



## Decentralization Community Update 88 December 2014



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Dear Members,

We are happy to share the 88<sup>th</sup> Update on Decentralization Community of Practice!

With this update, we share news on: e-Governance becoming reality in 2.5 lakh villages; Intel to deliver digital literacy across 1000 village panchayats; Gujarat Government notifying 50% quota for women in local bodies; Panchayat elections in Madhya Pradesh; Karnataka government drafting right to recall bill for rural voters; CSR funding to be linked to Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana and 10 Indian villages setting example for the whole country.

We are also sharing some readings and web links on: budget track on the Fourteenth Finance Commission; success of Participatory Budgeting; Governors' role and tribal areas; policy brief on digital pathways for inclusive local governance; successful public hearing on social audits of MGNREGS in Seoni, Madhya Pradesh.

Members are requested to spread the word on the vacancy announcements and share their thoughts on the ongoing query on 'Drafting Public Interest Litigation for Effective Devolution of Powers to Panchayats'.

We thank all the members who contributed towards this edition.

Hope you would enjoy reading the update and we look forward for your contributions for the next!



We wish you and your families a very Happy New Year!!

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

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### Community Activities

#### Ongoing Query

#### ➤ **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 73<sup>rd</sup> 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](mailto:se.decn.solutionexchange@un.net)

[Consolidated Reply](#)

**Role of PRIs in supporting women's access to and control over land. Examples and experiences from Ranjani Murthy, Independent Consultant, Chennai** Issued on: 22 December 2014. Download [PDF](#) (Size: 442KB)

*The query seeks examples and experiences on the role of PRIs in supporting inheritance and promoting land rights of women from landless households, including Dalits and Adivasis.*

Please send your responses to [se.decn.solutionexchange@un.net](mailto:se.decn.solutionexchange@un.net)

## Updates

### News

From [Resource Person](#)

#### **e-Governance may become reality in 2.5 lakh villages by March 2016**

As many as 2.5 lakh gram panchayats are likely to start enjoying e-Governance citizen-centric services offered over digital platforms by March 2016 next year as the National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) project is expected to be completed by then. People will have better access to healthcare, education and business opportunities, and connect themselves directly with the government. Under this around 7 lakh km of optical fibre cable (OFC) will be laid to connect village panchayats with broadband. The government has decided to reach [50,000 gram panchayats](#) this year, one lakh next year and another one lakh panchayats a year after.

Read more [here](#)

#### **Intel to deliver digital literacy across 1000 village panchayats**

The company has announced plans for training persons at the panchayat levels of 1,000 villages that are set to receive broadband connectivity under the National Optic Fibre Network. The US-based chipmaker said that it will work with the Government through this programme to impact at least 5 million Indians by 2015.

Read more [here](#)

#### **Nirmal Gram Puraskar to 15 Haryana village panchayats**

Fifteen village panchayats of Haryana have been selected for Nirmal Gram Puraskar-2013 under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's initiative 'Swachh Bharat Mission'. Five out of the 15 village panchayats, have been selected from district Gurgaon alone. Overall 587 Gram panchayats from all over the country have been selected for Nirmal Gram Puraskar-2013 under Swachh Bharat Mission.

Read more [here](#)

**Gujarat first to achieve over 100cr e-governance transactions**

According to a statistical report by eTaal — a Central government portal that disseminates e-transaction statistics — Gujarat accounts for 27 percent of the total 373 crore e-transactions services provided by all state government services in the past two years. Gujarat has recorded 100.3 crore e-transactions between January 1, 2013 and November 26, 2014 through over 58 crore e-transactions services provided under state government projects.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Gujarat Government notifies 50% quota for women in local bodies**

Gujarat Government has notified the Gujarat Local Authorities Laws (Amendment) Act, 2009 which has a provision of 50% reservation for women in urban and rural local bodies. The government, however, has excluded the controversial provision for compulsory voting from purview of the Act.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Madhya Pradesh: Panchayat elections to be held in three phases**

The fifth panchayat election for 3.92 lakh posts of zila, janpad and gram panchayats in Madhya Pradesh would be held in three phases, starting December 2014. Elections would be held in 50 zila panchayats out of total 51. Voting for posts of panch and sarpanch would be conducted through ballot papers while EVMs would be used for the posts of zila and janpad panchayat members.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Karnataka government drafting right to recall bill for rural voters**

State government proposes to introduce a bill that will empower rural voters to recall their representatives from gram panchayats. The Karnataka government plans to introduce a bill that will empower rural voters to recall elected representatives to gram panchayat, including president, if they are perceived to have failed to meet expectations.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Companies funding schemes under Adarsh Gram to be counted under corporate social responsibility**

With parliamentarians crying foul over dearth of funds to implement the Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, the Corporate Affairs Ministry has cleared the decks for companies to fund schemes at the village level by tying up with the Lok Sabha members concerned and count the spending under the mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) head. Now the companies can tie up with MPs to fund the Adarsh Gram Yojana scheme in adopted villages.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Bhuvan Panchayats 2.0 released**

Bhuvan Panchayats 2.0 is the Space based Information Support for Decentralized Planning (SIS-DP) project. Formulated by National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), SIS-DP ISRO is being implemented in partnership with State Remote Sensing Application Centres in the country. It provides 'Satellite Image Maps' for the entire country as base for decentralized planning, prepare thematic & base layers on 1:10000 scale, create databank, organize census data, climate data, other stakeholder's data. Comprehensive web portal as per PRI's and stakeholder's needs for decentralized planning, governance, and outreach to the citizens can also be developed.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Solar lamps cut down power bill for panchayats**

Vizayan Medu village near Tiruchi has realized the importance of solar street lamps. There has been an increasing awareness among the rural local bodies about the importance of solar street lamps as: it can be easily installed at any place (from pathway to grave yard); minimizes the recurring expenditure on power consumption bills; and avoid road accidents at junction places where two or three roads converge.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Good News: Democracy's better half**

Exclusive women's village councils (gram sabhas) are beginning to make a difference in India's rural areas. The concept of a mahila gram sabha was first discussed in Maharashtra, which later became the first state to legislate on it under the Panchayati Raj Act. In 2003, the Maharashtra government issued a circular for conducting mahila gram sabha meetings ahead of the gram sabha. This was made the law in 2012 under the Panchayati Raj Act. Since 2009, mahila gram sabhas have been piloted under the UN programme, Promoting Women's Political Leadership and Gender Responsive Governance.

**Read more [here](#)**

**10 Indian Villages That Set a Worthy Example for the Whole Country** ([Veronica Peris](#), IC Centre for Good Governance, New Delhi)

India, having an agro-based economy, depend the most on its villages for growth. The villages always have that distinct nostalgic charm that Indians alone can understand. Sarson ke khet, tea plantations, mud houses, clean air, charpaai, mitti, star-lit sky; these are just some of the happy things that we associate with life in an Indian village. But unfortunately, that feeling is slowly waning. Poverty, lack of education, lack of sanitation, etc are the first associations that the media paints about Indian villages. Here's a little fact: Gaons aren't a bad place to live. In fact, some of them are way better than any metro. And these exemplary examples prove just that.

**Read more [here](#)**

### Readings/Web links/Repositories

From [Resource Person](#)

#### **Budget Track on the Fourteenth Finance Commission**

Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability (CBGA) is a think tank based in New Delhi that works on government finances. CBGA's latest edition of Budget Track on the Fourteenth Finance Commission looks at issues faced by the 14th Finance Commission namely, the diminution of its Constitutional role, concerns about its terms of reference, centre-state fiscal relations, fiscal policy space, shortage of human resources, lack of absorptive capacity of the states, financing local governments, development of renewable energy, transparency, accountability and participation.

**Read more [here](#)**

#### **What Explains the Success of Participatory Budgeting? Evidence from Seoul Autonomous Districts** (By [Intae Choi](#), Yonsei University)

This study examines the association between the success of participatory budgeting and a number of variables that characterizes the participatory process in light of the participatory budgeting recently adopted by autonomous districts in Seoul. The study has taken into consideration three variables (the number, attendance rate, and level of expertise of the participatory budgeting committee members), and it examines the association between these three variables and the success of the participatory process, as measured by the amount of budget included in the official budget of the district. It was found that the level of expertise of the committee members has a significant positive association with the measured level of success of the participation.

**Read more [here](#)**

#### **Governors' Role and Tribal Areas** (an EPW article by [Sonum Gayatri Malhotra](#), Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi)

This article states that the institution of the governor has been sidelined in the administering of tribal areas despite clear constitutional guidelines to the contrary. At least apropos this issue, it begs the question whether the institution is relevant to Indian democracy, but for a start, the empowerment of the role of governor is a must.

**Read more [here](#)**

**India's tech opportunity: Transforming work, empowering people** (an article published in McKinsey by Noshir Kaka, Anu Madgavkar, James Manyika, Jacques Bughin, and Pradeep Parameswaran)

Millions of Indians hope for a better future, with well-paying jobs and a decent standard of living. To meet these aspirations, the country needs broad-based economic growth and more effective public services. Technology can play an important role in enabling the growth India needs. A new McKinsey Global Institute report details how 12 technologies can contribute to India's growth and to the economic empowerment of its people.

**Read more [here](#)**

**How digital pathways can work for inclusive local governance : A Policy Brief by Anita Gurumurthy and Nandini Chami** (by [Roshini Diwakar](#), IT for Change, Bangalore)

This policy brief provides insights from Women-gov, a feminist action research project aimed at enhancing marginalized women's active citizenship and their engagement with local governance, across three sites in India, Brazil and South Africa.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Newsletter: Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra, November 2014** (by [Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra](#), Lucknow U.P.)

Sahbhagi Shikshan Kendra has been working towards capacity building of civil society organizations and Government functionaries working in the development field. SSK organizes need based training for different stakeholders. Trainings help the beneficiaries to learn, gain and implement the same in their field areas. Some of the major trainings which SSK has conducted are: Training on Participatory Training Methodology (PTM); Leadership Development; Result Based Management; SHG; RTI; PRI; RTE and other Knowledge based trainings.

**Read more [here](#)**

**Successful Public Hearing on Social Audits of MGNREGS in Seoni, MP** (by [Yogesh Kumar](#), Samarthan, Bhopal, M.P.)

Under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (MGNREG) Act 2005, it is mandated for every Gram Sabha to conduct regular Social Audits of all the projects under the MGNREG Scheme taken up within the Gram Panchayat. To this effect, social Audits were conducted in all the 62 Gram Panchayats of Kurai block of Seoni district of Madhya Pradesh. The Social Audit was facilitated by GOI consultants from NIRD, Madhya Pradesh State Social Audit Committee (MPSSAC) and SAMARTHAN, Bhopal.

**Read more [here](#)**

## Upcoming Events

### International

**6th Annual Women's Leadership and Empowerment Conference, from March 1st - 3rd 2015 in Bangkok, Thailand** (organized by [Tomorrow People Organization](#), Belgrade, Serbia)

Women's Leadership and Empowerment Conference 2015 is a three-day program, which consists of three components: study session on women's leadership and empowerment of disadvantaged groups; presentations of submitted papers and; open discussions. It is intended to be a forum, discussion and networking place for academics, researchers, professionals, administrators, educational leaders, policy makers, industry representatives, advanced students, and others.

**Read more [here](#)**

## Announcements/Opportunities

From [Resource Person](#)

**UN Coordination Specialist, P4 Level:**

<b>Functional title</b>	<b>UN Coordination Specialist (For International Only)</b>
<b>Level</b>	<b>P4</b>

<b>Type of contract</b>	<b>FTA</b>
<b>Duration of contract</b>	<b>One year (Renewable)</b>
<b>Duty station</b>	<b>UNRC Office</b>
<b>Vacancy announcement is available at</b>	<a href="http://jobs.undp.org/cj_job_screening_rights.cfm?job_id=52394">http://jobs.undp.org/cj_job_screening_rights.cfm?job_id=52394</a>
	<a href="http://www.la.undp.org/content/lao_pdr/en/home/operations/jobs/">http://www.la.undp.org/content/lao_pdr/en/home/operations/jobs/</a>
<b>Deadline for applications</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> January 2015</b>

## UNDP

<b>Job Title</b>	<b>Deadline</b>	<b>Location</b>
<a href="#">Research Assistant</a>	1-January-2015	New Delhi
<a href="#">Research Specialist</a>	1-January-2015	New Delhi
<a href="#">UNV Programme Associate</a>	6-January-2015	New Delhi

## UNWOMEN

<a href="#">Program Analyst - Ministry of Women and Child Development with the Govt. of India – UN WOMEN MCO</a>	8-January-2015	New Delhi
<a href="#">Programme Associate, Colombo, Sri Lanka</a>	15-January-2015	Sri Lanka

***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](mailto:se-decn@solutionexchange-un.net.in)



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