

Facilitating District Planning **Integrated, Decentralized and Participatory**



**A Compilation of
Key Strategies, Learnings and Policy Implications,
Drawn from a Pilot Exercise undertaken in Vaishali district of Bihar**

April - December 2009

**Undertaken in the stewardship of District Planning Committee
In line with Guidelines of Planning Commission of India**



PRAXIS
Institute for Participatory Practices

Facilitating District Planning – Integrated, Decentralized and Participatory

*A Compilation of key strategies, learnings and policy implications,
drawn from a pilot exercise undertaken in Vaishali district of Bihar*

Narrative

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Foreword

From Unicef Chief? Or from Principle Secretary, Planning and Development?

List of Acronyms

ANM	Auxiliary Nurse and Midwife
BDO	Block Development Officer
BEP	Bihar Education Project
BPL	Below Poverty Line
BRGF	Backward Regions Grand Fund
DDC	Deputy Development Commissioner
DM	District Magistrate
DPC	District Planning Committee
DPMC	District Planning and Monitoring Cell
DPO	District Planning Officer
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GP	<i>Gram Panchayat</i>
HDR	Human Development Report
IAY	<i>Indira Awaas Yojana</i>
ICDS	Integrated Child Development Service
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
MMGSY	<i>Mukhya Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana</i>
MMR	Maternal Mortality Rate
NREGA	National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
PDS	Public Distribution System
PMGSY	<i>Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana</i>
PRI	<i>Panchayati Raj</i> Institution
PS	<i>Panchayat Samiti</i>
RGVY	Rajiv Gandhi <i>Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana</i>
SC	Scheduled Caste
SHG	Self Help Group
SSA	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan</i>
ST	Scheduled Tribe
ZP	<i>Zilla Parishad</i>

Table of Contents

Foreword

List of Acronyms

Table of Contents

<u>No.</u>	<u>Chapter Title</u>	<u>Page No.</u>
1	An Overview of Integrated District Planning	7
2	Enabling District level Stakeholders for Decentralized Planning Facilitating visioning exercises at multiple levels Strengthening the District Planning Committee of Vaishali Enabling local governments in documentation of decentralized plans The possibility of generating HDR based on district plan data Organizing technical support for integrated district planning	11
3	Enhancing Capacities at various levels for Decentralized Planning Design and delivery of capacity building workshops for PRI functionaries Orientation of key government officials Deployment of facilitators for decentralized planning Community mobilization for planning Enabling consolidation of plans at block and district levels Digitization of Plan data of various local governments suiting 'PlanPlus'	21
4	Ensuring Inclusion and Empowerment of Multiple Stakeholders Inclusion of socially disadvantaged communities Emergence of strong women leaders, including many from SC communities Greater likelihood of identification of real needs of community Restoration of the sanctity of <i>Gram Sabha</i> Opportunity for elected leaders to assert their leadership Overcoming hurdles through involvement of multiple stakeholders Involvement of civil society organizations at the grass root level Involvement of Standing Committees Involvement of District Planning Committee	30
5	District Planning – Critical Success Factors and Policy Implications Constitution and activation of District Planning Committees Need for Activity Mapping and devolution of finances for PRIs Need for an active DM and District Planning Office Need for Secretarial support for the DPC Need for clear guidelines to enable DPCs to function effectively Criticality of greater awareness about integrated district planning The need for clarity regarding financial outlays for planning Investment in capacity building of local government functionaries Micro-level institutional arrangements The need for judicious utilization of provisions like BRGF	38

Continued...

Need for meaningful follow-up of local plans
Need for mechanism for facilitation of convergence
Need for clear directives for de-segregation of Gender and SC sub-plans
The relevance of the theory of optimal ignorance
Need for a reasonable time span

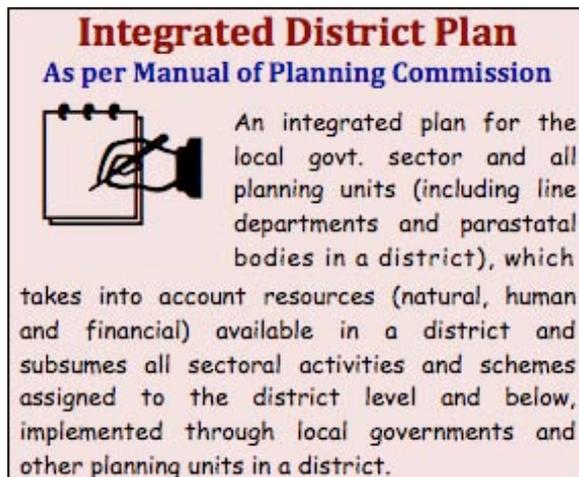
Appendices

- A A chronological transect of the integrated district planning exercise in Vaishali
- B Key people involved in facilitating the District Planning exercise in Vaishali
- C Role of *Panchayat Raj* institutions in Bihar as per various official documents
- D Bibliography and references

Chapter 1

An Overview of Integrated District Planning

With an eye on the overarching vision of inclusive growth, the Eleventh Five Year Plan of India has stressed upon the criticality of involvement of elected local government representatives in processes of planning, implementation and supervision of the delivery of essential public services. However, substantial reforms are required to put local governments at the centre of local level development processes. In keeping with the spirit of the 73rd and 74th amendments to the constitution of India, the state governments are expected to initiate several important steps towards empowerment of local bodies, including devolution of adequate functions and finances; deployment of competent functionaries and creation of suitable spaces for representatives of local governments to participate in vital processes of development planning and administration. However, the performance of several states of India, including Bihar, in devolving powers to self-governance institutions and processes has been relatively limited, though Bihar has taken significant steps to ensure gender equity by way of reservation of seats for women in institutions of local self-governance to the tune of 50%.



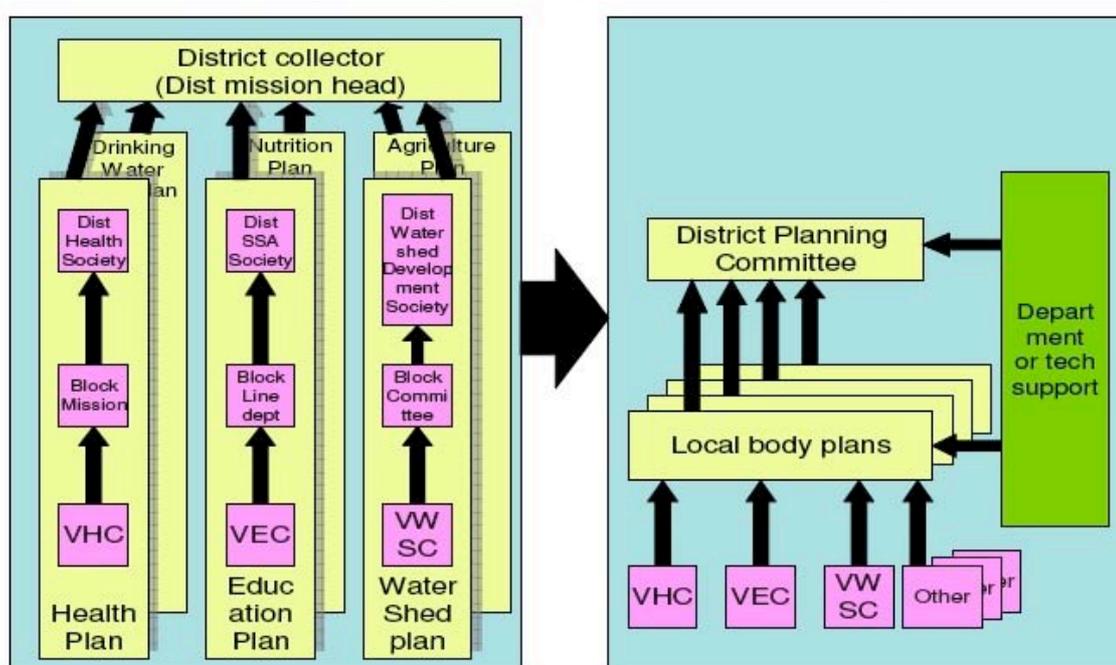
According to guidelines issued by Planning Commission, each district is expected to prepare a District Development Plan that integrates plans for all its constituent urban and rural areas, as well as sectoral allocations for various schemes under the urban and rural areas. As a matter of fact, the process of district planning offers a crucial leadership opportunity for representatives of local governments at the district level, as the mandate

of consolidating a district plan lies with District Planning Committees (DPC, henceforth; to be constituted in every district in accordance with Article 243 ZD/Part IXA of the Constitution of India), based on integration of plans prepared by all *Panchayats*, municipalities and planning units in a district. The DPC has two specific responsibilities in formulation of District Development Plans. It is expected to take into account matters of common interest between the *Panchayats* and the Municipalities, including spatial planning; sharing of water and other physical and natural resources; the integrated development of infrastructure and environmental conservation, and the extent and type of available resources, both financial or otherwise. To this effect, the DPC is mandated to consult such institutions and organizations as may be specified.

While the Planning Commission of India has issued comprehensive guidelines and a meticulously detailed manual to facilitate better convergence of resources,

involvement of multiple planning units and enforcement of inter-sector priorities through production of integrated District Plans; the involvement of agencies of local self-governance in formulating district plans has remained quite limited across the country. Historically, it has been a common practice for plans to be produced separately for different sectors in a district, with little or no convergence with other planning bodies or processes. From the standpoint of increasing accountability to local governments and people, and for optimal utilization of resources, it is important that local governments and other planning entities in a district work together and explore the possibilities of planning together. The guidelines acknowledge that local governments are the most appropriate level to create linkages and building synergies. Accordingly, there is a need to strengthen the existing planning systems comprising the machinery of planning and the process of consolidation of plans at the district level, in order that the aspired transition towards a concerted planning exercise involving all stakeholders and planning units in a district can be accomplished.

Key transformation sought through an Integrated District Planning Process



Sector plans emerging through parallel vertical processes bypassing local governments

Plans of multiple sectors integrated at the level of successive local governments.

The inter-related plans subsuming various sectors are expected to emerge over three timeframes: perspective plans envisaged over a long-term horizon, medium-term plans co-terminus with Five Year Plans, and annual plans of specific schemes and projects. According to a directive of Planning Commission, resource flow from the Centre to the states through various centrally sponsored schemes and additional central assistance would be linked to production of integrated district plans in future.

Box 1.1 outlines the key initiatives expected at the level of states and districts respectively for integrated district planning processes to be effective, according to the guidelines of Planning Commission.

Box 1.1 Steps to be taken at State level for facilitating District Planning Processes

- Completion of Activity Mapping, thereby spelling out the specific responsibilities of local governments;
- Formation of District Planning Committees in accordance with Article 243ZD;
- Issuance of guidelines to DPCs and local governments;
- Finalization of formula for distribution of local government component of the state plan;
- Indication of sector-wise and untied resources that would be available to each local government over five years and one year from the state plan;
- Indication of resources that would be available to each local government from central sources through Centrally Sponsored Schemes, Finance Commission grants, and any special allocations; and
- Presentation of a summary of District Plans, along with State Plan proposals for the Eleventh Five Year Plan/Annual Plan to Planning Commission.

Expected arrangements at the District level

- Compilation of available databases for local governments;
- Articulation of ‘Vision’ for local governments, mentioning key reasons of backwardness and covering important sectors¹;
- Organizing technical support and capacity building for DPCs and local governments;
- Prioritization of local needs and planning at the level of local governments; and
- Integration of plans of all district level planning units at the level of DPC.

Background of the Integrated District Planning Exercise in Vaishali

Unicef, in partnership with PRAXIS and CENCORED, embarked upon an ambitious endeavour in 2009, with the aim of facilitating emergence of the first ever ‘Integrated District Plan’ in Vaishali district of Bihar in line with the guidelines of Planning Commission. The exercise sought to strengthen the District Planning Committee of Vaishali and elected local governments at various levels to formulate and consolidate plans, with respect to the mandates given to them under relevant legislations or government orders. Box 1.2 broadly outlines the role of Unicef in facilitation of the unprecedented exercise in Vaishali.

¹ E.g. agriculture and allied sectors (as relevant); availability and development of water sources; industries – especially traditional, small industries including food processing; infrastructure including power; drinking water and sanitation; literacy and school education; health and medical facilities; poverty reduction and basic needs; gender and children; social justice – SC/ST, persons with disability etc.

Box 1.2 – UNICEF’s Support to the District Planning process in Vaishali

UNICEF’s support to the Integrated District Planning exercise in Vaishali stemmed from the felt need of scaling up its learnings and experiences of supporting integrated village planning processes in the district since 2005. In a nutshell, the package of UNICEF’s support to the district planning process for the year 2010-11 included the following:

- Establishment of the District Planning and Monitoring Cell (DPMC), envisaged as a representative body of key administrative authorities and various line departments in the district, formed to assist the District Planning Committee in consolidation of the District Plan for 2010-11. DPMC was equipped with competent consultants and essential resources to act like a Secretariat for the District Planning exercise;
- Organizing technical support for the integrated district planning process, by identification and induction of PRAXIS as the Technical Support Institute;
- Providing support in facilitation of micro-level planning processes by identification and induction of CENCORED;
- Financing the costs of capacity building events, orientation workshops, honoraria for personnel and agencies involved in the process and logistics of the planning processes;
- Active contributions to discussions related to formulation of strategies for the large scale planning process, design of important events and products, and conceptualization of process steps.

The effort in Vaishali stemmed from a shared interest in an integrated district planning exercise, emerging during a multi-stakeholder workshop involving the honorable Chairperson and members of *Zilla Parishad*, councilors of urban local bodies of Hajipur, Mahnar and Lalganj; the District Magistrate, the District Planning Officer, functionaries of District Planning and Monitoring Cell and representatives of various local organizations. ***It was the first time in the history of the district that members of various urban as well as rural bodies of local self-governance came together on a common platform to deliberate on a process of common interest.*** The daylong workshop contained interactive discussions on the concept of District Planning and broad contours of a development vision to be realized through the planning process. By end of the day, a district level steering committee comprising of representatives of *Zilla Parishad* and the municipalities was constituted to take the process forward.

In the course of the large scale planning process, a number of strategic interventions were attempted by the partnership of Unicef, PRAXIS and CENCORED to strengthen institutional capacities for decentralized planning and to generate outcomes in line with the guidelines of Planning Commission. These included perspective building exercises and trainings involving representatives and functionaries related to various local governments and administrative agencies; identification and deployment of a trained pool of human resources to facilitate the planning processes; strengthening of institutions mandated with planning/ monitoring roles, and creation of an enabling environment for decentralized planning, amongst others.

Chapter 2

Enabling District level Stakeholders for Decentralized Planning

The greatest challenge in facilitating integrated district planning lies in ensuring active involvement of a diverse range of stakeholders, including elected people's representatives, government officials, local communities and various organizations having a stake in the planning process. A number of important steps need to be taken to involve all such parties, in keeping with the guidelines of Planning Commission. Collective visioning processes at various levels form one such important step, which could generate a good deal of momentum around the planning process and enhance ownership of multiple stakeholders.

Facilitating Visioning exercises for planning at multiple levels

For the processes of district planning to be inclusive, participatory vision building exercises involving multiple stakeholders and undertaken in line with relevant guidelines of Planning Commission can be very helpful. The guidelines accord a good deal of significance to visioning workshops organized at various levels – i.e. the district, the intermediate *Panchayats* and local bodies. Visioning processes are envisaged as an opportunity for stakeholders from diverse planning units to articulate their development priorities and key transformations aspired in the long run.

Box 2.1 - Excerpts from Planning Commission's guidelines with regard to visioning

A vision document for 10 to 15 years should be prepared by the district and for each local government based on a participatory assessment. The District Planning Committee may hold formal interactions with local governments and other key stakeholders on this and then finalize it.

The vision document is expected to clearly identify the key reasons for backwardness/development shortcomings and address issues impeding development. Sectors that ought to be covered in the document could include:

- Agriculture and allied sectors (as relevant)
- Availability and development of water sources
- Industries – especially traditional, small industries including food processing
- Infrastructure including power
- Drinking water and sanitation
- Literacy, school education
- Health and medical facilities
- Poverty reduction and basic needs
- Gender and children
- Social Justice – SC/ST, Persons with disability etc.

The scope of the vision could be expanded to include areas of comparative advantage of each district. Based on the vision, development needs of people may be prioritized and goals set for planning processes, starting at the *Gram Sabha* level.

For facilitating the visioning processes in Vaishali, the development goals of the Government of Bihar, articulated for the 11th Five Year Plan were used as a framework (ref. Box 2.2). Accordingly, an assessment of the comparative advantages and challenges was also undertaken in a participatory manner. The state Goals provided a helpful lead to participants of visioning processes to identify similar goals at the level of their respective local governments, and similar goals were articulated in a number of blocks using specific expressions of transformations aspired.

Box 2.2 – 21 Development Goals of Govt. of Bihar for the 11th Five Year Plan

Goals related to Income and Poverty

- An average annual GDP growth rate of 8.5 percent during the 11th plan
- An average annual growth rate of agriculture between 5 – 7 percent
- Creation of 50 *lakh* new opportunities of employment
- 20% increase in the real wages of unskilled workers
- 13% reduction in the consumption-based poverty ratio (from 41.5% in 2004-05 to 28.4% in 2011-12)

Goals related to education

- Reducing the drop-out rate at primary level from 78.03% in 2003-04 to 27.85% in 2011-12
- Enhancing the literacy rate amongst people aged 7 years or above from 46.96% in 2001 to 64.04% in 2011-12
- Reducing the gender-gap in literacy by 9.2% (from 26.6% in 2001 to 17.4% in 2011-12)

Goals related to health

- Reducing infant mortality rate from the current level of 61% to 29%
- Reducing maternal mortality from the current level of 371 per *lakh* to 123 per *lakh* by end of plan period
- Reducing the gross reproduction rate from 4.3 to 3
- Halving the malnutrition rate amongst children in the 0-3 age-grade
- Reducing the prevalence rate of Anaemia from 54.4% to 27.2% amongst women and from 63.4% to 31.7% amongst girls

Related to women and children

- Increasing the sex-ratio in the age-grade of 0-6 years from 1000:942 to 1000:950 by 2011-12
- Increasing the participation rate of women and girls in government schemes up to 33%

Related to basic infrastructure

- Ensuring power connectivity for all villages and houses of families below poverty line by 2012
- 24-hour power supply by 2017
- Ensuring connectivity of all villages/hamlets of population up to 500 by all-weather roads by 2012

Related to environment

- Increase of 5% in forests and tree cover, from the current level of 10% to 15% by 2011-12
- Achieving WHO-standards for air quality applicable to large cities by 2011-12
- Treating unclean water of all cities to ensure cleaner river water by 2011-12.

For finalization of the district vision of Vaishali, a rolling vision prepared earlier as part of the BRGF planning process (2008-09) was re-validated in separate workshops involving representatives of local governments and district level officers. This prevented duplication of efforts and accorded sanctity to an already available Vision statement for the district meant to be valid over a five-year horizon. Box 2.3 presents a summary of the Vision statement for Vaishali articulated about a year back; which was re-endorsed by participants of an inception workshop held in the beginning of the planning process for 2010-11, including members of *Zilla Parishad* and various urban local bodies in the

district. The vision statement and the development indicators related to this were also read out during local level visioning exercises, so that stakeholders across the district had an opportunity to scrutinize and modify the same. As expected, a number of new ideas emerged during every visioning process, which have been documented for record.

Box 2.3 - The Vision² for Vaishali

“It is envisaged that a good infrastructure facility with a better social sector and high production level, particularly in agriculture, will take Vaishali district to an advantageous position.”

Towards achievement of the aforesaid vision, a number of development indicators relating to the following sectors have been articulated.

Production sector, with industries, agriculture, horticulture, poultry dairy development etc.

Infrastructure, including power, roads and transportation, finance, health, marketing domestic and foreign trade etc.

Social security, including health, education drinking water, sanitation, habitation employment, and old age security cover PDS, mid-day meal, women and child care etc.

Miscellaneous programmes and schemes for poverty alleviation, cultivation of scientific orientation among people, development of a healthy cultural environment in the district.

Additionally, in keeping with six key categories of the development goals (related to poverty reduction, education, health, basic infrastructure, women and children, and environment) formulated by the Government of Bihar, an analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats related to Vaishali's development prospects was undertaken by key government functionaries drawn from district, sub-division and block levels. The same categories were subsequently used as a framework for facilitating block level visioning exercises.

Box 2.4 presents a typical output of a visioning process undertaken in Mahua block of Vaishali, formulated together by members of *Panchayat Samiti*, block level government functionaries and *Mukhiyas* and government functionaries of the *gram Panchayats* falling in the block. The workshop was convened by the Block Development Officer of Mahua and Chaired by the Deputy *Pramukh* (Head) of Mahua *Panchayat Samiti*. As many as 18 members of the *Panchayat Samiti* of Mahua attended the visioning process, besides about 13 elected representatives from the local *gram Panchayats* and several government functionaries. The participants worked in small groups to articulate development visions corresponding to different themes and made presentations in the plenary.

² As articulated during the BRGF planning process for 2008-09, revalidated during the integrated district planning exercise in 2009

Box 2.4 - Outcomes of Block Level Visioning Workshop conducted in Mahua block

<p>Aspired situations and transformations regarding income generation / poverty reduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timely availability of seeds of good quality; • Adequate power supply for irrigation; • Timely release of water from the irrigation canals; • Application of scientifically valid agricultural methods; • Prevention from water-logging; • Timely supply of agricultural credit on easy terms by banks without involvement of middlemen; • Establishment of industries for employment generation. A sugar mill could be a feasible option in Mahua; • Promotion of sugarcane cultivation; • Establishment of a centre for sale and purchase of crops at fair prices; • Establishment of a veterinary care centre in every village and availability of animals of good breed; • Promotion of cottage industries; • Awareness drives for promotion of literacy among women; • Interventions to make women labourers self-reliant and encouragements for women to take up businesses; • Availability of credit for groups of young people to start their own businesses and enterprises.
<p>Group members: Satyadev Ram, Anita Devi, Sangeeta Kumari, Ashok Kumar Akela</p>
<p>Aspired situations and transformations relating to education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on education for each household; • Improved quality of teaching by <i>Panchayat</i> teachers and <i>prakhand</i> teachers. They should be transferred and posted away from their home <i>Panchayats</i> and blocks for greater accountability; • Improvements in quality of teaching in order that midday meals are not the only attraction for students; • Entrusting government staff with construction of buildings under education projects; • Holding schools accountable where children do not score over 50% in tests conducted by elected representatives; • Construction of a college for girls in Mahua; • Establishment of ITIs and BIT colleges; • Constitution of an education monitoring committee in each block; • Recruitment of teachers only through examinations; • Funds for Mid Day Meal should be deposited with the <i>Panchayats</i>.
<p>Group members: Aniruddh K. Singh, Nand K. Chauhan, Harendra Rai, Manju Devi, Durgeshwari Devi, Munni Kumari</p>
<p>Aspired situations and transformations relating to health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability of better maternity facilities, nutrition, balanced diet and relevant knowledge for pregnant women; • Establishment of a Health Sub-centre in every village; • Check on gender-based discrimination; • Educating people for population control; • Availability of an <i>Anganwadi</i> and an ANM for every population of 300; • Improved levels of education for men and women under SSA; • Assured availability of medicines, vaccines, medical practitioners and advice for better health care in every health centre; • Greater awareness about the virtues of clean hands and ante- and post-natal care.
<p>Group members: Amarnath Kumar, Aleem Akhtar, Meena Devi, Kaliya Devi, Dr. Krishna Choudhary</p>
<p>Aspired situations and transformations relating to women and children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special awareness programmes for women at hamlet level, customized as per local culture, languages, lifestyle and beliefs, in order that IMR and MMR could be reduced; • Availability of diagnostic health care facilities in each hamlet; • Expansion in the coverage of <i>Anganwadis</i>, to cover every community; • Arrangement of mobile medical teams during night time; • Preparation of IEC materials to promote involvement of men in household activities; • Sex education for adolescent girls in each hamlet.
<p>Group members: Shivdani Mishra, Ramanand Sahni, Arun Kumar Singh, Meena Devi, Anita Kumari, Dinesh.</p>
<p>Aspired situations and transformations relating to basic infrastructure</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connecting cut-off habitations with roads. Examples of such habitations would include Daudpur Kramchand in Mirzanagar GP, which is inhabited mainly by scheduled castes and people have to suffer a lot of difficulties during rainy season; • Adequate power supply for bolstering agriculture and for dealing with droughts. Without adequate power supply, expenditure on diesel, pump-sets and irrigation water runs very high. • A good number of land holdings in many GPs of Mahua are waterlogged round the year, affecting agriculture. Dealing with the problem of water logging. • Provision of coaching and stipends for improving the education of women and girls. • Small and cottage industries for women at GP level, to benefit more and more women.
<p>Group members: Yugal Kishore Rai, Ram Prasad Ram, Avdhesh Rai, Asha Devi, Daisy Devi</p>
<p>Aspired situations and transformations relating to environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mass-awareness drives for improving sensitivity towards trees and for enhancing their survival rates; • Large scale tree plantation drives on the sides of roads and on available government land; • Supply of low cost, smokeless ovens for rural households, to reduce pollution levels. • Imposing restrictions on movement of old vehicles that emit pollute air; • Construction of a bypass road around Mahua Bazaar, to prevent overcrowding of vehicles in the populated market area and check pollution.
<p>Group members: Amod Kumar Shukla, Ashok Rai, Basant Paswan, Laldev Paswan, Shyambabu Paswan</p>

Participants of Visioning workshop at Mahua: Satyendra Kumar (*Up Pramukh*), Atul Kumar Verma (BDO), Sangeeta Kumari (Member, PS, Jalalpur Gangti), Munni Kumari (Member, PS, Singhara Dakshini), Asha Devi (Member, PS, Bhadwas), Daisy Devi (Member, PS, Tajpur Bujurg), Meena Devi (Member, PS, Phulwaria), Meena Devi (Member, PS, Gauspur Chakamjahi), Kaliya Devi (Member, PS, Harpur Sarkhandi), Ashok Kumar Akela (Member, PS, Rasoolpur), Ramnandan Sahni (Member, PS, Fatehpur Pakri), Laldev Paswan (Member, PS, Jahangirpur Salkhanni), Amarnath Kumar (Member, PS, Paharpur), Amod Kumar Shukla (Member, PS, Paharpur), Basant Paswan (Member, PS, Supaul Dariya), Harendra Rai (Member, PS, Lakshminarayanpur), Nandkishore Chauhan (Member, PS, Mahua Mukundpur), Arun Kumar Singh (Member, PS, Mahua Singh Rai Area no. 20), Avdhesh Rai (Member, PS, Supaul Dariya), Rita Sinha (Member, PS, Sherpur Chhatwara), Aneeta Devi (*Mukhiya*, Mahua Singhrai), Durgeshwari Devi (*Mukhiya*, Jahangirpur Sarkhandi), Ashok Rai (*Mukhiya*, Phulwaria), Aleem Akhtar (*Mukhiya*, Singhara Dakshini), Ramprasad Rai (*Mukhiya*, Rasoolpur alias Madhaul), Aniruddh Kumar Singh (*Mukhiya*, Jalalpur Gangti), Satyadev Ram (*Mukhiya*, Sherpur Manikpur), Manju Devi (*Mukhiya*, Mahua Mukundpur), Shivdaani Mishra (*Mukhiya*, Bishunpur Hareram alias Paharpur), Mukesh Kumar Sah (*Up Mukhiya*, Lakshminarayanpur), Shyamnandan Rai (GP Member, Supaul Dariya Ward No. 2), Yugal Kishore Rai (*Sarpanch*, Hasanpur Asti), Naval Kishore Sah (*Up Sarpanch*, Phulwaria), Sunil Kumar Singh (Block Statistics Officer), Ashwini Kumar Sinha (BWO), Dr. Krishna Choudhary (Veterinary Officer), Dinesh (*Jan Sewak*), Anita Sinha (LEO), Pranav (CENCORED), Rishi Prakash Gautam (CENCORED), Lalan Kumar Sharma (Block Facilitator), Vibha Kumari (Block Facilitator), Mukta Ojha (PRAXIS), Anindo Banerjee (PRAXIS).

Before embarking upon the planning processes at the level of villages and urban local bodies as well, similar processes of articulation of development aspirations were facilitated. Also, the current status relating to each aspiration was also recorded and the planning processes were aimed at addressing the deficiencies in each area. The following diagram presents the typical output of such a process.

Development Vision of Rasoolpur GP (Mahua block, Vaishali)	
Goals for Development	Current Status Related to Goal
Ensuring availability of primary education to every child in the panchayat	40% children in the panchayat are deprived of education due to paucity of schools in the panchayat
Making adequate health facilities available across every ward of the panchayat	Health facilities are in a pitiable state. Only 20% of all health problems are addressed
Connecting each ward of the panchayat with each other with concrete roads	None of the wards of the panchayat have concrete roads
Providing employment to every household in the panchayat in the next 5 years	Unemployment is a major problem in the village
Equipping the panchayat with essential agricultural resources	The state of agriculture is pitiable, with high dependence on monsoons and private borings
Making arrangements for a toilet in every household	Absolute shortage of toilets
Converting each kuchcha house in the panchayat into a pucca house	30% houses in the panchayat are kuchcha houses
Making arrangements so that each household of the GP could light at least one bulb	Supply of electricity is negligible in the panchayat
Eliminating problems related to animals in the panchayat	Absolute non availability of veterinary Doctors and medicines
Provision of drinking water to every household of the panchayat	There aren't many problems relating to drinking water in the panchayat
Construction of an Anganwari centre in the dalit hamlet of Rasoolpur Mubarak	Children do not get proper nutrition due to being based in a dalit habitation

Strengthening the District Planning Committee of Vaishali

According to the guidelines of Planning Commission, each district should be equipped with its own technically qualified and skilled personnel to meet the functional requirements of district planning. While some core staff could be on full time assignment with the District Planning Committees, some may be posted on deputation from state government, academic world or professional bodies or engaged on a contract basis. Certain services may also be outsourced to professional institutions. In particular, availability of a Secretariat for assisting the District Planning Committee has been felt to be of critical importance in enabling the District Planning Committee to deal with the operational and technical challenges of planning.

Towards assisting the District Planning Committee of Vaishali in facilitating planning processes in an integrated, participatory and coordinated manner and to monitor the progress made against identified key results, a District Planning and Monitoring Cell (DPMC) was established with support from Unicef, vide a Memorandum of Understanding signed between Unicef and the District Magistrate of Vaishali. The Cell was envisaged as a potential Secretariat for the District Planning Committee, providing support in scaling up inclusive planning processes across the district and in developing a consolidated district plan encapsulating the needs and aspirations of local communities. Inclusive of representatives of various line departments under the stewardship of the District Collector, the Cell was armed with competent consultants and necessary equipment. Box 2.5 contains the composition of the District Planning and Monitoring Cell of Vaishali.

Box 2.5 – Composition of District Planning and Monitoring Cell, Vaishali

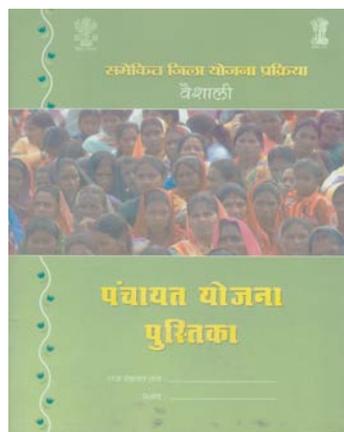
- District Collector cum Magistrate, Chairperson
- Deputy Development Commissioner, Deputy Chairperson
- District Planning Officer, Member Secretary cum nodal Officer
- Civil Surgeon, Member
- District Superintendent of Education, Member
- District Welfare Officer, Member
- District Programme Officer, ICDS, Member
- District *Panchayat Raj* Officer, Member
- Executive Engineer, PHED, Member
- Representative of Unicef, Member

In addition, three consultants were made available to DPMC with support from Unicef. The annual planning processes were envisaged to begin in the leadership of elected people's representatives at the level of *gram Panchayats*, subject to ratification by *Gram Sabhas* and consolidation at block and district levels, with support from the designated Technical Support Institute.

In addition, a Steering Committee to monitor and guide the progress of the integrated district planning exercise in line with relevant directives of central and state governments was also formed, which included the Chairpersons of *Zilla*

Parishad, the *Nagar Parishad* of Hajipur and the *Nagar Panchayats* of Mahnar and Lalganj; besides the District Planning Officer, the Deputy Development Commissioner and representatives of Praxis (the designated Technical Support Institute), DPMC and Unicef.

Enabling local governments in documentation of decentralized plans



In keeping with the framework for local planning outlined in the guidelines of the Planning Commission, it was decided to provide a semi-structured booklet to each local government to use in the planning exercise. As a matter of fact, provision of a booklet for compiling the plan suggestions for various sectors, the local development visions and key information relating to the *gram Panchayat* or urban ward turned out to be a useful strategy to enable local government representatives to put their local plans together in a form that could be shared with *Panchayat Samitis* for consolidation purposes. Each gram Panchayat or urban ward was provided with two copies of the Plan

booklet – one for its own record and the other for sharing with *Panchayat Samiti* or municipality. The *Panchayat* secretaries were requested to help the elected representatives in compiling secondary information relating the *Panchayats*, and were involved in the capacity building workshops together with *Panchayat* leaders for the same purpose. Box 2.6 presents the structure of a typical Plan booklet used at the *gram Panchayat* level.

Box 2.6 - Structure of a typical Plan booklet used at the *gram Panchayat* level

- A document cover indicating the name of the local government unit and block
- An appeal from Chairperson, *Zilla Parishad* and District Planning Committee
- A Foreword from District Magistrate
- *Panchayat* at a glance
- Locally determined goals for the next 5 years, and current status
- A summary of prioritized interventions of the *Panchayat* (with details related to the same appended at the end of the document) – signed off by the *Mukhiya* and *Panchayat Sachiv*
- Demographic particulars about the *Gram Panchayat*
- Ward-wise estimation of number of households on critical indicators
- Land holding pattern in the *Panchayat*
- Livelihood pattern in the *Panchayat*
- Assessment of facilities available in a *Panchayat*
- Ward-wise estimation of number of families covered under or excluded from various social security and anti-poverty schemes
- Particulars about disasters faced by the *Panchayat* in the last 5 years
- Land use pattern in the *Panchayat*
- Particulars about sources of irrigation and agriculture
- Particulars about livestock, fisheries and dependence on small animals
- Particulars about SHGs and credit flow from various sources
- Particulars about small and cottage industries
- Particulars about funds available to a *gram Panchayat* from various sources and local level tax realizations
- A birds eye view map of the *gram Panchayat*
- Key community needs and priority levels relating to various sectors, for each ward
- Check-list to examine suitability of plans for disadvantaged groups, including scheduled

- castes/ tribes, women, unskilled labourers, destitute elderly and people with disability
- Particulars related to status of women
- Details of members of Ward level Steering Committee
- Composition of and agenda of local Steering Committees

The possibility of generating HDR of a district based on District Plan data

The possibility of generating significant micro-level data on indicators of poverty and vulnerability, for potential use in beneficiary selection processes as well as for placing interventions in appropriate locations within a village emerged as one of the key gains of the process in Vaishali. The feasibility of generating relevant micro-level poverty data, as listed in Box 2.7, also gives rise to the exciting possibility of compilation of District Human Development Reports in a participatory and locally relevant manner. Generating a local database contains information relating to various vulnerability indicators, concentration of vital public amenities and resources, and reach of various government schemes and benefits could serve as an extremely useful aid for decentralized planning. Such data could be integrated with DISNIC as well, an NIC initiative aimed at collecting extensive data on local resources in a detailed village-wise database.

The Planning Commission of India emphasizes strongly on the criticality of availability of relevant primary and secondary data for meaningful planning. Such data needs to be classified as well as disaggregated to the relevant scale for use by local bodies for planning. Collecting such data every time a micro-planning exercise is undertaken only undermines the efficiency of the process.

Box 2.7 – The possibility of generating a Human Development Report of a District, based on District Plan data

A robust planning exercise can generate useful micro-level data relating to various indicators of poverty, which could be used for compilation of District Human Development Reports. Generating such data from the micro level would also ensure local ownership of such information in order that appropriate steps could be initiated to benefit disadvantaged families of various government schemes. During the integrated district planning process in Vaishali, significant data related to the following indicators were generated from each *Panchayat*.

- Number of landless families
- Number of families deprived of homestead land
- Number of sharecroppers
- Number of families with labourers migrating out of state
- Number of families having destitute women
- Number of families having destitute elderly
- Number of families having people with disability
- Number of families having suffered maternal deaths in the last 5 years
- Number of families having suffered infant deaths in the last 5 years
- Number of farmers in different categories of land holding
- Number of families hailing from socially disadvantaged castes
- Number of families pursuing difficult livelihoods

Box 2.8 presents a typical example of estimates generated on the basis of aggregation of relevant data for various critical indicators contained in the *Panchayat* level plans of Mahua block.

Box 2.1 – Estimates of no. of families in Mahua as per various critical indicators

Names of <i>Panchayats</i>	No. of landless families	No. of families deprived of homestead land	No. of share-croppers	No. of families with labourers migrating out of state	No. of families having destitute women	No. of families having suffered maternal deaths in the last 5 years	No. of families having suffered infant deaths in the last 5 years	No. of families having destitute elderly	No. of families having people with disability
Bhadwas	54	1	635	800	160	5	7	100	119
Bishunpur H.	1785	0	2173	259	39	0	12	8	69
Dagaru	43	20	258	785	85	59	58	62	78
Fatahpur P.	569	4	60	34	55	0	5	54	50
Fulwariya	922	94	572	558	40	1	5	51	64
Gauspur Ch.	1125	10	146	0	38	0	24	28	24
Hasanpur Osti	238	6	214	147	107	5	32	130	45
Jalalpur G.	521	55	44	6	38	13	26	23	27
Jhangirpur S.	4464	81	1716	3159	639	570	333	975	471
Maghoul	963	28	1081	710	75	2	11	63	51
Magurahi	202	9	328	756	147	7	0	79	81
Mahua M.	4562	92	192	1268	68	38	180	54	176
Mahua Singrai	177	156	222	540	258	6	117	282	186
Mirjanagar	310	0	1080	1030	660	0	0	127	51
Rusulpur M.	470	28	316	892	36	0	0	54	66
Sampura	2033	668	58	87	344	21	30	240	66
Sherpur Ch.	1322	0	296	344	30	0	23	16	24
Sherpur M.	506	90	0	2370	74	0	62	66	108
Singhara N.	1767	0	136	0	51	2	13	38	39
Singhara S.	1162	10	95	22	43	4	49	34	21
Supaul Taria	96	78	448	704	132	22	155	134	67
Total	23291	1430	10070	14471	3119	755	1142	2618	1883

Organizing Technical Support for the Integrated District Planning exercise

Ensuring representation of important line departments in the District Planning and Monitoring Cell of Vaishali was envisaged as a way of bringing in relevant technical expertise and current priorities of various sectors for incorporating in the district plan. Additionally, in line with the guidelines of Planning Commission, a Technical Support Institute was identified to extend support to the processes of capacity building and planning.

PRAXIS, an international agency having a base in Bihar and set up in 1997 with the mandate of promoting equitable and participatory approaches in development, was identified by Unicef as the Technical Support Institute for enabling the District Planning Committee to consolidate an Integrated District Plan for Vaishali. Registered as a Society in India, Praxis has worked with a number of governments, bilateral and multilateral development support organizations, community based organizations and agencies of local self-governance in promoting inclusive development. Subsequently, the District Collector of Vaishali vetted the appointment of Praxis as a Technical Support Institution and approved the inclusion of a representative of Praxis in a District level Steering Forum related to decentralized planning. Box 2.6 contains key

areas of support extended by Praxis, the Technical Support Institute in Vaishali in execution of the integrated district planning process.

Box 2.6 – The role of Praxis, the designated Technical Support Institute

The role of Praxis in supporting the Integrated District Planning process in Vaishali entailed the following:

Designing and facilitating important workshops

Key workshops held in the course of the district planning exercise, in which Praxis played an important role alongside colleagues from Unicef and DPMC included:

- (1) 'Inception Workshop' involving multiple stakeholders,
- (2) 'Taking Stock Workshop' involving key officials of Vaishali district,
- (3) 'Vision Building Workshops' in the few blocks,
- (4) 'Training of Facilitators' of the Decentralized Planning Exercises,
- (5) 'Training of Representatives of Urban Local Bodies' in Vaishali,
- (6) 'Consolidation Workshops' in a few blocks.

Preparing important documents related to the planning exercise

A number of documents related to capacity building processes in the decentralized planning exercise were formulated by Praxis, with inputs from Unicef and DPMC functionaries. These documents were meant for use of a diverse range of stakeholders related to the planning exercise and included the following:

- a. Module for a 4-day training of facilitators entrusted with provision of support to elected representatives during the planning process;
- b. Instructions manual and a module for 2-day training workshops involving *Panchayat Mukhiyas*, the *Up-Mukhiyas*, the *Panchayat Secretaries* and *Panchayat Rozgar Sevaks*;
- c. Outline for a 1-day orientation workshop involving government officers;
- d. A Planning booklet for use in compilation of data, community needs and priorities of various planning units (village *Panchayats* as well as urban wards);

Documentation of learnings and advocacy relating to the unprecedented district planning exercise in the stewardship of *Panchayati Raj* institutions.

Besides Praxis, CENCORED, an organization based in Bihar with rich experience of facilitating micro-level planning was contracted by Unicef to identify potential facilitators of the planning exercise. Designated as the 'Training and Planning Support Organization', CENCORED was also entrusted with the crucial responsibility of field level monitoring of the planning process and digitization of plan data.

Chapter 3

Enhancing Capacities for Decentralized Planning

For ensuring sustainability of the process of integrated district planning, the need for enhancement of capacities of important stakeholders cannot be over-emphasized. Capacities for functions related to decentralized planning need to be developed at multiple levels, customized to the specific needs of different stakeholders.

Design and delivery of capacity building workshops for PRI functionaries

In the course of the integrated district planning exercise in Vaishali, a diverse mix of stakeholders were imparted trainings and orientation related to various essential facets of integrated district planning. Modules for capacity building of different kinds of people were designed in order to bring about opportunities of discussion around the significance of inclusive planning, key operational issues and problems faced by different kinds of stakeholders. The pedagogy used in the trainings sought to avoid didactic methods and relied on pooling of relevant experiences and analyses to drive home a point. Box 3.1 outlines the design of training modules for representatives of *Panchayati Raj* institutions and government functionaries deployed at the level of local governments.

Box 3.1 – Outline of Module of 2-day Orientation Workshop involving Elected People’s Representatives and Government Functionaries

Day 1

- Start-up processes
- **Contextualizing district planning**
 - Understanding ‘exclusion’ and the need for equity in development processes
(Based on a case study, enacted as a role play)
 - Reflections on opportunities and levels of citizens’ participation in development planning processes undertaken in the past
 - Presentation on constitutional and policy provisions favouring decentralization
- Discussions on the significance of ‘**shared visions**’ and ‘local priorities’

Day 2

- Recapitulation of key discussion points and learnings of Day 1
- Discussions on **critical micro-level processes**
 - Essential preparations for planning process
 - Local level Information required for planning; related processes
 - Prioritizing development interventions
 - A mock drill of the decentralized planning exercise
 - Discussions on essential institutional arrangements
 - Preparing for *Gram Sabhas*
- Valedictory processes



Mukhiyas enacting a role play to simulate a planning process

Representatives of every single institution of local self-governance in the district were invited to a series of 2-day workshops held in the residential premises of an institution called CGC located in Vaishali block, which ran for over two months across 32 batches. In addition to the *Mukhiyas*, the deputy *Mukhiyas* (who, in many cases, represent the opposition at the *Panchayat* level), the *Panchayat Sachivs* and the *Rozgar Sevaks* of all the *Panchayats*, besides all the elected members of

various municipalities were invited to the residential trainings, in order that sufficient capacities and interests are generated for decentralized planning to be a continuous process.

In the course of the trainings for elected representatives, several important realizations emerged:

- It was the first time since elections to *Panchayati Raj* institutions were held in Bihar in 2001 that all the elected heads of all the *Panchayats* of the district had an opportunity to attend a formal training on decentralized district planning.
- The decision to also involve key government functionaries from each *Panchayat* along with the elected heads was appreciated by most participants, as it helped in clarifying issues in planning together, which was expected to contribute to more coherent actions on the part of all concerned.
- The participatory and relaxed style of the training methodology, including role-plays, group work, interactive discussions and question-and-answer sessions were appreciated by most of the participants.

The workshops brought about a rare occasion for the local level leaders to come together, deliberate on burning issues related to local governance, narrate their experiences and enhance capacities to undertake planning in an inclusive and participatory manner.

The orientation of members of the municipalities of Vaishali district was held in a separate workshop at Hajipur, which brought together all the members of the Municipal Council of Hajipur and the Town *Panchayats* of Lalganj and Mahnar. In keeping the provisions of Bihar Municipality Act 2007, the representatives of various urban wards were specifically guided towards formation of ward committees. A different booklet customized to the urban context was used for the planning exercise in the urban locations of Vaishali.

Orientation of key government officials

For district planning processes to be undertaken in the stewardship of *Panchayati Raj* institutions, government officers are expected to play a truly facilitative role in ensuring timely availability of relevant data and in provision of administrative and technical support to the planning exercise. Also, in view of the critical need of convergence across various sectors and planning units within a district, capacity building of important government officials holds critical significance.



During the district planning processes in Vaishali, all the important government officers related to various line departments, sub-divisions and blocks were brought together in a workshop to discuss the key elements of an integrated and decentralized district planning exercise, as part of the capacity building strategy related to the planning process. This workshop wielded enormous influence on the momentum of the planning exercises at different levels, as it was instrumental in making the entire team of district administration to commit itself to the success of the unprecedented District Planning exercise. The workshop was held in a highway motel, detached from the daily buzz and business of government offices in the district. The participants included the District Magistrate, the Additional Collector (Revenue), all the Sub Division Magistrates, all the Block Development Officers and key functionaries of various line departments, including the District level Officers related to departments of Planning, *Panchayati Raj*, Education, Health, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Horticulture and Welfare, amongst others.

In the workshop, the participants deliberated upon important strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges facing the district in the key sectors of education, health, development of women and children, infrastructure, poverty reduction and environment. Subsequently, dates were identified for rolling out the process across various blocks, including dates for visioning workshops at various levels.

Deployment of facilitators for decentralized planning

A pool of 32 people, including 24 from Vaishali and the rest from neighbouring districts, was groomed to extend facilitation support to local level planning exercises across all the *Panchayats* and municipalities of the district. Identified by CENCORED, the facilitators were selected on the basis of interviews conducted by a panel comprising representatives of the District Planning Office, Unicef, PRAXIS and CENCORED; besides on the basis of their performance in a written test and during a pilot planning exercise held as part of their training.

A 6-day training of facilitators, including an in-built fieldwork component of 2 days, was imparted between July 20 – 25, 2009, in a residential setting at Hajipur. Key areas of thrust during the training included discussions on the significance of the planning exercise; the need for the planning process to be community-driven and inclusive of most marginalized sections; key elements of various flagship schemes of the government; institutional arrangements; steps of the planning process, and the planning booklet. The facilitators visited the Gadai Sarai *Panchayat* of Lalganj block for practicing the planning exercise, where they divided themselves into groups and interacted with residents of different wards for identifying their key needs.

Snapshots from the capacity building workshop for facilitators in Vaishali



A training session for the facilitators in progress



The District Planning Officer addressing the facilitators

Community mobilization for planning

Bringing about widespread awareness at the village level regarding the planning process and its significance can be a useful strategy for enhancing the transparency and inclusiveness of the planning exercise. Experiences from Vaishali point at the likelihood of a far more democratic planning process wherever the local leaders took an active initiative in publicizing the process. In Bhim *Panchayat* of Patepur block, for instance, the *Mukhiya* played an active role in publicizing the processes of the planning exercise, which not only led to a good turnout in the *Gram Sabha*, but also imparted a high level of seriousness amongst all the ward members of the *Panchayat* regarding the planning exercise. In Khwajpur Basti *Panchayat* of Patepur block, a loudspeaker was attached to the backside of a rickshaw and announcements were made regarding the *Gram Sabha* several times over the two preceding weeks. In Rustampur *Panchayat* of Raghapur block, the *Mukhiya* used a *dhol* (a percussion instrument) for making announcements for the first-ever *Gram Sabha* held in the village. He made the first announcement a week before the *Gram Sabha* and then repeated it again after five days.

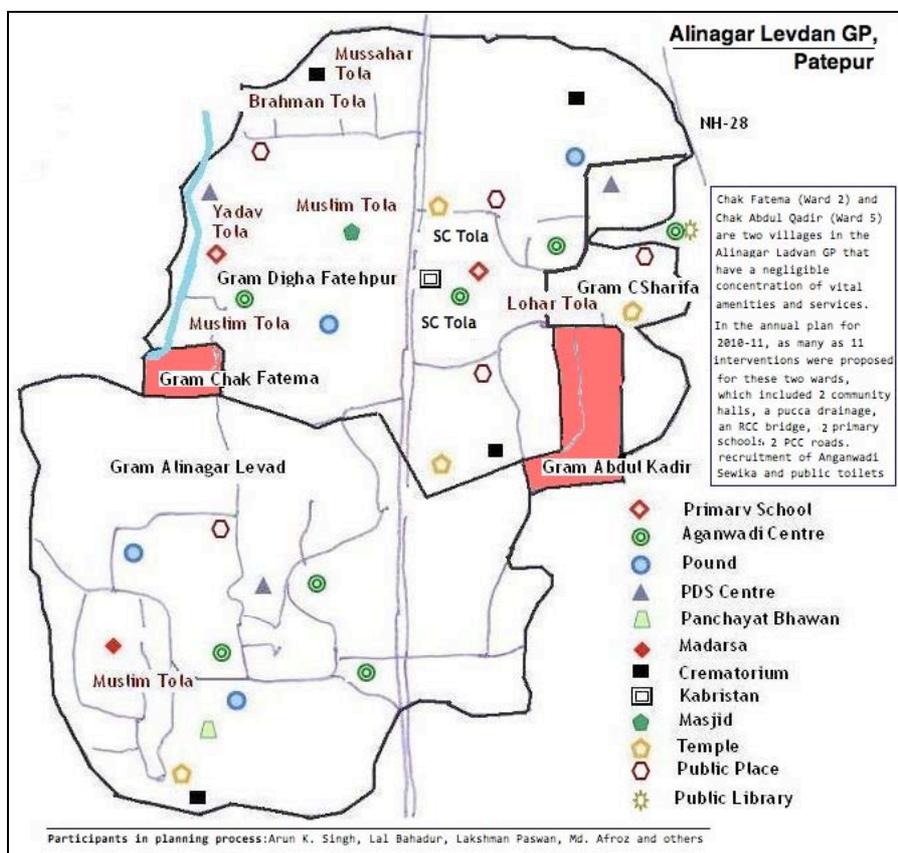
A specific strategy employed in Vaishali towards democratization of the process was the identification and entrustment of one local resident from each *Panchayat* to bring about greater public participation in the planning processes. The local resource persons played a very important role in mobilizing people for the village level meetings and in generating relevant insights about the village.



Another important strategy employed for ensuring high level of involvement of local communities in the planning process entailed **use of participatory methods** – e.g. Village Maps, Card Sorting Techniques, Cobweb Analyses etc. – to create opportunities for a large number of people to engage with the processes. In many villages, the local level visioning processes were also based on participatory methods (ref. picture on the left), whereby the aspired

development transformations were written on separate cards, placed on the ground, and the current state of affairs vis-à-vis each vision was indicated by local communities by placing stones at varying distances from the cards, depending upon the degree of their satisfaction with the current state. Similarly, all the resource endowments of a village were mapped by the local residents to analyze distribution of key resources across different habitations, to determine the most deserving locations for provision of any new resources. Participatory methods were used also during prioritization exercises undertaken in various wards and *Panchayats* to identify the most pressing needs. Diagram 3.1 presents the output of a village mapping process undertaken in Alinagar Levdan *Panchayat* of Patepur block.

Diagram 3.1 – A Bird’s Eye View Map of Alinagar Levdan GP, Patepur block

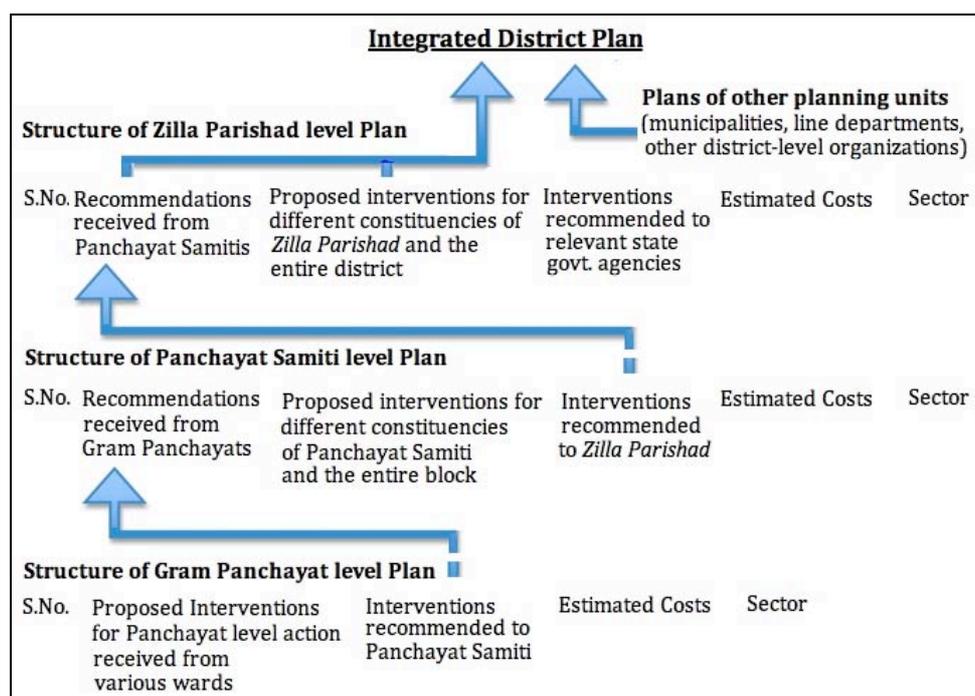


Also, press releases relating to key events and progress of the planning exercise were periodically issued in the local newspapers, which also helped in keeping the exercise in the public eye. Banners relating to the planning exercise were prominently put up in the Sonapur cattle fair, one of the internationally famous public events held every year in the neighboring Saran district, which also helped in enhancing the visibility of the exercise.

Enabling consolidation of plans at block and district levels

Consolidation of plans of various constituent planning units within a block and district is a crucial area of capacity building of local government functionaries, in view of its significance in emergence of an integrated district plan. After conclusion of the local level planning processes in Vaishali, representatives of DPMC, Unicef and PRAXIS attended the plan consolidation processes at the block and district levels to demonstrate methods of aggregating plans of various constituent planning units. To facilitate the consolidation processes in a systematic fashion, printouts of the summary of *Panchayat*-level plan outcomes (ref. Box 3.2 for a typical output of a *Panchayat* level planning process) were shared amongst members of *Panchayat Samiti*, requesting them to add to the list based on perceived priorities within the constituencies of each member of *Panchayat Samiti*, and overarching priorities for the entire block. In some blocks, the process of ratification of block-level plans required two meetings – one for analysis and discussions, and the other for formal ratification. Box 3.3 contains a typical output of a block level meeting of *Panchayat Samiti* members, government officials and other local stakeholders.

Diagram 3.2 outlines the process-flow of the consolidation processes across various levels.



Box 3.2 – A typical example of a Plan output from Gram Panchayat level

Plan proposals/ Aspirations of residents of Ababaqarpur Kowahi Panchayat (Patepur)		Sector/ relevant schemes	Time- frame Within 2010- 11	Cost estimate (subject to technical ratification)	Coverage/ Location
1	Provision of 42 new hand-pumps and arrangements for repair of 14 pumps	Drinking Water	Within 3 months of fund-receipt	Rs. 6,50,000	All 14 wards: Ward1-3, W2-4, W3-3, W4-5, W5-2, W6-4, W7-3, W8-3, W9-3, W10-4; W11-14: @ 2 per ward
2	a. Provision of 240 toilets b. Constructing 2 public latrines c. Constructing 3 <i>pucca</i> drains	Sanitation and environment	2010-11	Rs. 10,00,000	a. Wards 1 – 14 b. Wards 1, 2 c. Wards 1, 9, 10 (1000', 200', 300')
3	a. Arrangement of 200 job-cards b. Establishment of 1 production/sale centre c. Entrepreneurship training and start of poultry enterprise	Employment generation (SGSY)	2010-11	Rs. 17,00,000	a. Wards 1 – 14 b. Ward 1; on land of block headquarter. c. Wards 1 – 14 (90 beneficiaries)
4	a. Filling of earth, brick-soling through 7600 feet b. 800 ft. approach road c. Construction of RCC bridge d. Arrangement for PCC casting e. Arrangement for tarring	Road connectivity / transport (NREGA, PMGSY, MMGSY)	On receipt of funds, within 6 months	Rs. 50,00,000	a. Ward 1 (2200'), W3 (1000'), W5 (400'), W6 (300'), W7 (2500'), W9 (1000'), 13 (200') b. W 3 (800') c. Wards 1, 3, 6, 7 (1000') d. Ward 8 (4 km)
5	a. Provision of 14 solar lights b. Free electricity for all BPL families	Electrification and telecom (RGGVY)	Within 3 months of fund-receipt	Rs. 6,00,000	All 14 wards, covering 1700 BPL families
6	Building and 2 beds for HSC; 20 rooms, 30 beds and HIV testing facility for PHC; recruitment of ASHA	Health (NRHM)	2010-11	Rs. 2,40,00,000	In the local HSC and Patepur PHC respectively; using govt. land within GP for constructing building
7	a. Arrangement of 14 animals of high quality breed b. Arrangement of Vet. Doctor c. Arrangement of capital for 3 poultry training workshops	Animal Husbandry	Within 6 months of fund-receipt	Rs. 7,00,000	a. One to be provided to each ward c. One each for three villages falling in the GP
8	a. Arrangement of 5 rooms, 1 hand-pump, 1 boundary wall and 2 teachers in primary school (Patepur); b. 10 rooms for Girls' HS c. Computer teaching in HS	Education (SSA/BEP)	Within 6 months of fund-receipt	Rs. 51,20,000	Located within Wards 1 and 7; Girls HS located in Patepur
9	Provision of 200 houses	Housing (IAY/MMAY)	2010-11	Rs. 70,00,000	Across all 14 wards
10	171 Old Age Pensions, 76 Widow Pensions and 27 Disability-support Pensions	Social Security	2010-11	Rs. 6,57,600	Across all 14 wards
11	Barricading of cremation site; setting up modern crematorium	Social issues	2010-11	Rs. 4,00,000	On the cremation ground
12	Training on improved agricultural methods; provision of soil testing and improved seeds and fertilizers	Agriculture and irrigation	2010-11	Rs. 5,00,000	Involving 40 selected farmers of all three constituent villages
13	Provision of a new <i>Anganwadi</i> Centre; 2 new buildings and 2 hand-pumps including the existing <i>Anganwadi</i> Centre	Nutrition (ICDS)	2010-11	Rs. 3,30,000	New centre to be located on vacant govt. land within Panchayat.
14	Arrangement of nutritional diet and health awareness programme for pregnant women and children	Maternal and child health (NRHM/ICDS)	2010-11	Rs. 50,000	Involving all children and pregnant women of the Panchayat
15	Construction of a seating place and a <i>Samudaayik Bhawan</i>	Community assets (BRGF)	Within 3 months of fund-receipt	Rs. 2,40,000	In Ward no. 3
16	Arrangement of watchman and a watch-team of youth	Security, law and order	2010-11	Rs. 2,00,000	At the Panchayat level

Box 3.3 – A typical example of additional proposals of Panchayat Samiti

Block level Development Proposals (Bhagwanpur block)	Sector
Establishment of a Computer Training Centre and a Technology Training Centre at the block level	Employment generation
Construction of a general purpose building within the premises of the block	Miscellaneous
Provision of a residential school for children with disability at the block headquarter	Education
Establishment of a Information Centre at the block headquarter	Miscellaneous
Establishment of an additional patients' ward and arrangements for all kinds of pathological tests at the PHC	Health
Construction of building, a meeting room and boundary wall for the block-cum-circle office, along with residence for staff/officers	Miscellaneous
Construction of buildings for the police stations of Bhagwanpur and Sarai	Social Security
Establishment of a cold storage at the block level	Agriculture and Employment generation
Construction of a power grid cum sub-station at the block level	Power and Telecommunication
Completion of the half-completed production-cum-sale centre	Agriculture and Irrigation
Establishment of a processing-cum-sale centre for fruits and vegetables at the block level	Agriculture and Irrigation
Establishment of a Krishi Vigyan Kendra at the block level	Agriculture and Irrigation
Establishment of de-addiction cum rehabilitation centre in Panchayats with high concentration of mahadalit communities (e.g. Wafapur Banthoo, Harivanshpur Banthoo, Madhepur, Shambhupur Kowari etc.) in association with Mahadalit Vikas Mission	Social Security
Establishment of Stay Homes for the elderly, destitute and orphans at the block level	Social Security
Establishment of a central kitchen in all the Panchayats of the block for supply of fresh and nutritional food to all the primary schools and Anganwadis on time	Nutrition

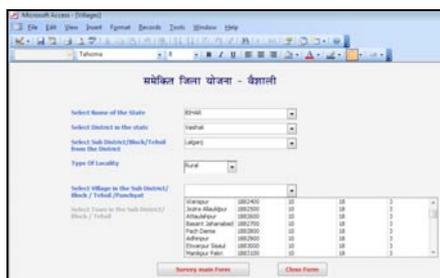
A good number of Panchayats in Vaishali also indicated possibilities of responding to frequently occurring natural disasters in the district, particularly floods. Box 3.4 presents an example of a locally identified step for disaster-preparedness, mentioning in Patepur, one of the flood-prone blocks of Vaishali.

Box 3.4 – An element of disaster preparedness in the local plans

Ladaho Panchayat of Patepur block of Vaishali has been prone to floods, having suffered massive damages and losses during the floods of 2004 and 2007. The flood of 2007 was severe in particular, causing losses to the tune of Rs. 1 Crore and damaging as many as 1236 houses and 800 livestock.

In the course of the decentralized planning exercise, the Panchayat identified the local primary school as a potential place for offering shelter to up to 1500 families in the wake of a disaster. Also, as many as 2936 families were identified to be especially prone to disasters.

Digitization of Plan data of various local governments, suiting 'PlanPlus'



One of the key accomplishments at the DPMC was the digitization of the contents of all the plans emerging from various local governments, ensuring compatibility with the requirements of the **PlanPlus** application designed by National Informatics Centre for use in capturing district plan data from various districts. For the purpose of indexing and

analyzing plan data related to various local governments, a tailor-made application was developed in-house by DPMC staff, which helped in identification of suitable data based on the requirements of various purposes.

Chapter 4

Facilitating Inclusion and Empowerment of Key Stakeholders

Production of integrated district plans would be absolutely infeasible without the active involvement of a number of important stakeholders. As clearly evident during the district planning processes in Vaishali, one of the key advantages of the multi-stakeholder processes emphasized upon in the guidelines of the Planning Commission lies in creation of opportunities for different agencies to engage with the planning process with a sense of ownership.

The intensive processes of decentralized planning undertaken over five rigorous months in Vaishali brought about several unprecedented accomplishments. The decentralized nature of the process and various preparatory initiatives to this effect ensured a number of significant outcomes, including an unprecedented scale of capacity building of PRI functionaries, deepening of democratic processes up to ward level and identification of very unusual forms of local needs, amongst others. Some of the discernible gains of the planning process, which can be attributed mainly to its inclusive character, have been outlined in this Chapter.

Inclusion of socially disadvantaged communities

The decentralized nature of the planning exercise brought about an unprecedented opportunity for several excluded habitations of Vaishali to be included in development processes. This can be attributed mainly to formation of ward level Steering Committees in each *Panchayat*, where a significant number of local residents, generally between 10 – 20 per ward, came together to anchor the planning process. Members of the ward level committees were also invited to present their key needs and aspirations in the *Panchayat* level *Gram Sabha*, which was another important arrangement towards ensuring that every ward had an opportunity to formally place its expectations from the planning process in the general assembly of the *Panchayat*.

In the process, several habitations of socially disadvantaged communities had an invaluable opportunity of not merely presenting their aspirations of development, but also of asserting their identity and rights. The following box contains two examples of how several *dalit* habitations got an important opportunity of inclusion in the local development processes.

How several *dalit* habitations of Vaishali entered the development track

Ward no. 1 of Sariarpur *Panchayat* of Raghapur block, inhabited by families hailing from Scheduled Castes, had been absolutely untouched by any development work till the onset of the planning exercise. By virtue of formation of ward-level Steering Committees, the residents of the ward got a significant opportunity to propose plans for their hamlet for the first time. The fact that over a dozen people, who were earlier afraid to express their needs in front of the dominant *Mukhiya* belonging to a more powerful caste, came forward to present their ward level plan in the *Gram Sabha* set a valuable precedent.

Similarly, Wards 2, 8 and 9 of Mahua Singhrai *Panchayat* of Mahua block, all inhabited by *dalit* communities, had been suffering from problems of water logging, scarcity of drinking water and lack of sanitation facilities for many years. These habitations neither have any hand pumps nor any public toilets. For the first time in the history of the *Panchayat*, the need for suitable interventions to address such longstanding issues was recorded in the *Gram Sabha*, thanks to organized representation of these habitations.

Emergence of strong women leaders, including many from SC communities

One of the most significant outcomes of the District Planning process was the emergence of a number of women leaders who established their authority through the decentralized processes. A good number of elected leaders from socially marginalized communities had a chance to assert their leadership. A good example is Amita Devi, *Mukhiya* of Mahua Singhrai GP hailing from the Scheduled *Tatma* caste, who succeeded in convening and organizing a *Gram Sabha*, despite resistance from some of the dominant caste-groups in her village. Despite being advised by her husband to remain evasive on the day of the *Gram Sabha* on the apprehension of resistance expected from two specific wards, she convened the *Gram Sabha* and also succeeded in assuring aggrieved residents of her village with regard to the reasons of delay in allotment of *Indira Awaas* houses in the *Panchayat* and the logic followed in formulation of the BPL list. Her deft handling of the meeting not only helped her to establish her leadership but also in successfully generating a village plan.

Madarna – an exemplary model of facilitation of collective leadership anchored by a woman leader

Rubi Singh, *Mukhiya* of Madarna *Panchayat* in Vaishali block approached the planning exercise as an opportunity to bring together various influential people of her village to collectively engage with the planning process. She invited all previous *Mukhiyas* and also her opponents who had lost to her in the last *Panchayat* elections and explained the process to them. Everyone agreed to support the process. She also played an active role in formation of Ward level Steering Committees and participated in several ward level planning processes.

According to the facilitators of the decentralized planning processes in Vaishali, one of the best visioning processes was held in Panapur *Panchayat* of Hajipur block. Panapur *Panchayat* has 13 wards, out of which women represent the local community in as many as twelve wards. The *Mukhiya* of the *Panchayat* is also a female and belongs to an SC community. When she invited ward members for a visioning exercise, everyone except the lone male member of the *Panchayat* turned up. A good number of development aspirations were articulated during the visioning exercise itself.

It is important to mention in this context that ***the facilitators of the planning processes were strongly advised during their training to pro-actively seek the involvement of women leaders and not their proxy representatives (e.g. their husbands), for challenging adverse social stereotypes through the planning process and thereby contributing to desired transformations.***

Greater likelihood of identification of real needs of community

One of the highlights of the planning exercise was the identification of some highly nuanced and context-specific needs of the poor people. For instance, the high degree of exclusion and dropouts of children belonging to the socially disadvantaged *Musahar* community was identified as one of the key development issues in one of the GPs of Patepur. During discussions, it came to light that the efforts of teachers towards bringing children to school had yielded no results as the children had to assist their parents in various livelihood activities. The *Mukhiya* of the village proposed appointment of a tutor out of village funds to take classes during hours convenient to the children, including in the evening.

The following box shows how the process of allowing emergence of locally determined needs led to identification of some highly important issues.

How *Neel Gais* hogged the headlines of the local plans in Raghopur

During a visioning exercise held at Raghopur block, the issue of crop losses amounting up to nearly 1.5 crores every year came up. The losses were attributed to a large number of destructive *Neel Gais* (large antelopes), which periodically rampage the standing crops in the block nested within the streams of Ganga River. Other key aspirations included construction of a bridge on *Kachcha Dargah*, which would improve the connectivity of the remote block and kick-start growth processes; and judicious utilization of available forest resources, which could turn Raghopur into the '**Mauritius of Bihar**'.

Restoration of the sanctity of *Gram Sabha*

A significant outcome of the decentralized planning process in Vaishali was the fact that *Gram Sabhas* were held for the first time in many *Panchayats* of the district, providing opportunities to many disadvantaged communities to express their development aspirations for incorporation in the local plans. A number of elected leaders played a pro-active role in convening *Gram Sabhas* and the following box outlines a few snippets from *Gram Sabhas* held during the process.

Snippets from *Gram Sabhas* across Vaishali

- Bahrapur *Panchayat* of Raghopur block of Vaishali recorded one of the highest turnouts of people in a *Gram Sabha*, with over 600 people attending the unprecedented assembly of *Panchayat* level electorates.
- In response to grievances expressed by people with regard to the ICDS scheme, it was decided by *Panchayat* leaders in *Nayagaon Paschim Panchayat* of Mahua block that *poshahar* (nutritional materials) would henceforth be distributed through *Gram Sabhas* to preempt any irregularities.
- Deenanath Paswan, the *Mukhiya* of *Chakrala Panchayat*, organized separate *Gram Sabhas* in all the five villages falling within the boundaries of his *Panchayat*. He also attended and facilitated ward level processes of need identification across several

habitations located in his *Panchayat*.

- A number of socially relevant issues were raised during the *Gram Sabha* held in Ratnakar *Panchayat* of Bhagwanpur block, including the issue of alcoholism.

Opportunity for elected leaders to assert their leadership

Most significantly, the decentralized planning processes provided the agencies of local self-governance a real opportunity of asserting their leadership in determining the most critical needs of people for addressing through relevant interventions. Several elected representatives, who actively participated in the planning process, took commendable initiatives to organize local level processes of planning.

A good example is Nagendra Pandit, *Mukhiya* of Khwajpur *Panchayat* of Patepur block, who organized a training for all the ward members of his *Panchayat* on processes of decentralized planning, after returning from a training workshop held at CGC Vaishali. Similarly, the initiative demonstrated by the *Mukhiya* of Bhim GP of the same block in organizing a grand *Gram Sabha* in a ceremonial manner using tents and prior announcements set a new benchmark.

The block level visioning exercise at Chehra Kala, which ran into rough weather in the wake of a sudden protest over alleged irregularities in the public distribution system by a mob comprising hundreds of people, could be salvaged only due to the leadership shown by the *Pramukh* of the *Panchayat Samiti* and some *Mukhiyas*, who had a keen interest in the visioning process.

The following box outlines several other noteworthy instances of initiatives shown by local leaders during the planning process.

Snapshots of initiatives shown by local leaders

Several local leaders, e.g. *Mukhiyas* of Ishupur, Majua Bujurg, Chandpur Fateh, Saidpur Manikpur and Dinpur *Panchayats* played an active role in compilation of data for the village plans and actively participated in ward level processes.

The *Mukhiya* of Saidpur *Panchayat* worked till late hours on several nights to ensure timely completion of the planning process in his *Panchayat*.

Suman Devi, *Mukhiya* of Bhagwatpur *Panchayat*, organized a focused visioning process involving all the ward members of her GP and actively participated in formation of ward level committees.

Overcoming hurdles through involvement of multiple stakeholders

Involvement of multiple stakeholders in the decentralized planning process helped in overcoming a number of barriers and resistance in various places. For instance, in Samastpur GP of Patepur, the *Panchayat* Secretary played an extremely pro-active role and took active initiatives in organizing all the village level processes, which was a significant support to the first-time elect *dalit*

Mukhiya. Similarly, the involvement of *Panchayat Samiti Pramukhs* and Block Development Officers in the block level visioning workshops ensured a good turnout of various block level officials as well as elected members of *Panchayat Samiti* and local GPs.

Efficient local coordination – key to emergence of good Plans

Chakmajahid *Panchayat* of Mahua block presented a remarkable example of efficient local coordination in production of the village plan. The *Mukhiya* of the village made photocopies of the Plan booklet and distributed it to the local teachers, *Anganwadi Sewika*, ANM and *Panchayat Rozgar Sevak* for their inputs, which resulted in emergence of data of good quality related to various relevant sectors. Similarly, the *Mukhiya* of Rampur Ratnakar *Panchayat* of Rajapakar block collected relevant information from various local level government functionaries over phone. The plan of Govindpur Bela village in Patepur also emerged well due to the active involvement of the *Mukhiya*, *Panchayat Sewak*, ward members and local teachers.

At the district level, the active interest of the DM and the DPO in the planning process ensured dispatch of a number of important letters and official communications on time, timely conduct of review meetings and maintenance of an air of priority around the planning exercise, which was one of the most significant factors in successful completion of the village level planning processes.

Involvement of civil society organizations at the grass root level

In some of the *Panchayats*, active involvement of local organizations and youth groups contributed significantly to the quality of the local level processes. One good example relates to the Madarna *Panchayat*, where a local NGO called Samaj Kalyan Kendra played a vital role in motivating people to participate in the planning process and in the Gram Sabha in particular. Similarly, a group of committed youth in Jahangirpur Sarkhandi *Panchayat* also proactively contributed to the planning process. One of the remarkable features of the process in this village was the identification of specific point-persons for representing the issues of each cluster of ten households in the village.

Efforts towards activation of Standing Committees

In the course of the decentralized planning processes, efforts were made to ascertain the status of Standing Committees of the *Gram Panchayats* and revive the same in order that they could carry the mantle of the planning exercise in future years. In many *Panchayats* where such bodies had not been constituted earlier, Standing Committees were formed by prompting the *Mukhiya* to take initiatives to this effect. Discussions were held around the key responsibilities of each Committee. In some places, e.g. Muravvatpur *Panchayat* of Sahdei Buzurg block, members of various Standing Committees also suggested the next set of meeting dates (ref. Box 4.1) for each Committee to follow up the plan proposals and to take charge of their respective mandates.

Box 4.1 - Composition & Agenda of Standing Committees of Muravvatpur gram Panchayat (Sahdei Buzurd block)

Names of Standing Committees		Names of Elected Members	Date of next few meetings	Key responsibilities agreed upon
1	Planning, Coordination and Finance Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kiran Devi Shatrughan Sah Sanjay Paswan Rambahadur Singh 	2 Sept., 8 Sept, 17 Oct, 28 Oct, 25 Nov. 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How could the Standing Committees be made more active? Are the financial and accounting practices in the Panchayat running properly or not? Are Gram Sabha meetings being organized properly or not? Are all plans related to the village endorsed by the Gram Sabha or not? Which aspirations of the people can be addressed directly by the Panchayat? Other responsibilities entrusted by Panchayat Raj Act 2006
2	Production Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savita Devi Jahangir Ansari Rambahadur Singh Devnandan Sharma 	14 Oct, 17 Oct, 27-28 Oct 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What could be done to support poor families of the village, which have to live a very difficult life due to poverty? What kinds of trainings or resources could be made available to the unemployed, destitute and other needy people? Are any eligible families excluded from the reach of social security and welfare schemes? Other responsibilities entrusted by Panchayat Raj Act 2006
3	Public Works Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rameshwar Paswan Urmila Devi Devnandan Sharma Shatrughan Sah 	2 Sept, 2 Oct, 28 Oct 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the deficiencies in maintenance of basic infrastructure and facilities in the village? How could these be overcome? Which people from different localities could be entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the maintenance of facilities? How could the people causing damages be held accountable? What local skills could be utilized in the maintenance processes? Are any parts of the village deprived from availability of vital resources? Other responsibilities entrusted by Panchayat Raj Act 2006
4	Education Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rameshwar Paswan Pramila Devi Devnandan Sharma Shatrughan Sah 	4 Sept, 4 Oct, 23 Nov, 27 Dec 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are any school-age children out of school? Do teachers come regularly? Are they sincere enough? Is the environment of the school conducive for learning? Do any children, particularly girls, have to face any misconduct? Are there any hurdles in distribution of mid-day meals, scholarships and text books? Does the school have adequate teaching materials and structures as per standards? Other responsibilities entrusted by Panchayat Raj Act 2006
5	Social Justice Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rameshwar Paswan Shatrughan Sah Sanjay Paswan Meera Devi 	27 Dec 2009	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are members of Scheduled Castes subjected to any form of discrimination, atrocities, exploitation or misconduct? Are victims of atrocities or misconduct able to avail of their constitutional remedies? How to ensure greater inclusion of people hailing from socially disadvantaged sections in various development opportunities? Are such people getting excluded from important opportunities? Other responsibilities entrusted by Panchayat Raj Act 2006

6	Public health, Family Welfare and Rural Sanitation Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shatrughan Sah • Devnandan Sharma • Md. Jahangir Ansari • Wasim Khan • Babita Devi 	Not decided yet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are the pregnant women of the village able to avail of pre-natal check-ups, vaccinations and institutional deliveries? • Are the newborn infants being administered vaccines regularly and taken proper care of? • Are there any deficiencies in the services provided by ANM, Asha, Doctors and staff of health centres? • Do any local causes of diseases need to be acted upon? • How could problems like water-logging, piling up of garbage, open defecation be addressed? • How could greater mass awareness be brought about with regard to issues of sanitation and health? • Other responsibilities entrusted by <i>Panchayat Raj Act 2006</i>
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One of the important learnings from the process in Vaishali was regarding the need to accord a strong thrust on the formalization and strengthening of the Standing Committees of *Gram Panchayats* and municipalities, for local level plans to be properly followed up and for development interventions to be effectively monitored by local leaders.

Involvement of District Planning Committee

Given that the mandate of consolidating district plans by incorporating all the district-specific plans of various planning units lies with the District Planning Committee, active involvement of its members in the planning processes is a critical pre-requisite for the effectiveness of a planning process. The cornerstone of the process in Vaishali was an inception workshop held in the beginning the exercise that brought together a majority of members of the District Planning Committee to collectively launch the process and approve the process design proposed by the Technical Support Agencies. Also, during the course of the exercise, the members of the DPC were kept in the loop of the progress through sharing of developments. As a matter of fact, a newsletter was prepared in the middle of the process and circulated to DPC members to apprise them of the mid-course status of the integrated planning exercise. Many of the active members of the DPC, e.g. the Chairpersons of Hajipur and Lalganj municipalities, even attended training workshops organized for elected representatives as part of the process.

Discussions with various members of the DPC during the process indicated how the apex district-level institution mandated with consolidation of district plans has not been accorded its due status and needs to be strengthened with the provision of an effective Secretariat-like support system in order to enable it to deliver on its mandate. Though DPCs have been formed in all the districts of Bihar vide a notification dated 29 August 2008 (no. 4458 – “*The Constitution of Bihar District Planning Committee and Conduct of Business Rules, 2006*”), they are yet to start functioning in the true spirit of their mandate. The following Table contains an interview of a senior member of the DPC of Vaishali, which brings to the fore several important issues relating to the actual role and status of DPC in consolidation of District Plans.

“District Planning Committees are yet to be accorded due sanctity!”

– Manindra Nath Singh, Member of *Zilla Parishad* and District Planning Committee.

[Manindra Nath Singh is serving a second consecutive term as a member of the *Zilla Parishad* of Vaishali. He is also the President of the Social Justice Committee of the *Zilla Parishad* and a member of the District Planning Committee as well as the district level 20-Point Programme Committee. During an interview shot during the District Planning process in Vaishali, he shared useful insights about the role of the District Planning Committee.]

“It’s been over six years since the District Planning Committee was constituted in Vaishali, in 2003. I have been a member of the DPC since then. However, there has been no formal orientation of its members regarding their roles and responsibilities since its inception, except circulation of a booklet, which mentioned the mandate of the Committee. It was by reading that booklet that I came to know about the extremely important role of the DPC with regard to integrated District Planning.”

“District plans must be integrated. Every plan made in a district by any agency must be brought before the DPC for incorporating in the district plan. However, in reality, it has never happened this way. The DPC doesn’t also have any Secretariat-like support system to steer the planning processes. Meetings have been held in the last few years only for taking our signatures on the BRGF proposals, which we have no right to modify. Now that the BRGF plans have also been formulated for three years together, I wonder if this would leave any need at all for a DPC meeting!”

“A strong DPC would help in curbing duplication in the contents of various plans and also check malpractices relating to the implementation of important government schemes and MP/MLA local area development funds. As of today, a number of agencies are involved in the implementation processes and there’s no point of convergence!”

“Elected representatives need to be taken more seriously. I still remember how a recent directive of the government of India regarding the need for formation of a district-level Committee to oversee the Mid Day Meal scheme was taken up by the state 11 months later, and it took another 9 months for the communication to travel from Patna to Hajipur. It was only after 3 more months that the Committee could be formed in Vaishali.”

“It is really significant that an integrated district planning exercise has been initiated in Vaishali. It was also the first time that all the elected members of PRIs and municipalities in the district came together for an orientation workshop around this exercise.”

Chapter 5

District Planning – Critical Success Factors and Policy Implications

For district planning processes to be effectively undertaken in an integrated, decentralized and inclusive manner as per the guidelines of the Planning Commission, a number of important arrangements would need to be secured. While this would call for several essential policy level initiatives at the state level, a formidable quantum of coordination activities, leadership initiatives and capacity building interventions would be required at the district level. This chapter discusses some of the critical success factors that any Integrated District Planning process ought to incorporate, drawing from learnings from the process in Vaishali.

Constitution and activation of District Planning Committees

Policies related to local self-governance in Bihar suggest a mixed bag of conditions vis-à-vis decentralized planning. Amongst favourable conditions, notification of policies regarding constitution of District Planning Committees in keeping with Article 243 ZD of the constitution of India is an important development and accordingly DPCs have started officiating in various districts. Vaishali has a 32-member DPC in operation, including 24 members of the *Zilla Parishad* and 2 members of the Municipal Council of Hajipur. Box 5.1 summarizes the mandate of the District Planning Committee as laid down in ‘The Constitution of Bihar District Planning Committee and Conduct of Business Rules, 2006’. Besides, the Bihar *Panchayat* Raj Act 2006 contains important policies for strengthening local self-governance, including affirmative provisions of reservation of seats favouring socially disadvantaged sections and women.

Box 5.1 – Powers and functions of District Planning Committee

- (1) To consolidate the plans prepared by District Board, *Panchayat* Committees, *Gram Panchayat*, Municipal *Panchayats*, Municipal Councils and Municipal Corporations of the district and to make draft of development plan for whole of the district.
- (2) To identify the local needs and objects within the framework of the National and the State Plan.
- (3) To collect, compile and update the information regarding the natural and human resources of the district for making solid database for *decentralized* planning and preparing details of the resources of district, town and block.
- (4) Enlisting the facilities of village, block, town and district level and its mapping.
- (5) To recommend the policies, programmes and priorities for the development of the district with a view to ensure maximum and justifiable use and exploitation of available natural and human resources.
- (6) To modify or amend and consolidate five year or Annual Development Plan prepared for rural and municipal areas, keeping in view the overall objectives and strategies of the plan.
- (7) To present the development plan to the State Government in such manner as may be

prescribed.

(8) To prepare employment scheme for the district.

(9) To prepare estimates of financial resources for financing the district plan.

(10) To recommend the regional and sub-regional outlay within the overall framework of the District Development Plan.

(11) To identify such plans and programmes for which institutional finance is needed and to recommend, keeping in view the forward and backward linkage with the plan.

(12) To recommend for ensuring the cooperation of voluntary organizations in the overall development process.

(13) To suggest and recommend the State Government regarding such State Regional Plans which have an important relation with the process of the development of the district.

(14) To recommend about the site selection for different works and plans.

(15) Any such function, which may be assigned by the State Government.

(16) The issues of mutual general interest of the District Board, *Panchayat* Committees, *Gram Panchayats*, *Municipal Panchayats*, *Municipal Corporations* and *Councils* as mentioned in sub section (7)(a)(i) of section 167 of the Act as well as the local plan, water and other physical and natural resources, infrastructure, integrated development and environment conservation.

(17) Every District Planning Committee shall keep in mind the following points at the time of preparing the draft of the development plan:-

(i) Limitation and type of available resources, whether financial or otherwise.

(ii) Consultation with the institutions and organizations as specified by the Govt.

Need for Activity Mapping and devolution of finances

However, several crucial conditions necessary for meaningful decentralization are yet to come about in Bihar. These include, amongst others, the critical act of 'Activity Mapping' across various departments and government interventions to set up the domain of responsibilities of *Panchayati Raj* institutions (Annex. C contains some stray provisions). According to a letter of Secretary, Department of planning and Development dated April 2007, the Commissioner and Secretary of Rural Development was entrusted with the responsibility of preparing an activity map, which however has not been concluded so far. Similarly, successive State Finance Commissions in Bihar have not been able to press upon the State government the need of devolution of adequate financial resources for the *Panchayati raj* institutions (PRIs) of the state, thereby failing on an important constitutional duty. The contrasts with most other states are glaring; for instance, while the 3rd State Finance Commission of Kerala provided for devolution of over 1,950 Crore rupees in favour of PRIs (for the base year of 2006-07; including grants for development, maintenance and general purposes and subject to 10% annual increment), Bihar hasn't committed any assured share for its PRIs out of its revenue proceeds or plan outlay. The only sources of

money for the PRIs of Bihar are the grants received from Central Finance Commission, besides a promissory share of 3% in the net tax realizations at the local level and funds received under the schemes of NREGA and BRGF. Unfortunately, the method of execution of these schemes leaves little control in the hands of the elected representatives!

Need for an active role of the DM and District Planning Office

In view of the large number of stakeholders whose active involvement is crucial for undertaking integrated district planning exercises in line with the guidelines of planning commission (the stakeholders include line departments, District Planning Committees, *Zilla Parishads*, *Panchayat Samitis*, Urban Local Bodies, *Gram Panchayats*, local organizations, credit agencies, parastatal bodies and various important officers at the district level, besides diverse local communities); a strong role of the DM is of critical importance for effective administration of convergence and Integrated District Planning processes. Only an officer of the stature of a District Magistrate can wield the requisite influence to carry along the diverse range of stakeholders.

An Integrated District Planning could be successfully undertaken in Vaishali (for the year 2010-11) due only to the active role of the DM. A number of important communications were promptly initiated out of the DM's office from time to time, some of which have been summarized in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1 Important directives issued from the office of District Magistrate Vaishali that strengthened the integrated district planning process

Letter Reference	Directives
295/DPMC/ Hajipur, dated May 7, 2009	Instruction to district level Heads of various line departments to share scheme-wise Progress Reports for the last three years, and Project Implementation Plans for the year 2009-10, for incorporation in the integrated district planning process.
36/DPMC/ Hajipur, dated August 24, 2009	Seeking incorporation of the details of even those proposals in the integrated annual plan for 2010-11 that have already been forwarded to district level authorities under some scheme or the other; to preempt duplication of ideas and to ensure the 'integrated' element of the plans emerging from each village <i>Panchayat</i> .
18/DPMC/ Hajipur, dated July 7, 2009	Directive to all important district level officials, Sub-division Officers and BDOs to attend an orientation workshop related to the integrated district planning process.
16/DPMC/ Hajipur, dated July 1, 2009	Constitution of District level Steering Committee (inclusive of DM, DDC, Chairpersons of <i>Zilla Parishad</i> and ULBs of Hajipur, Lalganj and Mahnar, and representatives of DPMC, Unicef and Praxis) for providing guidance to the district planning exercise.
32/DPMC/ Hajipur, dated August 11, 2009	Directive to all BDOs and Executive Officers of Urban Local Bodies, instructing them to communicate the dates of 2-day trainings organized for all <i>Mukhiyas</i> , Deputy- <i>Mukhiyas</i> , <i>Panchayat Secretaries</i> , <i>Panchayat Rozgar Sevaks</i> and ward

	members of all urban local bodies.
35/DPMC/ Hajipur, dated August 21, 2009	Directive to all BDOs and Executive Officers of Urban Local Bodies, advising them to ensure active participation of functionaries of village <i>Panchayats</i> and urban local bodies in the 2-day residential trainings.
26/DPMC/ Hajipur, dated July 24, 2009	Directive to all BDOs to organize one-day visioning workshops at the block level involving all the local representatives of <i>Panchayati Raj</i> institutions.
51-53/DPMC/ Hajipur, dated October 21, 2009	Directive to BDOs to follow up with functionaries of <i>Panchayats</i> not submitting village plans till date, for timely submission of the same for incorporation in the consolidated plan at the <i>Panchayat Samiti</i> level.

Need for secretarial support for the DPC

For the District Planning Committee to effectively manage the district planning process as per the mandate assigned to it under Section 167 of Bihar *Panchayat Raj* Act 2006; availability of secretarial support would be of critical significance, more so in states like Bihar where *Zilla Parishads* – which provide most members to the DPCs – do not have dedicated staff attached to them. The guidelines of the Planning Commission suggest a number of probable ways of providing technical and human resource support to the DPCs, including the setting up of a dedicated secretariat.

During the district planning process in Vaishali, it required establishment of a special pool of professional consultants financed by Unicef and attached to a forum of representatives of various line departments, to support the multi-level planning processes in the absence of formal mechanisms of secretarial support to the DPC. The Cell, set up with support from Unicef, played a critical role in liaising with key stakeholders in the district, facilitating vital communications on time and in organizing important events. Endowed with a small team of professionals and a good balance of essential competencies, which included skills as diverse as conducting training, managing databases and maintaining close contact with key government officials, the team did well to keep the process on track. Housed within a walking distance from the District Collectorate, the office of the DPMC remained a bustling hub of activity during the planning exercise.

Need for clear guidelines to enable DPCs to function effectively

Despite the fact that District Planning Committees have been constituted in Bihar, there is a strong need for clear directives to be issued by the State government to enable them to perform their mandated role of consolidation of District Plans effectively. Most importantly, other parallel planning units located at the district level, including line departments and para-statal bodies, need to be prevented from bypassing the DPC and undertaking parallel planning processes without timely convergence with Integrated District Plans. Given the vertical command lines of most line departments, such convergence is not feasible unless strictly demanded by the State government. DPCs ought to be an exclusive platform for consolidation of all district level plans, as per the recommendations of an Expert Group on planning at grass-root level (ref. Box 5.2).

Box 5.2 – Recommendations of Expert Group towards making the role of DPCs meaningful

Towards making the role of District Planning Committee meaningful, a number of significant recommendations were made by an Expert Group on Planning at grassroots level. These included the following:

- CSS guidelines that entrust the task of district level planning and implementation to parallel bodies, such as DRDAs and District Health Societies, need to be modified to incorporate the District Planning Committee in the process of District level planning.
- The Planning Commission could inform States that the DPC would be the sole body that is entrusted with the task of consolidating plans at the district level.
- The Planning Commission should specify a timeframe within which States will need to issue detailed instructions covering the manner in which the DPC would perform its functions.
- There must be a full-time professionally qualified District Planning Officer to head the District Planning Unit. If such persons are unavailable in the government, appointment of professionals on contract or outsourcing is an option to be considered and acted upon.
- Institutional support through universities and research institutions, both at the District and State levels, could be identified for assisting the DPC in planning, monitoring and evaluation.
- The Planning Commission should continue to provide the required support for district planning as was done earlier, except that this would now be provided to the DPC.
- Experts could be assigned to work either individually or in teams. They could be taken on a part-time basis, on assignment basis or full-time, if the need arises.
- It is for the State to determine the number of Experts that can be drawn to assist the DPC. This could depend upon the extent of devolution in each state.
- Though ideally they are best drawn locally, experts can be drawn even from outside the jurisdiction of the district, if required. Care must be taken to ensure that participation is voluntary, above partisan politics and able to respect different points of view.
- With growing urbanization of smaller and intermediate sized towns, there is need to especially draw in experts on municipal matters and the urban rural interface to assist the DPC in planning for local resource sharing, area planning, soil and waste and sewage disposal and other such matters which call for close coordination between *Panchayats* and Municipalities.
- The DPC could also constitute a few sectoral sub-committees for both the envisioning and the consolidation processes.
- It is strongly recommended that each Intermediate *Panchayat* be provided a planning and data unit, which could also be integrated into the larger concept of having a Resource Centre at each Intermediate *Panchayat* level, to provide a basket of pooled services, such as for engineering, agriculture, watershed development, women and child care, public health etc., which *Gram Panchayats* can draw upon for support in planning and implementation.
- One of the primary tasks of the DPC would be to build capacity for decentralized planning in the district. A major impediment to proper planning is the lack of personnel providing planning support and availability of good and comprehensible information at the Intermediate and *Gram Panchayat* level.
- The DPC should be entrusted with anchoring the preparation of the vision document, the maintenance of databases, training of planners, evaluation of outcomes, internal monitoring of performance and independent evaluation of outcomes.

Source: Report of 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission

Criticality of greater awareness about integrated district planning

The significance of Integrated District Planning processes needs to be understood and assimilated by various important stakeholders with far greater gravity. Unless the urgency and non-negotiability of the exercise is communicated to the districts with due seriousness, integrated and decentralized district plans will only remain a dream! Clear directives need to be issued to various line departments to desist from undertaking parallel micro-planning processes without active involvement of local governments, and no district level plans – regardless of agencies preparing them – should be allowed to escape the scrutiny of District Planning Committees.

Planning Commission and the state level Department of Planning must also take strong punitive actions against district authorities failing to facilitate integrated district planning processes in time for integration with the state plan.

At the level of local governments, the opportunity to engage with district planning processes must be propagated as a matter of right of elected people's representatives, and capacity building processes must have strong in-built awareness-generation components to emphasize upon such rights. In addition, local communities must be made aware of the importance of *Gram Sabha* based planning processes, through mass media and locally suitable modes of creative communication. Several flagship schemes have significant financial provisions related to information, education and communication (IEC), which remain severely under-utilized in most places. Such provisions can be made good use of in bringing about greater mass awareness about the significance of decentralized district planning exercise.

The need for clarity regarding financial outlays for planning

According to Planning Commission's Manual for Integrated District Planning, the states are expected to play an important role of mapping budgets related to various resource windows and conveying the same to every planning unit, in order that the same could be used for planning purposes. All available resource envelopes meant for use at the district level, including funds relating to various centrally sponsored schemes and district-specific components of state budgets, need to be de-segregated for various local governments for making micro-planning processes meaningful.

Lack of clarity about financial outlays at various levels in a district appeared as a big challenge for the district planning exercise in Vaishali, which made the planning exercise somewhat speculative, though based on an examination of expenditure data for previous years. Timely preparation of clear 'resource envelopes', disaggregated for various levels, sectors and schemes, should be an essential prerequisite for initiating integrated decentralized planning processes, to preempt situations where plan-sizes and contents are required to be revised at a later stage! However, given that the planning process in Vaishali was undertaken well in advance for the financial year 2010 – 2011, there is a

significant opportunity of informing the process of laying down district level plan targets and financial outlays undertaken by the Department of Planning at the state level for different sectors.

Also, a comparative analysis of expenditure levels in a district relative to the rest of the state can help in stimulating performance towards enhancing the role of the State in the lives of common people, indicated through per capita expenditure levels. Presentation of the relative expenditure levels of Vaishali (ref. Box 5.3) during a workshop of government officials generated good discussion around the same. It was felt that in-depth, multi-sectoral planning undertaken in consultation with people could help in ensuring a greater range of interventions in the villages, which in turn could lead to enhancement of the relative expenditure levels of the district.

Box 5.3 – Analysis of relative expenditure levels of Vaishali district for 2007-08

Parameters	Vaishali	Bihar
Total Expenditure (In Rs. Crore)	491.77	29720.48
Non-Plan expenditure	364.02	19058.15
Expenditure on central Schemes	0.02	9.8
Expenditure on centrally-sponsored Schemes	13.19	925.19
Expenditure on State schemes	71.20	5773.65
Expenditure on other items	43.34	3953.69
Gross per capita expenditure (Rs.)	1543.57	3055.40
On primary education (Rs.)	221.1 (Rank within state: 6)	399.72
On secondary education (Rs.)	58.55 (Rank within state: 19)	91.79
On higher education (Rs.)	0.93 (Rank within state: 16)	88.25
On health care (Rs.)	48.45 (Rank within state: 22)	107.54
On drinking water (Rs.)	9.41 (Rank within state: 22)	31.06
On welfare of SC/ST/backward classes (Rs.)	17.27	25.5
On social security and welfare (Rs.)	24.29	39.47
On nutrition (Rs.)	36.55	36.19
On roads and bridges (Rs.)	25.16	41.5
On public works (Rs.)	8.89	20.1

Source: Economic Survey 2008-09, Government of Bihar

Investment in capacity building of local government functionaries

“We used to make plans earlier as well but it was never integrated like it is this time! The training provided a comprehensive idea about the planning process to us and our Panchayat secretaries.”

Mukhiya, Ranipur Panchayat

When the decentralized planning process was rolled out across various local governments of the district, it enjoyed the support of a good range of stakeholders. The support received from various local bodies was due mainly to an intensive round of workshops involving key functionaries of *gram Panchayats* and urban local bodies in Vaishali, discussed earlier in Chapter 3. One of the most significant features of the process in Vaishali was the investment of a substantial amount of resources in development of local capacities amongst key functionaries of various local governments, covering elected leaders as well as important service providers (ref. Table 5.1). This was an unprecedented initiative that played an important role in production of decentralized plans.

Agencies facilitating integrated district plans must necessarily have a capacity building perspective for strengthening *Panchayati Raj* Institutions, and must provide inputs towards bolstering democratic processes. Design of training modules for PRI leaders must include inputs around issues of equity, accountability and democratic governance, and should not be limited merely to technicalities of planning processes. The choice of technical support agencies and assessment of their perspectives and strategies hold crucial significance to this effect.

Table 5.1 – The number of PRI functionaries attending the 2-day trainings

Blocks	Number of Panchayats	Number of PRI functionaries attending the 2-day trainings				
		Mukhiyas	Up-Mukhiyas	Panchayat Sachivs	Panchayat Rozgar Sevaks	Total
Raghopur	20	14	6	7	6	33
Mahua	24	16	9	16	19	60
Rajapakar	13	12	8	12	9	41
Patepur	32	14	15	29	0	58
Garaul	16	11	9	10	9	39
Desri	8	5	3	6	4	18
Sahdei Buzurg	11	5	1	7	2	15
Mahnar	14	11	12	11	13	47
Patedhi Belsar	9	7	5	4	6	20
Chehrakala	12	12	9	10	10	41
Jandaha	23	19	8	16	17	60
Bidupur	24	11	6	4	12	33
Hajipur	26	17	12	16	1	46
Vaishali	16	13	5	13	5	36
Bhagwanpur	21	17	20	13	17	67
Lalganj	21	15	12	18	15	60
Total	290	199	140	192	145	674

In addition to training of leaders and key functionaries of the local bodies, one of important strategies employed in the process in Vaishali the was identification of one competent local resource person in each village by the facilitators, to work closely with them and avail of hands-on training in facilitation to be able to support similar planning exercises undertaken in future. Identification of such local resource persons helped the facilitators immensely in accessing important information about the villages and in establishing contact with key local people.

In this context, it is important to mention that the cumulative cost of extending support to the decentralized planning process in Vaishali, including the costs of training workshops at various levels, the remuneration paid to the concerned staff and consultants of UNICEF, PRAXIS, DPMC and CENCORED, and the cost of logistics of the large scale exercise worked out to less than two-thirds of the amount earmarked for capacity building at the district level under a provision like BRGF. Box 5.4 outlines the costs incurred in organizing capacity building processes related to the decentralized district planning exercise in Vaishali.

Box 5.4 – Costs of organizing capacity building processes in Vaishali

Training for functionaries of <i>Gram Panchayats</i>	Rs. 441903
Training of representatives of municipalities	Rs. 36666
Training of govt. functionaries on decentralized planning	Rs. 245996
Orientation of <i>Zilla Parishad</i> and <i>Nagar Parishad</i> functionaries	Rs. 9967

Micro-level institutional arrangements

At the policy level, there seems a strong need for provisions for making the 'ward' a meaningful sub-unit of local self-governance without diluting the mandate and authority of a *Panchayat*, given the heterogeneous character of most *gram Panchayats* in Bihar. A good example to follow is the 'Strengthening Rural Decentralization' project of Government of West Bengal, which provides for devolution of untied funds and planning opportunities to each of the constituent wards of a *Panchayat* towards deepening of democratic processes within a *Panchayat*.

With the intent of strengthening the democratic processes related to the decentralized planning processes in Vaishali, steering committees were formed at the level of each ward (unit of representation of about 500 people in rural areas; and between 1200 – 15000 people in urban areas, depending upon the type of municipality) to support the elected representatives at the ward level in the planning process. This was a pioneering arrangement at the ward level, not envisaged even in the Bihar *Panchayati Raj Act 2006*. While the Bihar Municipality Act 2007 provides for constitution of Ward Committees, such bodies have not been formed in most municipal bodies in the state, including those in Vaishali. Each set of plan suggestions emerging from the ward level was duly signed off by at least twenty local residents constituting the ward level steering committees, who were nominated by members of the *gram Panchayat*. While this helped in making the process democratic at the local level, formal involvement of at least twenty people in each ward also made fulfillment of the quorum (twentieth part of the total number of voters in a *Panchayat*, amounting roughly to about 210 voters) for a valid *Gram Sabha* much easier! Also, constitution of Ward level Steering Committees helped some *Mukhiyas* in conducting *Gram Sabhas* even in the absence of ward members, particularly on 15th August when many ward members went to block office and other places to attend various functions.

One of the important learnings from Vaishali was regarding the need for strengthening of the Standing Committees of local bodies, by clearer delineation of their roles and responsibilities in the Bihar Panchayat Raj Act, and formulation of clear rules for such responsibilities to take effect meaningfully. Ideally, the Standing Committees should be an important point of consolidation of local plans for different thematic areas.

Need for meaningful follow up of local plans

Every effort needs to be made to respect the sanctity of integrated plans emerging during the decentralized planning processes, by ensuring timely release of funds for implementation, and setting up of monitoring mechanisms at the level of standing committees of PRIs and vigilance committees at the level of *Gram Sabhas*. Capacity of Standing Committees need to be enhanced to keep track of the monitoring indicators spelt out within the detailed specifications of plan proposals, and to hold responsible authorities accountable with respect to

their roles outlined in the local plans. It also calls for transparency with regard to the final choice of interventions in different sectors of intervention and its correspondence with the Plan proposals for the forthcoming year.

At the district level, Monitoring Cells need to be set up within District Planning Committees to track the progress of district planning processes and to extend facilitation support to diffuse emerging problems, if any. Establishment of a District Planning and Monitoring Cell in Vaishali district, aimed at providing secretariat support to the District Planning Committee, helped significantly in preparation of an integrated district plan for the year 2010-11 in the district.

Dealing with raised expectations of people and their leaders – a critical need!

The high degree of participation of various communities, elected leaders and their forums during the decentralized planning exercise, which has generated strong hopes and expectations amongst thousands of people regarding the greater likelihood of future interventions addressing their longstanding aspirations, implies that every effort needs to be made to respect and respond to the expectations of people.

Also, if the expectations of the people and elected leaders with regard to expected interventions for 2010-11 are not met, it would hold extremely adverse implications for future. This will have strong bearings on the participation levels of elected PRI members in similar processes in future and would affect their trust in the system of development administration.

A possible strategy for managing this risk could be to set aside a part of the BRGF fund for 2010-2011 for meeting the unfulfilled aspirations of people, left unaddressed after application of various appropriate schemes/programmes to different components of the integrated district plan for 2010-11.

This also calls for an effective ‘Grievance Redressal System’ at the state as well as district level to deal with the unfulfilled expectations of various participants of the planning process or any instances of unreasonable transgression of the democratic prerogative of elected bodies. Establishment of such a mechanism could help in holding higher level planning bodies accountable for their choice of interventions.

The need for judicious utilization of provisions like BRGF

The Backward Region Grant Fund provides an extremely significant window of opportunity to *Panchayati Raj* Institutions to undertake decentralized planning across a wide range of local needs. However, it seems BRGF-aided planning processes being undertaken in most districts of Bihar with support from various technical support agencies have got reduced to a scheme-specific planning exercise, often with little or no involvement of *Gram Sabhas*. Ideally, micro-plans prepared with support from provisions like BRGF should emerge as a singular point of reference for all schemes and interventions meant for local development. Once an integrated, comprehensive plan is prepared and approved by *Gram Sabhas*, it should leave no need for any parallel planning exercise to be undertaken for any scheme or purpose, by any line department or agency – at least with regard to direct interventions at the level of communities. After ensuring

dovetailing of various local needs to appropriate flagship schemes, only those interventions ought to be supported under BRGF that cannot be taken up under any of the regular schemes.

Any integrated district planning exercise, whether undertaken under BRGF or otherwise, must ensure prior concurrence amongst various stakeholders, regarding the need to preempt any parallel planning processes. This would necessarily demand formal workshops or interactions with functionaries of various line departments, officers at block and sub-division levels, and all heads of various planning-support functions at the district level (e.g. the DM, DDC, DPRO or DPO) to preempt such possibilities. Key planning bodies at the state and national levels must also play an active role in facilitating such concurrence, and ensure steps towards integrated planning processes.

Need for a mechanism for facilitation of convergence

Convergence-facilitation units need to be set up within the structures of District Planning Committees, including representatives of various line departments, to extend help in finalization of interventions on the basis of integrated plans. Such units need to be set up also at the state level, for guiding convergence across various line departments.

At the grass-root level, it was felt that deployment of a few dedicated Engineers across different clusters of *Panchayats* to examine and rationalize the estimates proposed by the people for various aspired interventions could make the financial dimension of local plans reasonable and less prone to chances of oversight/deferment.

Convergence is also required across the plethora of Departments and Technical Support Institutes involved in undertaking or supporting planning processes for a variety of purposes. In particular, coordination is required between the Departments of *Panchayati Raj* and Planning; to avoid duplication of efforts and resources in production of Integrated District Plans.

Need for clear directives for de-segregation of Gender and SC Sub-Plans

There is also a strong need for clear directives from the Department of Planning and Development to various planning units seeking de-segregation of plan components related to Scheduled Castes and on the lines of gender, in order that each set of Plans has a clearly discernible gender sub-plan and an SC sub-plan. During the planning process in Vaishali, a checklist was included in the design of the Plan booklets so as to act as a prompt for seeking de-segregation of Plans on these lines. In addition, the checklist also sought to flag plan components relevant for destitute elderly people, single women and people with disability.

The relevance of the theory of optimal ignorance

One of the important learnings of the District Planning process in Vaishali was regarding the relevance of the principle of optimal ignorance, i.e. the need for the micro-planning units to process only as much data as really necessary for planning purposes, and avoid a situation of data Diarrhea. *The responsibility of generating data for building up a local database, which can be a hugely useful aid for micro-planning, could be delegated to government functionaries deployed at the local level, e.g. the Panchayat secretary, and elected representatives should be the exempted from the responsibility of gathering data themselves.* In most villages in Vaishali, the local needs articulated by people during the planning processes were mostly regarding shortfalls in availability of government services, deficiencies in infrastructure, disproportionately low concentration of vital amenities, or aspirations of improved quality of services; which did not necessarily demand processing of all the secondary information that had been pre-organized for the planning processes. To make decentralized planning processes more feasible on a large scale and to prevent the planning processes from becoming extractive, it might be better to use only those pieces of critical information that would add value to a planning process.

Need for a reasonable time span

The process of integrated planning at the district level must start well in advance, preferably immediately after the completion of the planning and budgeting processes at the state level and should conclude by end of November so as to feed the state level processes of planning for the following year on time. The rush to conclude the planning process in Vaishali by November-end necessitated a substantially intense level of deployment of facilitators for supporting the village level processes, which could have been a more relaxed process had the processes of capacity building and planning started at least a couple of months earlier.

One key reason why the planning processes could be concluded on time in all the *Panchayats* despite large-scale transfer of *Panchayat* Secretaries during the course of the exercise was the confidence raised amongst *Mukhiyas* to anchor the planning exercise without undue dependence on the Secretaries.

Annex. A**A chronological transect of the planning exercise**

<u>Event/ Process</u>	<u>Dates/ Duration</u>
Constitution of District Planning and Monitoring Cell	February 24, 2009
Identification of PRAXIS as Technical Support Institute	April 21, 2009
Presentation to DM, DDC, DPO, DPRO, SDOs & BDOs outlining the proposed District Planning process	May 4, 2009
Inception workshop, involving the DM, members of <i>Zilla Parishad</i> & ULBs, for setting up the District Planning process and finalization of the District Vision	June 6, 2009
Constitution of Steering Body for overseeing the Planning process	June 6, 2009
Formulation of Training Modules and Planning Booklets	May – June 2009
Identification of CENCORED for facilitation of micro-level planning processes	July 2009
Interview and short-listing of facilitators for the planning process	July 11, 2009
Training of facilitators for the planning exercise, including pilot fieldwork	July 20 – 25, 2009
Workshop for Orientation of government officials regarding the District Planning process and for taking stock of the district - involving the DM, representatives of various line departments, SDOs and BDOs	July 22, 2009
Block level visioning workshops	July 27 – Aug. 18, 2009
32 batches of 2-day residential training of <i>Mukhiyas, Up Mukhiyas, Panchayat Sachivs</i> and <i>Panchayat Rozgar Sevaks</i> on Planning processes	Aug. 1 – Sept. 16, 2009
Training of elected members of municipalities in Vaishali	October 14, 2009
Decentralized village level planning processes in the stewardship of <i>Panchayati Raj</i> Institutions	Aug. 3 – Oct. 31, 2009
Decentralized planning processes in urban wards and municipalities	November 2009
Consolidation workshops at <i>Panchayat Samiti</i> level	December 1 – 15, 2009
Consolidation workshop at level of <i>Zilla Parishad</i>	
Consolidation workshop at the level of municipalities	
Consolidation workshop at the level of District Planning Committee	

Annex. B

Key people involved in facilitating the Integrated District Planning Exercise

From Unicef

- Rajiva Sinha, Programme Manager
- Koushik Kumar Nag, District Support Officer
- Vikas Singh, SPPME Specialist
- Pradeep Mishra, Consultant, District Support
- Brajesh Kumar Das, GoI-UN Joint Programme on Convergence

From Praxis (the Technical Support Institute)

- Anindo Banerjee, Head, Programme Initiatives
- Jay Kumar Verma, Programme Officer
- Mukta Ojha, Programme Officer

From District Planning and Monitoring Cell, Vaishali

- Pankaj Priya Choubey
- Shiv Shankar Pathak
- Atul Kumar Pandey
- Amitesh
- Amrita Pritam
- Subodh Kumar
- Tapas Kumar Chari

From CENCORED/ Centre Direct

(Organizations entrusted with facilitation of field processes)

- Indu Sinha
- Pranav Kumar
- Rishi Prakash Gautam
- Rajesh Ranjan (Centre Direct)
- Ashok Kumar Sinha
- Ajay Ojha
- Sameer Kumar

Facilitators of micro- level processes

Anju Sinha, Anuj Kumar, Anurag Kumar, Bhavna, Bibhishan Das, Chattu Das, Deepak Kumar, Hemlata Joshi, Kunal Kumar, Lalan Kumar Sharma, Leela Kumari, Manish Ranjan, Md. Shamshe Alam, Mithilesh Kumar Jha, Narottam Chand, Rakesh Kumar, Rakesh Kumar Pandey, Rama Shankar Mahato, Rameshwar Paswan, Rehan Anwar, Sanjay Kumar Sinha, Santosh Kumar, Shameem Aslam, Subhas Kumar, Sudha Nepali, Upendra Kumar, Usha Singh, Vijay Kumar, Vijay Kumar Jyoti, Vijaya Priyadarshini, Vikas Kumar, Vinay Kumar Saw, Vishwa Bhushan Prasad

Annex. C

A sample of the mandate of *Gram Panchayats /Gram Sabhas* in Bihar, drawing from various official documents

1 – Roles of *Panchayati Raj* institutions related to Primary Education

(Source: Resolution no. 8/3-431/95-1662 dated 24 September 2001; Department of Primary and Adult Education, Govt. of Bihar)

1.1 Related to Policy formulation, or general education works

Powers and duties of *Zilla Parishad*

- Formulation and implementation of central/state sponsored schemes at the district level
- Survey of educational activities and conduct of evaluations at the district level
- Planning of district level primary educational schemes and ensuring implementation

Powers and duties of *Panchayat Samiti*

- Monitoring of block level educational activities
- Planning for improvement of block level education as per educational policy of central/state level schemes and to ensure implementation with the consent of *Zilla Parishad*

Powers and duties of *Gram Panchayat*

- Conducting general supervision and inspection of activities undergoing in the school and undertaking remedial actions as well as sending reports to senior officials
- Planning for improvement of *Panchayat* level education as per educational policy of central/state level schemes and implementing after taking consent of higher units
- Constitution of School Education Committee (*Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti*) in each and every primary and secondary school within *Panchayat* as per the provisions under Bihar *Shiksha Samiti Adhiniyam, 2000*
- Setting up time for opening and closing of every primary and secondary school meant for specific target groups and sharing of information to all concerned person
- VEC to make all such decisions that would improve education within the school's territory under policy of central/state sponsored schemes, with the consent of *Gram Panchayat*

1.2 Related to setting up of new schools

Powers and duties of *Zilla Parishad*

- Sub-allotting the units made available by government to *Panchayats*, following govt. rules

Powers and duties of *Gram Panchayat*

- Selection of site for setting up school within *Panchayat* as per govt. provisions and distribution of units received from *Zilla Parishad* as per norms and processes determined by the government

1.3 Related to adjustment of teacher units

Powers and duties of *Panchayat Samiti*

- Adjustment of available units at the district level across different schools as per ratio of students and teachers suggested under govt. rules

Powers and duties of *Gram Panchayat*

- Sending proposals to *Panchayat Samiti* for adjustment of teacher units according to the ratio of students and teachers in the light of govt. rules

1.4 Related to up-gradation of primary school to middle school

Powers and duties of **Panchayat Samiti**

- Approval of list of primary schools for up-gradation to middle school in the light of govt. rules, as per proposal received from *Panchayat Samiti* and sending approved proposal to Deputy Regional Director, Education through District Superintendent of Education

1.5 Related to enrolments, dropouts, achievements, competitions and examination of class 8

Powers and duties of **Zilla Parishad**

- Planning for campaign at the district level for enrolment of all children of age group 6-14 in schools and its implementation
- Running special enrolment campaigns in all the schools in the district with the support of officials/ NGOs/staff/important person/teachers/parents on a specific date in the month of January every year
- Undertaking evaluation of the phenomenon of dropping out amongst enrolled children in all the schools of the district and making effective arrangements for preventing the same
- Supervision and inspection of all the schools in the districts for ensuring arrangements for education based on minimum standards of learning for all the children
- Making arrangements for necessary preparation of students for admission in schools of excellence
- Supervision and evaluation of collective examination of class 8th at district level

Powers and duties of **Panchayat Samiti**

- Provide necessary support to *Zilla Parishad* for running enrolment campaign in the district and independently planning for enrolment campaign at the block level and ensuring its implementation
- Monitoring of enrolment register prepared by teachers of all the schools in the block
- Undertaking evaluation of the phenomenon of dropping out amongst enrolled children in all the schools of the block and making effective arrangements for preventing the same, as well as sending report to *Zilla Parishad* for taking measures
- Ensuring minimum standards of learning in all the schools of the block, besides offering and implementing necessary suggestions
- Making preparations at block level for admission of students in schools of excellence
- Supervision and evaluation of collective examination of class 8th at block level

Powers and duties of **Gram Panchayat**

- Provide necessary support at the *Panchayat* level to *Zilla Parishad* and *Panchayat Samiti* for running enrolment campaigns
- Ensuring 100% enrolment of the children eligible for school-enrolment in the catchment of schools located at the *Panchayat* level with necessary support from VEC
- Extend necessary support to teachers in preparing enrolment registers and monitoring
- Evaluation of drop-out of enrolled and migrated students from all the schools in the block, taking effective measures to check drop-out, providing necessary suggestions and ensuring implementation of the same
- Ensuring minimum standards of learning in all the schools at *Panchayat* level, evaluation of achievements in this regard and offering suggestions for elimination of deficiencies
- Making preparations at *Panchayat* level for admission of students in schools of excellence
- Making necessary arrangements for students to attend collective examination of class 8th

1.6 Related to construction repairing and maintenance of school building

Powers and duties of **Zilla Parishad**

- Deciding numbers of schools to be constructed/repared block wise and allotment of funds received from govt. and different sources as per proposals and recommendations of *Panchayat Samities*, district administration or Department of Primary Education
- Receiving expenditure details and ensuring that details are sent to govt. after integration

Powers and duties of **Panchayat Samiti**

- Selection of schools to be constructed/repared as per funds received from *Zilla Parishad* and making it available to *Panchayats*

- Preparing detailed statement of expenditure related to constructions and ensuring it to be sent to *Zilla Parishad*
- Receiving proposal from *Panchayats* for construction/repairing of schools and sending the same to *Zilla Parishad*

Powers and duties of **Gram Panchayat**

- Construction of schools as per funds received from *Panchayat Samiti* in VEC's supervision
- Sending recommendations to *Panchayat Samiti* for construction of school in the *Panchayat*
- Sending expenditure details to *Panchayat Samiti*

1.7 Related to allotment of contingency funds received from government

Powers and duties of **Zilla Parishad**

- Sub-allotment of contingency fund received from govt. to schools through District Superintendent of Education
- Receiving expenditure details of sub-allotted funds, integration of the same and ensuring that the details reach govt./Dept.

Powers and duties of **Panchayat Samiti**

- Evaluation of expenditure of contingency funds in the block

Powers and duties of **Gram Panchayat**

- Ensuring proper expenditure of allotted contingency fund received from *Zilla Parishad* through VEC
- VEC will purchase learning materials from the fund received and make available to schools

1.8 Related to Mid-Day Meal and scholarships

Powers and duties of **Zilla Parishad**

- Monitoring and evaluation of distribution of Mid-Day Meal as well as scholarships in all schools in the district and removing the hurdles in the way of implementation of these schemes

Powers and duties of **Panchayat Samiti**

- Monitoring and evaluation of implementation of these schemes in all the schools in the blocks
- Approval, distribution and supervision of the scholarships through VEC
- Lifting of mid-day meals from block and ensuring distribution through VEC

1.9 Related to appointment of para-teachers

Powers and duties of **Gram Panchayat**

- Appointment of para teachers as per govt. norms, inspection and evaluation of their work, disbursement of their remuneration and relieving them from work (govt will formulate rules)

1.10 Administrative works

Powers and duties of **Zilla Parishad**

- Sanction of casual leave and permission for leaving headquarter of District Superintendent of Education to be granted by *Zilla Parishad Adhyaksha*; and subsequently by Deputy Development Commissioner cum Chief Executive Officer. No need to take approval for participating in departmental meetings but DDC should be informed before leaving headquarter
- Making recommendations for termination of teachers of primary and middle schools in a district to competent officer, on which the latter would act promptly according to rules

Powers and duties of **Panchayat Samiti**

- Block Education Extension Officer and Area Education Officer would seek approval from *Pramukh Panchayat Samiti* for casual leaves or before leaving headquarter; leave would be sanctioned subsequently by BDO /Executive Officer, *Panchayat Samiti*
- Making recommendations for termination of teachers of primary and middle schools in a block to competent officers on which the latter would act promptly according to rules

Powers and duties of **Gram Panchayat**

- Supervision and inspection of all primary and middle schools in a *Panchayat*. dispatch of documents related to schools and teachers for necessary action to Block Education Extension Officer or District Superintendent of Education
- Making recommendations for termination of teachers of primary and middle schools to competent officers, on which the latter would act promptly according to rules
- Ensuring the following works through *Vidyalaya Shiksha Samiti*:
 - Ensuring timely and regular attendance of Headmaster/Head Teacher/Assistant Teacher
 - Registering absence of Headmaster/Head Teacher/Assistant Teacher in case of late attendance or absenteeism without prior notice, and advising the DDO for deduction in salary for that particular date
 - Consideration of explanation given by Headmaster/Head Teacher/Assistant Teacher regarding unauthorized absence and conveying decision to DDO
 - Sanctioning Casual Leave of Headmaster/Head Teacher/Assistant Teacher

1.11 Related to transfer of teachers

Powers and duties of **Zilla Parishad**

- Transfer of teachers of primary and middle schools from one block to another (in keeping with govt. rules)

Powers and duties of **Panchayat Samiti**

- Transfer of teachers of primary and middle schools from one *Panchayat* to another (in keeping with govt. rules)

2. Role of Gram Sabha in facilitating access to govt. services and schemes

(Source: Letter no. 10923, dated 16 Sept. 2006; File no. RD/7-SGSY-Camp-05/06; sent by Chief Secretary, Govt. of Bihar; Revalidated vide Chief Secretary's Letter no. 2477, dated 3 March 2008)

"Gram Sabha is an important medium for people's participation in the *Panchayati Raj* system. Therefore it has been decided to establish Village Development Camps for facilitating easy access of development schemes and other services of the government for the common public through the *Gram Sabha*."

3. Role of Gram Sabha with respect to selection of economic activities, SHGs and beneficiaries under Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

(Source: Ready Reference for implementation of SGSY based on directives of RBI (endorsed by State level Bankers Committee in a meeting dated 19 Nov. 2007)

"Self Help Groups and individual *swarojgaris* should be selected only out of the list of Below Poverty Line households endorsed by the *Gram Sabha*. Active cooperation of the *Gram Panchayat* should be availed of in selection of key economic activities and in recovery of loans as well."

4. Role of Panchayat Raj institutions with regard to Watershed Development projects

(Source: Excerpts from Common Guidelines for Watershed Development Projects, GoI, 2008; endorsed by the Government of Bihar)

"The DPC will provide full governance support to the IWDP programme. The DPC will approve

the perspective and annual action plans relating to watersheds projects in the district. DPC will integrate the watershed development plans with over all district plans and also oversee its implementation.”

“The District *Panchayat /Zilla Parishad* will have an important role of governance in matters relating to the co-ordination of various sectoral schemes with watershed development projects, review of progress, settling disputes etc. Similarly, Intermediate *Panchayats* have an important role in planning the watershed development projects at the intermediate level. They can also provide valuable support to PIAs and *Gram Panchayats/ Watershed Committees* in technical guidance with the help of their subject matter specialists.”

“The *Gram Panchayat* would perform the following important functions:

- Supervise, support and advise Watershed Committee from time to time;
- Authenticate the accounts/ expenditure statements of Watershed Committee and other institutions of watershed project;
- Facilitate the convergence of various projects/ schemes to institutions of watershed development project;
- Maintain asset registers under watershed development projects with a view to retain it after the watershed development project;
- Provide office accommodation and other requirements to Watershed Committee;
- Allocate usufruct rights to deserving user groups/ SHGs over the assets created

In addition, *Gram Panchayat / Gram Sabha* is mandated to constitute Watershed Committees with the assistance of WDT (Watershed Development Team). The Secretary of the Watershed Committee (WC) should be selected in a meeting of the *Gram Sabha*. User Groups are responsible for the operation and maintenance of all the assets created under the project in close collaboration with the *Gram Panchayat* and the *Gram Sabha*. The *Gram Sabha* should ratify rules for operation of the Watershed Development Fund as well.

5. Role of *Gram Sabha* and elected members of *Panchayats* with regard to *Swajaldhara* schemes

(Source: Excerpts from the outline of the *Swajaldhara* scheme hosted on the website of Department of Public Health and Engineering)

“Responsibility of selection, distribution, formulation and implementation of drinking water supply schemes in a *Panchayat* lies with the communities (*Gram Sabha*) and elected members of *Panchayat*.”

6. Role of PRIs in National Food Security Mission

(Source: Guidelines for National Food Security Mission, Govt. of Bihar and Govt. of India, 2008)

“*Panchayati Raj* Institutions will be actively involved in selection of beneficiaries (specifically related to seed/ micro-nutrients extension programmes, integrated pest management, farm mechanization and demonstration sites) and identification of priority areas for the implementation of Mission (National Food Security Mission) interventions and implementation of local initiatives in the identified districts. The selection of beneficiaries for distribution of seed, seed mini-kits and nutrient management/soil ameliorants will be done in consultation with village *Panchayats* and the *Zilla Parishads*.”

7. Role of *Panchayat* representatives in dealing with Child Labor

(Source: State Plan of Action for Elimination, Release and Rehabilitation of Child Labour, contained in Bihar Extraordinary Gazette no. 555, October 2009)

Under this plan state has envisaged a taskforce, which shall be constituted at every block headed by *Pramukh* of the *Panchayat Samiti* and the Block Development Officer being the Member Secretary. A similar task force would be constituted at every *Gram Panchayat* with *Mukhiya* as the chairman and *Panchayat* Secretary as the Member Secretary.

These taskforces, under general control and supervision of the district taskforce, would plan, implement, coordinate and track the identification, release, and rehabilitation of child labour and education of all working children within their jurisdiction.

8. Role of *Panchayat* representatives in National Rural Health Mission

(Source: ASHA selection guidelines, Government of Bihar)

Gram Panchayats have the powers of selection of ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activists), which is to be undertaken in public meetings convened in different villages/hamlets of a *Panchayat* by the *Gram Panchayat*.

(Source: Document on Rogi Kalyan Samiti (Sub-society of State Health Society)/ State Health Society Bihar)

Members of *Rogi Kalyan Samiti* at the level of *Sadar* hospitals include two nominated members of *Zilla Parishad*.

9. Role of *Panchayat* representatives in implementation of NREGA

(Source: Operational guidelines, NREGA, 2008)

Role of *Gram Sabha*: The rights and responsibilities of *Gram Sabha* under NREGA include: (i) recommending works to be taken up under NREGS, (ii) conducting social audits on implementation of the Scheme, (iii) sharing information about the Scheme.

Role of *Gram Panchayat*: The *Gram Panchayat* is the pivotal body for implementation at the village level and is responsible for the following activities:

(i) planning of works, (ii) receiving applications for registration, (iii) verifying registration applications, (iv) registering households, (v) issuing Job Cards, (vi) receiving applications for employment, (vii) issuing dated receipts, (viii) allotting employment within fifteen days of application, (ix) executing works, (x) maintaining records, (xi) convening the *Gram Sabha* for social audit, (x) monitoring the implementation of the Scheme at the village level.

Role of Intermediate *Panchayat*: The Intermediate *Panchayat* will be responsible for the consolidation of the GP plans at the Block level into a Block Plan and for monitoring and supervision

Role of District *Panchayats*: District *Panchayats* will be responsible for finalizing the District Plans and the Labour Budget and for monitoring and supervising the Employment Guarantee Scheme in the District.

10. Role of local bodies in management of water resources

(Source: Draft of State Water Policy, 2009)

“Water User Federations, and local bodies like Municipalities and *Gram Panchayats* should be progressively included in the operations, maintenance and management of water bodies/facilities at the appropriate level in order that the management of such facilities could actually be transferred to the water user groups/ local bodies.”

Annex. D

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