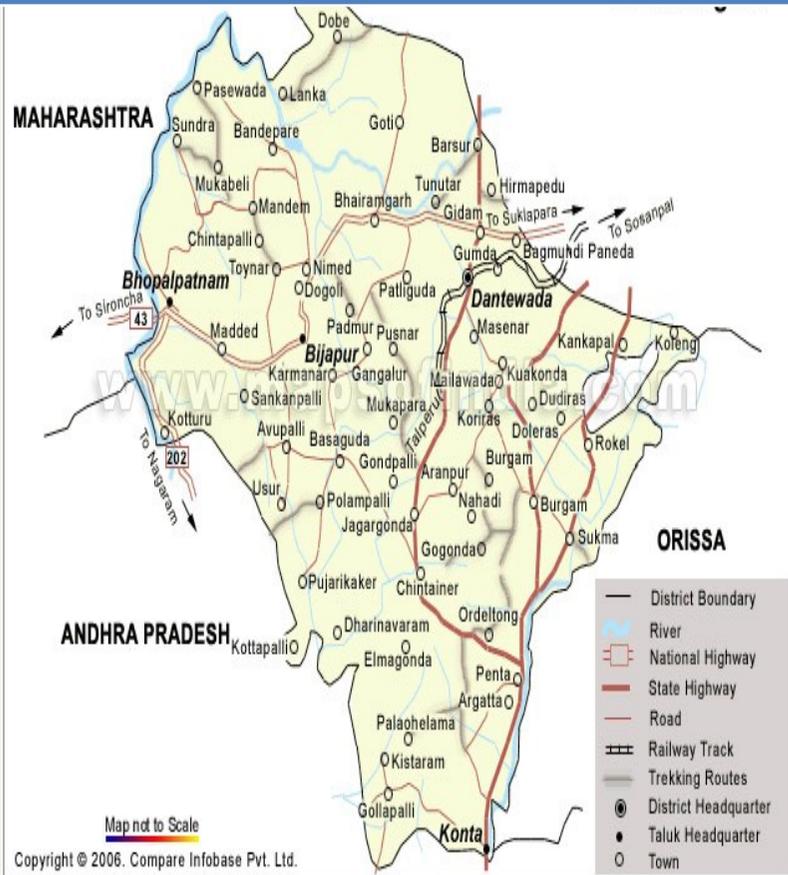


Against the Odds: Educational Initiatives in Dantewada



Against the Odds: A Case Study of Educational Initiatives in Dantewada

Manisha Priyam, Sanjeev Chopra, Om Prakash Chaudhary¹

Case Summary: This case presents a story of policy entrepreneurship against the odds. In India's federal framework, education is now a constitutionally mandated fundamental right of every citizen. However, its real life realisation is not a guarantee. While it is critically dependent on the state as a provider in a general sense, the difficult and contrarian circumstances in which district Dantewada achieved this right for its children, also highlights the role of local policy leadership in India's multi-level institutional framework of policy and governance. Notwithstanding the odds which included a very poor citizenry, caught amidst an adversarial state-citizen relationship, a violent ideology of ultra-left extremism, and ruined infrastructure, the District Collector envisioned schooling, and thereafter the full cycle of education, as a breakthrough from this impasse. Translating vision goals into actionable programmes required innovative thinking on pooling budgets, raising resources, and identifying personnel who could root the 'new', alongside perceptive, strategic planning. While this achieved in the minimum, a basis for evolving trust for the government, it's best case scenario is its potential for social mobility and human development of the beneficiaries—in this instance children who went through this institutional intermediation by the state. This latter achievement remains outside the pale of quantifiable indicators.

The case narrative unfurls as a descriptive account, highlighting at first the odds of context—the real frame in which we need to embed our vision in order to understand the significance of the Dantewada interventions, followed by an insight into the decision sequences that make the vision actionable. This latter highlights the collector as a part of a hierarchy, acting vertically in a chain of command from above, which has both policy and political executives on top, horizontal peers in the district, and 'street level' public bureaucracy as the hands and feet of this programme. In the third section, there is an overview of the interventions themselves, and here a triangulation has been attempted in terms of opening up the case to include community voices. In conclusion, there are reflections on the concrete aspects of implementation as also the horizon of vision. The attempt

¹ Authors are respectively-Manisha Priyam is a Ph. D. from the London School of Economics and Political Science, and ICSSR fellow at Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Sanjeev Chopra is an officer of the Indian Administrative Service, currently Joint Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture, Government of India, Om Prakash Chaudhary is an officer of the Indian Administrative Service, currently with the Government of Chattisgarh.

here is to understand whether there could have been alternate decision sequences, and what the challenges are of taking this experience to scale in other districts handling ideologically based violence classified as 'Left Wing Extremism' (LWE), or conflict zones in general.

I. The Context: A People Entrenched in Poverty and Remoteness

India knows district Dakshin Bastar Dantewada of Chhattisgarh for reasons of its being at the fore-front of the armed struggle between state security forces and groups of armed Left Wing Extremists—commonly referred to as 'Naxalites'. This violence has claimed many lives—that of civilians, security forces, and political leaders², and posed very serious challenges as to how normal state and development activities are to be carried out. Once part of the erstwhile district of Bastar³, it was formed as an independent district in 1998, and draws its name from the Hindu deity '*Maa Danteshwari*'. The region borders the states of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Orissa. Over 60 per cent of the district is under forest cover (consisting of mainly of rich teak-wood), and the region boasts of very rich mineral reserves of iron ore⁴, tin, kimberlite, and silica among others. It is predominantly a tribal inhabited region (nearly 78 per cent of the total population) —the major tribal groups are *Muriya, Mariah, Halba, Gond, Bhatra, Dhurva and Dorla*. The governance of this region is done under the special provisions of the Fifth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, applicable to nine states with large tribal population, and the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA).

² The most recent incident involves the killing of the top political leadership of the Congress, including state Congress chief Nand Kumar Patel, former MLA and *Salwa Judum* founder Mahendra Karma, and Vidya Charan Shukla among others.

³ Till 1998 Bastar district was larger than the state of Kerala with around 40,000 sq km geographical area and has since 1998, been bifurcated into 7 smaller districts Bastar, Kondagaon, Kanker, Narayanpur, Dantewada, Bijapaur and Sukma. In 1998 South Bastar Dantewada was created, in 2007 Bijapur was created from Dantewada, in 2012 Sukma was created as a new district after bifurcation of the Dantewada.

⁴ The famous Bailadila iron ore mines are located in the Dantewada.

Each tribal community has its own distinct identity and language—the main dialects are *Gondi, Halbi, Bhatari and Dorli*. They also have their own beliefs, and social customs and institutions including the *panchayat* system and community heads like *Baiga, Guniya, Siraha and Badde*. These leaders still draw prominence and respect among the community. They have a rich cultural life—replete with folk songs, dances, and dramas, and the *Murga Ladai* is a very popular source of entertainment. Worshiping nature and the spirit of their forefathers are essential part of their rituals, and their festivals are targeted either to seek permission from the Mother Nature or to please their deities and forefathers. Each tribe's totem is based on the names of animal, birds and trees furthering their deep association with nature. Their lives are simple, led in the affinity of nature, and little evidence of consumerism.

1.1 Livelihood: Dependant on the Forest

It is this affinity with nature which brings us to understanding the constraints and difficulties of their livelihood—certainly an important reason why Naxalism finds easy grounds. The main occupations of the people in this district are agriculture, poultry farming, and animal husbandry. But the farming practices are very primitive. The integrated south Bastar Dantewada district has a total of 21, 7417/ hectare of cultivable land, of which the share of irrigated land is a mere 6 per cent. This implies complete dependence on rain and the harvest is single crop in a year—only in the rainy season. The productivity of land is low—only 4 to 5 quintals of grains per acre. Paddy is the main crop; in addition maize, *kodo, ragi*, pulses, nuts and mustard are also cultivated in smaller quantity. So, overall income gained from this sector is very little.

Collection of minor forest produce and labour for daily wages is therefore a necessary supplement to their income, indeed a necessity for subsistence. After the month of December when the agricultural season ends, collection of minor forest produce like *mahua, tendu* leaves, *Datun* twigs, fruits, fire wood, *Basta* (root of new/ infant bamboo tree), *Boda, Tikhur, Chati, Dhup, Chiraunji* (a dry fruit), and fish. The tribes of *Dantewada* are also excellent artisans, and make *soop* and baskets with bamboo, and craft artistic items using clay, stone, metals, shell, and peacock feathers. The collection of minor forest produce brings in them in frequent disputes with forest officials, and forms the reason for ground level acrimony with state functionaries. The Forest Rights Act of 2006 is a statutory recognition of the rights of communities to protect and manage their forests.

1.2 Remoteness and Development Deficit

Quantitative indicators of development confirm the districts poor achievements on human development indicators, as compared to other districts of Chattisgarh, and abysmal as compared to All-India averages. This is especially evident in terms of the low educational attainment in the district—a low literacy rate of 30.2 per cent is less than half the state average of 64.7 per cent, and an All India average of 75 per cent.⁵ These low achievements are in a large measure the result of ‘remoteness’ of the district from visible institutions and milestones of development. This ‘remoteness’ is also self-perpetuating, posing insurmountable structural challenges in terms of furthering development. The case of ‘success’ of educational initiatives in Dantewada, is further underscored, as notwithstanding the challenges of structure, initiatives of a public agency (in this case the collector), made a difference.

⁵ Figures for Dantewada and Chattisgarh are cited from Chattisgarh Human Development Report, 2005 and all India average from decennial Census 2011.

The present Dakshin Bastar area has historically remained isolated from other parts of the country and hence remained underdeveloped. Till the formation of the state of Chhattisgarh in the year 2000, residents of the old united Dakshin Bastar district travelled more than 900 kilo-metres to reach the then state capital Bhopal, in Madhya Pradesh. Distance from other institutions, such as the high court bench in Jabalpur, educationally developed cities like Indore, Gwalior, Bhopal, Jabalpur, as also cities which were employment centres for skilled or unskilled labour—was all too far for the natives of this region. Added to the distance, the quality of the roads was sub-standard and inter-connectivity between villages and from villages to nearest facility centres of health, education and market was non-existent. Even now, a district (reference here is to old district of Dantewada) spread over 18,599 square kilo-meters, is served by merely 1217.45 kilo-meters of road (National 295 kilo-meters, State Highway kilo-meters, Major District Road of 110.40 kilo-meters, other district Roads of 273.25 kilo-meters, and rural roads 96 kilo-meters). Out of the 606 villages, only one-third (i.e. 227 villages, 37.46 per cent) are connected with all-weather roads. Under these conditions, many development blocks, specially in un-divided Batsar (45 blocks then), would not report even one visit by public officials, including heads of developmental department in their entire tenure.

There is a weak penetration of modern communication technology, specially telephones, mobile and internet. There are 5029 land line connections, mere 43 per cent coverage of mobile network, and the connectivity is poor with BSNL being the sole service provider. But there is a deeper sense in which this region remains isolated and remote from mainland India—this is accounted for by lack of language skills other than their own dialects, inability to communicate with the outside the world, and very low literacy rates reinforcing the remoteness. This also leads us to understand why India's most deprived and poorest are unable to 'demand' for their rights—in this case their right to education.

The remoteness of the region is reinforced by a stylised presentation of random facts below:

Table 1: Dantewada is Poorly Served by Modern Development

- Only one passenger train (daily) running from Vishakhapatnam
- Contrast this with 25 daily trips of freight trains from Bailadila iron ore mines
- First petrol station of the district head quarter set up in 2011; Until 2001, no LPG outlets in the district
- Poor market access—total of 1402 villages of the district depend on 58 *hat bazaars* for purchasing their daily needs. This also makes trade in minor forest produce a very difficult affair.
- District hospitals are poorly equipped for dealing with any serious ailment; no pathological laboratory; only one private hospital run by the National Mineral Development Corporation, with limited access for locals; run mainly for their own employees.
- In official records, around 70 per cent villages are electrified, but household reach is poor
- Only 2 government colleges with in-sufficient teaching staff.
- No Polytechnic College till the year 2010 in the entire region and no Engineering college till date.

The situation was made further complex in the years of 2005-2006, when conflict between security forces and civilians on one side and extremists on the other, polarized the ground situation and rendered 35 out of the 114 village *panchayats* highly inaccessible for administration. All the developmental arms of administration were cut-off in these villages. In an environment of fear and insecurity, the biggest casualty was education, -- children deprived of education and conditions of growth, were more likely to be influenced by the ideology of extremism as they became young adults with nowhere to go. The only way to counter this was through efforts of preventing future generations from imbibing the ideology of extremism, without the capacity of being able to assess it on parameters of reason.

It was in these conditions that the district administration of Dantewada embarked upon a mission based on education spread as a tool of generational transformation.

II. The U-Turn: Naxal Heartland Dantewada Gets a New Address⁶

For a district administration which inherits such severe structural constraints, and where options of maneuvering for spaces for developmental initiatives were severely constrained by used of armed power of the state in order to contain violence, to effect the ‘**u-turn**’ and carve out for itself a new name in developmental administration, is no mean achievement. From a grim situation of nearly a hundred primary schools and special *ashram* schools blasted by Naxalite , and close to 21,000/ children out of school, by 2012, the national press was reporting stories about a new address for the district—it was being referred to as the ‘Education City’ (Bhardwaj, 2012). What is more, the range of educational initiatives were more in the nature of an extended state support, spanning the years from early stages to where a young adult makes the transition to the formal world of work. This was different in terms of being more holistic, as a contrast to the minimalist formal obligations conferred on the state under the Right to Education Act.⁷

2.1 The Constraints

When the district collector joined in March 2011⁸, the problems of educational deprivation were acute on the ground, but not evident as much in formal figures, especially on parameters of institutional provision. From **Table 2** below, it can be seen that of the 1529 elementary schools in the

⁶ This title has been borrowed from an Indian Express Report on the educational Initiatives of Dantewada—Bhardwaj, Ashutosh “Naxal heartland Dantewada gets a new address: Education City”, *The Indian Express*, January 19, 2012.

⁷ Although education is considered a fundamental right of the child/citizen, state obligation for provision is limited to providing for age groups 6-14, covering grades 1-8 of formal education, referred to as the formal cycle of elementary education.

⁸ This refers to the official tenure of district collector of Dantewada, Om Prakash Choudhary—from 31-03-2011 to 05-04-2013.

districts, only 61 showed up as being ‘non-functional’. The real problem was evident when the administration counter-posed this information with two others:

1. Household level information on out-of school children
2. Review of real functionality of schools keeping in mind lack of basic amenities like roads and bridges, and public transport

Serious gaps were evident—out of the 43,361 children of the relevant age-group of 6-14 eligible for mandatory elementary education, less than half were formally enrolled. A staggering 21,816 were out of school, bereft of the benevolent hand of the state (see **Table 3**). Lack of accessibility meant that nearly 30 per cent villages were highly inaccessible, and around 20- 30 per cent schools were practically not running properly. Remoteness and inaccessibility was a major reason for lack of teachers as well.

Table 2: Public Infrastructure for School Education, Dantewada 2011-2013					
		March 2011		March 2013	
		Number of Institutions	Numbers functional	Number of Institutions	Numbers functional
1	Primary	1236	1182	1250	1250
2	Upper Primary	293	286	393	393
3	High School	20	20	39	39
4	Higher Secondary	25	25	35	35
5	Residential Bridge Course	10	10	43	43
6	Ashram Shala	123	123	159	159
7	Hostels	47	47	80	80

Table 3: Comparative Estimate of Children of Elementary School Age and ‘Out-of School’ ,Dantewda, 2011-2013			
January 2011		January 2013	
Children in the 6-14 age group	Children out of school	Children in the 6-14 age group	Children out of school
43361	21816 (50.3 %)	44981	5780 (12.8%)

This was compounded when vacancy rates for personnel in schools were closely examined—a staggering 90 per cent of the post of head-masters for primary schools were vacant (63 vacancies out of 76 sanctioned posts), and nearly 73 per cent of the post of primary school teachers (assistant and para-teachers; sanctioned posts 2353, of which vacancies were 1734) were vacant for the year 2008-09. Clearly, the great flexibility in teacher recruitments (as para teachers on contract or local teachers as *gurujis*) under the Education Guarantee Scheme specially meant for difficult to reach tribal areas, introduced in the erstwhile Madhya Pradesh had not been able to resolve the special crisis in Bastar region. Data reported in government formats masked the reality, as it did not highlight schools with low or no-enrolment. Even amongst schools reported as functional, many schools registered attendance of only 2-5 students everyday.

But filling up vacancies was no mean task, as even after repeatedly issuing advertisements for filling of seats, very few candidates turned up. Also, while 76 per cent of the posts were reserved for scheduled tribes, most locals were not qualified enough to apply for the posts. As a result, the posts remained vacant. Thus, the two major tasks that gained priority over all others, was to identify all out of school children, and second to create adequate infrastructure, including human resources in the light of breakdown of day-school structure.

Infrastructure in Ruins, Lack of Trust: Decision Dilemmas before the Collector

The vacancies in a critical public service, known for its capacity for local employment generation was a firm signifier of the unwillingness of people to take up jobs in this area; local capacity to fill in the gap would not be available until investments in education were made, highlighting

the cyclical nature of the problem. This further limited the room for manoeuvre available to the civil administration, as it had nearly no local roots, and no street-level bureaucracy—the field staff necessary to implement development interventions. There were two questions that formed the basis for the ‘decision dilemmas’ before the collector:

1. How do I realise the citizen right while I stand as a public leader in remote Dantewada?
2. Here is a situation where there is no ‘demand’ for education—can the very poor in extreme conflict situations be in a position to make this demand? How do I lead?

The motivators for action were indeed the collector’s own child-hood experience in neighbouring Raigarh district, where educational facilities are better on account of long-term missionary activities. Parts of this district, especially Jashpur, seemed to him very comparable to Dantewada—remoteness similar to Dantewada and inhabited similarly by a very poor tribal population. But the difference between these two comparable regions was made on account of superior provision for education in Jashpur. Poverty alone did not explain lack of schooling, and once provided, good educational opportunities had a potential for change comparable to none other. What followed was a sequence of actionable initiative bringing over 12,000 children to residential schools, and providing support for all subsequent ladders of schooling—building a full horizon so to say. He understood that Naxal groups were able to operate unchallenged in this areas also because there was no questioning of their ideology and violent way of functioning by the tribals. On the other hand he realised because of lack of education and awareness, local tribals are not able to question the system about development deficit and historical passiveness. He understood that this was a problem of rooted in past history, and quick-fix solutions were not possible. But there could be a break by effecting a generational change, creating a new band of educated and empowered.

2.2 Overview of the Educational Interventions:

Sr. No.	Name of the Initiative	Context	Intervention	Output
1	Residential Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 86 ashrams and school buildings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting 53 residential schools ‘fringe’ locations in the district with free boarding and lodging facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Around 12000 out of school children enrolled in the residential schools

		<p>were blasted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 to 30 % schools were defunct, because of inaccessibility , fear psychosis and poor amenities. • More than 21000(50.3%) children of the school going age out of school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gondi and Halbi speaking local youths were appointed as <i>Anudeshaks</i> to enroll the out of school children in highly LWE affected areas. • Pre-fabricated bamboo structures were created where cement structures were not possible. • Teacher training and modern teaching inputs provided-- audio-visual rooms, educational package CDs, providing television with satellite channel connections • Learning material in local dialects like <i>Gondi</i> and <i>Halbi</i> • Work-based education model in coordination with Vigyan Ashram, Pune to ensure “learning by doing” • Bachpan Banao-Fellowship for highly motivated professionals/students to work in any of the residential schools • Extra-curricular activities-- sports, yoga, library, summer and winter camps, etc. • Strengthening of school monitoring committees for enhancing community participation • Training on RTE was also conducted on a wide scale in collaboration with NCPCR • Read India Read Project implemented with NGO Pratham • Coordination with reputed NGOs for better implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The percentage of out of school children has been decreased from 50.3 % to 13% in between January 2011 to January 2013 in 6 -14 age group • An entire generation getting educated which would have missed the bus
2	<p>Tamanna- Providing exposure to students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from education, children in this part of the world lack even the basic exposure which limits the horizons of their imagination • Many of the children have not even seen a train in their lifetime • In this region normally children don’t feel comfortable to visit district and block head quarte . 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A <i>Science Museum, District Library</i>, and a state of the art <i>Audio-Visual Theatre</i> was created in record time at the District headquarter • <i>Tamanna Film Festivals</i> are conducted on regular basis, where 150 students from the far off villages visit in buses deployed by the administration • They are also taken to places of prominence in the district headquarter • Children meet with Collector , CEO ZP, SP, DFO etc. • The children are taken to various government offices at the district level as it is most important for them to get knowledge of places from where their entitlements like caste certificate, ration card, pensions, etc are provided and also where facilities like health, education, etc. are delivered • An outdoor flood-light cricket stadium has also been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 30,000 students provided with exposure to district headquarters and some major cities • After this project children feel comfortable to visit district head quarter, when needs arise. • The distance between administration and people is decreasing by this project.

			<p>constructed at the district headquarter where tournaments are organised for school children and they are also shown other tournaments during their visits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High school students sent to farther off places like Raipur, Vishakhapatnam, etc. by <i>Tamanna Express</i> where they are taken to various educational institutions to develop career choices 	
3	<p>Nanhe Parinde- Coaching to Class 5 students to secure admission in prestigious schools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quality government schools like <i>Navodaya Vidyalay, Sainik School</i> have a tough basic admission process • Thus, they invariably end-up enrolling only those children who are more aware and exposed rather than the worse off who languish in the wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the first year of the project, 105 children from interior areas belonging to marginalised background provided special coaching with regular 5th class education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With only 10 months of mentoring, 30 children selected in Navodaya Vidyalaya Barsoor out of a total of 60 selections. • Sainik School in Ambikapur-Surguja - 1 child selected from Nanhe Parinde project • 24 children selected in Karpawand, Eklavya Vidyalaya, Bastar • 25 girls selected in Eklavya Kanya Shiksha Parisar, Katekalyan • 5 girls selected for Parchanpal Kanya Parisar, Bastar
4	<p>Creation of Residential facilities for utilizing the provision of 25% reservation in private schools under Right to Education Act</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Right to Education Act envisages enrolment of 25% children from Economically Weaker Sections of society to nearby public and private schools. • But in a place like Dantewada, this reservation would lapse • The poor parents could not afford the expense on their child's stay and food in the city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In order to reap the optimum benefits of the RTE, the district administration through measures of both negotiation and conviction convinced the private and public schools to enroll students from the most deprived sections. • These children are provided free residential facilities at nearby locations to private schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 274 Students benefitted, all of them are orphaned tribal children whose parents are killed in conflict. • Additional construction going on to accommodate 1100 more children
5	<p>Education Clusters and Shiksha Savari Yojana-</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dantewada suffered from one of the highest dropout rate at the stage of pre matric level because the high schools, which are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clusters of important junctions in the district were chosen and '<i>Educational Clusters</i>' were created by providing residential facilities to children from 9th to 12th standard. Such residential facilities not only helped in increasing and sustaining the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Earlier there were residential facilities for only 1400 students of 9th to 12th standard, but 2000 new accommodation facilities were

	To improve enrolment of students in pre-matric level.	<p>lesser in numbers than the elementary schools, are located at places which are usually at some distance from their villages.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adding to this, poor transportation facilities and non-availability of residential facilities in high schools demotivate these children to go for higher studies. • This can be gauged from the fact that though there are 45,000 students in classes 1st to 8th, this number drops down to less than 6,000 for classes 9th to 12th combined. 	<p>enrollment ratio but also improved quality of education for children in such schools.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additionally the students getting enrolled in class 9th were provided bicycles under '<i>Shiksha Savari Yojna</i>', a scheme initiated only in Dantewada District supported by IAP fund. 	<p>created by mobilizing the CSR and other District level funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cycles have been distributed to more than 3,000 students. • This has resulted in 98% of 8th passed students getting enrolled in class 9th in the year 2012-13.
6	<p>Chhoo Lo Aasman- Providing high quality science education to the children at the intermediate level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A vicious cycle of poor performance in the region in the field of science education. • In its absence, neither doctors nor/ engineers made from this area, nor good science teachers. • Lack of teachers and poor quality of education discouraged the children from opting for science subjects, and this in turn lead to unavailability of qualified professionals for the vacancies within the district • Qualified professionals from outside refused to come owing to conflict situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Realizing that it would not be possible to send adequate science teachers to schools which cater to a handful of enrolled students, consolidation of efforts by bringing together students of 11th and 12th classes in two campuses in district head quarter • Selecting best regular science teachers from the district for classes 11 and 12. • Post class room special tutorials for entrance exam provided by teachers from reputed private institutions (Vision Kota) • Prepare students for professional courses like engineering, medical, polytechnic, nursing etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 675 students benefitted from this project in the first year , 71% are girls • 96% students from the project passed in the 12th Board examination, whereas the pass percentage of the rest of the district was merely 56%. • 26% students secured first class against only 7% from the rest of the district. • Improved overall pass percentage • Three girls secure a rank in the state merit list. • Twelve students selected in AIEEE
7	<p>Education City- hub for institutions ranging from</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a backward district like Dantewada where the impetus of education rests primarily and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An entire educational hub called '<i>Education City</i>' on roughly 90 acres of land at the cost of approximately Rs. 100 Crores dedicated exclusively for residential and classroom educational 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is developing as a center of excellence and creating a positive demonstration effect.

	<p>Primary school to professional institutions like Polytechnique College in one single campus</p>	<p>wholly on the government efforts, it became pivotal to establish and create sufficient infrastructure for implementing educational initiatives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was also a need to shield the children from the strife torn socio-political milieu which they had to face every day. 	<p>facilities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 institutions have already started functioning. • Once all the campuses get functional, it will cater to around 5000 students at a given point in 13 campuses with complete residential facilities. • The education city has a CBSE Board English medium model school, Ashram under Tribal Department, Separate 500-seater residential schools for Boys and Girls, Girls hostel under RMSA, Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya, Kanya Parisar for Chhoo Lo Aasman, Astha Gurukul for violence affected orphans , Industrial Training Institute, Polytechnique college, Krida Parisar, 1000-seater state-of-the-art Auditorium, etc. • It is equipped with an Indoor and Outdoor Stadium, linking roads with Solar Street Lights and Integrated Drinking water and Drainage plan for the entire education city. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This project has been selected as 100 innovative projects across the globe by KPMG. It is one of the project amongst 6 from India, selected in the list.
8	<p>Livelihood College (Gujar-Basar College)- College for the unemployed youth, who have missed the bus of formal education.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Large population of drop-out students and youth, who had missed the regular process of education due to conflict situation and poverty • Absence of viable employment opportunities would force them to live their lives in misery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential facility on Public-private partnership model, and for youth who were barely literate or semi-literate (class 5 -12 pass). • Admissions open to all regardless of educational qualification , any income or caste criteria. • Reputed organizations like IL&FS, IndiaCan, Tomorrow’s Foundation, Cap Foundation, ISAP, ESAB, brought in to impart skill education to the youth • Practical and class room training in more than 25 different trades. • Provided further linkages for placement with industries across India • Two types of trades were focused : emerging market trends (hospitality , industrial stitching , sales , tally etc.) and to improve local skill deficit (plumber, electrician, mason, solar panel establishment and maintenance, mobile repairing etc.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College has become the harbinger of skill development and a medium of exposure & employment for the young • In one year of functioning, 1875 students trained in more than 25 different trades, whereas 1015 students are undergoing training. • 939 students have secured placements according to their trades at various places with an initial salary ranging from Rs. 4000/- to Rs. 8000/ • 936 students have opted for self-employment or work locally. • This initiative indirectly helped in breaking the most potential cadre of the Naxals.

III. Implementation Process:

Understanding the implementation is critical to delve into the reasons for success of this case. This is not simply an instance of mechanical implementation of policy design handed down from above—rather it is a response to ground realities where neither central nor state level policies, discretionary funds, nor armed intervention have been able to support the realisation of a citizen right. The implementation sequence, starting from a personal conviction, builds on the strength of what is available, and fills the gap in terms of what has not been done. Three key elements of the implementation sequence includes the following:

- Finding support from the state's political leadership, and managing the local political leadership
- A prudent use of discretionary resources from Integrated Action Plan (IAP), managing contract and expenditure procedures
- Thinking strategically on school sites and reform team

Negotiating Political Support

The collector's emphasis on schooling was different from the general state level emphasis on reforms in the Public Distribution System. So, how was a collector able to lead and implement on a different priority? Especially as this could have entailed a weak support or at-least indifference towards district initiatives, or there may even have been the chance of a negative approach towards a functionary lower down in the hierarchy displaying autonomy while in the field. In the collector's understanding, most of the ground level problems in relation to the PDS had been resolved until 2008; also timely implementation of all other state level priority programmes such as making health cards, *vanadhikaar patta* distribution built a stock of goodwill. As far as local political demands were concerned, they were mainly concerned with more populist items (and not a long term impact item such as education). The strategy here was to assist the completion of these demands by increasing resources from CSR avenues, and allow the MLA to have a visible lead in these. So by doing more, the pool of opportunity was augmented and political leaders were able to get their share of tangible credit for public works programmes. The IAP, BRGF, SSA and maximum part of CSR resources became the collectors main source of revenue for expenditure on education, without any competing claims.

Co-operation from Other Departments

Given the enormous nature of these tasks and alarming urgency to finish them, these goals had to be worked-upon simultaneously. For this, the Collector formed different teams for implementation

and monitoring of different projects and took personal follow-up regularly through meetings and visits to project sites. Thus, successfully rolling-out projects of this magnitude involved various stakeholders, dynamics and processes at every stage, be it planning, executing, monitoring or follow-up. It involved inter and intra-departmental coordination with departments such as RGSM/SSA, Zila Panchayat, Tribal Development, Education Department, Women and Child Development Department, PWD, PHE, CSEB, RES, etc. Here the collector acted by breaking ranks of hierarchy and cutting across ranks to reach out to the ground functionaries and identified active and hard-working individuals. His initiative of identifying dedicated and smart teachers and giving them charge of Assitant Project Coordinator (APC) under the RGSM bore excellent fruits. With other departments such as Forest, Police/CRPF coordination was required many a times to get sites suitable for residential projects which sometimes were under their control, force was needed to protect construction at some sites or building material with contractors, facilitation of acces through check-posts for staff and building material contractor for these schools, etc. It was a mutual relationship, with the collector also sanctioning various ameneities and basic infrastructure such as drinking water facilities, approach roads, electrification etc. to the camps settled by armed forces. Forest department was made work agency for various works of watershed, MGNREGA, BRGF, etc. in the forest area to avoid clash of ineterst.

Coordination with all these departments was extremely crucial in processes like preparing project plans and getting all the due government procedure done. Here collector inverted the normal process of rolling out projects; he first assessed the need and visualised the necessary intervention for the same and then saw which scheme could be used to fund the needed activity. He left aside a normal 'scheme' implementation based mind-set and adopted a project-based approach. Funds are usually received by the districts tied to specific heads and it is difficult to manoever around these heads for all the needs of a project. Convergence of various resources; both physical and human, govt. dept and schemes and funds from various sources has been the key feature in all the initiatives. The total fund of around 300 crores has been used for education sector from various sources like IAP, SSA, RMSA, Tribal Dept., BRGF, MGNREGA, Minor Mineral Royalties, NRLM for skill education, CSR Funds of NMDC and ESSAR, etc. as no single scheme or programme could have been potent enough to sponser every aspect of residential educational projetcs due to limited availability of funds and stringent guidelines and compartmentalisation of expenditure heads. For ex. one potacabin project would require hostel building, school building, toilets, drinking water facilities, kitchen shed, internal and approach roads, electrification, desk-benches, boards, teaching and learning material, audio visual rooms, musical instruements , sports materails and recurring facilities for students such as books, uniforms, stationary, food, sports material, salaries for teachers and other staff and many such innumerable things. He first tried to work around tied parameters of the regular scheme and use as much funds as

can be from these, and converged schemes if need be. Thus, one important activity that he has done is activity based budget manoeuvring. For convergence, two schemes were used which had some manoeverability and large untied funding viz. Integrated Action Plan and Backward Regions Grant Fund. IAP and BRGF were suppose to do bridge gap funding and added this with CSR of NMDC and ESSAR to attend to things outside the perview of tied schemes. The priority of using funds was given to regular schemes such as SSA, Tribal Dept. schemes etc. and as many things were tried to be done through them as possible and as permitted in the scheme guidelines, as they are regular and uninterrupted sources of funds. Schemes like IAP and BRGF were used to fill gaps that were left from the regular schemes such as creating additional rooms, teacher quarters, digging borewells, etc. Roads and drainage lines were constructed through MGNREGA as these locations were rural. And CSR funds were used for things that couldn't satisfy the criteria in any of the schemes. Getting the CSR funds for these initiatives in the initial phase was a bit difficult as there is a tendency to spend on visible things and spending on education had less visibility. The collector through persistent communication and through intervention by Chief Minister was able to convince them and make the CSR money flow towards educational projects of the administration. He made sure that enough publicity is given to them in all the projects to maintain their interest. Thus, all the stakeholder's were in a win-win situation through these initiatives as it helped in judicious utilization of funds for a better cause.

Site Selection for Schools

A lot of thought was given on selection of sites for each project, specially as the schools were residential and there was a constant threat of Naxal violence. The schools were established in phases, at first in 'fringe' locations—on the borders of naxal dominated areas so that children from the cluster of nearby interior villages could be catered to. Meetings with BEO, BRCs, teachers, sarpanchs were conducted for this purpose. The 'Porta-cabin' schools became a centralised model at de-centralized locations. Volunteers for identification and getting the out-of-school children enrolled were recruited from the same interior villages so that they did not face any opposition in going into the interior areas. These fringe area schools were then developed as clusters of development—building of roads, bridges, electricity, drinking water, health facilities was veered around them. Thus, it helped to create a demonstration effect for the people from interior villages. This in-turn resulted in getting demand from them for similar facilities in their areas, making it easier for the administration to reach out spatially.

Building Contracts

Due to the fear of naxals, contractors were unwilling to take work in interior areas, even after 5-6 rounds of reissue of tenders. A series of meetings were held with local contractors, and solutions in the form of extra incentives for threat of damage to their costly construction equipments and machines

, higher wage rates for the labours, higher transportation cost of materials, and encouraging small contractors to take up bigger construction was also done. Pooling of contracts was also done-so that those awarded bigger construction work also worked on a few school sites in interior areas. Group tenders were promoted with combination of difficult and easy area , as well as less profitable and high profitable works. The 'Zila Nirmaan Samiti' which was formed in the year 2006-07 consisting of the collector, SP, Executive Engineers of major construction departments such as PWD, PHE, RES, was made work agency in many works which was not taken-up by contractors. All these efforts put-together helped in keeping the momentum of work on and avoid interruptions in work due to delays in payment and lack of availability of funds with the contractors.

IV. Immediate Achievements and Reflections for the Future

Some of the visible achievements include:

- Nearly 50,000 students have availed of the new opportunities, in the districts with 2.75 lakhs total population.
- Out of the total students, nearly 91 per cent are scheduled tribes, 46 per cent are girls; approximately 81 per cent belong to families affected by the armed conflict
- Improved enrolment, retention and pass percentages
- Increased enrolment of children in the science stream after grade 10, and registration of unemployed youth in hordes for skill development courses
- Residential facilities have helped in improving the nutritional level of children.
- The Livelihood College has created a pool of trained youth, being employed by various government and private agencies. The acute shortage of trained human resources is being addressed.
- Large-scale, high quality of infrastructure and strong social impact has led to widespread recognition for the project, and a reputable name for Dantewada as 'Education City'.
- Accolades from global audit major KPMG –lists Education City as one of the 100 innovative infrastructure projects in the world. The only education sector project from India that finds a mention in in this world city edition.

The larger social impact includes:

- Empowers local people and gives a voice to marginalized tribal population
- Re-imposes faith of the poor people in the public system. People from interior villages now come to the district collector with their demands regarding education

It has an impact which is institutional in nature:

- It demonstrates a replicable institutional model, of which there is immediate neighbourhood effect in Districts Sukma and Bijapur, both setting up Livelihood Colleges and centres for Choo- lo- aasmaam
- State level replicability—Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh has officially declared to start a Livelihood College like institution in every district of Chhattisgarh based on the Dantewada model. State level project and district level projects are about to start.
- Allows for a broader reflection on state initiatives in LWE areas in general

Opening Out: Moving Ahead with Lessons from the Case

So far, we have been concerned with the immediate and specifics of the case at hand. What lessons does the Dantewada case have for other district managers, or indeed for policy makers? Does it leave us with some reflections on what the right mix of strategy should be in LWE areas—where does the balance between the use of force and development strategies by the state lie? Can implementation experiences such as this loop back into the more macro-level of policy making—central and state level? Are the implementation lessons of this case stronger than the policy lessons? We now look at what arguments this case study has to offer to each of these questions.

For district managers in other LWE districts, what is clear is that the available power and resources empower them sufficiently to be able to overcome the constraints, should they be willing to do it. In this case, discretionary powers and innovation funds in the hands of the collector, has made a difference. The resources have come mainly from the IAP, SSA, RMSA, Tribal Dept., BRGF, MGNREGA, Minor Mineral Royalties, NRLM, CSR Funds of NMDC and ESSAR. Also, policy outcomes may not be achieved by simply following centrally determined instructions down the line. Innovation here means accurate local diagnostics---such as looking at disaggregated data, and the field situation more directly. In Dantewada, addressing implementation gaps visible in disaggregated data such as school level dispel -functionality and teacher vacancy helped in realising objectives.

It can be argued that similar powers, resources, and discretion are available in other districts as well. So, why does Dantewada do it, and others do not? What seems to be making a critical difference to the outcomes of this case is the role of political support both from the top, and at the local-level.

While the collector focussed on state development priorities (which were the chief minister's priority)—the PDS, distribution of health cards and *vanadhikaar pattas*, agriculture, removing indiscriminate practices in *tendu* leaf collection,

On the right mix of strategies for LWE areas, use of one type of state strategy (armed power) has its limitations. There is need for broader consent which comes from activities of developmental agencies. Even while the work is in progress, such initiatives open up the collector's office to multiple channels of information. Contrast this with conflict situations, where this office is dependent on only one source which comes from the line staff under the control of the police hierarchy. In turn, this contributes to a weakening of state-citizen relations. Opening up the collector's office to listening to the voices of people, their grievances is as much an achievement as tangible outcomes on stated policy goals.

A strong take-away underscored by this case is that constraints of ruined structure, difficult terrain and persistent poverty need not be reiterated as the 'cause' for why things cannot be done. Public agency needs to act in citizen interest, and provide basic citizen rights, bringing the state back-in.

Teaching Notes

This case forms the basis for many points of reflection on broader policies of development and poverty eradication in India, as well as implementation. These can be used for generating classroom discussions in the direction of both more central policy variables and thinking and ground level implementation issues:

Policy Discussions:

1. Does the Forest Rights Act empower the District Collector sufficiently to bridge the citizen-administration gap in tribal areas administered under the VI Schedule?
2. In what ways did the grant of *pattas*, and control over minor forest produce help the DC to reach out to people directly?
3. The working of Panchayat Extension in Scheduled Areas Act (PESA): Has PESA provided a base for emergence of leadership from below which demands development? If not, how can the state actors (in this case the DCs) work to generate local leadership which has a clear focus on development?
4. BRGF- Does the scheme empower the collector enough? Are the fund flows timely, and adequate? Is there adequate flexibility in operational procedures?

Implementation Questions

1. Convergence with other district-level wings of government—police, forest and other departments. Notice that this project has moved without much involvement of these other departments. Are there additionalities that could have been brought to the project had these other departments been involved?
2. Tendering Procedures-Since contractors were unwilling to work in Naxal affected strongholds, was the pooling procedure followed in this case an adequate approach? Or, should the project follow any other method?
3. Recruitment of Teachers-when local, specially tribal teachers are not available in sufficient numbers, how does the Collector break ground in meeting RTE norms --which are a rights based obligation on him/her?
4. Comparing the strategies for ‘Residential School’ with ‘day-school’: A residential school takes children away from their families and uproots them from their social-life. Was there a way in which the project could have moved with some day school facilities as well? Conversely, what lessons does Dantewada residential model have for other districts which focus only on the day school system?