

Civil Services Day

21st April, 2010

Background Papers for Panel Discussions



सत्यमेव जयते

Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances
Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions
Government of India

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Format of the Panel Discussions

Introduction to themes of panel discussions will be made in the first Plenary Session at 1215 hrs. by the Cabinet Secretary. After that, three parallel sessions would be held as below :-

- | | | | |
|-----|--------------------------|---|-----------|
| (a) | People's Participation | - | Hall No.4 |
| (b) | Sustainable Development | - | Hall No.5 |
| (c) | Innovation in Governance | - | Hall No.6 |

Time available for the panel discussion is one and half hours i.e. from 1215 to 1345 hrs. Broadly speaking, it is suggested that the time available may be apportioned as follows :-

- | | | | |
|-----|---|---|------------|
| (1) | Presentation of issues by Knowledge Partners | - | 5 minutes |
| (2) | Presentation of subject by chairperson | - | 10 minutes |
| (3) | Presentation by other panelists | - | 25 minutes |
| (4) | Suggestions by participants/open house discussion | - | 40 minutes |

The knowledge partner would be presenting issues for discussion. The Chairperson would give his views. After that, other panelists would be requested to give their suggestions. In the interactive session, participants may be asked to introduce themselves and be specific and brief on their interventions or questions.

Coordinators would support the chairperson and panelists in finalizing the recommendations and in preparing the presentation for the second Plenary Session. Suggestions and action plan would be presented in the second Plenary Session (1445-1510) before the Principal Secretary to PM and Cabinet Secretary.

Theme

People's Participation

Panelists

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3. Shri Kumar Ketkar,
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4. Ms. Sudha Pillai,
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5. Ms. Yamini Aiyer,
Director Accountability Initiative
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Need of the hour: Strengthen government-citizen relations Bringing them closer

1.1 Introduction

In India, recent years have seen an increasing vocal and visible demand for improved governance in public sector through active people participation. The focus is shifting towards “governance by the people”. Though there have been pockets of excellence in people participation, so far citizen involvement has mostly been limited to voting and tax payment.

Also, several attempts have been made to engage people by inviting suggestions and feedbacks. These interactions with people tend to end in talk session where citizens' views, demands, complaints, suggestions and concerns are heard and filed but without much follow-up action. Sometimes it results in loss of faith and discourages future participation by citizens.

In the past, direct citizen involvement in administrative reforms was not easy to implement, and caused discomfort to some officials accustomed to old values of control and confidentiality. The trend is changing with numerous examples of successful participatory governance such as those in the states of Andhra Pradesh (Social Audit), Delhi (Bhagidari), Madhya Pradesh (Education Scheme) and Kerala (PRI) that have aroused great interest and expectations from future initiatives. Successful initiatives like Bhagidari (Delhi), Gram Sabha (across country) and Right to Information Act have also brought in a new mindset towards openness and equal participation for all.

1.2 People Participation

People participation offers a new way of thinking about development and governance. It reflects the idea that common man cannot only help himself but also contribute in the development of the society by articulating the needs of the society and finding the right solutions that government is responsible for providing.

People participation in governance and administrative reform refers to “means” and “methods” by which citizens irrespective of gender, caste, social and economic status etc, can engage in, influence and take control over the resources and decisions that “directly” or “indirectly” affect them. People Participation can take different forms¹:

- direct;
- representational, by selecting representatives from membership-based groups and associations;
- political, through elected representatives;

¹Empowerment and Poverty Reduction: A Sourcebook. PREM World Bank. 2002

- information based, with data aggregated and reported directly or through intermediaries to local and national decision makers.

The Indian landscape in people participation can also be looked at from a perspective of Urban versus Rural. The methods and mechanisms deployed in Urban setting usually involve engagement methods like resident welfare associations etc. whereas in Rural setting the commonly used methods are Gram Sabha and Self Help Groups.

The table 1 highlights the aspects of active people participation beyond just voting and generic feedback.

Table 1: Clarifying the Definition of Active People participation²

Key component of Active People participation	Inactive People participation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves citizens (individuals, not representatives) in policy or program development, from agenda setting, need identification and planning to decision-making, implementation and review • Requires two way communication regarding change (interactive and iterative): between government and citizens; among citizens; and among citizens and civil society groups • Aims to “share” decision-making power and responsibility for those decisions • Includes easy, accessible and relevant forums and processes through which citizens come to an opinion and facilitate informed decision making • Contributes to collective problem solving and prioritization (deliberation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engages exclusively the leaders of stakeholder groups or representatives • Constitutes participation in a program where no decision-making power is granted regarding the shape or course of the policy or program • Involves participants only in last phase of policy development essentially inviting comments to what is proposed or what is wanted • Seeks approval for a pre-determined choice of alternatives

1.3 Common methods for people participation

Given below are some of the common methods³ deployed to foster public participation. Often choice of the option is determined by the issue at hand, time available, and cost implication among others.

² Adapted from “Handbook on Citizen Engagement: Beyond Consultation by Amanda Sheedy (2008)”

³ Adapted from “A Review of Public Participation and Consultation Methods” by Abelson J, Forest P-G, Eyles J, Smith P, Martin E and Gauvin F-P. Deliberations about Deliberation: Issues in the Design and Evaluation of Public Consultation Processes, McMaster University Centre for Health Economics and Policy Analysis Research Working Paper 01-04, June 2001.

Table 2: Methods for people participation

Method	Description
Bilateral meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the government agency meets directly with stakeholder groups to receive feedback or discuss areas of interest. this can be useful if the issue under discussion is accompanied by a high level of conflict.
Citizen Juries / Peoples Court (Lok Adalat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> group of 12-20 “randomly” selected citizens, gathered to effectively represent their community they are informed about the issue, hear evidence from witnesses and cross-examine them they then discuss the matter amongst themselves and reach a decision
Consensus Conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a group of citizens with varied backgrounds meets to discuss issues of a scientific and or technical nature consists of 2 stages: a) meetings with experts, discussions and work toward consensus (involves small group of people) b) conference during which main observations and conclusions are presented to the media and general public
Focus Groups / Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one time discussion of a particular topic involves individuals meeting a specific criteria one-time face-to-face meeting structured to be informal to encourage open discussion among participants also used a medium to generate awareness
Interviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual discussions with the public or representatives of interest groups may allow participants to cover a wider range of information than is solicited on a questionnaire, and thus perhaps to identify new issues or concerns not previously considered.
Notification, Distribution and Solicitation of Comments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> one of the simplest form of consultation solicit comments through a notice or invite may also involve other methods
Polling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the process wherein an issue is put to popular vote can be initiated by the government or other organizations, or sometimes the citizenry results may or may not be considered binding
Public Hearings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> form of public meeting limited in size tends to involve only interested citizens usually experts and interested citizens presentations are made
Publications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> all consultations produce some type of published material, which may describe the process, define the problem, issue or situation; suggest options; or request direct feedback from readers on their views, interests or alternatives.
Social Audit / Scorecard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> monitoring and evaluation of the progress by citizens
Surveys	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> solicit information from representative sample of citizens (usually by means of questionnaire) there are a variety of survey types: postal, telephone etc.

Method	Description
Toll-free helpline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • this provides an impersonal opportunity for the public to give feedback, provide ideas or identify issues. • the phone can be answered by a staff member who discusses the issue directly with the caller, or by a taped message and opportunity to record comments.
Websites / Blogs / Portals / Online communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • online medium of sharing information • can be used to create awareness and in educating people • important tool to collect feedback and conduct polls • also used to express opinions especially in case of blogs

2. Need for people participation

Following are the key reasons which bring forth the need for public participation:

1.	Remove information asymmetry leading to an informed decision
2.	Bring accountability and ownership to increase effectiveness
3.	Enable better governance by involving locals in decision-making as well as implementation
4.	Platform for people voices to be heard and taking people-government partnership to the next level

2.1 Remove information asymmetry leading to an informed decision

A common problem usually faced during implementation of local level projects is that of information asymmetry. Those in charge of the project may not possess some relevant information that may be available with locals in the area. Such information is at times critical towards the success of the projects.

-This has also been highlighted in a United Nations report⁴ that says,

“...Two types of problems can follow from such asymmetric information – known as ‘hidden information’ and ‘hidden action’ problems respectively. The ‘hidden information’ problem arises because the bureaucrats and technocrats responsible for the projects do not often have access to the details of local-level information that may be necessary for proper design and implementation of projects. Local people may possess the necessary information, but if the project is to achieve efficient outcomes, this information needs to be harnessed and used in tandem with the technical knowledge possessed by others. Thus in principle the problem of hidden information can be solved by a co-operative decision-making framework that involves all those who possess relevant information. Participation of local people in the design and implementation of community-level projects is essential for this purpose.

⁴ Participatory Governance: An Overview of Issues and Evidence by Siddiqui R. Osmani in “Building Trust Through Civic Engagements”, United Nations Publication 2008

Participation can also help deal with the ‘hidden action’ aspect of informational asymmetry that often stands in the way of the efficient execution of projects. In a top-down bureaucratic framework, implementation of local level projects will typically involve local people working for remuneration. If these workers choose to be negligent in their duties, this will have an adverse effect on the outcome of the project, but the bureaucrats may find it hard to detect the offenders through the arm’s length monitoring methods they typically employ. Nor is it always possible to detect negligence ex post by observing project outcomes, because even if the outcomes happen to be poor, the bureaucrats may not have the information necessary to decide whether it is the workers’ negligence or some extraneous factors that are responsible for poor outcomes. This is a typical moral hazard problem – one that entails loss of efficiency through harmful hidden action. Participation of the local community in all stages of the project cycle can help circumvent this problem in at least two ways. First, the community may employ the method of ‘peer monitoring’ to prevent negligence, which has a greater likelihood of success than the arm’s length method employed by the bureaucrats. Secondly, the sense of ownership that participation can bring may itself act as a deterrent – after all people don’t normally cheat in the tasks they consider their own...”

Box 01 - Citizens' Involvement in Rural India

The Gram Panchayats are encouraged to initiate atleast two to four open meetings every year in PRIs (Panchayati Raj Institutions). In Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, there is a provision for two meetings every year unless there is an urgent issue for which block office issues orders for conducting such meeting. In Kerala, each Gram Sabha is scheduled to meet every three months and there can be more meetings, if required. In Himachal Pradesh, four meetings of Gram Sabha are held at pre-determined dates i.e. 1st Sunday of January, April, July and October.

Source: Resources, Citizen Engagements And Democratic Local Governance: Synthesis Report by IPE (P) Ltd., New Delhi and PRIA

2.2 Bring accountability and ownership to increase effectiveness

An important factor in improving the effectiveness of governance is by bringing accountability. Increasing accountability not only that of government officials but also the beneficiaries. Engaging all stakeholders and creating a sense of ownership will also help in increasing efficiency. It will assist in taking complex decisions with the citizen’s involvement.

It is also essential for the citizens to realise “on-the-ground challenges” that are faced during implementation of welfare initiatives. People participation in governance will also bring forth the performance of government officials who take decisions and implement them for the benefit of the people. Such transparency will also increase the likelihood of more efficient outcomes. An important initiative that has brought more transparency and accountability in the governance system is the Right to Information Act 2005.

Box 02 - Right to Information Act 2005

The Indian Right to Information, Act 2005 is one of the most advanced information legislations in the world. The Right to Information Act (RTI Act) covers all levels of government Centre, State, district and local self governing bodies like Panchayats and Municipal bodies. It will also cover non-governmental organizations- i.e. NGOs, etc and other private bodies- that are financed substantially with public funds provided by the Government. This means every citizen has the right to put in an application requesting information or copies of records held by these bodies and such information should be given by the concerned body.

The main objectives of the RTI Act are

- To promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority and
- To set up a practical regime for giving citizens access to information that is under the control of public authorities.

Source: RTI Website (<http://rti.india.gov.in>)

“I believe that the passage of this bill will see the dawn of a new era in our processes of governance, an era of performance and efficiency, an era which will ensure that benefits of growth flow to all sections of our people, an era which will eliminate the scourge of corruption, an era which will bring the common man’s concern to the heart of all processes of governance, an era which will truly fulfill the hopes of the founding fathers of our Republic.”

- Dr. Manmohan Singh

2.3 Enable better governance by involving locals in decision-making as well as implementation

“Citizens know best what they need; officials can only claim to know it”. People participation increases ownership of the final outcome, keeping them relevant and to a large extent, guaranteeing their success. Therefore it is important that the decision making should involve citizens who understand the local context. This enables people to express their preferences in a better way and to make them count.

Box 03 - Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) implemented in Madhya Pradesh

Participation can also improve efficiency by ensuring better monitoring and verification. The Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) implemented in the Indian state of Madhya Pradesh is a similar example. Madhya Pradesh has long been one of the most backward states of India in terms of human development, with the literacy figure being low even by the low standard of the all-India average. In recognition of this problem, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh introduced in January 1997 the innovative Education Guarantee Scheme with a view to ensuring universal access to primary education in the shortest possible time. The scheme involved both a guarantee on the part of the government and a pact between the government and local communities for sharing the cost and managing the programme.

Under the Scheme, the government guaranteed the provision of a trained teacher, his/her salary, training of teachers, teacher-training materials and contingencies to start a school within ninety days, wherever there was demand from a community without a primary schooling facility within one kilometre, and provided this demand came from at least twenty five learners in case of tribal areas and forty learners in case of non-tribal areas. The community in turn had to identify and put forward a teacher and also provide the space for teaching. Local management committees were set

up for taking responsibility for day-to-day management of schools, and in particular for ensuring regular attendance on the part of both teachers and students. In the first year of its operation, more than forty new schools opened each day. A good deal of work remains to be done in terms of improving the quality of education offered by these schools, but at least in terms of ensuring access to education the Scheme clearly demonstrates the power of the participatory approach.

Source:
1) *Education Guarantee Scheme A Community-Government Partnership That Gets Millions into School in Madhya Pradesh* by Dr. Vimala Ramachandran at *Scaling Up Poverty Reduction: A Global Learning Process and Conference Shanghai, May 2004*
2) *Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)*, United National Publication (2006)

2.4 Platform for people voices to be heard and taking people-government partnership to next level

For many, Government matters mostly when people go to the polls to vote or pay their taxes. On several occasions, their voices are unheard and they do not even find a medium to raise their voice to the concerned authorities. Democracy loses its significance if its citizens feel powerless to change things other than time-bound constitutional right for time-bound “elections”. People participation provides a platform for changes to happen because citizens and governments are able to create synergy by working together. This leads to greater involvement of citizen in development and building partnership with government. It also allows people to negotiate with government and contribute to the nation building effort in a more engaging and participative way.

3. **Bringing People Participation into Practice**

3.1 Beyond voting and consulting: citizen engagement mechanism

Now-a-days there is support for people participation, but the challenge is how this can be put into practice. Literature review shows that in some cases people perceive that information received from government agencies is managed, controlled and manipulated in order to limit their capacity to participate in governance. This raises a basic question of how to engage and empower citizens in the most transparent and efficient manner so as to help in development of society. Some of the key requirements include:

- existence of strong political will
- creating a legal framework that decentralizes decision-making power at local levels
- providing the space for civil society and social movements to mobilize and educate common people for participatory enterprises
- regular monitoring and evaluation of progress

The table below highlights some the core principles to enhance and manage people participation.

Table 3: Core Principles⁵ for People Participation

Principle	Description
Careful Planning and Preparation	Through adequate and inclusive planning, ensure that the design, organization, and convening of the process serve both a clearly defined purpose and the needs of the participants.
Find right people	Find the right stakeholders for engagement who are interested in the success of the initiative
Common Vision	Build a common vision for the initiative with citizens and create awareness about the vision
Create Synergy	Support and encourage participants, government and community institutions, and others to work together to advance the common good. Help all involved listen to each other and explore new ideas unconstrained by predetermined outcomes.
Transparency in activities	Be clear and open about the process, and provide a public record of the organizers, sponsors, outcomes, and range of views and ideas expressed.
Bring accountability and ownership	Ensure each participatory effort has real potential to make a difference, and that participants are aware of that potential.
Sustained Engagement	Promote a culture of participation to sustain the participation level of citizens

3.2 Levels of Citizen Participation

Effective participation implies extended and sustained involvement of people to the extent that demands are translated into tangible outputs and outcomes (e.g. improved service delivery, redress of grievances, new policies). Public participation means different things to different people. One common method of categorizing participation is that of Arnstein⁶ (1969), as show in table below. The degree of involvement ranges from non-participation to full citizen control.

Table 4: Ladder of Citizen Participation

Level	Category	Description
Citizen control	Citizen Power	People participate by taking initiatives independently of external institutions except for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. An example of citizen control is self-government the community makes the decisions.
Delegated power	Citizen Power	Government ultimately runs the decision-making process and funds it, but communities are given some delegated powers to make decisions. People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans and formation or strengthening of local institutions.

⁵ Adapted from “A Critical Review of Public Participation in Environmental Decision-Making along the U.S.-Mexico Border” by Allyson Siwik, Elaine Hebard, Celso Jaquez -U.S.-Mexico Border 2012 New Mexico-Chihuahua Rural Task Force

⁶Arnstein, Sherry R. “A Ladder of Citizen Participation,” JAIP, Vol. 35, No. 4, July 1969, pp. 216-224

Level	Category	Description
Partnership	Citizen Power	Community has considerable influence on the decision making process but the government still takes responsibility for the decision. Participation is seen by external agencies as a means to achieve project goals, especially reduced costs. People may participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project
Placation	Tokenism	Community is asked for advice and token changes are made.
Consultation	Tokenism	Community is given information about the project or issue and asked to comment e.g. through meetings or survey but their view may not be reflected in the final decision, or feedback given. External agents define problems and information gathering processes, and so also control analysis. Such a consultative process does not concede any share in decision-making.
Informing	Tokenism	Community is told about the project e.g. through meetings or leaflets; community may be asked, but their opinion may not be taken into account
Therapy	Non-participation	People participate by being told what has been decided or has already happened. It involves unilateral announcements by an administration or project manager without any attempt at listening to people's responses
Manipulation	Non-participation	Participation is simply a pretense, eg with "people's" representatives on official boards but who are not elected and have no power, or where the community is selectively told about a project according to an existing agenda. The community's input is only used to further this existing agenda

4. Common Issues being faced by existing people participation initiatives

Following are the key factors which discourage public participation:

1.	Lack of right incentives for participation
2.	Information manipulation in participatory development <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hiding Priority to meet requirements of funding agency - Information manipulation due to diverging objectives
3.	Lack of technical knowledge of citizens
4.	Difficulty in getting the right people to participate
5.	Inflexible funding for the initiatives
6.	Loss of faith by citizens due to previous unsuccessful initiatives
7.	Lack of commitment at multiple levels

4.1 Lack of right incentives for participation

In some cases, there are few incentives for people to participate in governance. Some projects only focus on the outcomes of the project but they do not help people realize the importance and value of project, as well as the benefits they will obtain from their participation. A common problem faced while planning for any people participation initiative is the lack of identification of right incentives to encourage people participation. Since each initiative is different from another, different incentives have to be identified and implemented for each initiative.

The importance of incentives for people participation can also be understood from the fact that participation in public reform is not costless. The cost of participation could be in form of opportunity cost, or in form of the time and effort that people would have to put into participative activities. This cost is especially high for women, who are said to suffer from the 'triple burden'⁷ of devoting time to the conduct of public affairs in addition to the traditional double burden of engaging in productive activities while at the same time raising a family and running a household. Most people would not be keen to participate actively unless they perceive the potential gains to be large enough to outweigh their personal cost. The higher and more visible the initial incentives, more potent will be the participation and more efficient and equitable outcomes will be achieved in the decision-making processes.

4.2 Information manipulation in participatory development

Often information manipulation happens at the grassroots communities which hinders participatory development. Let us consider two scenarios of information manipulation as described in United National Publication - Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals⁸(2006).

4.2.1 Hiding Priority to meet requirements of funding agency

In some cases, the local communities have an understanding of their priority needs in terms of initiatives to be undertaken for implementation, and just need external assistance to finance the projects. Under such a scenario, it seems that communities would optimally meet their development concerns, while funding agencies would allocate their best available resources to increase the communities' welfare. The problem arises when the resources allocated by the funding agency are perceived to be scarce (communities believe that some types of projects will not be financed) and some uncertainty exists regarding parameters underlying the funding agency's choice of projects for the communities. Confronted with this uncertainty, communities are tempted to avoid revealing their priority needs when applying for funds, so as to better conform to the perceived preferences of the agency. Hence there is a biased revelation of information by the potential beneficiaries of aid money. Communities tend to focus on the projects based on the preference set by the funding agency rather than focusing on their actual needs.

⁷ Participatory Governance and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), United National Publication (2006)

⁸ Pitfalls of Participatory Development by Jean-Philippe Platteau

4.2.2 Information manipulation due to diverging objectives

In rural India, communities are often differentiated along age and gender lines, seniority of the lineage, and so on. Government/funding agencies are typically motivated by the objectives of poverty alleviation and empowerment of deprived sections of the population but are unable to pin point the individual stakeholders. This gives rise to serious conflicts of objectives with local elites who sometimes promote their own interests and do not have the same opinion of eligibility to funding assistance as specified in the vision laid down by the funding agency. To push their own interests, these elites sometimes exploit the information gap that exists between rural communities and government/funding agencies. In many instances, the opportunistic behavior of local elites consists of deceptively including the poor and disadvantaged in their project activities so as to access development aid.

Box 04 - Hand pumps in Uttar Pradesh

In a village of Uttar Pradesh (India) concerned by a water supply scheme, groups made of a few households contributed

the entire capital cost portion for one hand pump. It was understood that neighboring households would pay them back their share once the pumps were operational. This did not happen, though, and the hand pumps were considered by villagers to be the property of individual households. Some of the 'owners' even go so far as to remove the chain when they are not using the pump so as to ensure preferential access.

Source: Prokopy, LS 2005, 'The Relationship between Participation and Project Outcomes: Evidence from Rural Water Supply Projects in India', World Development, vol. 33(11).

4.3 Lack of technical knowledge of citizens

Creating awareness and education for people is critical to creating intensity for people participation. Literature review shows that there are actually several cases where the technical choices favored by local villagers may not be the best owing to a shortcoming in the understanding about local situations in which a project is conceived and implemented. Consider an example where there are issues in irrigation channels for the agricultural fields. A rural community may hence want to rehabilitate an irrigation canal, but if the primary channel that feeds the local canal has broken down due to neglect over a period of time (and other agencies are responsible for its repair), the community may be building a useless irrigation canal. Another example: people might identify availability of health services as a pressing need, but the implementation of fresh water availability projects may be more important as there could be contaminated water sources that citizens are unaware of and this could be a more important factor in promoting improved community health than a new hospital.

4.4 Difficulty in getting the right people to participate

Very often, after careful planning for the participative project, there is difficulty in finding the right people to be engaged for the initiative. It is important to ensure that people are not motivated by personal interests

but support community interest. The larger the active involvement of citizens, more critical it becomes to find the right people. Also, the people who are selected for supporting the initiative should be well aware of the issues and considerations that had gone in planning the project. In some cases, awareness workshops are conducted to ensure that people are aware of the vision and the objectives of the project. There needs to be a well defined mechanism and selection criteria to be in place to involve everyone at the same time identifying key people who can drive the projects towards successful sustenance.

4.5 Inflexible funding for the initiatives

Many times the funding for the projects is fixed for particular objectives. There is not enough flexibility allowed to the community to use the funds based on their requirements and needs. Even though the project is not on the priority list, but since funding is available, the project is implemented leaving aside more pressing needs of the community. Literature review shows that especially at community planning level, there is requirement at times for flexible funding so that the community can allocate adequate resources to their key concern areas. However, a pitfall is that communities might not be aware of their issues and there may not be a consensus on the optimal utilization of the resources. Taking this into consideration, there is need for more awareness and supported decision making where government or the funding agency provides adequate support to the community to make informed decision on allocation of funding for the development of the society.

4.6 Loss of faith by Citizens due to previous unsuccessful initiatives

It is not guaranteed that people participation will always be able to achieve these desirable outcomes for the initiatives, and even when it does so the degree of success can vary widely under different circumstances. Participation leading to greater empowerment depends in huge measure on the local conditions. In some cases people were asked for advise and inputs but their inputs were used primarily to populate the files and were never really considered in implementation. As their concerns were not addressed in implementation, this led to loss of faith in participation by the people. Such visible failure of participation initiatives becomes a de-motivator hindering participation in future projects. This increases the importance of making people aware of the real challenges for the initiatives so that they can perceive the initiatives understanding the constraints of the various stakeholders.

4.7 Lack of commitment at multiple levels

A major challenge is that of ensuring commitment at all levels. Governments find it difficult to adapt structures and decision-making processes that have commitment from all the stakeholders. Since people participation adds a layer of processes to the existing way of execution, commitment from all stakeholders is important especially people and government officials. If commitment is not there then this might result in project delays. In some cases literature review shows that Government officials are reluctant to engage people for implementation of projects.

Box 05 “Bhagidari”, the Citizen's Partnership in Governance

“Bhagidari”, the Citizen's Partnership in Governance is a means for facilitating citywide changes in Delhi. It utilises processes and principles of multi-stakeholders (citizen groups, NGOs, the Government etc) collaboration. It applies the method of Large Group Interactive Events and aims to develop 'joint ownership' by the citizens and government of the change process. The Bhagidari Programme envisages voluntary participation of the citizens. Efforts have been made to make it well structured and sustainable. To evolve a mechanism for putting the concept of Bhagidari into practice, wide consultations were initiated with various citizen groups-the Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs), the Market and Traders Associations (MTAs) and other NGOs. Discussions were also held with Municipal Corporation of Delhi, Delhi Development Authority, New Delhi Municipal Council, Delhi Vidyut Board, Delhi Jal Board and Delhi Police and the Department of Environment and Forest. These departments subsequently became the participating Departments in the Bhagidari Programme.

Institutional support was provided by creating the 'Bhagidari Cell' in the Chief Minister's office and by designating the General Administration Department as the Nodal Department to provide financial and administrative support. The 'Bhagidari Cell' has been coordinating the activities covered under Bhagidari as well as in conducting workshops. To make it a sustainable programme, Delhi Government has come up with a detailed plan scheme of 'Citizen-Government Interface'. This covers Bhagidari Workshops, various activities with citizen groups, documentation of the process, printing of monthly newsletter and award scheme for best citizen groups including MTAs and RWAs.

Some Outcomes

- RWAs and MTAs have started taking up the collective payment of water bills by cheque on fixed date and time.
- 267 RWAs and 5 MTAs are actively participating in observing water leakage and noting them down in a special register kept by DJB.
- RWAs and MTAs in most of the colonies are participating in the distribution of water through tankers.
- 140 RWAs have taken up Rain-water harvesting measures.
- 143 RWAs and 5 MTAs have voluntarily taken up participation in the replacement of old/leaking service pipes in their area.
- Delhi Vidyut Board had organised 16 camps under the Bhagidari scheme for load enhancement. The department received and processed 5279 applications generating a revenue of Rs.2.64 crores.
- The Govt. colonies of Timarpur and Gulabi Bagh with active co-operation of the Delhi Police officials have successfully carried out the tenant verification in their respective colonies.
- Tree plantation projects have been very popular with our Bhagidars. Extensive plantation measures within the colonies have been taken up by the RWAs of Greater Kailash-II, Niti Bagh, Chand Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Federation of Group Housing Society, Patparganj, Delhi, Chetra Vikas Sangthan, Palam and Dilshad Garden Pocket-E.

Key Challenges faced during the implementation

- Bringing together a large number of citizen groups and government officials on a common platform was not an easy task. It required detailed planning and co-ordinated action holding preliminary meetings, interactions and a whole gamut of logistical arrangements.
- It required managing a change process a change in perceptions of both the citizens and government officials. The first reaction of citizens was to view this programme as another avenue for redressal of public grievances.
- There was resistance from the field-level government officers who were not willing to step out of their shell and embrace the direct interaction with citizen groups. They felt it was erosion of their authority and in many instances it also stemmed corruption at the field-level.
- So far the citizen-groups interacting with us have been registered associations. The challenge is now step out with the programme into the slum clusters, resettlement colonies and the unauthorised regularised areas.

Source: Delhi Government Website (<http://www.delhigovt.nic.in/bhagi.asp>)

5. Institutionalization of public involvement

5.1 Building participation mechanism

Most public participation initiatives flow from a desire to attain specific development goals and are limited in time and scope. There is a need and also enough visible benefits to encourage institutionalization of participation by people. There are two main components to this: First, the requirement that people participation becomes a default component of the governance and administrative reform process. Second, the implementation and monitoring of policies should have sharing of ownership as well as accountability between the Government and the people.

Box 06 - People's Planning in Kerala

Kerala government recognised the planning process with people's participation in the form of "People's Campaign". According to a World Bank Report (2000), "The programme was formally inaugurated on August 17, 1996. More than one lakh people turned up for the training programmes and 30 lakh people all over the state participated in the special gram sabha and municipal ward meetings to discuss the planning issue. The primary objective of the people's campaign has been to motivate and empower local self-government to take up the new challenges of development planning. It was sought to be achieved by mobilising people regardless of their political affiliations, religion, caste or gender to help the local governments in all stages of development planning, from plan formulation and implementation to maintenance". For giving meaningful direction to decentralisation process, there was need to transfer an appropriate budgetary outlay to local bodies to help them prepare and implement their need based plans. The Kerala government has proposed to transfer 35-40 per cent of their budget outlay to these bodies. The participatory development process goes through a number of stages. These are:

- i. Discussion on the problems of development and identification of needs in gram sabha/ward committee meetings. Gram Sabhas were convened to identify local development priorities, with meetings held on holidays to ensure maximum participation. Volunteer squads visited households to explain the importance of participation while public meetings and different mass media were used to generate mass awareness. Group discussions were organized on 12 identified development sectors. The most important outcome of the gram sabhas was development reports covering local development aspirations, information on natural resources, available statistics and problems. It is estimated that about 2.7 million men and women took part in the Gram Sabhas. Twenty-seven per cent of the participants were women.
- ii. Sector-wise discussion on socio-economic indicators shown in "Panchayat Development Report", through development seminars. To facilitate the discussions, participants were given reports of the socio-economic status of the Gram Panchayat. The state of resources was assessed from existing government data, and survey of local geography and history. These exercises were guided by a group of trained local resource persons, elected PRI representatives, and government officials. This involved a massive programme to train resource persons from the state to local level.
- iii. Constitution of task force for all sectors in order to convert into action programmes, the solutions suggested in the development seminars. Sector-wise task forces prepared projects based on suggestions emerging from the development seminars. All the 12 development sectors had a task force of 10 to 15 members each and chaired by an elected representative with an officer from the relevant line department as the convenor. As many as 12 000 task forces were functioning at the village level alone with a total participation of at least 120,000 persons.
- iv. Formulation of plans for the local bodies.
- v. Integration of local plans and formulation of block and district level plans.
- vi. Appraisal of technical feasibility and financial viability of the projects and plans through Voluntary Technical Corps (VTCs).

Source: 1) *A handbook for trainers on participatory local development: The Panchayati Raj model in India; Second Edition; S.P. Jain and Wim Polman*

2) *World Bank Report (2000)*

5.2 Effective outreach and awareness

The accuracy and legitimacy of the knowledge produced during a public engagement exercise depends on the people sharing it. As such, a critical success factor of any participation exercise is gathering the ‘right’ people, with direct links to decision-makers.

Understanding the needs of communities, interests and points-of-view that need to be included in a people participation process is a delicate process. Ensuring that right stakeholders are not only invited to the table but also participate in the process is essential for both the legitimacy and credibility of the meeting as well as the ownership, communication and implementation of the outcomes. Educating the stakeholders and creating awareness about the initiatives is critical for success of any people participation initiative.

Box 07 - Pre-election awareness-raising activities in Himachal Pradesh

The Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA) based in India has been conducting pre-election, awareness raising activities in Himachal Pradesh. These were aimed to make the general public, the women and weaker sections in particular aware of the new Panchayati Raj Act. Villagers were informed on their vital role in planning and decision-making for their area's development, which began with electing a deserving candidate who would truly work for the people's interests. First-time political candidates largely composed of women and scheduled caste/scheduled tribe representatives were educated on their potential roles and responsibilities as well as the crucial element of participation in generating a useful and workable local development plan.

Teams of trainers were organized and likewise oriented on the role of NGOs/Pos in Panchayati Raj and on the provisions of the new Act. Based on the experience, it was necessary to use appropriate methods and tools of communication for the pre-election campaign. The methods finally selected were information materials dissemination (pamphlets, posters), series of local discussions, article writing exercises by the participants, Kala Jatha or cultural programmes consisting of songs, dances, street plays, etc., Radio programs, and Video showing.

Some main problems encountered pertained to the difficult travel arrangements through the geographical terrain and a lack of fluency in the local language of Himachal Pradesh. Despite of these shortcomings, the strategy proved useful in educating the people on how they can claim their rights from the state.

Source: Namita Malik, "A Campaign towards Empowerment: An Overview", reprinted in Participation and Governance, Vol. 8, No.23, PRIA, March 2002.

5.3 Selecting the right and ‘customised’ participation method

No one solution fits all. Since every situation and local conditions demand customized solution, it is critical to choose the right method of engaging people. Methods for people participation need to consider the following:

- use appropriate interaction methods to get maximum return in the available time
- involve the right participants at the right time
- create opportunities for all voices to be heard including social/economic inclusion
- have well defined criteria for stakeholder selection

- have in place a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation

Table below addresses some of the commonly used methods for engaging citizens in different stages of an initiative.

Table 5: Commonly used methods at different stages of an initiative

Stage of an initiative	Key Areas for involvement	Commonly used methods
Agenda Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establishing the need for the initiative • Defining the problem to be addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Polling • Focus Groups
Analysis and Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifying the key challenges and opportunities associated with an issue • Align qualitative and quantitative evidence with appropriate alternatives • Evaluate all options • Develop a workable model 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews • Open houses • Surveys • Consensus Conference
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On ground implementation establish programs, guidelines, and effective processes to deliver public benefits • Create awareness and educating people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publications / Websites • Community Planning • Workshops • Citizens Panels / Citizens Juries
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor policy outcomes to determine whether the goals of the policy are being met during implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social monitoring/audits • Scorecards • Surveys

5.4 Unlocking the potential of ICT

The widespread application of ICT enabled governance models encourages direct participatory forms. Now such governance models can become a reality because information residing within the government domain can easily be made available to the citizens themselves through ICT. Institutionalizing involvement of people in ICT enabled governance mechanisms is of significant importance in contrast with traditional forms of governance. The mode of governance transforms⁹ from “representative” to “individual based” and from “passive” to “pro-active”. The Sixth Central Pay Commission, constituted by Government of India to revise the pay and perks of government employees, has leveraged on the strengths of the National Portal of India to invite comments and suggestions from various stakeholders in response to a structured questionnaire.

ICT can help in a number of ways to engage citizens. Some of the tools that are commonly used include conducting online polling, collect online feedback and opinions, educate by disseminating information

⁹ “Stakeholder Empowerment through Participatory Governance: A Case Study” by Neeta Verma, Sangeeta Singh and Durga Prasad Misra

online. Now-a-days social marketing websites are being used actively especially in developed countries. The citizens take responsibility on themselves to generate awareness on a concerned topic and also guide people when they face difficulty. This model of citizen helping other citizen real time is helping governments across the globe evolve towards better governance.

Box 08 - National Portal of India and Sixth Central Pay Commission: A joint initiative

The Sixth Central Pay Commission, constituted by Government of India to revise the pay and perks of government employees, has leveraged on the strengths of the National Portal of India to invite comments and suggestions from various stakeholders in response to a structured questionnaire. This is the first time wherein through the innovative use of ICT, such a large scale fully online system opened for citizens to participate in the process of decision making in Government of India.

The 6th CPC had designed a detailed questionnaire with 37 questions in 19 key areas to invite public comments through the NPI. The questionnaire was open to the public for two months to invite responses. The questionnaire was publicized through both the print and electronic media.

Some Outcome

- A total of around 1670 responses to the questionnaire were received from employee unions/associations and individuals. These associations/unions represented from few thousands to 1.5 million employees depending upon their working Ministry out of total 4 million central government employees serving for the country.
- The process of gathering such responses in a structured and planned manner helped carry out a wide range of analysis on the data so received and are an aid to the process decision-making.
- The registration process captures the respondent category and status viz. Individual/Group Affiliation and In-Service/Pensioners/Others.
- The web space received around 30 million hits during the period in which the questionnaire was open for the public i.e. 10 million hits exclusively for the 6th CPC page. (The web-statistics application from Web Trends Ver. 7.0b configured to access the traffic analysis of NPI)
- Motivation for genesis of an exclusive upcoming Sub-Portal branded as “Public Participation Corner” under the umbrella of the National Portal of India.

Source: “Stakeholder Empowerment through Participatory Governance: A Case Study” by Neeta Verma, Sangeeta Singh and Durga Prasad Misra

5.5 Evaluating Performance and Sustaining Involvement

Since the results of people participation vary in different situations, it is essential to regularly monitor the performance of people participation and optimize it for better governance. Government need to think differently about how to evaluate successful public participation beyond the layout of public involvement expenditures. While successful public involvement can reduce project delays, other benefits, such as increased trust in the agency and agency personnel, public education, and increased civic capacity should be accounted for as well. Regular monitoring will also help in learning for large scale initiatives. Social Audit is becoming a common form for monitoring the projects and initiatives.

Box 09 - Soial Audit Kerala

Social audit is a citizens monitoring mechanism instituted in Kerela. As part of these audits, committees are constituted to look into the implementation of development work consisting of at least four persons from each gram sabha (including selected members of kudumbasri to represent women). This practice, however, is still not widely practiced, and had been constituted in only one of the panchayats studied. The social audit team is divided into three sub-groups; each involved in the activities of sectors of development activity under the gram panchayat, i.e., productive, service and infrastructure. The team makes an evaluation of projects that were implemented/are in the process of implementation. The report of the social audit team, however, had limited relevance in the scheme of implementation of development work.

Source: Citizens' Participation in Urban Local Bodies, LogoLink Research Project on ReCitE

6. Conclusion

High level of people participation in governance is critical to the health of the government. It results in development of social capital as well as building sustainable and cohesive communities. It also results in make the delivery of public services at local level more effective, efficient and responsive, and also increasing the understanding, reach, influence and choices people have over them.

There are several rationales for engaging the public more meaningfully in administrative reforms. The guiding principles for public participation based on the issues identified can be summarized as follows:

- Engage a demographically representative group of citizens reflective of the concerned community.
- Educating citizens about the issues, considerations and choices involved, so that they can articulate informed opinions.
- Ensures all voices are heard by facilitating high-quality discussion.
- Offer an unbiased point of view on the barriers and issues in a way that allows the public to understand and consider the same difficult choices facing decision makers.
- Produce information that clearly highlights the public's shared priorities.
- Engage public in implementation and share ownership as well as accountability
- Support ongoing involvement by the public on the initiative, including regular feedback, monitoring, and evaluation

Better governance cannot be achieved from a policy decision; it requires active participation from all the key stakeholders: the government, business or the market, and civil society. Some of the key questions whose answers will always be evolving as we reach new levels of people participation are:

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- How can authentic people participation be mobilized and utilized in best possible manner?
 - How can pockets of excellence in people participation be replicated throughout the country?
 - What are the key policy level changes required to enable increased people participation?
 - How can the efforts of citizens be measured?
 - How can discourse between citizens and public officials be institutionalized where citizen inputs are taken as contributions and not simply as commentaries, observations or complaints?
 - What tangible outcomes (for example, improvement of existing facilities/new facilities / new policy) related to service delivery follow when governments are made accountable through citizen participation?

There is of course, no one answer to the above questions and no one framework to addressing and encouraging participation from all stake holders. However, this deficiency is in fact the strength of this participatory democratic approach as the entire framework evolves with the society and becomes simple or complex, depending on the end audience. However, with every iterative implementation, one guaranteed outcome is the betterment of the people that the government aims to serve.

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Theme

Sustainable Development

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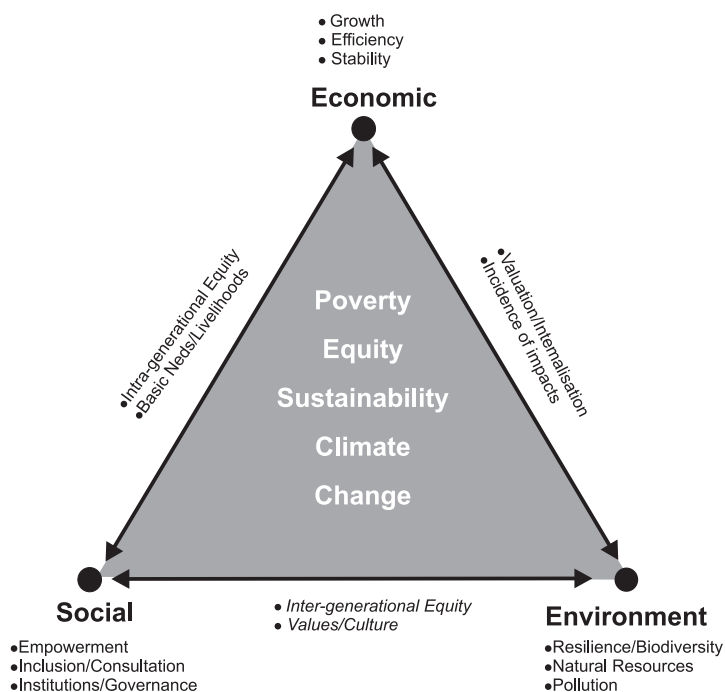
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Sustainable Development Definition and Context

India has witnessed tremendous growth in the last decade with the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growing from USD 700 billion in 2004 to USD 1095 billion in 2009^{10,11}. The GDP growth rate ranged from 6.5% to 9.35% during this period signifying substantial development and economic progress achieved by our country primarily because economic growth and development have been top most on the agenda. This is further substantiated by Vision 2020 that aims at “transforming the nation into a developed country” via focusing on the development of five key identified areas i.e. agriculture and food processing, infrastructure with reliable and quality electric power, education and healthcare, information and communication technology & critical technologies and strategic industries¹².

However, one of the key challenges anticipated in the pursuit of this vision would be balancing economic development with sustainability. 'Sustainable Development' was defined by United Nations (UN) in 1987 as 'development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. As this definition focused mainly on environmental aspects of sustainability it was later amended to include an additional and important factor i.e. social development, which resulted in the concept of traditional economic development moving to one of economic sustainability. The 'Sustainable



Source: Munasinghe, M. (1992), Environmental Economics and Sustainable Development, Paper presented at the UN Earth Summit, Rio de Janeiro, Environment Paper No.3, World Bank, Washington DC, USA

¹⁰ World Bank, World Development Indicators (<http://datafinder.worldbank.org/about-world-development-indicators>)

¹¹ CIA – The World Factbook (<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/in.html>)

¹² Vision 2020 India (www.indiavision2020.org)

Development Triangle’ is one of the most widely accepted frameworks explaining sustainable economic development in its modern sense.

Sustainable development has been a buzzword at most global economic conferences and forums lately. There is a heightened sense of responsibility amongst countries and increased awareness about environmental concerns such as climate control, carbon emission levels as well as other socio-cultural issues such as eradication of poverty, inequality and availability of natural resources for future generations. Sustainable economic development, therefore, is the concept of pursuit of economic development and growth that is not only sustainable in the long term but also is responsive to environmental and social challenges faced by individual countries and the world overall.

Apart from economic growth and environmental concerns, it includes the social aspect of ensuring empowerment, community welfare and inclusive development establishing a balance between economic growth and development (measured via indicators such as growth rate or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) / Gross National Product (GNP)) while improving the income distribution, access to natural resources and social welfare is the key to moving towards economic sustainability.

This document focuses on sustainable economic development in India. It identifies the recent trends in sustainable development and some of the key challenges faced by different stakeholders in the process. It also discusses various strategies and solutions that could address some of these challenges along with examples and case studies of where such strategies have proven successful in the past.

2. Stakeholders

Sustainable development, more often than not, is assumed to be a Government prerogative. While the Government is one of the key stakeholders in this context, sustainable development as a concept is so vast that a host of other stakeholders are important contributors.

Government (Central and State) as well as Other Local Public Institutions

The role of government in development is to not only provide the vision and direction but also to provide the basic framework and enablers to drive the growth of an economy while ensuring sustainability of such growth.

Developmental Institutions / Non-governmental organizations (NGO’s)

As per the World Bank, these are “private organizations that, to relieve suffering, promote the interests of the poor, protect the environment, provide basic social services, or undertake community development”. They are critical to sustainable development as they represent important social and environmental aspects of sustainable development.

Corporate and Private Business Owners

While profits continue to remain the single most important driver for private enterprises, sustainability through stakeholder satisfaction (customers, employees, investors, vendors, government and the society) is becoming critically important as well. Corporates today place special emphasis on corporate social responsibility through direct and/or indirect support to social and environmental causes. In addition, working together with the Government on developmental projects which have a commercial element to it, is increasingly gaining significance, especially in the developing world.

Civil Population

This is the largest group of stakeholders central to the issue of development with the fundamental objective for these end recipients being sustainable economic development. The ability of this diverse and widely spread out stakeholder group to effectively voice its opinion and fight for causes has increased manifold as a result of the boom in communications, networking and media.

One of the key challenges to be addressed from the point of view of all stakeholders is the level of participation. Contribution of each stakeholder should ideally be in the form of a collaborative and participatory role towards collective benefits. Most theories suggest that a participatory level of involvement not only addresses the concerns of all stakeholders, but also leads to greater cooperation and buy-ins. However, from a practical perspective, different stakeholders at different times direct their participation towards their own motives, and at times end up sabotaging the interests of the other stakeholders.

A good example of effective stakeholder participation is that of Balaghat, which is one of the naxal-affected districts of MP and has been characterized by lack of employment opportunities. The district administration sought to implement the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) in 2006 through citizen-centric governance, participatory approach to development planning and addressing issues like wage employment, agricultural productivity and livelihood opportunities.

Shri Gulshan Bamra who took charge of the district with a population of 1.5 million in 2006, made it a priority to bring about a proactive administration that focused on people-centric governance, integrated implementation of government sponsored schemes like NREGS, sensitive policing, etc. While NREGS was implemented across the country, in Balaghat, the officer integrated the use of development money under Central schemes such as road building, the state government's watershed programme and yearly plan funds, along with the projects taken up under NREGS. Since the development programmes were devised according to the local demand and monitored from the Panchayat level onwards, stakeholder participation was ensured. Complaint boxes were provided and complaint registers were maintained at workplaces for quick disposal of complaints.

In three years, the road connectivity in the district increased to 2,228 km from 520 km. About 28,000 hectares of new land came under irrigation. Activities such as Tendu leaf collection and bamboo cutting were resumed. Revenues from forest produce nearly doubled from Rs. 28 crores in 2006-07 to Rs. 55 crores in 2008-09. Migration dropped from

4,217 in 2005-06 to 2,840 in 2008-09 as locals found work near their homes. It was a people-centric programme where all issues of local and social interests were discussed with the active participation of male and female members and decisions were taken in a democratic manner. Thus the officer was able to wean away the local community from the naxal influence and to ensure all-round development.

Source: Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India

3. Strategies for Sustainable Development

In 1992, the United Nations introduced Agenda 21 in order to help countries approach sustainable development through the creation of policy documents known as ‘National Strategies for Sustainable Development’. In a study conducted by the International Institute of Sustainable Development (IISD) on 19 different countries, it was found that the different approaches could be categorized under the following strategies¹³:

Comprehensive, Multi-Dimensional Sustainable Development Strategy

Most countries follow the strategy of a single policy document that incorporates all aspects of sustainable development. Countries with comprehensive strategies aim to develop a framework applicable to their economic, social and environmental strategies that aims towards sustainable development. The common link between all such national plans is the long term goal and impact assessment. However, these should ideally also include medium and short term goals. Some countries which use this strategy are United Kingdom and Philippines.

Cross-sectoral Sustainable Development Strategy

This strategy focuses on one or two key sustainable development factors that are key guiding factors across development of multiple sectors. For instance, a poverty reduction plan has implications on multiple sectors such as education, employment and public administration. Some of the countries that follow this strategy are South Africa, Cameroon and South Korea.

Sectoral Strategy

Similar to those following cross sectoral strategy, countries that follow this strategy focus on the sustainable development of a particular sector. However, the primary difference is that under this strategy countries tend to have independent strategies for each sector (the one they feel suits it best), whereas in a cross-sectoral strategy, it applies to more than one sector and is less customized to the needs of a particular sector. Most countries incorporate sectoral strategy as part of their national strategy. Canada follows this strategy for sustainable development.

¹³Darren Swanson, László Pintér, François Bregha, Axel Volkery and Klaus Jacob, *National Strategies for Sustainable Development: Challenges, Approaches and Innovations in Strategic and Co-ordinated Action* (International Institute of Sustainable Development & Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH, 2004)

Sustainable Development Integration into Existing National Development Strategies

The emerging economies of India and Mexico have been known to follow this strategy. Instead of pursuing all or some aspects of sustainable development such as the environment or social aspects through a separate policy, all three aspects of sustainable development are built into the existing national developmental plans. E.g.: Similar to India's Five Year Plans, the government of Mexico develops a Six Year Development Plan. The Plan for 2001 – 2006 developed by the Mexican Government had three main objectives: social and human development, growth with quality and order & respect. Each Secretariat or Government Department developed their own sectoral plans consistent with the National Development Plan.

4. Sustainable Development in India

As discussed, India has adopted the strategy of integrating sustainable development into its existing national development strategy, primarily through its 5 year plans. However, in order to appreciate the context and significance of sustainable development for India, it is imperative to understand India's historical and current positioning in global politics and balance of power. At the time of independence, India proclaimed itself as a Nationalist Democratic Sovereign Socialist Republic – which brought out its belief in a welfare state. Since then, India has been hailed as the world's largest democracy where in spite of the inherent cultural multi-diversity; it has provided every citizen equally with basic fundamental rights, one of which includes the right to vote. From an economic philosophy standpoint, India has continued to follow a mixed economy, with a balance between government control and private enterprise, that has continued to evolve as per the needs of the country.

On the international front as well, India has traditionally stood for balance and moderation. It spearheaded the global Non-Aligned movement at a time when the world was divided by the Cold War. While India's economic and military significance has increased substantially over the past couple of decades, it continues to be able to maintain relationships with countries which are not necessarily allies of each other. It continues to maintain its relationship with Russia; is increasing its economic and defense ties with the United States; is working towards warmer relations with China, while also increasing cooperation and collaboration with the European powers. This has been possible because the world perceives India as a moderate mature super power in the making, with a balanced approach towards global issues.

However, India is showing its assertiveness on certain global issues such as 'Global Warming'. The recently concluded UN WTO conference in Davos is a case in point, where India made it clear that different parameters need to be applied to the developing world as compared to the developed world. Eventually, India did agree to moderate targets on pollution reduction to reaffirm its commitment towards tackling 'Global Warming'; which is another example of India's balanced stand.

From a sustainable development standpoint, India has stood for inclusive growth, without compromising on human rights. While China has seen faster growth over the past two decades as compared to India, it has been attributed to the autocratic nature of their government, which leans towards aggressive economic development which at times, may require them to make compromises on human rights. This has led to an extreme wealth distribution scenario with an ever widening gap between the rich and the poor. India on the other hand has pursued a more balanced approach towards economic development, giving appropriate importance to the ‘common man’. This has been recognized globally as well, as we see economic experts and astute investors increasingly show a preference towards India as an investment destination of the future – the primary drivers being stability, sustainability and inclusive nature of economic development.

4.1 Political Consensus

India has one of the most active political systems globally, with a large number of regional and national level parties, each with its unique agenda. However, in what can be seen as one of the most significant metamorphosis in Indian political history, we are now at a stage when there exists a broad consensus across major political parties of India with respect to recognizing economic growth and development as a primary way forward for the country. While, there will always be some divergence with respect to the manner in which our country should forge down this path, the broad consensus has and will continue to provide tremendous benefits for the future of our country.

4.2 Accountability and Public-Private Partnership (PPP):

While a broad convergence of political will towards economic development has been one significant boost; the other major issue traditionally holding back the pace of our country’s growth and development has been the efficiency and effectiveness of execution. Issues such as red-tapism and corruption are worth discussing as they constantly hamper our country’s progress. However, even on this issue there has certainly been a directional improvement in the recent past. This improvement has been on two accounts:

- Increased political and economic awareness amongst the common public driven by the boom of the middle-class combined with an all-pervasive influence of the media.
- Increased participation of the private sector in:
 - India’s development story through the emergence of the PPP model for infrastructure development.
 - The social sector through effective corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives that are driving real change at the grass-root level.

An excellent example of a CSR initiative is ITC's e-Chaupal system. As part of the initiative, ITC set up internet kiosks across multiple villages. Most farmers made petty margins on selling their agricultural products at local mandis due to lack of timely availability of information such as market price. ITC recognized an opportunity for a win-win situation by setting up e-Chaupal i.e. internet kiosks which would not only result in better prices for ITC, but would also benefit the farmers in multiple ways. The system was used to disseminate knowledge and information on better farming practices made freely available to farmers. It also empowered the farmers by making the latest pricing information available on the internet. The first phase included implementation of 6500 e-Chaupals which have been very successful and the project aims to be scaled upto 20,000 e-Chaupals by 2012. ITC's project management expertise was fundamental in managing the execution of this process while maintaining the costs.

Source: ITC e-Chaupal on ITC website (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Echoupal>)

The above trends have helped achieve the following:

- Ensured that the government is made to feel accountable for its performance (or the lack of it, as the case may be) towards the broader civil population of the country
- Ensured all major developmental projects are executed keeping the commercial success in mind ensuring speedy execution and improved overall quality. E.g.: Large projects in power generation are now being executed through the PPP model, road infrastructure and mass rapid transport projects executed on a Build Operate Transfer (BOT) basis, airport redevelopments through private participation, private sector involvement in the railways dedicated freight corridor, etc.
- Allowed the Government to play its role of an enabler as well as a moderator, ensuring commercial interests of the private sector do not overlook the socio-cultural and environmental needs of the people; and
- Provided the much needed infrastructural and financial support to the social sector through corporate support, empowering developmental institutions and NGOs to spread awareness and drive change more extensively E.g.: Collaboration on a 24 million litre rainwater harvesting project between SOS Children's Villages of India and Coca-Cola India, Aircel's initiative to 'Save the Tiger', Dell's tie-up with TERI to launch 'The Climate Edexchange' to improve environment education in schools across India, etc.

4.3 Role of the Social Sector

As discussed earlier, developmental institutions and NGOs are an important stakeholder in achieving sustainable development. The good news is that this sector has increasingly become an important influencer of public policy as it relates to sustainable development. Their role in ensuring communities and the environment are not designated as secondary issues under the garb of economic development cannot be overstated. This has been facilitated by greater collaboration amongst various national and international agencies fighting for a common cause, while continuing to connect with the people at a grass-root level.

Also, as previously mentioned, the social sector has leveraged effective tie-ups with the corporate sector for initiatives that are not only mutually beneficial but also beneficial to the environment, community and the society.

The concept of social audits is also a very effective method of involving citizens and NGO's by giving them the power and the say to make a difference. Before the implementation of social audits, Andhra Pradesh was victim to large misappropriation of public funds, ineffective implementation of employment programs and corruption. While these inefficiencies were commonly known to all, there was little power in the hands of commonman to question the application of such funds due to lack of transparency within the system. The implementation of NREGS in Andhra Pradesh in 2006 was accompanied by several other measurements which were monumental in resolving the corruption issue. Under the NREGS guidelines, there are 11 stages of the program where an individual or group could intervene to ensure public vigilance. To improve the efficiency and transparency of the process, the government implemented a social audit process which was first held in March 2006 on the National Food for Works Program in collaboration with Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan (MKSS) – a grassroots social organization. MKSS worked with the government to conduct pilot social audits and eventually institutionalize the social audit process.

Since its inception, Andhra Pradesh conducts social audits each month in all its NREGS districts. A team of 25 state resource team and 260 district level resource persons has been set up to identify and train village youth that would conduct the actual audits, under the guidance of MKSS. An important factor adding to the success of the social audits was the Right to Information Act (RTI Act) which made it easier to gain access to government documents. The process of social audits concludes in a Junsunwai or Social Audit Forum at the local level where the teams come together to share their findings. Villagers who've been victim to acts of corruption are invited to share their grief. It is mandatory for the NREGS officials to attend these forums. Some of the other participants include Mandal Development Officials, the Program Director, Panchayat members and occasionally, MLA's. The presence of such senior officials meant effective and immediate resolution and grievance redressal. Post implementation of the social audits, over 500 field assistants and 10 technical assistants have been dismissed.

Source: Transparency and Accountability in NREGA: A Case Study of Andhra Pradesh by Accountability Initiative, Centre for Policy Research

5. Recent Sustainable Development Trends in India

- Sustainable development in India now encompasses a variety of development schemes in social, cleantech (clean energy, clean water and sustainable agriculture) and human resources segments, having caught the attention of both the Central and State governments and also the public and private sectors. Despite the economic slowdown, some of the most heavily invested segments in India in 2009 were the social sector, cleantech investments into green energy, fuel alternatives and development schemes for backward and below the poverty line (BPL) families.
- In fact, India is expected to begin the greening of its national income accounting, making depletion in natural resources wealth a key component in its measurement of GDP.
- In the Union Budget 2010-11, the government announced the setting up of the National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF) for funding research and innovative projects in clean technologies.

- According to the Global Trends in Sustainable Energy Investment report, sustainable energy investment in India went up to US\$ 3.7 billion in 2008, up 12 per cent from 2007.
- India aims to reduce its Greenhouse Gases (GHG) to 4 tonnes of CO₂ by 2031 which is lower than the global per capita emission of 4.22 tonnes of CO₂ in 2005¹⁴.
- India is likely to spend over US\$ 20.4 billion on setting up of power plants based on renewable energy sources by the end of 2011-12
- In the Union Budget 2010-11, the government announced the setting up of the National Clean Energy Fund (NCEF) for funding research and innovative projects in clean technologies.

As can be seen from some of these developments, the Government's focus on sustainable development has continued to grow and is expected to do so in the future as well. These measures are in the right direction to ensure India's expected economic prosperity is well-rounded and sustainable for communities as well as the environment.

6. Issues with Sustainable Development

While we, as a nation, continue down the road to economic prosperity, helped along in no small measure by the growing political consensus and private participation, the government in its role as a public administrator continues to face some key issues in pursuing sustainable development strategies. Some of these key issues are:

6.1 Striking the Right Balance

- What is the right balance between economic growth and sustainability? When does sustainability and avoidance of conflicts with community and environment lead to an avoidance of growth altogether? As a public administrator, getting this balance right is the biggest challenge that needs to be tackled day after day. For every policy they bring into force or every developmental project that they decide to execute, they need to ensure economic growth and commercial viability along with ensuring minimum conflicts with community and environment. Striking this balance between economic growth and sustainability requires the public administrator to put an economic value on sustainability and assess the marginal utility of replacing sustainability in the long run with growth in the short run. Doing so is also critical to ensure one does not over compensate on the side of sustainability, such that growth is fundamentally impeded.

¹⁴International Brand Equity Foundation, India at a Glance (<http://www.ibef.org/india/sustainabledevelopment.aspx>)

The successful commissioning of the Delhi Metro before the pre-defined timelines and within budget is an excellent example of striking the balance between sustainable development and growth by the Government. With the economic growth and the rise in population density, Delhi was increasingly facing traffic issues for many years which had become a concern for both the citizens affected by the problem on a daily basis and the government that needed to continuously seek solutions to address this challenge. In such a situation, the Delhi Metro project, is a project which both the government and civilians can take pride in. It carries over 2.2 million passengers on a daily basis with an annual fuel saving of approximately \$110 million.

While, completion of the project's second phase has been a priority for the Government, this has been done while causing minimal discontent to the civilian population. Traffic diversions have been done for short periods of time and in a planned manner with metro traffic marshals available at each site to divert and manage traffic. Fares have been kept low and affordable for everyone while other non-operational revenue sources such as commercial use of land around the stations, advertising etc. have been identified. While such projects are sure to raise some environmental concerns, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has fared well even in that area. The Delhi Metro has been registered with the United Nations to receive carbon credits. By using a regenerative braking process, DMRC was able to reduce its power requirements by 30% of the overall energy required. Further, numerous stations have also been designed to allow rainwater harvesting as an additional step towards environment protection. These factors, along with the pace of development of the project and the inauguration of several routes prior to scheduled completion dates, together make a strong case for the Delhi Metro project. It has proven to be an ideal example of how different aspects of development can be balanced by adequate planning, execution and monitoring of the project.

Source: Delhi Metro Rail Website (http://www.delhimetrorail.com/commuters/whats_new.html)

- However, on the whole, national sustainable development strategies continue to remain a compilation of economic, social and environmental issues, objectives and initiatives. The fundamental notion of how issues, objectives and initiatives influence each other—both positively and negatively—is not largely understood.

6.2 Effective Governance Structure

- Effective governance of projects and policies is essential to monitor progress of the development strategy. However, the importance of effective governance through the monitoring of key sustainable development indicators to improve the strategy is most often ignored. It would allow for proper functioning of institutions and avoidance of conflicts between different stakeholders. Policies and projects are only as good as their timely implementation, and the lack of an effective governance mechanism invariably results in delayed implementation resulting in sub-optimal benefits and at times, negative impact on the community and environment aspects of sustainability. Process monitoring on developmental policies and projects is still in its nascent stage of adoption. Also, monitoring the outcome, in order to facilitate learning and adaptation for the future continues to be a major challenge. E-governance, which is the latest buzzword in public administration, is expected to be able to help public administrators deal with this challenge.

SARITA (Stamps and Registration Information Technology based Administration) led by the Government of Maharashtra is a perfect example of reducing inefficiencies arising out of manual processes through an e-governance initiative. Prior to the implementation of this system, the registration process was manual which implied that it was time and labor intensive. There was also a lack of transparency as the procedures were not standardized and information was not easily available. Instead of the traditional approach of the Government procuring the hardware and developing the solution itself, which would raise numerous challenges, a PPP with C-DAC was formed. The Department of Registration went through business process re-engineering to simplify the process. Software was developed to automate the registration process on a BOT basis as per which the solution provider, C-DAC, was to install, operate and maintain the hardware. This not only led to a cost saving for the Government but also improved the turnaround time for registration, reducing it to as low as 30 minutes. The new system was also more transparent and led to an increase in revenue collection.

Source: Best Practices on Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances website (<http://darpg.nic.in/arp-g-website/bestpracticesingovt/bestpractices.asp>)

6.3 Ensuring Efficiency and Effectiveness Right through the Execution-Chain

- The Ministry of Statistics and Project Implementation of India studied 925 projects in the central sector as on 31st March 2009 costing over 20 crores. From the total projects, 285 projects have an anticipated cost overrun ranging from 1.3% to 118.7%. The total anticipated cost of these 285 projects was 47% higher than the cost approved by the Government. Moreover, 423 of the total 925 projects were delayed by 1-192 months. Some of the reasons quoted for the time and cost overruns are fund constraints, land acquisition problems, slow progress in works other than civil works and environmental clearances¹⁵.
- The above statistics demonstrate that while a broad political consensus at the top is beneficial, when it comes down to core execution of developmental policies and projects, challenges continue to exist with the integration of the national strategy with local government agenda and co-ordination with the local bodies to convert national level strategy plans to action. This is primarily because state governments and local administrative bodies are not always the same as the party at the centre. As a result, co-ordination and implementation take a hit and pinning responsibility on non-performance becomes practically impossible, especially for models that are not implemented through the Public Private Partnership (PPP) model. Even for projects implemented through the PPP model, the private sector tends to lose interest if it feels that government inefficiencies will result in a commercially loss-making or unviable project.

¹⁵ Ministry of Statistics and Project Implementation of India, Project Implementation Status Report of Central Sector Projects Costing Rs. 20 Crore & Above, March 2009

Food procurement and public distribution are two important pillars of food policy of Government of India, for protecting farmers and consumers interests. The State of Chattisgarh (CG) procures over 30 Lakh Metric Tonnes of Paddy every year on Minimum Support Price (MSP) from more than 7.5 Lakh farmers over a period of about 3.5 months. As a part of this initiative, all processes involved in paddy procurement and Public Distribution System (PDS) have been fully computerized involving different organizations like Department of Food, CG Marketing Federation, CG State Civil Supplies Corporation (CGSCSC), Food Corporation of India, and Central Cooperative Bank.

Web-based monitoring of transportation of PDS commodities at Chattisgarh State Civil Supplies Corporation head quarters has been developed. In this, the GPS technology is used to monitor transportation of PDS commodities from warehouses to FPS. The movement of the truck is shown on a map as a moving icon in real time and can be monitored from the control room. If the truck goes to a geofenced area, SMS alarms are sent to the concerned authorities so that action can be taken. The system is a technological solution to check diversion of PDS commodities.

The complaints lodged through citizen interface website or call centre are monitored through a Complaint Monitoring System. Details of enquiry Officer, his report, and action taken by the centres are entered in the system by concerned authority.

The initiative by the team for upgradation of paddy procurement and PDS helped to increase transparency, eliminate corruption and people's participation at all levels. Transparency is also ensured in maintaining Unified Ration Card Database and Issue of PDS commodities to FPS, which facilitated all the eligible households to utilise their right to have a ration card and also commodities available at their respective ration shop.

At a time when the effectiveness of public service delivery system is increasingly coming under scrutiny and PPPs are being touted as the only option to improve service delivery, the team, through this initiative has established the continuing relevance of government institutions in reaching out to the rural poor.

Source: Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India

However, the PPP model does have its advantages, and a good example of PPP in a project is the Housing Policy developed by the Surat Municipal Corporation. The policy focuses on generating resources for poverty alleviation particularly in the Housing and Infrastructure sector. A detailed analysis of 333 slum areas was done in March 2006 and housing stock creation for urban poor and resource management for land and finance were identified as key focus areas. The development strategy was divided into three sections, Relocation, Redevelopment and Upgradation. Existing slums with threats from natural calamities, such as flood, were to be relocated and the land was to be reallocated for other purposes such as developing road transportation, etc. As part of the Redevelopment strategy, slum areas were redesigned with better infrastructure and other amenities. While as part of the Upgradation strategy, improvements were made to the existing slum areas where most infrastructure and basic amenities were already in place but were missing some amenities. Studies were conducted in each zone separately and a detailed analysis was done to generate a need based priority list. Most of these projects are being done through public private partnerships ensuring timely and cost-effective implementation of the project while leaving the planning and categorization of these slums with the government. This ensures that the objective of the activity remains to benefit the urban poor instead of commercially driven motives.

Source: United Nations Habitat Best Practices Database (<http://www.unhabitat.org/bestpractices/2008/bplist.asp>)

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- In a competitive environment such as in India, acquisition of talent is also a critical challenge as professional and experts tend to prefer multinationals due the compensation structure. Leveraging on the knowledge expertise of such professionals would prove beneficial in effective implementation and execution of development projects.

An appropriate example of this is the implementation of the Universal Identification (UID) number project. By effectively leveraging the assistance and leadership of a visionary from the private sector – Mr. Nandan Nilekani, the government seems to be on track to issue UIDs to over 600 million Indians in the next 5 years. This, as and when completed, will be a momentous achievement considering the enormity of the challenge given the issues unique to India.

6.4 Transparency within the System

- An oft-quoted refrain that we hear from people is ‘It must be the Government’s fault’. More often than not, the Government is at the receiving end of such accusations, and managing the expectations of these various stakeholders becomes a massive practical challenge. However, some of these accusations may be quelled just by making the system more transparent. When a developmental project, announced with much fanfare, takes much longer than estimated to complete with associated spiraling costs, it is natural for a person to point fingers at the Government. However, with transparent dissemination of information on the progress as well as reasons for the delay, the other stakeholders are likely to be much more sensitive and understanding in their reaction. In this context, the ‘Right to Information’ Act is clearly a step in the right direction and we have already seen numerous examples of how people are leveraging to stay better informed on issues that concern them.

A good example would be the recent controversy with regard to the UGC granting deemed university status. The Central Information Commission (CIC) slammed the University Grants Commission (UGC) for lack of transparency in information related to deemed universities.

An applicant had sought information from the UGC regarding the number of times the review committee had dismissed applications of colleges and universities for deemed status between 2005-2009 and the reports on the basis of which the status was not granted to a college or university during the period. The UGC did not respond to the request appearing as if the RTI Act did not apply to it. In response to this, not only did the CIC issue a showcause notice to UGC for not responding to the request within the stipulated 30-day period but also awarded a compensation of Rs. 2000 to the applicant. The information commissioner ruled that UGC had no reasons for refusing the information. The order depicted how the ‘Right to Information Act’ helped people stay informed and giving them the right to question the system on issues that most affect them and the development of the society in general.

Source: Times of India, CIC rap for UGC on deemed varsities (<http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/CIC-rap-for-UGC-on-deemed-varsities/articleshow/5510581.cms>)

- At the same time, it is important for all stakeholders to ensure they do not use the Government as a convenient excuse. It is expected for the media, private sector, developmental institutions / NGOs, and the public at large to voice their opinions and point out instances where they feel the Government is not doing something right, however, it is also equally pertinent that each of these stakeholders understand issues in objectivity and totality, rather than to serve their respective selfish or sensationalist motives.

For example, the Municipality of La Huacanda in Mexico has developed an alternate development model based on environment sustainability. The objective of this model is to establish an effective, professional and transparent administration. It encourages active participation from the citizens and other social actors in the decision making process. Such a decision making process based on consensus allows for all stakeholders to have a sense of ownership, giving the projects a degree of stability. More importantly, since the community members have a say in the allocation of funds to areas they feel require more attention, the process of resource and fund management has become more transparent. This has led to higher trust within the community for the local government and increased the commitment of the government to public welfare.

Source: United Nations Habitat Best Practices Database (<http://www.unhabitat.org/bestpractices/2008/bplist.asp>)

6.5 Effective stakeholder participation

- With the presence of a variety of stakeholders, ensuring effective participation from each of them through an institutionalized process remains a challenge. While, institutionalizing participation may lead to a slightly longer planning and discussion timeframe, it could prove critical to building trust amongst the stakeholders, and ensuring speedy and uninterrupted implementation once a consensus has been reached. This participation can be through national or regional councils, independent advisory bodies, place-based participation or ad hoc public participation. However, it is important to agree upon such a model tailored to our country's unique needs, in order to ensure speedier growth with greater acceptance.

A great example of collaborative stakeholder participation and creating an innovative solution to address an issue was the conservation of the Nanda Devi Biosphere Reserve (NDBR) that lies between the Nanda Devi National Park (NDNP) and the Valley of Flowers National Park (VoFNP). Both NDNP and VoFNP were declared Natural world Heritage sites in 1988 and 2005. Each of these sites had been involved in the conflict between environmental sustainability vs. economic development. When Uttarakhand was formed, the expectations of the villagers from the government gave rise to an innovative solution based on community involvement to address the issues faced by the 47 villages around these three areas.

In the case of NDNP, the principal means of income for the 4 villages around NDNP was generated through mountaineering services in and around the Park. With the closing of NDNP for all anthropogenic activities in 1983, most villagers lost their primary source of income. After twenty years, the state government held a series of consultative meetings in 2002 with the local communities. The result of this conflict resolution initiative was a regulated eco-tourism trek route on a 9 km stretch inside the Park. Trekking routes and camping sites were built inside the Park. One of the 4 villages, Village Reni was the birthplace of the Chipko (hug trees) movement. Park staff and social experts

helped in developing community based tourism plans to change the mindset of the community from that of a ‘traditional promoter to an important stakeholder of eco-tourism’

While in the case of VoFNP, the mass religious tourism of the Hemkunt Shrine that passed through a 19 km long trek route along the valley led to a large amount of garbage and plastic waste in the area disturbing the ecosystem of the valley. To address this issue, in 2003, the Park management created an institution called the Eco Development Committee (EDC) which included the local villagers Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Forest Department, Revenue Department, Police Department and Zilla Panchayat. The measures taken by this institution resulted in a drastic reduction in pollution on the trek route, regularization of unorganized shops along the route and creation of jobs.

At NDBR, most locals tended to misuse the Biosphere Reserve for various natural-resource based livelihood due to lack on clarity on legal provisions. In 2002, the initiative began with Park authorities dispelling the concept of NDBR as a Protected Area to encourage income generation. It also imparted focussed training and workshops to equip the park staff to understand and handle the social and livelihood dynamics of the area. The Park authorities also worked with 40 Village Forest Councils, 90 Women Welfare Groups and 32 EDC's to generate awareness and impart education to the local community.

Source: Roofless Towers: A Compilation of Award-winning Initiatives by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances

Another example of collaborative stakeholder participation can be seen in the “Housing for All of Us” Program in Brazil. This program was developed to address the shortage of over 70,000 houses in the state of Tocantins to families that were, at the time, either living without homes or in inappropriate houses. Partnerships were established between federal organizations, associations, social movements and communities. The partnership between the Curator Council of the Guarantee for Time of Service Fund and Ministry of Cities enabled subsidies and non-monetary assistance of USD 3000-4000 plus USD 920 added by the Tocantins Government per housing unit. This amounted to an application of \$62 million of investment for the construction of houses in 2005 and 2006. Through continuous training procedures and state advisory, over 350 professionals were trained in relevant degrees which not only created jobs and improving economic condition of the state but also provided a sustainable method of income generation. Further, the availability of complementary resources and using beneficiaries in the implementation of the work as assistants, addressed the challenge of working with the needs of different locations and managing the resources in a decentralized manner. Other associations and social movements helped administer the Program.

Source: United Nations Habitat Best Practices Database (<http://www.unhabitat.org/bestpractices/2008/bplist.asp>)

7. Solutions / Key to Successful Sustainable Development

As India continues to ambitiously grow at an unprecedented rate, with targets of consistent double-digit growth, infrastructure development is going to be critical to achieving success. This means greater clashes of economic growth imperatives with the other sustainable development objectives of social and environmental development. Consequently, the above issues could become roadblocks or factors which warrant identification and implementation of solutions on a priority basis. If we want to ensure that India continues to push down its path of economic reform and development, while ensuring participation and acceptance across stakeholders, leading to long-term sustainable development of the country – we need to discuss and deliberate upon some pertinent questions and issues given below:

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- How does an administrator balance economic growth and commercial viability, while ensuring sustainability and stakeholder acceptance?
 - At the stage of growth that India is at as a nation, does economic growth warrant higher weightage vis-à-vis sustainability concerns?
 - Do we have an appropriate structure or mechanism in place to give sustainable development the importance it warrants?
 - Practically speaking, can all stakeholders reach consensus on a common sustainable development strategy? How do we attach a cost to the delays, inconvenience and monetary impact resulting from trying to make ‘everyone happy’?
 - Are we witnessing sabotage and manipulation of developmental projects by one or more stakeholders towards selfish ends?
 - Is the PPP model a viable solution towards sustainable development?
 - Can corporates’ CSR initiatives be aligned to the overall sustainable development needs of the country?
 - What is the role of private enterprise with respect to effective governance and talent pool requirements in public administration?

Theme

Innovation

Panelists

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Context

“You see things; and you say, 'Why?’ But I dream things that never were; and I say, 'Why not?’” George Bernard Shaw

Public administration in today's environment of constant change and greater awareness has become a demanding task for policy makers and civil servants. There is a great interest around the world to reinvent governance and adopt innovative practices in the functioning of governments. Public administration becomes even more challenging in the developing countries like India where the governments have been under pressure to respond to the ever increasing demands of their citizens and to the changes in the global environment. Besides, our country's federal structure, socio-political environment and a large population adds to the complexity.

2. Introduction

In order to understand the relevance of innovation in public administration, it is important to first define what is meant by innovation and to distinguish it from cases that do not fall under this category.

Innovation

In general terms, Innovation refers to a new and effective means of changing the way an organization operates. To qualify as Innovations, an idea should represent a “radical departure” from business as usual. It should have an element of novelty and present a distinctively new approach to solving new / old problem(s).



A best practice, on the other hand, would be an activity that has produced great results and can be adapted to achieve similar results in a different situation. It may not present a new/ novel approach to solving problem(s).

An Innovative idea/scheme must also produce results beneficial to various target and non-target stakeholders and should maintain/ enhance the service level/ operational output. The various examples could be:

- Enhancing the effectiveness of output/ operational efficiency/ impact in the desired direction while maintaining same/ slightly higher cost of operations
- Reducing the cost of operations while maintaining the same/ slightly higher level of service level/ output

Innovations are typically driven by/ from

- a crisis
- a pressing problem on hand

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- curiosity and experimentation
 - a quest for wealth

Innovation in Public Administration

Innovation has long been associated with the private sector as the general perception is private organizations appreciate it as a tool to keep themselves on the cutting edge of work processes and technology and thereby seek to maximize profits. However, innovation in the government is also a subject of extensive discussion among politicians, public administration practitioners, academics and political analysts. It is being advocated as a vehicle to transform governments into flexible, more responsive units that work more efficiently and serve the citizens more effectively.

In context of public administration, there can be various types of innovations including [1]:

- *Institutional innovation*, which focus on the renewal of established institutions and/ or creation of new institutions e.g. creation of a new institution for discharging certain functions which are a potential conflict of interest for an established institution.
- *Organizational innovation*, including the introduction of new working procedures or management techniques in public administration e.g. e-enablement of various office procedures to facilitate effectiveness and efficiency
- *Process innovation*, which focuses on the improvement of the quality of public service delivery e.g. delivery of multiple services through a single channel to promote user convenience
- *Conceptual innovation*, which focuses on the introduction of new forms of governance e.g. interactive policy-making, engaged governance, people' budget reforms, m-governance etc.

Innovation has various dimensions to it, especially in the testing environment of public administration in India. The dimensions lie in the various processes of **planning**, **strategy** and **execution**, the overall objectives being that of providing maximum benefit to maximum recipients.

3. Underlying Needs for Bringing Innovation

Today our country is confronted with various challenges ranging from poverty to illiteracy, unemployment, environmental degradation and health. The root cause of these problems stems from poor governance which, to some extent, is the result of lack of innovation over the years in the way the country is being administered since independence.

Our government service delivery has numerous challenges because of

- the multiple socio-economic strata

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- the socio-political environment
 - the skewed ratio of government officials and population
 - nominal commitment of government officials to serve people in absence of any perceived benefit, poor infrastructure, low skills
 - cumbersome and archaic processes
 - lack of awareness among people leading to poor demand of the service

This implies that the government—

1. needs to operate in a highly inclusive, but resource deficient environment i.e. needs to use their resources and build capacities not only more effectively, but also, more creatively by, for example, getting the support of the private sector
2. needs to make its functioning, and its functionaries more accountable to the general public
3. needs to involve the citizenry in governance.

Past experience has shown that bringing innovation in government practices has a large number of pros attached to it [1]

1. It restores trust of the people in the public administration process, if required
2. It acts as a catalyst for civil servants to go that extra mile for bringing about change
3. It helps to optimize the use of resources and capacities to create public value as well as encourage a more open/participatory culture in government, therefore improving good governance in general
4. It can produce a domino effect in that a successful innovation in one area can open the door to innovations in other areas

All these factors are particularly relevant in the Indian context given our rapid growth, and the fact that the world now expects us to be the birthplace of the next big innovation. A bustling economy, increasing levels of literacy, improvements in technology have all meant that the 1.2 billion people of India are out there looking to transform their lives. And this can only be possible if our institutions metamorphose with the changing aspirations of the people.

4. Impact of Innovation

Innovation in public administration can lead to economic and social development. It can be leveraged for making available adequate health services, increasing reach of education, providing economic opportunities,

sharing information seamlessly and promoting empowerment and participation of the citizens. Today, it is on the backbone of innovation that a common man can access land records, obtain birth certificate and passports, file income tax returns and get medical opinion from the country's best doctors at the click of the mouse, which hitherto had been something beyond ordinary belief.



Every innovation can also create the opportunity for a series of innovations leading to a favourable environment for positive change. Although an innovation may be a small process, it can trigger a bigger process of transformation of the country.

Though the benefits of innovation are many, there are some downsides of innovation as well. The constant urge to innovate can wean away focus from day to day administrative procedures. This urge may also lead to hurried implementation of ideas which can lead to disastrous consequences.

5. Challenges in Applying Innovation

There are many potential challenges to fostering and application of innovation in public administration in India. These include [2], [6]:

Strict adherence to policies and procedures	The government structure is hierarchical, process-oriented, rule-based and relies on strict adherence to well-defined policies and procedures. This limits the management and leadership autonomy that is needed to initiate and spearhead change in government. Even officials, who are committed to modernizing the public service, are often constrained by the rigidity and hierarchy that is inherent in government.
Lack of incentives to innovate	The government structure has traditionally had higher penalties for failed innovation than rewards for successful ones.
Culture of risk aversion	The government structure has a culture of risk aversion where the focus is always on maintaining continuity of services at acceptable levels and not on bringing radical improvements. Precedents are typically identified before undertaking any new initiatives in government departments to manage any risk of failure.
No compelling reason for innovation	In private sector, organizations need to innovate or die. In the government it is unlikely that organizations would collapse due to lack of innovation. Failing functions in government are rarely closed down.
Delivery pressures	Most of the senior government officials spend a significant amount of their time in tackling day-to-day operational challenges and find little time to think about doing things differently.
No institutional linkages with the civil society	It has been observed that the government does not have institutional linkages with the civil society for sourcing innovative solutions. Initiatives have not been undertaken by the government to source solutions for various citizen related problems from the civil society.

Lack of support to innovators	Innovators from the civil society are not often provided the requisite support and encouragement leave alone being rewarded for their initiatives. It is rarely that we get to hear about Innovators being celebrated or publicly felicitated. As a result, the ecosystem is unable to create a conducive and facilitative environment for triggering major innovations.
Lack of linkages with the academia	It has been observed that the government does not have institutional linkages with the academia. Such linkages can help in gaining knowledge about the various studies/ researches being pursued across the country and their potential benefits for the society.

Case Study: e-Governance in registration of documents in multiple states [3]

Adoption of Innovative approach despite challenges in terms of adherence to policies and procedures

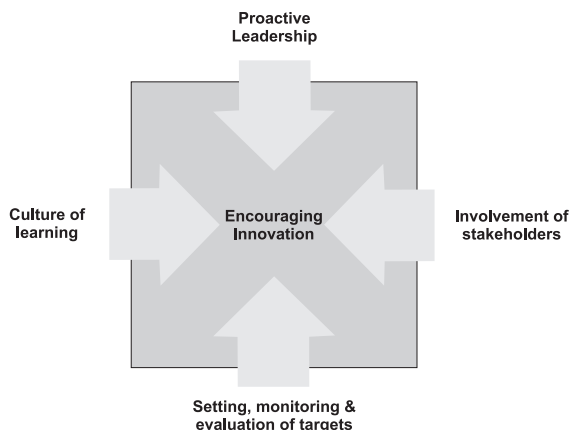
The successful implementation of e-Governance in registration of documents is an example of how to deploy innovative ideas using simple and commonly available ICT tools for effective governance.

The registration act is based on Central Registration Act of 1908 and hence re-engineering of the system was beyond the scope of the local administration or IT solution. However, as part of the project re-engineering of the implementation has been carried out with innovative, though simple technological solutions. Capturing photographs and printing on the backside of the first stamp paper along with printing of endorsement on the same paper using a laser printer has been conceived as part of the project. With this simple but innovative technique, not only frauds are minimized but the public is also benefited as there is not need to attach photographs of the parties concerned. Earlier influential people used to get the deeds registered sitting at home with the help of agents or unauthorized persons. There were professional witnesses appearing for third parties. With the introduction of taking photographs on the spot, all these loopholes were plugged. Moreover, as the photographs are printed on the original documents, there is virtually no scope of mix-ups and frauds even after the registration is completed.

6. Essentials for Encouraging Innovation

While we have identified the need for innovation and the various challenges in applying it, we next need to discuss the factors that will facilitate an environment of innovation. Innovation can occur as an effect of a variety of reasons: social change, political crisis or the identification of a new opportunity. Thus, innovation is the end result of applying principles to solve a particular problem.

The single most important factor for encouraging innovation is a proactive leadership. It is essential that senior officials encourage good ideas irrespective of



the source of their origin. Further, any innovation that is highly dependent on a person for its success will most likely flounder if the progenitor of the idea were to be separated from it. Therefore, a leadership that allows itself to stay detached from personalizing an idea would be highly conducive to supporting innovation.

Another factor that aids an environment of innovation is the involvement of all stakeholders in the development of the idea. This can be done through means like having focus groups or developing partnerships.

The ability to set targets and provide all possible support required for meeting those targets has also been found to play an important role in promoting innovation. Further, it is also essential that these targets are closely monitored, and evaluated against any previous benchmarks that may be available.

The other driver of innovation in public administration is embracing a culture of learning, where public administrators see themselves as harbingers of change. Innovation must be aligned towards achieving progress and the system must also be able to create the perception that creative thinking and accountability are suitably rewarded.

7. Key Principles and Strategies for Innovation in Public Administration [5]

Various innovative principles and strategies are being applied to address public administration and governance challenges. These include:

- Integrating Services
- Decentralizing Service Delivery
- Utilizing Partnerships
- Engaging Citizens
- Taking Advantage of Information and Communication Technologies.

7.1 Integrating services

With the scope of services being offered by government increasing, the focus moves from the type of service being offered to the mode of provisioning. Around the world, services being provided are being coordinated and customized to suit the citizen needs. The services are being combined to enable them to be offered to the citizens in a single entry point, or are being integrated in the value much earlier than reaching the citizens resulting in an integrated products and services offering.

Example: In Brazil, the Bahia's Citizen Assistance Service Centers (SAC) bring together federal, state, and municipal agencies in a single location to offer a multiple of government services. The centres have been placed in locations convenient to the public, such as shopping malls and major public transportation hubs. The concept of the SAC one-stop shop has been successfully adapted by a number of developed as well as developing countries, such as Portugal, Mozambique and South Africa.

Some of the innovations include client-focused one-stop service delivery for social services as well as mobile service delivery for multi-service delivery for clients in remote areas, innovative business registration, e-procurement and other similar practices.

Example: In the Philippines, gender and development mainstreaming efforts saw the creation of the Davao Medical Center, which in turn set up the Women and Children Protection Unit (WCPU) – a one-stop family crisis intervention centre, which provides legal, psychiatric and medical services to its patients.

7.2 Decentralizing Service Delivery

With the emphasis on increasing satisfaction levels of the citizens as well as businesses, this strategy aims to bring government closer to the people allowing not only their greater involvement and participation but also resulting in a customized service exactly matching the local needs.

Example: In Indonesia, in the Tanah Datar district in West Sumatra, decentralization was carried out in 2001 and as a result policies were implemented by the District Education Department in Tanah Datar to increase the quality of teaching in schools with the aim to improve the condition of students from poor families. Particularly innovative were the policies to limit the number of students in each class, to create a reward-system for high performing students and teachers and to institute a performance-based contracting of headmasters. In general, recent innovative strategies include decentralized policy development, implementation and evaluation; decentralized budgeting and expenditure management assessments.

7.3 Utilizing Partnerships

The increasingly demanding general public wanting enhanced service delivery levels, high efficiency, greater participation and minimum wastage of time and resources is pushing the government towards various collaborative approaches with other departments and agencies and also another very popular concept of Public-private partnerships.

Example: In Greece the 1502 Call Centre takes advantage of the expertise of the National Telecommunication Agency by letting operators within a special service of the Agency provide information regarding available services of providing government certificates. In addition, the responsible Ministry has made special arrangements both with the Agency and the Postal Services in order to keep prices affordable. Also, the establishment of consultative groups/committees, which include public officials and members of the business community and deal with policy/budgeting issues, is now rapidly being adopted by other countries.

Example: Various countries are using the concept of 'Franchising of government service delivery' as part of which PPP models are being used for setting up kiosks in rural areas. Nominal fee is charged to citizens for availing services rendered to them.

7.4 Engaging Citizens

Countries are encouraging citizens to provide inputs to government's policy formulation and monitoring processes. Strategies are being developed to encourage the active participation of citizens in various processes.

Example: In Australia, the State Government of Queensland has established a Community Engagement Division within the Premier's Department to engage the community in relevant policy deliberations to ensure social justice, equity and relevancy in public policies and programmes, especially at the regional level. Online consultations through the ConsultQLD are also available facilitating open public consultation on critical issues currently being considered by the Government.

7.5 Taking Advantage of Information and Communication Technologies

As the 2003 United Nations World Public Sector Report points out, the use of internet based services as a way to cut red tape or to spread digital infrastructure has expanded rapidly throughout public sectors in recent years. ICT applications, in general, have been introduced to upgrade service delivery in terms of wider access to services, improved efficiency and effectiveness and greater relevance and quality of services. Broadband access policies are being used since they are considered a key enabler of economic growth, distance education and facilitate advanced medical care to remote areas. The Republic of Korea, for instance, expects pervasive broadband to increase industrial efficiency, create e-business and jobs, and improve global competitiveness.

Example: In Mongolia a model online consultation facility has been created for engaging citizen participation. The site includes a legislative forum designed for citizen comments on the specific laws posted on the site and a policy forum for discussion about existing or proposed policies.

At the same time, internet-based service facilitates transparency and democracy into the overall practice of public administration. Electronic public information offices at local level have helped policy makers and public officials to get closer to the public and understand better the needs of citizens at an individual level.

8. Approach for Applying Innovation and Sustaining IT

There can be broadly two approaches for applying innovations:

- a) By incubating innovation
- b) By effectively transferring innovation

The areas where innovation can be applied in public administration include:

- Organization structure

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- Practices and procedures
 - Capacities
 - Mobilization, Deployment and Utilization of the human, material, information, technological and financial resources for service delivery to ordinary people

Before implementing innovative techniques and methods, extreme care should be taken and proper due-diligences be conducted in order to avoid adverse situations. Resistance from the various sections of the society will be inevitable because of the vast and diverse nature of our country. Such, resistances should be managed through counseling and public debates and widespread focus on spreading the net of holistic education.

Stakeholder consultation, focused group discussions, economic / social benefit analysis are some of the methods that can be deployed for evaluating the possible success upon implementing innovative ideas.

8.1 Incubating Innovation

The broad approach for incubating and applying innovation involves [2]:

- 1 Generating possibilities: This involves scanning different areas to generate possibilities for applying innovation.
- 2 Incubating and prototyping: This involves generation of ideas and tailoring them into more viable prototypes that can be tested
- 3 Replicating and scaling up: This involves launching of the innovation on a larger scale (based upon the successful working of the prototype)
- 4 Analysis and learning: This involves measuring the success of the initiative and bringing improvements based upon the analysis.



8.2 Effective Transfer of Innovation

While there is no doubt that the ability to deploy a successful idea from one context to another will reduce the time to market for that concept, it comes with its own caveats.

Successful practices are documented from the perspective of the ecosystem in which they were successful. As a result, a holistic picture of the factors enabling a practice to be successful cannot be formed. What would be required is the development of a set of tools to identify the transferability of a practice from one scenario to another. Some of the key ideas that can help in developing these tools are:

- *Appetite for innovation among public administrators*

Instead of providing meticulously planned tools aimed at a unified model, it is more helpful to provide people with a rough guideline to understand their context and develop a solution tailored to their situation.

8.3 Problem definition

It's generally more useful to first define the problem statement and then seek out the leading practices or other possible solutions to the problem. Some of the questions that might need to be answered are [5]:

- a) What is the service delivery/governance challenge that I am trying to solve?
- b) What have others done to address a similar challenge?
- c) What level of success was achieved through the implementation of the specific solution?
- d) What did it cost and how long did it take to implement?
- e) What were the prerequisites for the implementation (particularly legal, administrative, and financial in the original context)?
- f) Are there alternative solutions that could be proposed by employees of my organization or the recipients of services?

8.4 Learning & Knowledge

The process of learning and the utilization of that learning in another context is a very important component in being able to transfer innovation. While case studies and peer learning are good means to transfer knowledge, they don't lay adequate emphasis on the social, legal, economic factors that may have played a role in a particular idea being successful.

To conclude, a number of steps can be taken when a particular innovation is being adapted for another environment:

1. Adequate information dissemination amongst stakeholders responsible for the implementation
2. Conceptualising and formalizing a policy regarding adoption and associated processes
3. Creating a team capable of undertaking the exercise of replication
4. Effective and continuous monitoring of the implementation

9. Sustaining Innovation

Sustenance of innovation demands intensive involvement of the successor of the project champion. The glamour of conferences and media dies down beyond the initial stages of implementation of the project and quite often the successors of the projects do not see significant value in sustaining the project because of relatively low personal benefit. Thus, for innovation to be sustained:

1. The processes should be institutionalized
2. Stakeholders should be invited to actively participate in owning the idea
3. Capacity building should be undertaken as a core requirement, and not as an additional requirement
4. The model should be made financially self-sustaining through various means
5. Efficient communication channels should be established
6. The impact of the change should be felt across the community and should be adequately advertised

Case Study: RASI (Rural Access to Internet Services) [4]

Initiative suffering sustainability failure

The RASI project aimed at the social, economic and political development of rural people by establishing a network of village Internet centres. The original pilot initiative was launched in Melur, a small hamlet in Madurai District of Tamil Nadu in the name of Sustainable Access in Rural India (SARI) in 2001 to bridge the digital divide between urban and rural areas. After its successful implementation, the government of Tamil Nadu scaled up the project as e-Government service delivery centres throughout the state in the name of RASI. It was planned to cover all the districts in Tamil Nadu in a phased manner starting with 10 districts. However, the project deviated from its objectives of delivering essential services such as education, healthcare and tele-administration due to lack of government support, non-scalable technology and lack of motivation among kiosks operators. RASI witnessed a weakening of support from the local bureaucracy due to lack of institutionalisation and top-down approach to e-Government (support from the lower level officials remained only as long as initial champions were in office).

10. Conclusion

Increasingly, citizens are demanding greater transparency and accountability in the conduct of public affairs. Concurrently, rapid economic progress has led to a manifold increase in the quantum of work. Performance expectations have increased in terms of both speed and quality. Citizens no longer see the government merely as a law enforcer or a controller of national resources but as a provider of basic services and public goods. In this context, **innovation in public administration needs to play a crucial role**. However for same to foster, the following would need to be debated, discussed & addressed and a near-term & long-term roadmap would need to be drawn out:

- How does the administration strike an optimum balance between adhering to the processes and procedures which are considered de-facto and yet at the same time promote innovation (e.g. can technology be used to widen the scope for innovation)?
- How can appropriate mechanisms be established and put in place to incubate and support innovation and simultaneously create a culture that sustains it (e.g. can the civil servants be sensitized and trained on innovation to begin with)?
- With India poised at this critical juncture in the global context how do we ensure that Innovation gets its fair due and seeps in to become a part of the DNA of the system? (e.g. can civil servants be empowered with greater decision-making authority and a strong managerial leadership be promoted)
- To ensure that Innovation is relevant and creates an impact in the lives of the intended stakeholder how do we ensure that there is ample involvement and participation of the stakeholder?
- Innovation being such a broad and all encompassing term how can it be ensured that the movement happens in the right direction and is not misused by either the creator or the supporters?
- How can institutional linkages be built with the civil society for sourcing innovations? (e.g. can conceptualization of solutions to problems be outsourced to citizens)
- Can an empowered body for focusing on modernization of public administration through innovations help in fostering a culture of innovation?

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