Gender Responsive Local Governance in India

Implications of Fourteenth Finance Commission and Gram Panchayat Development Plan

UN WOMEN

UN Women is the United Nations organization dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. A global champion for women and girls, UN Women was established to accelerate progress on meeting their rights worldwide. UN Women supports United Nations member states as they set global standards for achieving gender equality, and works with governments and civil society to design laws, policies, programmes and services needed to implement these standards. It stands behind women's equal participation in all aspects of life, focusing on five priority areas: increasing women's leadership and participation; ending violence against women; engaging women in all aspects of peace and security processes; enhancing women's economic empowerment; and making gender equality central to national development planning and budgeting. UN Women also leads, coordinates and promotes the United Nations system's work in advancing gender equality.

Lead Consultant: Dharmistha Chauhan
Technical inputs: Navanita Sinha and Bhumika Jhamb
Copy edit: Ananthapriya Subramanian

UN WOMEN

United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

Foreword

A significant gain of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is the adoption of Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), an ambitious and transformative stand-alone goal to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls". SDG 5 is now universally accepted as the prerequisite for progress. However, fundamental to women-led, inclusive growth is the adequate and meaningful representation and participation of all women at all levels. In this context, SDG 16 recognizes the uneven progress across and within regions on promoting peace and justice, and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, thus emphasizing the importance of ensuring responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

The Indian case on this is no less than a global experiment that has brought to the fore the long-standing impact of affirmative action in ensuring governance mechanisms which truly reflect society and contribute effectively to human development.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional amendments provided unprecedented autonomy to local governments and brought governance closer to people. Most importantly, from a gender perspective, the amendments ushered in feminization of local governance by mandating 33.3 per cent reservation for women in panchayats and urban local bodies at all decision-making levels. In fact, some states have enacted legislation to mandate 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayati raj institutions. As a result, 1.3 million Constitutionally elected women, mostly from socially disadvantaged groups, are in leadership positions – the largest cadre of women in governance, anywhere in the world.

The Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) recommended three times greater allocation to local levels than the previous Finance Commission to enable greater political agency. More specifically, it stipulated that these funds flowed directly to the gram panchayats thus reinvigorating the project of decentralizing governance led by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. This holds special significance, particularly for its implications for women since it not only translates into greater quantum of funds at the disposal of local bodies but greater potential for the meaningful participation of women in the local planning and budgeting process in the form of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) as mandated by the Government.

It is in this context that UN Women undertook an assessment of the level of devolution and state of local democracy in India from a gender perspective. The study was conducted in six Indian States – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Telangana. The study is unique as it aims to understand the changes affected post 2015 by the Fourteenth Finance Commission and Gram Panchayat Development Plan processes and their implications for gender and local democracy in India.

UN Women is pleased to present "Gender responsive local democracy in India: Reflections and way forward". This report shows that the FFC recommendations and the consequent GPDP processes have undoubtedly bolstered the panchayati raj institutions, especially the gram panchayats. These have also opened newer opportunities for India to truly implement a people-led planning and budgeting process. These spaces represent untapped potential for improving women's participation and also enabling gender responsive local governance. More specifically, this will require a three-pronged strategy: specific investments in building capacities on gender issues and gender responsive budgeting for officials as well as elected representatives at multiple levels; creating and strengthening institutional mechanisms such as mahila sabhas by providing them statutory status and support mechanisms such as gender justice standing committees or watch groups at higher levels with the active participation of self-help groups and women's federations; and changing guidelines to provide specific budget allocations for gender related activities, especially those that are being reported as costless or low-cost activities.

As we move towards the Fifteenth Finance Commission, it is hoped that this report will be useful in informing the process. UN Women is grateful to have had the opportunity to work closely with state and local governments, together with independent experts and other stakeholders to advance this important work and for their valuable inputs and guidance, which have informed and helped finalize this report.

Nishtha Satyam

Nishtha Satyam
Deputy Country Representative
UN Women's Office for India, Bhutan, Maldives and Sri Lanka

Acknowledgements

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments in 1992 paved the way for the recognition of the third tier of government comprising panchayati raj institutions and urban local bodies as local self-governments. Since then a number of critical steps have been taken by the Government of India to provide more autonomy to the local bodies. The recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission are an important step in this direction. This resulted in a renewed focus on decentralized planning led by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, which has encouraged the preparation of a single, consolidated participatory and inclusive plan for the gram panchayat – the Gram Panchayat Development Plan – by converging all the resources controlled by the gram panchayat, engaging the gram sabha and addressing the needs of the most marginalized.

It is critical to ensure that these changes promote gender quality and women's empowerment. The first step towards this was taken in 1992 with 33 per cent reservation mandated for women in leadership positions at all levels of local governance. It is, however, critical to see how these opportunities and the recent fiscal policy changes have enabled gender responsive local democracy. This study has been undertaken to assess the gender responsiveness of local democracy in India, with a special focus on the implications of the Fourteenth Finance Commission and the consequent Gram Panchayat Development Plan processes.

UN Women undertook this exercise in consultation with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj as part of the common mandate to promote gender responsive local governance. The report is based on a study of six States - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana.

The study owes it content to the insights and advice given by many key experts on panchayati raj, in particular officials of the state Panchayati Raj Departments and the State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) in the study states. Special thanks are due to Anita Brandon (SIRD, Rajasthan); Abdul Haleem (SIRD, Andhra Pradesh); G.S. Ganesh and Malikaarjun (SIRD, Karnataka); N. Madhuri (SIRD, Telangana); Saroj K. Dash and Amita Patra (SIRD, Odisha) for their cooperation and inputs. The author would also like to thank all the UN Women consultants placed with the SIRDs, especially Fatima Syeda, Mainak Sarkar, Ruchi Chaturvedi, Vijaya Bhawani and Saurabh Dutta (consultant with the Department of Panchayati Raj, Madhya Pradesh) without whose support the study would not have been possible.

At the field level, I received all support from elected representatives and panchayat officials, without which this study could not have been possible. Multiple civil society organization partners also supported the process. My sincere thanks to Anjan Jena (Cooperation for Rural Excellence, Odisha); Hilda Grace (Centre for Rural Studies and Development, Andhra Pradesh); Pallavi and Sanjay (Sanket, Madhya Pradesh); Niranjan Sharma and Deen Dayal (Social Action for Human Resource Development, Rajasthan); and Nesar Ahmed (Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre, Jaipur).

Special thanks are due to Mridul Eapen for her inputs, both on the inception report and the final report. Last but not the least, I would like to express my special gratitude to Navanita Sinha and Bhumika Jhamb of UN Women for their constant support and guidance towards completing the report.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1:

Chapter 2:

Chapter 3:

Chapter 4:

Chapter 5:

Chapter 6:

Annexures

List of Tables and Figures

Acronyms

ANSSIRD	Abdul Nasir Sab State Institute of Rural Development
ANW	Anganwadi
BCs	Backward Classes
BPL	Below Poverty Line
CAA	Constitutional Amendment Act
CAG	Comptroller and Auditor General
CBGA	Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability
CC Road	Cement Concrete Road
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFC	Central Finance Commission
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSS	Centrally Sponsored Scheme
DPC	District Planning Committee
DPR	Detailed Project Report
DRDA	District Rural Development Agency
DRDS	District Rural Development Society
ER	Elected Representative
EWR	Elected Women Representative
FFC	Fourteenth Finance Commission
FSFC	Fourth State Finance Commission
GBC	Gender Budget Cell
GO	Government Order
GPDP	Gram Panchayat Development Plan
GPHDI	Gram Panchayat Human Development Index

GRB	Gender Responsive Budgeting
GSP	Gender Sub-Plan
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Scheme
INR	Indian Rupee
IPPE	Intensive Participatory Planning Process
IT	Information Technology
KSS	Krishak Shahyog Sansthan
LDC	Lower Division Clerk
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoPR	Ministry of Panchayati Raj
MWCD	Ministry of Women and Child Development
NGO	Non-Government Organization
NIRD &PR	National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
O&M	Operation and Maintenance
OBCs	Other Backward Classes
OSR	Own Source Revenue
PDS	Public Distribution System
PHED	Public Health and Engineering Department
PMAY	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana
PR	Panchayati Raj
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRIs	Panchayati Raj Institutions
RGPSA	Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sasakhtikaran Abhiyan
SATCOM	Satellite Communication
SBM	Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Campaign)
SC	Scheduled Caste
SCSP	Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

SFC	State Finance Commission
SHG	Self-Help Group
SIRD	State Institute of Rural Development
SoLD	State of Local Democracy
SRLM	State Rural Livelihood Mission
SSF	Singamma Srinivasan Foundation
SSFC	Second State Finance Commission
SSS	State Sponsored Scheme
ST	Scheduled Tribe
SWOT	Strength, Weakness, Opportunity And Threat
TFC	Thirteenth Finance Commission
TSFC	Third State Finance Commission
TSIPARD	Telangana State Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development
TSP	Tribal Sub-Plan
ULB	Urban Local Body
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VO	Village Organization
WCD	Women and Child Development
WCP	Women Component Plan

Executive Summary

A key target of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is the need to focus on "Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision making at all levels" (SDG target 16.7). The Government of India has already paved the way for this in 1993 through the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) by recognizing the panchayati raj institutions (PRIs) and urban local bodies (ULBs) as local self-governments. Since then the Government of India and various state governments have taken several steps towards realization of the goals of local democracy as envisaged in the Constitution. One of the most recent and critical initiatives in this regard is the adoption of the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) and the accompanying requirement to formulate Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP).

Given the high level of commitment to local democracy in the Constitution, the large flow of resources devolved to the panchayats under the FFC and the accompanying need to frame local development plans as under the GPDP, it becomes imperative to ensure that these changes promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Unless the processes at the gram panchayat level are made gender responsive and information and access to decision making are provided to women, it will not be possible to enable the benefits of delivery of basic services to reach women and men equally.

It was in this context that UN Women conducted a study to map the level of devolution and state of local democracy with a gender lens in six Indian States - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Telangana. The study used the modified State of Local Democracy – SoLD assessment framework – to map progress on eight mediating values: representation, participation, authorization, legitimacy, responsiveness, accountability, transparency and solidarity. The study applied the framework to the extent of local democracy as well as gender responsiveness of local democracy. It specifically aimed to understand the changes affected post 2015 by the FFC and GPDP processes and their implications for gender and local democracy in India.

An embedded case analysis approach was followed to understand the qualitative and process related aspects on the indicators at the gram panchayat level to develop state-specific cases. The methodology enabled the use of a range of primary and secondary information sources. Primary data was collected mainly through key informant interviews, including with elected representatives, gram panchayat officials, block and state-level officials of the State Panchayati Raj Departments, faculty of the State Institute of Rural Development and civil society organizations. Focus group discussions were also conducted with the communities to understand their perception of the gram panchayat and GPDP processes. Secondary data included the review of existing studies on panchayats at the state level, reports of panchayat finances submitted to the FFC, State Finance Commission reports, state devolution reports and government orders related to the devolution of powers, FFC and GPDP, specific guidelines, training modules, presentations and reports on the FFC and GPDP developed by states. In addition, the study also reviewed secondary literature to understand existing practices related to gender responsive planning and budgeting, especially the women's component plan in Kerala and the gender sub-plan in Rajasthan.

Key findings

Based on the SoLD framework, the key **findings** that emerged from the study are:

a. **Representation:** The institutionalization of the election process has enabled more than three million people's representatives to be directly elected to the three tiers of the panchayats. Almost half of these are women, which would not have been possible without the provision of reservation for them. Also, while there are still gaps in the influence exerted by elected women's representatives (EWRs), it emerged that around a quarter of those elected were able to exercise their powers while half of the elected women representatives were emerging as leaders with support from family members and panchayat officials at the village and block levels. The capacities of the elected representatives are still limited though. The sarpanch based PRI model also limited the participation of elected women representatives. Most decision-making powers and capacity building efforts are focused on the sarpanch with the result that women ward members are less active. A potential group of elected women representatives – the territorial representatives to the taluka panchayats and zilla panchayats are also neglected.

b. **Participation:** The CAA and subsequent state legislation also created space through the gram sabha for the active engagement of citizens in local decision-making processes. While the efficacy of the gram sabha as an institution may still be low, it still remains a strong (and the only) forum where citizens, especially women and those from the marginalized communities can participate in the local decision-making process, demand information and voice their concerns.

c. **Authorization and legitimacy:** The CAA also provided for devolution of functions, funds and functionaries, which resulted in many states issuing executive orders transferring a number of functions to panchayats. However, this "operational core" of the local democratic process is still to be realized in full. Much of the devolution of functions remains on paper while the depth of devolution of powers has not been achieved and the functions transferred are often not backed with funds and/or functionaries. The lack of effective devolution is also a key disabler for elected women representatives. It has been seen that without the actual transfer of powers to PRIs, the ground status is often dependent on the awareness levels and (powerful) influence of the elected representatives in the area. Elected women, especially women sarpanches, however, are at a major disadvantage since they do not naturally derive the power of influencing local decisions. Also, it is often seen that the male sarpanches have more access to information than women sarpanches due to the patriarchal nature of society. These factors further limit a women's ability to take action.

d. **Responsiveness:** Decentralized planning and budgeting processes had until recently (prior to the GPDP) been limited to pilots in areas led by external facilitators. Only the People's Campaign in Kerala and decentralized planning systems in Madhya Pradesh had been institutionalized at the state level. In terms of gender responsiveness, the women's component plan in Kerala has received mixed response by various researchers. The gender sub-plan approach of Rajasthan has received praise for its process though it has not achieved institutionalization at scale. Also, though these plans are strong participatory processes, there is limited linkage of these plans with the implementation process.

e. **Accountability:** Given the limited devolution of powers and lack of effective activity mapping exercises (in most states this has remained on paper), the accountability of the panchayats is bound to be limited. However, social audit processes initiated under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), especially in Andhra Pradesh and the panchayat *jambandi* process of gram panchayat accounts and works audit initiated in Karnataka are important strategies. However, the results are yet to be seen.

f. **Transparency:** While panchayats lack an integrated data management system given their limited resources, states have taken steps to ensure that the gram panchayats are compliant with the Right to Information. Thus, currently there is a high level of transparency at the gram panchayat level in terms of the availability of information. All payment details have been made available online. Another key initiative is that all panchayati raj bodies are expected to display boards with information on receipts, expenditure and development works. Also, the list of below poverty line (BPL) families and eligible beneficiaries of housing schemes has been displayed on the walls of the gram panchayats. However, there is a still a long way to go for transparency in decision making.

g. **Solidarity and inclusion:** There are more than two million elected representatives from marginalized communities, including women. However, their participation and influence in local democracy is still far from adequate. While there is state-wise variation in the activeness of elected representatives and elected women representatives from marginalized sections, the question of pseudo-representation exists not only in the case of women but for other marginalized communities. Another concern regarding inclusion is the inadequate coverage of services in Scheduled Caste (SC)/Scheduled Tribe (ST) habitations and the strengthening of the gram sabha, which can be an effective forum for marginalized communities to raise their concerns.

Implications of the Fourteenth Finance Commission and Gram Panchayat Development Plan:

In 2015, the local democratic processes got a major boost with the recommendations of the FFC, which provided for more than INR 200,292 crore to panchayats. This not only increased the fiscal autonomy of the gram panchayats but paved the way for change in the fiscal architecture of local bodies. Although the unconditional grant allocated by the FFC has been bound within the limits of the seven recommended basic services and some states have directed the usage of the funds to their principle objectives, the FFC has, in the words of an elected representative, ***"breathed new life into the panchayati raj system.***" An analysis of the data shows that for many gram panchayats, this has led to an increase (or at least certainty) of their resource base, both in terms of the amount and timeliness of the fund received. There are also examples seen in the field where the gram panchayats have been able to utilize these funds to meet their local needs. The FFC funds are not only seeing a higher level of utilization but they are in line with the allocations planned by the gram panchayats as part of the GPDP process.

Following the FFC recommendations, there has in fact been a huge impetus to local planning and budgeting processes in the form of the GPDP. Although decentralized planning was attempted by various states earlier, the GPDP has institutionalized the process with around 78 per cent of the gram panchayats in the country having developed GPDPs in 2016-2017. The GPDP process has been unique in that it has not only emphasized participatory local planning and budgeting but recommended a comprehensive strategy, including an emphasis on environment creation, capacity building, situation analysis, visioning exercises and institutional mechanisms while also strongly linking the plans with implementation. While not all states and gram panchayats follow all processes, the initial two years have seen a number of innovations at the state level and a renewed enthusiasm for planning at the gram panchayat level. A key achievement is the actual conduct of ward sabhas and gram sabhas for the purpose of planning. In fact, the study also observed an increase in the number of gram sabhas for GPDP.

Further, the increased resource base at the gram panchayat level and the FFC mandate for audits have resulted in a higher focus on accounting, audits and transparency. While the process is not yet observed in all the states, the process of calculating the resource envelope and communicating the same to the gram panchayat has also increased the awareness among the elected representatives. The study observed that most sarpanches and other influential ward members were aware of the FFC resources available at the gram panchayat level and exercised this knowledge in the planning and implementation of projects at the village level. In the words of an elected representative: ***"This***

is needs based development." The result has been an increase in enthusiasm among marginalized communities in participating in the gram sabhas for GPDP though the reach of benefits to the marginalized communities still remains limited.

Key recommendations

On the basis of the findings, following are the main recommendations that the national and state governments could consider to further strengthen the local democracy process in general and its gender responsiveness in particular.

I. Strengthening gender in local democracy through effective participation of elected women representatives, especially those from the marginalized communities and effective representation of women's voices/gender concerns.

1. Sensitization and capacity building

a. A key enabler for active participation of women is the support of family members, mainly husbands. It is thus important to sensitize men in general on the need for political participation of women.

b. The capacity building of elected women representatives must be institutionalized going beyond the sarpanch to other ward members and territorial constituency members. It was observed during the study that most elected women representatives were able to connect better with elected women at higher levels as opposed to men. These linkages need to be strategically exploited with focus on capacity building also at these levels of elected women.

c. Also, the training content should be customized to meet the needs of elected women representatives.

d. There should be more capacity building of self-help group members on governance issues as this would bridge another critical gender gap in the decentralization process – the participation of women in gram sabhas. Currently, the gram panchayats with active self-help group members have a higher participation in the gram sabha.

2. Institutional mechanisms

a. A notable link was seen between strong elected women representatives and the support they received from active women's groups and federations. Developing a cohort of elected women at the block or district level with the sarpanch, ward members, territorial constituency members can also be a good strategy to strengthen participation of women. Involving former elected women representatives and block/ district level self-help group leaders in this forum will strengthen it further.

b. There should be a mandate to form a gender justice standing committee at the gram panchayat, taluka panchayat and zilla panchayat levels to further the cause of critical gender issues beyond the current focus on the panchayats. This committee should be headed by the sarpanch and should have the mandate of creating awareness and monitoring actions to prevent gender-based violence, including child marriage, sex selection, domestic violence, etc.

c. Also, in addition to the standing committee, a gender watch group comprising self-help groups, village organization and block federation women members and former elected women representatives can be constituted to facilitate and monitor the gender responsive decentralized planning, budgeting and implementation processes.

d. In line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, all zilla panchayats should have a gender budget cell with gender experts from within the district officials (but not limited to women and child development department officials), civil society representatives, academics and women leaders of the district-level self-help group federations.

3. System-related

a. There should be a provision for better transport facilities/reimbursement to elected women representatives. Also, the honorarium was less which was not a motivation for elected women representatives who would not otherwise go so much to the taluka like a male elected representative. There should be an added incentive for elected women to go to the taluka.

b. Some budgetary allocations are needed for conducting the gram sabha and processes need to be created to ensure local agenda setting and mobilization. This is also important if mahila sabhas are to be institutionalized in the states rather than remaining sporadic efforts.

c. The study found that the presence of women staff in the panchayat (secretaries, extension officers or data entry operators) seemed to have a better impact on the activeness of the elected women representatives. While this needs to be substantiated further, it does point to the benefit of having more women in the panchayati raj department and the need for gender sensitization of all key panchayat staff.

d. Further, the processes may need to be externally facilitated for some time until they get streamlined. Civil society organizations could be engaged in the process. The presence of a facilitating agency was found to be an enabler for elected women.

II. Engendering Finance Commission and GPDP interventions for improving responsiveness /accountability of PRIs to gender mainstreaming

It is especially important to integrate gender in decentralized planning, budgeting and implementation processes as without this even the best intentioned policies may not be able to achieve the desired results. The GPDP processes seem to fall short of incorporating gender in their ambit. The study has undertaken a detailed gender appraisal of the GPDP guidelines and processes, based on which it recommends the inclusion of the following as part of the GPDP process.

1. Adoption of gender responsive budgeting

a. The study recommends the formal adoption of gender responsive budgeting (GRB) processes at the local government level. A range of GRB strategies and tools can be applied to local democracy to strengthen the decentralization and gender equality mandate of the Constitution.

b. Training on gender mainstreaming in the GPDP should be made compulsory for all panchayat secretaries and sarpanches. This should include gender sensitization and gender responsive planning and budgeting trainings.

c. There should be an emphasis/component on training elected women representatives and those from the marginalized communities in the GPDP guidelines itself.

2. Increasing women's participation in the GPDP process

a. Efforts should be made to train women and marginalized communities to create awareness on the GPDP and FFC resources, especially through training of self-group members on the GPDP and involving them as facilitators.

b. Processes like the mahila sabhas can be strengthened only if they are given a statutory status and linked with the GPDP processes. Exclusive mahila sabhas should be conducted for the GPDP. This should not only be made mandatory but the resolutions should be documented and placed in the public arena through plan plus.

3. Engendering the plans and planning process

a. The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) and states should issue separate guidelines and formats for reporting on gender parameters and undertaking gender analysis.

b. Each gram panchayat should be encouraged to have a gender development report to reflect on. This can be developed as an indicator-based format or by promoting the use of gender aware participatory tools like Moser framework and spatial mapping. In any case, there should be space/format for gender needs to be documented.

c. Each GPDP should have a gender and development outcome with clear indicators and activity plans. Separate problem prioritization and matrix ranking exercises with women or as part of mahila sabhas should be encouraged.

4. Resource allocation

a. States can also use the experience of the women component plan approach of Kerala to actually allocate a women's component within the FFC allocations. The GPDP guidelines, especially where indicating sectoral composition, should have a 30 per cent women component.

b. The powers to plan for these funds should be with women voters and the funds should be approved by the mahila sabha. Further, this should not be treated as a separate planning exercise but the processes should be integrated within the existing GPDP processes. This will ensure that not only will women have access to additional resources but the entire plan becomes more gender responsive.

c. There should be adequate resources allocated for social and gender development activities. The GPDP guidelines can also specify 10 per cent allocation for awareness activities on social and gender issues (currently included as costless/low cost activities identified as part of the GPDP).

In conclusion

The policy space created for representation of women in local democracy in India is unprecedented. However, there is now need to move beyond mere gender representation to gender responsiveness of local democracy. The FFC and subsequent GPDP process have already provided the necessary space and opportunity to enable this. However, gaps still exist in the process, which need to be addressed. As the MoPR revises the GPDP guidelines, it will be critical to ensure that the revision takes into account specific measures to make local democracy more gender responsive by incorporating some of the above process and system related suggestions in the existing guidelines. Many of these will also require a greater level of funding, which needs to be pursued by the state governments in addition to the funds provided by the Government of India. Further, these aspects can also be brought to the notice of the Fifteenth Finance Commission so that the mandate for fiscal devolution is made more gender responsive and both women and men have an equitable share of the resource allocation and development initiatives at the panchayat level.

CHAPTER

1 Introduction

Local democracy in India

As India aims to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) there is an overarching need to focus on *"Responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels"* (SDG target 16.7). This can, however, be meaningfully achieved only when the locus of power is shifted as close to the citizen as possible. This will enable and facilitate direct participation and efficient decision making; ensure constant vigil and timely intervention; provide space for all citizens to influence and promote their best interests, irrespective of their station and birth; and thereby promote true maturity of the Indian democracy (Second Administrative Reforms Commission: Sixth Report, 2007). This is even more important in the era of market driven globalization, wherein the process of democratic decentralization and community driven management could act as a countervailing force enabling people to gain control over decisions that influence their lives in critical areas (Decentralization in India: Challenges and Opportunities, n.d.).

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (CAA) of 1993 was a major move to translate the ideals of **"democratic decentralization"** into practice. By mandating **"devolution"** of powers, the Act endorsed the concept of transfer of substantial responsibility, decision-making and resource and revenue generation to a local government. The Act not only provided the means for the participation of people in local governance but fostered representation of the marginalized and women allowing for a true "local democracy" (Morell, n.d.; Yuliani, 2004; Second Administrative Reforms Commission: Sixth Report, 2007) (See Box 1 for definition).

Box 1: Understanding decentralization and local democracy

Decentralization is a broad term often used to refer to different forms of government. The main types of decentralization are:

A) Administrative decentralization, which includes deconcentration, the process by which "the agents of central government control are relocated and geographically dispersed" (Sayer et al.). **Delegation** or "the transfer of managerial responsibility for specified functions to other public organizations outside normal central government control" (Ferguson and Chandrasekharan). Both these forms of decentralization maintain the authority and control of the Central Government.

B) Democratic decentralization, the transfer of power to lower levels of government which are elected by local citizens; have some degree of local autonomy and downwardly accountable to citizens rather than to the central government. **Devolution** is the main form of such decentralization and refers to the transfer of substantial responsibility, decision making, resources and revenue generation to a local government. Such a form also provides "the means to allow for the participation of people and local governments" (Morell) taking the form of local democracy (as in Yuliani, 2004).

C) Local democracy, sometimes treated as synonymous with 'decentralisation', is also quite distinct. In particular, decentralisation may not necessarily be conducive to local democracy. In fact, in situations of sharp local inequalities, decentralisation sometimes heightens the concentration of power and discourages rather than fostering participation among the underprivileged (Second Administrative

Reforms Commission: Sixth Report, 2007). Thus, we can better define local democracy as a process of democratic decentralization, which is more inclusive in nature and has an equitable sharing of power and access to governance.

Since the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act the country has moved to become one of the largest local democracies with 2.9 million elected representatives, more than three quarters of them belonging to marginalized communities – Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC)/ Backward Classes (BCs) and women. The process has been further strengthened as states strive towards improving the status of devolution of functions, functionaries and funds to the panchayati raj institutions (PRIs). And while there may still be a long way to go, it is also true that the panchayati raj system has been institutionalized in the country.

Changes in panchayat architecture post 2015

In 2015, the process received a major boost when the Government of India adopted the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC)[1]. The FFC recommendations restructured the fiscal architecture of India providing more fiscal autonomy not only to the states but to the local bodies too. The allocation of more than INR 200,292 crore to panchayats for the period 2015-2020 is more than three times the grant of the Thirteenth Finance Commission. Further, by stipulating that these grants should flow directly to the gram panchayats and remain untied for them to spend, the FFC has ensured that the gram panchayats have adequate funds (around INR 85 lakh for five years for an average gram panchayat) to deliver services.

The FFC allocation is to be spent on basic services such as sanitation, drinking water, maintenance of community assets, etc. For this, panchayats are expected to prepare local plans to ensure that these basic services reach everyone, including the most marginalized sections of society (Ministry of Finance guidelines, 2015). This has necessitated a renewed focus on decentralized planning led by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), which has encouraged the preparation of a single, consolidated participatory and inclusive plan for the gram panchayat – the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) – made by converging all resources controlled by the gram panchayat, engaging the gram sabha and addressing the needs of the most marginalized.

Need for gender mainstreaming

The importance of PRIs and urban local bodies (ULBs) for enabling gender equality has increased with greater responsibility and financial allocations at the local level. It is now vital to understand the role of women and the gender responsiveness of local democracy in India. The mandate of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and subsequent state reservation policies have resulted in more than a million elected women representatives (EWRs) gaining access to political space. This initiative has not only supported women but strengthened the overall process of local democracy. Drage (2001) argues that women not only bring with themselves transformative leadership, which is more inclusive, tolerant and place emphasis on the larger good but encourage participation, collaboration and consultation which are vital for the success of local democracy. Some researchers also emphasize that social capital is key to high institutional performance and the maintenance of democracy (Putnam, 1993). Evertzen (April 2001) also states that decentralization works best when it encounters a lively civil society as issues reach the policy agenda when powerful or well-organized groups in society identify and assert their issues as problems. In India, social mobilization is relatively higher among women due to the presence of the self-help group movement in most

[1]The Finance Commission established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution is constituted every five years by the Ministry of Finance to mainly recommend the tax sharing arrangements between the central and state governments. Since the Tenth Finance Commission, the recommendations also include the resource share of urban and rural local bodies.

parts of the country. Women's solidarity and the existence of strong social capital can be the key to strengthening local democracy. Studies (Varshese & Dr. D.Mavoothu, 2014) have already shown how Kudumbasree has contributed to the political empowerment of women in Kerala.

In addition, women also benefit greatly from local democracy as participative governance provides them the space to effectively communicate their needs and ensure allocation of resources for the same, especially domestic responsibilities and management of scarce natural resources. Further, the effective participation of women is possible only at the local level given their limited mobility and other constraints. Additionally, the eligibility criteria for contesting elections at the local level are less stringent and the local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life and hence easier to combine with traditional gender roles and responsibilities. Local democracy and gender are thus two interlinked aspects with the potential to move forward together if facilitated.

It is important to note here that while decentralization is in the interest of women, it also makes the local level more important. As this importance grows, so does male interest in this, which results in women facing additional barriers, individual as well as institutional factors related to the organization of society and the political system with the risk that they will not reap equal benefits (Evertzen, April 2001). Research shows that the various provisions in the design of the decentralization process have not automatically resulted in the participation of women in public decision making (CWDS, 1999); (Goutam Sadhu, November 2014); (UNRISD, 2015); (Mousumi Deka, July - Sept. 2016). Thus, the decentralization process may not necessarily lead to gender inclusive and responsive local democracy.

Engendering the local democratic process has the additional challenges of:

a) Limited understanding of gender at the local level and even more limited capacities on gender responsive planning and budgeting. The same is often treated as additional work rather than as a core function of government.

b) The overall patriarchal structure in many parts of India, which not only limits women from participating and voicing their concerns in gram sabha and panchayat meetings but does not support an informed, well-articulated and gender responsive decision-making process.

Unless the processes at the gram panchayat level are made gender responsive, and information and access to decision-making are provided to women, it may not be possible to ensure that the benefits of basic delivery of services reach women and men equally. Hence, neither the goals of gender mainstreaming nor that of local democracy can be achieved. It is thus important that decentralized planning, budgeting and implementation processes integrate a gender perspective as otherwise even the most well-intentioned policies may not be able to achieve the desired results.

Study rationale and objectives

Making the process gender responsive, however, requires having a strong understanding of the state of local democracy at the grass roots level, especially since this is a state subject. The study was thus conceived as a means to first understand the extent of devolution and the state of local democracy in six Indian States – Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha and Telangana[2]. Given the large flow of resources devolved to the panchayats under the FFC and the accompanying need to frame local development plans under the GPDP, the study also recognizes the changes to the local governance structure post 2015. It thus aims to understand the changes affected post 2015 and their implications for local democracy. Understanding the need to ensure that these changes promoted gender quality and women's empowerment, the study looked at these criteria with a

[2]UN Women Multi-country Office India as part of its governance portfolio is actively involved in six states for promoting gender responsive governance. The same six states were selected for the study to enable more context specific recommendations, which will be useful for the project.

gender lens. The focus was thus not to identify gaps but look at existing good practices and potential entry points for enabling gender responsive governance.

The key objective of the study builds on this understanding of gender mainstreaming in local democracy, particularly in the context of the changes introduced by the FFC and GPDP in 2015. The focus is on analysing the findings in terms of the following themes:

a. Mapping the degree of local democracy and gender mainstreaming at the grass roots level and

b. Assessing the implications of the Fourteenth Finance Commission recommendations and the subsequent Gram Panchayat Development Plan processes for local democracy and gender.

Assessment framework

The study builds on the adapted State of Local Democracy (SoLD) framework of assessment (Jiménez, 2013). The SoLD framework builds on the core democratic principles of popular control of public decision making and decision makers and political equality of those who exercise that control. It has identified benchmarks on eight mediating values that enable citizens to periodically monitor the health of their local democracy to celebrate successes, while at the same time contributing to the reform of identified democratic deficits (See Annex 1 for original SoLD framework). In line with the popular principles and strategy the framework has been adapted to the Indian context. The study used this adapted framework to define the indicators to assess the extent of local democracy in general and gender responsiveness of the same in particular (see Table 1).

Methodology

The study used an "embedded case[3]" analysis approach to develop an overall national framework for enabling gender responsive local democracy. Six UN Women project states – Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha were analysed as individual cases to contribute to this overall national report. A key strength of this case study method is the possibility of using multiple and varied data sources and techniques in the analysis. The study has thus used a range of data tools, including all available and relevant government data records at the national, state, district, block and panchayat levels; key informant interviews; focus group discussions; observation and approved reports of official committees related to PRIs formed by the government; and national/state level studies undertaken by civil society.

While the availability of government records constituted a challenge, available documents were collected from the detailed list and reviewed (Detailed list of documents reviewed is given in Annex 2). Furthermore, interviews of key informants were conducted at the national and state levels covering various government and civil society actors (List of key informants interviewed is given in Annex 3).

In addition, field visits were made to 14 gram panchayats in the six States. In each gram panchayat, the sarpanch (village head) was interviewed at length. In addition, interviews were conducted with ward members and interactions were held with the local panchayat development officer. Efforts were made to balance the number of male and female interviewees and a conscious effort was also made to interview at least one person from the Scheduled Caste/ Tribe community (List of gram panchayats visited is given in Annex 4). In addition, the study collected information on gram sabhas, GPDP and gram panchayat finances.

[3]An embedded case builds on case studies undertaken at the micro level to derive lessons that can be useful for understanding the macro perspective. In this case, the study conducted gram panchayat level case studies to understand the state perspective and further developed the state-level case studies to understand the national status.

The actual status based on both primary and secondary information was then analysed using the SoLD framework to map the degree of progress on local democracy, implications of FFC and GPDP and gender mainstreaming processes. Annex 5 provides an overview of the assessment parameters used in the study. The insight from the field was used to corroborate or repudiate the policy prescriptions from the ground realities. Finally, the gaps and potential entry points for enabling a gender responsive local democracy in the state were identified.

Table 1: Assessment indicators based on the adapted SoLD framework

Mediating Value (SoLD)	Locally relevant strategy	Description	Indicators to assess the extent of local democracy	Parameters to assess the extent of gender responsiveness of local democracy
Representation	Elected representatives (ERs)	People's representatives directly elected to local democratic institutions, i.e. the three tiers of the panchayats	Regularity of elections Number and profile of ERs Motivation and capacities of ERs	What is the percentage of women? What are the capacities of elected women representatives (EWRs) to deliver on their mandate and represent the interests of their constituencies
Participation	Gram sabha	Citizens playing an active role in shaping local policies and practices	Conducting gram sabhas Attendance and participation in gram sabha	What has been the level and type of women's participation?
Authorization	Devolution of powers	Legal transfer of functions, funds and functionaries to the local level	Level of executive devolution Number and type of functions devolved Depth and clarity on devolution Matching functions with functionaries Concomitant fiscal transfers	How does status of devolution impact effectiveness of EWRs?
Legitimacy	Exercising the powers	Operational devolution of functions, funds and functionaries	Actual application of powers	How has it affected the functioning powers of EWRs
Responsiveness	Local level planning and budgeting	Grounds for decision making and the extent to which policies and plans reflect the will of the people	Practices for planning and budgeting in place	What is the role of women and responsiveness of the plans to gender needs?
Accountability	Social audits	Mechanisms which ensure that decision makers are answerable for the decisions made	Systems in place	Are there gender audits of plans and allocations being conducted?

Transparency	Right to Information and proactive disclosure	Openness of the institution to share information and amount of information available in public domain making decision makers answerable	Systems in place	How much access do women have over this information and system?
Solidarity	Inclusion of marginalized communities	Degree of social cohesion, relationships between different levels of the society and the equality of access to rights and benefits	Participation and benefit sharing for SC/STs and marginalized	Do women from all communities have as much access to decision making and benefit sharing?

The subsequent chapters of the report build on this analysis. It is divided into five sections:

a) The framework for local democracy and gender in India

b) State of Local Democracy (SoLD) and gender in India

c) The Fourteenth Finance Commission and its implications for local democracy and gender

d) The ground realities and gender inclusion for the Gram Panchayat Development Plan process

e) Reflections and recommendations for enabling gender responsive local democracy

Limitations

The study has certain limitations. First, the study sample, both for the selection of states and gram panchayats was not done randomly or based on statistical significance. The selection criteria were more pragmatic in nature and thus all findings cannot be generalized at the national level. However, the purpose was not to undertake an impact evaluation but to understand the nuances of the situation and the number of states and gram panchayats selected provided the required information. Wherever possible, secondary literature was reviewed to see the alignment with national trends. The study findings were then used to corroborate previous research and the status in the context of the changes introduced since 2015 and to help map the nuances behind the trends. In this context however, there was one limitation: since early 2000, limited multi-state research has been conducted on decentralization and the study has had to therefore rely either on area-based research papers or on devolution reports. Another limitation of the study has also been the lack of data in PRIs, especially in a uniform update format even within states, which could allow for consolidation of data. This, however, was envisaged before the study was initiated and hence the case analysis method was adopted.

It is important to note here that the study is more qualitative in nature attempting to identify the emerging trends of the processes and systems and should not be compared with an empirical study having similar objectives.

CHAPTER

2 Framework of Local Democracy and Gender in India

History of panchayati raj institutions

India has had a long history of local self-governance in the form of panchayats right from ancient times to the British era. Post-independence, the Constitution provided for the same under Article 40 of the Directive Principles of State Policy. However, not much attention was given to the development of PRIs until the Balwantrai Mehta Committee report in 1957 following which the PRI system was launched in Nagour (Rajasthan) on October 2, 1959. Subsequently, bigger States like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal enacted legislation giving PRIs a formal status. The process got a boost after the Ashok Mehta Committee Report, which saw States like Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka further strengthening their PRI Acts and systems. However, except for Kerala and to some extent West Bengal and Karnataka, the progress on local democracy in the first four decades after Independence was slow.

Constitutional mandate

In this context, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was passed with effect from April 23, 1993 providing a mandate for setting up powers and responsibilities of PRIs. These included two types of provisions: a) mandatory and b) discretionary.

The mandatory provisions (Article 243 A to F)

The Act, in particular specified the creation of a three-tier system of PRIs at the village (gram panchayat), intermediate (taluka or block panchayat) and district (zilla panchayat) levels. There was also provision for mandatory conduct of elections to all three tiers every five years through the State Election Commissions; reservation for SCs and STs in proportion of the population and for women on one-third of the seats. The Act also envisaged the gram sabha as a forum for people's participation in governance, especially for planning and monitoring purposes. In addition, the Constitution mandated the formation of a State Finance Commission on the lines of the Central Finance Commission as well as District Planning Committees on the lines of the Planning Commission and State Planning Boards (as part of the 74th CAA).

It is important to note the language and processes prescribed in the Constitution, which is similar to that describing the federal structure of India. In fact, T.R. Raghunandan (India Infrastructure Report, 2007) states: "It is not far-fetched to suggest that the relationship between the State and the panchayats is designed on lines similar to that of the Centre and the State."

The discretionary provision (Article 243 G)

The operative core of the 73rd CAA, however, is Article 243 G, which directs the states to endow panchayats through law so as to function as "institutions of self-government". States have to further provide for "devolution of powers" and responsibilities to panchayats to enable them to prepare plans for economic and social development as also implementation of schemes and matters related to the

Eleventh Schedule. The CAA also envisaged a high level of fiscal devolution by not only authorizing states to vest taxation powers in panchayats but the mandatory constitution of the State Finance Commission to review the financial positions of the panchayats and to make recommendations on the principles governing the distribution of net proceeds of taxes duties, etc. between the State and panchayat (Article 243I).

The use of the word "may" as stated in the CAA on this aspect has led to much ambiguity with some arguing that the wording indicates the discretion of the State with the panchayats being mere implementing agencies for the state governments. Champions of decentralization, however, argue that the discretion is limited by the imperative to endow powers and authority to enable them to function as institutions of self-governance (Raghunandan, India Infrastructure Report, 2007) Another important argument here is the review of the subject of devolution in the Eleventh Schedule, which clearly points to the role of panchayats not being limited merely to the implementation of schemes but towards enabling local self-governance. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that the Constitution has used the word "devolution" and not "delegation" of powers, which implies a clear intent of democratic decentralization or "transfer of substantial responsibility, decision making, resource and revenue generation to a local government."

State legislation and executive orders

Subsequent to the CAA, most states brought in new legislation or amended existing ones to conform with the Constitutional mandate within one or two years. The mandatory provisions of Article 243 A to F were incorporated in all state legislation with minor modifications, most of which were progressive in nature. Box 2 summarizes the major changes in the mandatory provisions in state level legislation.

Most state laws also contain elaborate provisions on the details of functions assigned to panchayats or undertake these through a Schedule to the state law. This is often also backed by executive orders and amendments in allied Acts. A review of Acts in the six study States based on the MoPR website data http://www.panchayat.gov.in/documents/401/84079/Status__of__Devolution.pdf), however, shows that Rajasthan and Karnataka are the only States to have devolved all 29 matters related to the Eleventh Schedule to PRIs. Karnataka not only did so in the 1993 Conformity Act itself but reinforced the same in the 2015 amendment by providing that "the Responsibility Map drawn up in the course of review of the Principal Act and published as 'First Rules'

Major modifications in state Acts for mandatory provisions:

- Most states provided direct election for the position of head of the PRIs except Karnataka, which provides for indirect elections.
- Some states also have restrictions on eligibility for elections like the two child norm and need for functional toilets. Rajasthan additionally has minimum education qualification criteria.
- Most states have an additional reservation for OBCs/BCs.
- Initiated by Bihar in 2006, most states have introduced 50% reservation for women.
- Generally, the reservation matrix is for five years. Karnataka has in a recent (2015) amendment changed it to 10 years.
- Many states have amendments transferring the powers of the gram panchayat to the gram sabha.
- In most states, gram sabhas are to be conducted at the village level (Palli sabhas) and not only at the gram panchayat level. In addition, Rajasthan and Karnataka have also mandated ward sabhas.
- Standing committees have been mandated at all levels of PRIs

under the amendment Act shall be deemed to be Rules duly made under this section". This has given a high level of legal sanctity to the devolution of functions to PRIs. In Rajasthan, 18 departments have been transferred through executive orders since 2003, although effective devolution is being pursued only in five key departments. Among other states Odisha has devolved 21 functions of 10 departments while Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have devolved all functions of 10 departments through executive orders. Madhya Pradesh transferred functions of 15 departments in 1998 but many notifications have been overturned since. According to self-reported data too (Devolution Index Report, 2015-16), Karnataka has devolved 40 functions to panchayats while also issuing executive orders on the same and amendments in allied Acts. The results for the six study States are given in Table 2.

Table 2: Devolution of functions in study States

State/ Status	AP	Kar	MP	Odi	Raj	Tel
No. of functions	25	40	14	21	25	15
Executive orders Issued	16	40	16	21	25	18
Changes in allied Acts	0	40	12	0	7	3
Source: Devolution Index Report, 2015-2016. For further state level details see Table 4.						

Interestingly, the CAA was silent on the issue of human resources for panchayats probably on the assumption that the transfer of functions implied the transfer of functionaries. However, state legislation and executive orders have been more proactive in defining these. Most state legislation have clearly articulated the need for the panchayats to have a secretary in the Act itself. The Rajasthan Act is, in fact, much more elaborate on the staff requirements in each tier of the panchayats. Further, most State Acts have also given powers to panchayats to appoint/outsource staff as per their need, subject to budgetary limitations. The Rajasthan and Karnataka Panchayati Raj Acts also envisage the setting up of a separate cadre of services for panchayats with the Rajasthan Rules specifying even the various categories and posts required under the panchayat cadre. The latest amendment of the Karnataka Act also provides for a board to facilitate the panchayat human resource services and mandates the state government to provide budgetary allocations for building the capacities of panchayat staff. Also, most states have issued executive orders transferring the functionaries of select departments (for the functions devolved) to PRIs. The Madhya Pradesh Act additionally provides powers to the gram sabhas over government employees in their jurisdiction, including withholding salaries, sanction of leave, review of works, etc.

At the state level, all legislation provided for taxation powers, particularly for housing or building tax, market tax, entertainment tax, etc. and the power to levy application fees and water charges. Interestingly, most powers of taxation have been given to the gram panchayats with hardly any taxation powers to the other two tiers. In all states, the panchayats have been empowered to have a Kosh or fund for their financial resources maintained mainly in bank accounts at the gram panchayat level (except Andhra Pradesh and Telangana[4]) and in state treasuries at higher levels. PRIs have been permitted to have funds from own sources, get grants from central or state governments and/or also raise funds through loans. There is no statutory requirement of transfer of funds to PRIs in any of the states except Karnataka, where the Panchayati Raj Act has made an assured annual grant to all tiers as part of Section 206.[5] In addition, in Karnataka, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, district sector funds have been created for transfer of funds to PRIs. States have also passed executive orders for transfer of Central and State sector funds for certain schemes to panchayats. However, except for the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission) most of these are at the district level.

[4] In these states funds at all levels are retained in the treasury.

[5] Currently, the amount is INR 8 lakh, 1 crore and 4 crore for gram panchayat, taluka panchayats and zilla panchayats respectively.

Most state Acts have also taken forward decentralized and participatory planning by making it mandatory for the gram panchayat to have an annual plan approved by the gram sabha. Rajasthan and Karnataka have taken the planning process further down to the ward level. In Karnataka, the 2015 amendment also provides for each newly elected panchayat to have a five-year vision plan within three months of assuming office. In addition, all state Acts provide for consolidation of plans in the higher tiers and final approval of the annual plan by the District Planning Committees. Here again Karnataka has introduced a recent amendment to create taluka (block) level planning and development committees.

Another key feature of the state PRI Acts is the incorporation of the Right to Information and the powers given to the gram sabha to review accounts and works of the gram panchayats. Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have also introduced the system of social audit. Madhya Pradesh has gone a step further in bringing accountability by introducing the Right to Recall elected members and the sarpanch after two and a half years.

Fourteenth Finance Commission and Gram Panchayat Development Plan

Following the 73rd CAA, the Central Finance Commissions (CFCs) also included awards for PRIs in their recommendations. The 10th, 11th and 12th CFCs limited the same to allocation of money calculated per capita to PRIs, leaving it to the states to transfer the funds further. The Thirteenth Finance Commission (TFC) made a major breakthrough by according the PRIs a share from the divisible pool of resources and created conditions mandating the states to transfer the funds to PRIs and not divert it for other uses.

The FFC has been a step ahead by not only providing funds up to three times that of the TFC award but creating stronger systems for ensuring the transfer of funds to the lowest tier of PRIs – the gram panchayats. Without imposing major conditionalities, the FFC has enabled the flow of untied funds to gram panchayats to help them provide basic services as per the mandate devolved to them by the state legislation. Thus, the FFC has provided space for better fiscal autonomy of the gram panchayats without undermining the state authority. This is a huge award of INR 2002 billion for a period of five years from 2015 to 2020 and has created much excitement among the champions of fiscal decentralization in the country.

Following the recommendations of the FFC, the Ministry of Finance, through its guidelines for the release and utilization of grants, stipulated that proper plans should be prepared by the gram panchayats for providing basic services within the functions devolved to them as per state laws before incurring any expenditure under the FFC award (Ministry of Finance, 2015).

Building on the opportunity created for strengthening the decentralized planning and responsive governance processes, the MoPR introduced the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). The GPDP is a process of integrated development planning conducted in a fair, transparent and participatory mode at the gram panchayat level to capture people’s needs and priorities, match them with available resources and additionally mobilize local resources. Based on consultative processes with the states, the MoPR issued guidelines for the GPDP on August 5, 2015. This was followed by more comprehensive guidelines issued in November 2015 supplemented by a manual for the GPDP developed in 2016. Subsequently, most state governments have also developed guidelines for the GPDP and notified these.

Mandate for gender mainstreaming

The CAA has also mandated gender mainstreaming in local democracy through one-third reservation for women in all elections. Some state legislation has further advanced the same by providing for up to 50 per cent reservation for women. The reservation for women is applicable even within the reservation for marginalized communities, namely SCs, STs and OBCs/BCs. Another important aspect is that along with the mandate for ensuring social justice the subject of women and child development has also been allocated to PRIs as per the Eleventh Schedule of the CAA. Most states have also devolved women and child development as one of the main departments to panchayats. Thus, Constitutional and state laws already allocate the responsibility of ensuring gender equality and addressing gender concerns to local bodies.

In addition, it is important to bear in mind the mandate of the Ministry of Finance (2005) and the Eleventh and Twelfth Five Year Plans to implement gender responsive budgeting (GRB) at all levels and across all sectors in the country. GRB is an approach to incorporate the gender perspective in all planning, budgeting and auditing continuum. Subsequent to the Ministry of Finance directive, 57 union ministries have adopted gender responsive budgeting and set up gender budget cells to facilitate and monitor progress. The MoPR has also set up a gender budget cell to promote GRB approaches in all decentralization processes and institutional mechanisms.

Following the national directive, many State governments, including Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan, formally adopted gender responsive budgeting. In 2013, the Ministry of Women and Child Development also advised states to adopt GRB across the board and issue a formal notification for adoption of GRB at the zilla panchayat level (vide D.O. No: 1-25 /2012-GB dated February 14, 2013). In this context, the GPDP processes and the allocations of the FFC should not only reflect gender equalities both in planning and budget allocations but comply with the gender responsive budgeting approach.

In the subsequent sections, the study reviews the extent of gender mainstreaming in local democracy in India and the gender responsiveness of the Fourteenth Finance Commission and subsequent GPDP processes.

CHAPTER

3 State of Local Democracy and Gender in India

The year 2018 sees the process of local democracy in India complete 25 years. Despite initial delays and setbacks, within a decade, the country had already successfully achieved the targets of a representative and politically decentralized system (World Bank, 2000). The State of Panchayat Report (published in 2006, 2008 and 2010) and various Devolution Index reports (2012-2013; 2014-2015; 2015-2016) show that overall, the mandatory provisions specified in the Constitution have already been implemented. Unfortunately, both the state governments and central ministries have been slow to take note of the discretionary provisions on devolution of powers or the "operative core" of the 73rd CAA. The Devolution Report (2014-2015) clearly states that "the implementation of the operative core of the decentralization, relating to the devolution of the 3Fs – functions, functionaries and funds – has fallen substantively short of the letter and spirit of the CAA in many a state." This fact has been reinforced in the Devolution Report 2015-2016. Since 2004 when the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was formed, concerted efforts have been made to pursue this agenda (see Box 3). The overall emphasis has been to empower the panchayats with certain functional mandates, give them a significant degree of autonomy and an element of self-reliance and self-sufficiency through fiscal transfers, taxation powers and tax assignments (MoPR, 2006).

Box 3: Role of Ministry of Panchayati Raj in enforcing the 73rd CAA

In June 2004, the Government of India created the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to primarily oversee the implementation of Part IX of the Constitution. On June 29 and 30, 2004, the Government of India organized a conference of Chief Ministers on rural poverty alleviation and prosperity through panchayati raj. Following the consultation, the Ministry organized seven round tables around the country to discuss the panchayati raj system.

The national consensus was on the need to focus on:

a) Establishing a clear role for panchayats in the centrally sponsored schemes,

b) Strengthening decentralized planning and allocating funds for the same in state plans and budgets and

c) Enabling higher level of devolution of functions, functionaries and funds to the panchayats.

Several advisories and guidelines were issued to the states and union ministries/departments in this regard. The MoPR also set up multiple committees of experts to facilitate the processes and provide a road map for implementing the above actions. Annex 6 summarizes the various actions and directives issued by different central government agencies towards realizing the spirit of the Constitution. In 2009, the Ministry also formulated a Model Panchayats and Gram Swaraj Act (MPGSA) for the states.

In the subsequent sections the study reviews the progress on local democracy in the country using the adapted SoLD framework. The parameters for the review have been customized to suit the Indian context and include: a) Political representation; b) People's participation; c) Devolution of powers; e) Decentralized planning; f) Accountability and transparency; and h) Solidarity and inclusion.

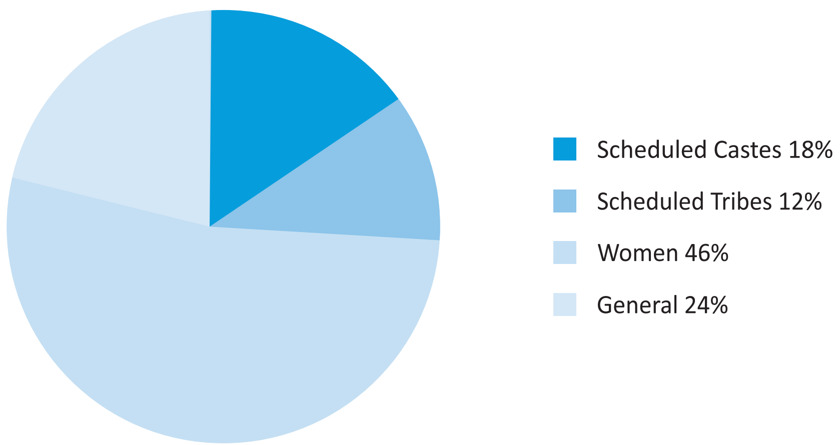
The analysis has attempted to capture the status on the ground, especially on gender mainstreaming and identify the key enablers and challenges to achieving progress.

Political representation through elected representatives

In conformity with the CAA, all states have set up independent State Election Commissions and after an initial delay of one or two years (except in Jharkhand where the delay was for 12 years) PRI elections have been held in all states. Elections were also held regularly every five years in all study states except united Andhra Pradesh where there was a delay of two years due to a court stay order in 2011. There also seems to be a growing voter interest in the electoral process as seen from the high voter turnout. In Madhya Pradesh, for example, the turnout was 83.39 per cent in the last election in 2015. Specifically, female voter turnout improved from 69.3 per cent in 2000 to 83.17 per cent in 2015 (State Election Commission). Multi-candidate elections are becoming a norm with increased political dominance being reported in most states. However, instances of the village elite manipulating the elections have also been reported, especially where there are women and Scheduled Caste candidates in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.

Nevertheless, the country has more than 2.9 million elected representatives, with more than three-quarters of them being women and from marginalized communities (Figure 1). These figures point to the beginning of the political empowerment of women and marginalized communities at the grass roots level with the opportunity to express their voice in the decision-making process.

A study by Centre for Women's Development Studies in 1999 showed that reservation has indeed enabled people from marginalized communities and women to be elected, where otherwise these groups would never have had a chance. This fact has been reinforced in this study. All women sarpanches and ward members interviewed in this study were categorical that they would not have contested the elections if the seats were not reserved for women. This was true also for certain men elected representatives from marginalized communities.



Data Source: Statistical Yearbook of India, 2016

Figure 1: Composition of elected representatives in India (2014)

Once elected to the local political posts, the next step was the question of capacities for ensuring local development. The orientation of the elected representatives was found to be encouraging with most not only having a clear vision about the village development needs but they clearly articulated the concerns of the poor (voiced in the complaints on the public distribution system, below poverty line cards and rural housing benefits).

However, many of the elected representatives still considered themselves implementing arms of the government and the role of panchayats as being limited to creating infrastructure and providing basic services. Thus, their efforts to get information were also aligned in that direction. Also, one could see most of the sarpanches and active elected representatives having a clear knowledge of administrative and technical processes related to the same.

It was thus felt that the concern was more about capacities than the orientation or commitment. The issue of limited capacities can be addressed through better capacity building measures. However, not all states are able to provide the required support to build capacities in a streamlined manner. While States like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Odisha and Telangana do have a strong capacity building programme, it was found that not all elected representatives, especially ward members benefited from it. None of the elected representatives interviewed could recollect a good training programme except the sarpanch in Odisha. Also, in the past two years, the trainings appear to have become focused on the GPDP and state priority schemes rather than the overall PRI process, which should have been the case given that most of those interviewed were elected post 2015. A limiting factor mentioned on capacity building was that with the restructuring of the centrally sponsored schemes post the FFC, the funds for capacity building through the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan have also become limited.

One woman sarpanch said: "It is better for panchayats to be able to take up a number of smaller works rather than one big work. That way we are able to spread the benefits of development across all the wards." Another sarpanch stated that he would visit almost all the wards everyday and meet people to understand the problems, especially those related to delivery of basic services.

It was also felt that the understanding of women and Scheduled Tribe elected representatives was generally less than the others (Inference from interviews with elected representatives). Generally, there are women who are increasingly taking charge but still seek support from their male relatives for functioning. Largely, the elected women representatives interviewed can be classified into three groups:

- **Category A: Established women elected representatives** who function independently but with some support from male relatives or other ward members. These women understand their roles and responsibilities and are also able to assert their powers within the limits of the local democratic processes.
- **Category B: Emerging elected women representatives** who are aware about their roles and represent the community when essential but are highly dependent on a male member of their family. These women have the potential to grow and with some capacity building and handholding support will be able to exert their influence.
- **Category C: Enabling women elected representatives** who are behind the scenes and represented openly by their male counterparts. They need sustained capacity building and facilitation to be able to realize their position and work towards enabling the same.

Among the panchayats visited it was found that more than half of the women (56 per cent) were in Category B while an equal proportion at 22 per cent were in Category A and C. (Figure 2). The Category A women were found in Karnataka and Odisha while Category C women were found mainly in Madhya Pradesh where there was the most obvious display of sarpanch patis (husbands).[6] It was also observed that while women sarpanches are still somewhat active, the situation of women ward members is worse. In Madhya Pradesh, for example, a two-time women ward member could not even recollect the dates of the gram sabha and had no idea of what the gram panchayat was doing. In Rajasthan, of the four ward members interviewed, while two had some knowledge of the functioning of the gram panchayat, two had none. Also, at a gram panchayat meeting attended during the study, no women participated and a woman member came in later to ask the panchayat secretary about the proceedings and to sign the register. Table 3 next summarizes the state-wise status of women's political empowerment and capacity building in PRIs.

[6] Please note that this analysis is based on a small sample of 23 elected women representatives in the six states and observation-based matrix of indicators and cannot be compared to empirical studies of similar nature, which may show different results.

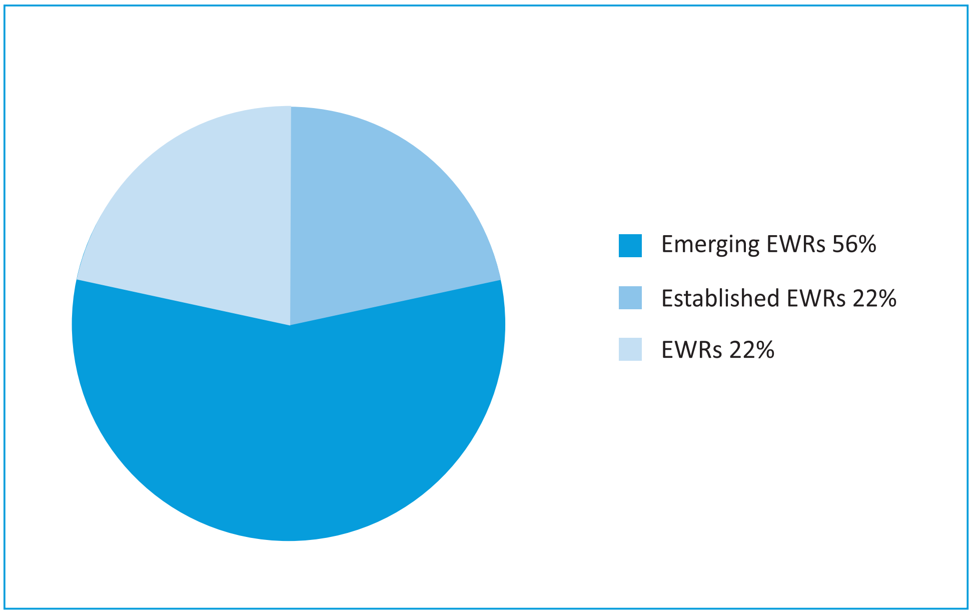


Figure 2: Activeness of elected women representatives met during the study (Based on scoring criteria used in Annex 6)

Table 3: State-wise progress of representation

Parameters	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	Madhya Pradesh	Odisha	Rajasthan	Telangana
Total number of elected representatives (2014)	2,57,055	95,307	3,96,918	100863	120727	-
Percentage of women elected representatives (2014)	50%	44%	51%	78%	50%	-
Level of activeness among elected representatives	Sarpanches are active; know administrative processes clearly; and are able to articulate village concerns	Sarpanches and some of the ward members are active; know administrative processes clearly; and are able to articulate village concerns	Elected representatives with strong political connections are active; know administrative processes clearly; and are able to articulate village concerns	Sarpanches are active but have limited understanding of administrative processes	Elected representatives from influential backgrounds (upper castes/ army backgrounds) are active; know administrative processes clearly; and are able to articulate village concerns	Sarpanches and some of the ward members are active; know administrative processes clearly; and are able to articulate village concerns

Level of activeness among elected women representatives	Sarpanches have limited understanding of administrative processes but are able to voice village concerns	Sarpanches and elected women representatives have higher understanding of administrative processes and exercise their rights	Concept of pseudo- sarpanch and strong up sarpanch was found prominent. Elected women representatives contacted were not active	Sarpanch and elected women representatives have limited understanding of administrative processes but EWRs are articulate and represent themselves	Concept of pseudo- sarpanch and strong up sarpanch was prominent but few EWRs were articulate.	EWRs were not so articulate, neither did they report much participation in PRIs
Capacity building	High focus on capacity building at state and gram panchayat level. Training focus more on state priorities/ programmes as against general PRI mandate. Not much focus on gender.	High focus on capacity building of officials. Less coverage of ERs and even lesser coverage of EWRs. However, Satcom trainings are reaching EWRs. Not much focus on gender.	Not much information could be gathered at state level. At field level low coverage was reported.	Focus on capacity building is there but actual training numbers may be less. However, at field level a higher coverage of training was reported. Not much focus on gender.	High focus on capacity building with systematic modules and training plan at state level. At field level officials reported higher coverage than ERs. Separate gender trainings conducted.	Focus mainly on GPDP trainings and on officials. Very less field level coverage reported. Not much focus on gender.

Source: Compiled based on Statistical Year Book 2016, review of government documents, field observations and informant interviews

This is not to say that women sarpanches have not been able to exercise their rights at all. There are many instances where women sarpanches and other elected representatives have demonstrated a strong sense of leadership and made transformational changes in their constituencies. Women are also able to be more vocal on the rights of the marginalized. Many women elected representatives have made a mark, a fact borne out by instances of women also winning from general (unreserved) seats. However, the majority of women elected representatives are still a long way from being able to exercise their right to decision making on a par with male elected representatives (Expert Committee on Leveraging Panchayats for Efficient Delivery of Public Goods and Services, 2013). The success stories appear to be exceptions rather than the rule and in most cases, the struggle and perseverance of the woman are responsible for her achievements.

People’s participation

The gram sabhas, which are the main platform for people’s participation in local governance, are the weakest link. Marked by low attendance and growing apathy, energizing them has been a real challenge (MoPR, 2012). However, one of the earlier criticisms about the gram sabha not happening (MoPR, 2012) or people not being informed about the same seems to have been resolved to some extent. This has been enabled by the state fixing the dates and agenda for the gram sabhas and converting this into an annual process. It was also found that the number of gram sabhas has gone up with the GPDP process. In one gram panchayat in Odisha, for example, of the seven gram sabhas conducted last year, four (60 per cent) were in the context of the GPDP. It was also observed that not only were the gram sabhas conducted but most people interviewed (except a few women) recollected the date of the last meeting and the agenda of the same. In general, the participation in the gram sabha was reported low, especially that of women and marginalized communities due to cynicism about the effectiveness of the gram sabha. Discussions with key informants showed that unlike in the past, there were no complaints of false signatures of people having attended the meeting. However, followers of the sarpanch/ ward members and local government staff like Anganwadi workers, ASHAs, etc. ensured that the quorum was fulfilled.

Where states have introduced lower level forums like palli sabhas in Odisha or ward sabhas in Rajasthan and Karnataka, not only has the participation increased in general but also that of women. In gram panchayats in all the three states, it was reported that the participation in these meetings was reasonably good (around 50 to 60 per cent). The recording of gram sabha and ward sabha minutes, though improving with the provision of registers to the gram panchayats, is still a challenge and hence details could not always be verified. Mahila sabhas are reported as key to improving women's participation and in this regard, Rajasthan and Karnataka have started issuing orders for holding mahila sabhas before the gram sabhas. However, during the study none of the three gram panchayats visited in Rajasthan could recollect a mahila sabha being held and in only one gram panchayat in Karnataka one mahila sabha was reported to have been conducted.

One reason for the increasing cynicism about the gram sabha has been that state and government officials reportedly set the agenda with communities having no say in this. In general, people assumed the gram sabha's role with that of identifying beneficiaries and approving government works and hence, unless there was something in it for them, they saw no value in attending the meetings. There seemed to be an understanding that gram sabhas were not for debate and deliberation, another reason for the low interest in them. Also, social issues and concerns of the marginalized were hardly discussed in the gram sabha, which dissuaded people from these communities from participating. It is here that the GPDP proved to be useful for reviving the gram sabha as even people from the marginalized sections could be mobilized (especially when there was an established NGO in the area) to participate in the meetings and voice their concerns and needs. In both Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, local NGOs mobilized the Scheduled Castes to participate in the gram sabha and ward sabha and add their demands in the GPDP.

Box 4: People's perspectives from Gadi gram panchayat in Madhya Pradesh

The Gadi gram panchayat in Gairatganj block of Raisen district, Madhya Pradesh has a population of 6,500 people comprising different communities, including minorities and Scheduled Castes. Headed by a woman sarpanch, the gram panchayat has 3,738 voters from 20 wards. The main livelihood options are agriculture and bidi making (from the tendu leaf) and many families also migrate for work in brick kilns in Vidisha and Bhopal.

An interesting perspective on the role of PRIs and the inclusion of marginalized communities emerges from meetings with citizens and elected representatives of the gram panchayat.

Citizen's (Scheduled Caste community) perspective- The panchayat has a mandate to provide basic services to the people and receives funds for the same. For this they need to convene the gram sabha to hear the concerns of the people. The panchayat members do hear out the problems in the gram sabha but do not always act on these. There is discrimination against the Scheduled Caste community, which lacks access to most services. This has led to disillusionment among the community on participation in the gram sabha. However, now that the panchayats have been given a development mandate and all works happen through panchayats, more people have started attending the gram sabhas. With the support of Krishak Shahyog Sansthan (KSS), the community participated in the last gram sabhas on village planning (GPDP) held on January 26, 2017 and again on April 14, 2017. More than 175 people participated in the January gram sabha as against 35 the previous year. This was the result of the 14 ward/habitation level meetings and discussions facilitated by the KSS. Also, though the government had set the agenda for these gram sabhas, the community also developed its own agenda and submitted it in writing to the gram panchayat. This led to their issues being discussed and the gram sabha also approved resolutions related to their demands. The community had raised the issues of water supply, internal roads and drainage. However, nothing has happened so far and people feel that if their demands are not met they will stop attending the gram sabhas.

Perspective of elected representatives- Two elected representatives and one pseudo-sarpanch (husband) were interviewed (The sarpanch could not be met as there were guests at home)[7]. The elected representatives felt that people did not attend gram sabha meetings even after being informed. Also people think gram panchayats had powers to solve every problem, particularly on the below poverty line status for the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and the public distribution system. Earlier, these were the main issues that attracted people to the gram sabha. However, these issues are with the tehsildar. Even for other programmes, the elected representatives have orders to plan and implement specific agendas. For FFC, for instance, they were asked to make detailed project reports for internal cement concrete roads and now they have made a detailed report on sanitation and solid waste management. The panchayat has been active in planning and implementing this for all the 1,400 families in the gram panchayat. Also, the gram panchayat has undertaken other works such as primary school development, Anganwadi repair, planting trees in the cemetery, etc. The gram panchayat can only implement activities for which they have powers and funds. Interestingly, the sarpanch pati said he had strong political connections and hence, irrespective of who the sarpanch was, he led the development works in the village and brought in funds for the village.

There was no mention of the gram sabha in the interviews with the elected representatives. It appears that the gram sabhas are losing effectiveness as a development platform despite panchayats having more functions and funds. Unless, the funds are untied and the gram panchayats are able to resolve the concerns of the communities, the gram sabhas will not be active. Further, it is also important to build the capacities and understanding of the elected representatives on the importance of the gram sabha. It was interesting that despite there being an active citizen based gram sabha, the elected representatives did not consider it an achievement and continued to highlight the infrastructure achievements of the gram panchayat.

Another form of people's participation is the standing or functional committees. While mandated on paper, these committees were only found active to some extent in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. These were the only States where the elected representatives were at least aware of the composition and role of these committees. In Telangana, in particular, the functional committees have been quite active in the GPDP process and the members also share the plans and activities of their committees. The committees also have at least one village organization member[8], which ensures women's participation to some extent. A major criticism against these committees, however, is the inclusion of non-elected members, especially local government functionaries like Anganwadi workers, ASHAs, school teachers, etc. In Odisha, there was criticism on official members dominating the village planning and development committee although in the field no one could recall such committees.

[7] Interestingly, of all the three gram panchayats visited in Madhya Pradesh, although each had a woman sarpanch, none could be interviewed as they were reported to be absent on one or the pretext. In all three gram panchayats, the sarpanch pati (husband) gave the interviews.

[8] A village organization or VO is the federation of all self-help groups at the village level.

Authorization and legitimacy: Gap between stated and actual devolution

The Expert Committee on Leveraging Panchayats for Efficient Delivery of Public Good and Services (2013) stipulated that, “Apart from not having devolved the functions clearly, most states have also not devolved the concomitant funds and functionaries. Neither have they put in place other collateral measures to the extent envisioned by the Constitution.” The Devolution Report published by the MoPR in 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 reinforced the same. The major concerns in the process are multifold. Table 4 next summarizes the status of executive devolution in the study states.

Devolution of functions

Twenty-five years since the CAA was passed, the Constitutional mandate of devolution of the 29 subjects has not been fully executed even on paper. While the number of functions reported to be devolved in the devolution index report ranged from 40 in Karnataka[9] to 14 in Madhya Pradesh, the discussions at the state level revealed a somewhat different picture. It was seen that actual devolution of all the 29 functions had happened only in Karnataka and Rajasthan.

Table 4: Devolution in the study states

State	Authorization of powers	Legitimacy of powers
Andhra Pradesh	22 GOs issued during 1997-2002. Again during 2007-2008, the State Government devolved 10 departments to PRIs. Thereafter, no functions were devolved. Funds related to devolved functions were to be released directly by the line departments.	Nine subjects reported to be transferred but not completely. Key role in taxation, especially building permits and house tax. Implementation of solid waste management and sanitation programmes and cement concrete road construction. Support and management of drinking water supply and implementation of public health awareness campaign. Monitoring of Anganwadi centres, elementary schools and mid-day meal programme. Individual beneficiary identification requires sarpanch approval though through Janmabhoomi committees, which are more powerful.
Karnataka	The process was initiated in 1987 when administrative and fiscal reforms followed the enactment of the Karnataka Panchayati Raj (KPR) Act of 1987. Following this the Government issued an executive order transferring 257 plan schemes of 20 departments to the zilla parishads and 89 plan schemes to mandal panchayats. The process was further accelerated with the introduction of the KPR Act of 1993, which spelt out the functions to be transferred at each tier. In 1994, through a series of notifications the Government then transferred more than 600 schemes to PRIs. In 1998 again, some functions were reallocated between the three tiers on the basis of the recommendations of a high-powered committee. This was followed by an elaborate activity mapping exercise which saw many of the schemes being realigned and so too the district sector funds by 2005-2006. The new 2015 amendment has further strengthened the process by recognizing the “activity” or “responsibility” mapping exercise as a rule under the Act.	A district centric model with all 29 subjects devolved at the zilla parishad level and the District Rural Development Society also merged with the zilla parishad. Fourteen departments have been transferred at the taluka panchayat level. Of the 29 subjects, gram panchayats have limited promotional role in 23 subjects. In actual terms, gram panchayats have been involved in planning and implementation of rural development, rural housing, internal roads, sanitation and water conservation. They are also involved in beneficiary identification, especially for social welfare schemes and pensions. Gram panchayats are also consulted on designing drinking water schemes and some agriculture related interventions. They are actively involved in monitoring ICDS and elementary school programmes and play a supportive role in awareness campaigns on health.

[9] Karnataka had devolved a higher number of functions at the zilla and mandal panchayat levels much before the CAA as part of the PRI Act of 1983. Further, in 1987, an executive order was issued transferring 20 departments to zilla panchayats.

Madhya Pradesh	Functions of 15 departments were transferred by 1998. Subsequently, an activity mapping exercise was undertaken in 2001. However, instead of strengthening the process, many of the notifications were overturned by 2007.	Gram panchayats are mainly involved in the construction of cement concrete roads and Swachh Bharat Mission related activities. Drinking water supply related functions are jointly shared with line departments. However, for all activities, permission of the chief executive officer at the block level is required and PRIs do not have much independence.
Odisha	Instructions were issues by the Chief Secretary in July 2003 for devolution of 21 activities of 10 departments. Subsequently, an activity mapping exercise was undertaken and individual departments issued orders in October 2005 to operationalize the same. These departments are mainly linked to school education, health and family welfare, agriculture and allied activities, water resources, food and civil supplies, women and child development, SC/ST welfare and panchayati raj.	Main functions devolved include village roads and bridge construction, drinking water supply and sanitation programmes. Gram panchayats are also involved to some extent in education, health, ICDS and canal irrigation programmes. Funds are also linked with functional transfer at least for salaries of staff. However, parallel committees by departments are involved in the implementation. These committees are created through ex-officio positions and do not require authorization of panchayats.
Rajasthan	The transfer of powers was authorized through an executive order of the Chief Secretary in 2003, when functions of 18 departments were transferred to the PRIs. In 2010, a cabinet level review of the process of devolution was undertaken following which a series of government orders were issued in October 2010 to enable effective devolution of five key departments in the state, namely health, primary education, women and child development, agriculture and social justice and empowerment. Following this, a detailed activity mapping exercise for these five departments was undertaken and all the individual departments also issued orders for transfer of functions and functionaries to the PRIs.	Of the five key departments devolved, gram panchayats are actively involved in the ICDS, monitoring of primary schools (especially the mid-day meal scheme), planning of drinking water and sanitation (including solid waste management), street lighting and construction of roads and drainage programmes. The MGNREGS is also implemented through the gram panchayats. In terms of social justice and empowerment, the gram panchayats are involved in securing pension for widows, the elderly and the disabled. There is little knowledge of their role in agriculture activities. Their involvement in health is limited to providing support for generating awareness.
Telangana	Twenty-two government orders were issued during 1997-2002. In 2007-2008, the State Government devolved 10 departments to PRIs. Thereafter no functions were devolved. Funds related to devolved functions were to be released directly by the line departments.	Gram panchayats reported having limited functional responsibilities as those being transferred from the State Government but were clear that if they could raise funds (own source revenue or corporate social responsibility) then they were able to take action on primary education, road construction, water supply, sanitation and solid waste management. MGNREGS is being implemented through the gram panchayats.
Source: Compiled based on Status of Devolution, Ministry of Panchayati Raj (http://www.panchayat.gov.in/documents/10198/0/Devolution%20Status.pdf) and review of state-level documents mentioned in Annex 2		

Further, in Rajasthan, while the executive orders were issued for 18 departments, the focus was limited to the devolution of five departments. In Telangana, 10 subjects are reported to have been devolved with government orders issued for the same. In Odisha, orders have been issued for 21 activities of 10 departments. In Madhya Pradesh, the functions of 15 departments have been transferred.

The type of functions being transferred and at what level of the PRI is also in question. In many states the core functions related to the provision of basic services like drinking water (Public Health and Engineering Department-PHED), food security (public distribution system-PDS), street lighting and solid waste management have not been devolved. There were concerns among elected representatives on the non-devolution of PHED and PDS. Further, the states have retained the power to overturn the devolution process seen in the case of Madhya Pradesh. Direct transfer benefit procedures have further curtailed the actual level of devolution. For example, the panchayats now have no role in the rural housing schemes where the funds are transferred directly to the bank account of the beneficiaries and the selection process is based on the Socio-economic Caste Census 2011 and not done by the gram sabha as before.

In some states, devolution has occurred mainly at the district level and not at the gram panchayat level as should have been the case based on the principle of subsidiarity. For example, a review of the activity mapping exercise in Karnataka shows that gram panchayats have only a limited role in 23 subjects. Only on two subjects, rural housing and drinking water, do they have all the roles of planning, implementation, supervision, promotion, functionaries and funds.

Another area of concern is the ambiguity in the devolution process which leaves many functions in the concurrent list. For example, in Rajasthan, a gram panchayat wanted to plan for a water supply line but the PHED objected as it wished to extend the existing supply system to retain water charge collection. However, given the PHED norms, it was not possible technically to provide water to the ward without disturbing the existing road, which the community objected to.

The activity mapping promoted by the MoPR in 2001 has been reduced to an academic exercise in most states. The state Panchayati Raj departments do not own the mapping exercise as it is undertaken by external agencies and in some states, these could not even be retrieved easily. Karnataka and Rajasthan are the only two states that have notified the exercise and issued circulars to the effect. Even this exercise does have limitations as discussed above.

The extent of devolution within a subject has also not been achieved as long-established codes prescribing technical standards and approval processes (such as the Public Works Department code), circulars, operation manuals, transfer orders, etc. might still de facto continue to vest with the line departments concerned (Sudha Pillai, 2013).

For the reasons listed above, elected representatives are able to assert some powers based on their understanding and concerns. Discussions with key informants further revealed that actual devolution at the gram panchayat level was limited to rural development (MGNREGS, rural housing, drinking water and sanitation), roads and buildings (internal village roads and drains), minor irrigation (deepening of ponds), rural electrification (street lights) and social welfare (pension schemes). The specific scheme guidelines enable the gram sabha or gram panchayat to identify the works as in the case of MGNREGS or beneficiaries as in the case of rural housing. Further, when there is a clear link with the implementation role or construction activity, gram panchayats are able to relate more with activities over which they have complete control and which have visible results. This includes issues concerning the immediate need of the village like drinking water or where the line department has failed to achieve success and requires the support of the gram panchayat like sanitation. Another enabling factor has been the link of schematic trainings with the functions transferred. In Rajasthan and Karnataka, it was observed that except roads for all the other programmes the gram panchayats own the functions more when they have been trained on these.

Box 5: Mantepally gram panchayat in Telangana - Example of decentralization as enabler

Mantepally is a small gram panchayat of 1,204 families in Wanaparthy district, Telangana. The sarpanch, Purhottam Garu, is a real estate developer from Hyderabad and has taken interest in the development of his native village. The gram panchayat had an election for the sarpanch post but all the candidates and ex-sarpanches worked together to initiate several measures including:

a) Individual water connections for all households,

b) Open defecation free status (toilets for all),

c) LPG connection for all women,

d) Ten fruit trees planted per family (nursery run by a local farmer distributed the saplings),

e) Solid waste management system with dustbins for all households, main dustbin (innovatively constructed with cement rings) for all streets and a garbage dumping yard outside the village (constructed with funds from MGNREGS) along with daily waste collection on cycle rickshaws,

f) Underground drainage system maintained with public support and a biological waste water treatment plant constructed with support from ICRISAT,

g) Internal village roads constructed partially with land donated by villagers and

h) A 'water ATM' providing drinking water on payment, constructed with support from an NRI and maintained on cost recovery basis.

Mantepally is a good example of how a functional gram panchayat with adequate funds can change the face of rural development. The gram panchayat has ensured people's involvement in its administration with more than 40 members in functional committees, including non-elected representatives. People's participation is evident not only from their presence at the meetings but the pride in the progress their village has seen. Another good practice is that of keeping records. All the registers in the village are well maintained and of a high quality. Interestingly, the village has not received much funds from the FFC or even own source revenue in the form of taxes but undertakes activities by leveraging funds from line departments and other sources. It is thus possible that with a good source of untied funds, the gram panchayat can do much more. However, one issue reinforces the fact that gender mainstreaming in decentralization will not happen automatically and needs external intervention. The gram panchayat proudly displays the framed photographs of all ex-sarpanches. However, the photograph of the present sarpanch's wife, who is also an ex-sarpanch, is missing.

The gram panchayat also exercises some control on other subjects like women and child development (ICDS) and primary education (especially mid-day meal scheme). Here too, the role of the gram panchayats is limited to construction of new centres and monitoring the quality of services. While most gram panchayats expressed pride in doing these activities, there were also instances, especially related to attendance of teachers where they felt that their complaints went unheeded. This points to the fact that the monitoring role of the gram panchayat members is limited to complaining to higher authorities as they do not have any powers to take action on complaints. In many areas that are the formal responsibilities of the panchayats, parallel structures such as missions, societies and committees have been set up further limiting the role of the gram panchayats. Most of the other subjects, especially agriculture and allied activities, land improvement and small and cottage industries are still being carried out by the line department, although consultations are held with the gram panchayats on selecting sites and identifying beneficiaries. The weakest link at the gram panchayat level was observed with the health and family welfare departments. In most cases, the gram panchayat reported that department functionaries used them at times for facilitating works, especially mass awareness campaigns, vaccination drives, etc. However, the panchayats had little role in planning, monitoring or implementing the services. This points to another enabler of devolution, which is the will of the state department to transfer the function to the gram panchayat.

Devolution of functionaries

It was found that the transfer of functionaries does not always follow the transfer of functions to gram panchayats. The panchayats thus face a limited availability of technical expertise. Panchayats now deal with four types of functionaries: a) Their own staff appointed directly by the state through the panchayat cadre, b) Functional staff appointed by the panchayat on a contractual basis; c) State cadre officials transferred to a tier of the panchayat and directly responsible for supporting the panchayats and d) Line department officials functioning under the panchayat jurisdiction but not reporting to it.

One of the key parameters that the study looked into was the number of own functionaries available in the gram panchayat. Most states had created a panchayat or rural cadre and had at least three to four sanctioned positions for each gram panchayat. This included: One panchayat secretary, one extension officer, one lower division clerk or data entry operator, one rozgar sahayak (as part of MGNREGS) and one peon or watchman. Recruitment has been undertaken mainly at the state level for all these posts except for the peon/watchman. However, a number of positions are still vacant. People are either given additional charge like in Rajasthan where the lower division clerks hold additional charge of panchayat secretary in all the gram panchayats visited or the post is shared between panchayats as in the case of Odisha where one panchayat secretary is shared between two to three panchayats. The situation was slightly better in Telangana with there being one panchayat secretary for each gram panchayat. However, other lower ranked positions had not been filled in the State. Karnataka was the best performing among the study states in this regard. In both the gram panchayats visited in the State, there was a team of four officials with well-defined roles and responsibilities and the elected representatives were also aware about their roles.

Not only were the young men and women holding the panchayat secretary positions in Karnataka trained but they were well aware of the PRI, FFC and GPDP norms and processes. The situation was a bit mixed in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. However, there were apprehensions, both in terms of the capacities of the panchayat secretaries and their availability to the community in Madhya Pradesh.[10]

In Rajasthan too, the panchayat staff was well aware of the role of the gram panchayat having been trained by the SIRD. In both the States, the panchayat staff was well acquainted with the FFC norms and GPDP process. In Odisha, the experience with the extension officers was mixed – there was one new woman who was nervous but highly committed and a slightly aged person who had information but seemed to be highly disinterested in the process (although block level officers were also present in the meeting).

All panchayat secretaries complained about being overloaded with work and also about having to report to the block panchayat office although they did report working directly with the elected representatives. In all the gram panchayats one could see the sarpanch dominating the panchayat secretary. Further, where there were more employees, especially competent data entry operators and accountants, they seem to have made information more accessible for the elected representatives. At least to some extent at the gram panchayat level, the elected representatives exercised their managerial rights and were being guided by the staff. This was evident in their demand for a junior engineer level officer under their control and accessible to them rather than the current shared position. All panchayats had recruited functional contractual staff – watchmen, pump operators, bill collectors, sweepers, etc. as per their requirements and paid the salaries for these staff from their own budget.

Table 5 summarizes the status and gaps in the availability of functionaries at the gram panchayat level in the study States.

[10] The communities reported that panchayat secretaries lived outside their allocated villages and did not come regularly to open the office. However, we were able to meet all three panchayat secretaries – two at the panchayat office and one at the local bank. In one panchayat though, we had to wait until noon for the panchayat office to open.

Table 5: Status of gram panchayat functionaries in study States

Parameters	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	Madhya Pradesh	Odisha	Rajasthan	Telangana
State appointed own staff	One panchayat secretary	One panchayat secretary, one data entry operator, accountant, rozgar sahayak	One panchayat secretary, one data entry operator, rozgar sahayak	One extension officer, one panchayat secretary	One panchayat secretary, One lower division clerk, rozgar sahayak	One panchayat secretary
Functional staff	Watchman, water operators, sweepers and cleaners	Bill collectors, watchman, water operators sweepers and cleaners	Watchman	Watchman, water operators, sweepers and cleaners	Watchman, water operators, sweepers and cleaners	Watchman, water operators, sweepers and cleaners
Issues	No lower level staff	-	Panchayat secretaries are not easily available as they do not live in the community.	Each panchayat secretary has multiple gram panchayats and cannot cover all of them	Number of panchayat secretary positions lying vacant with LDCs having additional charge	No support staff

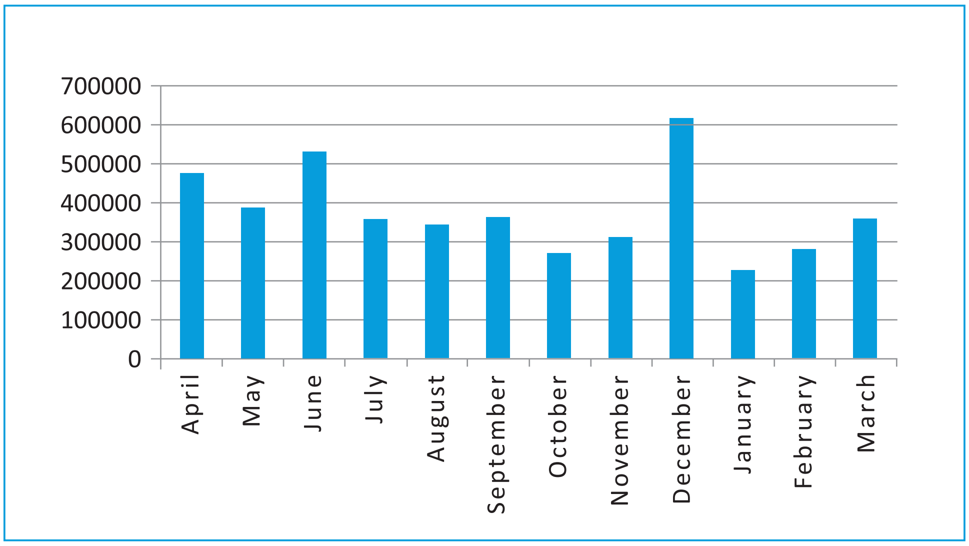
The elected representatives had no control over other line department staff, including those at the gram panchayat level like Anganwadi workers, auxillary nurse midwife (ANM) and teachers, who were not even considered panchayat employees. Elected representatives in most gram panchayats, in fact, reported that they helped the local government staff with undertaking various activities in the village, especially when they needed more people's involvement.

At the gram panchayat level, no line department officials were transferred to panchayats. If at all, the staff is from the rural development and panchayat departments. However, at the taluka and district levels, officials do get transferred to the panchayats. While an in-depth assessment was not done, it was found that the block development officer (BDO) or the chief executive officer (CEO) of the taluka had been transferred to the taluka panchayat. In addition, in States like Rajasthan and Odisha the taluka panchayat also has panchayat extension/development officers, junior and assistant engineers, progress assistants, computer and accounts staff, who report to the CEO or block development officer and to the taluka panchayat president. There is still some tension between the two positions of power at the taluka level and the coordination is often reliant on the inter-personal relationship. Interestingly, the relationship between the junior engineers and the assistant engineers with the sarpanches (one position usually caters for 7 to 10 gram panchayats) seemed strong at least in Rajasthan and Odisha.

The line department employees devolved to panchayats have also been transferred. There was a mixed response from the states in terms of their reporting to either the CEO or BDO or the taluka panchayat president but the main reporting lines of these officials were clearly to their parent department. One of the key reasons is that the transfer of functionaries (and institutions) is mostly on paper with only the salaries being transferred through panchayats. Experts say that even in case of gram panchayat level functionaries like Anganwadi workers, often the panchayat is bypassed in their selection process and the district/block office makes the decision and influences the gram sabha to approve the same. In the case of Madhya Pradesh, key informants report that the powers have been officially withdrawn from the panchayats.

Devolution of funds

Till 2015, fiscal devolution was the weakest link with even states that had made sweeping legislation for transfer of functions not matching this with the concomitant transfer of funds leaving panchayats with unfunded mandates (Raghunandan, 2007). On paper, there are four major sources of funds for panchayats: a) Own source revenue (OSR); b) Transfers from the Central Finance Commission (CFC), c) Transfers from the State Finance Commission (SFC) and d) Tied funds from central and state sponsored schemes (CSS/SSS). Of these, the biggest proportion is the tied funds from CSS/SSS and the smallest from own source revenue (OSR). In Karnataka, for example, a review of 2012-2013 data shows the tied funds being almost 91 per cent of the total funds with CFC/SFC being 6.89 per cent and OSR a meagre 1.88 per cent. The situation is better at the gram panchayat level with the figures for the same being 57 per cent, 29 per cent and 14 per cent respectively (Devolution Report, 2015-2016). In Rajasthan too, the figures were at 66 per cent, 24 per cent and 1 per cent respectively (Need Assessment Report, 2011-2012). It needs to be noted that at the gram panchayat level, the main source of CSS/SSS is MGNREGS and Backward Regions Grant Fund – both of which elected representatives do not consider completely tied.



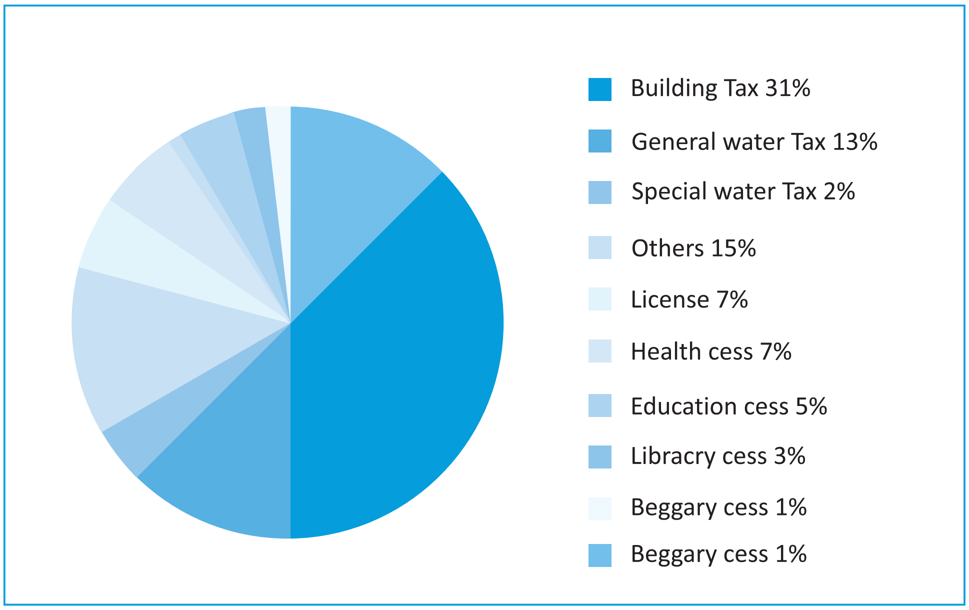


Figure 3: Amount and type of tax collected in Srirampura gram panchayat in Karnataka (2016-2017)

A review of the current situation shows that although the gram panchayats have taxation powers, they have not utilized these much, especially in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha. The situation is, however, commendable in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana, where the States have been able to generate own source revenue funds to the tune of a few hundred crore rupees. In Andhra Pradesh, for example, the share of OSR at the gram panchayat level was a high 35.41 per cent (Devolution Report, 2015-2016). In Karnataka, one of the gram panchayats visited had collected around INR 4.45 million of taxes through multiple and regular tax collection processes (Figure 3). In Odisha the focus was not so much on collecting taxes but creating economic resources.

Funds from the CSS/SSS are disbursed to panchayats in two ways: one, directly to the PRIs through individual departments as in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Telangana and Odisha and two, through a panchayat window or district sector budget as in Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. In the case of the former there is often the issue of funds not being released as required. In Andhra Pradesh, for example, of the ten, only six line departments had released INR 70.14 crore to PRIs during 2015-2016, of which INR 67.02 crore was from the fisheries department. Further, even from this amount only INR 4.83 crore were spent (CAG, AP_Report_No_1_of_2017_on_Local_Bodies).

In the case of district sector funds, although there has generally been an increase in the PRI share over the years, the share is a minuscule amount of the total state budget. In Madhya Pradesh, for example, the funds allocated to PRIs increased from INR 7,911.12 crore during 2011-2012 to INR 21,155.33 crore during 2015-2016; however, the percentage increase was marginal. In Rajasthan, too, a study by the Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CGBA) reported the increase to be around 2.26 per cent in 2008-2009. This had risen to just 4.03 per cent in 2015-2016 with a total transfer of INR 5561.84 crore (Annual Report of Department of Panchayati Raj, 2015-2016).

In some states when the funds are disbursed to the PRIs, especially lower tiers, they are used often for salaries and allowances of employees attached to the PRI rather than for development purposes (CBGA, 2010). States like Karnataka and Kerala have transferred substantial funds though, either as statutory grants or as a share of tax revenue to the PRIs. Rajasthan also reports higher fund transfers though interviews with key informants revealed that panchayats do not have the capacity to manage the funds and the State appeared to show devolution more on paper.

Box 6: Srirampura gram panchayat in Karnataka shows the way

Srirampura gram panchayat in Mysuru district, Karnataka is a peri-urban area with seven villages covering a population of 24,147. The gram panchayat has an active woman sarpanch (president), Ms. Chudamani of the Scheduled Caste community, who enthusiastically shared her role and achievements. The gram panchayat has undertaken a number of development activities in the villages, especially related to basic services like roads, street lights, water supply, sanitation (received the Gandhigram prize in 2015-2016), etc. and is now working towards setting up a solid waste management system. The sarpanch said the villagers mainly worked in a railway factory in the vicinity and hence did not need livelihood support programmes for agriculture and allied activities.

The gram panchayat uses MGNREGS funds mainly to create service infrastructure. In addition, the sarpanch said that the FFC and statutory grants from the State Government were useful to deliver basic services. Now her focus is on maintaining and improving these services and for this the gram panchayat needs to generate funds. As per the State provision, it is able to collect multiple taxes and fees. The gram panchayat had an annual OSR of INR 88 lakh in 2016-2017, of which around INR 44.54 lakh was from taxes and INR 39.35 lakh from fees and other charges. It has been able to raise this revenue because a. it is a peri-urban area and people demand services and b. it has a proper system of tax collection and monitors the dues and receivables on a monthly basis. The gram panchayat is thus able to meet its annual expenses on various heads, including an electricity bill of INR 34.40 lakh, salary expenses of INR 15 lakh, water and sanitation expenses of around INR 1.70 lakh, etc.

However, there are challenges. The gram panchayat has been trying to introduce a door-to-door waste collection system on a chargeable basis. However, as one of the villages is in a revenue block, it cannot levy taxes there, which means that the other villages will oppose any tax. The sarpanch feels there needs to be more clarity on these issues and it will be better if the taxes are levied at higher levels and the role of gram panchayats is restricted to tax collection.

The other major source of funds to PRIs, especially gram panchayats is through CFC and SFC transfers. These funds are crucial because they are mainly untied in nature, transferred directly to the accounts of the PRIs (bank accounts of gram panchayats in most cases) and hence are under the direct control of the panchayats. Over the years, the transfer of funds to PRIs from CFC and SFC has shown an increasing trend. In Rajasthan, for example, the CFC and SFC fund transfers had more than doubled between 2010-2011 and 2013-2014. In Karnataka too, the CFC transfers rose from INR 419.38 crore in 2010-2011 to INR 977.82 crore in 2014-2015. In Andhra Pradesh, during 2010-2015, the State Government released INR 214.34 crore to PRIs under the SFC grants based on the recommendations of the Third State Finance Commission (since the 4th SFC was not constituted). During the same period, the CFC funds released were INR 4124.26 crore. The amount released to gram panchayats is not available. However, the Comptroller and Auditor General reported that the amounts could not be utilized at the gram panchayat level and had lapsed.

An important enabler in this context is also the regularity and quality of the State Finance Commission reports. It was seen that except Rajasthan none of the study States had formed the mandated five SFCs (considering the time period from 1995 to 2015). In the other States only four of the five SFCs were formed. Even Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, which began the decentralization process much earlier, were lagging in this regard. Further, among the study States, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan have accepted more than 50 per cent of the recommendations with financial implications (Devolution Index Report, 2015-2016). The States appear to more or less accept the recommendations of the SFC even if the essence of the recommendations is not translated into reality. For example, the Second SFC Karnataka observed: “In actual practice gram panchayats were getting less than 5 per cent of the amount made available for rural local bodies in spite of the recommended share of 25 per cent in the First State Finance Commission.” In Madhya Pradesh too, although the State Government accepted the recommendations of the 3rd SFC that four per cent of the divisible fund of the State Government should be devolved to PRIs, the actual devolution in 2015-2016 was only INR 910 crore as against the required INR 1157.7 crore (Report No. 4 of 2017, Madhya Pradesh, Audit report on local bodies for the year ended 31 March 2016, 2017). Also, the recommendations of the SFCs may often be guided by what the state wants and could be manoeuvred by the panchayati raj department. For example, in Rajasthan the interim report of the Fifth SFC clearly states that on the recommendations of the Department of Panchayati Raj, it has not only changed the resource sharing between the various PRI tiers (which is a positive step) but was also making expenditure on Mukhyamantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan as the first charge for SFC (as also FFC) funds.

Decentralized planning

The other weak link of the decentralization process has been the implementation of the mandate of Article 243 G (a) for panchayats to be given the power to plan for social and economic development. Although there was a mandatory provision for setting up district planning committees (DPCs) to facilitate this process, the DPCs are mostly formed on paper and are not functional. Even the self-reported data in the Devolution Report (2015-2016) shows that in most states DPCs are not functional and in 15 states integrated district plans have not been prepared. Further, the fact that the head of the DPC in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, etc. is not an elected representative from the PRI but the territorial (Prabhari) Minister who is a member of the Legislative Assembly is revealing as to who controls the local decision making. In some states, the DPCs also seem to have been sidelined by the panchayati raj departments as part of the GPDP process. For example, in Karnataka, the DPCs are categorized as an important planning body in the 2005 amendment, with an additional taluka planning and development committee and a state level planning and development committee to strengthen the mechanism. In reality, the GPDP processes are mainly led by the taluka yojana sahayak samiti and the zilla yojana sahayak samiti with the DPCs only having an approval role (Namma Grama Namma Yojana: Status Report, 2017).

There are, however, multiple models of decentralized and participatory planning innovated at state and central levels in India over the past few decades. The most prominent among these are the people's planning campaign in Kerala, the UNDP supported decentralized planning process in Madhya Pradesh, the Planning Commission mandated district plan approach and the intensive participatory planning process (IPPE) pursued by the Ministry of Rural Development (Box 7).

Box 7: Decentralized planning models in India

a) The people's planning campaign (PPC) of the women component plan (WCP) model of Kerala, which focused on a stage-wise process of demand generation and activity planning at the gram panchayat level with the lead taken by panchayat members and volunteers. This process has three unique features: The concept of development seminars to discuss sectoral issues, the announcement of 35-40 per cent of state plans as untied funds for the panchayats to give them a better idea of the resource envelope and the earmarking of 10 per cent of the funds as the women component plan.

b) The consultative process of Madhya Pradesh initiated by the State and further strengthened with support from UNDP. The key features of this process were the participatory techniques used in the village for demand generation, the focus on identification of issues of vulnerable populations – SCs, STs and women, the use of IT to collate the data and village plans, and the development of district response plans by the line departments.

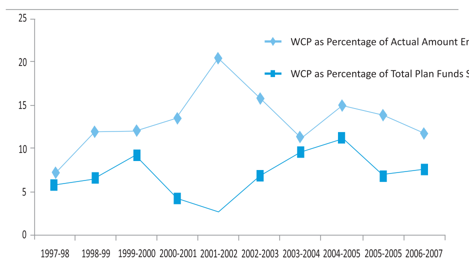
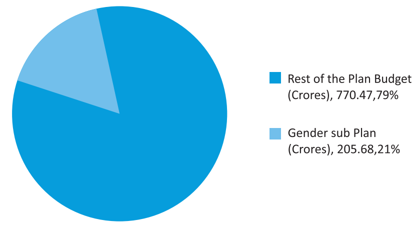
c) The integrated district planning and gender sub-plan approach promoted by the Planning Commission. This model focused on five key steps: situational analysis, determination of resource availability, participatory planning exercises at village level, classifying needs and matching them with resources, both tied and untied to develop village plans and preparation of block and district level plans as also district vision document.

d) The intensive participatory planning process (IPPE) model is being implemented in its phase II by the Ministry of Rural Development and focuses on participatory planning and convergence of MGNREGS and NRLM at the village level.

The key learning from these processes include a) The limited focus on setting systems for implementation and focus on the plan development process, b) No link with resource envelope which also does not take into account regional imbalances, c) Centrally developed guidelines and a format driven exercise that does not take into account local conditions, d) No alignment with multiple planning processes, e) High need for external facilitation and f) No system for compilation of the grass roots plans at higher levels. Another important feature of at least two of the above models is the focus on including women's/gender needs and allocating resources for the same. A review of the existing literature on these models show that the two strategies – the women component plan approach of the people's planning campaign model and the gender sub-plan approach of the integrated district planning process – both have their own successes and challenges. Table 6 next captures the strategies, critique and resultant allocations of the two approaches.

Table 6: Review of two key gender responsive planning and budgeting approaches in local governance

Particulars	Women's component plan (WCP) approach	Gender sub-plan (GSP) approach
Key strategies	➢ Earmarking of 10 per cent of the amount available at the PRI level as WCP ➢ WCP budget to be determined by women through participatory processes at gram sabha/ward assembly level ➢ Each of the five stages of the people's planning exercise had a gender component – gender needs assessment, gender trainings, separate chapter on women's issues in the development reports, separate planning and allocation for the WCP ➢ Fixing of allocations for women and review of the same	➢ Based on five-step framework of GRB ➢ Workshops and trainings for government officials, elected representatives and local community to understand local gender issues and needs ➢ Mapping of women's needs; by the women themselves and review of current programmes outreach to women ➢ Gender reflection workshops before plan finalization ➢ Developing of gender road map in district plans with specific allocations
Critique	➢ Tendency to go for higher allocations in general infrastructure projects and reduction in flow of resources to women (Eapen, 2007) ➢ Lack of gender perspective in projects with main focus on distribution of assets to women (Muraleedharan, 2007)	➢ Lack of institutionalizing of the process, post the initial facilitation stage and even after focused sensitization some officials still considered it as additional work (UNDP, 2014) ➢ Process lead by district officials and limited bottom up planning even after strong facilitation (UNDP, 2014) ➢ Without conceptual clarity can be seen as a separate women's only plan and can be limited to looking at women's participation in existing programmes and schemes without any transformative thinking (Roy, Eapen on Solutions Exchange)
Achievements	➢ Instrumental in promoting the women's agenda (Khan, et al., 2000; Issac, 2000) ➢ Although focused on infrastructure and asset distribution, these have major implications for poverty reduction and are thereby crucial for women (Chakraborthy, n.d.)	➢ Mandate from the Government of India created space for actual pilot in many states- Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh (UNDP, 2014) ➢ Distinguished for focus on capacity building and multi-stakeholder engagement (UNDP, 2014) ➢ Has had a better impact on the GPDP processes initiated in 2015

Budget Allocations	Figure 4: Trends in WCP allocation and expenditure in sample panchayats in Kottayam district (Kerala)[11] 	Figure 5: Percentage fund allocation for gender sub-plan in Udaipur district 2011-2012 
Source of figures	(Moolakkattu and Nair, 2014)	(UNDP, 2014)

It is interesting to see how the new GPDP process has been able to address these learnings. A strategy of the GPDP is to ensure systems for implementation given its link to FFC and SFC funds. It also helps to have an understanding of the resource envelope. While the GPDP places emphasis on overall envelope assessment, knowing the size of untied funds is useful. The GPDP has central guidelines but has allowed for sufficient state modifications to incorporate local conditions. Last but not the least is the plan plus software and similar state software, which allow for uploading the plans and thereby not only consolidate but monitor the implementation status.

Gender responsive budgeting

One can also find innovative experiments in gender responsive budgeting by civil society organizations. An interesting approach was initiated by the Singamma Srinivasan Foundation (SSF) project in Karnataka. This project supported by UN Women focused on advocacy-based research on the situation of women, identification and voicing of women's needs and concerns and gender analysis of major programmes/schemes. As part of the project, elected women representatives were also asked to build an "ought" budget that was reflective of the local needs (Box 8).

Box 8: 'Ought' budget exercise in Karnataka

The 'ought' budget exercise was carried out in two village panchayats and one municipality in three phases. During the first phase, the project sought to understand from elected women representatives their perceptions of and participation in the budget making process. From the first phase it was clear that: a) There is no system where the women representatives are made aware of or helped to understand how the budget is prepared and how it is allocated, b) There are no written guidelines or booklets which spell out the budget details to the members and the public and c) There is no linkage between expenditure and the priorities listed by women (Ahalya Bhatt, 2003).

In the second phase, elected women representatives were asked to prioritize their local needs vis-à-vis the priorities fixed by the village panchayat. It was observed that the priorities fixed by the village panchayat were different to the priorities identified by the women heads. The village panchayat ranked public health and education in 7th and 8th places whereas the elected women representatives ranked these 4th and 5th.

In the third phase, using this background information, the project sought to by motivate the elected women representatives to preparing an 'ought' budget. First, the members were briefed about how the

[11] The figure is better read without considering the extremities in 2001-2012 when there was a drastic reduction in the plan size.

panchayat prepares the budget. Second, the women were asked to prepare an 'ought' budget by listing their priorities. Through focus group discussions, the members were sensitized about the budgetary process, which in turn, motivated them to express interest. The women members were asked to prioritize the development works from their point of view ('ought' budget) and compare it with the existing budget ('is' budget).

The results showed that most of the elected women representatives listed drinking water as the top priority followed by drainage as the village lacked a proper drainage system, which would facilitate the construction of toilets. Next seen as priority was the improvement of infrastructure such as constructing roads, culverts, maintenance of the school building and bus shelter. It was noted that the priorities of the panchayat and the elected women representatives varied. This exercise clearly emphasized the need for women to participate in the local decision-making processes.

A review of the initiative shows an increase in gender sensitivity and enhanced commitment to gender needs at the local level. The process has also resulted in an increased participation of women in assessing needs and budgeting activities and their voices have become stronger through the facilitation process. Field reports have also noted an increase in the allocation for women's needs. Here again the major limitation was the institutionalization of the process post funding (Evaluation of UN Women's Work on Gender Responsive Budgeting in India, July 2012).

Accountability and transparency in PRIs

Another critical aspect of local democracy is ensuring the responsiveness of the local plans and decisions to the needs of its citizens – both men and women – and linking resources with outcomes to enable citizens to demand results. Unfortunately, not much has happened on this front but this is not surprising since this stage can only arrive once the initial processes of devolution and decentralized participatory planning are streamlined and gram sabhas become strong enough to be able to hold local elected representatives accountable on their plans and actions. The most important limitation in terms of accountability is the inadequate devolution of the 3Fs as per the activity mapping exercise. So, for example, although it is the role of the gram panchayat to provide drinking water to the community, it does not have any funds to build a system and relies on the Public Health Engineering Department for the same. The Department has to follow its norms, which further limits the gram panchayat from contributing in the design. After the system is in place, gram panchayats are handed over the same without any maintenance funds. While the gram panchayat does take responsibility to manage the water system, it cannot be held completely accountable for the system not being functional. Thus, ensuring the accountability of the gram panchayats to the voters is still not possible to the desired extent.

The introduction of a social audit at the local levels, especially for responsiveness of the panchayat plans and actions are a step towards beginning the discussions on responsiveness and accountability. However, much remains to be done on this front. As of now social audit processes initiated under MGNREGS, especially in Andhra Pradesh and the panchayat jambandi process of gram panchayat accounts and works audit initiated in Karnataka have been important strategies but the results are yet to be seen. The jambandi system was lauded as a good system by the Third SFC of Karnataka but has also been criticized for being undertaken as a routine exercise. In another similar initiative Karnataka has also brought in gram panchayats under the sakala or citizen's charter.

Transparency in PRIs at the gram panchayat level has been a major issue, especially when there is a lack of infrastructure, staff and IT systems. However, the reach of these at the gram panchayat levels has led to a major change in the availability of information. With changes in all the three, one can see an increased level of transparency in the availability of information. All payment details have been made available online. Another key initiative is that all panchayati raj bodies are expected to display boards containing information of receipts and expenditure and development works. Also, the list of below poverty line (BPL) or eligible Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana beneficiaries has been painted on the walls of the panchayats. These practices were seen in all the gram panchayats visited for the study.

Further, some states have also taken steps to ensure that gram panchayats are currently compliant with the Right to Information. Karnataka again has been the forerunner in this regard since the 1993 State Conformity Act, which emphasized the need to maintain accounts and conduct audits in all the three tiers. The State also mandates that within 72 hours, gram panchayat meeting proceedings have to be displayed on the notice board along with the names of the members voting for or against the resolutions taken up at the meeting. In an effort to foster transparency, all gram, taluk and zilla panchayat members have to declare their assets annually and lodge accounts of election expenses with the Election Commission. Further, all PRI members are to disclose to the panchayat any conflict of interest when they have a personal pecuniary interest in a panchayat action or sub-contract.

However, in terms of transparency of decision making there is a still a long way to go. The gram panchayats themselves are still not clear on their resource envelope and the technical specifications required for project approval. Thus, which project will be approved and the reasons behind a rejection are often not clear to anyone but the sarpanch (who is also dependent on what has been shared by the junior engineer or assistant engineer). There are also reports that apart from the sarpanch these officials refuse to respond to other ward members.

Solidarity and inclusion

One of the major critiques of the pre-1993 panchayati raj process was the lack of representation of marginalized communities and women among the elected representatives. While states like Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra tried to address this by providing reservation for SC, ST and women in the PRIs, the major breakthrough in this regard came after 1993. Both the CAA and subsequent state level initiatives, especially since 2006 have enabled the participation of more than two million elected women representatives (46 per cent) or elected representatives from marginalized sections (30 per cent).

Among the elected women representatives, those from the marginalized communities had a higher representation in States like Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In these States the representation of OBC/BC and ST women was higher than the mandated reservation. In Rajasthan, for example, more than 34 per cent of the elected representatives are from OBCs, 25 per cent from STs and 21 per cent from SC communities (See Table 7). Among women, 22 per cent are from the OBC community, 13 per cent from ST and 10 from SC communities. Thus, by providing space for women's participation in decision making, the local democratic agenda is pursuing both the gender and representation agenda. The social and economic opportunities available to women, particularly for those belonging to socially disadvantaged groups such as SCs and STs, are an extraordinary phenomenon despite the otherwise poor human development indicators for women in India (UNDP, n.d.).

Table 7: Caste composition of women elected representatives in select states

State		General		SC		ST		OBC/ BC	
		Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women
Andhra Pradesh	Sarpanch	8209	4105	3958	1979	2497	1249	6926	3463
	Ward members	55089	27890	27645	14009	14321	6295	48003	25058
Telangana	Sarpanch	2916	1458	1465	733	749	375	2931	1466
	Ward members	26739	11560	17100	9900	12854	7299	31989	15893
Rajasthan	Sarpanch	1840	996	1859	898	2245	1148	3018	2001
	Ward members	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA

These numbers, however, only tell part of the story. While the representation of women and marginalized communities is adequate, their active participation and influence is not. In some States like Karnataka and Odisha, elected women representatives and elected representatives from marginalized sections demonstrated a high level of awareness and activeness in the gram panchayat activities. However, the situation is only moderately adequate in the case of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Here, the elected women representatives are articulate but still often take a back seat to men not only from their families but often from those in positions like up sarpanch (deputy) who are often not elected directly.

The question of pseudo-representation exists not only in the case of women but also for other marginalized communities. The post of up sarpanch, for example, often becomes more powerful. It was seen in one gram panchayat that the husband of a Dalit woman sarpanch touched the feet of the upper caste up sarpanch before taking a seat. In another gram panchayat, the sarpanch was actually selected from a village other than the main one in the panchayat as that village could not come up with a consensus candidate. However, the panchayat duties are now being conducted by the aware ward members of the village. In fact, the sarpanch was also completely silent at the gram panchayat meeting attended during the study.

With the gram sabhas themselves proving ineffective, the challenge of enabling the participation of women and marginalized communities and getting them to raise their concerns is more daunting. First, the cynicism linked to the gram sabhas does not motivate them to participate in the meetings. Second, there is the added barrier to women due to the patriarchal settings, which further prevent them from speaking up at the meetings. Interestingly though, some issues such as women not having access to information, the timings of the gram sabhas and the readiness of officials to involve women have been sorted to a great extent by fixing the dates for the gram sabhas with a specific agenda. While this is considered by many as a limiting factor for local democracy, most women and those from marginalized communities reported having information regarding these gram sabhas. Also, these forums provide opportunities to mobilize communities to participate. For example, in Raisen, Madhya Pradesh since the agenda for the January 26 gram sabha was already known, a local NGO had mobilized the SC community to not only participate but prepared the members to voice their concerns in the forum. Thus, the SC community added agenda items to the gram sabha beyond what was mandated by the State and also discussed their concerns on water supply and PDS. However, gram sabhas are still marked by the poor attendance of women and marginalized groups. Higher participation of these sections is limited to where there has been a specific effort by a CSO to mobilize these communities as reported in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan or where self-help groups are strong as reported in Karnataka and Telangana.

A critical strategy used in some areas for fostering women's participation in gram sabhas has been the concept of mahila sabhas,[12] particularly in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. In the pilot stage, these mahila sabhas have seen a marked increase in women's awareness levels and their participation in the gram sabha (UN Women, n.d.). A government order has now made it mandatory in Rajasthan to hold a mahila sabha prior to holding the gram sabha. The same has been done in Karnataka through an amendment in the PRI Act. However, during the field visits none of the three gram panchayats in Rajasthan mentioned mahila sabhas and only one in Karnataka referred to conducting a mahila sabha. Since the mahila sabhas lack statutory status, the gram panchayat officer (at the block level) will not take action on issues raised at and resolutions received from them unless the resolutions are brought into the agenda of the statutory gram sabha and passed there. Nor will these issues be taken up in annual action plans (UN Women, n.d.).

A key barrier for women in particular to participate in the gram sabha is the issue of mobility as meetings are held in the main village of the panchayat. However, rules have also been changed to hold gram

[12] A concept initially piloted by UNICEF in Maharashtra is now well recognized by many states as well as by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India.

sabhas at the village level and also bring more focus on ward sabhas. This has resulted in improved participation of the communities, especially women. In both Rajasthan and Karnataka it was reported that women participate in larger numbers in ward sabhas as compared to gram sabhas.

Also, while devolution per se may not have a direct gender or solidarity implication, the degree of legitimacy of panchayat decisions and actions has a strong implication for inclusion. With the lack of actual transfer of powers to PRIs, the ground status is often dependent on the awareness levels and (powerful) influence of the elected representatives in the area. Thus, if the sarpanch is a powerful person in the region, irrespective of his elected status, the sarpanch will be able to exercise the right to decisions more easily. This is seen when powerful sarpanches bestow benefits on people close to them and in areas where they have a higher stake. Women sarpanches and those from marginalized communities, however, are at a major disadvantage since they do not naturally derive the power of influencing local decisions.

Another critical issue is the inclusion and responsiveness of the decentralized planning processes. Interestingly, many of the decentralized planning models had a strong gender approach. The people's planning campaign has the “women component plan” which not only allocated 10 per cent of the funds to the PRI for planning and benefiting women but strategically includes gender analysis at all stages of the planning process. The gender sub-plan approach introduced as part of the district planning process has specific components to orient stakeholders on gender issues, enable participatory needs assessment exercises with women and marginalized groups and attach specific allocations for women. There has also been a focus on the Scheduled Caste sub-plan (SCSP) and Tribal sub-plan (TSP) components as part of the decentralized planning process and also district sector plans. Interestingly, the FFC award has done away with this aspect, which gives more resources for the marginalized. Except for Telangana, which retains the SCP component, this aspect has not been included in the planning process in any state.

Whatever the strategy, the fact also remains that most earlier efforts have remained mainly pilots and have not been institutionalized to the scale desired. Even the Kerala model has focused more on the distribution of assets to women and infrastructure projects than an actual gender needs assessment (Eapen, 2007; Muraleedheran, 2007). Nevertheless, there has been an increased allocation for women as a result of these approaches and points to the need for institutionalizing the same as part of the gender responsive budgeting in PRIs.

Another important gap area of PRIs in terms of inclusion has been the coverage of services in SC/ST habitations. This was seen during the field visits when the gram panchayats are given fewer resources and they have to prioritize from within the available funds; the allocations are geared more towards provision of services in upper caste/class habitations rather than SC/ST habitations. In Madhya Pradesh, it was seen that all the SC habitations did not have water supply lines while the rest of the village did. Also in the GPDP, the focus on roads and drainage was for other areas despite neighbourhoods predominated by SCs being the most affected. However, GPDP processes have also accorded the opportunity for these populations to come forward and voice their demands or needs. In the gram panchayats in Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, a local NGO was able to mobilize marginalized communities to participate actively in the gram sabhas and ward sabhas.

CHAPTER 4

Fourteenth Finance Commission – Implications for Local Democracy and Gender

The 10th Central Finance Commission (1995-2000) was the first to give an award to panchayats to discharge the new role assigned to them under the 73rd CAA. The recommended grant then was INR 100 per capita of rural population as per the 1971 census. Both the 11th and 12th Central Finance Commissions built on this by increasing the amount to INR 127 and INR 270 per capita respectively. The major breakthrough was made by the Thirteenth Finance Commission (TFC), which allocated for the first time a percentage of the Central revenues for local governments and recommended a total share of 2.28 per cent of the Central divisible pool for PRIs. The TFC award was not only much higher than the earlier grants but it set strict conditions to prevent these funds from being delayed or diverted by the states for their own purposes. However, conditionalities on better accounting measures and local revenue collection were imposed to avail of top up grants. The Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) has gone a step ahead to improve the fiscal decentralization of local bodies.

Principles and recommendations of FFC for PRIs

The Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) was guided by the principle of greater fiscal autonomy to the lower tiers of government. The FFC not only applied this principle of Centre-State resource sharing but extended it to the PRIs (Reddy Y. V., May 23, 2015). Not wanting to undermine the authority of the state governments, the FFC perceptively worked out a mechanism for provision of untied funds to PRIs, which was three times the TFC award. While not imposing any major conditionalities, the FFC set some simple ground rules for the award. These include inter alia:

- An award of INR 2002 billion for the period of 2015-2020 for PRIs to be divided based on either 90 per cent population and 10 per cent area criteria or as per SFC recommended criteria.
- There are two parts to the grant:
    - A basic grant of 90 per cent which is to be provided directly to the gram panchayats. No funds were provided for the other two tiers of PRIs at the intermediate and district levels.
    - A performance grant of 10 per cent which will be provided on showing improvement in own source revenues and submission of annual audit accounts. The states have to notify a scheme for disbursement of the performance grants.
- The FFC also stipulated that the basic grant will be transferred in two instalments each year in June and October directly to the gram panchayats. The states have to transfer the funds within 15 days of receiving it from the Centre to avoid interest payments (from own funds).
- The FFC grants are required to be spent on provision of basic services as assigned to the gram panchayats under relevant state legislation.

The total share of the FFC grants to PRIs works out to around INR 500 per capita annually (INR 2,404 per capita over five years) and INR 17 lakh per year (INR 85 lakh for five years) for an average gram panchayat. This is five times that of the 10th CFC and three times that of the 13th CFC. The PRIs in the six study States are expected to receive funds of an average INR 10 to 25 billion every year as basic grants (Table 8). In addition, there is a 10 per cent performance grant.

Table 8: Basic grants expected to be received by PRIs in the study States

In crores

States/ Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2015-2020
Andhra Pradesh	934.34	1293.75	1494.81	1729.23	2336.56	7788.68
Karnataka	1002.85	1388.62	1604.42	1856.02	2507.88	8359.79
Madhya Pradesh	1463.61	2026.62	2341.57	2708.78	3660.14	12200.72
Odisha	955.52	1323.09	1528.71	1768.44	2389.54	7965.28
Rajasthan	1471.95	2038.17	2354.92	2724.22	3681.01	12270.27
Telangana	580.34	803.58	928.47	1074.07	1451.3	4837.75

This amount is untied and comes with minimum conditionalities. Also, it can be used for a variety of purposes related to the provision of basic amenities, including creation of capital assets. Further, the amount has been transferred solely to gram panchayats and not to the other tiers and is expected to increase the resource base of the gram panchayats sizeably. All this is seen by the proponents of local democracy as an opportunity to rejuvenate the PRIs.

Conditionalities of FFC

These recommendations are, however, not without limitations and some need to be examined more cautiously, especially when read in conjunction with the "Guidelines for the implementation of recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission with regard to local bodies grant" issued by the Ministry of Finance on October 8, 2015 and a review of the implementation guidelines at the state level. The most critical concern is on the stated versus actual untied nature of the grants. The FFC and the Ministry of Finance have both strictly limited the use of the grant for basic services. This is a limiting condition as it makes the grant tied to a large extent. First, the mention of the seven services – water supply; sanitation, including septic management, sewage and solid waste management; storm water drainage; maintenance of community assets; maintenance of roads, footpaths; street lighting; and burial and cremation grounds, which although guiding has the risk of conveying the message of being mandatory. It is left to the states to decide which other services they consider as basic services and include these in this list. Thus, the PRI does not have the option of actually using these grants to meet its own plans and aspirations.

Furthermore, states have imposed additional conditionalities on the use of these grants. For example, in Madhya Pradesh there is an order to use the FFC funds mainly for the construction of internal cement concrete (CC) roads. In fact, the State has implemented a saturation approach for CC road, making detailed project reports for each gram panchayat and directing FFC funds to be used for the same with the gram panchayats only left with the right to prioritize which road they want constructed first. In Karnataka, the State FFC guidelines mandate the funds to be allocated in a certain percentage mode for different activities. Thus, water supply works needs to be allocated 20 per cent; roads and drainage 30 per cent; maintenance of community assets 15 per cent; sanitation 10 per cent; street lights 10 per cent; crematorium and conservation of bio diversity 5 per cent and administration 10 per cent (government order dated 08-02-2016).

In Andhra Pradesh there has not been any special restriction on the usage of FFC funds but the state has been persuading the gram panchayats to focus on drinking water as the first charge for FFC fund allocation followed by solid waste management and construction of dump yards. In Telangana too, the elected representatives spoke of similar guidelines being issued though this could not be verified as the state guidelines only focus on seven sectors. In Odisha, a directive states that 30 per cent of the allocation to the panchayat should be utilized for drinking water purposes with the priority being piped water supply. Further, the Department has issued letter no. 8582 dated 16.05.17 for utilizing Fourth SFC and FFC funds for construction of kitchen sheds, where required.

Another limitation is the advice that the cost of technical and administrative support towards operation and maintenance (O&M) and capital expenditure should not exceed 10 per cent of the allocation to the gram panchayat (MoF, October 8, 2015). This would further restrict the gram panchayat since much of its demand is often related to skilled functional staff for O&M, particularly for water supply. An average 10 per cent of the INR 17 lakh limits this amount to around INR 14,000 per month, which is small for large panchayats while the overall amount itself could be insufficient for smaller panchayats. Following the Ministry of Finance directive, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj also issued guidelines on the utilization of O&M and capital expenditure grants (MoPR, December 16, 2015) suggesting a list of allowed and disallowed items for this grant. It is important to note from these guidelines that the cost of the GPDP preparation is also to be met from this head. This could further restrict the use of the money by the panchayats. Rajasthan, for example, has not made any restrictions on the use of FFC funds but only issued the list of 21 services or activities for which the FFC funds can be used, However, there are detailed guidelines issued for the usage of the 10 per cent O&M and capital expenses allocation (government order dated 29-11-2016).

Implications of Fourteenth Finance Commission on local democracy

On the panchayat resource base

One of the key implications of the FFC is expected to be on the resource base of the gram panchayats. This needs to be understood in detail in the state context and is different for different states. In Rajasthan, for example, post FFC the net flow to gram panchayats in the form of untied funds was expected to increase fourfold covering all capital, operations and maintenance expenditure of the gram panchayats (Rajasthan 5th SFC Interim report). With an expected CFC/SFC inflow of around INR 3438 crore, the SFC also assumes that funds are no longer going to be an issue for the gram panchayats. However, data from the field does not seem to corroborate this. For example, in Majra gram panchayat of Alwar district in Rajasthan, the total income for 2014-2015 was INR 37 lakh while for 2015-2016 it was only INR 23.36 lakh (See Table 9).

Table 9: Analysis of resource base of Majra gram panchayat in Rajasthan

Head of income	2014-2015	2015-2016	Percentage increase/ decrease
CFC	686982	1085902	58
SFC	1386838	555641	-60
Untied	635014		-100
MP/MLA LAD	99928		-100
Education cess	100100	5600	-94
State schemes	561500	642928	15
Other receipts	230155	46365	-80
Opening balance	37851	266818	
Total	3,738,368	2,603,254	-30
Closing balance	266818	0	
Net total	3,700,517	2,336,436	-37
Source: Majra gram panchayat gauswara records			

The fact is that while CFC grants have increased, there is a corresponding decrease in untied funds and SFC from the state as also other sources, thereby keeping the overall gram panchayat resource base more or less the same. However, in states like Telangana, where SFC funds are less and more or less constant at INR 66.18 crore, overall there is going to be an increase in funds at the gram panchayat level from INR 1105 crore in 2015-2016 to INR 1351 crore in 2016-2017 due to the influx of FFC funds. The net increase is also reflected at the gram panchayat level in Mantepally (See Figure 6).

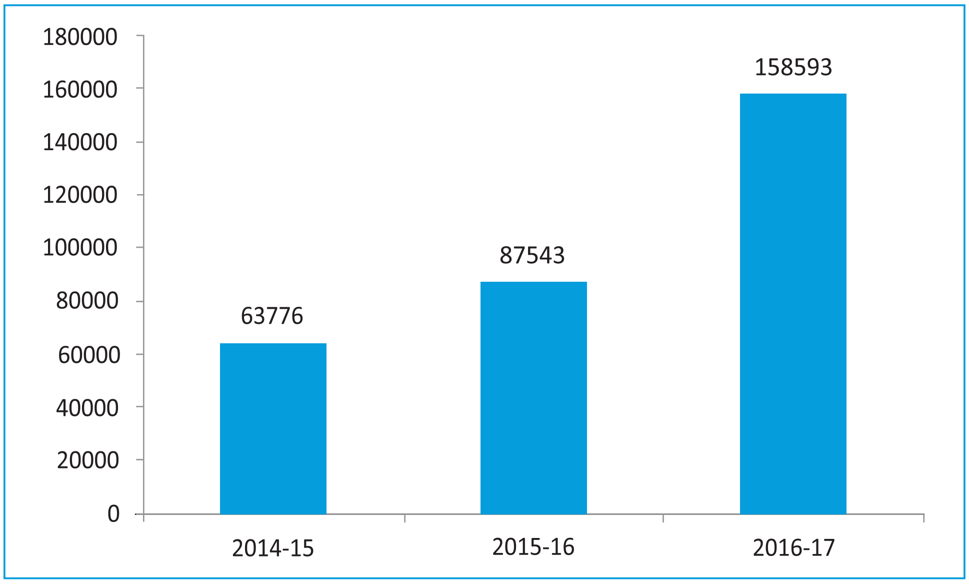


Figure 6: Funds received at Mantepally gram panchayat in Telangana

On timeliness of fund release

One reason for the Rajasthan figures could also be the high amount of TFC funds transferred in the last year, which probably is a late transfer. However, the FFC modality of having to transfer the funds within a stipulated time period has streamlined the transfer of funds to gram panchayats not only for the CFC but for the SFC. After some initial hiccups, this system has been established in Rajasthan, Karnataka, Odisha and Telangana. Madhya Pradesh still has an issue as the State also has had to pay an interest due to the late release of the first instalment of FFC grant (Report No. 4 of 2017, Madhya Pradesh, Audit report on local bodies for the year ended 31 March 2016, 2017). This has also led to a steady flow of funds to the gram panchayats in every quarter. For example, in Majra gram panchayat, Rajasthan, between 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, except for one quarter the others have seen a minimum inflow of around INR 4 lakh (See Figure 7).

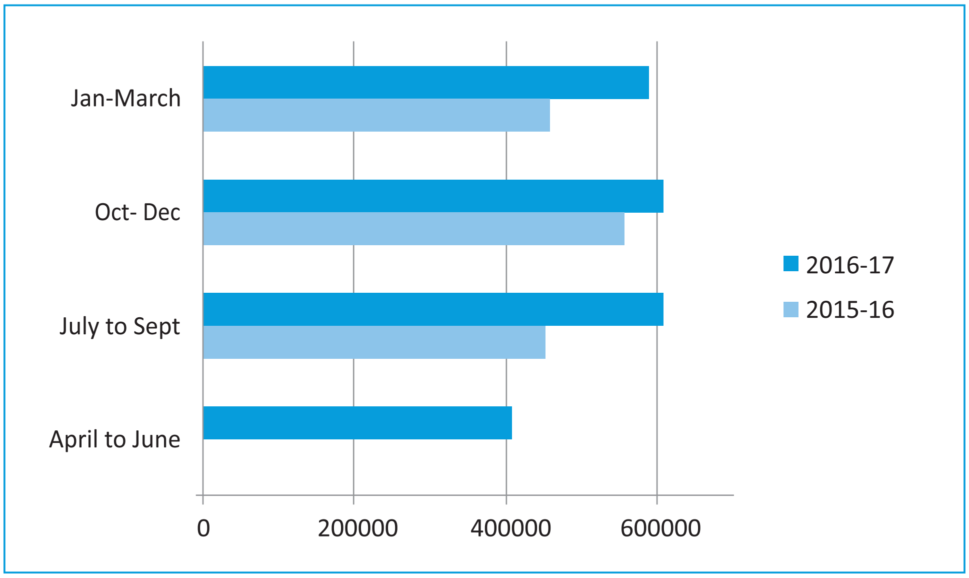


Figure 7: FFC and SFC instalment cycle for Majra gram panchayat in Rajasthan

On financial autonomy

Another major issue is about financial autonomy. Even with the limited fiscal devolution, there are major fissures which limit the progress on financial autonomy. First, for fiscal devolution to be effective the local government must be able to fulfill its obligation effectively. There must be sufficient room for flexibility through untied resources to establish priorities, devise new projects and allocate funds. This means that any fiscal devolution without effective implementation powers will not be successful as it limits the linking of resources to outcomes. Second, as we have seen earlier, the current share of untied funds is so limited that the panchayats are not going to be able to devise local projects and implement the same. Related is the fact that while both CFC and SFC funds are untied there needs to be separate bank accounts for each type of fund and the gram panchayat has to follow the one project-one fund[13] source system. This further limits the gram panchayats from being able to plan as per the need as the actual amount available for any project is less. This also hinders the continuity of works. Ultimately, they have to seek matching funds from line departments for the projects and thereby get bound by the state systems. Even in the case of CFC funds being untied, as discussed earlier, state governments do transfer the funds but impose indirect curbs and conditionalities on the usage. There are then states which assign unfunded mandates (or with unclear resource responsibilities) to the panchayats.[14] With pressure on the panchayat secretary to achieve those targets, there is a financial liability on the panchayat and the untied funds are then used to pay off this.

It is also important to improve the conditions of fiscal transfers. Also, issues of technical sanctions and approvals, which keep decision-making powers out of the hands of the panchayats need to be resolved. The sarpanch is only authorized to issue the administrative sanction while the technical sanction in all states is issued at the taluka level. Often, the plans that the panchayats make remain a wish list as the final approval is done by officials like the chief executive officer at the block level in the case of Madhya Pradesh or the block development officer in the case of Odisha.

Last but not the least it is important to understand the allocation and expenditure patterns of the CFC/SFC funds. While it is expected that the expenditure will be in line with the FFC and state mandates and likely to be infrastructure oriented, it is interesting to see the actual types of works for which the funds will be allocated or used.

On gender responsive allocations

An analysis of the FFC and SFC budgetary planning (done separately as part of the GPDP) in Bam gram panchayat of Odisha shows that FFC funds were planned to be used primarily for drinking water and sanitation related activities, street lights and creation and maintenance of capital assets. The SFC funds were used primarily for constructing approach CC roads.[15] A significant activity was the use of funds for providing tanker water supply during acute shortages in the summer. In Malangi gram panchayat in Karnataka, the funds were used for constructing two Anganwadi centres. In Kanhavas gram panchayat of Rajasthan, the funds were used for laying water pipelines in one hamlet, drainage construction, soak pit construction, cleaning the village and a solid waste management system.

[13] This implies that any project needs to have only one source of fund at the gram panchayat level. For example, if the village wants to have a pond at a cost of INR 4 lakh, it is difficult to pool in INR 2 lakh each from CFC and SFC funds. It will have to break up the cost estimates to make this into two projects, which is technical in nature and difficult at the gram panchayat level. Thus, the village ends up doing smaller projects.

[14] For example, many elected representatives as well as panchayat officials said they were allocated targets for construction of toilets under the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan without having any funds to do the same.

[15] This division, however, seems more to have been made at the taluka level rather than by the gram panchayat members. Interestingly, the copy of the GPDP (CFC) taken from the village shows a demand for activities which have been completed with SFC (GPDP review).

It is important to note here that the more gender responsive activities are in the unfunded or no cost category. It is also important to review the budgetary provisions, especially of the FFC to see if they have been able to contribute to increasing women's access to basic services at the gram panchayat level. For the purpose of this study, a simple methodology was devised to assess the gender responsiveness of the FFC budget for two gram panchayats with respect to the 2015-2016 budget. All services have been divided into three categories: A) Services which directly address women's practical or strategic gender needs, like for example, the drinking water system, B) Services which have a high potential to address strategic gender needs of women/girls, like for example, the road to the primary school and C) Other services. An analysis of the budget of Bam gram panchayat in Odisha based on this shows that around 63 per cent of the budget is under Category A. This may be a basic analysis but it does point to better gender responsiveness of the FFC budget allocation at least for this one gram panchayat in Odisha. The situation may not be the same in all states, as can be seen in Kanhavas gram panchayat of Rajasthan where the expenditure pattern for the FFC in 2015-2016 shows only 33 per cent funds under Category A (Figure 8).

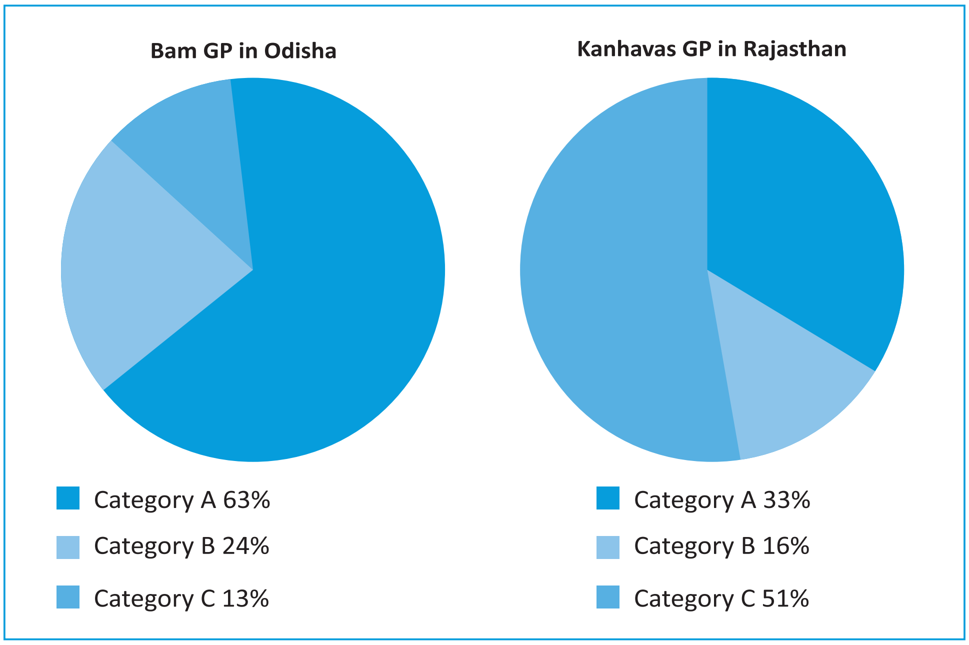


Figure 8: Gender analysis of FFC allocations in two gram panchayats

On fund utilization

All these point to the fact that the FFC funds are to a great extent untied in nature and even within their limited autonomy the gram panchayats are able to utilize the funds to meet local needs. Another important observation is that the gram panchayats are actually able to utilize the amounts for the purpose they have allocated the money. While the limitation of data does not allow this analysis in all states, the same was reinforced in the interviews with the elected representatives. Data available for one gram panchayat in Rajasthan also points to the same (see Figure 9: Allocation vs expenditure of FFC fund in Kanhavas gram panchayat of Rajasthan). It is not surprising therefore that overall, the elected representatives appear happy about the FFC recommendations.

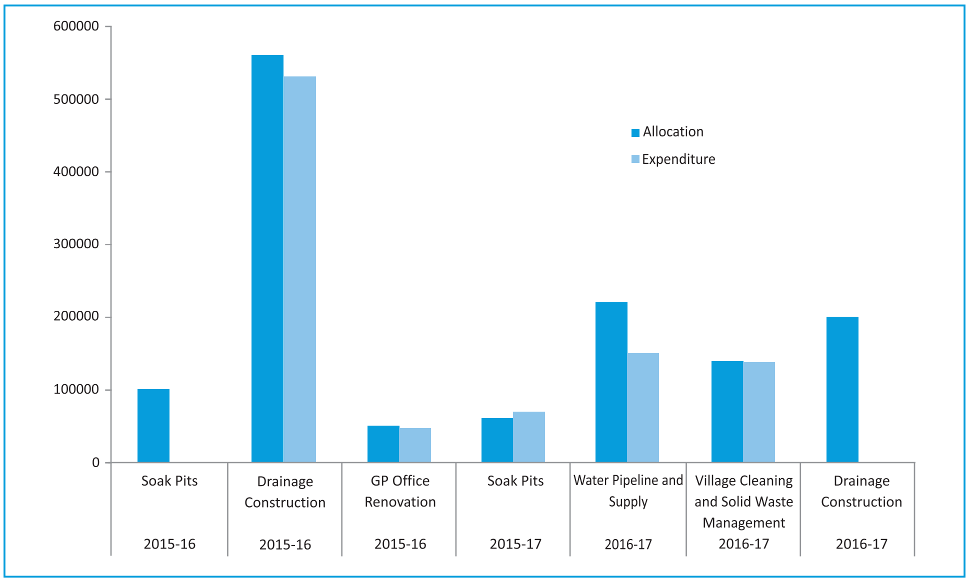


Figure 9: Allocation vs expenditure of FFC fund in Kanhavas gram panchayat of Rajasthan

On democratic processes

Another important implication of the FFC recommendations is to do with the structure and role of the panchayats as mandated in the Constitution. First, the fact that the money can only be used at the gram panchayat level could place a strain on the other two tiers of the panchayats. Already, the other two tiers complain about the lack of funds. The fact that SFCs are not fully functional in all states means that they could be denied any untied funds in the near future. However, wherever the SFC is functional as in the case of Rajasthan, there has been a re-appropriation of the fund-sharing ratio between the three tiers based on the current situation. The earlier fund sharing formula of 85 per cent for gram panchayats, 12 per cent for taluka panchayats and 3 per cent for zilla panchayats has been revised to 75 per cent, 20 per cent and 5 per cent respectively (Fifth SFC Report). In Karnataka too, the State has increased the amount of statutory grants to taluka panchayats and zilla panchayats to INR 1 crore and INR 4 crore which is more than sufficient. In fact, since this quantum of funds cannot be made available through any revenue sharing mechanism, it is expected to be retained as absolute amounts as part of the ongoing Fourth SFC report.

The FFC focus on strengthening the SFCs and synchronizing its timelines with that of the CFC, if implemented will also go a long way to strengthen the overall fiscal decentralization processes. Already, the MoPR and state governments have initiated the process of implementation. Post the FFC, many states have intensified the status of the SFCs and States like Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have expedited the process of the latest SFCs. There is much more focus on the recommendations of the SFC in line with the changed fiscal position of gram panchayats since the Fourteenth Finance Commission.

CHAPTER

5 The Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) – Ground Realities and Gender Inclusion

Following the recommendations of the FFC, the Ministry of Finance, through its guidelines for the release and utilization of the local bodies grant stipulates that proper plans are to be prepared for the basic services within the functions devolved to the gram panchayats as per state laws before incurring any expenditure under the FFC award (MoF, 2015). Building on this opportunity created for strengthening the decentralized planning and responsive governance processes, the MoPR introduced the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

The GPDP is a process of integrated development planning conducted in a fair, transparent and participatory mode at the gram panchayat level to capture the community's needs and priorities, match them with available resources and additionally mobilize local resources. The process focuses on convergence planning, including the sources of funds available at the gram panchayat level like SFC, OSR, MGNREGS and flows from other central and state sponsored schemes (CSS and SSS). While the FFC focused on basic services, the GPDP is envisaged as an all-encompassing plan focusing on poverty, education, water and sanitation, public health, natural resource management, economic development as well as social issues related to SCs, STs, gender, migrants, children, the elderly, differently abled, etc.

GPDP guidelines

Based on consultative processes with the states, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj issued guidelines for the GPDP on August 5, 2015. This was followed by more comprehensive guidelines issued in November 2015 and supplemented by a manual for planning the GPDP developed in 2016.

The key components of the GPDP process include:

- Emphasis on participatory planning involving all stakeholders and the active role of the gram panchayat and gram sabha.
- Creating an environment at the state level for a publicity campaign to generate enthusiasm and motivate people's participation in the process. It also stresses the importance of stakeholder orientation and building capacities of functionaries and elected representatives on the process.
- The need to calculate and communicate the resource envelope to the gram panchayats to be able to match people's needs with available resources. There was also focus on convergence while estimating the resource envelope and the need to shift to a single plan – GPDP for the panchayat.
- Setting up state-level empowered committees headed by the Chief Secretary or Development Commissioner with key Department Secretaries as members to monitor and facilitate the process. Similarly, coordination committees are to be set up at the district and block levels.
- A time bound plan approval process to ensure accordance with the financial year for smooth implementation.
- Recommending electronic fund management system for transparency and prudence along with clear technical and administration guidelines to be laid down by states. However, it also

emphasized the need to keep the FFC recommendation that the gram panchayat's choice of projects, which are in accordance with technical and administrative guidelines, should not be changed by any higher authority.

- A robust physical and financial monitoring system along with social audits.

The MoPR envisages that these processes can transform gram panchayats into institutions of local self-governance and establish their identity as development institutions. They also have the added advantage of orienting departments to local needs and inducing competition among gram panchayats to improve performance. Overall, the process of participatory planning for a GPDP will (a) Improve service delivery, (b) Enhance citizenship, (c) Motivate volunteerism, (d) Create space for an alliance of people's institutions and groups, and (e) Improve governance at the local level (MoPR, 2015).

Further, state specific guidelines have been framed to facilitate coordination of the various activities to be undertaken and arrangements to be made for the execution of a time bound action plan for preparation of the GPDP in most Part IX states. Many states have also issued a number of government resolutions to pursue the process. Most states have built on the MoPR guidelines with few modifications.

Gender review of national and state guidelines

A quick review of the various processes specified as part of the GPDP highlights some innovative measures towards strengthening local democracy. However, the process, although ambitious, still has some loopholes and also potential opportunities for making the local governance process more gender responsive. In Table 11 we have undertaken a SWOT analysis of the GPDP guidelines and processes being proposed at the national and state levels with special reference to gender mainstreaming.

Realization of GPDP processes

While a lot of "what to do" is available on the GPDP, there is little on "what is being done". It is important to understand what has been happening on the ground on the GPDP.

Nationwide extension

One achievement of the GPDP is, of course, the institutionalization of the whole decentralized planning process. No other earlier programme or process has achieved this scale of gram panchayat level plans. Overall, the country has seen more than 1.95 lakh gram panchayats preparing plans over the past three years. Table 10 gives a quick overview of the GPDP planning status in the country.

Table 10: Status of GPDP in India

Year	Total GPs	GPDP conducted		On plan plus		Implementation initiated	
			%age	Nos.	%age	Nos.	%age
2015-16	249200	60444	25	42027	17	32482	14
2016-17	249225	195124	78	136713	55	80822	32
2017-18	249172	100966	41	89490	36	6306	3

State-level achievements

An interesting aspect of the GPDP guidelines is that these encouraged states to own the initiative by giving it a local name and publicizing the same. Not only did all the study states convert the name into locally specific initiatives but provided adequate publicity to them. In Karnataka, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh, the Chief Ministers were involved in announcing the programmes and appealing to the public to participate in the planning process. In Telangana, for example, the Chief Minister launched the Grama Jyoti programme at a Collector's conference. The programme was initiated from August 17, 2015 in all the gram panchayats in the State with the theme of sanitation and cleanliness. In addition, the programme was publicized through local folk media and newspapers. The Department of Panchayati Raj in Madhya Pradesh also advertised the programme on FM radio.

A formal launch and orientation workshops were organized at various levels, especially in Telangana, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Odisha. Capacity building has been the core of the GPDP activities initiated by the state panchayat departments through the SIRDs. Generally, most states have adopted a cascade model for reaching out to the grass roots and hence, the focus has been on developing state, district and block level master trainers and resource persons on GPDP.

Table 11: SWOT analysis of GDPD guidelines with special reference to gender

Key features	Strengths	Opportunities	Weakness	Threats
Participatory planning process	➢ Enables decentralized planning in the true sense with people's participation ➢ Focus on state specific guidelines to incorporate local perspective ➢ Even though the process is participatory there are systems for consolidations enabled by the use of IT (Plan Plus software).	➢ Provides space for all citizens, including those from marginalized communities to voice their concerns and demands. ➢ Karnataka has provided space for orientation of women leaders from SHGs to be involved in the process. Telangana has provided for one woman VO leader to be part of each functional committee.	➢ Not much focus on ensuring women's participation or giving space for women's needs/ demands to be separately captured ➢ Assuming SHG participation as women's participation may not always be a good strategy as often the participation may be limited to a few SHG leaders. ➢ Limits to people's participation when planning has been assigned to functional committees as in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. ➢ Definite guidelines for works and formats have limited space for innovation.	➢ Unless the participatory planning process has a gender perspective, it will not be possible ➢ It is quite possible that the SHG women may not actually be involved in the process

Environment creation and capacity building	➢ There is huge focus on awareness and publicity campaigns to encourage people's participation ➢ Use of media (FM radio, folk media, newspapers) promoted. ➢ States encouraged to name the programme and leverage the Chief Ministers for publicity ➢ SIRDs nominated as the nodal agency for capacity building with clear fund allocation from RGPSA-CB ➢ Focus on training elected representatives and functionaries	➢ Provides wide stature to the process as it is recognized at the highest levels ➢ State ownership over the programme will increase also leading to better monitoring, convergence and implementation. ➢ Creation of state specific guidelines and training modules for GPDP. ➢ Development of resource pool and plan for cascading model of trainings to reach the grass roots.	➢ Post FFC fund availability under RGPSA could be an issue ➢ There is not much focus on reaching out to women and marginalized communities ➢ Capacity building especially is not targeted for these groups ➢ Except Rajasthan and Odisha, the other states still do not have a gender mainstreaming in GPDP module. Andhra Pradesh has only issued a government order. ➢ Lack of strong resource pool for trainings on gender.	➢ High stakes could lead to states not being so open to critique ➢ Indirect issue of directives (For example, Madhya Pradesh has said that if 70 per cent funds are used for internal cement concrete roads, the state will contribute the other 30 per cent).
Determination and communication of resource envelope	➢ Important and innovative exercise of linking plans to resource availability and not just creating a wish list.	➢ Even if full resource envelope is not known at least communication of FFC and SFC fund availability can be ensured.	➢ No focused efforts on determining the envelope except to some extent in Karnataka. A short cut method of 10 per cent increase from last year's allocation suggested.	➢ Expectations of the community from the gram panchayat will be raised, which they may not be able to fulfill leading to increased cynicism
Situational analysis	➢ Needs assessment based on situation analysis is an important step as against only wish list preparation. ➢ Provision for sectoral assessment and preparation of development status report ➢ Karnataka guidelines suggest use of the Gram Panchayat Human Development Index as well as a 62-point indicator framework.	➢ Provides space to introduce new concerns, especially those related to social issues and marginalized sections. ➢ Provides a benchmark for review of progress.	➢ Lack of availability of data at village level not addressed. ➢ No clarity on who will facilitate the process except in Karnataka which has identified a group of 20 SHG members and five community volunteers for this. ➢ No focus on undertaking gender analysis.	➢ Situational analysis being limited to identification of infrastructure or scheme outreach gaps rather than actual need assessment.

Identification of costless activities	➢ Brings in the focus on social issues especially since it is mandatory	➢ Provides space to introduce awareness building activities	➢ Not all social issues can be unfunded. ➢ There should have been a provision for some funding.	➢ Gram panchayats take up the same focus as state mandate as a routine exercise with no thought
Institutional Mechanisms	➢ Empowered committee at state level headed by Chief Secretary or Development Commissioner ➢ Coordination committees at district and block levels ➢ Gram sabhas mandated by states as the final approval authority ➢ Recognized role of standing / functional committees related to planning	➢ Revival of the standing committees/ functional committees on planning ➢ Revival of gram sabhas for people to add in their demands and also as an approval authority	➢ No clear link with state plans or planning process ➢ No clear role for DPCs except for approval ➢ No formal alignment with other schematic planning cycles through issues of circulars or similar measures ➢ No mechanisms to provide statutory status to mahila sabhas for getting women's demands on record	➢ Multiple planning cycles and processes can create apathy towards the process
Visioning Exercise and GPDP Finalization	➢ Gram panchayats having a perspective plan or vision (especially a five year one as in Karnataka) strengthens their overall understanding of development ➢ Plans linked to outcomes or goals like in Telangana	➢ Provides space for prioritization of activities at the gram panchayat level ➢ PRA tools can be used for prioritization exercise ➢ Telangana has toolkit for developing gender goals	➢ Vision exercise not focused on gender issues ➢ No focus or parameters for gender focus in the final prioritization process ➢ No link of plan finalization with women's needs or mahila sabha resolutions	➢ No talk of child sex ratio or gender based violence in funded activities can lead to the importance of the same being disregarded
Plan link with Implementation	➢ Direct link with implementation ➢ Some states have even frozen plans for implementation ➢ Approval processes in place with systems to review the plans ➢ No powers to higher levels to delete or modify the plans; they can only give a technical appraisal	➢ Freezing of activities can also be taken ahead for line department works (especially those which are devolved to gram panchayats)	➢ Need to have project proposals sanctioned by higher level even after plan is approved ➢ Technical sanction still as per state laws may limit autonomy of gram panchayat	➢ Poor quality of plans can result in poor quality of implementation

In Odisha, for example, one round of capacity building has been conducted through a cascade model of 400 empaneled master trainers and the second round of training was being planned during the course of the visit. The State Institutes of Rural Development in Rajasthan and Odisha have also developed training modules for orientation on the GPDP, a refresher course and on gender mainstreaming in the GPDP. In Telangana, specific trainings on the GPDP process were organized for functional committee members and nodal officers through the Telangana State Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development. More than 1.21 lakh people have been trained on the GPDP process in the State. While one major limitation of the process has been the availability of quality resource persons, the states have nevertheless conducted a number of orientation trainings and refresher workshops on the GPDP. Madhya Pradesh is also planning a capacity building programme using self-help group women as community resource persons. Although yet to be rolled out the training programme on master trainers has been completed and based on the success of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) model, this appears to be a promising initiative.

The focus of the trainings, at least at the SIRD level, however, appears to be more on functionaries now than on elected representatives. In Karnataka, for 2016-2017, 31 trainings were conducted for 4,643 people, of which only 500 were elected representatives (ANSSIRD, 2016-17). Similarly, in Telangana, 2,199 trainings were conducted on the GPDP in 2016-2017 for 78,747 functionaries as against 36,331 (31.5 per cent) elected representatives. As a result, panchayat functionaries had a much better understanding of the GPDP processes and FFC mandate than the elected representatives.

On the creation of institutional mechanisms for monitoring the GPDP process, all states had formed state-level empowered committees and district and block level monitoring committees. However, the actual functioning of these committees is in doubt. Except Rajasthan, none of the states has any government order on the composition or meeting of these committees. The status of the DPCs, which are already defunct, further affects the quality of planning. The link of the GPDP process with the DPCs is still not clear. While some recognition on the role of the DPCs was seen at the state level in Karnataka and Rajasthan, there was no awareness of this at the field level. In Odisha, however, the taluka (block) level officials did report on the compositions and meetings of DPCs.

This was also true for village level planning committees. There appeared to be clarity on these only in Telangana and it was reported that the functional committees had become active following the GPDP process. In Karnataka, while there was clarity on the standing committees, apart from the panchayat officer, the elected representatives were not aware of the gram panchayat yojana sahayak samitis. However, the elected representatives were aware of their role in the plan development process. In Odisha, there was a mixed response on the gram panchayat level planning unit. While in one gram panchayat, the sarpanch spoke about having a committee (although it had more officials than elected members), in the other, the sarpanch was not aware of any such planning committee.

States have communicated the resource envelope to the gram panchayats, at least the funds available under the FFC and SFC. Karnataka was the only state where the Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj had written individual letters to all the gram panchayat presidents (adhyaksha/ sarpanch) communicating the resource envelope available for their respective gram panchayats. In most other states, there was a gap between the resources available and the plan, which showed a lack of clarity on the resource envelope. There were instances of mismatch in the activity planning and the resources available even for FFC/SFC funds. For example, in Odisha, the GPDP plans provided by the block had a larger number of activities as compared to those taken from the gram sabha resolution. There was, however, a cost estimation for the plans the gram panchayats had made, which showed an improved planning process. In Rajasthan, for example, the GPDP reviewed had more than 80 activities, which seemed like a wish list without proper estimation of resources. In fact, the key stakeholders interviewed in the State admitted that it was not possible to identify the actual resource envelope as there was no gram panchayat-wise planning of line department budgets.

Another observation during the study was that while there was a mandate to have convergence and a plan based on the resource envelope available, the fact remained that planning even for FFC and SFC funds had to be done separately as the actual utilization pattern required the gram panchayat to have separate bank accounts for these funds and also fund-wise project implementation. Hence it is not possible for the gram panchayat to use both the funds together. This issue was raised by the elected representatives, especially in Telangana suggesting that since the SFC funds were small, they should be allowed to use these for complementing the FFC funds rather than kept separate. Further, actual convergence is not being achieved as states continue to have multiple planning processes. The link of the GPDP with the state plans is also not clear.

It needs to be noted that preparation of the GPDP is a time bound process where the process cycle should be followed and completed within a stipulated time period. It is important that the timelines are linked with the annual planning and implementation calendar of the gram panchayats. In 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, most states saw a delay in the GPDP planning process. Thus, by the time the plans were actually approved, the annual financial year was about to end. In Telangana, the State actually carry forward the full plan to the next financial year and in States like Odisha, a few incomplete activities were carried forward in the next year's plan. Further, some States like Karnataka and Rajasthan did not actually focus on detailed planning exercises in the first year itself. The more elaborate planning processes began in 2016-2017 and especially for 2017-2018, all the study states were making efforts to link the GPDP process with the annual planning cycle to ensure that the plans were approved by April or latest by August/ September so that the implementation could start after the monsoon period. This linking of the planning process with the financial calendar is an important step that the GPDP has achieved in terms of institutionalizing the gram panchayat level planning process.

Table 12: Overview of GPDP process in the study States

Sr. No.	Key mechanisms for GPDP	Andhra Pradesh	Karnataka	Madhya Pradesh	Odisha	Rajasthan	Telangana
1	GPDP guidelines	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2	Empowered committee	Yes	Yes	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Coordination committees	No	NA	NA	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Environment creation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Clarity on resource envelope	Only for FFC/SFC	Yes	Only for FFC/ SFC	Only for FFC/SFC	Only for FFC/SFC	Only for FFC/ SFC
6	Capacity building	Yes	Yes	Data not available	Yes	Yes	Yes
7	External facilitation / Human resource availability	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
8	Planning process	Three Rounds	One round of five-year planning; two rounds of annual planning	DPR preparation complete	Three rounds	Three rounds	Two rounds with same plan repeated for second year

9	Approval authority	Gram sabha	Gram sabha	Gram sabha	Gram sabha	Gram sabha	Gram sabha
10	Fund release	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
11	Implementation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
12	Availability of plans in public domain	Yes	Yes	Not for all gram panchayats	Yes	Yes	Yes

Actual planning process at the gram panchayat level

One of the key features of the GPDP process is undertaking a situational analysis. However, among the gram panchayats visited except in Malangi gram panchayat in Karnataka (which was highlighted by the SIRD as an ideal GPDP), no other gram panchayat had done a detailed situational analysis. In most states, where information had to be uploaded online it was done by the panchayat secretary in consultation with one or two elected members. There seems to be an impression within the gram panchayat, sometimes rightly so, that the ward members have a clear idea about what is available and what needs to be done in their areas and so they do not need to do any mapping exercise. In Karnataka, the situational analysis required a clear number and name identification and the process was done with some sincerity. But in other states even getting those documents at the gram panchayat level was not possible.

In Odisha, Rajasthan and Karnataka, a demand generation process is undertaken in palli sabhas or ward sabhas and the community mobilization for this is done by telling people that “if you don’t participate in this process and share your demands then it will be difficult to add in any activities later on”. This, and the fact that these sabhas are held locally and hence mobility is generally not an issue, has meant that there is a larger participation of the community in these processes. Ward sabha resolutions were also available for review in Rajasthan and Karnataka and focus group discussions with the community showed that they had participated in the process. Women’s participation in these processes was higher than at the gram sabha level. In Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the activity planning exercise was done by the functional committees, which have to indicate two goals for their function and then select activities for the same.

The demands or activity lists were then discussed in the gram sabha and put up for approval. In all the states, it was observed that gram sabhas were conducted for the GPDP process. This was verifiable through gram sabha resolutions and through discussions with the community and elected representatives. Even in Madhya Pradesh, where the GPDP process has so far been limited, the community reported participation in the gram sabhas to share their concerns. An important aspect of the demand generation process observed was that it was restricted to infrastructure creation and there was no demand generation or planning at the community level for the costless activities. Costless activities were mainly limited to planning for open defecation free villages and a focus on solid waste management in Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. There was, however, some added planning to understand the issues of the disabled and about biodiversity in Karnataka. Other than these there has been no planning on costless activities in any other state.

Also, the processes to enable the participatory techniques being used to gain knowledge to develop project proposals do not seem to be followed properly as many GPDPs are still wish lists and there is no prioritization. However, discussions with elected representatives showed that they did do the prioritization when it came to implementing the projects as they had to submit individual project proposals for approval or take administrative sanction post the GPDP approval. The elected representatives were clear that this was their priority at least in the case of FFC and SFC funds and that they first took up projects which were more urgent. They, however, were not so clear on how they could define priority. Even in Madhya Pradesh, where 70 per cent of the funding has been limited to constructing cement concrete roads, the gram panchayats do have a say on which road is to be taken up first. For other activities too, it is the gram panchayat that decides which work is to be taken up as priority.

In most states, the process has thus been that the ward sabha puts up projects and the gram sabha selects from among these (sometimes even all) and approves the GPDP. In Malangi gram panchayat, Karnataka, the ward sabha had identified 342 activities, of which the gram sabha approved 37 activities. However, it is the gram panchayat then (mainly the sarpanch and a few ward members with the panchayat secretary) who prioritize indirectly by having a say on which projects will be taken up for implementation. The elected representatives see this as a big step towards empowering the gram panchayats.

GPDP approval process

The GPDP approval process in all the study states was decentralized in the sense that it had to be approved at the gram sabha level and only technical verification, if required was to be undertaken at the higher levels. Also, in most states, the higher authorities did not have any powers to modify the GPDPs. The plans as prepared by the gram panchayat are also uploaded directly online to ensure maximum transparency. The actual approval powers with the gram panchayat and the gram sabha are however limited. In all states, the gram panchayats are required to follow the state guidelines/ laws for panchayat works. This means that after the GPDP is approved, the gram panchayat has to issue an administrative sanction for each individual activity which goes for technical approval to the taluka. In most cases this meant that a junior engineer or assistant engineer at the taluka level would review the project and assign technical approval. In Rajasthan, once the technical approval is received, the panchayats are empowered to begin the implementation. However, in most other states, an approval by the block development officer or the chief executive officer at the taluka level was needed for amounts up to a certain limit and at district level beyond that (Box 9).

Box 9: Process of GPDP approval and review process in select states

In Telangana, administrative sanction up to INR 2 lakh was under the powers of the gram panchayat; above INR 2 lakh and below INR 3 lakh under the divisional panchayat officer and above INR 3 lakh was to be approved by the district Collector. In addition, technical sanction up to INR 25000 was by the assistant engineer (PR), above INR 25000 and below INR 2 lakh by the deputy executive engineer (PR), above INR 2 lakh and below INR 5 lakh by the executive engineer (PR) and above INR 5 lakh was by the superintending engineer (PR).

In Odisha, an added process was a review by the panchayat extension officer on whether the activities were actually approved in the GPDP, which was good.

In Karnataka, the online system is being developed which freezes the GPDP plan and there is now a direct link of the works undertaken with the plans approved. In fact, for any change the gram panchayats have to approach the Abdul Nasir Sab State Institute of Rural Development.

Review of plans and the implementation process

Apart from the process related aspects, it is important to review the actual plans to understand the status of reflection of local priorities and needs. One level of analysis is to review the type of activities which are emerging in the planning process. A review of a few GPDPs showed a clear emphasis on infrastructure development as against social development although in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, there has been some emphasis on costless activities like sanitation and hygiene and/ or education. For example, the Malangi gram panchayat in Karnataka had a costless activity goal of 100 per cent enrolment in primary education.

One of the key activities emerging in all states is that of construction of cement concrete approach roads and renovation of wells/ponds. However, there has also been a focus on drainage and solid waste management activities (mainly dumping grounds), drinking water facilities, street lights, construction of bathing ghats and changing rooms and in some cases, construction of Anganwadi centres or rooms in primary schools.

A review of the GPDP for Kanhavas gram panchayat in Rajasthan, for example, shows that the plan was a wish list of 18 activities in 2015-2016, of 84 activities in 2016-2017 and 82 activities in 2017-2018. A review of the 2017-2018 plan shows that of the activities, 62 per cent works were related to roads and drainage; 6 per cent other sanitation related activities like cleaning of village, soak pits, closing open drains, etc.; 7 per cent of the activities were related to drinking water; and another 11 per cent was related to construction activities for the primary school, Anganwadi centre, temple and crematorium ground.

In Odisha, a review of the GPDP of Bam gram panchayat showed that in 2017-2018, of the 30 works planned 40 per cent was on constructing roads, 24 per cent was related to drinking water; 20 per cent was related to street lights and 16 per cent on tank renovation. Interestingly here, the GPDP document provided by the gram panchayat showed only the planning of roads.

An important inference from the above is that the GPDPs are often the reflection of the state priorities, whether enabled through indirect guidelines and formats or through training programmes. However, there has also been a significant level of local contextualization in the plans.

Review of GPDP from a gender lens

A review of the GPDPs shows that not all are responsive to gender needs. A key practical gender need of women, drinking water for example, has not emerged as a top priority in many GPDPs though many state governments have focused on the same. In Rajasthan, even when the ward had prioritized water supply as number one in its plan, the GPDP prioritized it at number 44. Similarly, in Madhya Pradesh, although many hamlets within the gram panchayat villages were facing severe water problems, the focus of the GPDP remained on constructing internal roads. Odisha is the only State where drinking water is prioritized in the GPDP. The fact is that the GPDP process does not provide for special focus on women’s concerns as part of the budget planning. The focus on women is part of social issues and costless activities, which are not actually planned for in detail at the gram panchayat level. Generally, amenities like street lights, better drainage and solid waste management do benefit women too. However, there has been no further role for women in implementing these activities and thus their concerns cannot be specifically addressed.

It is also interesting to review the GPDPs from a gender perspective to see if women’s concerns are being addressed. As such, the GPDPs do not seem to be too responsive to gender needs. In Rajasthan, although one of the gram panchayat villages faced a drinking water problem, the issue was addressed only in the GPDP of 2017-2018 and that too as priority number 44. A prioritization exercise (Annex 7 and Table 13) conducted with women in Majra gram panchayat, Rajasthan showed that their priority was mainly drinking water facilities to be provided in ward 3.

Table 13: Prioritization exercise[16] with women in Majra gram panchayat, Rajasthan

Issues/ Priorities as listed before the exercise	Number of times	Women's priority	Ward priority	GPDP priority
Name not being in BPL List	0	10	-	-
Non-availability of cheap grains from PDS for few homes	1	9	-	-
Water entering homes from pond due to drains not being cleaned	7	3	12	-
Lack of water facilities	9	1	1	44
Liquor shop	4	6	-	-
Domestic violence	2	8	-	54,55
Dowry problems	3	7	-	54,55
Irregularity in village cleaning	5	5	-	68
No water supply and electricity facilities in Anganwadi centres	6	4	-	-
Lack of proper roads resulting in waterlogging	8	2	5 to 10	7, 26

Thus, only some of the priorities of women are covered under the GPDP and the fact that water supply is placed at number 44 speaks for itself.[17] However, it is also important to mention here that this GPDP was one of the few that had allocated funds for awareness activities related to women and also planned for specific infrastructure for Scheduled Caste neighbourhoods.

A review of the GPDP of Kejroli gram panchayat in Odisha (reported the best practice in the block) also shows that if proper processes are followed a gram panchayat can have a better and more gender sensitive vision (Box 10). Also, the majority of the activities planned then are services which directly or indirectly benefit women/girls, for example bathing ghats or roads to primary school (See Table 14).

Box 10: Kejroli gram panchayat vision statement (Dhenkanal district, Odisha)

- All villages of the gram panchayat shall have motorable all-weather roads, IT connectivity and proper irrigation facilities by 2017-2022,
- Providing safe drinking water and total sanitation for all households of the gram panchayat by 2017,
- Delivering accountable public services (ANW, ASHA and schools) through grass roots governance in the gram panchayat,
- Generating resource and knowledge about local self-employment and livelihood in all villages of the gram panchayat by 2021,
- Providing pension to all eligible old people, widows and differently abled by 2017, and
- Sustainable use of local natural resources for long-term livelihood of the local people.

[16] Problem prioritization exercise: a Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) tool was used to understand this. The exercise enables the community to list all their problems and then pair them one-on-one to see which is of higher importance. In the end, the issue which emerges the most number of times in the pairing gets the highest priority.

[17] There have been problems earlier in providing pipelines to this ward due to the cement concrete road, which needs to be removed to lay the lines when the work is done by machines as per PHED norms. Also, PHED officials object to the panchayat taking up this activity as the Department supplies water to the rest of the village and do not want the same to affect the water charge collection status.

A review of the GPDP in Malangi gram panchayat, Karnataka also showed an interesting response given the emphasis on convergence. The GPDP (2017-2018) had 37 activities, of which 15 (41 per cent) were related to Anganwadi construction; 9 (24 per cent) activities were related to land and water management; one on drinking water; one related to a veterinary hospital; one on repairing the school building and water facility; and the rest were to do with individual benefits for the disabled or trainings. Interestingly, only two core activities (the construction of Anganwadi centres) to be implemented by the gram panchayat (Part A activities) had been identified.

Table 14: Activity planning in the gram panchayat with proper processes

Type of Activities	Category A	Category B	Category C
Funded	➢ Tubewell construction and repair of drinking water supply ➢ Open well construction for drinking water ➢ Standpost construction for drinking water ➢ Tanker water supply in summer ➢ Construction of bathing ghats and changing rooms ➢ Rural housing under PMAY and Biju Pacca Ghar Yojana (in name of women) ➢ PDS distribution through women SHGs ➢ Widow pensions ➢ Individual toilets under SBM ➢ Strengthening of State Rural Livelihood Mission programme	➢ Health and awareness camps ➢ Renovation of water bodies ➢ Cleaning of roads and drains ➢ Street lights ➢ Conducting gram sabha ➢ Repair of primary schools ➢ Construction of roads and culverts leading to school and Anganwadi ➢ Construction of Anganwadi centre ➢ Priority list for rural housing (mainly in name of men) ➢ Social security schemes ➢ Identification of youth (girls and boys) for skill training	➢ Road improvement ➢ Dug wells ➢ Land development ➢ Cremation ground ➢ Construction of roads and culverts
Unfunded/ costless	➢ Gram panchayat will be free from liquor ➢ Free of trafficking of women/children ➢ Child marriage free ➢ Gram panchayat with gender focus ➢ Promote SHGs for various economic activities ➢ 100 per cent institutional delivery	➢ Keep its status of zero dropouts ➢ Bonded labour free ➢ Child labour free ➢ Hunger and malnourishment free ➢ Open defecation free ➢ 100 per cent immunization	

Impact on democratic processes

One critical impact of the GPDP process as discussed earlier in the report has been enlivening the gram sabha process in the PRIs with multiple gram sabhas being organized for the GPDP. In the gram panchayats visited at least two gram sabhas/ward sabhas have been held annually in connection with the GPDP process. The resolutions of these gram sabhas were better documented. In all the states, the community was also generally aware of the month when these discussions were held.

Another impact on the local democratic processes has been that the gram panchayats are not only being seen as demand generating institutions but capable of fulfilling some of their obligations. It was also seen that unlike previous planning experiences, in the case of GPDPs, the gram panchayats are more hopeful of being able to deliver on their promises. This is also why the gram panchayats are focusing only on infrastructure for basic amenities as they do not want to raise expectations on activities that they cannot deliver on.

The most important impact of the process, however, has been the institutionalization of the decentralized planning process in the country, a major step towards implementing Article 243G mandate on the preparation of plans, perhaps not directly for economic development and social justice but for developing basic amenities and infrastructure.

CHAPTER

6 Enabling Gender Responsive Local Democracy – Reflections and Recommendations

An appraisal of the State of Local Democracy (SoLD) and the Fourteenth Finance Commission and Gram Panchayat Development Plans using a gender lens shows that while the country has made great strides in creating spaces for political empowerment of women, there is still a definite need for institutional mechanisms and processes that will enable mainstreaming of gender in local democracy.

The study highlights the key enablers and limiting factors of gender mainstreaming. The reflections and recommendations are highlighted below under two categories:

- Effective participation of elected women representatives, especially those from the marginalized communities and effective representation of women's voices/gender concerns
- Responsiveness /accountability of PRIs to gender mainstreaming

Effective participation of women in PRIs

Stronger support mechanisms

The support of family members has been a key enabler for the active participation of women. This has already been well documented in earlier studies (Buch, 2000; Chowdhury and Radha, 2002; SCMSPIR, 2011) and is reinforced during interviews with the active elected women representatives. The main support in most cases came from the husband. It is thus important to sensitize men in general on the need for political participation of women.

Another link between all strong elected women representatives is that they are stronger when there are active women's groups and federations backing the women political leaders. In Karnataka, the woman sarpanch and ward members, especially the re-elected ones are more articulate, which they attributed to their involvement with the self-help group movement. The same was also seen in Telangana where the VO leader was much more articulate that the ward member.

The presence of a facilitating agency, mainly civil society organizations, was also found to be an enabler for the elected women representatives. This too has been documented in previous studies and is reinforced by the key informants interviewed. The same was observed in Rajasthan where elected women representatives and other elected representatives saw the presence of an established CSO as supportive. Most capacity building and handholding support was given by the CSO.

During the study, it was also felt that the presence of women staff in the panchayat (secretaries, extension officers or data entry operators) also seemed to have a positive impact on the activeness of the elected women representatives. While this needs to be substantiated further, it does point to the benefit of having more women in the panchayat department and the need for gender sensitization of all key panchayat staff.

Focus beyond sarpanch

Among the key limiting factors, it was found that the sarpanch based PRI model limited the participation of elected women representatives. As mentioned earlier, other than the sarpanch, capacity building efforts are not usually targeted at other elected women representatives. This not only means that the women ward members are mainly inactive but a potential group of elected women representatives – the territorial representatives to taluka panchayats and zilla panchayats – are neglected. Most elected women representatives are able to connect better with women leaders at higher levels as opposed to men. However, these linkages have not been strategically exploited. In fact, it was also observed that in at least three states – Telangana, Rajasthan and Odisha – the women territorial representatives to the taluka panchayat are much more articulate and empowered (and have greater mobility). However, their role in the development of their constituency is not clear and these women are not even targeted for capacity building efforts.

Former elected women representatives are another important yet neglected constituency. There is no process of recognizing the work or achievements of these women, nor is there any cohort or support group that can help these women take forward the process of women's political empowerment at the local level. In fact, the level of recognition is so poor that in one gram panchayat office, which displayed photographs of all the ex-sarpanches on the wall, the photograph of the only woman sarpanch was missing.

Effective devolution

The lack of effective devolution is also a key disabler for elected women representatives. While devolution per se may not have a direct gender implication, the degree of legitimacy of panchayat decisions and actions has a strong gender implication. Due to the lack of actual transfer of powers to PRIs, the ground status is often dependent on the awareness levels and (powerful) influence of the elected representatives in the area. Women elected representatives do not enjoy such an influence in the area and thus are not able to function as effectively as an influential male sarpanch. However, this is not only a gender issue but applies to elected representatives from marginalized communities.

Also, it is often seen that male sarpanches have a greater access to information than women sarpanches due to the patriarchal society. This further limits a women's ability to take action. It is also one of the reasons why the concept of pseudo-sarpanch has gained momentum. Often even when the women are elected, it is a male member of the family who gets the information from the local government officials as the latter are more comfortable dealing with men and are not sensitized on gender.

Enabling systems

There were also a few system related limitations, which point to the need for gender responsive budgeting practices to be introduced in the panchayati raj department. First, all states reported that the honorarium for elected representatives was not much, which was not a motivation for a woman who would not otherwise go so much to the taluka like a male elected representative. Thus, there had to be added incentive for elected women representatives to go to the taluka. The lack of transport facilities and inadequate transport costs provided for going to the taluka/block office were additional deterrents. All sarpanches reported having to travel daily to the block office without being provided compensation for this. While this was still possible for a male elected representative, it proved a much bigger obstacle for women. In fact, in all states, panchayat officials also suggested providing for better transport facilities/reimbursement to elected women representatives.

Box 11: Enablers and disablers for active elected women representatives

Key enablers for active EWRs	Limitations/disablers for EWRs
➢ Support of the family ➢ Support of SHG women ➢ Presence of facilitating agency, mainly CSOs ➢ Local commitment and capacity building ➢ Women panchayat secretaries and extension officers	➢ Sarpanch based PRIs (neglect of ward members and territorial constituency representatives) ➢ Low honorarium ➢ Lack of transport facilities/ inadequate transport costs for going to black office ➢ Lack of effective devolution ➢ Lack of recognition

It is also especially important to integrate gender in decentralized planning, budgeting and implementation processes as without this even the best intentioned of policies may not be able to take off at the grass roots level. However, it also emerges that rather than a separate approach to gender-based planning, gender analysis needs to be incorporated in the regular planning process itself as otherwise there is a tendency to look at it as an additional burden and also the resource allocation for these plans are seen as additional requirements (UNDP, 2014). Thus, for the decentralization process to be gender inclusive, it would require having strong gender entry points, continuing strategic inputs and monitoring indicators for measuring the gender responsiveness of the outcomes.

Gender responsiveness /accountability of PRIs

Formal adoption of gender responsive budgeting at the PRI level

The gender responsive budgeting (GRB) processes which acknowledge the gender patterns in the society focus on including a gender lens at all levels of policy and budget making and highlight the need to allocate money to address gender discriminations and are thus recommended as an appropriate tool for engendering the decentralization process. This has already been adopted in most of the study states and at the national level and thus has a clear mandate.

Many GRB processes and tools available at the international and national levels can be used to further strengthen the decentralization processes. In fact, a review of the entry points tools promoted by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development shows that most of them, whether spatial mapping, GRB checklists, outcome budgeting or gender audit, all have a strong component of decentralization and local applicability (Handbook on GRB for Central Ministries and Departments, 2015). The fact that participatory processes have been emphasized at all levels of the Five-Step Framework for GRB also signifies its compatibility with decentralization.

GRB tools also tend to focus on situational analysis, need based planning and budgeting, which are important steps of decentralization. In fact, the key strategy of GRB is to identify women's needs and respond to them as part of the planning process; this can be achieved only at the local level. Situational analysis and needs assessment are the most vital steps for any GRB to be actually effective. Unless done at the local level, any situational analysis of needs assessment is bound to throw up macro-level aggregations, often concealing the actual concerns of women. Also, in the absence of systematic gender data collection and research, participatory needs assessment and local level demand articulation become the most authenticate sources of information on which policies and programmes should be based. The study thus recommends a range of GRB strategies and tools which can be applied to local democracy to strengthen the decentralization and gender equality mandate of the Constitution.

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has already mandated the need to take GRB to zilla panchayats. Now states need to create a mandate for GRB at all levels of PRIs. The state Departments of Panchayati Raj should formally adopt GRB by issuing a comprehensive directive towards this. It should include the creation of institutional mechanisms for GRB within the PRI framework, creating systems for making allocations for women visible in the PRI planning and budgeting processes, especially GPDP and FFC provisions and making provisions for unfunded gender mandates.

Institutionalizing capacity building for gender

It is well recognized that the reservation policy has enabled the representation of women in the elected local governments. However, while, there is a significant improvement in the participation and influence of these elected women representatives in the local governance process, a lot more remains to be done. Building the capacity of elected women representatives has emerged as the key strategy for pursuing this. However, the study found that the process of capacity building of elected women representatives is still not institutionalized. Not only is the outreach of the training limited to only the sarpanch but the content is not customized to meet the needs of the elected women representatives. The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj as well as SIRDs and CSOs in many states have developed participatory training modules for women representatives[18]. However, these are still not being used regularly. It is important to convert these modules into a training calendar at the SIRD level to ensure that all elected women representatives undergo at least one or two modules while a few are able to undertake the complete training process. This is important for elected women representatives as they require continuous training support.

A major lesson emerging from the study is ensuring that these trainings are not limited to women sarpanches but are planned for other ward members and territorial constituency members. This requires a high level of funding, which will need to be pursued by the state governments in addition to the funds provided by the Government of India. The current strategy of states providing the staff and infrastructure support to SIRDs while the programme costs come from the Government of India is a major limitation to having a larger capacity building plan and thwarts the participation of women most. The strategy followed by Karnataka to have SATCOM trainings needs to be streamlined for elected women representatives as it is seen that women’s participation is higher in these trainings.

Another limitation for this process is the availability of master trainers and resource groups. Gender and gender responsive budgeting are sensitive subjects and require a higher focus for developing the resource cadre. The current approach of having one or two trainings for master trainers does not seem to be effective. There needs to be a more systematic process for selection and training of master trainers. Further, it also needs to be ensured that the SIRDs have some kind of a collaborative partnership with these trainers so that they can also provide the necessary handholding support in the field to the elected women representatives. The NRLM model of national and state resource groups should be looked at to develop a similar model for PRIs.

The NRLM strategy of community resource persons should also be explored for training and building the capacities of elected women representatives. Madhya Pradesh has already begun this experiment by training self-help group women leaders on the GPDP. However, states can explore the possibility of creating a pool of such resource persons not only from the self-help groups but territorial constituency members and active former elected women representatives.

Wherever self-help group or village organization members are active the elected women representatives get more support and the gram sabhas too have better participation from women.

[18] NIRD&PR has also developed a detailed participatory training manual on “Promoting women’s political leadership and gender responsive governance in collaboration with UN Women” available at http://www.panchayatgyan.gov.in/documents/30336/0/1+ToT+Manual+English+nirdpr+unw+mopr_compress.pdf/b9fdb72e-33fe-48cf-a09b-0bb12159fcb9 and another on gender sensitization for NRLM which is available at http://www.nird.org.in/nird_docs/nrlm/nrlmhandbookSensitisation050716.pdf

Targeting self-help group and village organization leaders for capacity building on local democracy and gender responsive budgeting should thus be a focused strategy of all states. This can prove a successful strategy as has been seen in the case of Kudumbashree in Kerala. Each state should thus have a systematic and institutionalized linkage between elected women representatives and self-help groups/village organization members.

Another important yet neglected area of capacity building is the training of other elected representatives and PRI officials on gender mainstreaming and gender responsive budgeting processes. The study showed that there was hardly any focus on training elected representatives and PRI officials on these issues. More important is that rather than have only input based trainings linked with a particular subject as in gender mainstreaming in the GPDP, the focus should be on gender sensitization of all elected representatives and PRI officials. Participatory modules already available for such trainings (for example, some developed by SIRD, Rajasthan) can be reviewed and recommended for such trainings to be undertaken at a large scale.

All these actions, however, requires a high level of funding support which can be a big issue if the Government of India reduces the support for PRI trainings post the FFC and the states are not yet prepared to supplement the funds.

Engagement of external facilitators

The increased capacity building, especially of self-help group members would also help cross another critical gender gap in the decentralization process – the participation of women in gram sabhas. Currently, the gram panchayats with active self-help group members have a higher participation in the gram sabha. Thus focused targeting of self-help group members will help improve women's participation further. However, the quality of the gram sabha also needs to be improved to enable people's and in particular, women's participation in the real sense. While some initiatives have already been taken by the state governments, especially on palli and ward sabhas and fixing dates to support the process, various stakeholders recommend two vital actions to strengthen the gram sabhas.

First, there needs to be some budgetary allocations for conducting the gram sabha. While some of this can come directly from the PRI's own funds, it is necessary for the state government to issue guidelines on this so that the gram panchayats are clear on how to use their funds for the gram sabha and do not face rejection of expenses by the block accountant or audit queries.

Second, processes need to be created to ensure local agenda setting and mobilization. This needs to be externally facilitated for some time to ensure streamlining of the process. A review of the gram sabha initiatives shows that wherever an active civil society organization or local agency has taken the lead for some period of time, the results are lasting and the gram sabha participation is higher. Though this is well recognized it is not yet institutionalized as there is no state support for such action and most work happens with funding from multinational agencies and is often limited on time and the geographical scope of the project. The Panchayati Raj Department, in line with the mother NGO approach of the National Rural Health Mission, could identify an agency in each state and district to facilitate this process.

Statutory status for mahila sabhas and women component plan in the FFC

This is especially essential for mahila sabhas if the same is to be institutionalized in the states. The facilitation process, in addition to mobilization, will also be helpful in introducing tools for local agenda setting for women and demonstrating systems to link gram sabha debates with outputs and women's agendas. These processes, especially the mahila sabhas can also be strengthened further if they are given a statutory status and linked with the GPDP processes. In addition, states can also use the experience of the women component plan approach of Kerala to allocate a women's component within the FFC allocations (the same can also be recommended to the Fifteenth Finance Commission) so that there is a specific focus on allocating funds for women's priorities that have emerged from the mahila sabhas. The latter actually could become the first step towards promoting gender responsive budgeting in PRIs.

Institutional mechanisms

A key step towards mainstreaming gender in the PRIs is to create institutional mechanisms for the same at multiple levels. It is important that whichever institutional mechanism is adopted, it is multi-stakeholder based with panchayat officials, line departments, elected representatives, women activists, academics and representatives from the community on board. Based on a review of various gender responsive budgeting mechanisms and institutional structure of PRIs in the six study states the following institutions are being suggested.

The first and most important mechanism is the formation of a gender justice standing committee at the gram panchayat, taluka panchayat and zilla panchayat levels. This has already been initiated in Karnataka as part of the social justice committees. This committee should be headed by the sarpanch and have the mandate of creating awareness and monitoring of actions to prevent gender-based violence, including child marriage, sex selection, domestic violence, etc. In addition to the standing committee, a gender watch group comprising self-help group, village organization and block federation women members, and former elected women representatives should be constituted with a mandate to facilitate and monitor the gender responsive decentralized planning, budgeting and implementation processes. These gender watch groups can also be entrusted with the responsibility of undertaking a gender audit of the GPDPs and panchayat level activities. It is, however, important that these committees are not only formed on paper but equipped with a proper mandate and subsequently supported with related capacity building and handholding measures.

Further, in line with the recommendations of the Ministry of Women and Child Development, all zilla panchayats should have a gender budget cell (GBC) with gender experts from within the district officials (but not limited to women and child development officials), civil society representatives, academics and women leaders of the district level self-help group federations. The GBCs should also be adequately equipped with dedicated human resources and finances to be able to undertake research, evaluation, workshops, trainings, awareness activities, etc. essential to promote gender responsive budgeting within the district. The GBC can also serve as a technical support group in planning, policy formulation and implementation of gender issues at the gram panchayat and taluka panchayat levels. These GBCs can actually be a group of gender focal points appointed for each block/taluka or cluster panchayats to further strengthen the decentralization processes.

Whatever institutions are put in place, it is important that they have clear action points and are given enough authority to fulfill those commitments.

GRB entry points for planning and resource allocation (GPDP and FFC)

Based on previous experiences of gender responsive budgeting at the local level and a review of the current GPDP and FFC processes, there are two major emerging strategies to promote gender responsive planning and budgeting in PRIs:

a) The women component plan approach and

b) Engendering the planning process

It is also, however, important to note here that these strategies are not mutually exclusive but are required to complement each other. The idea is to create a mandate which compels the system to plan and budget for women and use that mandate to engender the overall planning process.

As has been discussed earlier, many states have already issued directions for the use of FFC funds for specific purposes. This, on the one hand, has reduced the untied nature of the grants and on the other, limited the scope of innovation, especially on social and gender issues. It is thus recommended that the guidelines should be made more gender responsive by introducing a mandate of 30 per cent women component plan. This should ideally be made applicable for the whole GPDP process but specifically for FFC and SFC funds. The powers to plan for these funds should be with the women voters and the mahila sabha should approve the funds. This will, on the one hand, provide a statutory status to the mahila sabhas, while on the other create systems for involving women in the planning process. In addition to this, the states can also issue a separate guideline highlighting the planning process for these funds and indicating the list of social and gender development issues (including infrastructure for women) that can be undertaken using these funds. Based on the Kerala experience, which this recommendation derives from, this does provide women with a larger say in the local planning process. Also, as suggested, this should not be treated as a separate planning exercise but the processes should be integrated within the existing GPDP processes. This will ensure that not only do women have access to additional resources but the entire plan becomes more gender responsive. The MoPR can also consider introducing this as an additional conditionality in suggestions to the Fifteenth Finance Commission.

The GPDP process does not provide for special focus on women's concerns as part of the budget planning and costless activities are not actually planned for in detail at the gram panchayat level. Generally, basic amenities like street lights, better drainage and solid waste management benefit women too. However, there has been no further role of women in implementing these activities and thus their concerns cannot be specifically addressed. Another critical area to be considered here is the concept of gender analysis and review of the participatory plans being developed. It is well known that the needs of women are different from those of men and studies have also shown how the priorities of women panchayat representatives can be different from that of men. This is often because of the limited understanding of gender at the local level and even more limited capacities on gender responsive planning. Also based on the gender review of the GPDP guidelines and field level processes, the following steps (see Table 15) should be included in the guidelines to make them more gender responsive.

Table 15: Suggestions for making GPDP process more gender responsive

GPDP Processes	Opportunity	Achievements	Gaps	Recommendations
Environment generation	Space for reaching out to communities directly and encourage their participation	Most states used mass media to reach out to communities Most ERs/EWRs had also participated in the GPDP related gram sabha Comparatively higher levels of awareness regarding GPDP as also participation in GPDP related gram sabhas In Karnataka, there was a focus on mobilizing 20 SHG women as local facilitators.	No specific reaching out to women Women participation was reported less in gram sabha Mahila sabhas either not conducted or not publicized (also not formal part of GPDP guidelines)	Reaching out to women and the marginalized communities to create awareness on GPDP and FFC resources, especially through training of SHG members on GPDP and involving them as facilitators Exclusive mahila sabhas to be conducted for GPDP Mahila sabha resolutions to be documented and put in public arena through plan plus

Capacity building	Important for ERs from marginalized communities and EWRs	All panchayat secretaries and most sarpanches know importance of GPDP and the process to be followed Many EWRs know about the GPDP processes	Current focus more on training functionaries than ERs for GPDP. Most women and ERs from marginalized communities interviewed could not recollect participation in any such trainings	Special emphasis/ component for training of EWRs and those from marginalized sections in the GPDP guidelines itself Training on gender mainstreaming in GPDP should be made compulsory for all panchayat secretaries and sarpanches. This should include gender sensitization as well as gender responsive planning and budgeting trainings
Institutional mechanisms	In most states, there is provision for women representation in the standing committees.	In Telangana and Andhra Pradesh, there was a specific inclusion of women VO leaders in the functional committees.	Women committee members are not active	Specific training focus for women in committees
Resource allocation	Good amount of untied funds from FFC and SFC for planning and also sharing of resource envelope with PRIs	Sarpanch and active ward members aware of FFC and SFC allocations GPs have higher stake in planning for these funds in most states Funds transferred directly to GP accounts and mostly on time	Low gender development is not a criteria for higher resource allocation among districts No specific resource allocation for women No specific mention in the guidelines for the plans to be gender responsive Social/ gender development parameters included mainly as costless activities	Allocate adequate resources for social and gender development activities. The guidelines, especially where indicating sectoral composition, should a 30 per cent women component. Specific 10 per cent allocations for awareness activities on social and gender issues (costless/ low cost activities identified as part of GPDP)

Situation analysis and need assessment	Data collection on specific indicators using format and situational analysis using PRA tools It is expected that the situation analysis will capture data on gender parameters.	PRA tools used in some states, where facilitation was available Most GPDPs have some basic GP level data Karnataka had detailed format to capture situational analysis and some questions on gender related parameters	Lack of facilitation, especially on gender and social issues in PRA No mention of separate gender analysis There was no clarity even on the sector-based needs assessment on how to do gender analysis nor was it a priority No space to separately record women's needs	Each gram panchayat should have a gender development report to reflect on Gender aware PRA tools like Moser framework and spatial mapping should be promoted Separate guidelines and format for reporting on gender parameters and undertaking gender analysis Space/format for gender needs to be documented
Visioning exercise	Space for long term goal/ indicators Need based plan development	Although not so well done, most GPDPs do have some goal/outcome indicator Telangana has developed a draft toolkit for having gender goals as part of the vision and outcome indicators for each functional committee	Less focus on social issues in vision exercise and not much link of vision with activity plan There is no talk of gender-based violence, not even child sex ratio except in costless activities	Each GPDP should have a gender and development outcome with clear indicators and activity plan
GPDP finalization	Ward sabhas to put up demands and gram sabha has to do the prioritization Final approval by gram sabha – no major changes possible	Women have been able to put up their infrastructure demand, especially for drinking water in ward sabhas and gram sabhas	There was no gender focus in the final prioritization process in the guidelines or in practice Sometimes priorities of women highlighted in ward sabhas may have taken a back foot in the gram sabhas where women's participation is less	GPDP should have a separate women's component, which is planned and approved by the mahila sabha Separate problem prioritization and matrix ranking exercises should be done

Conclusion

One can say that the policy space created for representation of women in local democracy has borne results. This is not only seen in the higher number of elected women representatives which is mandated but the recognition that these women will not be there without reservation. The activeness of the elected women representatives in understanding the mandate of the panchayats and their own role in the same is also increasing. However, there still needs to be a more proactive enabling environment and capacity building support provided to the elected women for them to function effectively. Further, it is also important to increase the participation and engagement of women in general beyond the election process, in decision-making forums like the gram sabha and other participatory planning processes. In fact, a lot needs to be done to improve the gender responsiveness of the planning and budgeting processes. The FFC and subsequent GPDP process have provided the necessary space and opportunity for increasing participatory planning and budgeting processes. However, these need to be made more gender responsive, both by increasing the participation of women in these processes and creating systems for panchayats to deliberate and act on gender concerns. Even while addressing primary infrastructure and service delivery needs, the panchayats tend to be gender blind in the sense that there is no thought given for women's needs. This needs to be the first step pursued as part of future GPDP processes. The next stage would be to get the panchayats to address more pressing social concerns, especially violence against women. Both these can only happen through increased capacity building, creation of systems for gender appraisals and gender responsive allocations.

ANNEXURES

1 SoLD Framework for Assessment of Local Democracy

Democratic Principle And Mediating Values	
Basic Democratic Principles : ➢ Popular Control Over Public Decision –Making And Decision Makers ➢ Equality Between Citizens In The Exercise Of That Control	
Mediation Value	**Description**
Representation	Representation ,Achieved Through Regional, Provincial Or Local Elections And Polictical Parties Is The Rais On The Democratic Institutions And Processes .Representations Embodies The Rule By The People And The Different Tendencies Of Public Opinion
Participation	Participation Is A Necessary Condition For Democracy And Can Be Facilitated By Both Instutionalized And Informal Mechanism.it Is Only Through Participation That Citizens Can Elect And Guide Their Representative And Play A Role In Shaping Local Policies And Practicies.
Authorization	Authorization Is Herently Linked To Free And Fair Electrol Choice Local Election Allow Citizens To Authorize P Ublic Representatives And Official To Represnet Their Intrest In A Local Legistature Or Other Elected Body ,Or As Delegated To Other Public Actors/ Authorities As A Local Level.
Legitimacy	Democratic Legitimacy Is The Popular Acceptance And Recognition Of The Power And Authority Which Elected Local Representatives Extercise Through Their Decisions And Actions .It Validates The Acceptibality Of The Rules And Processes Of Democracy And Confirms Whether The Rules And Practices Are Indeed Respected And Recognized By The Local Population.
Responsiveness	Responsiveness Reflects The Way Local Government Respond To The Needs Claims And Policy Preference At Citizens.it Refers To The Grounds For Decision Making And The Extent To Which Public Policies And Their Implementation At The Local Level Reflects The Will Of The People.
Accountability	Accountabilty Refer To The Relationship Between The Local Population And Their Representative , At The Mechanism S Through Which Citizens Can Ensure That Decision Makers Are Answerable For Decisions Made, Such As In The Area Of Public Service Delivery , And Actions Taken On The Citizens ' Behalf . It Has Horizontal (Sepration Of Power) And Vertical (Citizen –Elite) Dimensions.
Transparency	Transparency Refers To The Level Of Openess Predictability And Answerablity Of Local Representative And Institutions .Transparecy Is Critical For Citizens To Engage In Democratic Processes, Monitor Public Officials, And Demand Responsiveness And Accountablity.
Solidarity	Solidarity Refers To The Ties In A Society That Bind Different People To One Another , Expressing Social Bonds Rather Than Autonomous Individual Ties. Solidarity Reflects The Degree Of Social Cohesion Within A Local Unit Equality Amongest Individuals, As Well As Relationships Between Different Level Of Society ,So That All Who Are Living Withing The Local Unit Can Access And Enjoy Their Rights

ANNEXURES

2 List of Documents Reviewed at State Level[19]

1. State Panchayat Act
2. Review/studies on State PR Act
3. Executive orders related to devolution of functions, funds, functionaries, women's participation, decentralized planning and GPDP processes, FFC
4. Data on PRIs, elections and elected representatives' composition over the years
5. Data on trainings of PRIs for the last election cycle (or at least past three years) – type of 1.trainings and number of participants covered by sex disaggregation
6. SIRD annual reports/evaluation report
7. Activity mapping exercise report
8. Latest SFC report
9. SFC recommendations acceptance/ rejection report by state government
10. Transfer of funds (allocation) from state to panchayats (at various levels) in past three years
11. Actual transfer of funds (release) for select sector related department (as suggested by state) to panchayats in past three years
12. Best practices on PRIs: reports of state government submitted to Ministry of Panchayati Raj (especially for awards)
13. Panchayat related research studies by SIRD/Department of Panchayati Raj
14. Reports/studies by UN agencies and CSOs on PRIs in the state
15. State level panchayat planning guidelines before GPDP (for DPCs, decentralized planning, MGNREGS, IPPE, etc)
16. GPDP guidelines of the state, especially the formats in which the data is to be submitted
17. GPDP training manuals
18. GPDP review meeting minutes
19. Actual FFC fund transfer to panchayats at state level
20. Utilization status of both basic and performance grants at gram panchayat level and at state level
21. GPDP plans of select gram panchayats
22. Actual fund received and utilization status of FFC (and overall funds) for select gram panchayats

[19] Review for each state was done based on the availability of data/reports in the state.

ANNEXURES

3 Key Informants Interviewed

Sr. No.	Name	Organisation	Date
1.	Yogesh Kumar	Samarthan, Madhya Pradesh	1st December, 2016 1st August, 2017
2.	Pallavi Mali	Sanket, Madhya Pradesh	1st December, 2016 1st August, 2017
3.	Nesar Ahmed	Budget Analysis Rajasthan Centre	8th December, 2016 18th April, 2017
4.	Subrat Das	Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA), New Delhi	9th December, 2016
5.	P.K. Mohanty	Independent expert, Hyderabad	14th December, 2016
6.	Uppalli Mohanty	Centre for Youth and Social Development, Odisha	20th December, 2016
7.	Yamini Mishra	UN Women, New Delhi	20th December, 2016
8.	Jayalakshmi	NIRD&PR, Hyderabad	23rd December, 2016
9.	Jawed Khan	CBGA, New Delhi	29th December, 2016
10.	Sakshi Saini	Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi	3rd January, 2017
11.	Rukmini Tanka	Consultant, UN Women, New Delhi	13th January, 2017
12.	Anita Brandon	SIRD, Rajasthan	19th January, 2017 28th February, 2017
13.	Anita Nazare	Government official, Karnataka	21st January, 2017
14.	Jyostna Jha	Centre for Budget and Policy Studies, Karnataka	23rd January, 2017
15.	Yamini Aiyar	Accountability Initiative, New Delhi	3rd February, 2017
16.	Priyanka	Accountability Initiative, New Delhi	3rd February, 2017
17.	Vinod Vyasulu	Jindal School of Public Policy	3rd February, 2017
18.	Lakshmi	Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad	7th February, 2017
19.	Jyoti	Centre for Good Governance, Hyderabad	7th February, 2017
20.	Sharma	Consultant-Panchayats	21th February, 2017
21.	Neeraj Jha	Consultant-Panchayats, UNICEF	27th February, 2017
22.	Meena	Joint Secretary, Panchayat Department, Government of Rajasthan	27th February, 2017
23.	Sanjay Singh	Executive engineer, Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Rajasthan	18th April, 2017
24.	Niranjan Sharma, Deen Dayal Sharma	Social Action for Human Resources Development, Alwar	19th April, 2017
25.	Kavita Mishra	Block development officer, taluka panchayat, Neemrana, Alwar, Rajasthan along with other taluka staff	19th April, 2017
26.	N. Madhuri	SIRD, Telangana	23rd May, 2017

27.	S. Seshadhari	SIRD, Telangana	23rd May, 2017
28.	G.V. Surya Rao	GPDP, nodal officer, Government of Telangana	24th May, 2017
29.	Narayan Reddy	Panchayat expert, Government of Telangana	24th May, 2017
30.	Hilda Grace	Centre for Rural Studies, Local NGO, Anantapur	
31.	Sudhakara Rao	Additional Commissioner Panchayat, FAC, Government of Andhra Pradesh	12th June, 2017
32.	C. Balaji	SPMU-Panchayats, Government of Andhra Pradesh	12th June, 2017
33.	Abdul Haleem	SIRD Andhra Pradesh	12th June, 2017
34.	Saroj K Dash	SIRD, Odisha	29th June, 2017
35.	Amita Patra	SIRD, Odisha	29th June, 2017
36.	H.K. Prasad	Director, Panchayati Raj, Government of Odisha	30th June, 2017
37.	Shivani	Joint Director, Panchayati Raj, Government of Madhya Pradesh	6th July, 2017
38.	Vinod	Technical consultant, Panchayati Raj, Government of Madhya Pradesh	6th July, 2017
39.	H.B. Sen	KSS, Raisen (Local NGO working on panchayats and dalit rights)	1st August, 2017
40.	Sourabh Dutta	UNICEF consultant for GPDP to the Department of Panchayati Raj, Madhya Pradesh	2nd August, 2017
41.	Anjan Jena	CORE, Local NGO, Odisha	22nd August, 2017
42.	J S. Sahoo	Block development officer, Kankadahad block, Dhenkanal district along with block progressive assistant; Gram panchayat extension officer; and assistant engineer, Kankadahad block, Dhenkanal district	23rd August, 2017
43.	G.S. Ganesh Prasad	Deputy director, ANSSIRD, Karnataka	30th August, 2017
44.	G. Malikaarrjuna Swamy	Faculty, ANSSIRD, Karnataka	30th August, 2017
45.	B.J. Ravindra	Faculty, ANSSIRD, Karnataka	30th August, 2017

ANNEXURES

4 List of Gram Panchayats Visited and Interviews Conducted

State	District	Block/taluka	Gram panchayats visited	Interviews/ meetings
Andhra Pradesh	Anantapur	Bukkarayasamudram	Bukkarayasamudram	Sarpanch and ward members
		Atmakuru	Atmakuru	Sarpanch and ward members
Karnataka	Mysuru	Mysuru	Srirampura	Sarpanch and ward Members
		Peripatna	Malangi	Sarpanch and ward members
Madhya Pradesh	Raisen	Gairatganj	Gadi	Meeting in SC habitation sarpanch pati
			Alampur	Women's meeting Women ward members, sarpanch pati
	Sagar	Sagar	Badkuva	Up sarpanch, male ward members, sarpanch pati,
Rajasthan	Alwar	Neemrana	Majra	Women's meeting, sarpanch and ward members
		Neemrana	Kanhavas	sarpanch and ward members
Odisha	Dhenkanal	Kankadahad	Kantakal	Gram panchayat meeting, sarpanch and ward members
			Bam	Sarpanch, female ward members
Telangana	Wanaparthy	Wanaparphy	Mantepally	Village meeting, sarpanch, ward members and functional committee members
	Mahbubnagar	Moosapet	Nijalapur	Gram panchayat meeting, sarpanch, ward members, functional committee members
		Maddera	Pallerla	Sarpanch, female ward member

ANNEXURES

5 Directives by Central Government on Strengthening PRIs

Agency	Panchayats and CSS	Decentralized Planning	Devolution of 3Fs
Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR)	➢ Completion of activity mapping by the states by April 1, 2005 ➢ Report on "Modifying the guidelines of CSS for identifying domain for PRIs" submitted to Cabinet Secretariat on January 22, 2008 ➢ Detailed advisory on agreed minutes based on report circulated on Jan 19, 2009 detailing the role and responsibilities of PRIs in CSS and ACA and to put in systems in place by April 1, 2009	➢ States to constitute DPCs in all districts by April 1, 2005 ➢ V. Ramachandran Committee on Planning at grass roots level, 2006 ➢ National conference on chairpersons/CEOs of DPC in January 2009	➢ Uphold the spirit of 243G through devolution only to panchayats and not to parallel structures ➢ Resolution for inclusion of PRI component in the budget of each state/ central government departments by end of fiscal 2004-2005 ➢ Measuring state performance through Devolution Index ➢ Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS) ➢ Advisory issued on transitional and permanent arrangements with a definite timeline for panchayat functionaries on October 13, 2009 ➢ Expert committee on leveraging panchayats for efficient delivery of goods and services, April 2013
Cabinet Secretariat	➢ Letter to all ministries operating CSS to reflect in their schemes the import of Constitutional provisions in letter and spirit within two months, issued in November 2004		

(Erstwhile) Planning Commission	➢ Circular to supplement MoPR advisory on CSS issued on April 1, 2009	➢ Approach paper for Eleventh Plan stresses on importance of grass roots planning and for need to base state plans on district plans. ➢ Based on V. Ramachandran Committee Report, guidelines for district planning (for XI FYP) was issued on August 25, 2006 ➢ Manual for integrated district planning prepared in collaboration with MoPR with focus on participatory district planning processes, 2009	
Central Finance Commissions			➢ Allocation of funds by X, XI and XII Finance Commission ➢ 13th Finance Commission recommended a total share of 2.28 per cent of the central divisible pool for local governments with strict conditions to prevent diversion of the funds by state government.

ANNEXURES

6 Categorization of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs)

S. No.	State	Ewr Position	Self Repre-sentition During Interview	Vocal	Understanding Of Role Of Panchayat	Under-standing Of Role Of Self	Participa-tion In Gp Meeting	Had Infor-mation Of Processes Followed By Gp	Articulation Of Problems At The Gp Level	Provide Information On Activities Undertake By The Gp	Provide Infor-mationrelated To Processes Of Gpdp /Ffc	Had Taken Up Some Action As The Ewr	Total
1	Andhra Predesh	Sarpanch 1	1	1	1	1	1			1			6
2		Sarpanch 2	1	1	1							1	4
3		Ward Mem-ber 1	1	1	1							1	4
4		Ward Mem-ber 2	1	1	1							1	4
5	Karnataka	Sarpanch 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	10
6		Sarpanch 2	1	1	1		1						4
7		Ward Mem-ber 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			1	8
8		Ward Mem-ber 2	1	1	1	1	1						5
9		Ward Mem-ber 3	1	1	1	1							4
10	Madhya Pradesh	Sarpanch 1	0				1						1

S. No.	State	Ewr Position	Self Repre-sentition During Interview	Vocal	Understanding Of Role Of Panchayat	Under-standing Of Role Of Self	Participa-tion In Gp Meeting	Had Infor-mation Of Processes Followed By Gp	Articulation Of Problems At The Gp Level	Provide Information On Activities Undertake By The Gp	Provide Infor-mationrelated To Processes Of Gpdp /Ffc	Had Taken Up Some Action As The Ewr	Total
11		Sarpanch 2	0										0
12		Ward Mem-ber 1	1		1								2
13		Ward Mem-ber 2	1	1			1						3
14	Odisha	Sarpanch 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1		1		8
15		Ward Mem-ber 1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1				7
16		Ward Mem-ber 2	1			1	1		1				4
17	Rajasthan	Sarpanch 1	1		1	1	1		1	1			6
18		Ward Mem-ber 1	1	1		1			1			1	5
19		Ward Mem-ber 2	1		1	1			1				4
20		Ward Mem-ber 3	1	1		1							3
21	Telangana	Sarpanch 1	1	1	1		1		1	1	1		7
22		Ward Mem-ber 1	1	1	1	1	1			1			6
23		Ward Mem-ber 2	1		1	1	1		1			1	6

Number of points for each criterion: 1; Established EWR: 7 or more points; Emerging EWR: 4 to 6 points; Enabling EWR: Less than 3 points

ANNEXURES

7 Women's Prioritization of Problems for Ward No 3 in Majra Gram Panchayat of Rajasthan

Problems	Name not being in BPL list	Non availability of cheap grains from PDS for few homes	Waterlogging due to lack of cleaning of drains	Lack of water facilities	Liquor shop	Domestic violence	Dowry issues	Irregularity in village cleaning	No water supply and electricity facilities in Anganwadi	Lack of proper roads resulting in water logging
Name not being in BPL List	X	PDS	Drain cleaning	Water	Liquor	Violence	Dowry	Cleaning	ANW Facility	Road repair
Non-availability of cheap grains from PDS for few homes		X	Drain cleaning	Water	Liquor	Violence	Dowry	Cleaning	ANW Facility	Road repair
Water entering homes due to drains not being cleaned			X	Water	Drain cleani--ng	Drain cleaning	Drain cleaning	Drain cleaning	ANW Facility	Road repair
Lack of water facilities				X	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water	Water
Liquor Shop					X	Liquor	Liquor	Drain cleaning	ANW Facility	Road repair
Domestic violence						X	Dowry	Cleaning	ANW Facility	Road repair
Dowry problems							X	Cleaning	ANW Facility	Road repair
Irregularity in village cleaning								X	Cleaning	Road repair
No water supply and electricity facilities in ANW									X	Road repair
Lack of proper roads resulting in waterlogging										X

Bibliography

Ananda S Millard, A. B. Learning from Phase One: Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Governance in India and South Asia. UN Women Multi-country Office, New Delhi, n.d.

India, Government of Rajasthan. Annual Report of Department of Panchayati Raj 2015-2016.

Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development, Government of Karnataka. Annual Report 2016-2017.

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability. A Study of PRIs in Rajasthan and Kerala. New Delhi, 2010.

Chakraborthy L. Fiscal Decentralization and Gender (n.d.).

Chakraborty P. Finance Commission's Recommendations and Restructured Fiscal Space. Economic and Political Weekly, March 21, 2015.

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability. Comparative Analysis of Priorities of State Budgets for 2015-2016. New Delhi, 2016.

India, Government of India. Convergance Report for Central Sector Schemes, 2008.

Centre for Women's Development Studies. Women in Panchayats. New Delhi, India, 1999.

The Hunger Project. Defining Participatory Local Governance, February 5, 2013. Available from: https://localdemocracy.net/2013/02/05/defining-participatory-local-democracy/ (accessed December 5, 2016).

United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Social justice in an Open World: The Role of United Nations. New York, 2006.

India, Ministry of Finance, Government of India. Government Resolution No: 13 (32) FFC/FCD/2015-16. Guidelines for the implementation of recommendation of Fourteenth Finance Commission (FC-XIV) with regard to local bodies grant. New Delhi, October 8, 2015.

Drage, J. Women in Local Government in Asia and the Pacific: A Comparative Analysis of Thirteen Countries. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, 2001.

Evertzen, A., Gender and Local Governance. SNV-Netherlands Development Organization, April 2001.

FGS, Evaluation of UN Women's Work on Gender Responsive Budgeting in India. UN Women MCO. New Delhi, July 2012.

India, Government of India. Fourteenth Finance Commission Report. 2015.

United Nations Development Programme. From Reservation to Participation: Capacity Building of Elected Women Representatives and Functionaries of PRIs.

Goutam Sadhu, C. B. Factors Influencing Participation of Women in Rajasthan. International Journal of Science and Research, 3 (11) (November 2014).

India, Government of India. 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1993.

India, Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India. Handbook on GRB for Central ministries and departments, 2015.

Jiménez, B. K. State of Local Democracy Assessment Framework. International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, 2013.

United Nations Development Programme and Planning Commission of India. Making local actions matter: Good practices in decentralized planning, implementation and monitoring, 2014.

Mani Shankar Aiyer. Expert committee on leveraging panchayats for efficient delivery of public goods and services. Government of India, 2013.

India, Central Statistical Organization, Government of India. Men and Women in India. New Delhi, 2014.

Moolakkattu and Nair. Women Component Plan in Kerala: A Study of Five Panchayats, 2014.

Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Decentralised planning. Available from: http://www.panchayat.gov.in/gram-panchayat-development-plan (accessed November 6, 2016).

India, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. Manual for planning for gram panchayat development plan, D.O No. M-11015/249/2015_CB. New Delhi, March 2, 2016.

India, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. Model guidelines for decentralised planning at gram panchayat (GPDP), GO-M-11015/249/2015-DPE. New Delhi, November 4, 2015.

Mousumi Deka, D. L. Constraints of women's participation in panchayati raj institutions: A study in Kamrup district (rural) of Assam. International Journal of Advanced Research, 3 (3), July - September 2016.

Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Karnataka. Namma grama nammayojana: Status report, 2017.

Mathur, Shiv Charan. Need Assessment Study of Urban Local Bodies and Panchayati Raj Institutions. Social Policy Research Institute. Jaipur, 2011-2012.

United Nations Development Programme. Discussion Paper-1, Human Development Resource Centre, Decentralization in India: Challenges and Opportunities (n.d.).

Pranay Kotasthane, V. K. Impact of Fourteenth Finance Commission: Karnataka budget, 2015–2016. Economic and Political Weekly, L (46 and 47), November 21, 2015.

Putnam, R. Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy. Princeton University Press, 1993.

Raghunandan, T. R. India Infrastructure Report. Government of India, 2007.

Raj, M. O. Government resolution no G-39011/4/2015-FD, Utilization of grants based on the recommendations of the Fourteenth Finance Commission for meeting O&M and capital expenditure by gram panchayat. Government of India. December 16, 2015.

Reddy, G. R. Finance Commission proposes,the Union disposes. Economic and Political Weekly, I (26 & 27), June 27, 2015.

Reddy, Y. V. Fourteenth Finance Commission: Continuity, change and way forward. Economic and Political Weekly, I (21), May 23, 2015.

India, Controller and Auditor General of India. Report No. 4 of 2017, Madhya Pradesh, Audit Report on Local Bodies for the year ended 31 March 2016 (2017).

India, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. Road map on panchayats, 2012.

Round tables on panchayati raj institutions, 2004-2005.

Sahasranaman, A. Panchayat finances and the need for devolution. Economic and Political Weekly. 2012.

Sudha Pillai, Devolution of powers and the panchayats. July-September 2013. Available from: Inclusion: Mainstreaming the marginalized: http://inclusion.skoch.in/story/34/devolutionofpowersandthepanchayats334 (accessed February 7, 2017).

Tata Institute of Social Sciences. Devolution Index Report. Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India, 2015-2016.

The United Nations Development Fund for Women Evaluation Unit. UNIFEM's work on gender responsive budgeting, 2009.

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. Gender equality: Striving for justice in an unequal world, 2015.

Moily, V. Second Administrative Reforms Commission: Sixth report. Government of India, 2007.

Varshese, R. M., and Dr. D.Mavoothu. Political empowerment of women in Kerala through kudumbashree. International Journal of Advanced Research, 2014.

World Bank. Overview of Rural Decentralization in India- Volume 1, 2000.

Yuliani, Elizabeth Linda. Decentralization, deconcentration and devolution: what do they mean. Interlaken workshop on decentralization, 2004.