Decentralization Community
Update 90
February 2015

Community Activities | Updates | Announcements

Dear Members,

We are happy to share the 90th Update on Decentralization Community of Practice!

This update bring news on: constitution of three sub-groups within NITI Aayog; ISO certification of panchayats; creation of 10 new zila panchayat constituencies in Goa; Karnataka panchayats strengthened through innovative project and to get more spending freedom; gram panchayat elections in Maharashtra in 2015; panchayats to hold ownership of hydro-projects; Ministry to develop 10 gram panchayats as e-panchayats; Labour Ministry plans central scheme to track movement of migrant workers and delinking of eight schemes from central support.

We are also sharing some readings, web links and articles on: Decentralized Planning- Rhetoric versus Reality; A social role for NITI Aayog; Statistical Year Book-India 2014, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation and Users' Guide for Assessing Rule of Law in Public Administration and a Guidance Note for Assessing Rule of Law in Public Administration.

Members are requested to spread the word on upcoming Annual World Bank conference and IRMA's Management Development Programme. We also request members to share the details of the vacancy announcements and contribute to the ongoing query on: Role of PRIs in improving the health and nutritional services at village level and Drafting Public Interest Litigation for Effective Devolution of Powers to Panchayats.

We thank all the members who contributed towards this edition.

Hope you would find this edition useful.

Regards,
Naveen Das,
Resource Person,
Decentralization CoP, Solution Exchange

Community Activities

Ongoing Querries

➢ **QUERY: Role of PRIs in improving the health and nutritional services at village level. Experiences and Advice**

Most of the Central and State Government programmes are supposed to be implemented through panchayats at the village level. Since the upper castes are socially, culturally and economically powerful, they hold key positions in the village, which gives them the power to take decisions or influence the selection of beneficiaries under the government programmes. This prevents the selection of beneficiaries from SC and ST community for most of the beneficiary oriented schemes and also does not allow them from assessing the services, though most of the development programmes are meant for them.

Members of the decentralization community are requested to share their experience and examples on:

- What role can PRIs /Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition Committees play in bridging the gap between the existing healthcare providers and the people in need of services particularly the excluded groups during Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition (VHSN) days ?

- What are the parameters that need to be included while assessing the quality of the Health & Nutritional services of a village?

- What are the ways to assess/ investigate the access of services (Information, Physical, Financial and Social Capital) by the excluded community in a village

Please send your responses to se.decn.solutionexchange@un.net

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➢ **Drafting Public Interest Litigation for Effective Devolution of Powers to Panchayats. Advice and Examples**

Panchayats are meant to be autonomous institutions of self-government however they are treated as subordinate authorities at present. There is a wide variation in the devolution of powers to the panchayats across states. Further power, authority and responsibilities of Panchayats as envisaged in the Article 243G could not be exercised, as the State Governments were unable to empower them to collect taxes under Article 243H and Finance Commissions were formed under Article 243-I to initiate measures to improve financial position of Panchayats. Hence panchayats are not in a position to undertake the responsibilities in respect of items stated in Schedule XI of the Constitution. Also various Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), which are under the purview of Panchayats, are being directly implemented in a mission mode approach. There is a need for reviewing CSS to enable State Governments to devolve power and functions to PRIs. Such review can be enforced through Public Interest Litigation (PIL) to the Supreme Court highlighting the above issues. Members are requested to comment and share their insights on:

- Whether it is necessary to seek time bound directions from Supreme Court to the State Governments to implement the 73rd Constitutional amendment?

- What are the administrative advantages /disadvantages of implementing CSS through Societies instead of departments of state governments or through Panchayats?

- How many states have constituted Finance Commissions under article 243I? Are the findings of the State Finance Commissions constituted so far, available in the public domain under article-4 of RTI Act?

Read the full query here.
Read the responses here.

Please send your responses to se.decn.solutionexchange@un.net

Updates

News

From Resource Person

PM announces constitution of three sub-groups within NITI Aayog
The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, has announced that the NITI Aayog would constitute three sub groups of Chief Ministers on the following themes:
- Sub-group to study the 66 Centrally Sponsored Schemes and recommend which to continue, which to transfer to states, and which to cut down;
- Sub-group to recommend how NITI Aayog can promote skill development and creation of skilled manpower within states;

- Sub-group to decide on institutional mechanisms to be evolved, and technological inputs, for ensuring that commitment to Swachh Bharat becomes a part of our life in perpetuity;

Read more here

Budget 2015: Eight schemes delinked from Centre's support
The government has decided to delink eight Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS), including National e-Governance Plan, Backward Regions Grant Funds, Modernisation of Police Forces and Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyaan (RGPSA), from its support. As many as 24 Centrally Sponsored Schemes will run with the changed sharing pattern and 31 programmes will get full support of the Centre in 2015-16.
Read more here

Panchayats vying for ISO certification
Several grama panchayats in the Kerala are competing with one another to acquire certification from the International Organization for Standardization. With the government's focus on reforms targeting less-paper office, the Local Self-Government (LSG) Department is extending support for bringing 100 panchayats under the ISO class. The government has decided to distribute an incentive of about Rs. 1 lakh each to ISO-graded panchayats next month.
Read more here

Kollam is best district panchayat
Kollam district panchayat has been adjudged the best in the state for the year 2013-14. Malappuram and Thiruvananthapuram bagged the second and third positions. The awards were presented at the Panchayat Day Celebration held in Palakkad. The 30 panchayats which won ISO certifications were also honoured.
Read more here

Goa government creates 10 new zilla panchayat constituencies
As a preparation to the Zila Panchayat elections in March 2015, Goa government has redrawn the extent and limits of the 50 Zila panchayat (ZP) constituencies in the state by carving out at least 10 new constituencies and including villages irrespective of political limits. For south Goa zila panchayats, the number of constituencies has been increased from the earlier 20 to 25.
Read more here

UNICEF honoured with the IPE Global Development Sector Excellence Award
As part of the first of its kind Development Leadership Engagement activity, IPE Global, the largest Development Consulting firm of South-Asia, honoured UNICEF with the Development Sector Excellence Award 2015 in the Bilateral/Multilateral Donor Category. The event brought together some of the top representatives from, civil society organizations, government officials bilateral and multilateral agencies and academicians to discuss on subjects of interest to the development community
Read more here

Karnataka panchayats may get spending freedom; state to introduce Gram Panchayat Bill
The Karnataka government is set to introduce in the ongoing Assembly session Karnataka Panchayat Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2014. The bill, which may be renamed as Gram Swaraj Bill, is expected to strengthen the panchayat raj system with administrative experience, training, a separate cadre of officers and wider powers to the gram panchayats. An expert committee headed by Congress MLA K.R. Ramesh Kumar committee has recommended, among other things, that 30% of the state budget should be devolved through the gram panchayats and half of these funds should be untied and left to need-based spending on the part of the panchayats.
Read more here

Karnataka panchayats strengthened by management principles (by Madhavi Rajadhyaksha, Avantika Foundation, Bangalore)

An innovative project named **Gram Panchayat Organisation Development (GPOD)** focused on strengthening the functioning of village-level elected bodies has been taken up by the Karnataka government in 30 gram panchayats. The aim of this capacity development programme is to improve governance and service delivery to citizens under RGPSA. The initiative is first of its kind in the country.
Read more here

15000 gram panchayats will go to polls in Maharashtra in 2015
Apart from the gram panchayats polls, elections will be held in Navi Mumbai, Aurangabad, Vasai Virar, Kalyan Dombivali Municipal Corporations, eight nagar parishads, 139 newly created nagar panchayats, Bhandara and Gondia zilla parishads and 15 panchayat samitis during the year.
Read more here

Panchayats to hold ownership of up to 2 MW hydro-projects
To strengthen the Panchayati Raj institutions across the State, the Uttarakhand Government has for the first time reserved hydro-power projects up to 2 MW for institutions including the Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat and Zila Panchayat. In support from Uttarakhand Renewable Energy Development Agency (UREDA), the Panchayat institutions would be directly involved in the construction, generation, distribution and usage of the electricity generated by the projects of up to 2 MW.
Read more here

10 panchayats picked for total 'digital' push
Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Government of India has decided to develop 10 gram panchayats across the country as e-panchayats by December 2015, which will serve as models. These panchayats, selected from 10 states, will perform all functions — from planning, accounting and service delivery like issuance of certificates, licenses — online. Digitization of panchayats was first launched in 2009. The move is part of the government's attempt to take the Digital India project to the panchayats.
Read more here

Panchayat in Tamil Nadu makes a mark in solid waste management
Puliyur town panchayat has made a sound beginning in solid waste management by generating revenue from the waste collected from the public. Though several other panchayats have already forayed into the process of making manure from waste, Puliyur town panchayat has gone a step ahead by incorporating four other methods to generate revenue. Besides compost yard, it has set up a bio-gas plant, shredding plant, duck rearing pond and vermi-compost yard.
Read more here

Labour ministry plans central scheme to track movement of migrant workers
The Ministry of Labour & Employment is considering starting a central scheme to track the movement of migrant workers in the country to help the government to target their social security benefits better and revise the allocation to states based on updated data. The migrants will be monitored through a national coordination system to be built by the centre and the states. This will ensure that they continue availing of the government's social security benefits, irrespective of their movement between different states.
Read more here

UK most transparent country in the world
UK topped the list becoming the most transparent country with India falling five ranks since last year. India is ranked at 39 in the global rankings. Pakistan is ranked 67th in the list, while China stands at 46. At the bottom of the whole table are Mali, Haiti and Myanmar (also known as Burma). The least open governments in the developed world are Singapore, with a transparency score of 46.06 out of 100, Iceland with a score of 46.57, and Belgium with a score of 47.29. Eighty-six countries were assessed for how easy their governments make it for state information to be analysed
Read more here

Readings/Web links/Repositories

From Resource Person

Decentralized Planning- Rhetoric versus Reality (by Anirban Sheth, Institute of Social Sciences, Kolkata)
The article discusses the panchayat structure at the village level and details the functions of Gram Sansad, Gram Sabha, and Gram Unnayan Samity that exist in West Bengal. It also talks about the theory and practice of decentralized planning and takes a close look at the problems of decentralized planning and offers some practical suggestions for its improvement.
Read more here

A social role for NITI Aayog (by Arun Kumar, author of Indian Economy since Independence: Persisting Colonial Disruption)
The article discusses the possible role of NITI Aayog on long-term issues, with solutions that are not just economic or technological but also social and political — of strengthening democracy, building institutions and regaining policy space.
Read more here

Differences between Planning Commission and the newly created Niti Ayog
The document differentiates between earlier Planning Commission and the newly formed NITI Aayog on various structural and functional aspects.
Read more here

India and the MDGs: Towards a Sustainable Future for All
The document analyses India's progress in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) over the past 14 years and outlines policy recommendations that could accelerate progress.
Read more here

Statistical Year Book, India 2014, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation
The Statistical year book is one of the vital instruments designed to meet the ever growing diversified range of information requirement. The publication provides data sets, not only on various facets of Economy of the Country, but also on the vital social aspects like housing, health, environment, infrastructure, tourism and crime.
Read more here

Users' Guide for Assessing Rule of Law in Public Administration and a Guidance Note for Assessing Rule of Law in Public Administration
Based on pilot experiences in three different development contexts – Ukraine, Sierra Leone and the Philippines – the Guidance Note and User Guide highlight the advantages of bridging the gap between these two practice areas and provide practical guidance on how this can be operationalized at the country level. The Users' Guide provides a simple and easily applicable tool for national and local State institutions to carry out self-assessments to determine whether they respect rule of law (RoL) principles in their relations with society.
Read more here

Upcoming Events

Management Development Programme (MDP) in March 2015 at IRMA, Anand, Gujarat
(From Oliver Macwan, Institute of Rural Management Anand -IRMA)
This MDP is designed specifically for employees and training of trainers, individuals and teams who aspire for incredible performance and also covers a programme on Improving Organization and Social Performance through CSR and Developing Leadership Skills. Request the interested members to kindly join relevant MDP. Brochure, nomination / application form for the programmes can be downloaded from:
http://solutionexchange-un.net.in/ftp/decn/comm_update/MDPs%20Feb-Mar-1.pdf

Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty 2015, 23 March 2015 - 27 March 2015, Washington DC.
The Annual World Bank Conference on Land and Poverty organized by the World Bank Development Economic Research Group (DECRG) is a key global event where representatives from governments, civil society, academia, the development community, and the private sector come together annually to discuss new developments and progress on land policy and implementation. The conference aims to foster dialogue and sharing of best practices on the diversity of reforms, approaches and experiences that are being implemented in land sectors around the world.
Read More here

Announcements/Opportunities
From Resource Person

UNWOMEN

Job Title	Deadline	Location
Monitoring & Evaluation Analyst	5 March 2015	New Delhi

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Many thanks to all who contributed to this issue!

If you have items to feature in the Updates, please send it to Solution Exchange for the Decentralization Community at
se-decn@solutionexchange-un.net.in

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