



Decentralization Community Update 80 April 2014



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Dear Members,

We are happy to share the 80th Update on Decentralization Community of Practice!

In this Update, we are happy to share the details of UNDP-Election Commission of India (ECI) partnership supporting visits of delegates from Election Management Bodies from 20 countries to observe election processes during the General Elections currently underway in the country. Similarly, we would like to welcome the recent Supreme Court's judgment recognizing transgender as the third sex and granting them rights as any other Indian citizen.

In addition to readings and web resources, we would especially like to draw your attention to the two upcoming events being organized by IT for Change and Vikram University, Ujjain. Both are inviting abstracts and full paper from interested participants.

Finally, please do check out the Grameen Kosh portal developed by IRMA that is a repository of socio-economic realities of rural life in the country.

As always we eagerly look forward to your feedback and suggestions on how we can improve our Updates!

Regards,
Resource Team
Decentralization CoP, Solution Exchange

Community Activities

[Ongoing Queries](#)

- **Role of State Finance Commission (SFC) in strengthening the finances of panchayats and urban local bodies. Examples and Experiences Reply by 10th March 2014 by A.N.P Sinha, Chairman; 5th State Finance Commission, Bihar**

Excerpt of the query: The State Finance Commission of Bihar seeks Members view on the following questions:

- What are the **methodologies and incentives that need to be incorporated to improve and raise the revenue (tax and non-tax)** of panchayats, ULBs and the state government?
- What are the **various tapped and untapped tax potentials of local bodies**, with particular emphasis on property tax?
- What procedure needs to be followed for **review and forecast of revenue and expenditure**?

Members may also share any relevant national and international best practices on the above mentioned questions that they are aware of. The valuable inputs of the Members will help SFC in

framing its recommendation to the state government of Bihar for effective and efficient functioning of the local governance institutions.

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

Updates

News

ECI Launches 2014 Election Visitors Programme

The Election Commission of India (ECI) and UNDP have a memorandum to jointly promote exchange of visits and sharing of experiences and skills in the field of electoral management with developing countries. Under this, during the election period total 51 delegates from Election Management Bodies of 20 countries shall be visiting the states of Karnataka, UP, West Bengal and Himachal Pradesh to observe the Indian democracy at work. The 2014 Election Visitors Programme is part of the South-South Cooperation initiative of the Election Commission of India. The countries are Namibia, Nigeria, Lesotho, Malaysia, Mauritius, Myanmar, Nepal, Uganda, Kenya, Bhutan and some member-countries of League of Arab States (Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Morocco, Somalia, Palestine, Iraq and Oman).

Read more at:

ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/Election%20Commission%20news%20on%20delegate's%20visit.pdf

Supreme Court delivered its landmark judgement recognising third sex

The Supreme Court's landmark judgment on recognising the transgender (TG) community as a third gender brought celebrations all over the country. The ruling has been welcomed by not only the community but also human rights groups who are happy that the court underlined their long-standing demand for equality and integration. This judgment is a great step towards ending the discrimination of tens of thousands of transgender in India, who are marginalised, exploited, ostracised, discriminated, abused, and often forced into prostitution to survive.

Read more at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-27031180>

Ranking Indian States on Human Development: India Public Policy Report (IPPR) 2014

The report, compiled by Rajeev Malhotra, Executive Director, Centre for Development and Finance, Jindal School of Government and Policy (JSGP), Sonapat, Haryana have declared Sikkim as the best state in terms of human development indicators. The report found that health was directly linked to sanitation coverage. "Sikkim, which has 100 percent sanitation coverage, showed very few cases of diarrhoea." It also observed that geographically smaller states performed better than larger ones.

Read more at <http://twocircles.net/2014apr03/sikkim adjudged best state gujarat slips.html#.U1-QaIGSwmN>.

The report can be accessed at

<http://www.oup.co.in/product/academic-general/economics/development-economics/155/india-public-policy-report-2014/9780199452040#>

India ranks 102 on 132 for social progress, New Zealand tops list

The Social Progress Index (SPI) rates 132 countries on more than 50 indicators, including health, sanitation, shelter, personal safety, access to information, sustainability, tolerance and inclusion and access to education. The index is published by 'Social Progress Imperative', a non-profit organisation based in USA. The SPI covers questions such as whether a country can satisfy its people's basic needs and whether it has the infrastructure and capacity to allow its citizens to improve the quality of their lives and reach their full potential.

The index shows that economic growth does not automatically lead to social progress. India's score card can be seen at <http://www.socialprogressimperative.org/data/spi/countries/IND>

Read more at: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/world-news/new-zealand-tops-social-progress-index-india-at-102nd-position/article1-1203618.aspx>

India is ranked 136 among 186 countries in the UN's Human Development Index (HDI)

"The Rise of the South: Human Progress in a Diverse World" 2013, released by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), noted that India is ranked 136 among 186 countries in the UN's Human Development Index (HDI). The related Gender Inequality Index ranked India at 132 and the Inequality Adjusted HDI rank was 91, as measured by this composite index of reproductive health, years of schooling, parliamentary representation, and participation in the labour market. The report is based on the status of women and gender inequality.

Read more at: <http://www.easternmirrornagaland.com/2014/04/womens-natural-role-overlooked-in-india/>

Events

International symposium on Human Development in Global South: Emerging Perspectives in the Era of Post-Millennium Development Goals, April 28-29, 2014 New Delhi (From Alakh N Sharma, Director & Professor, Institute for Human Development, New Delhi)



The international symposium witnessed important deliberation on Human Development in Global South: The Roadmap to an Equitable Future, Eradicating Poverty, Ensuring Social Protection, Providing Food Security, Tackling Under nutrition, Expanding Employment Opportunities, Promoting and Educational Opportunities, Universalising Health Coverage and Care. Thematic discussions were held on: Employment & Social Protection; Food Security & Nutrition; Health and Health Care; Access to Education & Training; Social Inclusion. The detailed programme schedule can be accessed at [ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/International symposium on Human Development in Global South-%20pogramme.pdf](ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/International_symposium_on_Human_Development_in_Global_South-%20pogramme.pdf)

Twenty-first Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebrations on Panchayats, Women and Right to Food; 24-25 April 2014, ISS

On the occasion of Twenty-first Women's Political Empowerment Day Celebrations, ISS organised an event on the theme of the food security bill. In particular, discussions were centred around the provision in the act where gram sabha, panchayats and women have been treated as the beneficiaries and not as decision makers in terms of deciding the requirements of the food grains for their locality, storage of food grains by the use of low cost traditional methods as well as monitoring of the scheme.

Upcoming Events

National seminar on Democratic Decentralisation in India, September 26th & 27th, 2014

School of Studies in Political Science, Vikram University, Ujjain (Madhya Pradesh) proposes to organise a National Seminar on ***Democratic Decentralisation in India: Retrospect, Challenges and Ways Ahead*** to discuss threadbare the multi-faceted issues related to panchayats in India. In view of this, Abstracts and Full papers are invited from participants. University will reimburse travel cost and will arrange local hospitality for the invited delegates. Registration fees and other details can be accessed at:

[ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/National Seminar on DemocraticDecentralization Vikram University.pdf](ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/National_Seminar_on_DemocraticDecentralization_Vikram_University.pdf)

Inclusion in the network society– mapping development alternatives, forging research agendas, IT for Change, Bangalore, 29 September - 1 October 2014

International Development Research Centre (IDRC), along with IT for Change, will host a round table between 29th September - 1st October, 2014, bringing together leading development scholars and practitioners to contribute to the ongoing dialogues on ICTs and development – particularly from the vantage point of equity and inclusion. Interested individuals can participate and send their abstract of 1000 words that will become the basis for an analytical essay, in case it is short-listed for the round table. Abstracts must be received by 31st May 2014. Full essays are due by 15th August 2014.

Submissions and queries can be addressed to: networkinclusion@gmail.com and www.itforchange.net

Readings/Web links/Repositories

IRMA launches Grameen Gyan Kosh (From [Shyam Singh](#), IRMA, Gujarat)

Grameen Gyan Kosh (GGK) is a knowledge repository on rural India. It provides a wide and updated account of issues related to rural life. It portrays the dynamics of different aspects of rural life, viz. society, polity, economy and culture through relevant resources. GGK is initiated and hosted by the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) - a pioneering academic institution in rural management education and research. GGK aims at disseminating a wide range of resource materials, to provide general information on different aspects of rural life as well as being a source of information on a range of behaviours associated with rural households.

Read more at ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/Grameen_Gyan_Kosh-IRMA.pdf

Basic Statistics for Local Level Development (BSLLD): Report on availability of panchayat/village level statistics (From [Ritu Mathur](#), UNDP, India)

The report is based on experiences of conducting the pilot in 32 States/UTs and it is an important stepping stone for developing a nationwide scheme to have robust statistical system for continuous flow of local level statistics. The report will be useful for formulation of a comprehensive Plan Scheme for all the States/ UTs for supporting the local administration such as the PRIs to collect and collate local level statistics on regular basis and put out Village/Block/ Panchayat level aggregated information on each of the identified core variables. It is envisaged that this report will help in formulating appropriate scheme which will inter-alia take into account weaknesses of the local level system in various parts of the country.

Read the report at:

ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/Report_pilot_study_Rural_Areas_MOSPI.pdf

State of the Poor: Where are the Poor and Where are the Poorest? World Bank

A World Bank report on poverty titled "The State of the Poor: Where are the Poor and Where are the Poorest?," said that India accounts for one-third of the world poor, people living on less than USD 1.25 (about Rs 65) per day. The report shows extreme poverty headcount rates have fallen in every developing region between 1981 and 2010 from half the citizens in the developing world to 21 per cent, however 1.2 billion people still living in extreme poverty across the world.

Read the report at

ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/State_of_the_poor_paper-%20World%20Bank.pdf

From [Resource Team](#), UNDP, New Delhi

Regional Inequality in India in the 1990s - an EPW article (From Nirvikar Singh, Jake Kendall, R K Jain, and Jai Chander) Vol - XLIX No. 15, April 12, 2014

This article is based on a study done for the Development Research Group, RBI. It examines changes in regional inequality in India in the 1990s using data for 210 of India's districts, spread across nine states. The methodology is that of cross-section growth regressions, which seek to explain longer-run growth rates in terms of initial conditions of development. By identifying these connections, it seeks to illuminate the role of physical infrastructure, financial development, and human capital in influencing regional patterns of growth.

Read more at:

ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/Regional_Inequality_in_India_in_the_1990s.pdf

Wealth and Health of Children in India - an EPW article (From [Diane Coffey](#), [Aparajita Chattopadhyay](#), and [Rajan Gupta](#)) Vol - XLIX No. 15, April 12, 2014

This article presents an interesting state-level analysis of the association between state net domestic product per capita and three children's health indicators. It also describes how these relationships differ in the last two rounds of the National Family Health Survey. It finds evidence that the cross-

sectional relationships between aggregate wealth and children's health indicators are positive, yet the association was less steep in the mid-2000s than in the late 1990s. It also finds a negative relationship between growth in SNDP per capita and improvement in state-level children's health indicators. These findings are consistent with the hypothesis that the kinds of investments which improve health may lead to economic growth, rather than vice versa.

Read more at

ftp://ftp.solutionexchange.net.in/public/decn/comm_update/Wealth_and_Health_of_Children_in_India.pdf

Announcements/Opportunities

From [Resource Team](#)

- [UNV Monitoring, Evaluation and Research Associate](#) 6-May-2014 New Delhi

All below positions are based in New Delhi (Placed within the Ministry of Rural Development) and last date to apply is 11th May 2014

- [Manager Communications, Aajeevika Skills, GOI-UNDP Project - Governance and Accelerated Livelihood Support](#)
- [Head Operations, Aajeevika Skills, Aajeevika Skills, GOI-UNDP Project - Governance and Accelerated Livelihood Support](#)
- [Chief Operating Officer \(North-East\), Aajeevika Skills, GOI-UNDP Project - Governance and Accelerated Livelihood Support](#)
- [Head, Partnership for Development \(Pfd\) Cell, Aajeevika Skills, GOI-UNDP Project - Governance and Accelerated Livelihood Support](#)
- [Chief Information Officer, Aajeevika Skills, GOI-UNDP Project - Governance and Accelerated Livelihood Support](#)

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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