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Appreciation Programme

Participatory Integrated District Planning in Local Government

Module - II

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Introduction

The process of district planning is complex and needs to be conducted in a systematic manner. It needs to focus on the key areas (that have been outlined in this module) and follow the key steps indicated in order to maximize the potential of planning, not only in the context of the development of the entire district but the smallest unit, where the planning process was undertaken.

The district plan which is a consolidation of the plans from various village *panchayats* and municipalities, needs to be developed keeping in mind the vision envisaged for the entire areas, as well as goals that one must reach to attain the vision.

The plan should represent all the major demands of the people to make it truly decentralised and participatory. Prioritization of local needs, inclusion of the poor and the marginalised, including women are crucial factors in conducting a participatory integrated district plan.

However, it is not just the planning and design that is to be participatory and inclusive but the same is required in its implementation, monitoring and evaluation. The participation of all the stakeholders is critical, if envisaged targets and goals are to be achieved. However, independent evaluation is the best way of assessing whether the process has achieved its objectives, especially in fulfilling the needs of the poor and the marginalised and to determine, whether the plan has been actually implemented in its true spirit.

Objectives

- Identifying the objectives of the Integrated District Plan
- Understanding the stocktaking process
- Identifying the key areas that need attention
- Tabulating the important steps for developing a district plan

Unit 1: Process Of Participatory Integrated District Planning

1.1 Introduction

As we have understood from the readings of first module, the nomenclature for local governments may vary in different countries; however, the nomenclature for 'district' always represents an administrative entity or unit, where plans prepared at the local government level are consolidated in one way or another, depending on the planning process prescribed constitutionally or through executive orders. In the current module we try to understand the process of integrated district planning and learn about the tools and methods used to carry out the same.

An integrated district plan describes what a district will try to achieve over a standardized term, usually five years, and how it intends to achieve it. An essential step in this direction is to ensure that each unit at the lowest level is treated as a separate planning unit. The district plan is built upon the integration and consolidation of the plans prepared by these units, keeping in mind the development of the entire district, as well as the respective unit. These units may include the village *panchayat* in rural areas or urban municipalities in India; cities in Brazil; municipalities in South Africa; urban councils or *pradeshiya sabhas* in Sri Lanka etc.

1.2 Objectives Of Preparing A District Plan

- To generate a common development perspective of the district amongst all the stakeholders
- To articulate and envision inspirational goals for overall development of the district
- To promote the inclusion of the poor and the marginalised, including women, into the end
- To help the stakeholders develop realistic, objective oriented and executable five year
- To break down these five year plans into well balanced annual plans
- To incorporate the needs of women and disadvantaged groups into these plans
- To foresee optimal utilization of the available resources for achieving higher levels of livelihoods, especially for the underprivileged

- To motivate and prepare all segments of the community in collectively facing challenges, difficulties and bottlenecks, in the implementation of the plans
- To keep the vision of the development of the area as a goal post towards which the entire planning process should be oriented.

1.3 Stocktaking

Let us try to understand the process of carrying out integrated district planning, contextualized around the Millennium Development Goals. The entire process is preceded with stocktaking of the existing resources.

Stocktaking or data collection is the starting point and, probably the backbone of the entire planning exercise. The data should be collected and analysed in order to understand and evaluate where to start (baseline) and what to achieve in the given time frame. The available data should also be disaggregated up to the lowest unit of planning. The data should be compiled to prepare the stocktaking report of the district (planning unit in this case). The stock taking report should contain the following information:

- A brief introduction to the district's history, social structure, geography, economy, demography and natural resources;
- Details of available infrastructure and services for the public within the district, including the administrative set up, particularly of the local government structure;
- Data regarding key development areas, detailed down to the lowest level of planning unit possible;
- An assessment, highlighting significant features of development or lack of it. . This assessment should focus on progress and shortfalls, gaps in outcomes in implementing the previous plan, as well as spillover works and funds required for their completion;
- A description of all financial resources available in the district for planning; and a brief of areas where there is potential for accelerated growth.

1.4 Key Areas and Steps In Integrated District Planning

| Visioning for District Planning | Resources for District Planning | Planning and Project Formulation | Consolidation and Integration for District Planning | Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of Plans |
|--|--|--|---|---|
| <p>Step I Building a vision for the specific district</p> | <p>Step II Ascertaining the availability of resources</p> | <p>Step III Identifying needs that have to be addressed in order to reach each goal</p> | <p>Step VI Consolidation and integration with plans prepared by other bodies</p> | <p>Step VII Implementation according to the plan, in terms of both time span and deliverables</p> |
| | | <p>Step IV Prioritizing the identified needs</p> | | <p>Step VIII Ensuring that the set goals are being reached</p> <p>Assessing whether the process has achieved its objectives, especially in fulfilling the needs of the poor and the marginalised</p> |
| | | <p>Step V Linking available resources to the identified needs</p> | | |

(Raghunandan 2007)

Visioning For District Planning

Step 1. Building a vision for the specified district

MDGs could be a starting point for the stakeholders to prepare the district vision and its goals. A district vision must be prepared in a participatory manner with the involvement of all stakeholders. It must clearly delineate the perspective for development in the area over the next 10-15 years. . The vision must be articulated primarily in terms of goals and outcomes and should not lay down the conditionality of schemes and programmes.

Box I below gives the various steps undertaken in the implementation of an Integrated District Plan, in Deogarh, in the state of Jharkhand, India.

Resources For District Plan

Step II Ascertainning The Availability Of Resources

It is important to identify the resources available at the various tiers of local government, as they are a crucial factor in achieving the desired targets for the district. The resources (available and with potential) are classified as follows:

- **Human resources:** Population
- **Natural resources:** Forest wastelands, water bodies, agro-climatic conditions
- **Human made assets:** Cottage and small-scale industry, infrastructure – roads, toilets, educational institutions
- **Financial resources:** Money raised from schemes, taxes, user charges, national and sub-national government funds, funds for non-planned expenditure, such as salaries and maintenance of assets

Planning And Project Formulation

Steps III, IV, V

The planning process must be initiated at the lowest level of planning unit. The district plan, must keep in focus that all aspects should be need-based and centered on the district vision. The plan could be a five-year perspective plan broken down into annual plans. In the case of India, the local governments in rural and urban areas do planning separately and later these plans are consolidated at the district level.

Rural Planning

In India, planning in rural areas is undertaken at three levels corresponding to the three- tiers of *Panchayati Raj* Institutions (PRIs) that is village *panchayat*, block *panchayat* and district *panchayat*. The process of planning begins at the lowest level - *Gram Sabha* (village council). After the problems have been identified, solutions found and resources allocated found by the *Panchayat* level standing committee, the process moves to the next stage where the plans are considered by the intermediate *panchayats*. At this level, a consolidation of the various village level plans, along with the additions of the block level, takes place and the plan is sent to the district *Panchayat level*. The district *Panchayat* consolidates all these plans and this version is then sent to the District Planning Commission (DPC) for the preparation of the draft district plan.

Urban Planning

The procedure in urban areas is very similar to its rural counterpart. The only difference is in the administrative units. The grass-root level plan is drawn up at the ward level. From the ward level, it moves into the area *sabha* (ward council). From here, a consolidated plan goes to the municipal level, wherein a municipal plan is drawn. This municipal plan is forwarded to the District Planning Committee (DPC) for further consolidation into draft the district plan.

Step III - Identifying Needs That Have To Be Addressed To Reach Each Goal

A checklist of the needs articulated by the community would have to be prepared, in order that these may be addressed, to achieve the desired development goals for the district, as also the vision of the people for their community. For example, if the need is to achieve 100 percent enrolment in primary schools in the district, then it is imperative that the following are identified:

- ✓ Number of primary schools
- ✓ Connectivity to schools in different seasons
- ✓ Toilet and drinking water facilities in schools
- ✓ Adequate arrangements including teachers, learning aids and materials, classrooms with basic facilities

In a similar manner, needs related to other developmental goals would have to be identified for the district.

Step IV Prioritizing the identified needs

- ✓ Once needs have been identified, the tasks of listing these out in order of priority needs to be undertaken. Posing the following questions can help in reaching a decision:
- ✓ Which issue is of the outmost urgency?
- ✓ What are the initiatives that can be undertaken immediately?
- ✓ Which identified need will benefit most of the people?
- ✓ What will help the marginalised (scheduled castes & schedule tribes), excluded and the poorest?
- ✓ Which is the more cost efficient solution to a given problem?

Step V Linking available resources to the identified needs

- ✓ Once needs and resources are identified, it is essential that they are matched with the available resources at each level of local government, level so as to have maximum efficiency and utilization. In matching financial resources to prioritized activities:
- ✓ Allocate funds meant for specific purposes (tied funds) to the appropriate activity
- ✓ Only when tied funds are exhausted, untied funds should be allocated, wherever needs are still unmet
- ✓ Plan and allocate human, natural and other non-financial resources to ensure their optimal utilisation

Village-Level Participatory Planning In Kabarole District, Uganda

The poor often face problems in participating effectively in local development planning due to lack of self-esteem and confidence, and also due to inadequate guidance and support. Kabarole district in Uganda, Western Uganda has addressed this problem using facilitators that have been trained in participatory planning and socio-economic and gender analysis (SEAGA) methodologies. SEAGA assists in the understanding of how development policies and programmes are likely to affect the economic activities and socio-cultural relationships among different local community groups.

In 2004 in Karambi sub-country, participatory planning tools were used during community meetings which allowed deeper analysis of the needs that had to be prioritised for support from the non-sector capacity grant (NSCG) and other programmes. A facilitator who was well schooled in participatory and SEAGA methodologies was appointed the planning local person (PLP) to help the citizens respond to the multiple problems facing the sub-county, including malnutrition, unsafe drinking water and food insecurity. The PFP involved the whole community at village level in identifying solutions to these problems as well as the resources available to address them. He separated the men, women and youth into distinct groups after realising that not all members would participate fully if they remained as one group. Each group was guided in drawing a 'village resource map' indicating important resources in the village such as water sources, forests, grazing areas, schools, Churches, clinics, farms, good planting materials, markets and trading centres. Participants agreed on the symbols to be used to represent the different resources on the maps. They were also asked to identify what was required to improve the situation and indicate it on the map, which enabled them to identify their own resources and priority development areas. Finally the groups were brought together, the maps were integrated and village resource and needs assessment maps were drawn. The maps were forwarded to the parish and sub-county for integration into the sub-county's three-year development plan. The resource maps provided important information about local perceptions on how to solve local development problems, and provided the basis for demanding services from the sub-county local government. The community resolved to carry out this exercise on an annual basis on the first Sunday of April.

Three important lessons were learnt from this exercise. First, participatory planning encourages effective community participation and appreciation of local development challenges and opportunities. Second, village resource maps prepared by the local people themselves generate local ownership, alert local communities to local features and resources, and make development planning more precise and relevant to the community. Finally, planning that takes account of gender issues and the needs and interests of all members promotes community cohesion, empathy and shared vision.

(Commonwealth Local Government Conference, 2013)

Step VI Consolidation and Integration for District Planning

The Indian Constitution provides that there should be a District Planning Committee (DPC) for every district, whose primary role is the preparation of a draft annual district plan.

Consolidation and integration of rural and urban plans are important to address the rapid urban expansion, affecting areas outside their previous boundaries. This erosion of peripheries among rural, urban and semi-urban areas has posed challenges to the existing structure of management and governance. For example, the *panchayat* near the peripheries of the cities are transferring into rings of slums and the gram *panchayats* have to deal with problems in these new semi-urban areas with the existing rural instruments. Again, with increasing trends of rural to urban migration, the pressure on the peripheral areas of urban cities increases manifold.

Consolidation and convergence of various schemes and financial resources is based on the following principles:

- ✓ Convergence of schemes should be undertaken at each *panchayat* level, so that adequate resources are found for implementing projects and programmes prioritized by the *Gram Sabha* and the *panchayats* at all three levels.
- ✓ *Panchayats* at different levels should pool their resources to implement projects, which are common to two or more tiers of the *Panchayati Raj* system.

Identifying Spaces For Consolidation

The starting point for merging rural sectoral and urban spatial planning is to identify possible commonalities in the functional responsibilities of rural and urban local governments. For example, the 29 matters listed in the Eleventh Schedule and 18 in the Twelfth Schedule¹ of the Indian Constitution can be clustered to identify overlaps in *panchayat* and municipality functions, which can be dealt with in the consolidation.

¹ Comprises matters or subjects over which the *panchayats* and municipalities have jurisdiction.

Among the functions mentioned in the Eleventh Schedule and the Twelfth Schedule, there are clear demarcations of primary sector functions, regulatory services and other services like education, anti-poverty, infrastructure and economic development. While consolidating the plans, it may be remembered that rural plans deal primarily with the primary sector, while the urban plans are mainly about regulatory services. However, other issues like anti-poverty programmes, watershed management, garbage management, education, (especially higher education), health, transportation, irrigation etc. require an integrated approach, as they have applicability to both sectors.

Methods For Integration

Plans prepared at the different levels of local governments need to be integrated to develop an overall development plan for the district (Planning Commission, 2006). The following methods of integration are used in this process:

- a) **Spatial Integration** refers to integration of plan components, which are spatial in nature. For example, integration of schemes such as roads that run through one or more localities or local bodies.
- b) **Sectoral Integration** refers to the integration that takes place within a sector. For example, an integrated approach to agricultural development requires integration of several components such as drip irrigation, high yielding crop varieties, integrated pest management, transportation and marketing facilities.
- c) **Cross-Sectoral Integration** aims to ensure maximum support from different interventions across sectors. For example, development of a good public health plan requires inputs from allocation for water and sanitation, as well as road networks to remote habitations.
- d) **Vertical Integration** distinguishes what can be taken up at higher levels of local government, which have the advantages of scale and therefore cannot be undertaken by the lower tiers. For example, for effective eradication of malaria, interventions at the district level may be more effective than those at the village level.

- e) **Integration Of Resources** identifies and plans the channelisation of several schemes sponsored by national or state government. These schemes may be utilised by the local governments, or even integrated into local plans, supplemented by additional resources.

Unit 2: Implementation, Monitoring And Evaluation Of Plans

Step VII - Implementation according to the plan, in terms of both time span and deliverables

It is the responsibility of the DPC and the respective local governments in rural and urban areas to:

- ✓ Ensure that funds are released regularly to the *Panchayats* and Municipalities
- ✓ Monitor the proper utilisation of the funds released
- ✓ Assign specific tasks to be undertaken to the *Panchayats*, the Municipalities, or the line departments

It is the responsibility of the *Panchayat* and Municipality to ensure:

- ✓ Monitoring of the sanctioning of works, tendering, hiring and outsourcing and specified time limit for each milestone
- ✓ Mandatory and regular quality checks

Step VIII Ensuring whether the set goals are being reached

Independent evaluation, is the best way of assessing whether the process has achieved its objectives, especially in fulfilling the needs of the poor and the marginalised and to determine, whether or not the plan has been actually implemented in its true spirit.

Assessment takes place at multiple levels

- a) **physical infrastructure** developed such as schools, health centres
- b) **financial resources** deployed and whether expenditure has been contained within estimated limits, or failed to reach targets
- c) **quality goals** including infant and maternal mortality, drop out rate,

is easy to verify, an evaluation of qualitative targets is rather difficult.

The independent monitoring system must also identify reasons for the non-fulfillment of plan targets and suggest means of remedying the defects. Monitoring, of projects also involves the participation of individuals and groups from within the community, including village councils in rural areas and ward councils in urban constituencies, as well as Resident Welfare Associations. They could be encouraged to

- ✓ Find innovative ways for the *panchayats* and municipalities to check whether they have attained the desired goals.
- ✓ Allow for *panchayats* and municipalities to inspect each other and rank themselves.
- ✓ Request individual citizens to give report cards on implementation

By adopting these eight steps, a participatory integrated district plan can be prepared which will go a long way in helping the district to achieve the desired targets of socio- economic development.

Integrated District Planning in Deogarh, Jharkhand

The key areas in the planning exercise

District Vision

- Diversification of agriculture to include allied sectors such as horticulture, fisheries and dairy
- Infrastructural improvements such as roads, electricity, health facilities and education
- 100% literacy rate
- Improved facilities to attract more pilgrims
- Scientific disposal of waste
- Establish Deogarh as an international pilgrim & tourist center
- Declaring city as zero garbage city including waste minimization, decentralized and scientific waste management system (handling rules 2000)
- Ensuring pollution free environment

Resource Availability and Potential

- Human resources: One million population
- Natural resources: Forest rich in medicinal and aromatic plants, wastelands, water bodies, agro-climatic conditions favourable for cultivation of fruits, vegetables and commercial flowers.
- Human made assets: Cottage and small-scale industry, infrastructure – roads, toilets, educational institutions
- Financial resources: Money raised from schemes, taxes, user charges, national and sub-national government funds, funds for non-planned expenditure, such as salaries and maintenance of assets

Planning and project formulation

- Agro-development to benefit the landless labourers, as they constitute a majority of the population
- Improvement of roads
- Infrastructural facilities, including improved roads for pilgrims in the month of *Shravani*

Consolidation and Integration

- Agriculture - Crop diversification was introduced in the agricultural sector
- Animal Husbandry - Poultry, cattle, and dairy markets were boosted using the assistance of financial and developmental agencies
- Education - Spreading of awareness regarding education. Revitalization of transport facilities ensured betterment in the literacy levels
- Industries - Entrepreneur friendly lease systems, improved communication systems, strengthening of training systems, better credit absorptions to prompt the growth of industries

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation of Plans

At every stage of the planning process, the plan is constantly available to the general public for scrutiny. thus enabling a transparent and participative plan preparation provides the platform for monitoring of the implementation of plan by the respective institution and public

Summary

A district plan is an integrated output of many processes and uses different tools and techniques in its preparation. In this module, we have learnt about the key areas and steps in the preparation, planning, consolidation, implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation of a district plan.

The district stock taking report helps the planners to assess the level and types of resources available. These include human resources, natural resources, human made assets and financial resources. Mapping of resources is critical in gauging the availability of all streams of funds available at the level of each planning unit. District vision sets out broad development goals that are not affected by funding constraints, rather the process influences long term funding sources and identification of lead sectors for development.

Capacity building is an integral component for optimizing the participatory planning and build skills of all the stakeholders in areas such as planning, negotiation, communication, facilitation, as well as intensive knowledge on the schemes of the government for development both in rural, as well as urban areas.

The additional reading on “Developing a Micro-Plan – A Facilitator’s Manual is important in developing a deeper understanding on the various steps of the planning process, outlined in this module. To develop a more comprehensive understanding of participatory processes that can be used, make a chart with the 8 planning steps involved and against these detail out the various PRA (Participatory Resource Appraisal) tools that can be deployed for maximum participation of all the stakeholders.

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