



Understanding Planning at the Intermediate Panchayat Level in the Context of Participatory Decentralized Planning

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Concepts of Decentralization

- ❖ **Decision making closer to the people for better allocative efficiency** – people pay (& vote) for what services they want
- ❖ **The principle of fiscal equivalency** – if the political jurisdiction matches with the benefit area, marginal benefit equals to the marginal cost of production (service delivery) – helps optimal provision of public services
- ❖ **The decentralized theorem** – Each public service should be provided by the jurisdiction having control over the minimum geographic area that would internalize the benefit and cost of such provision
- ❖ **The Principle of Subsidiarity** – Taxing, spending, regulatory exercise should be exercised by the lower level of government unless there is a convincing reason to assign that work to the higher government

Concept of Planning

- ❖ **Planning is a process** of moving from one level of development to a higher level as decided as per some normative framework and in the local context to prioritize the same
- ❖ There are many ways to judge the progress: (i) thematic sectors on which development is measured, (ii) across different categories of people and (iii) across different areas
- ❖ Any government normally plans for (i) what they are responsible, therefore, accountable – that has a jurisdictional element as well as a subject/thematic area
- ❖ They can also plan for what they feel can improve the status of the people in their jurisdiction on matters for which any other government is responsible (e.g., Centrally Sponsored Programmes are mostly on subjects on which States are responsible but Union Govt. allocates their resources)
- ❖ Planning involves allocating resources to improve to (i) any subject of development (**what**), (ii) to be for certain group of people (for **whom**), (iii) for a jurisdiction (**where**) and has to follow certain process (**how**) – by exercising discretion what to develop, for who, where and how.

Rationale for Decentralized Participatory Planning

- ❖ Planning is for progressing in multiple dimensions of development which in other words meeting various needs of the people
- ❖ Also, the needs are to be met on a sustainable basis – which means the correct **process of development**:
 - i) The process should be people-centric in which people are the **Subject** of development and not the **Object** of development
 - ii) Such development should be **facilitated** and not **controlled** from above
 - iii) Development should be **empowering** and to **reduce dependence**
 - iv) The process should **start with internalizing the problem first** along with the contextual factors, the opportunities and barriers and working on what is possible to be done by the people/tier of Govt. themselves and then seek for support for what the people/Govt do not have
 - v) Such support is fund, technology, skill, capacity etc.

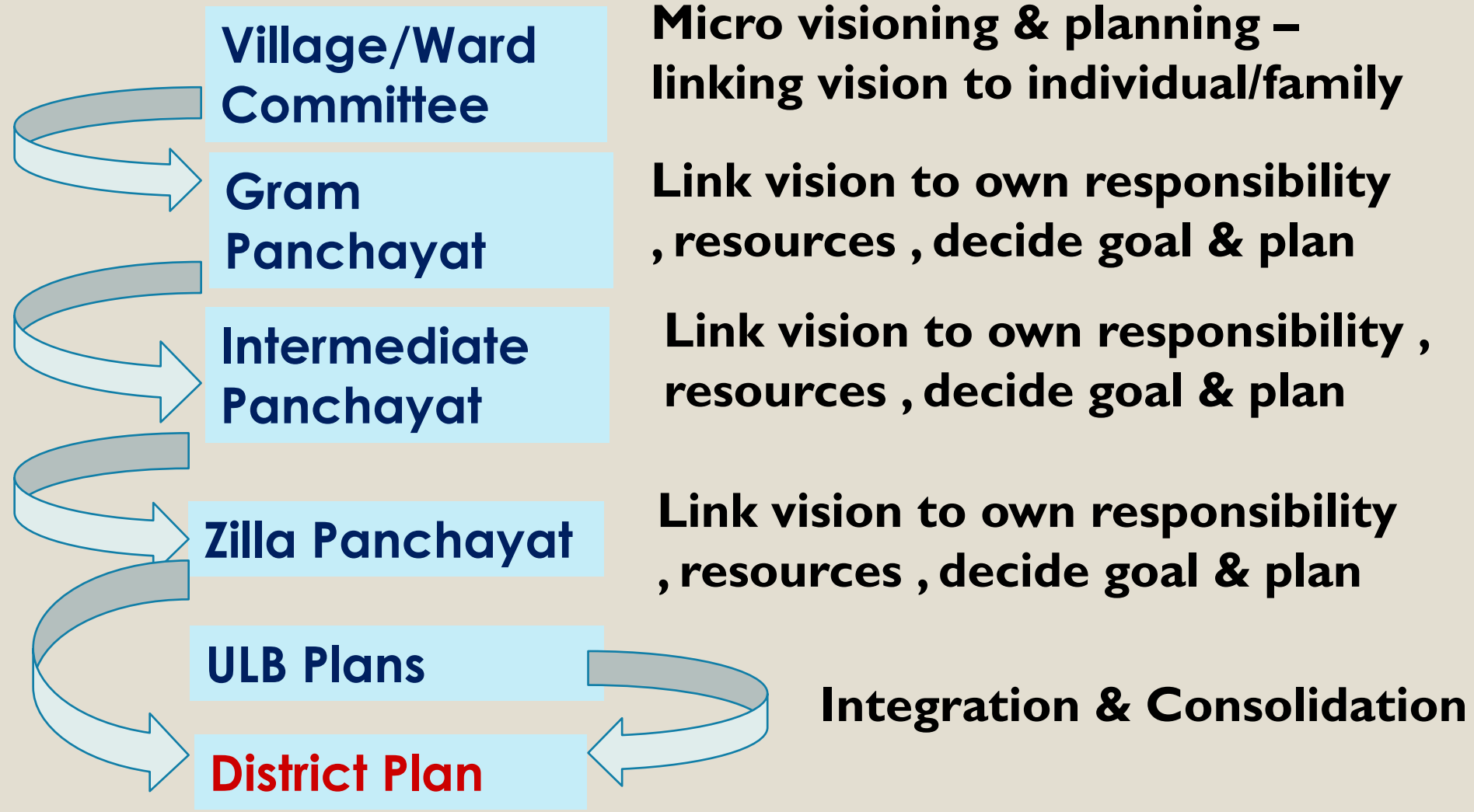
Rationale for Decentralized Participatory Planning

- ❖ Planning is **not to start with what fund any Govt has** and on what sector they should spend the available fund
- ❖ So, problem/needs of the people are to be assessed as the starting activity – their problems may be solved by (i) People themselves with facilitation (no/low cost activities), (ii) GP, (iii) PS, (iv) ZP or (v) higher level govt.
- ❖ Therefore, participation of the people to assess the need, which people can visualize and identifying the constraints at a decentralized level can provide which tier of govt. including people's own initiatives can address the problem faced by any locality
- ❖ In that case people become the owner of the plan and not a beneficiary
- ❖ There are macro-issues (SDGs) which people are not aware or cannot visualize/quantify or issues which is emerging and it is difficult for the people to comprehend (climate change) which requires inputs from higher levels to plan interventions at the lower level
- ❖ Thus, planning has to start from below but with good facilitations from above

Integration and Coordination of Planning

- ❖ GPDP has taken roots and is prepared & implemented to address issues which are local and keeping the responsibility of the GP for delivering various services
- ❖ Many of the problems identified cannot be addressed at the GP level because – (i) externality of the interventions, (ii) inadequate resources or (iii) requires more advanced technology beyond the capacity of the GP
- ❖ Those are to be referred to the PS to examine what can be taken care of at their level
- ❖ The PS has to plan based on (i) Problems referred to them by the GPs (based on primary data collected using PRA tools/survey, (ii) Problems identified by their own members, (iii) Analysis of secondary data, if possible with disaggregation up to GP level,
- ❖ Similarly, problems which cannot be addressed at the PS level has to be referred to the ZP and, if necessary, to the state level through ZP
- ❖ What has been said is easier said than done, which requires proper coordination across different tiers and across different departments

The Challenge of Integration of Plans of Different Tiers



Importance of Planning by the Intermediate Panchayats

- ❖ **Legal Mandate to plan** – for economic development & social justice as provided under the Constitution
- ❖ **Presence of officials of all line departments:** Intermediate Panchayat (IP or PS) being coterminous with the Block, it has presence of officials of all the critical departments
- ❖ **Higher capacity** can be used to improve the quality of GPDP and ensure coordination among relevant line departments/ many GPs are too tiny to plan/projectise efficiently
- ❖ **Availability of secondary data** makes it easier to analyse and the problem of mismatch between administrative jurisdiction and service areas of various facilities is generally not there – so GPs may be sensitized with block/GP level data for planning
- ❖ **Mandate to overview functioning of the GPs** – PS stands at a crucial level for overseeing planning by GPs and drawing attention of the larger issues to higher level

Constraints in Planning by Intermediate Panchayats

- ❖ Lack of political & administrative will to have PS Development Plan (PSDP) as well as **lack of a framework/guidelines for PSDP**
- ❖ **Capacity of the PS/Block has dwindled over the years** and many departments view that they should work independently – how to ensure coordination without control?
- ❖ **Weak/No Standing Committees** to deal with specified subjects with participation of the officials of the line departments concerned – **lack of institutional mechanism**
- ❖ Lack of dedicated technical man-power to guide Planning process
- ❖ Lack of own source revenue of the PSs as well as entitled fund for planning

Other Constraints of the PS

- ❖ Little formal devolution of powers/ responsibilities on the PS
- ❖ Block Officials are generally deputed to function as officials of the PS – there is little strength of the PS to take care of its core institutional functioning
- ❖ Members of PS are not oriented on thematic subjects which are administered by officials of line departments – so coordination becomes difficult
- ❖ Lack of guidelines / proper mindset how services of the line departments can be utilized by the PS even if they are not administratively controlled by the PS
- ❖ Lack of data/ capacity to analyse data to plan with objectivity based on evidence with clear deliverables

Evidence Based Planning at the PS Level

- ❖ The PS needs to have capacity to compile block wise situation on different themes of development and to guide GPs to capture primary data for GPDP as well as helping PS to build a block database
- ❖ The state needs to support development of database and to provide a framework of data collection and management (DISE/ HMIS/ ICDS MIS etc.)
- ❖ Spatial maps of the PS showing GPs to visualize spatial planning and to help convergence
- ❖ Building capacity of the PS to analyse the data and to compile a Development Status Report (DSR) showing status on SDG indicators to the extent possible – that gives the perspective to plan and measure progress
- ❖ Analyse progress across GPs to the extent possible, rank the GPs for each item of development and invest to bring more equity and bridging the gaps which are bigger in certain GPs – such analysis will also improve the quality of GPDP
- ❖ **Building capacity is a big challenge**

Way Forward for PSDP

- ❖ The state government has to come out with an order based on the guidelines prepared by the NIRDPR/MOPR to give specific mandate
- ❖ Need for a dedicated team with capability for data analysis & interpretation/ M&E/ engineering/IT/ various critical aspects of human development & livelihood
- ❖ All the line departments to compile the status of progress in respect of their responsibilities for each block and organize training at the district level to explain the status and their priorities
- ❖ Preparation of a DSR for each PS, whatever rudimentary that may be, as a written document, which needs to be shared to all stakeholders
- ❖ To have development seminars on each theme with participation of line departmental officials/experts/ elected functionaries to understand the issues objectively
- ❖ Identify the development gaps, priorities and to also work out the resource envelop. At the block level it will be meaningful to also workout the need for institutional finance, skill development, IEC/SBCC and work out the interventions plans as well as monitoring

THANK YOU