

## EXAMINATION OF THE REASONS FOR THE FAILURE TO PREPARE DISTRICT PLANS AND IMPLEMENT THEM - LEARNINGS FOR POLICY MAKING



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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## District Planning

District Planning is the process of preparing an integrated plan for the local government in a district, taking into account the resources available and covering the sectoral activities and schemes assigned to the district and below through local governments in the State. Decentralised District Planning encompasses different planning units comprising District Panchayat, Block Panchayat and Village Panchayat, Municipalities, line departments and parastatals would prepare a plan for execution of each of their functions and responsibilities after consultations with people.

The main aim of district planning is to arrive at an integrated, participatory coordinated idea for the development of a local area. An essential step in this direction is to ensure that each Panchayat at any level or Municipality is treated as a planning unit and the 'district plan' is built up through consolidation and integration of these plans as well as by considering the development of the district as a whole. It is a two-way interactive exercise, with the district being viewed as a convenient local area. As now practised, the concept of district planning is considerably diluted by the fact that most department schemes envisage in their guidelines, separate and self-contained 'planning' processes.

## Need for the Study

It is a matter of concern that even after the lapse of 25 years since the amendments were made, decentralised planning is yet to become effective in the country. While most States carried out amendments of their respective State Acts in conformation of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments, the implementation of the provisions was not uniform. In all the States DPCs were formed according to the Act but the functioning of DPC and preparing of development plans are negligible. Many reports make a mention of the spirit of decentralisation in planning not being reflected in the district planning. The present study examined the status, roles, responsibilities, powers and functions devolved, training need assessment in the context of district planning, and functional difficulties and problems faced in preparation of district planning. It also tried to bring workable strategies for effective preparation of participatory integrated district planning and functioning of the DPCs.

## Objectives

- To assess the status of district plan preparation on par with the manual of Integrated District Planning (IDP).

- To understand the status and typologies of devolution of powers to PRIs
- To examine the problems in preparation of Integrated District Plans.
- To identify the issue of data gaps in district planning.
- To examine the capacity requirements for the stakeholders of district planning with focus on DPC members.
- To study the factors of success of the Integrated District Plan and its process.
- To find the reasons for failures in implementation of the district plan.

## **Method and Sampling**

### **Design of the Study**

The research study was conducted in nine States - two each from southern, northern, eastern and western regions of India. From each region, two States were selected based on the status of the preparation of district planning. Accordingly, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu from southern region, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab from northern region, West Bengal and Jharkhand from eastern zone, and Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh from western zone were selected for the field study. Kerala was also included in the study as a State for its overall better performance. In the second stage, one district was selected randomly from each State as a sample unit. It covered 314 respondents representing members from District Planning Committees (DPCs) from nine districts, i.e. one sample district from each selected State. Field data was collected through personal interviews and interactions with the DPC members. The study collected required data on the perception of people through canvassing semi-structured interview schedules prepared for the study. It also recorded people's satisfaction with the district plan prepared, status of inclusion of projected needs in GP plans, and their integration into the district plan. Further, people's opinions were collected through focussed group discussions/informal discussions and presented to strengthen the data description. Sectoral department officers, special invitees of DPCs and officials of ZPs were also involved in the discussion for collection of particulars related to sectoral planning.

## **Major Findings**

### **Roles and Responsibilities of District Planning Committees**

- The nature of political representation and other status of membership into the District Planning Committee (DPC) represents four-fifths of members selected from the elected members of the Zilla Panchayat and Municipalities of the respective district in proportion to the ratio of population representing rural and urban areas in the district.

- Total number of members of DPC varies from district to district across the States. The representation comprises all the Members of the Legislative Assembly, and Parliament (MLAs & MPs), and Mayors of municipalities of the constituencies within the jurisdiction of the district. In addition, subject experts and representatives/officials of line departments are also included as Special Invitees to District Planning Committees.
- In the States of Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, one-fifth of members were 'Nominated Members' representing line departments and subject experts, but in Jharkhand, the DPC has the provision of only elected members of ZPs.
- The sample population has an affiliation with 64.3 per cent of Zilla Panchayat members, 24.5 per cent from urban local bodies, namely urban local bodies. Only around 2 per cent were subject experts and Special Invitees
- More than 90 per cent of DPC members did not have specialised experience or subject knowledge in rural development. Around 33 per cent only reported having experiences in the field of rural development and panchayati raj.
- On the hierarchy of various levels of PRIs, the ZP has to take the responsibility of leading the development process, but the actual powers and functions are devolved only to the Gram Panchayat.
- Majority (84.5 per cent) of the respondents of the study reported that the Act has given powers and functions to the DPC, and it needs to be implemented. But as a matter of fact, only a very few members accepted that they understand the real spirit of powers and functions of the DPC and its members.
- Out of 15.5 per cent of respondents, majority were not fully satisfied with the status of functioning of the DPC but responded with partial satisfaction with its existence. Around 26 per cent of agreed members were unsatisfied over the process of discussion and agenda listed and passing of resolutions in relation to development activities proposed by district administration.
- Prior information was not given to the DPC members on the items on agenda for proper orientation and effective participation contribution in the meeting.
- Majority reported that the committee meeting carried out a list of activities prepared and presented by various departments for the current year or coming years and the same got approved by the DPC without discussions. Even if any member raises issues for detailed discussions, such attempts would be suppressed by the local MLAs or MPs or district administration.
- In a few States, especially in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, DPCs are chaired by the Minister in-charge of the district. The respondents said that it is very difficult for the DPC members to pose arguments against the views of the Minister or against the ruling party Chairman of the district.

## Process of DPC Meetings

- Frequency of DPC meetings conducted - The State PRI Act of the majority of the States under study made provisions for conducting four meetings in a year, one in each quarter.
- In the study States, DPC meetings were conducted once a year and it was acknowledged by 33.8 per cent of respondents. In States like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, all the respondents stated that only one meeting was conducted. It can be concluded that majority of the study States conduct one or two meetings, except for Kerala and MP which are conducting three meetings.
- Regarding the attendance of members, 48.1 per cent of respondents, mainly from States like Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Punjab, have attended only one meeting in a year. Followed by 36.9 per cent from Karnataka, more than 50 per cent from Kerala & Rajasthan, 30 per cent from Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and 25 per cent from Punjab reported attending two meetings in a year. Only in MP (61.5 per cent) and Kerala (40.6 per cent) respondents reported attending three meetings.
- The overall status of participation of sample respondents reveals that DPC members participate only in one or two meetings.
- Major Agenda - It was reported by 48.1 per cent altogether from the study States that the meetings take place with the reading of targets and achievements of the previous year by the respective line departments and presentation of the targets for the forthcoming year and approved by obtaining the signatures of the members. Another 38 per cent of respondents reported that no discussion on the agenda items takes place, and the meetings used to be concluded with the approval of the plans with the signature of members who attended the meeting. Interestingly, only 10.1 per cent of respondents from Kerala, MP and Karnataka reported accepting approval of the plan with proper discussion and consolidation of the plan.
- Allowance - The details related to 'provision of allowances' to DPC members for attending DPC meetings exist in all the States but around 24.8 per cent reported that they have not availed the claims of allowances. While sitting allowance is paid in Karnataka, MP, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, UP and Jharkhand, a monthly honorarium is paid in the State of Kerala.
- It shows that more than 65 per cent of sample respondents have negative opinion about DPCs and reported that they were inactive. It was accepted by all members in Jharkhand, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Majority of members from Rajasthan (60.6 per cent), and UP (69.2 per cent) agreed that the DPCs in their States are inactive. Only the States of Kerala and Karnataka reported presence of 'very active DPCs'. Madhya Pradesh also reported having well-functioning 'active' DPCs, fulfilling the mandatory requirements of the DPC role.

### **Availability of Data for District Planning**

- All respondents from Kerala and 42.5 per cent from Punjab positively responded to the availability of sectoral data at the district level. Further, 50 per cent of respondents from Madhya Pradesh and a few respondents from Uttar Pradesh made a serious note on the non-availability of data specific to district planning. The remaining States neither have data management system for the district planning committee nor are the members aware of its availability.
- Majority of the respondents have given positive responses and mentioned the availability of district statistical offices in all the States and statistical offices maintain the data regarding all the sectors of rural development, agriculture and allied subjects. Except for the State of Kerala, in all other study States, almost all the respondents are unaware of the role of district statistical department support for the District Planning Unit.

### **Capacity Requirements for DPC Members in Preparation & Consolidation of District Plans**

- All the respondents from Jharkhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal reported positively to fixing minimum educational qualifications as eligibility criteria to become members of the DPC. The same views were supported by 56.3 per cent from Kerala and above 70 per cent from the States of MP, Punjab, Rajasthan and 46.2 per cent from UP. The proposal was rejected by UP.
- In total, only 36.3 per cent agreed on attending training programmes related to District Planning. The State-wise data shows that in Kerala, all the members have attended training programmes followed by around 91 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 61.5 per cent from Madhya Pradesh, 54.5 per cent from Rajasthan, 33.3 per cent in Karnataka and 24.6 per cent in UP. In contrast, no one has attended any training in States like Jharkhand, Punjab and West Bengal. Similarly, majority of respondents from UP and Karnataka reported non-participation in training programmes. Majority of the members attended only one training programme, which was an orientation on PRIs and the roles of DPCs.
- It is understood that only 6 per cent of respondents were covered under national-level capacity building institutions like NIRDPR. Thirty-six per cent of respondents, majorly from Karnataka, Kerala and UP, attended training programmes at State level training institutions like SIRD and other networking institutions, and 58 per cent attended training programmes conducted by district training institutions.
- It reflects there is a need for organising more training programmes by the NIRDPR and SIRDs either directly or through networking, partnering institutions in

saturation mode. Most respondents from all the States suggested conducting more training programmes to build the capacity of the DPCs as requested by 91.4 per cent.

### **Administrative Support**

- The importance of having a separate office structure is understood immensely by all the States in India through mentioning the provision in the State-specific PRI Act. All the respondents emphasised the need for creating office infrastructure for the DPC along with administrative support required for making adequate base work for the preparation of district plan.
- Out of the nine States, Punjab and Tamil Nadu do not have separate official mechanisms to assist the DPC. But in the case of Uttar Pradesh, the majority of sample respondents agreed to have office premises for the DPC. The overall responses pointed to the need for a separate office in their respective districts.
- States like Jharkhand, UP and West Bengal have given separate offices for DPC without administrative mechanism and manpower. The experiences of the study reflect that wherever the DPCs are provided with separate office premises along with manpower, the DPCs undertook important initiatives and show good progress in plan preparation.
- In the discussions related to earmarking of funds to meet the expenses related to arrangements on plan preparation, altogether 48 per cent of respondents from Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Rajasthan and UP agreed on having funds to meet the expenses on plan preparation.
- In Jharkhand, Kerala, Rajasthan and MP, the funds required for plan preparation are routed through the State Planning Board whereas in Karnataka and UP, the expenditures are met by the respective Zilla Panchayats of the districts. In some States, the expenditure is provided by the district administration.
- Regarding availability of mechanism for addressing the problems of the DPC members as well as other stakeholders in the context of the preparation of district plans, only Kerala reported of having a grievance redress mechanism. But, in other States, no specific system was created to attend to the issues raised by the members of DPCs or find solutions.
- Important problems expressed by the majority of the DPC members were failure in proper orientation on the preparation of district development of plan, lack of motivation in terms of financial support or non-availability of recognition, lack of adequate experts' involvement in the planning process and lack of base statistical data about the district.

### **Problems Faced by the DPC Members during Planning**

- Majority or all the respondents from the study States reported that the dates announced for the DPC meeting is inconvenient for them. The meeting dates were fixed at the convenience of the DPC chairman without consulting most of the members.
- The DPC members feel lack of freedom to express their views for or raise objections against inclusion and exclusion of programmes and schemes in the district plan. In many States, the district minister and State representing minister serve either as chairman, ex-officio member or special invitee, which hinders the free participation of other members or suppression of views of opposition party members.
- In the States, where bureaucrats lead the process of plan preparation, the views of DPC members are ignored.
- Almost all the members agreed on the non-inclusion of subject specialists and planning experts in the DPC which hinders the visualisation of long-term development of the district. This results entirely depending on the line department's list of activities as components of the plans.
- In all the study States, it was found power struggles in the context of district plans severely affect the planning process. The views of elected representatives are not recognised by the district administration; similarly, the views of officials are harshly criticised by the elected members.
- The fund crunch is leading to the DPC members losing interest. Except for Jharkhand, the DPCs in all other States face financial problems in undertaking various projects under District Plans. The members are unaware of the funds from different governments and schemes for the district. Irregular fund flow to various administrative units of PRIs is also one of the reasons creating disinterest among members to participate in the planning exercises.
- The exercise of merely preparing district plans eventually leads to leaving it as a bundle of documents without any chance for its implementation. It severely affects the enthusiasm of the DPC members to come forward for the district planning process. In Jharkhand, it is understood that the rural development funds are routed through DPC, which motivates the DPC members.
- Around 77 per cent of respondents positively responded to the existence of political conflicts, except in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh and to a certain extent in Rajasthan. Lack of political party's coordination and thoughts of holistic development have delayed plan preparation and acceptance of the plans by the different departments to seek administrative approval from their respective heads.

- The political rivalry can be said as impedance for non-inclusion of demands from the opposition parties and vice-versa, the ruling party insisting on development proposals based on their ideas, regions and interests.
- In Kerala, around 80 per cent of the study population stated that DPC is the ultimate authority on consolidation of plans. Different line department heads or representative presents annual action plans of their departments followed by a detailed discussion on the necessity of inclusion and exclusion. Karnataka also has a strong DPC system and all the elected Zilla Panchayat members become DPC members. Therefore, in Karnataka, the supreme power of consolidation and approval of district plans are in the hands of Zilla Panchayat joined with urban local bodies. In some States, namely Punjab, MP, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, UP and West Bengal, the district administration plays a dominant role in the preparation and approval of district plans.
- Majority of the sample population from Jharkhand (100 per cent), MP (23 per cent), Punjab (52.5 per cent), West Bengal (100 per cent) and Rajasthan (24.2 per cent) responded that up to 50 per cent of activities have the possibility of initiation. Acceptance for 50-75 per cent activities was stated by all DPC members from Karnataka, 63.3 per cent from Rajasthan, 47.5 per cent from Punjab, 34.6 per cent from MP and 25 per cent from Kerala.
- It is surprising to note that there is no specific mechanism to review the implemented activities as per the perspective or annual action plan. Lack of this review process led to lack of accountability on the part of governance in fulfilling the people's real needs.
- Regarding the worthiness of plans prepared by various districts in their respective State in the context of holistic development approach, majority of respondents responded (54.5 per cent) in the context of comprehensive development and categorized below 25 per cent worthiness.

### **Suggestions for Improving the Functional Ability of the DPCs**

- Respondents from all States felt that DPC would play a vital role in the development of the district through their contribution to the preparation of plans, monitoring of the progress of the plan implementation and reviewing the targets achieved by the different departments. The State's specific PR Acts have given delegated powers to prepare and review the district plans implementation as well as an advisory role on making corrective measures to the department concerned on finding shortcomings, misappropriations and deviations.
- In reality, majority of the members were unaware of their roles and powers due to

less exposure to the constitutional provisions. To address the issue, adequate orientation, realisation and creating an enabling environment for the implementation of assigned roles are required.

- The State of Kerala is fully positive in the decentralisation of powers and functions and activation of various institutions of local governance, including DPCs, which resulted in majority of respondents rating DPCs as 'Very Strong'. Respondents in States like Karnataka, West Bengal, MP, and Rajasthan gave 'Satisfactory' rating. Participants from Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab revealed that DPCs were not performing as per the provisions of the State Acts.
- The overall rating of the DPCs' performance in the study States is 'not satisfactory' as reported by 51 per cent whereas around 40 per cent are 'just satisfied.' This status reveals the need for enormous efforts in making the DPCs vibrant and its members active for implementing their powers and functions, according to the provisions of the PRI Acts of the respective States.
- Irrespective of the States, the respondents were not satisfied with the existing strategies for attracting attendance. Low attendance, counterproductive strategies for mobilising attendance and superficial efforts on district plan preparation were the results of the process and strategies followed in the sample districts.

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# **CHAPTER - 1**

## **DISTRICT PLANNING IN INDIA**

### **1.1 Background**

India being the largest democratic country in the world, decentralisation of planning and development administration becomes mandatory to ensure an effective delivery system and good governance. Decentralised planning as an approach to balanced development and reduction of regional disparities emerged well before Independence. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments (Articles 243G, 243W) envisage planning for economic development and social justice by PRIs and Municipalities respectively, and their consolidation (Article 243ZD) into District Development Plans by the District Planning Committee (DPCs) after consideration of matters of common interest between the Panchayats and the Municipalities, including spatial planning, sharing of water and other physical and natural resources, integrated development of infrastructure, environmental conservation, the extent and type of resources available whether financial or otherwise. The initial attempts towards decentralised planning, however, began from the second five-year plan onwards. The Eleventh Plan further envisaged a participatory district planning process as an integral part of the preparation of State Five Year Plans and Annual Plans. The then Planning Commission and MoPR, Govt. of India, jointly prepared a Manual for 'Integrated District Planning' to guide the States and districts in the context of the preparation of district planning. Based on the manual, each district should prepare an integrated vision for development over 10 to 15 years, and a perspective plan for five years, not constrained or conditioned by the existing schemes and programmes. In order to take the process of participatory district planning forward, the foremost necessity is to set up District Planning Committees (DPCs) on the lines of Article 243 ZD. The District Planning Committee (DPC) has a powerful mandate of aggregating village-level plans prepared through the active participation of Gram Sabha and citizen-centric urban plans.

### **1.2. Need for District Planning**

The Constitution of India provides for the distribution of legislative and financial powers between the Centre and the States. Further, the Constitution does not specify any political authority for the districts. Thus, this raises the important issue of the possibility of district planning. The case for district planning arises from the fact that a coordinated inter-departmental effort is likely to give greater benefits from the same outlay. At the sub-State levels, usually, the development activities are handled by

various departments with specific organisational structures. The non-departmental public agencies such as commercial banks, input corporations, market agencies, etc., also operate at district and sub-district levels with separate plans of action.

Thus, development functions get highly fragmented among numerous departments and agencies. Immense benefits can be reaped by integrating and coordinating these individual efforts into a consistent regional plan framework. This requires setting up of planning agency which can be beneficial for most departments and agencies. Therefore, coordinated, consistent and integrated district planning is crucial for the development and achieving social justice. Thus, it is desirable that planning is decentralised at least up to the district level so that effective use can be made of local resources after identifying local needs and problems. Planning at a centralised level would mean either neglecting diversity or earmarking big budget for collection of data and information from a large area and processing such voluminous information to evolve a consistent and integrated plan. Therefore, it is emphasised that decentralised planning has to be of manageable size and simultaneously accounting for regional needs and resources.

The emphasis on sub-State level planning in India has primarily been the outcome of political values. The influence of Gandhian ideals of self-reliance in small communities is viable only through decentralised planning. Ideas of “planning from below” and “grassroots planning” have been stated time and again since the inception of the planning process in India. Planning at the district and lower levels has been seen as an input to the process of strengthening democracy in a country. The political ideals of democracy and socialism have been the concepts underlying whatever efforts that have been made to decentralise the planning process.

### **1.3 Concept of District Planning**

District planning is to arrive at an integrated, participatory, coordinated idea of the development of a region. An essential step in this direction is to ensure that each Panchayat at any level or Municipality is treated as a planning unit and the ‘district plan’ is prepared through consolidation and integration of these plans as well as by considering the development of the district as a whole.

As of now, the concept of district planning is considerably diluted by the fact that most department schemes envisage in their guidelines, separate and self-contained ‘planning’ processes. In other words, district-level planning implies evolving a developmental scenario at the district level, focusing on the specific needs of people, growth potentials of region and the available resources. The district plan must be specific to the agro-climate and socio-economic conditions with the focus on increasing production, reducing employment and poverty alleviation at the national level.

## **1.4 Decentralised Planning Initiatives**

The idea of district planning was advocated during the formulation of the First Five Year Plan which had mooted a village production council for agricultural planning. Village, block and district plans were required to be prepared on the eve of the formulation of the Second Five Year Plan. Following the report of Balwant Rai Mehta committee, the Third Plan laid emphasis on the role of people's participation in the local-level planning under the framework of the Panchayati Raj. The Third Plan described the methodology for preparing State plans for rural development by consolidating the district and block plans.

A decade after the Balwantrai Mehta Committee's recommendations, the Administrative Reforms Commission noted that the attempts at district planning have not been effective due to lack of clear guidelines and lack of specific resources in the district. The Commission, therefore, recommended creating appropriate planning mechanisms for the formulation of plans at the district level.

Later, based on the recommendations of the Administrative Reforms Commission, the Planning Commission issued guidelines in the year 1969. These guidelines were worked out so as to encourage the formulation of district plans. The guidelines stressed the need for decentralised planning and suggested the involvement of local self-governments through participation of local people, including progressive farmers and entrepreneurs for assessment of existing problems, needs and matching with the available resources for addressing the priority issues. This was the first major document to give a comprehensive outline of the methodology of district planning. Based on the Planning Commission's guidelines, some States attempted preparation of district plans.

In its approach to the Fifth Five-Year Plan, the Planning Commission has stressed the importance of District Planning for the effective use of funds and local resources for the cause of reduction of inequalities among the States and better coordination of planning and implementation with the prime role of PRIs. Some States were able to formulate district schemes during the Fifth Plan. But not much development took due to administrative reluctance and non-cooperation of various line departments. The States felt lack of freedom and flexibility to frame their schemes of priority.

## **1.5 District Planning Board (DPB)**

There was an approach to establishing a three-tier planning machinery at the district level with adequate powers of decision-making on local matters of administration and development by establishing a planning cell. This unit is called

District Planning Board (DPB) and it comprises both officials and non-officials. The District Collector and some development officers at the district level are usually associated with the DPB along with the representation from sectoral departments. In a few States, the board was headed by the State Minister and in some other States, the District Collector worked as Chairman of the board. The Collector occupied a key role in the board even in those States where he/she was not the Chairman. The control of the Collector over the district planning process was further exercised through the District Planning Officer, who is the member secretary of DPB.

The DPB could not become an effective instrument for performing detailed planning functions such as analysis of data and formulation of schemes. Thus, in many States, small sub-committees or executive committees of the DPB were constituted. Those committees were designated with different names in different States. The committee assisted the district planning board in the field of identifying the problems, suggesting targets, proposing inter-sectoral or intra-sectoral transfers when necessary and supervising budgetary allocations and expenditures. These committees meet once a month or every two months. Since the officers of the smaller committee of the DPB have other own responsibilities to attend to, they were not in a position to spare time for the preparation of the district plan. Thus, very few States have attempted to provide full-time staff. According to the information obtained by the Planning Commission's Working Group on District Planning, the number of purely technical personnel available in the States ranged from 2 to 6 officers in 1984. They have usually been seconded from other departments and do not seem to possess any particular planning experience.

In 1982, the Planning Commission set up a working group on district planning and it submitted its report in 1984 under the chairman of Shri C. H. Hanumantha Rao. This Group suggested setting up a broad-based District Planning Body comprising representatives from the Zilla Panchayat, Panchayat Samitis, Municipalities and Corporations, MLAs and MPs from the district, prominent personalities, workers and entrepreneurs representatives, Block representatives, etc. The Working Group further recommended that to aid the District Planning Cell in Technical matters, there could be a District Planning office headed by a Chief Planning Officer with the status next to that of the District Collector. The Group also suggested the strengthening of the Collector's role and clear definition of financial and administrative powers for the district-level government and adequate disaggregation of outlay according to districts. Thus, the Working Group made far-reaching recommendations on the technical and administrative aspects of district planning. It is clear that the organisation's support for planning rural development programmes, whether at the block or the district level, is inadequate and weak. Therefore, there is a need to review the entire setup for planning at the grassroots.

The G.V.K. Rao Committee, which was set up to review the administrative arrangement for rural development and poverty alleviation also stressed the need for decentralised planning at the district and block level. More specifically, it endorsed the Working Group's recommendation for setting up district planning bodies and the suggestions for decentralisation of financial and administrative powers.

L. M. Singhvi Committee (1986) on the revitalisation of the Panchayati Raj Institution has also emphasised the concept of district planning for constructive rural development and nation-building. Since district planning is a vital part of the process of decentralisation, the Planning Commission was directed to readjust its priorities so as to serve this aim and thus ensure considerable gains to the economy and promote human resource development. Under this directive, considerable importance was henceforth to be given to development in Blocks and districts in the Eighth Plan.

A good planning organisation at the grassroots is necessary for the success of planning at these levels. Realisation of this need has led several State governments to establish Planning Boards at the district level. The launch of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) has also shaped the formation of an organisation, known as the District Rural Development Agency, for their planning and implementation.

District Planning Committee (DPC) is jointly elected by the members of the Panchayats at all three levels and the Municipalities within the district. The DPCs constituted are having the task of consolidating 'the plans prepared at lower levels into a draft district development plan' which would then be forwarded to the State Government. The 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendments (Articles 243G, 243W) envisage planning for economic development and social justice by Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs), respectively, and their consolidation (Article 243ZD) into District Development Plans by the District Planning Committees (DPCs), after consideration of matters of common interest.

### **1.6. Eleventh Plan & Decentralised Planning**

The Eleventh Plan further envisages the participatory district planning process as an integral part of the preparation of State Five Year Plans and Annual Plans. Such holistic planning will result in the convergence of schemes, synergistic implementation and better outcomes.

### **1.7. Second Administrative Reform Commission**

It emphasised the importance of decentralised and recommended participative district planning.

- i) Development authorities to become the technical/planning arms of the DPCs
- ii) Strict compliance with the guidelines dated 25.8.2006 issued by the Planning Commission in preparation of the district plan
- iii) Developing methodology of participatory local-level planning
- iv) Integration of district plans with the State Plans
- v) Clear demarcation of planning functions among the local governments and planning committees

### **1.8 Manual for Integrated District Planning**

The first volume of the Manual contains an exposition of the essential principles of participative district planning and sets out the steps to be taken at the State and national levels. The second volume is a Handbook for District Planning that lays down the modalities and sequence of processes for the preparation of a participative district plan. It includes the formats and checklists by which the processes can be documented and data provided for different planning units.

### **1.9. Participative Integrated District Planning**

Participative integrated planning is multi-dimensional and includes i) Three levels of Panchayats and Municipalities ii) Multiple sectors (viz. health, education, nutrition, sanitation, livelihoods), iii) A variety of funding sources (viz. State/Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Finance Commission, own resources), iv) Integration of departmental and programmatic machinery, and v) A broad spectrum of stakeholders, each seeking fulfilment of its own from a plan. With increased specialisation and sectoral thrusts in development, there has been a tendency for more and more sectoral plans prepared in relative isolation, for example, District Health Plan, District Watershed Plan, District Education Plan and so on. It is important that this vertical planning process is transformed into a horizontal planning process, where local governments and other planning entities work together to develop a holistic plan, out of which sectoral plans emerge. Achieving this coordination in the face of an increasing number of schemes and fund-flows into the districts will necessitate a quantum improvement in the existing planning and implementation mechanism through local governments and DPCs.

### **1.10. Role of BRGF/MGNREGA in catalysing Decentralised Planning**

Despite various initiatives on decentralised, participative and integrated planning, the MGNREGS and BRGF remain the two main schemes having a process of

bottom-up planning. Under Sections 16 and 17 of the MGNREGA, 2005, the Gram Panchayat and the Gram Sabha have been given key roles in planning, implementation and monitoring of the programme. Those two schemes provide a good source of funds to the Gram Panchayats.

### 1.11 Decentralisation - Chronology of Attempts and Committee Reports

Year	Item	Ideas and Concepts
<b>First Plan, 51-56</b>	Community Development Blocks	To break up planning exercise into National, State, District and Local Community levels
<b>Second Plan, 56-61</b>	District Development Councils	Drawing up village plans and popular participation in planning through the process of democratic decentralisation
<b>1957</b>	Balwant Rai Mehta Committee	Village, Block, District Panchayat institutions established
<b>1967</b>	Administrative Reforms Commission	Resources to be given/local variations accommodated, purposeful plan for the area.
<b>1969</b>	Planning Commission	Formulated guidelines; detailed the concept of the district plan and methodology of drawing up such a plan in the framework of annual plans, medium term plans and perspective plans
<b>1978</b>	Prof. M.L. Dantwala	Block-level planning to form a link between village and district level planning
<b>1983-84</b>	Centrally Sponsored Scheme/ Reserve Bank of India	Strengthen district Plan/District Credit Plan
<b>1984</b>	Hanumantha Rao Committee	Decentralisation of function, powers and finances; Setting up of district planning bodies and district planning cells
<b>1985</b>	G. V. K. Rao Committee	Administrative arrangements for rural development; District Panchayat to manage all development programmes
<b>1993</b>	73 <sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment 74 <sup>th</sup> Constitutional Amendment	243 G, W, 243ZD District Planning
<b>1994 - 1996</b>	Conformity Acts by State	Constitution of District Planning Committee in all the States.
<b>2006</b>	Second Administrative Reform Commission	Emphasised Participatory District plan
<b>2008</b>	MoPR & Planning Commission	Manual on Integrated District Plan
<b>2009</b>	Backward Region Grant Fund	Preparation of District Plan
<b>2015</b>	Fourteenth Finance Commission	Preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan

## **1.12 Methods for Preparation of Draft District Plan**

Decentralised planning is a plan to be prepared by the rural and urban local bodies in accordance with their own resources for the activities assigned to them and the national/State schemes implemented by them and, physical integration of the plans of rural and urban local bodies with the elements of the State plan that are physically implemented within the geographic confines of that unit.

### **1.12.1 Objectives of Decentralised Plan**

The objective of decentralised planning is to arrive at an integrated, participatory coordinated idea for the development of a local area. An essential step in this direction is to ensure that each Panchayat at any level or Municipality is treated as a planning unit and the 'district plan' is built up through consolidation and integration of these plans as well as by considering the development of the district as a whole. It is a two-way interactive exercise, with the district being viewed as a convenient local area.

### **1.12.2 Building a Vision**

The vision would be primarily articulated in terms of goals and outcomes and would address basically three aspects of development, namely human development indicators, infrastructure development and development in the productive sector. The articulation of a vision is best done in each planning unit, right down to the Gram Panchayat level, stating with respect to the needs and potential of each area, the attainable levels and the goals to be achieved. A basic requirement is that the preparation of the vision is not conditioned by schemes and programmes. Visioning exercise is a collective dream about a region being participative in nature; it would build a spirit of teamwork.

Building a vision for basic human development indicators would essentially cover all the aspects of human life like health, education, women and child welfare, social justice and availability of basic minimum services. Each Panchayat could propose in its envisioning exercise that they will achieve the levels specified for each such aspect within a particular period. For instance, in regions literacy rate below the national average, the first step would be to reach the average level and the next would be to attain the desirable level. Similar envisioning could be undertaken in respect of attainments regarding health, water supply and sanitation, etc. Attention has to be given to gender integration and the downtrodden in the participatory process in order to enable them to share their views and opportunities to fulfil their needs through an integrated plan. The process of visioning starts by constituting planning committees at

each Gram Panchayat, block and district. The secretary of the Gram Panchayat (GP), all sectoral heads of the GP, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), Capacity Building Organisations (CBOs), Self-Help Group (SHG) representatives, retired resource persons and other interested persons have to be called for the planning related meetings. The planning committee would be chaired by the elected head of the respective unit of GP, Inter mediate Panchayat (IP) and Zilla Panchayat (ZP). At each level, a visioning exercise needs to be carried out for developing vision and identifying problems and needs. The Ward and Gram Sabhas will have to be involved fully in the preparation of the district vision. Undertaking a participative citizen survey is itself a good way of starting the process, by giving every citizen surveyed an opportunity to voice his or her needs and vision. The district vision document should be given wide publicity. Copies and abstracts of the same should also be made available to the people.

### **1.12.3 Data Requirement for Decentralised Planning:**

While doing the envisioning process, a stock-taking exercise has to be conducted for assessing the human condition in the district, and to know the availability of natural, social, and financial resources and infrastructure in that region. The database prepared would be a valuable resource for the stocktaking exercise. Planning at the district level requires a careful study of human and natural resources along with field realities for optimum utilisation and responsive planning. Varieties of data on physical resources, and human and economic aspects are the prerequisites for preparing an integrated plan for the district. The data required to prepare the profile of the GP are discussed below.

**Topography:** It is much essential to understand the nature of topography, major physical divisions, drainage system, soil type and texture in order to quantify the resource base of a region.

**Technology adoption:** The level of technology adopted in agriculture and allied sectors are also to be ascertained. Technology status of infrastructure such as road networks, communication facilities, power supply, and financial institutions needs to be identified. Agriculture:

In order to understand the agriculture status in the region, the data relating to the area under cultivation, land use pattern, cropping pattern, crop cycle, nature and quality of soil, sources and adequacy of irrigation, types of farming, ownership of land, size of landholdings and the system of tenure, production and productivity are to be collected at village level.

**Resource Inventory:** Identification of various resources available in the region like physical and natural resources are to be carried out properly. Data on the quantum

and quality availability of local resources, their utilisation and the possibility of usage for various purposes have to be collected and verification to be done through different sources. The data required for decentralised planning can be broadly grouped into the following categories:

#### **Natural Resources Database:**

- i) Water resources: type of sources, quantity and quality, water availability and scarcity period, etc.
- ii) Soil: type, quality, soil problems, and causes
- iii) Flora and Fauna: species availability and uses
- iv) Land use pattern: different uses of land in the planning region
- v) Livestock: nature, quantity, production and productivity
- vi) Cropping pattern (season-wise)
- vii) Climate: variation subject to season and suitability for various options
- viii) Rainfall: rainfall rate over a period of time, temperature variations and weather conditions are to be properly assessed.

#### **1.12.4 Participative Citizen Surveys and Manpower Planning:**

Data regarding the demography of the region like male-female ratio, child population, education, employment status, landholdings, land-man ratio, wage rate, size of agricultural labourers and their migration, etc., has to be collected to understand the sociological aspects while formulating a plan. Human resources are as important as physical resources. One of the reasons for the failure is underutilisation of the human resources. Therefore, the plan should clearly state the details of human resources that are available in their region. The planning team has to collect the demographical data like total population, sex, age, educational status, occupational status and skill availability. If the region has inadequately skilled labourers, then the plan should suggest ways to train the people to equip them with some suitable skills. If the local region has surplus labour, the plan should find ways to utilise the surplus labourers by providing suitable employment. Information is a basic tool for planning, but information relevant to each area and its population is rarely available.

A citizen survey leading to a database for each Gram Panchayat to know more about them developed in a participative manner is a desirable prerequisite for participatory planning. The process of data collection on citizens could be so dealt with that Gram Panchayats see their empowerment in it. This also builds a climate of participation even before the actual planning process starts. Accordingly, data has to be collected on the following heads.

### **1.12.5 Availability of Infrastructure Facilities:**

Some of the remote areas and villages are still facing difficulties due to lack of adequate infrastructural facilities. To enable faster development and growth, adequate infrastructure is inevitable. Facilities like roads, communication, power supply, marketing channels, etc., are scarce or low standard in rural areas. The growth and development of a region or sector are directly related to its quantum and quality availability of resources and infrastructure. Hence, the planning team has to collect information about the availability and requirement of infrastructural facilities. It will help the planner to prepare a suitable plan to fill up the gap before initiating the implementation of any programme.

### **1.12.6 Data required on Infrastructure - Economic & Social**

#### **Economic infrastructure:**

- i) Markets: types, availability, needed and location appropriateness
- ii) Banks/Financial Institutions: numbers, area of operation, performance, etc.
- iii) Roads/Transport/Communication/Electricity: available, working, not working
- iv) Agri input Centers, Agri. Extn. Officers: seeds, fertilisers, pesticides Govt./private
- v) Veterinary Centres: numbers and services

#### **Social Infrastructure Availability and their Utility:**

- i) Schools/Colleges/Educational Institutions
- ii) Hospitals/Health institutions
- iii) Community Centre/Libraries/etc.
- iv) Placement of entertainment centres
- v) Drinking water/sanitation

#### **Trade and Industry:**

- i) Mining and quarrying
- ii) Small-scale Industries
- iii) Household /Cottage Industries
- iv) Handicrafts
- v) Forest, Agro-based industries
- vi) Wholesale/Retail trade

### 1.12.7 Availability of Financial Resources and Flow

Finance is the first and foremost criterion for putting any plan into action. The success of a plan depends on the financial provisions and its timely flow. A plan, whether a short-term or long-term plan, is shaped by the fund availability. The decision regarding the schedules of launch and completion of the plan, types of machinery to be used, personnel to be employed and other related matters can be finalised only based on the financial availability.

The details on various sources to be ascertained, like

- i) Grants received from the Central/ State governments
- ii) Credit from the banking at financial institutions
- iii) Local bodies' general fund
- iv) People's Contribution
- v) Loan from the financial institutions

### 1.13. Identification of Problems and Needs of the People

The next important step in the planning process is the identification of problems and needs of local people. For this purpose, the planning region has to be surveyed, data must be collected from all households, and discussion should be carried out with resource persons and the general public. The planning team has to understand the nature and acuteness of various problems by observing the specific region. Particulars on educational status, income and expenditure, level of poverty, consumption pattern of people, living standard and lifestyles have to be collected. The proposed plan should focus on solving the identified problems by satisfying the needs of people.

**Prioritisation of Problems:** In rural areas, problems are multidimensional in nature and prevail at various levels. These problems cannot be solved in one go. Certain problems may take a few years to solve while some others just need a few days or months. Instances such as epidemics and other health-related problems are of grave nature and need urgent attention. Issues like provision of transport and communication facilities can be given next priority. The plan should prioritise and develop programmes based on the urgency of matter.

**Concern on Environmental Sustainability:** Planning at the grassroots or State or national level should aim at sustainability in development. Instead of planning for ad-hoc solutions, striving towards arriving at permanent solutions create much impact on the development scenario in the region. For example, if a region faces the problems of unemployment and poverty, the plan should pave the ways and means to provide

permanent employment opportunities, either on-farm or off-farm, in government or non-government organisations or by self-employment. Programmes like providing wage employment through various government schemes may satisfy the immediate requirement but will not offer permanent solutions. Therefore, planners have to do maximum efforts to solve the problems in a sustainable way through alternate mechanisms and suitable strategies. At the same time, the proposed industrial or business activities should not degrade the environment.

**Formulation of Objectives:** Formulation of objectives is one of the major tasks of planning. The objectives should be drawn up for solving the problems of the local people and regional prosperity. The planner should concentrate on the peculiar problems for immediate solutions. The objectives should be achievable, focusing on optimum utilisation of locally available resources.

**Designing of Strategies, Programmes and Targets:** After the identification of problems and finalising the objectives and priorities, the team has to concentrate on the preparation of proper strategies. By involving people and acknowledging their concerns, they should consider the problems encountered and objectives enunciated. The strategies have to be prepared in order to deliver benefits to the local people within the stipulated time. Setting targets is an important function in the development planning. To fulfil the objectives, the targets are to be fixed in specific terms with a time frame and should be based on the availability of resources, ability of services, capacity of the implementing mechanism, and State policies.

#### **1.14. Matching of Resources to the Plan:**

Ideally speaking, each Gram Panchayat should be free to allocate resources in accordance with the assessed needs. However, at this stage of our development, the local planning exercise has to take into account the diversity of sources of funds. The attempts should put them to the best possible use. Therefore, once the order of resources for the plan is known, it is best to place them into a matrix that is divided into three categories, namely purely untied funds, partly untied funds and tied funds. Such a matrix would give each Panchayat an idea of how it can slot its priorities into the conditionality associated with funding. This would ensure that inescapably tied funds should be first used, followed by untied funds.

Once the needs are assessed at the Panchayat level, a process of linking each need to the source of funding can be adopted, through the steps detailed below:

**Step 1:** Classifying each need into a matrix: Discussions with people would throw up several needs, such as housing, sending children to schools, nutrition, roads, healthcare, etc. Each of these has to be classified under broad headings, irrespective of the source of funds.

**Step 2:** Assigning specific purpose grants: Having classified the needs, the next step would be to identify the specific purpose grants that address such needs and match these resources to each need.

**Step 3:** Assigning part-untied funds: Part-untied funds are available for certain purposes and allow for a certain measure of convergence with other schemes. Examples are funds awarded by the Central and State Finance Commissions. These funds can be used for gap-filling within limits.

**Step 4:** Assigning fully untied funds: The final step is the placement of fully untied funds. These are typically own sources of revenue, general or untied State Plan Grants, SFC grants.

In this connection, it would also be very useful to consider the assignment of non-monetary contributions, such as voluntary labour, as fully or partly untied resources.

### **1.15 Sequencing of Planning**

The planning exercise ought to lead to a five-year plan for the period corresponding with the national plan period, and annual plans that define and prioritise areas and schemes from such a plan. The long-term plans would capture the overall picture of the Panchayat and allow people to understand what planning and governmental funding could hold out for them. Once a five-year plan is prepared, the annual plan can be drawn out from it. Considering the size and availability of the personnel of Gram Panchayats, it is obvious that they would need assistance and help in the preparation of projects and schemes, but the decision should be that of the Gram Sabha. Development Meets/Workshops at the Gram Sabha level would be necessary, leading to the emergence of a draft plan, with schemes and projects listed in priority.

### **1.16 Planning at Different Levels:**

Gram Panchayat plan: Everybody should be able to understand the plan, more so the people of the village and the Gram Panchayat members. The Gram Panchayat level plan could follow a broad and simple pattern drawn from best practices. Given below is a possible framework:

- i) The Vision
- ii) Citizens' Profile
- iii) Natural Resources & Infrastructure Profile
- iv) The Financial Resources Profile
- v) The Anti-Poverty Programme

- vi) The Gender Justice Programme
- vii) The Special Component and Tribal Programmes
- viii) Programmes for Social Security
- ix) Implementation
- x) Monitoring and Evaluation

### **The Planning Process at the Intermediate Panchayat**

The process and format of the Intermediate Panchayat plan will be largely the same as that suggested for the Gram Panchayats. However, the actual components would be dependent on the Activity Mapping for the Block Panchayat and the vision envisaged by the Intermediate Panchayat. An important role of this level of Panchayat is to act as a facilitator in the various steps of planning at the Gram Panchayat level. The tasks of the Intermediate Panchayat as regards planning would be

- i. Preparing five-year and annual plans in accordance with activity mapping and covering inter village-panchayat issues, through a participatory process following the steps listed in the case of Gram Panchayats (as appropriate)
- ii. Maintaining multidisciplinary technical teams (which could include NGOs) for assisting Gram Panchayats in planning and implementation. This would specifically synergise inter-tier coordination for watershed development and Rural Business Hub initiatives. There is an urgent need to equip each Intermediate Panchayat with a planning support unit.
- iii. Maintain and manage multi-panchayat cadres, such as teachers, engineers, watershed managers, social forestry supervisors, Anganwadi supervisors, and intermediate-level health supervisory workers
- iv. Feedback from Gram Panchayats regarding works outside their purview, such as inter-village road formation and multi Panchayat irrigation structures could be included in Intermediate Panchayat Plans.

### **Planning Process at the District level**

As regards District Panchayats, the role would preparation of plans in accordance with the activity mapping and overall coordination in planning, providing capacity building and technical support, to lower levels of Panchayats. The formulation of district development plan involves the integration of area plans prepared by the rural and urban local bodies with development plans of the sectoral departments in the districts and credit plans prepared by the Lead Bank of the district.

### **1.16. Issues to be Noted while Preparing Perspective Plan**

Reinforcing Administration and Planning through delegation of powers, setting up an effective grievance redressal system, and creation of necessary infrastructure, service conditions, and facilities for all personnel working in these areas would also need to be specifically addressed in the district plan. There is a need to ensure close collaboration between various levels of Panchayats, without converting the relationship into either a hierarchical or an effort-duplicating one (needs clarity). The principle of financial subsidiarity needs to be followed, by which even if a higher level of Panchayat, such as a District or Intermediate Panchayat sanctions a work of a value less than a prescribed floor limit, it transfers the money allocated for that work to the Gram Panchayat concerned for implementation. This will lead to a clear understanding and separation of who implements what, regardless of who sanctions it. In addition, just as District and Intermediate levels of Panchayats would be mandated to delegate the implementation of schemes below a certain outlay ceiling to the level below, it ought also to be open to lower levels of Panchayats to recommend the immediately higher level such schemes that ought to be undertaken at the higher level. In addition, there is a need to enable the clustering of Gram Panchayats to build a sufficient scale for efficient planning. Some of the ground rules for planning at the intermediate level include mandating prior consultation with Gram Panchayats. It is suggested that Intermediate and District Panchayats ought to hold meetings of all elected local government members of various levels of Panchayat within its jurisdiction and carry out a detailed consultation exercise. In the case of District Panchayats, a meeting of all Village Panchayat Presidents along with all elected members of the District and Block Panchayats may be held to ensure a structured consultation.

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## **CHAPTER - 2**

### **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Planning in India**

The planning process in India started in 1951 with the launching of the first five-year plan. Since then India's planned development has been guided mainly by two objectives -

1. Building up a democratic, rapidly expanding and technologically progressive economy, and
2. A social order based on justice and offering equal opportunity to every citizen.

Keeping in view these objectives, massive investment programmes have been launched in successive five-year plans. Development programmes were directed towards relieving the masses from misery and suffering caused by the existence of poverty, unemployment and inequality.

No doubt, India has made great progress in different fields despite internal and external problems. But there have been some fundamental failures also. Centralised planning for nearly five decades has created islands of affluence, leaving major parts of the country in penury and neglect illiteracy. Ill health and poverty continue to plague the country with no perceptible improvement despite specific mentions in the Constitution and repeated declarations to remind them to mitigate some of the problems faced by the country in a time-bound manner.

Even though it has been possible to bring down substantially the ratio of people below poverty line, the absolute number of people below poverty line remains more or less at the same level. There is something which one cannot boast of a planned development of such a long time close to five decades. Obviously, the planners have not been able to address the issues and problems faced by the countryside and the masses. The most alarming tragedy is that the planners wanted the benefits of development to trickle down to the poor, but that did not happen.

Nearly 30 crore people in the country are still living below the poverty line. The past experience of 'top-down' planning has not produced the desired results. The development process bypassed the poor man and his rural society and got centralised in the urban industrial sector and the upper social class.

As the 'trickle down' does not work automatically, redistributive programmes and policies became necessary, especially to ensure the poor a share in the fruits of development. Today, development is looked upon from a new angle as a human

problem, and it is directed towards the transformation of man and his traditional social set up. Its basic goal is to attain the satisfaction of basic human needs. This radical change in approach to development has created an urgent necessity for decentralisation of planning. The satisfaction of basic human needs through mass participation in the development process and bridging the gap between rich and poor regions is possible only if planning comes down to the grassroots level. To this end, the move to strengthen planning at the local level is a welcome development. It was in this context that the ideas of grassroots level planning gained ground and the necessity of strengthening the system of governance at grassroots level and empowering the people in the development process was recognised.

## **2.2. Decentralised Planning**

Decentralised planning is a system through which the planning process is brought close to the people, who are the ultimate target for the development. It is a multilevel planning system in which planning is attempted at different political, administrative and executive levels so that there is greater integration between the development needs and priorities of smaller areas and different socio-economic classes at the regional, State and district levels.

Decentralisation involves planning for all sectors or types of activity within a geographical area. It lays emphasis not only on the decentralisation of the decision-making process but also on increasing participation by the people at all stages of planning. These would enable full utilisation of resources, according to the needs of the local people by making them actively involved in the formulation as well as execution of plans at the grassroots level.

Decentralisation implies a movement away from the centre. It implies an even distribution of power among all agents in the social, political and economic spheres. It facilitates the articulation of people's needs and demands. Through decentralisation, a State move towards the avowed goals of development principles.

## **2.3. Democratic Decentralisation**

In the present context of parliamentary democracy, decentralisation means "the transfer of functions and not a transfer of powers." It is a process of transfer of responsibility, authority and functions from a superior government unit to a lower government unit. The basic idea of decentralisation is sharing the decision-making power with lower levels in the organisation. But this power can be shared within the system at a lower level or by creating new mechanisms in the system. Power can also be shared with outside organisations or agencies.

Depending on the extent and means by which power can be shared with the lower levels, Rondinelli (1984) and others have recognised four types of decentralisation.

### **Deconcentration**

Passing down of administrative discretion to local authorities in a system where few decisions can be taken without reference to the central authority is called deconcentration. It results in some dispersal of power. Decentralisation entails shifting of workload in the form of administrative responsibilities from central offices of the executive to regional offices. Yet, this does not give these latter offices the discretionary freedom to take decisions. Authority and powers of central offices remain with the centre. Therefore, it is also called geographic decentralisation or administrative decentralisation.

### **Delegation**

It is a form of decentralisation in which powers of decision-making and management are given to local institutions or organisations. It implies the transfer or creation of ample responsibility, to plan and implement decisions concerning specific activities or a variety of activities within specific boundaries, to an organisation that is technically and administratively capable of carrying them out, without direct supervision of an administrative unit. In such a system, the central authority can take away the powers of the local authority at any point of time.

### **Devolution**

It is the most desirable form of decentralisation. It grants decision-making powers to local authorities and gives them the freedom to take full responsibility, without referring back to the central authority. The devolved powers include financial powers and authority to design and execute projects and programmes. In the case of devolution, the local levels of government are allowed to act in a more or less autonomous fashion, with the centre taking a supervisory role.

### **Privatisation**

In this form, the Government hands over some of its responsibilities and public functions to provide non-governmental or voluntary organisations. Such voluntary organisations could be industrial associations, professional groups, cooperatives and the like.

A semantic problem has been introduced by the widespread currency, of the term “democratic decentralisation”, which in fact is often used with reference to programmes and tendencies which are neither democratic nor decentralised, except in form. By democratic decentralisation, we mean the transfer of some of the responsibilities of Central government to subordinate agencies which are elected by geographic or functional constituencies and which require at least some of their powers not by delegation from higher administrative authority, but by legislative and perhaps Constitutional provisions.

Decentralised planning process is a systematic approach to identify and formulate specific programmes and projects leading to the achievement of development goals stipulated for an area within a specific period. It is not an exclusive bottom-up process of planning. It is a two-way planning process starting from the top (national and State) and the bottom (grassroots) levels simultaneously. The two processes merge at a point below which centralised planning becomes irrelevant and unmanageable and above which micro planning is not possible. This point can be identified at the district level and it is the cutting edge of development administration. The prime objective of decentralised planning is the growth and distributive justice of the whole economy by suitably linking up local needs and priorities with avowed goals of development. Decentralised planning can be successful where the demands of local people and the supply of resources from the government and other sources meet the equilibrium point. Here, demand means the needs and desires of the people raised at rural local self-governments and village assemblies whereas supply comes from government grants, loans, external sources, locally mobilised resources and contributions.

#### **2.4. Decentralised Planning Studies – Findings**

Several studies have been conducted at national and local levels, concentrating on decentralised planning and the resultant developmental activities in the State.

Kumar B. Das, in his work ‘Regional Economic Development and Decentralisation,’ says that centralised planning is not only complex and difficult to implement but also inappropriate for promoting equitable growth and self-sufficiency among low-income groups or regions. Decentralised structures for procedures for people’s participation in the development process will be effective to generate economic growth with greater social equity.

According to B.P.S. Bhadouria, decentralised planning enables better perceptions of local needs, provides the rationale for taking planning to the grassroots levels, ensures effective participation of the people, makes better-informed decision-making possible, leads to better exploitation of local resources and potentials, aims at

better coordination and integration among programmers, and create greater awareness pertaining to their well-being and welfare in general. He suggests a combination of 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' planning processes for establishing, receiving and delivery mechanisms at the local and regional levels to meet the needs of the masses, thereby reinforcing national and indigenous capability towards self-reliance.

Inamdar and Kashire attempted to examine the nature and process of district planning in Maharashtra through a case study of district planning process adopted in Maharashtra, which deviates much from the prescribed model in the State and facilitates coordination and participation to a great extent. They remark that the gap between theory and practice has adversely affected the scientific nature of the planning process in the State. The authors were not impressed with the popular participation.

The status of decentralised planning in Himachal Pradesh was taken as a matter of investigation by O. C. Sub. The study reveals the fact that the State Government is enabled to operate the district planning in accordance with the recommendations given by the Rao committees, [C. H. Hanumantha Rao Committee and G. V. K. Rao Committee] on district planning. The entire decentralised planning in the State should be not below but upwards from the district level.

A joint venture of nine IAS officers at Lal Bahadur Sastri National Academy of Administration resulted in an evaluation of the process of district planning in Gujarat. The investigation reveals that the district planning in the State is only partially successful as it is confined only to a 15 per cent discretionary outlay and a 5 per cent incentive outlay. Planning for the 80 per cent normal district-level schemes is done at the State level itself. A substantial amount of the united funds is eaten away by way of committed expenditures in the form of ongoing schemes and non-plan expenditures. The role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in decentralised planning is reasonably low.

Lack of a scientific approach towards district planning was considered an important feature of the district planning system in Gujarat. Abdul Aziz tries to evaluate the decentralised planning experience of Karnataka after the implementation of Karnataka Zilla Parishads, Taluk Panchayat Samitis, Mandal Panchayats and Nyaya Panchayats Act, 1985. The author is impressed by the mechanism created by Panchayati Raj Institutions to allow the people to participate in the planning process and provisions for inter-departmental coordination, reduction in the misidentification of funds by them, effective utilities, etc. The study also throws light on the new institutional framework that occurred due to the implementation of decentralised planning, and the resultant desirable changes in the rural areas, particularly in the housing, education and health facilities of the villages studied. The major conclusions he derived are:

- i. Many of the districts are dissatisfied with the present criterion of allocation of district plan funds, as it was allocated without giving a better scope for Zilla Parishad in handling the financial resources for the development of the district,
- ii. Heavy electricity and non-plan expenditure calls for the development work of Mandal Panchayat are hampered by limited and inexperienced staff in the office, and failure to give sufficient attention to Gram Sabha at village level which is the bedrock decentralised planning at the grassroots level.

Rondinelli and Cheema advise caution on the question of decentralisation and development. The authors point out that decentralisation may be invoked to promote a multiplicity of objectives often in conflict with each other to provide central efficiency by reducing the overload. This can promote political efficiency by providing for local initiative and local participation to maximise grassroots democracy. Their conclusion, which is in favour of innovative systems of grassroots democracy, is based on the ideals of decentralisation and participation.

In a recent volume edited by Sinha, various authors discuss the need for greater functional and financial decentralisation. In his critique of the Indian experience of Decentralised Planning, Sinha notes three types of “limits to decentralisation”- political, administrative and technological.

Misra argues that participation in planning is not of an instrumental value but an end in itself. Hence, it is imperative in the process of planned development. Emphasising the development of a scientific approach and conceptual framework for a district plan in a multilevel planning structure, Chaya Degaonkar tries to analyse the planning and development process within a national system and a particular system in it. The author justifies the choice of district as a planning unit on the grounds of attending to the regional problems and fulfilling the regional needs on the one side, and the need to involve the poor masses in the development process on the other. She emphasises the fact that growth and equity are to be taken as the long-term objective of any district planning so that everyone can have access to the fruits of national development. She concludes with the remarks that district planning in India is still in the evolutionary stage.

Ajith Kumar Singh argues for greater transfers of ‘power and resources’ in an increasing manner from the State level to the district level. For a better locative system and successful working of the decentralisation projects, he has made some suggestions. They are

1. Maintain a proper balance between the share of the State and district in plan funds,
2. Provide adequate weight to backwardness,

3. Include the element of incentive at all stages of planning, and
4. Provide for earmarking a certain amount for local development programmes.

He concludes by emphasising local-level development as an essential factor for the success of decentralised planning in its real sense.

Bharghava and Shivanna make an attempt to evaluate the functioning of Taluk Panchayat Samiti in Karnataka. The authors point out that the Samiti, as a middle-tier Panchayat Raj Institution, has been found to render useful service, specifically in relation to the provision of a functional link between Zilla Parishad and Mandal Panchayats. The study also reveals the discontent among the officials and non-officials of the Taluk Panchayat Samiti due to the absence of effective executive power for Taluk Panchayat Samiti.

Studies connected with the Planning Commission's report on district planning (by the Working Group on District Planning headed by C. H. Hanumantha Rao in May 1984), brought out the fact that planning from below was undermined by different streams of funding the district plan. As States had to prepare their annual plans within the framework prescribed by the Government of India, they, in turn, prescribed rigid guidelines that left little scope for flexibility to District Development Councils in preparation of their annual plans. Substantial funds were also retained at the State level and schemes were formulated by sectoral departments without having proper consultations with the District Development Council. The Working Group recommended the following steps to achieve the objective of a meaningful district planning:

- For good district planning, functions, powers and finances need to be decentralised. States should outline the sharing of functions with districts.
- Each district plan must reflect the basic objectives of the national plan and the divisible plan outlay ought to be distributed to districts based on population, area and level of development.
- District Planning Bodies consisting of a Chairman, Member-Secretary and nearly 50 members should be set up with the Collector as the Chief Coordinator.
- The District Planning body should be assisted by a Chief Planning Officer, and he/she has to be backed by Block level planning officers and technical experts from various disciplines.

Hanumanth Rao attributed three main reasons for the failure of decentralised planning and development of the economy. They are:

1. Exploitation of the benefits meant for poor people in the rural areas by the rural elites in the local self-government.
2. The non-congenial impact of social structure and property relations on the rural people existing in the country .
3. Political unwillingness of the State to decentralise the power to pass it to the lower level. These factors make the process of decentralisation difficult and painful in almost all States of India. So, the author strongly recommends the removal of these factors at any cost.

Prof. Gangrade is of the opinion that Panchayat Raj Institutions have an important role to play in organising enrolling, informing, instructing, sensitising and mobilising people for development and welfare activities. The author opined that with the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment, the rural man started to give up the depending culture and focused on 'self-reliant' policy. The rural man is both an actor and a beneficiary in the changing process, according to him. He emphasised the need for allowing the Panchayat Raj Institutions to do their welfare responsibility in accordance with the Eleventh Schedule of the Act. The members of the Panchayat at all levels must be educated about various legislations and welfare measures to raise the status of the marginalised and weak groups. He further advocates that the Panchayats must act as a 'watch dogs' institutions to monitor and implement the programmes and the motto of work should be to become self-reliant rather to look at others. He suggests 'Self-Reliant' village communities as the best model for India.

The necessity of decentralising governance from the Centre to States, towns and villages for promoting people's participation and efficiency in working is highlighted by Bhatnagar. He points out that the term 'local self-government' in India originated when the country was under British administration and did not enjoy any tinge of self-government either at the Centre or at the State level. He identifies five essential attributes of a local body:

1. Its statutory status,
2. Its power to raise finance by taxation,
3. Participation of the local community in the decision-making.
4. Freedom to act independently of central control, and
5. Its general purpose approach in contrast to the single purpose character.

He emphasised the importance and efficiency of local bodies in tackling local problems. He concludes his article by projecting a few advantages of the decentralised institutions - they are more flexible, innovative and effective and can generate higher morale, more commitment and greater productivity than the centralised institutions.

Planning at the Grassroots by Prasad K. (1988) presents an in-depth analysis of the issues in grassroots-level planning. It evaluated the recent Indian experience in MLP in terms of its methodological and organisational aspects, with suitable suggestions for improvement.

Decentralised Planning: Priority Economic Issues by Rao V. M. (1989) has indicated that decentralised planning in India is still in the preliminary stages of experimentation. He explained the issues of planning in the areas like planning for growth, planning for needs and promotion of people's participation.

Decentralisation of Planning: Need of the hour Rama Shankar Singh,(1990) analysed the need for decentralised planning and suggested implementing various social welfare schemes carefully and efficiently. Stating that decentralised planning in the district level is needed, he wanted the process of removal of poverty and eradication of unemployment to be necessarily speeded up. He concluded that all efforts needed to be directed towards achieving these goals for which the administrative machinery, local government, institutions and leaders of local society needed to be brought together on planning.

Decentralised Planning and Panchayati Raj, ISS (1994) presents the experience of and lessons from experiments in decentralised government below the State level in Karnataka and West Bengal, the pioneers and architects of political and economic decentralisation in post-Independence India. It urges the necessity of switching to a three-tier system of elected government backed by constitutional guarantees for any meaningful decentralisation.

In People's Plan of Kerala (1997), Surendran examined the three-tier magnitudes of the people's plan of Kerala with Gram Panchayat, Block Panchayat and District Panchayat. He suggested that the integration of political will of different parties is a primary requirement for the success of people's plan. People have to ignore their differences, whatever they may be, and extend their support to the development issues.

Balan P.P. observed in Kerala Development Plan (2004) that people's participation is the hallmark of decentralised planning. He stated that the local people have the opportunity to participate in local governance by participating in Gram Sabha and other Committees constituted by the local bodies. He concluded that Kerala's experience shows that social activism and people's participation are fundamental to a good local governance system.

Status and Functioning of District Planning Committees in India, PRIA (2009) notes that district planning can be successful only when it is owned up to by all the stakeholders – both people and planners alike. Hence, all-round awareness and education are necessary preconditions to make it effective. The larger purpose of

integrated planning can also be derailed by the people themselves, who do not take into account the larger regional picture and pursue partisan individual interests. Thus, prior to the planning exercise, people need to be oriented towards holistic planning with a regional perspective.

District Planning Committees: An analysis of the Roles, Responsibilities, Performance and Strengthening Measures – A Study of Mandya and Mysore District Planning Committees by Ashok.S.Sanganal (2009) quoted that the functioning of DPCs is satisfactory. At present, the planning takes place in a disjointed approach in the urban and rural areas. For instance, the projects of water supply, roads, schools, hospitals, etc., are implemented by the respective municipalities or the Gram Sabhas. Presently, not much coordination is visible. There is a need for coordination of mutual sharing of amenities. This could be done by the DPC at the time of preparation and implementation of new plans.

The detailed review of literature has enabled the researcher to conceptualise the research problem and understand the process and preparation of District Planning across the country. It is found that across India, the active participation of DPC members, sectoral departments and stakeholders in the process of preparation of District Planning is not seen so significant. It is to be noted that a good number of studies are made on the importance of decentralised planning in general. But there are very few studies on the aspects of the preparation of Integrated District Plans and the role of DPCs. Hence, it is worthwhile to take up a study on the examination of the reasons for the failure to prepare District Plans with an integrated perspective. This would certainly enrich the existing body of knowledge on Decentralised Planning at the grassroots level.

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## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH DESIGN**

#### **3.1. Background and Objectives of the Study**

In general, planning is conceived as allocation of resources to achieve centrally directed and defined economic objectives. It is a conscious effort to achieve desired ends. It is a rational method of application of resources for the fulfilment of specified objectives. As a systematic approach to goal achievement, planning could be undertaken by simple as well as complex organisations, by private and public sectors, at the macro and micro levels, by the national and regional entities, to achieve strategic and tactical objectives. Corporate growth, defence strategy, and economic development represent prominent areas where planning is useful.

Planning in India began at the national level. Even now, it is national planning that occupies a pre-eminent position in the planning process. But there have also been attempts to initiate planning at the lower levels, State, district and below.

#### **3.2. District Planning**

‘District Planning is the process of preparing an integrated plan for the local government in a district taking into account the resources available and covering the sectoral activities and schemes assigned to the district and below through local governments in the State.’ Decentralised District Planning comprises different planning units covering District Panchayat, Block Panchayat and Village Panchayat, Municipalities, line departments and parastatals would prepare a plan for execution of each of their functions and responsibilities after consultations with people.

The main aim of district planning is to arrive at an integrated, participatory coordinated idea for the development of a local area. An essential step in this direction is to ensure that each Panchayat at any level or Municipality is treated as a planning unit and the ‘district plan’ is built up through consolidation and integration of these plans as well as by considering the development of the district as a whole. It is a two-way interactive exercise, with the district being viewed as a convenient local area. As now practised, the concept of district planning is considerably diluted by the fact that most department schemes envisage in their guidelines, separate and self-contained ‘planning’ processes.

#### **3.3. Need of the Study**

It is a matter of concern that even after the lapse of 25 years since the

amendments were made, decentralised planning is yet to become effective in the country. While most States carried out amendments of their respective State Acts in conformation of the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> Amendments, the implementation of the provisions was not uniform. In all the States, DPCs were formed according to the Act but the functioning of DPC and preparing of development plans are negligible. The report of the MoPR's 'Status of Panchayats 2007-08' mentioned lack of community mobilisation as a major weakness in the decentralised planning process. It also pointed out the lack of capacity of DPCs in preparing plans, budgets and technical designs related to district plans. However, DPCs have been formed in most of the States but the committees have not been made effectively functional. Many reports make mention of the spirit of decentralisation in planning not getting reflected in the district planning.

The present study examined the status, roles, responsibilities, powers and functions devolved, training need assessment in the context of district planning, functional difficulties, and problems faced in preparation of district planning. It also tried to bring workable strategies for effective preparation of participatory integrated district planning and functioning of the DPCs.

### **3.4. Objectives**

- To assess the status of District plan preparation on par with the Manual of Integrated District Planning (IDP)
- To understand the status and typologies of devolution of powers to PRIs
- To examine the problems in preparation of Integrated District Plans
- To identify the issue of data gaps in District Planning
- To examine the capacity requirements for the stakeholders of district planning with a focus on DPC members
- To study the factors of success of the Integrated District Plan and its process
- To find the reasons for failure of district plan implementation

### **3.5. Method and Sampling**

#### **Design of the Study**

The research study involves the analysis of the process of district planning support provided by the State in terms of policy prescriptions, government orders, guidelines and interaction with Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Government Departments and Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs). It involves travel to the State capitals as well as districts.

### Selection of States as Sample for Study

Initially, the study was proposed to be conducted in four States. However, the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) of the NIRDPR suggested having better coverage by selecting two States from each geographical zone and also suggested including Kerala as a special case of study. Therefore, the study selected nine States with the intention of ensuring representation of different geographical regions of the country.

For the selection of study States, a combination of methodologies was adopted. To pick up the States from each region, the study used the database that ranks States as per the 'improved index of devolution in policy' developed on the basis of a nationwide study conducted by TATA Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai with the financial support of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), GoI. The study has developed an index for a 'support system for devolution' and ranked the States.

**Table 3.1: Devolution Index of the States**

	<b>Indices on Support System for Devolution</b>
<b>South</b>	
AP	8
Karnataka	4
Kerala	1
TN	2
Telangana	7
<b>North</b>	
JK (Was it before Jammu & Ladakh were made UTs?)	17
HP	12
Punjab	17
Uttarakhand	10
Haryana	5
UP	16
<b>East</b>	
WB	10
Odisha	11
Assam	13
Bihar	15
Jharkhand	16
Chhattisgarh	12
<b>West</b>	
Rajasthan	11
MP	9
Gujarat	6
Maharashtra	3
Goa	14

Varied methodologies were adopted to select States from each zone. The States were grouped based on the geographical zones and within each zone, the States were placed in the order of its rank thereby forming a pattern of rank-holding States. Following this pattern, two better devolved States from south zone having lower ranks within the zonal ranks were selected, namely Tamil Nadu (rank 2) followed by Karnataka (rank 4). But in the selection of States from the Northern region, two middle-ranked States were selected, namely Uttar Pradesh (rank 16) and Punjab (rank 17). A similar methodology for selection of States from East Zone - two States having medium ranks namely Odisha (rank 11) and Chhattisgarh (rank 12) were selected. But, from the West Zone, least devolved States having higher rank within the group, namely Madhya Pradesh (rank 9) and Rajasthan (rank 11) were considered for selection. These different combinations were adopted to understand the overall functional level of the States having varied ranks of decentralised support systems for the functioning of rural local bodies. The district planning committees need support of various mechanisms at the district level which relies on support systems established at the district level in the States. Even though different methodologies were adopted for the selection of States, making an analysis of different ranked States was very difficult. But the scenario of variations can be found in each State based on the opinions given by the study population.

Kerala was included in the study considering the overall better performance of the State.

### **Selection of Districts as Sample Units for Field Data Collection**

In the second stage, one district was selected from each sample State. For the selection of a district, simple random sampling was used and lottery method was adopted.

### **3.6. Selection of sample population as respondents for the Study**

Since the study attempted to understand the status of devolution of powers to local bodies, and the processes and problems of district planning, it covered the members of DPCs representing various categories, such as elected representatives from Gram Panchayat (GP), Block Panchayat (BP) and Zilla Panchayat (ZP), nominated/elected to the DPCs, including urban local bodies. In addition, it also covered nominated members/special invitees of sectoral representatives among the district departments who have a stake in district planning. At maximum, **DPC members at three levels of PRIs were covered for detailed data collection; similarly, it covered the members of the DPCs representing various departments.**

**The study team interacted with the President/Chairman and officials of the GP, BP and ZP to understand the issues pertaining to district planning.** Further, interactions were also carried out with the people of GPs by conducting Focus Group Discussions (FGD) to understand the level of satisfaction with the district plans and their effect on the development of the Panchayat.

### **3.7 Tools**

A. Primary Data - Primary data was collected from members of DPCs, elected members of the three levels of PRIs and members of various standing committees. A semi-structured interview schedule, covering all the aspects mentioned in the Integrated District Plan manual issued by the then Planning Commission of India, was prepared and administered. The research coordinators took personal interviews of each DPC member. The respondents were asked the listed questions and their responses were recorded in the interview schedule and analysed for arriving at conclusions. The conclusions arrived from the study are based on the responses derived from the personal interview from the sample States. It reflects only on the status, process and functioning of the District Planning Committee of the sample States. But generalisation of conclusions of this study may not suit other States because variations prevail in the constitution and composition of DPC in each State.

The interview schedule mainly covered the following aspects:

- Effective dissemination of information and communication
- Mobilisation of people
- Conduct of Gram Sabha
- Data Management
- Institutional and Other Support for District Planning Committees
- Vision Building
- Stock Taking
- Resource Inventory
- Conduct of PRA
- Problem Analysis
- Stakeholder Analysis
- Activity Mapping
- Strategies adopted in the development plan
- Fund Envelope

- Consolidation of Urban and Rural Plans
- Concurrent Monitoring and Social Audit of District Plans
- Factors contributed to the effective preparation and implementation of the district plan
- Reasons for failure in preparation and implementation of the district plan.

B. **Secondary data** - A checklist was prepared to collect details from the district planning office and secondary data was collected through various sources and appropriately used in the report.

### C. **Focus Group Discussions (FGD)**

Focus Group Discussions (FGD) were also conducted and adequate data was collected from various sections of people belonging to at least three Gram Panchayats and one Block Panchayat of the sample districts. This exercise helped to understand the practical problems faced in the preparation and consolidation of plans. The following contents were discussed under FGD:

- Problems faced during GPDP preparation
- Level of people's participation in the preparation of plans
- Level of reflection on people's needs
- Identification of the functional difficulties
- Participatory process and outcomes
- Level of incorporation of GPDP into the district plan
- Convergence strategies
- Participation of development sectors.

### **3.8 Chapter Scheme**

The report has been organised into five chapters. Chapter One deals with District Planning in India – Background, legal provisions, and various concepts of decentralisation. Chapter Two contains the Review of Literature on the studies related to the district planning and devolution process. Chapter Three presents the Research Design, including strategies for sample and data collection. Chapter Four covers 'Data Presentation and Analysis' and the Chapter Five presents 'Findings and Recommendations of the Study.'

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## CHAPTER - 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

The present study was conducted in nine States, namely Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It covered 314 respondents representing members of District Planning Committees (DPCs) from nine districts, i.e. one sample district from each selected State. Field data was collected through personal interviews with the DPC members. The study collected required data on the perception of people by canvassing semi-structured interview schedules prepared for the study. The study also recorded people's satisfaction with prepared district plan, and status of inclusion of projected needs in GP plans and their integration into the district plan. Further, people's opinions were collected through focused group discussions/informal discussions to strengthen the data description. Sectoral department officers, special invitees of DPCs and officials of ZPs were also involved for collection of particulars related to sectoral planning. The data collected from all stakeholders is systematically and sequentially presented in this chapter.

**Table 4.1: State-wise Sample Distribution**

S. No.	State	Members
1	Jharkhand	32
2	Karnataka	36
3	Kerala	32
4	Madhya Pradesh	26
5	Punjab	40
6	Rajasthan	33
7	Tamil Nadu	22
8	Uttar Pradesh	65
9	West Bengal	28
<b>Total</b>		<b>314</b>

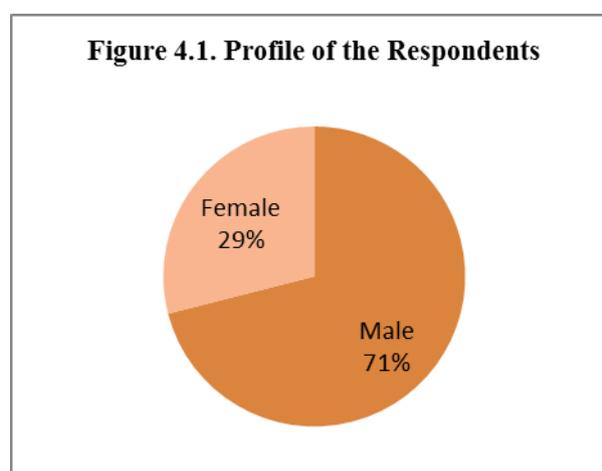
Table 4.1 presents the details of the number of respondents from each selected State. In total, the study covered 314 District Planning Committee members as respondents. The number of respondents from each State varies according to the number of DPC members in the selected district. Further, the size of DPC depends on the number of wards of the ZP and urban local bodies in the district. While the district

selected from Uttar Pradesh is the highest in size with 65 members, the district chosen from Tamil Nadu is the lowest with 22 DPC members.

#### 4.1 Profile of the Respondents

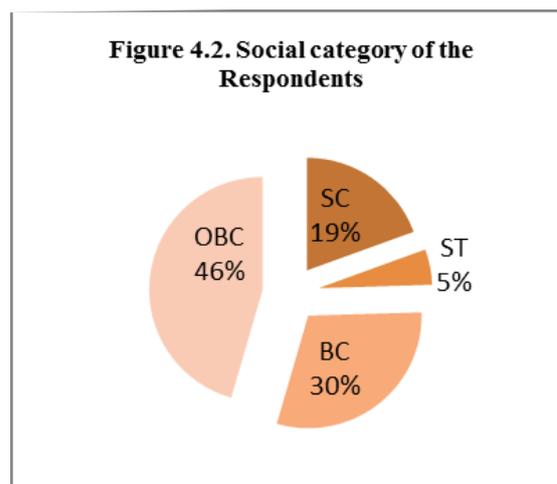
Gender	Table 4.1.1: Gender status									
	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	UP	West Bengal	Grand Total
Male	23 (71.9)	23 (63.9)	23 (71.9)	18 (69.2)	28 (70.0)	24 (72.7)	15 (68.2)	46 (70.8)	23 (82.1)	223 (71.0)
Female	9 (28.1)	13 (36.1)	9 (28.1)	8 (30.8)	12 (30.0)	9 (27.3)	7 (31.8)	19 (29.2)	5 (17.9)	91 (29.0)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.1.1 presents the status of male and female respondents of the sample population. The study sample comprised 71 per cent male and 29 per cent female members. The DPC has a 71:29 proportion ratio of male and female due to reservation of 33 per cent seats to women in the PRI bodies. But the number of male nominated members from various institutions to the DPC was high. The sample shows better women representation in Karnataka (36.1 per cent) and Tamil Nadu (31.8 per cent), followed by 30 per cent women representation in Madhya Pradesh (30.8 per cent) and Punjab (30 per cent). In other sample States, women representation is less than 30 per cent



Category	Table 4.1.2: Social category									
	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	UP	West Bengal	Grand Total
SC	4 (12.5)	4 (11.1)	4 (12.5)	8 (30.8)	13 (32.5)	8 (24.2)	8 (36.4)	8 (12.3)	4 (14.3)	61 (19.43)
ST	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (61.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (5.10)
BC	11 (34.4)	11 (30.6)	11 (34.4)	2 (7.7)	22 (55.0)	2 (6.1)	2 (9.1)	22 (33.8)	11 (39.3)	94 (29.94)
OBC	17 (53.1)	21 (58.3)	17 (53.1)	0 (0.0)	5 (12.5)	23 (69.7)	12 (54.5)	35 (53.8)	13 (46.4)	143 (45.54)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

The study recorded the social category of the sample respondents which is presented in Table 4.1.2. The social classification of sample population reflects more representation from the Most Backward Class (MBC) up to 45.5 per cent, followed by around 30 per cent Backward Class (BC), 19.4 per cent Scheduled Caste (SC) and up to 5.1 per cent Scheduled Tribes (ST). It is good to note that around 24.5 per cent of SC & ST members were part of DPC, which is a little higher than the SC & ST reservation which shows the inclusiveness of the downtrodden in the planning structural mechanism for the district development. But State-wise data shows that except for Madhya Pradesh, ST representation was not noticed in other States. The inclusion of SC category was high in all the States, which was more than the representation at national level.



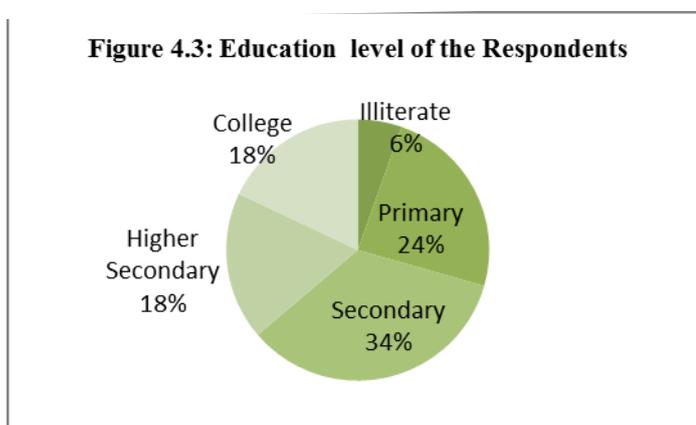
Age in Years	Table 4.1.3: Age Group									
	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	UP	West Bengal	Grand Total
<b>21-30</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>31-40</b>	5 (15.6)	5 (13.9)	5 (15.6)	7 (26.9)	13 (32.5)	8 (24.2)	5 (22.7)	10 (15.4)	5 (17.9)	63 (20.1)
<b>41-50</b>	18 (56.3)	18 (50.0)	18 (56.3)	13 (50.0)	19 (47.5)	21 (63.6)	11 (50.0)	36 (55.4)	18 (64.3)	172 (54.8)
<b>51 and above</b>	9 (28.1)	13 (36.1)	9 (28.1)	6 (23.1)	8 (20.0)	4 (12.1)	6 (27.3)	19 (29.2)	5 (17.9)	79 (25.2)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

The age groups of DPC members are classified into four categories. The ages of the members vary from 31-60 years. Majority of the sample population (54.8 per cent) was in the age group of 41-50 years, followed by 25.2 per cent in the age group of 51-60 years and around 20 per cent between 31-40 years. Nobody was found below the age of 31 years.

Education	Table 4.1.4: Level of Education									
	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	UP	West Bengal	Grand Total
Illiterate	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (15.4)	6 (15.8)	4 (12.1)	3 (13.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (5.4)
Primary	3 (9.4)	3 (8.3)	3 (9.4)	12 (46.2)	16 (42.1)	19 (57.6)	10 (45.5)	6 (9.2)	3 (10.7)	75 (24.0)
Second-ary	14 (43.8)	14 (38.9)	14 (43.8)	6 (23.1)	6 (15.8)	6 (18.2)	5 (22.7)	28 (43.1)	14 (50.0)	107 (34.3)
Higher Secondary	8 (25.0)	8 (22.2)	8 (25.0)	1 (3.8)	5 (13.2)	1 (3.0)	2 (9.1)	16 (24.6)	8 (28.6)	57 (18.3)
College	7 (21.9)	11 (30.6)	7 (21.9)	3 (11.5)	7 (17.5)	3 (9.1)	2 (9.1)	15 (23.1)	3 (10.7)	58 (17.9)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.1.4 displays the educational status of DPC members. The educational status of the DPC members is important because educated intellectuals will be able to understand the issues pertaining to the district's development during the planning process. Interestingly,

Figure 4.3: Education level of the Respondents



around 95 per cent of the respondents are literate. The educational distribution reflects that 34.3 per cent of sample population studied up to secondary level, 34.3 per cent attended only up to primary schooling, 18.3 per cent studied up to higher secondary and around 18 per cent attended college. The Constitution does not mandate educational qualifications for contesting to the District Panchayat; therefore, the uneducated can also contest and become a member, and thereby a member of DPC. Illiterate members were found in Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu. Interestingly, the number of graduates was more in Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala and Jharkhand.

Status	Table 4.1.5: Marital Status									
	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	UP	West Bengal	Grand Total
Married	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)
Unmarried	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

The data regarding marital status of respondents is given in Table 4.1.5 and it shows that all the members were married. Even though marital status is not directly relevant to the study, it attempted to understand any unmarried being part of the planning mechanism.

Religion	Table 4.1.6: Religion Category									
	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	UP	West Bengal	Grand Total
<b>Hindu</b>	19 (59.4)	19 (52.8)	19 (59.4)	19 (73.1)	19 (47.5)	19 (57.6)	19 (86.4)	38 (58.5)	19 (67.9)	190 (60.5)
<b>Muslim</b>	2 (6.3)	2 (5.6)	2 (6.3)	2 (7.7)	2 (5.0)	2 (6.1)	3 (13.6)	4 (6.2)	2 (7.1)	21 (6.7)
<b>Christian</b>	11 (34.4)	15 (41.7)	11 (34.4)	5 (19.2)	0 (0.0)	12 (36.4)	0 (0.0)	23 (35.4)	7 (25.0)	84 (26.8)
<b>Sikh</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	19 (47.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	19 (6.1)
<b>Others</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

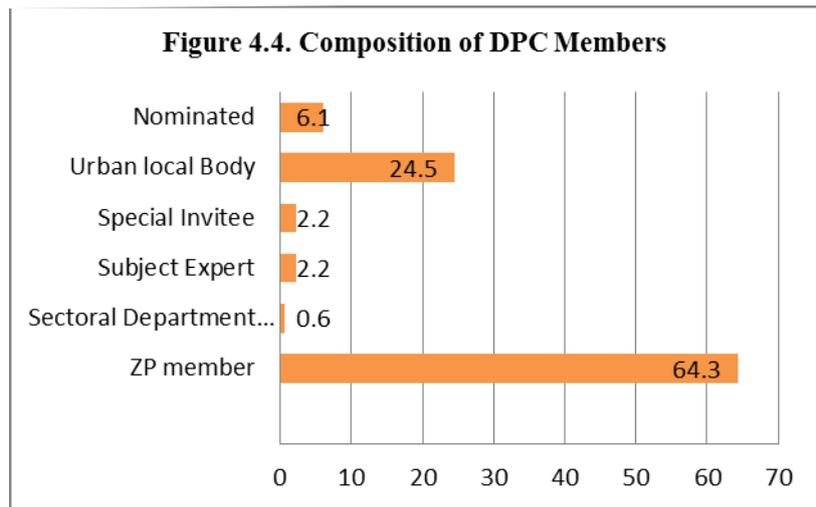
Table 4.1.6 presents data on the religious composition of the study population. It shows that the majority (60 per cent) of the sample DPC members followed Hinduism, followed by Christianity (around 27 per cent), Islam (6.7 per cent), and Sikhism (6.1 per cent). In the study region, the proportion of representation was high for the Christians and Muslims. The representation of Sikh religion was found only in Punjab. The Christian representation is high in Kerala, Karnataka, UP, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. This description presents only the district-wise religious status, not exactly reflecting the actual status in the study States.

## 4.2: Roles and Responsibilities of District Planning Committees

### 4.2.1 Composition of DPC Members

Membership in PRIs	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>ZP member</b>	18 (56.3)	16 (44.4)	23 (71.9)	18 (69.2)	27 (67.5)	23 (69.7)	18 (81.8)	42 (64.6)	17 (60.7)	202 (64.3)
<b>Sectoral. Dept. Representative</b>	2 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.6)
<b>Subject Expert</b>	2 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	3 (9.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (2.2)
<b>Special Invitee</b>	0 (0.0)	2 (5.6)	0 (0.0)	3 (11.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (2.2)
<b>Urban local Body</b>	10 (31.3)	8 (22.2)	6 (18.8)	5 (19.2)	13 (32.5)	6 (18.2)	2 (9.1)	18 (27.7)	9 (32.1)	77 (24.5)
<b>Nominated</b>	0 (0.0)	10 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.1)	5 (7.7)	2 (7.1)	19 (6.1)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100.0)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.2.1 presents data related to the respondent's nature of political representation and other statuses of membership in the District Planning Committee (DPC). According to the State Panchayat Act of sample



States, it is mandated that four-fifths of members for DPC have to be elected/selected from the elected members of the Zilla Panchayat and Municipalities of the respective district in proportion to the ratio of the population representing rural and urban areas in the district. The total number of members of DPC varies from district to district across the States. The representation would comprise all the Members of the Legislative Assembly, Parliament (MLAs & MPs), and Mayors of municipalities of the constituencies within the jurisdiction of the district. In addition, subject experts and representatives/officials of line departments were also included as Special Invitees of the District Planning Committee. In the context of DPC Members, each State has been following the said procedures of reservation of membership as per the provisions of the Constitution of India, under the provisions of 243 ZD, for women, Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs). In Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, one-fifth of members were 'Nominated Members' representing line departments and subject experts, but in Jharkhand, the DPC has the provision of only elected members of ZPs. The Gram Panchayat or Block Panchayat members were not included in the process and there are no provisions for nominated members too.

In the study area, the sample population has affiliation of 64.3 per cent Zilla Panchayat elected members, 24.5 per cent from urban local bodies, namely Town Panchayats or Municipalities, 2.2 per cent of subject experts and Special Invitees and 0.6 per cent of Sectoral Department representatives. The study shows no representation from Block and Gram Panchayats to the DPC.

During the discussion, a general trend of comments was raised by elected members and nominated members of the DPC. The elected members remarked that the DPC is powerless as the district administrators or line department heads take the financial decisions. Even the responsibility of action taken on decisions rests with the district administration. On the contrary, the nominated members felt that the elected members always dominate the other members; in majority of the cases, ruling party representatives were always dominant among the DPC members. Therefore, they have

a say on all the decisions of DPC, which has a direct influence on functional aspects of the planning and action. Political interference leads to further political dominance and it eventually leads to taking biased decisions.

**Table 4.2.2: Duration of Membership in DPC**

Duration	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Less than one Year</b>	0 (0.0)	16 (44.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (23.1)	0 (0.0)	39 (12.4)
<b>1-2 years</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (30.8)	16 (40.0)	11 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	8 (12.3)	28 (100)	71 (22.6)
<b>2-3 years</b>	10 (31.3)	0 (0.0)	28 (87.5)	13 (50.0)	15 (37.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	42 (64.6)	0 (0.0)	108 (34.4)
<b>3-4 years</b>	0 (0.0)	2 (5.6)	4 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.5)	18 (54.5)	18 (81.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	70 (22.3)
<b>4-5 years</b>	10 (31.3)	8 (22.2)	0 (0.0)	5 (19.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	9 (32.1)	10 (3.2)
<b>More than 5 Years</b>	0 (0.0)	10 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (12.1)	2 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	2 (7.1)	16 (5.1)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.2.2 presents the experience of the sample population as DPC members. As per the State Panchayati Raj Acts of almost all the States, the tenure of the District Planning Committee is five years, as mandatory for any other statutory people's body. Every five years a new body is getting elected to serve as DPC along with the special invitees and nominated members. It was observed in the study region that 38.9 per cent members served between 2-3 years. While 25.4 per cent members have experience of only 1-2 years, another 24.5 per cent served for 3-4 years. It was noted that very few members from some States worked for more than five years, as they were re-elected for a second term to the ZP.

**Table 4.2.3: Status of Subject Expertise of the Respondents**

Subject Expertise	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Agriculture</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (0.7)
<b>Rural Development</b>	8 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.2)	0 (0.0)	12 (18.5)	6 (21.4)	32 (11.5)
<b>Panchayat Raj</b>	10 (31.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (15.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (36.4)	0 (0.0)	20 (30.8)	8 (28.6)	55 (19.8)
<b>Planning</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (25.0)	7 (26.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (5.4)
<b>Politics</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (31.3)	0 (0.0)	14 (35.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (12.3)	0 (0.0)	32 (11.5)
<b>Administration</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (15.6)	9 (34.6)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	2 (6.1)	14 (21.5)	0 (0.0)	32 (11.5)

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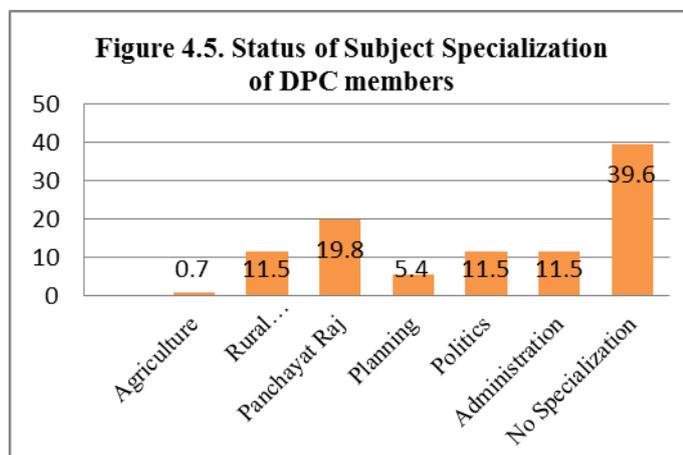
**Table 4.2.3: Status of Subject Expertise of the Respondents**

<b>Industry</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Animal Husbandry</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Horticulture</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Women Development</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Natural Science</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Engineering</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Economics</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Others</b>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>No Specialisation</b>	14 (43.8)	0 (0.0)	4 (12.5)	10 (38.5)	26 (65.0)	0 (0.0)	20 (90.9)	11 (16.9)	14 (50.0)	110 (39.6)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	278 (100)

According to the Panchayati Raj Acts of sample States, the DPC members have to play vital roles in the development of the district by exploring various development opportunities available in the district. For this purpose, the DPC has to have a number of experienced people with expertise in the fields of agriculture, animal husbandry, cottage industries, service sector, etc. The PRI Acts of States do not mandate any educational qualification or subject expertise to qualify as a member. A person who has got elected as a member of the Zilla Panchayat will automatically be eligible to become a DPC member.

In this context, an attempt was made to understand the relevant experience of the sample members and the details are presented in Table 4.2.3. It explains the perception of sample respondents about their field of experience concerning the preparation of district plans. It is to understand that the district plan focuses on achieving the

desired development and welfare of the people, and proper planning needs the involvement of various subject experts. Therefore, interactions were made to understand the fields of experiences of the members. Table 4.2.3 gives multiple choices of responses about the subject specialisations. Majority of the respondents responded with 'No relevant Experience'. More than 90 per cent of DPC members did not have specialised experience or subject knowledge in the field of agriculture, animal husbandry, planning, engineering, politics and administration, which is vital to development planning. Only around 33 per cent reported having experiences in the



field of rural development and panchayati raj. Further discussions with the respondents revealed that almost all had an understanding of the number of subjects required but the DPC was lacking adequate knowledge on planning and monitoring of development programmes.

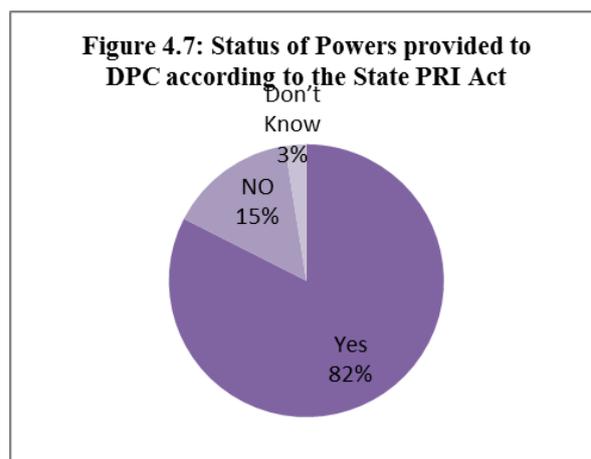
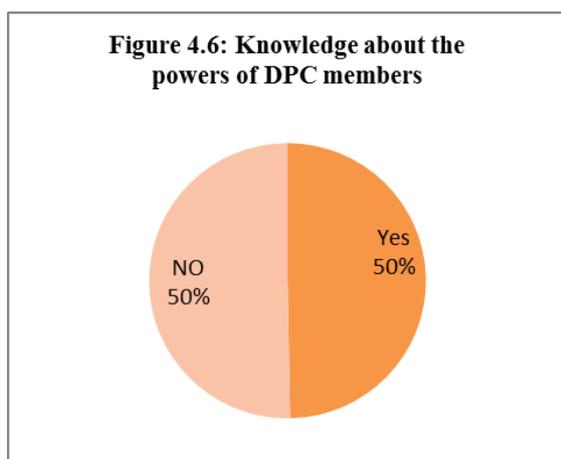
**Table 4.2.4: Whether your State PRI Act provided any Powers to DPC?**

Re- sponse	Jhar- khand	Karna- taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja- sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>YES</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	12 (46.2)	23 (57.5)	33 (100)	22 (100)	41 (63.1)	28 (100)	259 (82.5)
<b>NO</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (53.8)	9 (22.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	24 (36.9)	0 (0.0)	47 (15.0)
<b>Don't Know</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (20.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (2.5)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

**Table 4.2.5: Are you aware of the powers of DPC members?**

Respon- ses	Jhar- khand	Karna- taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja- sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pra- desh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	15 (46.9)	36 (100)	32 (100)	8 (30.8)	12 (30.0)	17 (51.5)	0 (0.0)	23 (35.4)	13 (46.4)	156 (49.7)
<b>NO</b>	17 (53.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (69.2)	28 (70.0)	16 (48.5)	22 (100)	42 (64.6)	15 53.6)	158 (50.3)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

It is well known to all the stakeholders of the PRIs that after the 73<sup>rd</sup> and 74<sup>th</sup> constitutional amendments, several vital subjects dealing with the delivery of basic needs, development and creation of welfare were devolved to the local bodies. On the hierarchy of various levels of PRIs, the ZP has to take the responsibility of leading the development process, but the actual powers and functions devolved to the bottommost institution, namely Gram Panchayat. Thus, the district-level ZP is having planning and supervisory roles within the district. Therefore, it is essential that the DPC members have an understanding of their powers under the PRI Act. During the study, majority (84.5 per cent) of the respondents opined that the Act has given powers and functions to the DPC and it needs to be implemented. However, the real status was reflected during further deeper interactions with the members and the study team received mixed responses received on the level of awareness among the DPC members in this regard. Hardly few members could understand the real spirit of powers and functions of the DPC and its members.



**Table 4.2.6: Are Powers given to DPC adequate?**

Responses	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	26 (81.3)	5 (19.3)	9 (22.5)	8 (24.2)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	13 (100)	102 (39.2)
<b>NO</b>	15 (100)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.7)	21 (80.7)	31 (77.5)	25 (75.8)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	15 (53.6)	195 (62.1)
<b>Total</b>	15 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100))	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.2.6 reveals the opinion of the sample DPC members on the adequacy of powers given to the DPC and its members. Around 60 per cent said that the powers given to the DPC or its members are not adequate. The rest 40 per cent replied that existing provisions of powers are adequate but needs to be implemented with real spirit. Provision of more powers to the DPC will enable the PRIs to function effectively. DPC being one of the important units in deciding or driving development for the district, it was suggested that the committee has to be given adequate powers, including finance allocation, along with administrative support mechanism. Most respondents aired similar opinions for strengthening DPCs to operate as a regular institution that focuses on key areas of development in the district.

**Table 4.2.9: Level of Satisfaction on Powers given to DPC in the sample States**

Level of Satisfaction	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Fully Satisfied</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Partially Satisfied</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (100)	0 (0.0)	6 (54.5)
<b>Satisfied some extent</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (66.7)	3 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (45.5)
<b>Not satisfied</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (100)	3 (100)	0 (0.0)	5 (100)	0 (0.0)	11 (100)

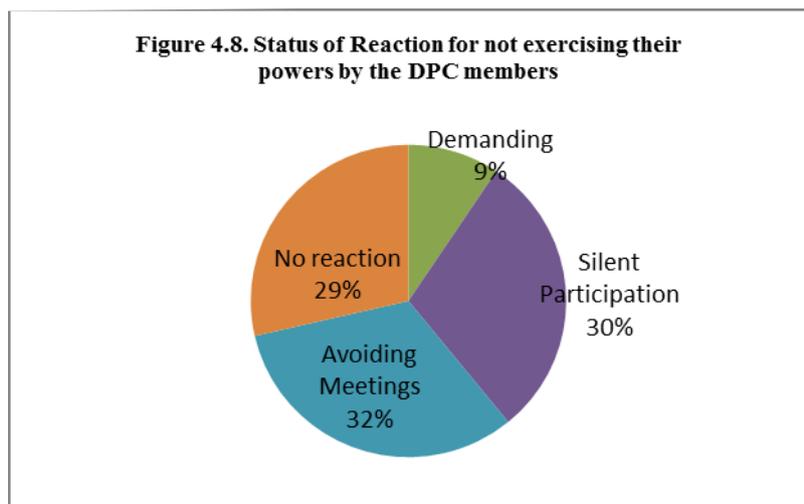
Table 4.2.9 presents the views of respondents who agreed to have the freedom to exercise the duties prescribed by the respective State PRI act. Out of 15.5 per cent of the respondents, the majority were not fully satisfied with the status of functioning of the DPC but responded with partial satisfaction with its existence. Around 26 per cent of agreed members reported not having satisfaction with the process of discussion and agenda listed and also passing of resolutions in relation to development activities proposed by district administration. They further added that prior information was not given on the items on agenda to the DPC members for proper orientation, effective participation and contribution in the meeting. It was reported, the committee meeting carried out a list of activities prepared and presented by various departments for the current year or coming years and the same got approved by the DPC without discussions. Even if any member rises issues for detailed discussions would be suppressed by the local MLAs or MPs or district administration.

**Table 4.2.10: Status of Reaction for not exercising their powers by the DPC members**

Responses	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pra-desh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Demanding</b>	0 (0.0)	18 (50.0)	6 (66.7)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	25 (9.4)
<b>Silent Par-ticipation</b>	0 (0.0)	10 (27.8)	3 (33.3)	17 (65.4)	18 (48.6)	18 (54.5)	0 (0.0)	13 (21.7)	0 (0.0)	79 (29.7)
<b>Avoiding Meetings</b>	15 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (19.2)	4 (10.8)	6 (18.2)	0 (0.0)	28 (46.7)	28 (100)	86 (32.3)
<b>No reaction</b>	0 (0.0)	8 (22.2)	0 (0.0)	4 (15.4)	14 (37.8)	9 (27.3)	22 (100)	19 (31.7)	0 (0.0)	76 (28.6)
<b>Total</b>	15 (100)	36 (100)	9 (100)	26 (100)	37 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (100)	28 (100)	266 (100)

Responses on 'reaction against the suppression of views of members looking for explanations' are listed in Table 4.2.10. Around 37 per cent reported 'no reaction' even though they have the urge to raise. Around another 24 per cent said they were

'Silent Participants' in all the meetings. Around 17 per cent reported absence from attending future meetings if they were not allowed to raise objections. Only 23 per cent reported leading arguments until proper explanations are given by the department concerned. In a few States, especially in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, DPCs are



chaired by the Minister in-charge of the district. The respondents opined that it is very difficult for the DPC members to lead arguments against the views of the Minister or the ruling party Zilla Panchayat Chairman. Members of opponent political parties as well as apolitical members of expressed displeasure over this tendency.

### 4.3: Process of DPC Meetings

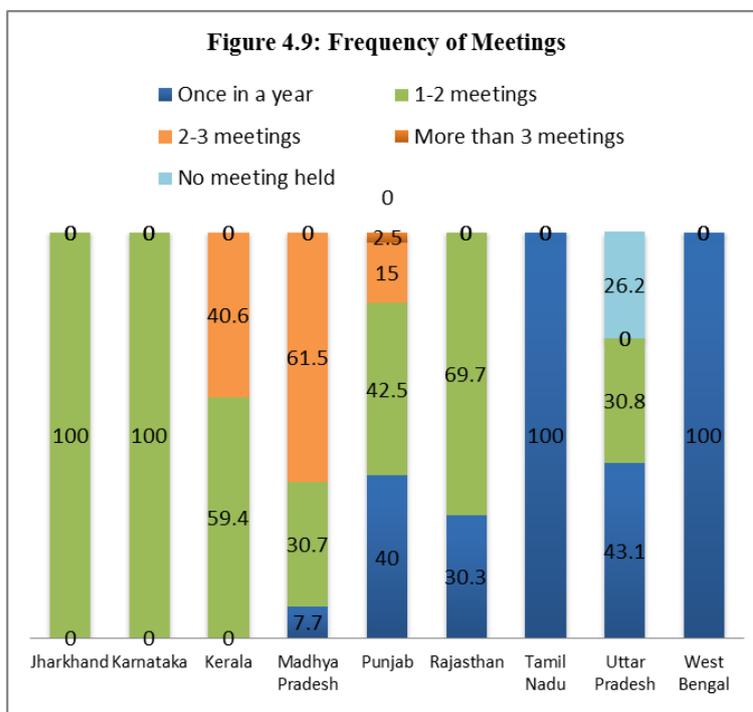
**Table 4.3.1: Frequency of DPC meetings conducted**

Frequency of Meetings	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pra-desh	West Bengal	Total
Once a year	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (7.7)	16 (40.0)	10 (30.3)	22 (100)	28 (43.1)	28 (100)	106 (33.8)
1-2 meet-ings	32 (100)	36 (100)	19 (59.4)	8 (30.7)	17 (42.5)	23 (69.7)	0 (0.0)	20 (30.8)	0 (0.0)	155 (49.4)
2-3 meet-ings	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (40.6)	16 (61.5)	6 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	35 (11.1)
More than 3 meetings	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (0.3)
No meeting held	0 (0.0)	17 (26.2)	0 (0.0)	17 (5.4)						
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b> (100)	<b>36</b> (100)	<b>32</b> (100)	<b>26</b> (100)	<b>40</b> (100)	<b>33</b> (100)	<b>22</b> (100)	<b>65</b> (100)	<b>28</b> (100)	<b>314</b> (100)

Data furnished in Table 4.3.1 reflects the State-wise status of the DPC meetings conducted by the respective district selected for the study. The opinions of the respondents were multiple, but in general, it is understood that the DPC meetings were conducted once a year and 33.8 per cent of respondents acknowledged it.

All the respondents in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal confirmed conduct of one meeting. But, in the case of UP and Punjab, around 40 per cent of the respondents

stated that a meeting was conducted. While Jharkhand and Karnataka conducted two meetings per annum, 70 per cent of respondents in Rajasthan said they conducted two meetings. Around 31 per cent in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh confirmed conduct of two meetings.

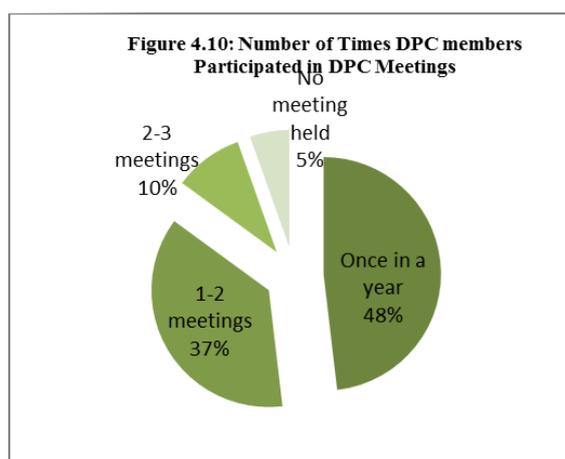


Around 41 per cent from Kerala and 61.5 per cent from MP said three meetings were conducted. It can be concluded that the majority of study States have conducted one or two meetings, except for Kerala and MP. It is interesting to note that the State PRI Act of the majority of the States under study made provisions for conducting four meetings in a year, i.e. one in each quarter.

**Table 4.3.2: Frequency of Participation in DPC Meetings**

Frequency of Meetings	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Once a year	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (7.7)	29 (72.5)	10 (30.3)	22 (100)	28 (43.1)	28 (100)	151 (48.1)
1-2 meetings	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	19 (59.4)	8 (30.7)	10 (25.0)	23 (69.7)	0 (0.0)	20 (30.7)	0 (0.0)	116 (36.9)
2-3 meetings	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (40.6)	16 (61.5)	1 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	30 (9.5)
More than 3 meetings	0 (0.0)									
No meeting held	0 (0.0)	17 (26.2)	0 (0.0)	17 (5.4)						
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>36</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>32</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>26</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>40</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>33</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>22</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>65</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>28</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>314</b> <b>(100)</b>

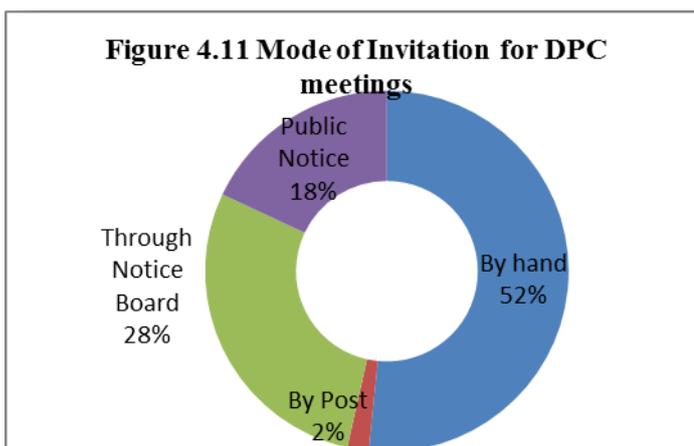
Table 4.3.2 presents responses on the status of participation in DPC meetings. It shows that 48.1 per cent of respondents, mainly from the States like Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Punjab, have attended only one meeting in a year. This is followed by 36.9 per cent from Karnataka, more than 50 per cent from Kerala and Rajasthan, 30 per cent from Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and 25 per cent from Punjab reported attending two meetings annually. Only in MP (61.5 per cent) and Kerala (40.6 per cent), the respondents reported attending three meetings. The overall status of participation of sample respondents reveals that DPC members participated in only one or two meetings.



**Table 4.3.3: Mode of Invitation for DPC Meetings**

Mode of Invitation	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
By hand	17 (53.1)	20 (55.6)	26 (81.3)	7 (26.9)	30 (73.8)	16 (48.5)	22 (100)	24 (36.9)	0 (0.0)	162 (51.6)
By Post	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.9)
Through Notice Board	15 (46.9)	10 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	11 (42.3)	10 (23.8)	15 (45.4)	0 (0.0)	17 (26.2)	12 (42.9)	90 (28.5)
Public Notice	0 (0.0)	6 (16.6)	0 (0.0)	8 (30.8)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	24 (36.9)	16 (57.1)	56 (18.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>32</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>36</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>32</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>26</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>40</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>33</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>22</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>65</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>28</b> <b>(100)</b>	<b>314</b> <b>(100)</b>

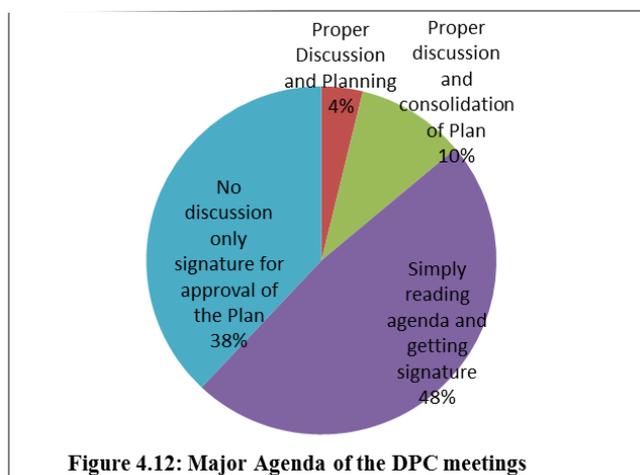
It is notified in the provisions of the PRI Acts of the respective States that adequate arrangements need to be made to send invitations well in advance through various modes in order to make it convenient for the members to participate in the meetings. The status and method of invitation are given in Table 4.3.3. In majority of the States, 'invitation letters' were given to the individual member personally as reported by around 30 per cent of respondents from Jharkhand, MP, Rajasthan and West Bengal. Moreover, more than 40 per cent of the respondents from the above States mentioned that the meeting invitation is displayed on the notice board. The study team further observed the practice of displaying invitations on the public notice boards and bringing it to the public attention through print media in Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.



**Table 4.3.4: Status of District Plan Preparation**

Agenda	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Proper Discussion and Planning	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (37.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	12 (3.8)
Proper discussion and consolidation of Plan	0 (0.0)	5 (13.9)	14 (43.7)	6 (23.1)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	32 (10.1)
Simply reading agenda and getting signature	32 (100)	18 (50.0)	6 (18.7)	12 (46.1)	16 (40.0)	19 (57.6)	0 (0.0)	33 (50.8)	15 (53.6)	151 (48.1)
No discussion only signature for approval of the Plan	0 (0.0)	13 (36.1)	0 (0.0)	8 (30.8)	24 (60.0)	12 (36.4)	22 (100)	27 (41.5)	13 (46.4)	119 (38.0)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

It is understood that the key role of DPC is planning for the district and monitoring the development programme implementation through periodical reviews. In order to understand the actual status, the purpose and agenda prepared for the meeting were verified with the sample respondents and the responses are placed in Table 4.3.4.



As per the table, altogether 48.1 per cent respondents from the study States opined that the meetings would see presentation of targets and achievements of the previous year by the respective line departments, presentation of the targets for the forthcoming year and its approval by obtaining the signatures of the members. Similarly, 38 per cent of respondents reported that, in general, no discussion takes place on the agenda items, and the meetings would be concluded with the approval of the plans by obtaining the signature of members. Interestingly, 10.1 per cent of respondents from Kerala, MP and Karnataka reported of accepting approval of the plan with proper discussion and consolidation of the plan.

It was observed that political factor plays a dominant role in deciding the inclusion of development activities in the district plan. As mentioned in the previous sections of this chapter, majority of the elected members of DPC are from the ruling party. The nominated members other than the line department officials are also ruling party cadres. This dominance of the ruling party influences the plans and actions. Other social and economic factors do not cast much impact on the functioning of DPC.

**Table 4.3.5: Nature of Payment for Attending DPC Meetings**

Type of Allowance	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Sitting Allowance</b>	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	13 (100)	8 (61.5)	20 (100)	22 (100)	34 (56.7)	28 (100)	161 (62.9)
<b>Monthly Allowance</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	5 (38.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	52 (20.3)
<b>Yearly Allowance</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>One time Allowance</b>	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (18.3)	0 (0.0)	43 (16.8)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	13 (100)	13 (100)	20 (100)	22 (100)	60 (100)	28 (100)	256 (100)

Table 4.3.5 reports the status of the process of 'payments of allowances' for the members attending DPC meetings. The details related to 'provision of allowances' to DPC members for attending DPC meetings exist in all the States but around 24.8 per cent of members reported that they have not availed the claims of allowances. While the members are paid sitting allowance in Karnataka, MP, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, UP and Jharkhand, a monthly honorarium is paid in Kerala.

**Table 4.3.6: Intellectual Contribution to the Consolidation of Plans**

Type of Allowance	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Fully Participate</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (65.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	26 (8.3)
<b>Partially Participate</b>	0 (0.0)	15 (41.7)	8 (25.0)	3 (11.5)	0 (0.0)	3 (9.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	29 (9.2)
<b>Silent participant</b>	32 (100)	11 (30.6)	3 (9.4)	16 (61.5)	0 (0.0)	21 (63.6)	22 (100)	38 (58.5)	15 (53.6)	158 (50.3)
<b>Non-participant</b>	0 (0.0)	10 (27.8)	0 (0.0)	7 (26.9)	40 (100)	9 (27.3)	0 (0.0)	22 (33.8)	13 (46.4)	101 (32.2)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

The nature of participation in DPC meetings was checked with the respondents and the details are presented in Table 4.3.6. More than 80 per cent of respondents participate either as silent or non-participants and sign the resolution passed by the district. The non-participants are unaware of the importance of the DPC as an institution of planning and development in the district. When asked about the reasons, the members cited lack of awareness of the importance of district planning, inexperience in the planning process, and lack of knowledge and skills in subjects of development. In majority of the study States, DPC members are not giving due importance to attending DPC meetings. Moreover, lack of personal interest and political and administrative suppression by political elites also influence their attentiveness.

**Table 4.3.7: Opinion on the functioning of DPC in preparation of District Plans**

Overall Motivation	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Very Active	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	28 (87.5)	3 (11.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	33 (10.5)
Active to some extent	0 (0.0)	24 (66.7)	4 (12.5)	17 (65.4)	0 (0.0)	11 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	20 (30.8)	0 (0.0)	76 (24.2)
In active	32 (100)	12 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	6 (23.1)	40 (100)	20 (60.6)	22 (100)	45 (69.2)	28 (100)	205 (65.3)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

The overall opinions of the respondents about the functioning of DPC in their respective States are presented in Table 4.3.7. More than 65 per cent of sample respondents in Jharkhand, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal had negative opinions and reported that DPCs are inactive. Majority of members from Rajasthan (60.6 per cent) and UP (69.2 per cent) agreed that the DPCs were inactive in their States. Only, member from Kerala and Karnataka reported functioning of 'very active DPCs'. Madhya Pradesh also reported having 'active' DPCs that work towards fulfilling the mandatory requirements.

#### Section 4.4: Availability of Data for District Planning

Section 4.4 of the data analysis collates the opinion of the DPC members and their responses regarding the availability of data needed for district planning.

**Table 4.4.1: Data on Different Sectors Essential for Planning**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Yes	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	17 (42.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	49 (15.6)
No	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	18 (5.7)
No idea	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	13 (50.0)	23 (57.5)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	28 (100)	247 (78.7)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.4.1 reflects the status of the availability of data pertaining to various sectors as input data for district plan preparation. The views were categorised as 'Yes', 'No' and 'No idea'. All respondents from Kerala and 42.5 per cent from Punjab positively responded with respect to the availability of sectoral data at the district level. Further, 50 per cent of respondents from Madhya Pradesh and a few from Uttar Pradesh revealed non-availability of data specific to district planning. Majority of the respondents from the remaining study States said they are unaware of the data availability. But department officials reported that no arrangements have been made for maintaining data requirements of DPCs in any of the sectors.

**Table 4.4.2: Availability of Centralised and Computerised Data Management System**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	10 (25.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	42 (13.4)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (50.0)	9 (22.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	27 (8.6)
<b>No idea</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	13 (50.0)	21 (52.5)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	28 (100)	245 (78.0)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.4.2 presents the opinion of the respondents on the existence of a centralised digital data management system in their respective districts. The field data reflect similar responses as reported in the previous table. The respondents said Kerala has a separate data management system while around 25 per cent of the respondents from Punjab reported on the availability of a similar system. The remaining States neither have data management system for the district planning committee nor are the members aware of it.

**Table 4.4.3: Availability of District-Level Data Management System**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (10.2)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (35.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	19 (6.1)
<b>No idea</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	26 (100)	26 (65.0)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	28 (100)	263 (83.8)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

**Table 4.4.4: Data Access and Coordination with the Statistical Department**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (10.2)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	6 (2.1)
<b>No idea</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	26 (100)	39 (97.5)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	28 (100)	276 (87.9)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

The responses to a question on the accessibility and data support from the statistical department at the district level are presented in Table 4.4.4. Majority of the respondents have given positive responses and mentioned the availability of district statistical offices in all the States. They added that statistical offices maintain the data of all sectors pertaining to rural development, agriculture and allied subjects. For a sub-question on the accessibility of data and support from the statistical department for district planning, the sample units have given varied opinions. Except for Kerala, almost all the respondents were unaware of the support offered by the District Statistical Department to the District Planning Unit.

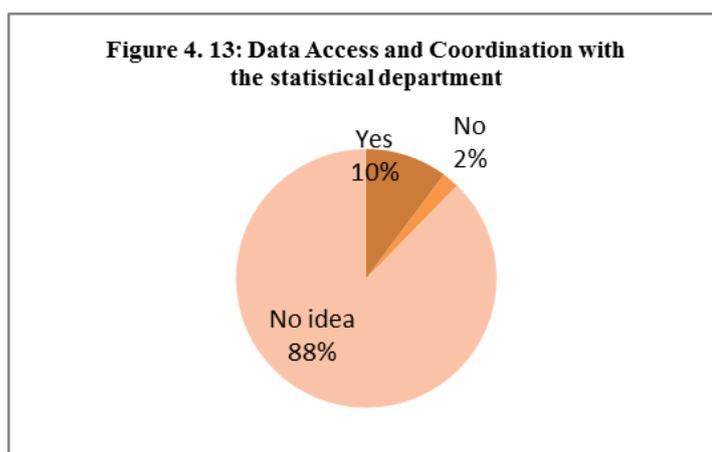
**Table 4.4.5: Need for Data in the Context of District Planning**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Yes	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	0 (0.0)	28 (100)	217 (69.1)
No	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	65 (100)	0 (0.0)	97 (30.9)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

**Table 4.4.6: Did You Seek Data from Sectoral Department?**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Yes	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	65 (100)	0 (0.0)	97 (30.9)
No	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	0 (0.0)	28 (100)	217 (69.1)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Tables 4.4.5 and 4.4.6 present data based on the respondents' opinion on the status of district planning unit's approach with the district statistical unit. The respondents were asked to offer their views on the requirement of data for district planning. The responses were positive from all the States. But, in reality, except for Kerala and UP, no initiatives were taken to request data access and support for the process of district plan preparation from District Statistical Departments in other States. In general, the DPC units did not make any effort to request data for the purpose of district planning. Similarly, few respondents cited their lack of awareness on approaching District Statistical Departments for data in the context of district planning.



## Section 4.5: Capacity Requirements for DPC Members in Preparation & Consolidation of District Plans

Section 4.5 of the data analysis presents the data related to questions on the opinion of the members on educational qualification, capacity initiatives made and

**Table 4.5.1: Educational Qualification required or not to become a member of DPC**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	18 (56.3)	19 (73.1)	30 (75.0)	24 (72.7)	22 (100)	30 (46.2)	28 (100)	239 (76.1)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (43.8)	7 (26.9)	10 (25.0)	9 (27.3)	0 (0.0)	35 (53.8)	0 (0.0)	75 (23.9)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

**Table 4.5.2: Educational Qualification required for becoming a member of DPC**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Just literate</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Professional Education</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.6)
<b>Minimum Education</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	28 (100)	309 (98.4)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Tables 4.5.1 and 4.5.2 present responses related to requirement of specific educational qualification to become a DPC member. In such cases, suggestions on the type and level of qualifications required for the DPC members are also presented and discussed.

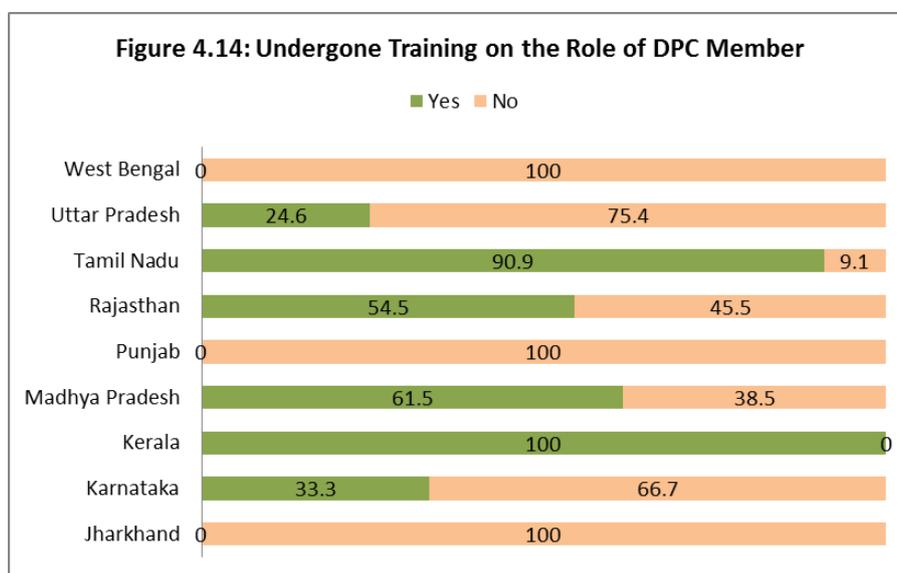
All the respondents from Jharkhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal reported positively to fixing minimum educational qualification as eligibility criteria to become a DPC member. The same views were supported by 56.3 per cent respondents in Kerala and above 70 per cent in MP, Punjab and Rajasthan, and 46.2 per cent from UP. The proposal was rejected by around 44 per cent in Kerala, 27 per cent in MP, 25 per cent in Punjab, 54 per cent in UP and 27.3 per cent in Rajasthan.

To the subsequent question on the type of educational qualifications required for the DPC members, majority opined that they should have minimum education and experience.

**Table 4.5.3: Undergone Training on the Role of DPC Member**

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Yes	0 (0.0)	12 (33.3)	32 (100)	16 (61.5)	0 (0.0)	18 (54.5)	20 (90.9)	16 (24.6)	0 (0.0)	114 (36.3)
No	32 (100)	24 (66.7)	0 (0.0)	10 (38.5)	40 (100)	15 (45.5)	2 (9.1)	49 (75.4)	28 (100)	200 (63.7)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.5.3 presents the status of training programmes attended by the sample respondents as DPC members. On aggregate, only 36.3 per cent agreed on attending training programmes related to district planning. State-wise data shows that all the members in Kerala have attended training programmes followed by around 91 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 61.5 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 54.5 per cent in Rajasthan, 33.3 per cent in Karnataka and 24.6 per cent in UP. In contrast, no one has attended any training in Jharkhand, Punjab and West Bengal. Similarly, majority of respondents from UP and Karnataka reported non-participation in training programmes, which is envisaged for orienting the DPC members on their functional responsibility and role clarity of other constitutional provisions.



#### 4.5.4 As a member of DPC attended Capacity Building Programmes

Response	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Yes	0 (0.0)	12 (33.3)	32 (100)	15 (57.7)	11 (27.5)	18 (54.5)	20 (90.9)	16 (24.6)	0 (0.0)	124 (39.5)
No	32 (100)	24 (66.7)	0 (0.0)	11 (42.3)	29 (72.5)	15 (45.5)	2 (9.1)	49 (75.4)	28 (100)	190 (60.5)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

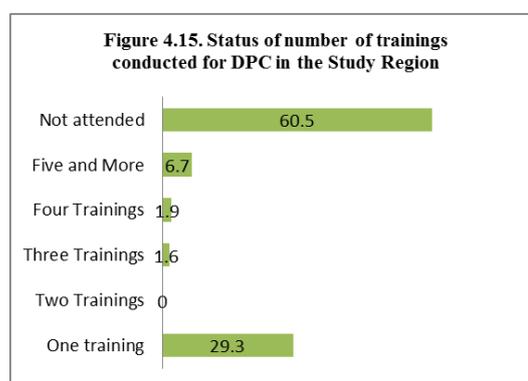
Table 4.5.4 records the responses to the question related to DPC members' participation in capacity development programmes, such as long-duration training programmes, workshops, interactions, exposure visits and planning-related skill development programmes conducted by Central/State government institutions.

According to their views, all the members in Kerala and Tamil Nadu attended capacity building programmes. In total, around 40 per cent of people agreed with their participation in the CB-related programmes, but 60 per cent have not attended. In Jharkhand and West Bengal, all the members have not attended training programmes. In Punjab and UP, more than 78 per cent of people have not attended any training. Majority of the members in Karnataka (66.7 per cent), MP (42.3 per cent) and Rajasthan (45.5 per cent) responded that they have not attended training programmes on planning skills.

**Table 4.5.5: Status of the number of training programmes conducted for DPC in the Study Region**

No. of Training programmes	Jharkhand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
One training	0 (0.0)	12 (33.3)	0 (0.0)	15 (57.7)	11 (27.5)	18 (54.5)	20 (90.9)	16 (24.6)	0 (0.0)	92 (29.3)
Two Training programmes	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
Three Training programmes	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (15.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.6)
Four Training programmes	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.9)
Five and More	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (65.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (6.7)
Not attended	32 (100)	24 (66.7)	0 (0.0)	11 (42.3)	29 (72.5)	15 (45.5)	2 (9.1)	49 (75.4)	28 (100)	190 (60.5)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.5.5 presents the number of training programmes attended by the sample respondents and it reveals that 29.3 per cent of respondents altogether attended only one training, i.e. majority from Tamil Nadu (90.9 per cent), Rajasthan (54.5 per cent), and Madhya Pradesh (54.5 per cent). Among the remaining respondents, around 1.6 per cent attended three training programmes, around 2 per cent attended four training programmes and 6.7 per cent, mainly from Kerala, attended five and more training programmes. It can be concluded that majority of DPC members has attended one training on orientation on PRIs and DPC roles.



**Table 4.5.7: Duration of Training Programmes**

Duration	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>One Day</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (100)	9 (81.8)	18 (100)	17 (85.0)	16 (100)	0 (0.0)	75 (60.5)
<b>Two Days</b>	0 (0.0)	12 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (18.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (11.3)
<b>Three Days</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (65.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (16.9)
<b>Four Days</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (15.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (4.0)
<b>Five Days</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (7.3)
<b>Total</b>	0 (0.0)	12 (100)	32 (100)	15 (100)	11 (100)	18 (100)	20 (100)	16 (100)	0 (0.0)	124 (100)

Table 4.5.7 reflects the views on the duration of training attended by DPC members. The data shows that 60.5 per cent of the respondents altogether attended one-day training. Around 11.3 per cent of have attended two-day training, 7.3 per cent (from Kerala and very few in Tamil Nadu) attended five-day training programmes.

**Table 4.5.8: Usefulness of the Training Programmes**

Response	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Excellent</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	26 (81.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	29 (23.4)
<b>Very Good</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (85.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (18.5)
<b>Good</b>	0 (0.0)	12 (100)	0 (0.0)	15 (100)	9 (81.8)	18 (100)	0 (0.0)	16 (100)	0 (0.0)	70 (56.5)
<b>Poor</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (18.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (1.6)
<b>Total</b>	0 (0.0)	12 (100)	32 (100)	15 (100)	11 (100)	18 (100)	20 (100)	16 (100)	0 (0.0)	124 (100)

Table 4.5.8 shows the benefits of training programmes based on the views of members who have attended it. The overall opinion of 23.4 per cent respondents, majorly from Kerala, shows that the programmes were excellent and it helped them contribute to the district planning and understand the planning process. Of the rest, 18.5 per cent, majority from Tamil Nadu, rated the training programmes attended by them 'very good' while 56.5 per cent, majority from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and UP, rated it 'good.' This indicates that the training programmes and other related capacity building programmes played a vital role in increasing the contribution levels members in terms of ideas and other functional delivery.

**Table 4.5.9: Category of Training Institutions that Conducted Training Programmes**

Duration	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>National Organisation</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (15.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (7.4)
<b>State Organisation</b>	0 (0.0)	12 (100)	26 (81.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (100)	0 (0.0)	54 (43.5)
<b>District Training Centre</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	15 (100)	11 (100)	18 (100)	17 (85.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	61 (49.2)
<b>NGOs</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Others</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	0 (0.0)	12 (100)	32 (100)	15 (100)	11 (100)	18 (100)	20 (100)	16 (100)	0 (0.0)	124 (100)

**Table 4.5.10 Requirement of Additional Training programmes**

Response	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	32 (100)	22 (61.1)	32 (100)	17 (65.4)	36 (90.0)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	287 (91.4)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	14 (38.9)	0 (0.0)	9 (34.6)	4 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	27 (8.6)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.5.9 demonstrates the categories of training institutions that imparted training for the DPC members. It is understood that only 7.4 per cent of respondents were covered under national-level capacity building institutions like NIRDPR, whereas 43.5 per cent of respondents from Karnataka, Kerala and UP attended training programmes at State-level training institutions like SIRDs and other networking institutions. Around 49.2 per cent attended the training programmes conducted by district training institutions. It reflects the need for NIRDPR and SIRDs to organise more training programmes either directly or through networking and partnering institutions in saturation mode. Most of the respondents (91.4 per cent) collectively suggested conducting more training programmes to build the capacity of the DPCs.

### **Importance of Capacity Building**

Capacity requirement for planning has been vitalised through various studies. All development programmes of either Central government or State governments have a significant budget outlay for capacity building of the stakeholders. Specifically, the Ministry of Rural Development, GoI invest a huge amount in capacity building for major Rural Development programmes like MGNREGA, Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Drinking Water and Sanitation (Jal Jeevan Mission & Jal Shakti Abhiyan). Similarly, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, GoI earmarks hundreds of crores of rupees on capacity building of elected representatives and officials of PRIs through revamped RGSA. Both

the Ministries support capacity building institutions such as NIRDPR, SIRDPR and ETCs to impart adequate training for the elected representatives and officials of the District Panchayat, Block Panchayat and Gram Panchayat. Many studies stand testimony to improved capacity of the Gram Panchayat resulting in better planning and action. Unfortunately, there is no significant attempt in building the capacity of DPC either by the Central government or State governments.

Moreover, visualising development, visioning for future development and understanding the resource pattern require certain skills specific to planning. Subject knowledge is also important to deal with the issues pertaining to local problems and solutions. Therefore, the study looked at the views of DPC members on supporting capacity building, especially of elected and nominated members.

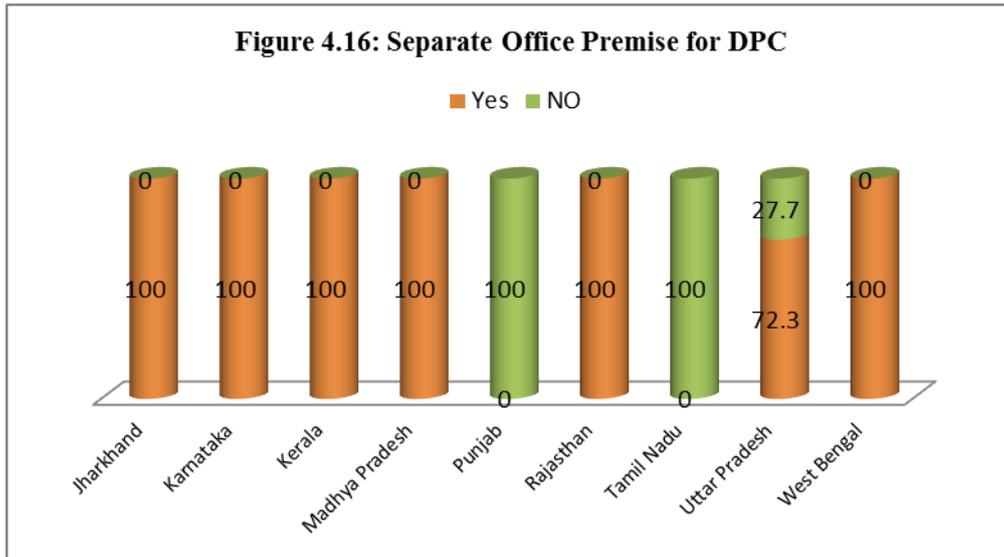
#### 4.6 Administrative Support

**Table 4.6.1: Separate Office Premises for DPC**

Responses	Jhar-khand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	0 (0.0)	33 (100)	0 (0.0)	47 (72.3)	28 (100)	234 (74.5)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	40 (100)	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	18 (27.7)	0 (0.0)	80 (25.5)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.6.1 shows the availability of separate office premises for DPC in the study States. The importance of having a separate office structure is understood immensely by all States as reflected in various literatures. All the respondents of the present study also emphasised the need for creating office infrastructure for the DPC along with administrative support for making adequate base work for the preparation of district plan. According to data presented in the above table, out of nine States, Punjab and Tamil Nadu did not have separate official mechanisms to assist the DPC. But in the case of Uttar Pradesh, majority of sample respondents agreed of having office premises for the DPC while around 28 per cent in the State complained of not having adequate infrastructure. The overall responses points to the fact that respondents from the study States have acknowledged the need for separate offices in their respective districts.

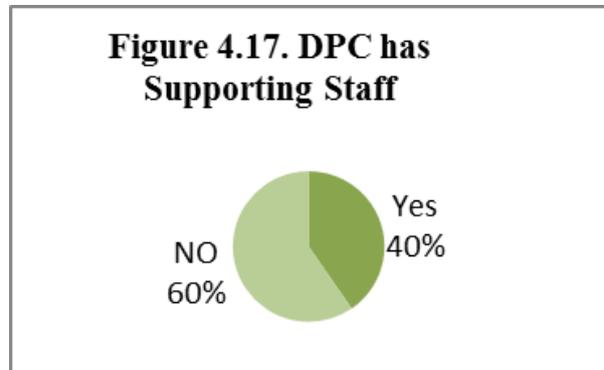
Further interaction with the DPC members revealed that having office building would encourage the members to come together and discuss in detail the issues and requirements of the district, which will help to make a roadmap for the planning process and initiatives.



**Table 4.6.2: Supporting Staff for DPC**

Responses	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	0 (0.0)	33 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	127 (40.4)
<b>NO</b>	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	40 (100)	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	187 (59.6)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.6.2 describes the views on the provision of supporting staff to initiate the planning process. Out of 314 respondents from nine study States, around 60 per cent reported non-availability of supporting manpower for the preparation of district plans. But the remaining respondents from the States of Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan agreed on the provision of administrative staff for undertaking the district plans. Jharkhand, UP and West Bengal have given separate offices for DPC without administrative mechanism and manpower. The experiences of the study reflect that the DPCs having separate office premises along with manpower have undertaken important initiatives and shown great progress in plan preparation.



<b>Responses</b>	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	0 (0.0)	33 (100)	0 (0.0)	23 (35.4)	0 (0.0)	150 (47.8)
<b>No</b>	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	40 (100)	0 (0.0)	22 (100)	42 (64.6)	28 (100)	164 (52.2)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

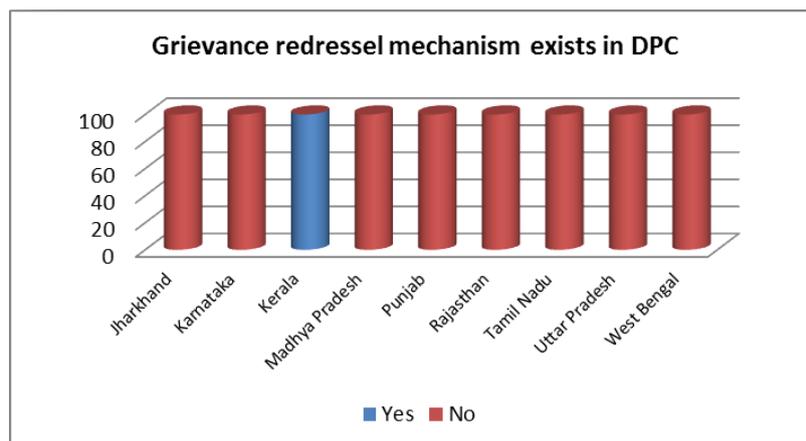
Discussions on earmarking of funds for DPCs to meet the expenses related to arrangements on plan preparation are presented in Table 4.6.3. Around 48 per cent of respondents from Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Rajasthan and UP agreed on having funds to meet the expenses of plan preparation. In certain States, namely Jharkhand, Kerala, Rajasthan and MP, the funds required for plan preparation are routed through the State Planning Board while in Karnataka and UP, the expenditures are met by the respective Zilla Panchayat of the districts. In the remaining States, the same expenditure is provided by the district administration on ad-hoc basis, either through line departments or the miscellaneous accounts of the district.

The district administration and the DPC members insisted on allocating adequate fund to the DPC along with the power of administrative and financial approvals to the DPC Chairman. It is understood from the discussions with various stakeholders of the district plan preparation, the exercise requires massive groundwork like studying the problems and potentials of the district, expert group discussions, preparation of draft development report and involving expert institutions in seeking suggestions for development plans. It also requires financial assistance to meet the travel expenses, honorarium of the members, people representatives and institutions along with stationeries, and wages of the administrative staff.

<b>Responses</b>	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (10.2)
<b>No</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	282 (89.8)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.6.4 presents the availability of mechanisms for addressing the problems of the DPC members as well as other stakeholders in the context of the preparation of district plans. Among the study States, only Kerala reported having a grievance redressal mechanism. It makes all efforts in addressing the problems faced by the

members. But, in other States, no specific system was created to address or find solutions to the issues raised by the DPC members. Further interactions with the DPC members revealed that they had raised complaints regarding



various processes related to the conduct of DPC meetings, such as sending notices, scheduling of meetings, agenda preparation and discussion on agenda, payment of allowances, etc. Other important problems articulated by the DPC members were poor orientation with respect to district development plan preparation, lack of motivation owing to weak financial support, lack of recognition, absence of experts in the planning process and non-availability of base statistical data. These problems need to be addressed appropriately and a specific system is required to receive the complaints and initiate efforts for sorting it. The respondents opined that a grievances redressal mechanism would undoubtedly boost the process of district planning and also increase the morality of the members by sparing their valuable time.

#### 4.7: Problems Faced by the DPC Members during Planning

Table 4.7.1 Major Problems faced by DPC members in attending DPC meetings

Major Problems	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
Inconven-ience dates	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (15.6)	0 (0.0)	5 (2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (14.3)	14 (4.5)
No monetary benefits	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (10.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (21.4)	10 (3.2)
No freedom to talk	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.3)	0 (0.0)	5 (12.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	7 (2.2)
No subject expertise	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (34.4)	0 (0.0)	7 (17.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (5.7)
All the reasons	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	26 (100)	19 (47.5)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	18 (64.3)	246 (78.3)
No Problems	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (43.7)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	19 (6.1)
Total	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.7.1 lists the problems faced by DPC members and factors hindering their performance. Either all respondents or majority in the study States reported that the dates of DPC meetings announced are inconvenient for them. The meeting dates were fixed without consulting the members and only to suit the schedule of DPC Chairman. Moreover, the time gap between the announcement date and actual meeting date would be very short, and therefore all members were unable to attend the DPC meetings. The district administration or ZP always conduct meeting with low attendance by just fulfilling the quorum requirement.

Similarly, the DPC members feel that the honorarium or travel costs are not adequately paid. Due to this, the majority of DPC members are reluctant to attend meetings and they are reluctant to spend own money for the purpose.

Similarly, the members feel they are not at the liberty to either express their views or raise objections to the inclusion and exclusion of programmes and schemes in the district plan. In many States, the District Minister and Minister representing the State serve either as chairman, ex-officio member or special invitee. This, in turn, restricts participation of other members or suppression of views of opposition parties. The States, where bureaucrats leading the process of plan preparation, also face a similar situation. In addition, almost all members agreed on the non-inclusion of subject specialists and planning experts in the DPC panel. It hurdles the visioning process for the long-term development of the district, resulting in district plan becoming just a list of activities submitted by various line departments.

The above-discussed issues need to be addressed by creating appropriate mechanisms to discuss in detail and overcome the problems by focussing on the holistic development of the district.

<b>Major Problems</b>	<b>Jhar-khand</b>	<b>Karna-taka</b>	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	<b>Punjab</b>	<b>Rajasthan</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	<b>West Bengal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Administrative Dominance</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (15.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (1.6)
<b>Minister's Suppression</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>No subject expertise</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (34.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (3.5)
<b>Political party interference</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	26 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (5.1)
<b>No chances for Participation at all</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Lack of Personnel</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>All the above Reasons</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	282 (89.8)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.7.2 presents the external factors hindering the process of district planning preparation based on the views of the respondents from nine study States. It is observed that power struggle in the context of district plans severely affects the planning process across the States. On one hand, the views of elected representatives are not recognised by the district administration and on the other, the views of officials are harshly criticised by the elected members. This tendency has discouraged both sides, leading to inactiveness on participation, expression and implementation of development plans. It was reported that political interference also significantly dilutes the process of district plans. Lack of personal interest and motivation among DPC members as well as representatives of the line departments severely affects the quality of planning process. All members were of the opinion that the views of DPC members regarding plan documents are not accepted and this underestimation negatively impacts the attendance at DPC meetings.

**Table 4.7.3: Problems Faced by DPC Members in the Preparation of District Plans**

Problems Faced	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>No subject Specific Expertise</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>No clarity on the availability of resources</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Unaware of the sources of funds</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Irregular Funds Flow</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Political Party interference</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>No holistic approach</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>All the above reasons</b>	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	32 (100)	18 (69.2)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	28 (100)	269 (85.7)
<b>No administrative funds and man-power support</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	8 (30.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	13 (4.1)
<b>No Problems</b>	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	32 (10.2)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

The enquiry into various problems faced by the DPC members further revealed that funds crunch is causing lack of interest among the DPC members. Their views have been presented in Table 4.7.3, which shows that in the study States except Jharkhand, the DPCs confront financial problems in undertaking various projects under District Plans. Around 87 per cent of respondents agreed on facing fund problems and had no clarity on the availability of resources for district development. Similarly, they were unaware of the funds allocated under different government schemes for the district. Irregular fund flow to various administrative units of PRIs is one of the reasons that discourage participation in the planning exercises.

Most members were of the view that lack of funding sources stands a hurdle for preparing a holistic development plan comprising vital activities to bridge the development gaps. In reality, funds from Central and State governments are directly sent to the Gram Panchayats without much allocation to the other two units, namely the Block and District Panchayats. In addition, departmental development schemes are sent to the departments concerned without any link to the DPCs. This non-coordinated effort shows lack of convergence and leads to compartmentalised initiatives for development. The exercise of mere district plan preparation makes it mere a bundle of documents with hardly any opportunity for implementation. It severely affects the enthusiasm of DPC members, who come forward for the district planning process. It is understood in Jharkhand, the rural development funds are routed through DPCs and this practice motivates the members to partake in district planning.

**Table 4.7.4: Problems faced by DPC in consolidating the Plans**

Problems Faced	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Delay in submission of block and GP plans</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (34.4)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (3.5)
<b>Mismatch between urban and rural Plans</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (56.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (5.7)
<b>Power clash among various tiers of PRIs</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>No coordination among DPC members</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>No support from Line departments</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	3 (9.4)	3 (11.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	11 (3.5)
<b>All the above Reasons</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	0 (0.0)	23 (88.5)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	28 (100)	274 (87.3)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.7.4 presents the views of DPCs regarding the problems in the consolidation of rural and urban plans. It is assumed that the district development plans should have plans for the entire district including rural, semi-urban and urban areas. Even though the district development plan manual issued by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj has emphasised various processes to be undertaken, in reality, the district planning process ends with just consolidation of plans submitted by various Block Panchayats and urban local bodies. The representatives of Block and Gram Panchayats are not involved in the process of consolidation in majority of the States. It is essential to debate the development opportunities and inclusion of prioritised activities, considering the geographical requirements. Moreover, there is always a tussle in the amalgamation of plans of urban local bodies with rural local needs. Proper integration needs adequate capabilities and appropriate mechanisms to bring integrated district development plan. The absence of the spirit of real integration will result in district development plans becoming an annexure of the list of activities submitted by various units of governments.

**4.7.5: Do You Think Political Rivalry Hinders the District Plan Preparation Process?**

Responses	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	9 (28.1)	13 (50.0)	40 (100)	19 (57.6)	22 (100)	44 (67.7)	28 (100)	243 (77.4)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (71.9)	13 (50.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (42.4)	0 (0.0)	21 (32.3)	0 (0.0)	71 (22.6)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.7.5 presents the respondents' opinions related to the prevalence of political rivalry affecting the process of district plan preparation. Around 77 per cent of respondents confirmed the existence of political conflicts, except in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh and to a certain extent in Rajasthan. Lack of coordination among political parties has delayed plan preparation and slowed down the process of acceptance of plans by different departments to obtain administrative approval from their respective heads. Political rivalry is obstructing the planning process in the form of non-inclusion of demands from the opposition parties as well as the ruling party's insistence on development proposals based on their ideas, regions and interest. In Kerala, matured political discussions and mutual agreement has led to healthy discussions involving both ruling and opposition parties for the cause of unified development of the district. The extremely varied political ideologies of ruling and opposition parties in Jharkhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Punjab have paralysed the preparation of the Integrated District Development Plan. In many study States, the problems faced by people and their needs have been neglected due to political rivalry between ruling and opposition parties.

**Table 4.7.6: Major Role Played in Finalising or Consolidating the District Plans**

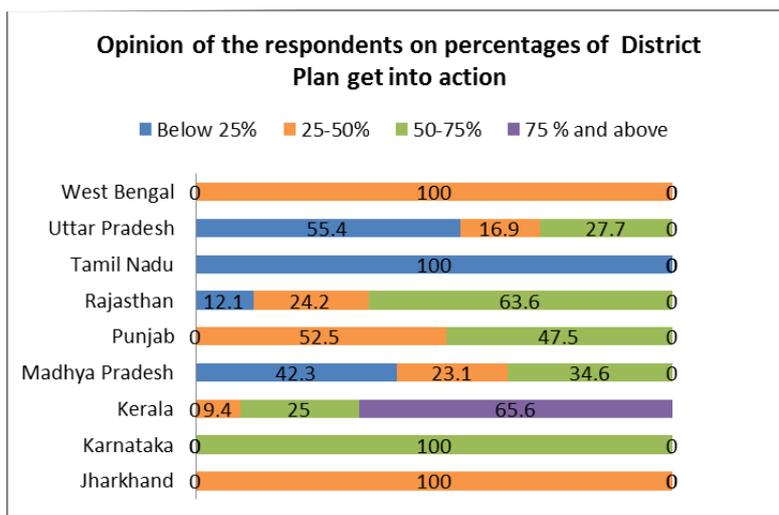
Institution	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>DPC</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (71.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (7.3)
<b>District Administration</b>	12 (37.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	20 (76.9)	39 (97.5)	28 (84.8)	22 (100)	47 (72.3)	28 (100)	196 (62.4)
<b>Zilla Panchayat</b>	20 (62.5)	36 (100)	9 (28.1)	6 (23.1)	1 (2.5)	5 (15.2)	0 (0.0)	18 (27.7)	0 (0.0)	95 (30.3)
<b>Others</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.7.6 presents different institutions' roles in finalising and consolidating the activities of the District Plan based on the responsibility given by various States. In Kerala, around 80 per cent of the study population viewed DPC as the ultimate authority on consolidation of plans. In this State, heads or representatives of different line departments present the annual action plan of their departments, followed by a detailed discussion on the necessity of inclusion and exclusion. Karnataka also has a strong DPC system and all the elected members of ZP become members of DPC. Therefore, in Karnataka, the supreme power of consolidation and approval of district plans are in the hands of Zilla Panchayat joined with urban local bodies. Apart from these two setups, in Punjab, MP, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, UP and West Bengal, the district administration plays a dominant role in the preparation and approval of district plans.

**Table 4.7.7: Respondents' Views on the Status of Implementation of District Plan**

Class Intervals	Class Intervals	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal
<b>Below 25 per cent</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (42.3)	0 (0.0)	4 (12.1)	22 (100)	36 (55.4)	0 (0.0)	73 (23.2)
<b>25-50 per cent</b>	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	3 (9.4)	6 (23.1)	21 (52.5)	8 (24.2)	0 (0.0)	11 (16.9)	28 (100)	109 (34.7)
<b>50-75 per cent</b>	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	8 (25.0)	9 (34.6)	19 (47.5)	21 (63.6)	0 (0.0)	18 (27.7)	0 (0.0)	111 (35.4)
<b>75 per cent and above</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (65.6)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	21 (6.7)
<b>Nothing gets implemented</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

As has been mentioned, the States have to prepare and implement the district plans. It is understood that the States giving financial importance to DPCs have a higher chance of implementing plans prepared by them. Similarly, the States giving importance to bureaucratic power also have high possibility of implementing planned activities through line departments and lower units of PRIs.



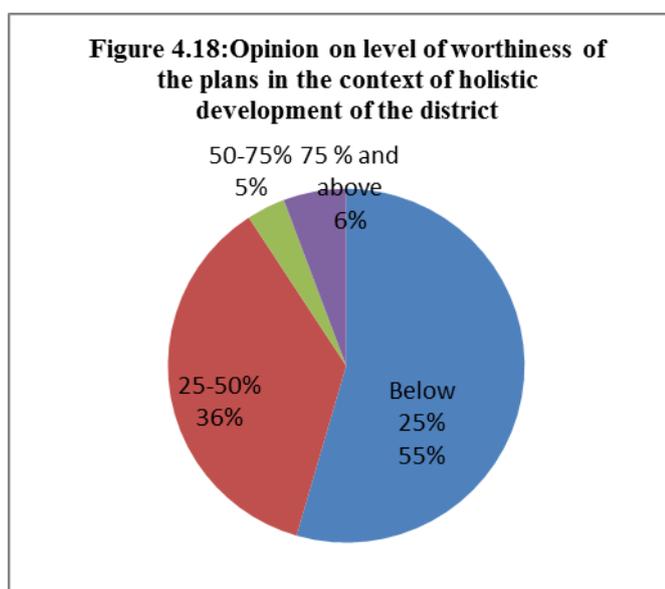
Perceptions of DPC members on possibilities of implementation of planned activities are listed in Table 4.7.7. All respondents from Tamil Nadu unanimously agreed and 42.3 per cent from MP, 55.4 per cent from UP and 12.1 per cent from Rajasthan opined that only less than 25 per cent of planned activities are having chance of implementation. Similarly, the respondents from Jharkhand (100 per cent), MP (23 per cent), Punjab (52.5 per cent), West Bengal (100 per cent) and Rajasthan (24.2 per cent) opined that up to 50 per cent of activities have chance of implementation. Acceptance for 50-75 per cent was reported by all DPC members in Karnataka, 63.3 per cent in Rajasthan, 47.5 per cent in Punjab, 34.6 per cent in MP and 25 per cent in Kerala.

The only State where majority of the respondents (65.6 per cent) agreed that more than 75 per cent of planned activities are getting implemented is Kerala. In the context of the percentage of activities, implementation chances may be under-reported in a few States because of the tussle between political and administrative groups and differences of opinion. For example, in Tamil Nadu, UP and a certain extent of MP, the administrative dominance has drawn flak from the DPC members. It is surprising to note that there is no specific mechanism to review the implemented activities as per the perspective or annual action plan. Absence of this review process leads to lack of accountability on the part of governance in fulfilling the people's actual needs.

**Table 4.7.8: Quality of District Plans in the Context of Holistic Development**

Class Intervals	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Below 25 per cent</b>	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	17 (65.4)	16 (40.0)	11 (33.3)	22 (100)	45 (69.2)	28 (100)	171 (54.5)
<b>25-50 per cent</b>	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	8 (25.0)	5 (19.2)	24 (60.0)	21 (63.6)	0 (0.0)	20 (30.8)	0 (0.0)	114 (36.3)
<b>50-75 per cent</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.8)	4 (15.4)	0 (0.0)	1 (3.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	11 (3.5)
<b>75 per cent and above</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (56.3)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (5.7)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.7.8 presents data on the opinion of the DPC members on the worthiness of plans prepared by various districts in their respective States in the context of the holistic development approach they followed. The concept of holistic development aims to bring comprehensive development of the region or district by inclusion of various sectors, sections and regions, addressing the gaps of development with a prime focus on identifying the drivers of development through the lead sector. The sectoral development includes all major sectors like agriculture and allied production, and services. The inclusion of various sections includes addressing the issues of diverse income categories of population. Similarly, the inclusion of all regions is essential with priority on backward and most backward regions for addressing various geographical problems and needs. Further, the development of the district has to target development of services and infrastructures, which enable people to have ample opportunities for various livelihood options. These natures of inclusion were evident in bringing development in various study States.



It can be seen from the table that majority of respondents (54.5 per cent) rated the quality of plans in the context of comprehensive development. All the respondents of Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal rated its worthiness below 25 per cent,

whereas Uttar Pradesh (69.2 per cent), MP (69.5 per cent), Punjab (40 per cent) and Rajasthan (33.3 per cent) gave higher ratings. It reflects that said States have not given proper attention to the preparation of holistic development plans. In the next category, all the respondents from Karnataka and more than 60 per cent from Punjab and Rajasthan opined that their plans have up to 50 per cent of worthiness in covering a comprehensive development approach.

Majority of respondents (56.3 per cent) in Kerala rated that their plans have more than 75 per cent overall worthiness. The research further found that the mere preparation of a document of the plan will not bring any change in development of the districts unless more attention is given to identifying major issues and needs. Therefore, a mechanism is needed to cross-verify the proposed projects and activities under the district development plans on the basis of the actual problems and needs.

#### Sections 4.8. Suggestions for improving the functional ability of the DPCs

<b>Table 4.8.1: Does DPC Play a Vital Role in the Development of District?</b>										
<b>Responses</b>	<b>States</b>									<b>Total</b>
	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	
<b>Yes</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	31 (77.5)	28 (84.8)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	300 (95.5)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	9 (22.5)	5 (15.2)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	14 (4.5)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.8.1 reflects the responses of the study population on recognition of the role played by the DPC in the development of the district. As per the opinion of respondents from all States reported, DPC plays a vital role in the development of a district through their contribution to preparation of plans, monitoring of plan implementation progress and reviewing the targets achieved by different departments. The State-specific PR Acts have given delegated powers to DPCs for preparing and reviewing the district plans implementation besides playing the advisory role by facilitating corrective measures for the department concerned upon finding shortcomings, misappropriations and deviations. But, in reality, majority of the members were clueless about their roles and powers due to limited exposure to the constitutional provisions. Adequate orientation, realisation and creating an enabling environment are necessary for the implementation of assigned roles.

**Table 4.8.2: Opinion on DPC's Performance as per the Provisions of PRI Act**

Responses	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Very Strong</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (18.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6 (1.9)
<b>Strong</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	18 (56.3)	3 (11.5)	0 (0.0)	2 (6.1)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	23 (7.3)
<b>Satisfactory</b>	0 (0.0)	36 (100)	8 (25.0)	19 (73.1)	10 (25.0)	19 (57.6)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	28 (100)	125 (39.8)
<b>Not Satisfactory</b>	32 (100)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4 (15.4)	30 (75.0)	12 (36.4)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	0 (0.0)	160 (51.0)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

A status analysis based on the opinions of the sample respondents on 'Rating the performance of DPCs on par with the State PR act' was made and their responses are presented in Table 4.8.2. As it was mentioned earlier, the State PRI Acts in India assign certain important roles and responsibilities to the DPCs. The spirit of implementation of State Acts varies from State to State due to existing political equations. For example, the State of Kerala is fully positive in the decentralisation of powers and functions and activation of various institutions of local governance, including DPCs. Resultantly, around 19 per cent of respondents rated DPCs as 'very strong' institution and 56.3 per cent graded it 'strong.' all the respondents in Karnataka and West Bengal, 73.1 per cent in MP, 57.6 per cent in Rajasthan and 25 per cent each in Punjab and Kerala rated the performance of the DPCs 'satisfactory' on par with State PRI Acts.

All the participants from Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu, more than 92 per cent from Uttar Pradesh and 75 per cent from Punjab rated DPCs 'non-performing' in accordance with the Provisions of PRI Act. The overall ratings of the DPC's performance from the study State is 'not satisfactory' as reported by 51 per cent and 'satisfied' by around 40 per cent. This status underscores the need for enormous efforts to make DPCs vibrant and encourage its members for implementing their powers and functions according to the provisions of the PRI Acts of the respective States.

**Table 4.8.3: Strategies to improve the attendance of the members of the DPC meetings**

Responses	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Very Strong</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Strong</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Satisfactory</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Not Satisfactory</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

An enquiry was made on the strategies adopted by the Zilla Panchayats to attract more participants to the DPC meetings and the responses are presented in Table 4.8.3. Based on the opinion of sample respondents about the process and strategies adopted in mobilising participants for the DPC meetings, they were given four options. The participants were explained the criteria for different categories. The first one 'Very Strong' stands for full attendance, communication with the members well in advance, adequate information on the agenda of the DPC meetings with supporting documents and follow-up calls to the members. The second category 'Strong' refers to strategies for ensuring adequate meeting information and payment of honorarium and travel. The third category 'Satisfactory' refers to sending information about the meeting without a follow-up mechanism and completing the meetings with minimum attendance. The fourth category 'Not Satisfactory' indicates non-adherence to the above strategies but conducting meetings simply with a minimum mandatory quorum of attendance and finalising the proceedings without much discussion.

Irrespective of the States, the respondents expressed displeasure over the existing strategies for encouraging attendance. The process and strategies followed in the sample districts reflect low attendance, ineffective strategies for mobilising participants and lackadaisical efforts for district plan preparation.

### **Reasons for Low Attendance in DPC meetings**

The reasons for low attendance reported by the respondents are i) Lack of financial powers, ii) Lack of direct powers to penalise the defaulters, iii) Lack of provision for actual TA and DA for the members iv) Busy schedule of VIP members like MLAs, MPs and Ministers, and v) meeting conducted on shorter notice.

The responses call for serious attention from the researchers and policymakers to advocate the State governments for taking extraordinary measures to make the system of district planning by the District Panchayat/Zilla Parishad from inactive to vibrant mode and adopt innovative approaches to put together a district development report in real sense for its better implementation.

<b>Suggestions</b>	<b>Jhar-khand</b>	<b>Karna-taka</b>	<b>Kerala</b>	<b>Madhya Pradesh</b>	<b>Punjab</b>	<b>Raja-sthan</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>	<b>Uttar Pradesh</b>	<b>West Bengal</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Make aware of the role and responsibilities</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Increase the honorarium</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>More Training programmes</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Selection on a non-party basis</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Inclusion of more members from the sectoral departments</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Earmarking of more funds for administrative expenses</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Provision of permanent manpower and office accommodation</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>More public hearings</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Contracting of National Level Institutions for Planning and ratification by the DPC</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>All the Above</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

Table 4.8.4 presents the responses of sample respondents to a question seeking suggestions to strengthen the performance of the DPCs in general, and the sample States, in particular. Various suggestive options as listed in the table were given to the respondents and all chose 'all the above listed' option for activation of DPCs for further effective functioning. The suggestions given by the respondents are given below with adequate explanation.

**Awareness:** Based on the responses of the sample DPC members and other stakeholders, the awareness level of the roles and responsibilities and powers given to the DPCs by the respective State PRI Acts are unknown to the majority of the people in general, and even to the district level elected representatives. The State Government's Panchayati Raj Ministry and Departments are obligated to orient on the functional

roles of PRI elected members and the provisions of the PRI Act in the context of meetings, quorum requirements and other provisions related to the functioning of the DPCs. It is essential to conduct a number of awareness programmes, interactions and exposures. It will help the members to play their roles and perform their functions with adequate inputs.

**Monetary Incentives:** The respondents from all the study States highlighted the necessity for monetary incentivisation for the DPC members to attend the meetings. There are provisions to pay sitting allowance in a few States and reimburse the approved rates of travel cost to the members attending the meetings. But majority of respondents feel reluctant to claim the monetary benefits due to the procedural requirements and paltry allowance. The actual cost of travel may range from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 3000 based on the distance from the member's residence to the district headquarters. This financial loss discourages the members of Zilla Panchayat/DPC from attending the meeting. The rate of attendance as well as interest declines every year. Therefore, the sample respondents suggested a decent honorarium along with reimbursement of the actual cost of travel. They said it would boost the members' interest in participating in the meetings and contribute meaningfully to district plan preparation.

**Capacity Building:** The findings of the present study as well as various similar studies emphasise the need for capacity building of the members to increase the domain knowledge and relevant planning skills for effective participation and better contribution. Majority of the elected members pointed out that district planning is a massive exercise which needs not only domain knowledge but also skills on how to plan for the development of the district. Majority of them lack both knowledge and skills. These are not mandatory requirements for contesting in the election at various levels of PRIs. In India, predominantly rural areas rely on agriculture and allied sectors, agro-based rural industries and service sectors. The skills in identifying the problems, potentials, strategies, projects and budgeting based on local resources are very vital. In order to link the need-based activities with various funding sources demands specific skills for the people who are involved in district plan preparation, especially for DPC. In this context, it is imperative to conduct a series of capacity building training programmes for the DPC members. The regional, State and national level capacity building institutions, which are specifically meant for rural development and panchayati raj, have to be encouraged to conduct capacity building programmes. The NIRDPR, SIRDs and ETCs have the mounting duty of capacity building of all elected representatives of PRIs at three levels.

**Selection of members:** The DPC member's selection or election has to include representation from all three tiers of Panchayats. It is essential for geographical representation as well as covering the region's specific issues in the district plans. At present, elected members of Zilla Parishad, District Panchayat and Municipality are only considered to become members of DPCs. This nullifies the role for subject experts, who can play the functional role in the district planning committee. Inclusion of various institutional representatives like Universities, IITs, Community Polytechnics, social service institutions, philanthropic societies and many other locally available good working institutions in different fields should be considered. There is also a necessity to form subject-wise expert groups to check the feasibility and utility of the projects proposed in the district plans.

**Inclusion of Sectoral Departments:** It is essential to include more non-members and special invitees from the various line departments with the provision for mandatory attendance. This will help to bring sector-based strengths and weaknesses for finding better opportunities to function as an integral part of district planning. Department-wise working groups can be appointed to work seriously on identifying problems, needs and potentials of the sectors and work out viable strategies to bring real development through district planning.

**Funds support for DPC:** The DPC members of the sample districts unanimously requested permanent fund allocation to the DPC and other supporting mechanisms like wages for manpower, purchase of consumables, payment of monetary benefits to the members and expenses on administrative requirements. Funds are required to carry out various meetings, and interactions with the communities at various parts of the district.

**Need for official administrative structural mechanism:** It was identified from the field verification that only very few States have made separate office structure for the DPC. Creation of office buildings is essential for the DPCs to organise, discuss and prepare district plans. Data required for district planning should be made ready to present to the stakeholders as well as public.

**Involvement of planning Institutions:** It is also worth considering the involvement of State and national-level reputed institutions and individuals, who are having experience in development planning, to initiate and coordinate the planning process with adequate handholding support for bringing better development plans for the district.

**Table 4.8.5: List of Additional Powers Required for Better Performance of DPCs**

List	Jhar-khand	Karna-taka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Raja-sthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>More financial Powers</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	16 (20.8)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5 (7.7)	0 (0.0)	21 (6.0)
<b>More funds to the ZP</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (13.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	10 (2.8)
<b>Ward-wise budget allotment</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (16.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (3.7)
<b>Personnel support to each DPC member</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (16.9)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	13 (3.7)
<b>Special political honour to the DPC members</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	25 (32.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	25 (7.1)
<b>All</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	0 (0.0)	33 (100)	22 (100)	60 (92.3)	28 (100)	269 (76.6)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	77 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	351 (100)

Table 4.8.5 provides the data related to the opinions of DPC members on powers, functionalities and funds requirements, in addition to the existing provisions under State PRI Acts. Majority of the respondents recommended more financial powers in terms of routing the scheme-based rural development funds through DPCs, i.e. financial approval of the projects proposed by the various levels of PRIs with the approval of the DPCs. Further, a majority supported earmarking specific funds, such as MLALADS and MPLADS, for DPCs to design and implement special projects in the member's respective constituencies. It is also suggested to provide ward-wise minimum budget allocation in the form of untied funds to meet certain developmental gaps. Also, most members suggested providing political honour and recognition to each DPC member.

**Table 8.6: Requirement of Public Presentation of Consolidated Plans before Its Approval**

Responses	Jhar-khand	Karnataka	Kerala	Madhya Pradesh	Punjab	Rajasthan	Tamil Nadu	Uttar Pradesh	West Bengal	Total
<b>Yes</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)
<b>No</b>	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)
<b>Total</b>	32 (100)	36 (100)	32 (100)	26 (100)	40 (100)	33 (100)	22 (100)	65 (100)	28 (100)	314 (100)

**Need for more public hearings and interactions:** As per the district plan manual of the MoPR, the plans have to start from wards and it has to be consolidated at the Gram Panchayat level, Block level, and ultimately at the district level, including the plans of urban local bodies. But, in reality, it happens haphazardly and the actual requirements of different sections of the people at various levels are not considered. In some States, where the district administration takes the lead role, the districts prepare plans just by updating sectoral department needs of the particular year based on the department-wise allocation of funds. Similarly, the districts where Zilla Panchayat makes a lead role, the plan is prepared by consolidating a few activities given by various Blocks and urban local bodies. In a decentralised democracy, planning has to integrate and incorporate the people's needs by considering their voices. Participatory planning requires participation of more and more people. The draft district plan has to be presented at an appropriate forum having the public along with their representatives. The final approval of the plan has to consider the views of general public at various levels.

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## **CHAPTER 5**

### **FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study was conducted in nine States, namely Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. It covered 314 respondents representing members of District Planning Committees (DPCs) from nine districts, a sample of one district from each State. The data collected from the field study was analysed in the previous chapter and various aspects of district planning, process and capacity needs of the District Planning Committee (DPC) were discussed in detail. This chapter presents the major findings drawn from the field data and perceptions culled from the discussion with various stakeholders of district planning.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities of District Planning Committees**

- In the District Planning Committee (DPC), four-fifths of members are selected from the elected members of Zilla Panchayat and Municipalities of the respective district in proportion to the ratio of population representing rural and urban areas in the district.
- The total number of members of DPC varies from district to district across the States. The representation would be all the Members of the Legislative Assembly, Parliament (MLAs & MPs), and Mayors of Municipalities of the constituencies within the jurisdiction of the district. In addition, subject experts and representatives/officials of line departments are also included as Special Invitees to District Planning Committees.
- Each State is following the said procedures of reservation of membership as per the provisions of Article 243D of Constitution (for women, Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs)) in the selection of members for District Planning Committee (DPCs).
- In the States of Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, one-fifth of members were 'Nominated Members' representing line departments and subject experts. But in Jharkhand, DPC has the provision to include only elected members of ZPs.
- The sample population had Zilla Panchayat members (64.3 per cent), and representatives from urban local bodies (24.5 per cent), namely urban local bodies. Only around 2 per cent were subject experts and Special Invitees.
- Every five year, a new body is elected as DPC, with 38.9 per cent of members having experience of 2-3 years. Another set of 25.4 per cent of members have experience of 1-2 years. Only 24.5 per cent of members served for 3-4 years.

- The PRI Acts of States do not mandate any educational qualification or subject expertise; they are qualified as DPC members following their election as Zilla Panchayat members.
- More than 90 per cent of DPC members did not have specialised experience or subject knowledge in rural development. Only around 33 per cent reported favourably having experiences in the field of rural development and panchayati raj.
- On the hierarchy of various levels of PRIs, the ZP has to take the responsibility of leading the development process but the actual powers and functions devolved only to the Gram Panchayat.
- Majority (84.5 per cent) of the respondents of the study acknowledged that the Act has given powers and functions to the DPC, and it is to be implemented. But in real status, only a very few members were aware of understanding the real spirit of powers and functions of the DPC and its members.
- Around 60 per cent said that the powers given to the DPC and its members are inadequate. But, around 40 per cent replied that existing provisions of powers are adequate but need to be implemented with real spirit.
- Out of 15.5 per cent of respondents, majority were not fully satisfied with the status of functioning of the DPC but are partially satisfied with its existence. Around 26 per cent of agreed members said they are discontented over the process of discussion, agenda listed and passing of resolutions concerning development activities proposed by district administration.
- The DPC members were given no prior information about the agenda items. As a result, they neither get a proper orientation nor make an effective contribution during the meetings.
- Majority reported that the committee meeting carried out a list of activities prepared and presented by various departments for the current year or coming years and the same got approved by the DPC without discussions. Even if any member raises issues for detailed discussions, the local MLAs or MPs or district administration would suppress it.
- Regarding members' reaction to discussions in the DPC meetings, around 37 per cent opted 'no reaction' even though they have an urge to raise. Around another 41 per cent said they were 'Silent Participants' in all the meetings. Only 23 per cent reported to have led arguments until proper explanations are given by the department concerned.
- In the study States of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, DPCs are chaired by the Minister in-charge of the district. The respondents rued that it is very difficult for the DPC members to raise arguments against the views of the Minister or the ruling party Chairman of the district.

### **Process of DPC Meetings**

- Frequency of DPC meetings conducted - The State PRI Act of the majority of the States under study made provisions for conducting four meetings a year, one in each quarter.
- In the study States, DPC meetings were conducted once a year and 33.8 per cent of respondents acknowledged it. In States like Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, all the respondents attended only one meeting. It can be concluded that majority of study States conduct one or two meetings except Kerala and MP which conduct three meetings.
- Regarding the attendance of members, 48.1 per cent of members, mainly from States like Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Punjab, have attended only one meeting yearly. Further, 36.9 per cent from Karnataka, more than 50 per cent from Kerala & Rajasthan, 30 per cent from Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and 25 per cent from Punjab reported attending two meetings in a year. Only in MP (61.5 per cent) and Kerala (40.6 per cent) the respondents attended three meetings.
- The overall status of participation of sample respondents reveals that DPC members attend only one or two meetings.
- In majority of the States, 'invitation letter' has been given to the individual members personally as reported by around 30 per cent of respondents mainly from Jharkhand, MP, Rajasthan and West Bengal. More than 40 per cent of the respondents from the above States mentioned that the meeting invitation is displayed on the notice board.
- The existing practices of invitation to the DPC meetings are found in various forms like display on the public notice boards and print media in the States of Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- It was reported by 48.1 per cent altogether from the study States that the meetings take place with the by the respective line department officials reading out the targets and achievements of the previous year, presentation of the targets for the forthcoming year and its approval by obtaining the signatures of the members.
- Another 38 per cent of respondents reported that no discussion take place on the agenda items. They added that the meetings used to be concluded with the approval of the plans by securing the signatures of members.
- Interestingly, only 10.1 per cent of respondents from Kerala, MP and Karnataka said the plan is approved after proper discussion and consolidation of the plan.
- The 'provision of allowances' to DPC members for attending the meetings exist in all States but 24.8 per cent of members of said they have not availed the claims of allowances. While sitting allowance is paid in Karnataka, MP, Rajasthan, Tamil

Nadu, West Bengal, Punjab, UP and Jharkhand, a monthly honorarium is paid in Kerala.

- More than 80 per cent of respondents participate either as silent and or non-participants but put their signature on the resolution passed by the district. The non-participants arrive casually, go around the departments, and finally come for putting signature.
- In majority of the study States, DPC members are not giving much importance to participation in DPC meetings. Moreover, lack of personal interest, and political and administrative domination of political elites influence the participation of the members.
- More than 65 per cent of sample respondents, comprising all members in Jharkhand, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal, had negative opinion about DPCs and reported that they are inactive. Majority of members from Rajasthan (60.6 per cent) and UP (69.2 per cent) opined that DPCs were inactive in their States. Only the States of Kerala and Karnataka reported the presence of 'very active DPCs.' Madhya Pradesh reported having 'active' DPCs functioning well towards fulfilling the obligatory requirements.

#### **Availability of Data for District Planning**

- All the respondents of Kerala and 42.5 per cent of Punjab responded to the availability of sectoral data at the district level. Further, 50 per cent of respondents from Madhya Pradesh and a few from Uttar Pradesh complained of non-availability of data specific to district planning. The remaining States neither had data management system for the district planning committee nor were the members aware of its availability.
- Majority of the respondents mentioned the availability of district statistical offices in all the States to maintain the data regarding all the sectors pertaining to rural development, agriculture and allied subjects. Except for Kerala, in all other study States, almost all the respondents were unaware of the role of district statistical department's support for the District Planning Unit.

#### **Capacity Requirements for DPC Members in Preparation & Consolidation of District Plans**

- All the respondents from Jharkhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal responded positively to fixing minimum educational qualifications as eligibility criteria to become members of the DPC. The same views were supported by 56.3 per cent in Kerala and above 70 per cent in MP, Punjab, and Rajasthan and 46.2 per cent in UP. The proposal was rejected by UP.

- A significant percentage of the study population suggested having minimum educational qualifications and experience.
- In total, only 36.3 per cent agreed to attending training programmes related to district planning. The State-wise data shows that all members in Kerala have attended training programmes followed by around 91 per cent in Tamil Nadu, 61.5 per cent in Madhya Pradesh, 54.5 per cent in Rajasthan, 33.3 per cent in Karnataka and 24.6 per cent in UP. In contrast, members from Jharkhand, Punjab and West Bengal have not attended any training. Similarly, majority of respondents from UP and Karnataka reported non-participation in training programmes. Majority of the members attended only one training which was an orientation on PRIs and DPC roles.
- According to the views of the sample population, all members in Kerala and Tamil Nadu attended capacity building programmes. In total, around 40 per cent of people confirmed their participation in the CB-related programmes. In the rest of the States, either all members or the majority did not attend skill development programmes related to district planning.
- The usefulness of the training was assessed based on the views of members and 21.6 per cent from Kerala rated the training programmes 'excellent' and added that it was beneficial for their contribution to the district planning and understanding of the planning process. Majority from Tamil Nadu and West Bengal rated the training 'very good' whereas 47.7 per cent from Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and UP rated the training programmes attended by them 'good.'
- It is understood that only 6 per cent of respondents were covered under national-level capacity building institutions like NIRDPR. In total, 36 per cent of respondents, majority from Karnataka, Kerala and UP, attended training programmes in State level training institutions like SIRDs and other networking institutions. Majority of them, i.e. 58 per cent, have attended training programmes conducted by district training institutions.
- The study highlights the need for organising more training programmes by the NIRDPR and SIRDs either directly or through networking, partnering institutions in saturation mode. Bulk of respondents from all the States (91.4 per cent) suggested conducting more training programmes to build the capacity of the DPCs.

### **Administrative Support**

- The importance of having a separate office structure is well understood by all the States in India through mentioning the provision in the State-specific PRI Act. All the respondents emphasised the need for creating office infrastructure for the DPCs along with administrative support required for making sufficient groundwork for district plan preparation.

- Out of nine States, Punjab and Tamil Nadu do not have separate official mechanisms to assist the DPCs. But in the case of Uttar Pradesh, majority of sample respondents wanted separate office premises for the DPC. The overall responses from the study States stressed the need for a separate office in their respective districts.
- Around 60 per cent reported non-availability of supporting manpower for the preparation of district plans. But the remaining 40 per cent agreed on the provision of administrative staff in undertaking the district plans. The States of Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan have official mechanisms to support the district planning process.
- States like Jharkhand, UP and West Bengal have given separate offices for DPC without administrative mechanism and manpower. The experiences of the study reflect that the DPCs which are provided with separate office premises along with manpower have taken important initiatives shown good progress in plan preparation.
- In the discussions regarding earmarking of funds for meeting the expenses related to plan preparation, around 48 per cent of respondents in Karnataka, Kerala, MP, Rajasthan and UP agreed on having funds to meet the expenses.
- In Jharkhand, Kerala, Rajasthan and MP, the funds required for plan preparation are routed through the State Planning Board. In Karnataka and UP, the expenditures are met by the respective Zilla Panchayat of the districts. In some States, the expenditure is provided by the district administration.
- The district administration and the DPC members insisted allocation of adequate funds to the DPC by giving the power of administrative and financial approval to the chairman.
- The plan preparation requires massive groundwork like studying the problems and potentials of the district, expert group discussions, preparation of draft development report and involving the expert institutions for seeking suggestions. It also needs financial assistance to meet the travel expenses and honorarium to the members, people's representatives and institutions.
- Regarding availability of mechanism for addressing the problems of the DPC members as well as other stakeholders involved in preparation of district plans, only Kerala reported of having a grievance redress mechanism. In other States, no specific system was created to address the issues raised by the members of DPCs or find solutions.
- The key issues highlighted by majority of the DPC members were lack of proper orientation regarding district development plan preparation, demotivation resulting from weak financial support, absence of recognition, shortage of adequate experts in the planning process and dearth of base statistical data.

### **Problems Faced by the DPC Members during Planning**

- A major section of respondents from all the States opined that the dates announced for the DPC meeting was inconvenient for them. The meeting dates were fixed according to the convenience of the DPC chairman and no consultations in this regard are made with majority of the members.
- Moreover, the time gap between the date of announcement and meeting date would be very short. Therefore, all members could not attend the DPC meetings. The meetings organised by district administration or ZP always have low attendance and they are only bothered about the minimum mandatory quorum.
- The DPC members felt that the amounts earmarked for honorarium and travel costs are inadequate. Majority of them were reluctant to attend the meeting by spending own money.
- The DPC members feel lack of freedom to express their views or raise objections to the inclusion and exclusion of programmes and schemes in the district plan. In many States, the Minister in-charge of the district and State representing minister serve either as Chairman, ex-officio member or special invitee. This restricts the involvement of other members and overturns the views of opposition party members.
- In the States where bureaucrats leading the process of plan preparation, the views of DPC members are neglected.
- Almost all the members said the non-inclusion of subject specialists and planning expertise in the DPC hampers the visualisation of long-term development of the district. This practice results in DPCs entirely relying on the line department's list of activities as components of the plans.
- In all the study States, it was found that power struggles in the context of district plans severely affect the planning process. The views of elected representatives are not accepted by the district administration whereas the opinions of officials are severely criticised by the elected members.
- The fund crunch is causing demotivation among the DPC members; except for Jharkhand, DPCs in all other States face financial problems for undertaking various projects under district plans. The members are unaware of the funds available under different government schemes for the district. Irregular fund flow to various administrative units of PRIs is also one of the reasons that dissuade members from attending the planning exercises.
- Majority of members were of the view that the preparation of a holistic development plan was not possible due to the lack of funding sources. In reality, funds from Central and State governments directly sent to the Gram Panchayats

without much allocation to the other two units, namely Block and District Panchayats. In addition, departmental development schemes are sent to the departments concerned without linking the DPCs concerned. This non-coordinated effort shows lack of convergence, leading to compartmentalised initiatives for development.

- The exercise of mere preparation in district plan has resulted in making it a bundle of documents without any chance of implementation. This affects severely the enthusiasm of the DPC members who want to involve in the district planning process. It is understood that in Jharkhand, the rural development funds are routed through DPC; as a result, it gains momentum and motivates the DPC members to engage in district planning.
- The district planning process ends with just consolidation of plans submitted by various Block Panchayats and urban local bodies. In the process of consolidation, the representatives of Block and Gram Panchayats are not involved in majority of the States. Their presence is essential to debate the inclusion and exclusion of proposals. There is always a tussle in the amalgamation of plans of urban local bodies with rural local needs. Adequate capabilities and appropriate mechanisms are needed to bring out integrated district development plans.
- Around 77 per cent of respondents confirmed the existence of political conflicts, except in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh and a certain extent in Rajasthan. Lack of political parties' coordination and the thoughts of holistic development are holding up the plan preparation and causing delay in plan acceptance by different departments to get administrative approval from their respective heads.
- Political rivalry is obstructing the planning process in the form of non-inclusion of demands from the opposition parties and the ruling party insisting on preparing development proposals based on their ideas, regions and interest.
- In Kerala, matured political discussions and mutual agreement are driving healthy discussions by both ruling and opposition parties for the cause of unified development for their district.
- The extremely varied political ideologies of ruling and opposition parties had paralysed the preparation of the Integrated District Development Plan in States like Jharkhand, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Punjab. People's issues and needs are neglected due to the political rivalry between ruling and opposition parties in many study States.
- In the State of Kerala, around 80 per cent of the study population termed DPC as the ultimate authority on consolidation of plans. In Kerala, different line department heads or representatives present annual action plans of their departments, followed by a detailed discussion on the necessity of its inclusion and exclusion.

Karnataka also has a strong DPC system and all the elected members of ZP become members of DPC. Therefore, in Karnataka, the supreme power of consolidation and approval of district plans rest with Zilla Panchayat along with urban local bodies. In States like Punjab, MP, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, UP and West Bengal, the district administration plays a dominant role in the preparation and approval of district plans.

- Majority of respondents say up to 50 per cent of activities have the possibility for **action (implementation/initiation?)** as reported from Jharkhand (100 per cent), MP (23 per cent), Punjab (52.5 per cent), West Bengal (100 per cent) and Rajasthan (24.2 per cent). Acceptance of 50-75 per cent was reported by all the members in Karnataka, 63.3 per cent in Rajasthan, 47.5 per cent in Punjab, 34.6 per cent in MP and 25 per cent in Kerala.
- Majority of the respondents in Kerala (65.6 per cent) opined that more than 75 per cent of planned activities are getting implemented.
- It is surprising to note that there is no specific mechanism to review the implemented activities as per the perspective or annual action plan. The absence of this review process had led to lack of accountability on the part of governance in fulfilling the people's actual needs.
- Regarding the worthiness of plans prepared by various districts in the context of holistic development approach, majority of respondents across study States reported (54.5 per cent) gave a rating of below 25 per cent.
- All the respondents from Karnataka and more than 60 per cent of respondents from Punjab and Rajasthan opined that their plans have up to 50 per cent of worthiness in covering a comprehensive development approach.
- Only in Kerala, majority of the respondents (56.3 per cent) commented that their plans have more than 75 per cent worthiness.

### **Suggestions for Improving the Functional Ability of the DPCs**

- The respondents across study States perceived that DPC would play a vital role in development of the district through their contribution to preparation of plans, monitoring of the progress of the plan implementation and reviewing the targets achieved by different departments. The State's specific PR Acts have given delegated powers to DPCs for preparing and reviewing the plan implementation as well as playing an advisory role for helping the department concerned to take corrective measures when shortcomings, misappropriations and deviations are detected.
- But in reality, most members were ignorant of their roles and powers due to less

exposure to the constitutional provisions. Adequate orientation, realisation and creating an enabling environment for the implementation of assigned roles are needed.

- It was ascertained by majority of sample respondents that the State PRI Acts provide certain important roles and responsibilities to the DPCs. But the implementation and enthusiasm to follow the spirit of the State Acts vary due to political equations pertaining to the respective States.
- The respondents from Kerala rated DPC as 'VERY STRONG' due to decentralisation of powers and functions and activation of various institutions of local governance including DPCs. The 'Satisfactory' rating was given by the majority in Karnataka, West Bengal, MP and Rajasthan. The Participants from Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab said that DPCs are not performing as per the provisions of the State Acts.
- As regards the overall status of rating the DPC's performance from the study States, 51 per cent rated it 'not satisfactory' and around 40 per cent rated 'just satisfied.' This status reveals the need for enormous efforts for making the DPCs vibrant and encourage its members to implement their powers and functions according to the provisions of the PRI Acts of the respective States.
- Irrespective of the study States, the respondents were not satisfied with the existing strategies for bettering attendance. The process and strategies followed in the sample districts reflect low attendance, ineffectual strategies on the mobilisation of attendance and half-hearted efforts on district plan preparation.

### **Suggestions to Strengthen the Performance of the DPCs in General, and Sample States in Particular**

Various suggestive options, as listed in the table, were given to elicit the opinion the respondents for making the DPCs active for effective functioning an all chose 'all the above-listed options.' The options listed are given below with adequate explanation.

#### **Awareness**

- Based on the responses of the sample DPC members and other stakeholders, the awareness level of the roles, responsibilities and powers given to the DPCs by the respective State PRI Act are unknown to the majority of the people as well as the district level elected representatives.

- The State Government's Panchayati Raj Ministry and Departments are obligated to orient the elected members on the functional roles of PRI and the provisions of the PRI Act with regard to meetings, quorum requirements and other provisions related to the functioning of the DPCs.
- Awareness programmes, interactions and exposure visits need to be conducted in large numbers to help the members play their roles and perform their functions with adequate inputs.

### **Monetary Incentives:**

- All the respondents wanted recognition for their contribution and seek real inputs, and stressed the necessity for monetary incentivisation.
- In a few States, there are provisions to pay sitting allowance and reimburse the approved rates of travel cost to the members who attend the meetings. But, majority of respondents feel reluctant to claim the monetary benefits due to the procedural requirements and the allowance being a meagre amount.
- The actual cost of travel may range from Rs. 1000 to Rs. 3,000 based on the distance from the member's residence to the district headquarter. This financial loss to the members of Zilla Panchayat/DPC discourages them from attending the meeting. The rate of attendance gradually declines, and the personal interest of the members comes down year by year.
- All sample respondents suggested decent honorarium along with reimbursement of the actual cost of travel to encourage their participation in the meetings and duly contribute to district plan preparation.

### **Capacity Building:**

- The findings of the present study and also various similar studies point to need for capacity building of the members to increase the domain knowledge and relevant planning skills for effective participation and contribution to better district plan.
- It was reported by most of the elected members that district planning, being a massive exercise, needs domain knowledge and skills on making plans for the development of the district. Though knowledge and skills are not mandatory requirements for contesting elections at various levels of PRIs, majority of the elected members lacking it.
- In India, rural areas predominantly rely on agricultural and sectoral departments, and agro-based rural industries and service sectors. The skills in identifying the

problems, potentials, strategies, projects and budgeting based on the local resources and various funding sources are posing enormous skill requirements for the people who are involved in district plan preparation.

- In this context, it is pertinent to conduct a series of capacity building training programmes for the DPC members by the regional, State level and national level capacity building institutions specifically meant for rural development and panchayati raj. The NIRDPR, SIRDs and ETCs have the mounting duty of capacity building for all the elected representatives of PRIs at all three levels.

### **Selection of Members:**

- While selecting/electing the DPC members, representatives from all three tiers of Panchayats is essential for ensuring geographical representation as well as covering region-specific issues in the district plans. At present, elected members of ZP/District Panchayat and Municipality are only considered to become members of DPCs. It undermines the need for subject experts, which is integral for the functional role of district planning committee.
- Inclusion of representatives of various institutional like Universities, IITs, Community Polytechnics, social service institutions, philanthropic societies and many other locally available good working institutions in different fields is required in DPCs. Formation of subject-wise expert groups to check the feasibility and utility of the projects proposed in the district plans is also necessary.

### **Inclusion of Sectoral Departments:**

- It is essential to include more non-members and special invitees from the various line departments with the provision for mandatory attendance. This will help to bring sector-based strengths and weaknesses for finding better opportunities to function as an integral part of district planning. Department-wise working groups can be appointed to work seriously on identifying problems, needs and potentials of the sectors and work out viable strategies to bring real development through district planning.

### **Funds Support for DPC**

- The DPC members of the sample districts unanimously requested permanent fund allocation to the DPC and other supporting mechanisms like wages for manpower, purchase of consumables, payment of monetary benefits to the members and expenses on administrative requirements. They also sought funds to carry out various meetings, and interactions with the communities at various parts of the district.

### **Need for Official Administrative Structural Mechanism**

- Only very few States have made separate office structure for the DPC. It is crucial to create office buildings for the DPC to organise, discuss and preparation of district plans. It also requires to mobilise data, analyse it and make it ready for presentation to the stakeholders as well as public for preparing district plans.

### **Involvement of planning Institutions**

- It is also worth considering the involvement of State and national-level reputed institutions and individuals are experienced in development planning to initiate and coordinate the planning process with adequate handholding support to bring better development plans for the district.

### **Recommendations**

- Majority of the respondents recommended more financial powers in terms of routing the Centrally and State-sponsored schemes through DPCs, i.e. financial approval of the projects proposed by the various levels of PRIs with the approval of the DPCs.
- They proposed earmarking specific funds for DPCs, like MLALADS and MPLADS, to design and implement special projects in the members' respective constituencies. It is also suggested to allocate ward-wise untied minimum budget to meet certain gaps of development. Also, majority of members suggested paying political respect and recognising each DPC member.
- **Need for more public hearings and interactions:** As per the manual of MoPR, the plans including those for urban local bodies, must start from the wards and it should be consolidated at the Gram Panchayat level, block level, and at the district level. In reality, it happens haphazardly and fails to consider the real requirements of different sections of people.
- In some States, where the district administration takes the lead role, the plans are prepared just by updating the needs of sectoral department for the particular year based on the department-wise allocation of funds. Similarly, in districts where Zilla Panchayat plays a lead role, the plan is prepared by consolidating the activities given by various Blocks and urban local bodies.
- The provision of more powers to the DPC is needed. Since the DPC is one of the important units in deciding or driving development for the district, it has to be given adequate powers, including finance allocation along with administrative support mechanisms. Almost all respondents voiced similar opinions on strengthening DPC to function as a regular institution that focuses on vital areas in leading development in the district.

- To address the problems appropriately, a specific system is required to receive the complaints and make efforts to sort the grievances. The respondents opined that the grievances redressal mechanisms certainly would boost the process of district planning and increase the morality of the members by sparing their valuable time.
- This tendency discouraged both sides, leading to less importance on the participation, expression and implementation of the development plans. It was reported that political interference significantly dilutes the process of district plans. Lack of personal interest and motivation among the DPC members as well as representatives of the line departments severely affect the planning process and its quality. The members unanimously opined that non-acceptance of the views of DPC members in the plan documents results in underestimation of their experience and knowledge, which results in a gradual decrease in attendance at the DPC meetings.
- Serious attention from the researchers and policymakers is needed to advocate for State governments to put extra initiatives to make active the system of district planning by the District Panchayat/Zilla Parishad for adopting innovative approaches to bring out a real district development report for better implementation.
- In a decentralised democracy, planning has to integrate and incorporate the people's needs by considering their voices. This requires more and more people's participation and district draft plan presentation at an appropriate forum comprising public and their representatives. The final approval of the plan should be based on the support and acceptance of the majority.
- The concept of holistic development aims to bring comprehensive development of the region or district by the inclusion of various sectors, sections, and regions by addressing the developmental gaps with a prime focus on identifying the drivers of development through the lead sector. Sectoral development includes all major sectors like agriculture and allied, production and services. The inclusion of various sections encompasses addressing the issues of various income categories of the population. Similarly, inclusion of all regions by prioritising various geographical problems and needs of backward and most backward regions is essential. Further, the focus should be on developing services and infrastructures in the district, which create ample opportunities for various livelihood options.
- The research found that the mere preparation of a document of the plan will not bring any change in the development of the districts unless more attention is given to identifying major issues and needs. Therefore, a mechanism is needed to cross-verify the proposed projects and activities under the district development plans with the actual problems and needs in the context of the overall development of district.

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