

# Power to the People?

## Case Studies on Decentralized Planning In West Bengal



Riddhi Foundation, Kolkata

With Support from NIRD&PR, Hyderabad

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# Study Team

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# Chapter 1

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## INTRODUCTION

Government has to utilize its resources in a planned manner for the wellbeing of the people, who as the principal, elect the government and authorise them to use the public resources as their agent for meeting their needs. Effective planning requires clear understanding of the diversity and importance of needs and aspirations of different sections of the people, assessment of status of development through evidences and analysis of relevant data, estimation of resources available and exploring possible alternatives in meeting the need of the people. At the local level, particularly at GP level in India including West Bengal, all the processes for planning like identification of the needs, process of consultation with the people, assessment of the status of progress on various dimensions of development based on evidences, information on availability of funds and its timing and freedom to use are faced with problems of various types. There is also lack of clarity on the responsibilities assigned to the GPs as local government through devolution of specific functions and its perceived accountability in delivering various services. This is because of lack of clarity and specificity of devolution of functions in many cases. On the other hand, many functions are to be performed by the GPs as agent of the state or that of the Union Government within the prescribed guidelines. Funds for these functions are not only tied but have different fund release mechanism and uncertainty about the likely amount a particular GP will receive though there could be a state wise allocation. All these make it difficult to pool all available resources to prepare one integrated plan with inter-sectoral convergence and rather it leads to several sectoral plans for each programme.

Overcoming the problems require appropriate capacities, support from the state Government and putting in place several institutional mechanisms for facilitation of the planning process at the grass root level. The efforts towards these have varied widely across states, based on several factors including the political will to strengthen planning at the grass root level. West Bengal has shown strong political will in promoting decentralization and the process of planning has evolved over the years from the 1990s. There has been also gradual increase in capacity of the GPs in better understanding of their roles and following the appropriate processes for improving preparation of GP level planning in West Bengal.

Several institutional measures have been taken in West Bengal for strengthening rural governance including planning during the last two decades. One recent intervention was through the programme named as ‘Strengthening Rural Decentralization’ supported by the DFID, Government of UK<sup>1</sup>. This was followed by another programme named ‘Institutional Strengthening of Gram Panchayats’ (ISGP) funded by the World Bank, which is still continuing<sup>2</sup>. Some of the interventions were for strengthening the system of governance which

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<sup>1</sup> The SRD was launched on 22<sup>nd</sup> November, 2004 and continued till the year 2010-11. The programme has been discussed briefly in Chapter 3.

<sup>2</sup> The ISGP was launched in the year 2010-11 and the first phase of the same has been over on 2016. The second phase of the programme has started from mid of 2016. The programme has been discussed briefly in Chapter 4.

helped all the GPs and in some cases the interventions like facilitations for decentralized planning were confined to only some of the selected GPs. Therefore, though there has been general improvement in functioning of the GPs but the capacity to plan and implement the same vary across the state.

Apart from facilitation of the planning process, availability of fund with discretion to spend by the GP is another critical requirement for planning. Such support was available under BRGF to some of the districts for the period from 2005-06 to 2014-15<sup>3</sup>. Total availability of funds for planning at the GP level has increased steadily over the years and there has been a substantial jump in availability of funds with the GPs after the recommendation of the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission (FC) was accepted by the union government.

### 1.1 Relevance of Planning by GPs in the Context of the 14<sup>th</sup> FC

The 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission recommended an award of Rs. 63,051 crore for the Panchayats over the entire award period (2010-15), which was to be appropriately divided among the three tiers of Panchayats by the respective states. Share of West Bengal (excluding that for the special area) was Rs. 4144.3 crore. The state government earmarked 70% of the award of the 13<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission grants for the GPs and the amount worked out to be Rs. 2901.1 crore. The 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission recommended an award of Rs. 2, 00,292.2 crore for the rural local governments of the entire country, which will go entirely to the GPs. The recommended share of West Bengal has been Rs. 14,515.2 crore, which is close to 5 times the amount of award of the 13<sup>th</sup> FC. Such large inflow of funds will have two immediate implications: (i) the extra resources will help the GPs in improving the basic services for which the GPs have responsibilities, and (ii) for efficient use of resources there is need to plan effectively and implement the plan efficiently. It is, therefore, very important to understand the processes being followed in planning by the GPs of West Bengal and how the same can be improved further for optimizing the return on planned investment for enhancing wellbeing of the people.

### 1.2 The Study and its Terms of Reference

In the context of the above, NIRD&PR sponsored Riddhi Foundation a study, to be conducted jointly with the NIRD&PR, to assess the process of planning at the GP level and related issues, particularly participation of the people in the planning process in West Bengal. The study was to be made in 12 GPs of the state, with different contexts in respect of availability of funds and facilitation supports received. The study was to be headed by Dr. M N Roy and Mr. Dilip Ghosh from Riddhi Foundation and Dr K Jayalakshmi and Dr Ajit Kumar from NIRD&PR. The same was taken up from the month of August 2016 and the field work was completed in the month of December 2016.

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<sup>3</sup> BRGF was a central sector scheme of the MOPR launched in February 2007 for providing untied funds for development of the 250 backward districts across 27 States. 22 districts were added later making total BRGF districts to 272. In West Bengal 11 districts namely, Bankura, Birbhum, Dakshin Dinajpur, Uttar Dinajpur, Jalpaiguri, Malda, East Midnapur, West Midnapur, Murshidabad, Purulia and South 24 Parganas were included under the scheme. Allocation during the year 2013-14 was Rs. 5,000 crore and the scheme was discontinued from the year 2015-16.



### 1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was to have the following objectives:

- i. Describing the planning process followed by the respective GPs.
- ii. Identifying the role played by the SRD/ISGPP initiatives in promoting decentralized planning in the respective GPs.
- iii. Specifying the collateral factors essential to effective decentralized planning and identify gaps
- iv. Identifying the factors affecting the participation of people in decentralized planning in the respective GPs.

The subsequent chapters deal with different aspects of the study. Chapter two provides a brief outline of the evolution of Panchayats in West Bengal from time of its inception during the colonial era. Chapter three outlines the evolution of decentralised planning in West Bengal and the existing orders for planning at the GP level. Chapter four consists of the actual study conducted in the twelve selected GP. The final chapter elucidates the major findings of the study.

## Chapter 2

# EVOLUTION OF RURAL LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN INDIA

### 2.1 The Evolution of Panchayats in India

Local Self-Governance (LSG) in India started during the British colonial period. It was in 1870 that Gram Panchayat was authorised by Lord Mayo with the enactment of Bengal Village Chowkidari Act or Mayo Resolution<sup>4</sup>. Objective of the act was to bring about efficiency in administration to meet the demands of the people and to mobilize further fund for the growing wants of the country<sup>5</sup>. However, it was the Ripon Resolution of 1882 which prioritised the local government and recognised the twin objectives of administrative efficiency and political education<sup>6</sup>. Then, the Bengal Local Self-Government Act, 1885 was passed to establish a network of rural local bodies at two levels - district and subdivision<sup>7</sup>. The Act also established Union Committees to perform municipal functions in rural areas. These bodies were constituted by the government on the basis of informal election<sup>8</sup>. The Royal Commission on Decentralization in India recommended merger of Chowkidari function and welfare function in the locality. Thus in the new system, both the functions were placed in the hands of same local body.

This was followed by the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms in 1919, which led to the establishment of village panchayats in the provinces, including the princely states of India<sup>9</sup>. The reforms introduced the municipal functions into a newly created body - known as the Union Board and other two bodies at district whereas, the sub-division levels remained unaltered.<sup>10</sup> Then under the Government of India Act, 1935 provincial autonomy was introduced, which marked another important stage in the evolution of Panchayats<sup>11</sup>. This act made the elected provincial governments duty bound to enact legislation for further democratization of local self-government institutions including village panchayats.

Post-independence, the provision for organizing the village panchayats as units of self-government was laid down in Art.40 of the Directive Principles of the State Policy Part IV of the Indian Constitution. It states that “the State shall take steps to organise village panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government”<sup>12</sup>. However, the state under this article was not compelled to follow it leading to non-establishment of panchayats at the village level just immediately after independence. Instead Community Development Project was introduced in 1952<sup>13</sup>. Although

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<sup>4</sup> Mathew, G. (2013). *Status of Panchayatit Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*

<sup>5</sup> ibid

<sup>6</sup> ibid

<sup>7</sup> Slidshare.net, *Historical Perspectives of Panchayats West Bengal* 2013

<sup>8</sup> ibid

<sup>9</sup> ibid

<sup>10</sup> ibid

<sup>11</sup> Mathew, G. (2013). *Status of Panchayatit Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*

<sup>12</sup> Bare Act, *Constitution of India* 2010

<sup>13</sup> Roy, M.N. (2011). *Rural Local Governance in West Bengal*

the project modelled after the experiments at Marthandam, Shantiniketan, Baroda, Etawah and Nilokhere, yet it met a dead-end due to absence of effective people's participation of people in the project at the block<sup>14</sup>. Therefore, to secure this participation process at the institutional set-up, a committee was formulated in 1957.

## 2.2 The 1960's

The Balwantray Mehta Committee (1957) was appointed to assess the effectiveness of two plan projects - Community Development and National Extensive Service of 1953<sup>15</sup>. The team opined that without village level agency, who represents the entire community, assuming responsibility, providing leadership in implementation of programmes for rural development cannot be possible<sup>16</sup>. It went on saying that, public participation in community should be organised into statutory representative bodies<sup>17</sup>. Therefore, on the basis of such assessments, recommendations were made for the effective working of the mentioned programmes, stating<sup>18</sup>: (a) establishment of three tier Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI), (b) transfer of power and responsibility to PRI for its efficiency, (c) adequate resources to PRI for smooth functioning, and (d) channelizing all social and economic development through PRI. However, the committee did not insist on a uniform structure of PRI throughout the country, allowing states to evolve their own suitable pattern. It is worthwhile to note that – from this stage the term 'Panchayati Raj' came into existence<sup>19</sup>. All states had passed the Panchayat Acts and panchayats have reached all parts of the country by 1959 and mid-1960's respectively<sup>20</sup>. However, based on the recommendation of Balwantray Committee, first Panchayat Raj was inaugurated in Nagaur in Rajasthan in 1959 by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru followed by Shadnagar in Andhra Pradesh<sup>21</sup>.

Following the Balwantray Committee, two committees were set up to study the status of the then established Panchayati Raj bodies. The first committee was set-up by the then Planning Commission, chaired by G.V.K. Rao<sup>22</sup>. The committee raised its concern against the irregularity of panchayat elections, which was deliberately jeopardised by the bureaucracy, local vested interests and their elected representatives in that state legislature and Parliament. This is because the latter bodies feared the ascendancy of the Panchayats. The second committee was of Jayaprakash Narayan in 1961<sup>23</sup>. The committee detected the double-standard in thinking and contradictory positions, which was developing within the government in creation of an independent Intensive Agricultural District Programme, bypassing the Community Development Programme. In the opinion of the committee there was a non-requirement to have individual subject-wise allocation as a guide with the adoption of Panchayati Raj for planning and implementation. Eventually, the Community Development got replaced by Rural Development, which marks the end of both community and panchayats as agents of change and agencies of development.

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<sup>14</sup> Mathew, G. (2013). *Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*

<sup>15</sup> ibid

<sup>16</sup> ibid

<sup>17</sup> ibid

<sup>18</sup> Balwantray Mehta Committee Report 1957

<sup>19</sup> Mathew, G. (2013). *Status of Panchayati Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*

<sup>20</sup> ibid

<sup>21</sup> ibid

<sup>22</sup> ibid

<sup>23</sup> ibid

## 2.3 The 1970's

The Ashok Mehta Committee was formed in 1977 to review the working of panchayats, which submitted its report in 1978. The recommendations suggested were<sup>24</sup>: (a) reduction of dependence of PRIs on state governments, (b) providing power of taxation to PRIs, (c) transfer of certain taxes like profession tax, entertainment tax, tax on land and building to PRIs, and (d) open participation of political parties in Panchayat election, (d). seat reservation for weaker section, (e). two seats reservation for women, (f). requirement of Constitutional sanctions, and (g). to extend people's participation in developmental activities. In short, the committee suggested for decentralisation and more participation of local people in effective function of PRIs.

## 2.4 Early 1980's

It was not before the 1980's that two back to-back important Committees were appointed to look into the importance of panchayat as a unit of local self-governments. One was the GVK Rao Committee in 1985<sup>25</sup>. The committee recommended for the revival of the PRI in order to assign them with the greater responsibility of planning, implementation and monitoring of rural development programmes<sup>26</sup>. The second committee was set in 1986 under L.M Singhvi<sup>27</sup>. The committee recommended for constitutional status of panchayats and incorporating a new chapter in the constitution to define the power and functions PRI and conducting fair election through the election commission<sup>28</sup>. It also provided the recommendation for the appointment of finance commission and assigning all the rural development programmes the PRI by amending Schedule VII of the constitution<sup>29</sup>.

## 2.5 The 1990's

In 1992 Lok Sabha passed the 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act. Art.243 and Eleventh Schedule were inserted in the act, which provided constitutional status to PRIs<sup>30</sup>. All states and union territories, depending upon their total population, are to constitute three or two tier PRIs. The main features of the amendment are<sup>31</sup>: (a). Three tiers of Panchayats at the District, Block, and Village level in states with over 25 lakhs of population. States having less than this population will form two tiers omitting the intermediary tier. (b). Panchayats declared as institutions of self-governments. (c). States were authorised to devolve functions to the Panchayats relating to 29 subjects including agriculture, land reforms, minor irrigation, fisheries, cottage and small scale industries, rural communication, drinking water, poverty alleviation programmes etc. (d). State government would release local bodies grants to Gram Panchayats as per the recommendation and allocation of Finance Commission. (e). Panchayats were now authorised to prepare and implement plan(s) regarding economic development and social justice. (f). States were asked to constitute a State Finance Commission in every five

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<sup>24</sup> Ashok Mehta Committee Report 1978

<sup>25</sup> Kumari, N. (2015). *Concept of Village Panchayat: Constitutional Analysis*

Rao.G.V.O. (1985). *Report of the Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation Programmes*

<sup>26</sup> ibid

<sup>27</sup> Kumari, N. (2015). *Concept of Village Panchayat: Constitutional Analysis*

Singhvi. L.M (1986). *L.M.Singhvi Committee Report*

<sup>28</sup> Slidshare.net, *Historical Perspectives of Panchayats West Bengal* 2013

<sup>29</sup> Kumari, N. (2015). *Concept of Village Panchayat: Constitutional Analysis*

<sup>30</sup> Mathew, G. (2013). *Status of Panchayat Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*

<sup>31</sup> Artheopedia.net, *Local Governance System in Rural India (Panchayati Raj) and the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution*

years to determine the Panchayats' share of state's financial resources as a matter of entitlement. (g). Representation of Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes and women must be there in Panchayats, applying also in the cases of Chairpersons and Deputy Chairpersons of these bodies. (h). The State Election Commission should conduct election at the local bodies in every five years in each state.

A key point to highlight here is, the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act provided the Parliament to legislate law on Panchayat Raj applicable to Fifth Schedule areas that is the tribal areas. On the basis of which, the Dilip Bhuria<sup>32</sup> Committee was formed. The report recommended for the introduction of The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act. 1996, (PESA).<sup>33</sup>

The countrywide establishment of the PRIs has coincided with the Indian economic reforms of 1992. India has seen fairly impressive GDP growth since then but development and distribution through Panchayati Raj has been uneven. Greater GDP growth has resulted in greater volume of funds going to PRIs but reduction of poverty has been uneven as there is wide variation in the capacity of the institutions to plan and implement on their own<sup>34</sup>.

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<sup>32</sup> Dilip Bhurui was a senior Scheduled Tribal MP from Madhya Pradesh

<sup>33</sup> Aiyar, M.S. (2015). *Inclusive Governance for Inclusive Development: The History, Politics and Economics of Panchayat Raj*

<sup>34</sup> ibid

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# Chapter 3

## DECENTRALISED PLANNING IN WEST BENGAL

### 3.1 Introduction

The West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1957 was passed to establish the Panchayats in the state. It led to the formation of Anchal Panchayat at cluster level and Gram Panchayat at village level<sup>35</sup>. Zilla Parishad at district level and Anchalik Parishad at Block level were next introduced under the West Bengal Zilla Parishad Act, 1963<sup>36</sup>. Thus, from 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1964, West Bengal adopted the four-tier PRI in West Bengal as against the three-tier as recommended in the Balvantray Committee Report<sup>37</sup>.

### 3.2 The Initial Attempts in the Eighties

The second generation of Panchayat in West Bengal with legal framework started with the passing of West Bengal Panchayat Act, 1973<sup>38</sup>. This act introduced the three-tier Panchayats in the state with direct election to each tier on adult franchise. In spite of passing the Act, the same was not implemented<sup>39</sup>. However, in 1977 the Left Front formed the state government in West Bengal and immediately implemented the Panchayat Act<sup>40</sup>. The first election of the three-tier panchayat that is Zilla Parishads at district level, Panchayat Samitis at block level and Gram Panchayats at cluster of village level with open participation of political parties, was held in 1978<sup>41</sup>. Once elected the Panchayats stay in power for five years after which a fresh election is held<sup>42</sup>.

It was during this time that the Ashok Mehta Committee was formed in 1977 by Government of India to review the working of Panchayats. In 1978 the committee submitted its report recommending<sup>43</sup>: (a) reduction of dependence of PRIs on state governments, (b) providing power of taxation to PRIs, (c) transfer of certain taxes like profession tax, entertainment tax, tax on land and building to PRIs, and (d) open participation of political parties in Panchayat election. Later in 1986, L.M.Singhvi Committee recommended constitutional status for Panchayats<sup>44</sup>. However, it was in 1992 that the Lok Sabha passed Constitution 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act<sup>45</sup>. Article 243 and the Eleventh Schedule was inserted in the Constitution through the said Amendment and it also provided constitutional status to PRIs<sup>46</sup>. After that all states and union territories, depending upon their total population, have constituted three or two tier PRIs. Some provisions viz. Gram Sansad, Reservation for women and SC/ST members in each tier of

<sup>35</sup> Mathew, G. (2013). *Status of Panchayatit Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*

<sup>36</sup> ibid

<sup>37</sup> ibid

<sup>38</sup> Roy, M.N. (2011). *Rural Local Governance in West Bengal*

<sup>39</sup> ibid

<sup>40</sup> Mathew, G. (2013). *Status of Panchayatit Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*

<sup>41</sup> ibid

<sup>42</sup> Slidshare.net, *Historical Perspectives of Panchayats West Bengal* 2013

<sup>43</sup> Ashok Mehta Committee Report 1978

<sup>44</sup> Kumari, N. (2015). *Concept of Village Panchayat: Constitutional Analysis*

<sup>45</sup> Slidshare.net, *Historical Perspectives of Panchayats West Bengal* 2013

<sup>46</sup> ibid

panchayats were incorporated in the State Act through the West Bengal Panchayat (Amendment) Act, 1994 and 1997 following constitutional amendment of 1992<sup>47</sup>. Later Gram Unanyan Samiti at Gram Sansad level was incorporated through West Bengal Panchayat Amendment Act of 2003<sup>48</sup>.

It was initially assumed that the Panchayat should try to perform its own works and create resources by implementing the governmental projects delegated to it, until it becomes self-sufficient<sup>49</sup>. Having said this, during the period of 1980's and early 1990's the role of Panchayats remained confined largely to acting as the delivery mechanism of Central and State government's programmes<sup>50</sup>. Apart from the Land Reform Programme, the Panchayats have successfully implemented the Centrally Sponsored Rural development programmes like National Rural Employment Programme, Integrated Rural Development Program, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Rural-Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, etc.<sup>51</sup>.

In the recent times, the role of Gram Panchayats has expanded to additional functional activities as mentioned under The Eleven Schedule of Indian Constitution through the amendment of Bengal Act<sup>52</sup>. These includes poverty alleviation programmes, site and beneficiary selection for the different programmes and scheme and extend benefits to the disadvantage sections of other backward classes, SCs and STs<sup>53</sup>. However, its role of delivery mechanism helped it to establish the grass-root level independent local government. Yet, planning and governance at Panchayat level still needs devolution of functions, resource allocation to those bodies and capacity building to discharge their responsibilities<sup>54</sup>.

### 3.3 Experiments in Village-level in Medinipur

In 1980s an experimental village level plan was initiated with cooperation of the Rural Development Centre of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharargur in Medinipur district<sup>55</sup>. This attempt was made to prepare micro-level plan at the block level for the development of rural people<sup>56</sup>. This is a hypothetical plan, which was to be initiated by forming Block Planning Committee at block level, District Planning Committee and District Planning and Coordination Council at district level<sup>57</sup>.

In order to prepare a plan, each GP required to prepare a need statement mentioning all the problem of the Panchayat areas<sup>58</sup>. This plan was based on the need statement received from the GPs. A statement of the on-going and proposed programme of plan outlay of different departments and authorities for each block were to be prepared and to be forwarded to the district headquarters<sup>59</sup>. Finally, the district plan was to be finalised by the committee headed

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<sup>47</sup> Slidshare.net, *Historical Perspectives of Panchayats West Bengal* 2013

<sup>48</sup> Mathew, G. (2013). *Status of Panchayatit Raj in the States and Union Territories of India*

<sup>49</sup> Sen, A. *Panchayati Raj System in West Bengal*, Important India, August 21, 2013 Blog

<sup>50</sup> Mitra, A. (2015). *The History of Political Panchayats in West Bengal, India: A brief Analysis*

<sup>51</sup> ibid

<sup>52</sup> Government of West, Bengal Department of Panchayats and Rural Development, *ISGP Project*

<sup>53</sup> ibid

<sup>54</sup> ibid

<sup>55</sup> Raha, R and Jana, H. (2005). *Decentralized Planning and Rural Development an Experiment in a Block in Paschim Medinipur District of West Bengal*

<sup>56</sup> Ibid

<sup>57</sup> ibid

<sup>58</sup> Sundaram, K.V. 1997. *Development from Below*

<sup>59</sup> ibid



by the Sabhadhipati<sup>60</sup>. This village level plan was also aimed at “conscientising’ the local people in the social and class realities of the area and motivate them to bring about fundamental changes in social structure in making them bare-foot planners<sup>61</sup>. Therefore, creating a core planning capacity as a permanent asset in the Gram Panchayats. However, it remained confined to the preparation of the plan only<sup>62</sup>.

### 3.4 The Nineties: Convergent Community Action

The Constitutional Amendment Act of 1992 paved the way of the three-tier Panchayati Raj mechanism for decentralised planning and governance in the country. Following this amendment, the Panchayats and Rural Development Department made it clear that the former would be confined to the Gram Panchayat level to start off with in order to develop the decentralised participatory planning at all the tiers<sup>63</sup>. Therefore, based on this objectivity, in 1999 government of West Bengal with the support and auspices of UNICEF launched Convergent Community Action (CCA) strategy<sup>64</sup>. Pilots for testing the methodology was started in the districts of Paschim Medinipur, Jalpaiguri, Purulia and Burdawan. .

This strategy aimed at strengthening the decentralisation of governance by building and raising the capacities of elected panchayat members as well as the people at the village-level<sup>65</sup>. For which, it prioritised at sensitising to make people participate in developing their own village plan depending upon the needs, resources to be used and available resources with technical and financial help provided to them. Therefore, it was aimed at building community-based participatory planning, implementation and monitoring of the plans revolving around the Gram Sabha involving the elected representatives<sup>66</sup>. As it was assumed that people has better understanding of their problems and knowledge of resource availability in their village and use of that resources<sup>67</sup>. Whereas, it would be the Panchayat representatives to formulate the plan on the basis of information provided to them by the people and bureaucrats to just to execute the plans<sup>68</sup>.

The CCA as an experimental strategy was implemented at Salboni block of Paschim Midinapor under the supervision of Midnapore Planning and Development Society (MPDS)<sup>69</sup>. . Whereas, in Jalpaiguri district, which had no track record of village planning, started CCA for the zeal and interest of District Magistrate. Instead of people getting involved in the programme, the whole administration got involved in it. However, when Rastriya Sam Vikas Yojana programme came, CCA was not converged with it. This raised questions on the extent of awareness and conceptualisation of the objective of introducing CCA by district administration

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<sup>60</sup> Sundaram, K.V. 2002. *The Local Planning Process Evaluation and Transition of a New System*

<sup>61</sup> ibid

<sup>62</sup> Sundaram, K.V. 1997. *Development from Below*

<sup>63</sup> Government of West Bengal, Finance Department, *Fourth State Finance Commission* 2016

<sup>64</sup> Ghatak, M. and Ghatak, M (2002). *Recent Reforms in the Panchayat System in West Bengal: Toward Greater Participatory Governance?*

<sup>65</sup> Shodhana Consultancy Pvt. Ltd, A Study of Convergent Community Action Approach in The Districts of Chandrapur & Yavatmal - UNICEF

<sup>66</sup> ibid

<sup>67</sup> Raha, R and Jana, H. (2005). *Decentralized Planning and Rural Development an Experiment in a Block in Paschim Medinipur District of West Bengal*

<sup>68</sup> ibid

<sup>69</sup> ibid

In Purulia the work was confined to only one block – Kashipur<sup>70</sup>, and in Kashipur GP. Although, apart from government officials, people were involved in planning using the methodology along some follow-up measures. However it did not spread in other areas and was limited to Kashipur only. In Haringhata block of Nadia district the plan was introduced without the involvement of heavyweight personnel. The CCA planning was guided and monitored by faculties of from State Institute of Panchayats and Rural Development (SIPRD presently renamed as B.R.Ambedkar Institute of Panchayats and Rural Development). The experience of these blocks revealed the potentialities and the possible pitfalls of the proposed decentralised planning methodology. . In six blocks of Burdwan district CCA was launched with the name of Grambasider Dwara Gram Parikalpana (Village Planning by Villagers).

CCA programme highlighted one important feature of personalised nature in operating the whole programme. The ownership of the programme did not rest on the whole set of persons in state and district but was in the hands of –one or two government officials. Soon after the launch of the programme, things started to change at the state level. The idea of forming a ‘think-tank’ was taking shape with frequent meetings of State Level Advisory Committee, which did not flourish. The entire programme then had become a single-handed government programme under the P&RD Department. As a result the programme did not achieve its desired goals with only pockets of success. However the lessons learnt fed into the next major experiment - the DFID supported initiative named ‘Strengthening Rural Decentralisation’ (SRD)<sup>71</sup>.

### 3.5 Strengthening Rural Decentralisation

The Strengthening Rural Decentralisation (SRD) was launched in November 2005<sup>72</sup>. The purpose for initiating this programme was to accelerate, strengthen and complement the West Bengal government’s ongoing initiative to strengthen rural decentralisation<sup>73</sup>. The programme also aimed at pro-poor decentralisation with enhanced accountability of the Panchayats by interlinking four outputs namely – (a) Effective preparation and implementation of a roadmap and linked policy actions to deepen rural decentralisation, (b) Institutional framework and capacities for PRIs, line departments and support institutions to operate more effectively in their decentralised roles, (c) Pro-poor, participatory planning, implementation and monitoring systems established across PRIs and (d) Resources enhanced and utilised for pro-poor local development in a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable manner<sup>74</sup>. In order to adhere to its aims of ensuring transparency, accountability and inclusiveness in preparation and implementation of participatory plans, innovative methods for information dissemination were incorporated in SRD Programme.

For this programme 921 GPs were selected in 14 districts in two phases from 2005 to 2010. Out of which, 6 were most backward districts namely Uttar Dinajpur, Dakshin Dinajpur,

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<sup>70</sup> Kashipur Block of Purulia District had an experience in participatory planning under the Watershed Development Programme. As in CCA, this block was also a pilot block for Watershed Development Programme

<sup>71</sup> Finance Department, Government of West Bengal, *Fourth State Finance Commission* 2016

<sup>72</sup> *ibid*

<sup>73</sup> Ghosh, D and Mukherjee, M. (2016). *Monitoring a Decentralization Programme: A Review of Concurrent Evaluation Issue*. (Forthcoming). Full reference

<sup>74</sup> *ibid*

Malda, Murshidabad, Purulia and Birbhum<sup>75</sup>. District Programme Management Unit (DPMU) were established in all the programme districts for facilitating the rural decentralization including pro-poor participatory planning and its implementation. Institutional strengthening of GPs and institutionalisation of participatory planning, implementation and monitoring of plans have been conducted by building capacity of the Gram Panchayat Facilitation Team (GPFT) and Gram Unayan Samiti (GUS) members by DPMU. The Gram Sansad was the central planning unit in SRD. Priority was given to participation of women through SHGs and mobilizing them for social development for improving quality of life.

The SRD planning process began with the formation of Gram Panchayat Facilitating Team (GPFT) comprising of Gram Unayan Samiti (GUS) members from Gram Sansads. The GUS undertook social and natural resource mapping at village levels from the collected household and community level data at the neighbourhood (“para”) meetings. The community members used these data to map, identify, quantify and prioritise their own problems, resources and potentials to solve the problems.

Under SRD, plans at both Gram Sansad and GP levels were aimed to be holistic and integrated by incorporating all available resources of Government schemes, untied funds provided by the Central and the State Government, own resources of the GPs. Dovetailing it with community contributions in the form of labour, kinds and cash. SRD’s independent evaluation reports observed of having been able to shift the planning focus from “scheme-based to theme-based” with a conscious attempt to match available resources to meet the local needs and priorities. Instead of just listing the works under different schemes; Gram Sansad-based plans of low-cost activities with minimum technical support, was prioritised under SRD programme.

Therefore, the capacity building process of the SRD to make local people participate in the planning process had been an empowering exercise both for the communities and the GPs. An impact evaluation of the SRD found the GPs under SRD as well-informed, displayed better reach, raised voice of the people and showed signs of more systematic adoption of decentralised principles than non-SRD GPs. Continuous and sustained discussion on people’s participation in local planning, issues of strengthening institutional processes in GPs through GUS and social awareness campaigns had a positive impact on the community consciousness.

However, this programme has been subjected to limitations starting from lack of political will, gap in capacity of its members, limited participation of Community Based Organisation (CBOs) and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), and lack of convergence with related departments<sup>76</sup>.

Limitation in the fund flow was also witnessed. Initially the programme design proposed for a GBP 130 million fund over a span of 7 years, out of which DFID sanctioned only GBP 2 million for two years in the first phase<sup>77</sup>.<sup>78</sup> In the second phase following the successful completion of the first phase, DFID sanctioned GBP 27 million between 2007-08 and 2010-11<sup>79</sup> which was

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<sup>75</sup> ibid

<sup>76</sup> Ghosh, D and Mukherjee, M. (2016). *Monitoring a Decentralization Programme: A Review of Concurrent Evaluation Issue*. (Forthcoming).

<sup>77</sup> ibid

<sup>78</sup> ibid

<sup>79</sup> ibid

well below the required amount. Finally, the programme got halted due to termination of DFID funding support in 2011. However in spite of several internal and external limitations, this programme was able to revitalise the initiative of decentralised participatory planning at the village level, which CCA failed to initiate<sup>80</sup>.

### 3.6 Institutional Strengthening of Gram Panchayat Project

Institutional Strengthening of Gram Panchayat (ISGP) is a World Bank supported project launched in 2010-11<sup>81</sup>. It was initially launched in 1000 selected Gram Panchayats in West Bengal (Cooch Behar-76 GPs, Dakshin Dinajpur-39 GPs, Birbhum-99 GPs, Nadia-111 GPs, Burdwan-165 GPs, Bankura-113 GPs, Paschim Medinipur-172 GPs, Purba Medinipur-132 GPs and Howrah-93 GPs). Unlike the SRD programme, ISGP project was initiated in comparatively advanced and high performing GPs to reduce the implementation risk<sup>82</sup>. The objective of the project was to institutionally strengthened Gram Panchayats in West Bengal. It was envisioned that by strengthening Gram Panchayats there would be access to additional performance based untied fund<sup>83</sup>. This fund would be required for execution of their effective service delivery functions, reducing capacity gaps in execution of functional responsibilities and improving planning systems<sup>84</sup>. Additional amount of Block grant was received by 1000 GP from World Bank<sup>85</sup>.

There were four components of ISGP<sup>86</sup>. The first component was to provide untied grants to GPs having two sub-components- block grants and state funded untied grants. The second component was for capacity building support to the GPs for basic service deliver through a range of activities. The third component of the project was to monitor the PRI to strengthen it through annual performance assessments (APA) and quality assurance audits (QAAs). The fourth component of the project was programme management and implementation including project communication. The fourth State Finance Commission has noted that ISGP project has made significant contribution towards strengthening PRIs as Institution of Self Government<sup>87</sup>. Six areas have been identified as areas of intervention including<sup>88</sup>: (i). Strengthening democratic functioning of the Panchayats; (ii) Improving core civic services; (iii) Decentralised planning and implementation; (iv) Augmenting Panchayat finances and financial management; (v) Building capacities of Panchayat functionaries; and (vi) Harmonisation of Acts and Rules.

Under the ISGP Project, there had been significant improvement in annual plan and budget preparation as prescribed and in timely manner, utilisation of fund, and compliance with prescribed procurement, accounting and reporting systems and rules and clean external audit reports<sup>89</sup>. There had been improvements in creation of more durable infrastructure with the execution of the project by GPs. An effective hand holding support to the elected and official functionaries were provided followed by setting up an example of basic service delivery by the

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<sup>80</sup> Ghosh, D and Mukherjee, M. (2016). *Monitoring a Decentralization Programme: A Review of Concurrent Evaluation Issue*. (Forthcoming)

<sup>81</sup> Government of West Bengal, Finance Department, *Fourth State Finance Commission Report* 2016

<sup>82</sup> *ibid*

<sup>83</sup> *ibid*

<sup>84</sup> *ibid*

<sup>85</sup> *ibid*

<sup>86</sup> TARU Leading Edge Pvt. Ltd., *Final Report on Midline Review of CB Initiatives under ISGP Project West Bengal: Volume I*

<sup>87</sup> Government of West Bengal, Finance Department, *Fourth State Finance Commission Report* 2016

<sup>88</sup> *ibid*

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*

GP.<sup>90</sup> The second phase of the ISGP has been launched in the state from the middle of 2016. For the second phase, the programme is providing Performance-Based Grants (PBG) to all 3342 GPs<sup>91</sup>.

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<sup>90</sup> Government of West Bengal, Finance Department, *Fourth State Finance Commission Report* 2016

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# Chapter 4

## CASE STUDIES

This chapter consists of the twelve case studies on the selected Gram Panchayats. The case studies deal with the experiences the GPs had regarding different types of support they received, their planning capacities, problems encountered, and way forward.

### Case Study 1: Raskundu Gram Panachayat

Raskundu Gram Panchayat is situated in Garbeta III Block of Paschim Medinipur District. This GP has received support from SRD and BRGF.

#### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP is 15,272. As the Table 1 shows, 'other' community has the maximum share of population within the GP, followed by the minority community.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total Population	2013-2014	
			Male	Female
Population	2,527	15,272	7,927	7,345
SC	422	2,153	1,104	1,049
ST	0	2,518	1,316	1,202
Minority	961	4,936	1,725	1,696
Other <sup>92</sup>	1,144	5,665	1,311	1,198
BPL <sup>93</sup>	1,209	N/A	N/A	N/A

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 15272, only 8095 are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
4,510	56.89	3,585	48.81	8,095	53.01

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP is lower than the district literacy rate (79.04), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

Table 3 shows the number of gram sansads and its member respectively. For 8 gram sansad there are 6 male members and only 3 female members. There are 3 SC and 1 ST member.

<sup>92</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission (SFC) there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>93</sup> Out of 2527 households, 1209 are BPL households.

**Table 3: Number of Gram Sansad and Members**

Post	Number	
Gram Sansad	8	
Male Member (Gen)	5	
Female Member (Gen)	2	
Male Member (SC)	1	
Female Member (SC)	0	
Male Member (ST)	0	
Female Member (SC)	1	
Total	Male - 6	Female – 3

Source: Self Evaluation Data

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16. However, the GP is unable to provide the data for the financial year 2009-10 and 2011-12.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	-	-	-	-	5.15	4.95	13.80	7.80
Krishi o Sanslishtha	-	-	-	-	122.32	30.86	214.80	99.45
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	-	-	-	-	11.32	29.81	5.35	3.74
Silpa o Parikathamo	-	-	-	-	73.84	12.98	141.84	50.57
Janaswasthya	-	-	-	-	14.77	5.39	46.40	13.69
<b>Sub-Total</b>	-	-	-	-	227.40	84.01	422.20	175.26
Salary etc.	-	-	-	-	16.72	16.70	21.29	17.73
<b>Total</b>	-	-	-	-	244.13	100.71	443.50	192.99

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation and expenditure details, we note that maximum amount has been allocated every year for agriculture and infrastructure. Field visit to the GP has confirmed that infrastructure has been a high priority. The activities undertaken following the plans were however not available for detailed analysis. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- The gram panchayat members present for the discussion were - Kanchan Das Pradhan, members and Panchayat Samiti Member. Apart from that, staff members are present namely - EA, Secretary, Sanchalaks, Jeevika Sevak, Sahayak, Gram Rojgar Sahayak,
- Problems identified in 2008 were: (a) there were 4 'backward villages'; (b) roads were in bad shape; (c) shortage of ponds; (d) drinking water sources were not adequate.



Adding to the list, they emphasised more on unavailability of drinking water and bad or no roads as the major problems faced by the GP then.

- Important achievement since 2008 were: (a) 47 submersible pumps were installed in the GPs; (b) ICDS centres have been built, (c) increased income of the people from NREGS, (d) better roads and connectivity, (e) making books affordable and accessible for the poor children.
- According to the members, SRD planning process was useful as it identified the problems of the area through a participatory exercise. SRD plans were made after hamlet level meetings and preparation of social and natural resource maps. That made investments meaningful.
- However, the facilitation support of the SRD programme was withdrawn after the project came to an end. Thereafter the GP discarded SRD style planning and went back to scheme-wise planning. Even the Block administration preferred the scheme wise planning. Thus, the SRD experiment on planning did not have any permanent impact in this GP and planning process has been discontinued. The state government did not own the process introduced through SRD.
- Under the BRGF, the GP used to receive around to Rs. 8 lakhs per year. BRGF and Finance Commissions (both central and state) funds were utilised to install 47 submersible pumps in all sansads of the GP. The 14<sup>th</sup> Central Finance Commission funds is being used to lay down the pipe lines now.
- The total expenditure incurred by the GP in a year is around Rs. 1.5 Crore.
- Average employment generated for each active job card holding families under MGNREGS in the last financial year 2015-16 was 50 days. This year the achievement is only limited to 37 days.
- All 22 ICDS in the GP now have their own concrete building. These were done mostly by the GP or the PS (as proposed by the GP).
- Books were distributed to needy students. Toilets have been built in school. Papaya trees have been planted in ICDS centres so that the children can eat papayas.
- The GP runs an Ayurvedic dispensary. This GP has only two health sub-centres, where it should have been three given the population size.
- The GP has also held camps on awareness generation for preventing early marriage. The incidence of institutional delivery is about 100%. There are thirteen ASHA workers who conducts door-to-door visits in every village respectively. The fourth Saturday meeting with ANM and ICDS workers are held regularly.
- There are around 70 active SHG groups. Some of these groups are engaged in producing copper ornaments, babui rope, sal leaf plates.
- Agriculture is the main livelihood of the people of the GP. Rice and potato with some vegetables and sesame are produced. Potato is a major crop and can provide a source of income for most of the families. Usually one crop of paddy is rotated with vegetable and sesame.
- Paddy cultivation is not fetching adequate price in the market but is grown for subsistence purposes. Water from deep tube-wells has become expensive – Rs 100 per hour of water from deep tube-well. Labour has also become expensive – Rs 200 per

day during Kharif season. MGNREGS wage, according to the group, has pushed up the market price.

- The GP is affected by lack of rain.
- Migration is low – 2-3%.
- Recent problems faced by the GP are of lack of drainage facilities. The waters drawn up through the submersible pumps need to be drained.
- Irrigation is another problem. Water from private mini sources comes to about 100 rupees per hour. Additional cost of seed, fertiliser, pesticide is also high.
- TB is emerging as a major health problem in the tribal areas.
- Addiction to alcohol is a major problem in these areas.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the above table that tax collection has gone up between 2009-10 (Rs. 22005) to 2015-16 (Rs. 72000). Whereas, Non-Tax Revenue has gone down during these years from Rs. 1174074 in 2009-10 to Rs. 420198 in 2015-16. Total OSR has gone down as a result from Rs.1196079 in 2009-10 to 492198 in 2015-16.

**Table 5: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	00.22	11.74	11.96	00.74	1.38	2.13	1.04	1.68	2.73	00.72	4.20	4.92

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- There is no tax collector in the GP for the last two years. Therefore, collection has gone down.
- The OSR is used for supporting students from poor families with books and meet other emergency needs. The GP also helps schools within its area by building boundary walls.

### Conclusion

Based on the above discussion we may arrive at certain concluding remarks. The fund flow to the Gram Panchayat has increased significantly as a result of which the plan budget of the GP has increased substantially. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of GP.

The additional support received by the GP from SRD and BRGF have resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. But only till the time the intervention was there. Once the intervention was stopped, planning process of the GP has also stopped and they went back to their sector-wise plan as favoured by the block administration.

What is significantly missing from planning in this GP is planning for livelihood. Group discussions revealed that agriculture is in a state of crisis, with paddy cultivation not being profitable any more. However, the Gram Panchayat planning has not addressed the issue

although they have identified the problem. The latest health challenge for the GP is regarding TB especially among the four backward sansads inhabited by the tribal communities. The GP has taken some preliminary steps regarding raising awareness on TB.

The Pradhan of the GP is a woman. She was present all through the discussion but did not speak.

## Case Study 2: Mangrul Gram Panchayat

Mangrul Gram Panchayat is situated in Chandrakona I Block within Ghatal Sub-division of Paschim Medinipur District, which was covered under BRGF. The GP received support from both SRD and ISGP.

### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 24,618. As the Table shows, within the GP 'other' shares the maximum number of population, followed SC community and Muslim community.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	6,551	24,618	12,672	11,946
SC	3,397	10,085	NA	NA
ST	377	844	NA	NA
Muslim	415	3,060	NA	NA
Other <sup>94</sup>	2,362	10,629	NA	NA
BPL <sup>95</sup>	2,434	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 24618, only 17079 are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
9277	73.20	7,802	65.31	17,079	69.37

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP is lower than the district literacy rate (79.04), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

**Table 3: Service Delivery Institutions within the GP**

Index	Number
No. of Primary Schools	17
No. of Sishu Shiksha Kendra	7
No. of Madhyamik Schools (Secondary Schools)	3
No. of Higher Secondary Schools	1
No. of ICDS	34
No. of Ishwarchandra Janachetana Kendra	15
No. of Private Schools	3
No. of Health Centres	1
No. of Sub-health Centres	4

Source: Self Evaluation Data

<sup>94</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>95</sup> Out of 6551 households, 2434 are BPL households.

Table 3 shows the numbers of different educational institutions and health care centres present in the GP. One of the significant feature is that this GP has around 34 ICDS centres and 17 Primary schools, indicating that the GP is giving attention towards basic education for all although the GP is not directly responsible for building primary schools.

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	64.63	3.96	7.38	5.84	15.23	101.02	15.50	21.26
Krishi o Sanslishtha	00.75	39.49	122.45	58.32	364.55	153.09	507.73	168.39
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	18.60	1.39	6.58	73.38	8.20	1.46	2.00	1.60
Silpa o Parikathamo	96.60	77.44	188.94	4034.56	403.72	82.13	463.17	179.11
Janaswasthya	10.10	7.77	22.12	15.03	99.70	39.61	55.60	6.98
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>190.68</b>	<b>130.07</b>	<b>347.49</b>	<b>4187.15</b>	<b>891.42</b>	<b>377.31</b>	<b>1044.00</b>	<b>377.36</b>
Salary etc.	18.37	9.34	22.00	13.60	19.28	1.72	21.63	18.99
<b>Total</b>	<b>209.05</b>	<b>139.42</b>	<b>36.94</b>	<b>4200.75</b>	<b>910.71</b>	<b>394.55</b>	<b>1065.63</b>	<b>396.35</b>

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation and expenditure details, the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “shilpa o parikathamo upasamiti” which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. Field visit to the GP has also corroborated this. The activities undertaken following the plans were however not available for detailed analysis. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### Sector-wise Goals and Targets

The data that was made available did not have much information on how the GP analysed its problems at the beginning of SRD in 2006-07. However, the GP plan for the year 2013-14 has a detailed analysis of the kind of works the GP wanted to do through planning. This is expressed in the table below.

**Table 5: Sector-wise Plan Goals and Targets 2013-14**

Sector	Development Goals	Target
Education	Basic education for all and to ensure minimum infrastructure in every educational institution	Development of the educational institutions, which are under the Gram Panchayats (GP), construction of safe toilets, drinking water facilities, improving educational learning, construction of school garden, playground, as well as arrangements for practice of sports and cultural activities.

Sector	Development Goals	Target
Health	Disease reduction in the GP areas and providing health care facilities to every individual in the GP.	In all 19 sansads, development of sub-health centres and within the sub-health centres arrangements for necessary facilities for treatment along with appropriate infrastructure supporting child delivery. Construction of a clinic for the treatment of burning, dog bites, snake bites and poisoning.
WCD	Reducing malnutrition among children, adolescent and pregnant mother, women empowerment and poverty eradication and reducing maternal mortality and infant mortality rate	Establishment of one Anganwadi in every Mouza, Taking care of the adolescents and pregnant mothers through Anganwadi centres and SHGs. The SHGs and their sangha must improve themselves. For the actual sense of self-dependency, the SHGs would distributeseeds of trees which give flowers which have commercial value,, vegetable seeds, fish sperm, ducklings, chicks and enhance their productivity. Guaranteeing safe motherhood through the initiative of safe child delivery.
Social Welfare	Identification of service recipients and providing improved services according to their expectations. Making arrangements to provide piped drinking water facilities to every family in the GP.	Through MGNREGS Programme, repairing waste canals, and controlling environmental pollution by constructing of toilets for healthy life, smoke free oven for every family. Fair implementation of Sahay Programme. Incorporation of special needs disabled persons into different government jobs. Identification of homeless families and bringing them under suitable environment and offering support to them. Arrangement for getting the certificated of disabled, scheduled, birth, death, business, etc.
Agriculture	Through overall development and stability in agriculture scope for expansion and increase in productivity. Irrigation development and expansion.	Through the MGNREGS increasing productivity of every land. Through digging of the water bodies, expanding the provision for irrigation. Construction of fruit garden on private land for expansion of fruit farming. Every family every year will be given seedling of a single fruit. Benefits of canal irrigation and Suez gate construction.
Animal Husbandry	Opportunity for increased livelihood through advanced cattle farming. Increasing the provision for fish, meat and eggs.	Repairing of canals and ponds and providing the opportunity fish farming. For the creation of improved cow breeds, need the supply of cow-sperms through GPs and arrangement for treatment centres. Arrangement for goats, ducks, chickens, high-breed goats farming through the Self-Help Groups.
Industry	Production of agro based industrial products. Create opportunity for livelihood from the development of micro and small industries and improve their financial status.	Development of small industries with Self-Help Groups for manufacturing of items from bamboo , bronze, etc.
Infrastructure	Development of roads, repairing kaccha road, culvert, and formation of bridges. Formation and repairing of market areas and other infrastructures.	Connectivity and communication with other GPs for development purposes. Construction of advanced transportation system along with market, schools, health, agriculture, etc.
Other Sectors	Development of social and cultural welfare, combating natural disasters in the GP.	Construction and maintenance of playing ground, community centre, tourist centres for and arrangement for combating natural disaster.

Source: GP Planning Document

### Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- This GP has received continuous support under SRD, BRGF and of ISGPP. Therefore, the GP witnessed three types of planning under the three programmes. The SRD process of planning was not continued after the conclusion of the project in 2010. Instead a less participatory form of planning was initiated under ISGP project.
- One of the GP *karmacharis*, who is there in the GP from the time of SRD, identified the primary problems of the GP during 2006-07 as roads, housing and food security. The group also identified agriculture as a problem which is still continuing. The principal crop is paddy. In recent times, paddy cultivation is not incurring enough profits as in the past. For example: for per bigha of land (1/3 of 1 acre), the cost of production is about Rs. 8000/- for 8 quintal of rice. The selling price is about Rs. 8800/-. So, the profit per quintal is only about Rs. 800/-. Paddy is still cultivated for subsistence purpose rather than for income. GP has identified the problem but is unable to address the issue through planning. They also seemed to be unaware of new techniques of agriculture which can reduce cost and improve soil fertility.
- At present 40% of IAY demands have been met and therefore the housing problem has been solved to some extent. The group complained about problems related to BPL listing which is, according to them, depriving many poor people. Also, demand is still higher than the supply.
- Access to clean drinking water used to be the problem of the GP. The members claimed now the demand for drinking water sources are more; for which, they have installed tube-well to provide drinking water but new problem of maintaining them has come up.
- In the earlier version of planning, there was some ownership of the people, who contributed to maintain the tube-well after being installed by government. Though people still contribute for the electric supply of the deep tube-wells handed over to them. The GP is now able to provide piped water to 70% of the households. Submersible pumps have been installed with ISGP support and residents gives the user charges for it. But still problem of drinking water is yet to be fully solved.
- Regarding the road connectivity to every village, the GP with its planning has managed to solve the problem to a large extent. Around 65% of the *paras* of the GP are connected by all-weather concrete road. Quality of the roads have also improved. While rest are morrum roads. There are no bamboo bridges in the GP anymore. All such bridges have been converted to concrete bridge or culvert. Around 600 houses have been distributed.
- The GP is a late starter on sanitation. Only 270 toilets have been built so far. Arrangements for water in these constructed toilets are yet to be made.
- According to the members, people are now demanding their needs more than ever in spite of providing roads, housing, drinking water facilities and toilets. The problem of maintaining these infrastructure remains the biggest hurdle for the GP. According to them, the infrastructures, which have been constructed cannot to be maintained under the existing schemes.

- With the implementation of MGNREGS, the GP is able provide employment to the agricultural labourers. Around 50-52 days of work are being provided per year under MGNREGS on an average. This has made a difference in terms of increasing development of the GP and decreasing number of chronically hungry people. Instead of 21, only 6 persons are now chronically hungry, these are mainly old-aged person with no family members. Total expenditures of the GP per year is around Rs. 3.Crores approximately, of which the annual expenditure under MGNREGS is around Rs. 2 crores.
- Fund flow of NREGS is a concern. Rs. 35 lakhs are still due for the last four months making delay in payment to the workers.
- The Sanchalaks of Shiksha and Janaswasthya (Education and Health) said that the problems of the GP were: low quality of Mid-Day Meal in schools, lack of maintenance of primary schools, limited number of ICDS centres, and limited number of primary health care units. There is a Primary Health Care in the GP covering four gram sansads but does not have a doctor. The nearest hospital is Block Primary Health Care, which is around 20 km from the furthest village of the GP. Out of four sub-centres, one do not have own premises and functions from a hired premise. The GP by incorporating in its plan, have now constructed 2 ICDS centres and 12 are yet to be constructed. Access to water and electricity are still a problem in the ICDS centres. Though the planning priority of the GP is to have more roads that is why primary schools are not maintained. The sub-committee members are of the opinion that the GP allocated only about 20% of its total fund for the purpose of education and health sub-committees.
- The Shanchalak of Krishi Upa-Samiti (agriculture) claimed that there have been some important interventions - improved water supply through digging of wells, drainage facilities, distribution of seeds and fertilizers and distribution of chickens and goats. However, there was not much evidence of agriculture related interventions to improve the scenario of paddy cultivation.
- Irrigation is a major problem in the GP. The demand is mostly for repairing the deep tube-well for which the required fund cannot be mobilised by the GP itself. In- spite of agricultural being the main occupation of the people, agricultural sector is facing crisis.
- There are 160 SHGs in the GP. There is a cluster of SHGs at the GP level. The cluster guides the SHGs to maintain their records. The SHGs are involved in economic activities such as making *dhoop* (incense sticks), sewing, goat rearing and bamboo based handicrafts. Regarding the benefits, the SHG member said along with their improved earnings level, there have been several non-financial benefits as well. For example, many women have stepped outside home for the first time, they have gone to the bank for the first time. Most remarkable task undertaken by SHGs was that they collectively have destroyed hooch dens in the GP and continues to do so where there is one. To save them for domestic violence and also protect their husband and sons from falling prey to the toxic effect of the alcohol and wasting their hard-earned money.



### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the above table that Tax collection has gone up between 2009-10 (Rs. 258000) to 2015-16 (Rs. 612081) and Non-Tax Revenue has also gone up during these years. Overall there is a growing trend, from Rs.516000 in 2009-10 to Rs.1956611 in 2015-16. However, the group admitted that the OSR collection is still low.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	2.58	2.58	5.16	4.30	29.12	33.43	4.38	27.94	32.33	6.12	13.44	19.56

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- The Own Source Resource (OSR) collection of the GP is low mainly because of lack of incentive for tax collectors. The tax collector said that about 60% of the current demand is collected. Mutation of name is a problem. Getting arrears is a problem, nearly Rs. 2 lakhs are still due. Again, the tax collector said that it is the poor households who are better taxpayer compared to the economically sound households. This is because the latter could meet their own needs of basic facilities whereas, the poor households are dependent on the GP for such facilities.. Secretary observed that around 60% of OSR is spent on development purposes and the rest is spent on office management issues. It is used for road maintenance and repair, especially after flood, for providing drinking water in schools and installation of tube-wells. They have not yet thought of awarding the beneficiaries of old-age pension, disability, and widow pension through own source fund. Because number of beneficiaries have increased but sanctions remains a problem. However, to increase the tax collection, GP has given a circular that no certificates (birth, ration card, etc.) would be provided to households until taxes are paid.
- Finally, the study team wanted to know from the group how they benefited from the additional support provided by SRD and ISGP. The group said:
  - (a) The GP is now confident about its planning skills. The group said that they can plan without the support of mentors.
  - (b) The group said that Annual Performance Assessment has improved capacity of the GP.
  - (c) Sansad meetings are regularly held, the group noted with satisfaction.

### Conclusion

Based on the above discussion we may arrive at certain concluding remarks. The fund flow to the Gram Panchayat has increased significantly between 2009-10 to 2015-16 as a result of which the budget of the GP has increased substantially (see Table 4 above). The majority of the funds are from centrally sponsored schemes like MGNREGS and therefore the planning of the GP has had a bias towards infrastructure projects. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of GP.

The additional support received by the GP from SRD, BRGF and ISGP have resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. The mentoring system was praised by the GP as this ensured a friend in need all the time whenever they needed some help.

What is significantly missing in Gram Panchayat planning in this GP is planning for livelihood. Group discussions revealed that agriculture is in a state of crisis, with paddy cultivation not being profitable any more. However, the Gram Panchayat planning has not addressed the issue although they have identified the problem.

Literacy rate of the GP is also lower than the district, state and national average. Planning has so far not addressed the issue.

### Case Study 3: Chinpai Gram Panchayat

Chinpai Gram Panchayat is situated in Dubrajpur Block of Birbhum District. It has received SRD, ISGP and BRGF fund.

#### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 18108. As the Table shows, within the GP the maximum number of population come under the category 'other', followed by SC community and Muslim community.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	3,795	18,108	9,248	8,860
SC	1,520	6,606	NA	NA
ST	0	971	NA	NA
Muslim	630	2,804	NA	NA
Other <sup>96</sup>	1,645	7,727	NA	NA
BPL <sup>97</sup>	1,521	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 18108, only 11295 or 62.38% are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
6,446	69.70	4,849	54.73	11,295	62.38

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

This is lower than the district literacy rate (70.9), state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

#### II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	8.45	4.70	14.86	12.95	24.51	14.52	32.16	7.83
Krishi o Sanslishtha	125.81	114.64	126.06	89.19	262.82	191.19	594.28	155.92
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	26.64	15.54	16.80	00.54	9.45	00.89	5.30	00.68

<sup>96</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally 'other' category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>97</sup> Out of 3795 households, 1521 are BPL households.

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Silpa o Parikathamo	52.87	17.61	79.94	80.41	106.10	47.49	42.14	47.91
Janaswasthya	13.15	11.02	13.10	6.12	28.54	11.32	17.95	24.36
Sub-Total	226.93	163.52	250.76	189.22	431.43	265.43	691.84	236.40
Salary etc.	9.81	13.32	17.20	15.83	18.53	17.34	20.54	14.67
<b>Total</b>	<b>236.75</b>	<b>176.85</b>	<b>267.97</b>	<b>205.05</b>	<b>449.97</b>	<b>282.77</b>	<b>712.38</b>	<b>251.07</b>

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation and expenditure details, the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “Krishi o Sanslishth” (agriculture) along with “Silpa o Parikathamo” (infrastructure) which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. Field visit to the GP has also corroborated this. However, there is no data available on the specific infrastructural and agricultural activities they have undertaken. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

#### **Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field**

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- The present gram panchayat members were not members during the SRD project which was implemented when Left Front was in power. However, the leader of the opposition could remember that agricultural and livelihood equipment used to be given under SRD. Equipment for games were also provided. They could not immediately recall anything about the planning exercise. One present member said that there was a planning exercise of sorts but since they were in the opposition they were not welcome. However, a Gram Unnayan Samiti was set up at the ward level and plans used to be prepared samiti-wise.
- Regarding the gram panchayat planning, the acting Secretary of the GP said that the demands are listed in sansad meetings. However not all problems raised there can be addressed by the GP.

The usual demand is for road, drain, water, 100 days’ work, pension etc. A problem that cannot be addressed by the GP is sent up to the PS through the PS member.

- Major investment is done under Shilpa and parikathamo (infrastructure) sector. The demand from other sectors are less than the demands for infrastructure.
- Major problem of the village is that of supplying drinking water. Water of 10 selected tube wells are tested each month. The second major problem is related to Pension schemes of all types; Old age, widow and disability pension. SECC list of beneficiaries is yet to be activated. The number of persons receiving old age pension is 345, whereas around 700 should be getting it. Widow pension is given to 45 beneficiaries but the number of eligible widow is about 150. Disability pension is given to 15 persons

whereas, the number of deserving persons is around 50. This gap creates problems for the GP as people's expectations are not met.

- With the ISGPP intervention institutional processes have strengthened and improved such as accounting, record maintenance and office procedures.
- There is delay in arrival of untied funds which reduces the efficiency of the GP.
- There is some confusion in the GP regarding procedures of planning as per the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). The group said that they have already prepared a plan but would now have to re-do the plan.
- Primary occupation of the people of the GP is agriculture – mainly paddy cultivation. The land is generally one crop except for those adjacent to canal, which are two cropped. Paddy production is marginally profitable if the family members personally labour in the fields. Input cost of fertiliser, water, electricity, labour have gone up considerably in comparison to the selling price of paddy, which is low. The mill owners buy at prices lower than the procurement price fixed by the government -Rs. 1400 and Rs. 1000. The land here is sandy, thereby having low soil fertility. Water is also scarce. 80% of the land is rain fed. The tanks excavated under MGNREGS has of late added to irrigation potential of the GP to some extent.
- People migrate mostly to other districts, and to some extent to other states. Their engagement in other areas is mostly for skilled work.
- Total labour wage due under MGNREGS is around Rs. 1.40 crore for works done during the financial year of 2016-17. Material cost for previous year (2015-16) is also due. MGNREGS had initially reduced migration but people have again started migrating because of delayed payments.
- Maintenance of existing assets is an emerging area of concern. The estimate of maintenance cost has been submitted by the GP to 4th SFC amounting to only Rs. 9.83 lakh. Although the members consider this estimate to be an understatement. As the assets grow the fund required for maintenance also increases.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the table below that tax collection has gone up between 2009-10 (Rs.340216) to 2015-16 (Rs.325256). Non-Tax Revenue has also gone up during these years from Rs.154900 in 2009-10 to Rs.346903 in 2015-16.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	3.40	1.54	4.95	3.07	1.13	4.20	3.10	4.64	7.75	3.25	3.46	6.72

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- Own fund of the GP is utilised mostly for paying electricity bill of 90 installed street lights, distribution of text books to deserving students, waste management etc. A piped water supply scheme has been installed 5 months back with the support of OSR.

No charges are being realised from the users yet. The GP is contemplating to realise some fee in future.

- Collection of own source revenue is unfortunately not very high. Although the Bakreswar thermal Power plant is located within the GP, yet not much tax is being collected from them. The Panchayat can perhaps raise the demand but not very confident if they can realise it.

### **Conclusion**

The fund flow to the Gram Panchayat has increased significantly between 2009-10 to 2015-16 as a result of which the budget of the GP has increased substantially. Major investment has been done in developing the infrastructure of the GP, especially roads, which also coincide with the demand of the people.

Most of the current GP members are not aware of the SRD planning. However, ISGP intervention has resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings, according to the GP functionaries. The mentoring system was praised by the GP as this ensured a friend in need all the time whenever they needed some help.

What is significantly missing in Gram Panchayat planning in this GP is planning for livelihood. Group discussions revealed that agriculture is in a state of crisis, with paddy cultivation not being profitable any more. Paddy cultivation is only profitable if family members are involved, thereby cutting down labour cost. Gram Panchayat planning has however not as yet managed to intervene in introducing new system of agricultural practices to address the problem of agriculture and livelihood.

## Case Study 4: Panchkuri I Gram Panchayat

Panchkuri I Gram Panchayat is situated in Medinipur Sadar Block of Paschim Medinipur District, which was covered under both BRGF and SRD.

### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 25080. As the Table shows, within the GP Muslim community is predominant, followed by ‘other’ and ST community.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	2,788	25,080	13,132	11,948
SC	367	1,836	NA	NA
ST	0	6,119	NA	NA
Muslim	1,196	9,184	NA	NA
Other <sup>98</sup>	1,225	7,941	NA	NA
BPL <sup>99</sup>	2,323	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 25080, only 13096 are literate in the GP. Of which female literacy rate covers only 44.80%.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7,743	58.96	5,353	44.80	13,096	52.22

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP (52.22%) is lower than the district literacy rate (79.04), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

Table 3 shows that number of families in the agricultural sector increased by 33.02% from 2008-09 to 2011-12. This is, in all probability, the result of families breaking up into smaller units. It is noteworthy that in handicraft industry number of families have declined whereas in all other occupational sectors the number of families has increased. Number of families in other occupational type increases by 102.5% from the year 2008-09 to 2011-12 which is the highest among the increase in all ‘other’ occupational sectors. This, in all probability, refers to multiple odd-jobs carried out by the people of the GP.

**Table 3: Distribution of Population based on their Occupation from 2006-12**

Occupation Type	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2011-12
No. of families in agricultural sector	2,268	2,268	2,268	3,017
No. of families in handicraft industry	434	434	434	296
No. of families in educational sector	106	106	139	198
No. of families in ‘other’ occupational type	433	433	407	824
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,236</b>	<b>3,241</b>	<b>3,248</b>	<b>4,335</b>

Source: Self Evaluation Data

<sup>98</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>99</sup> Out of 2788 households, 2323 are BPL households.

From Table 4 it is seen that the number of houses in all the categories remained same over the years, except for 2011-12. Jhopdi in own land constituted the highest share of housing category followed by good conditioned kuchcha house. The number of weak kuchha house has declined in the year 2011-12 whereas, in all other categories the number of houses has increased.

**Table 4: Distribution of Type of Housing from 2006-2011**

House Type	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2011-12
Pucca house	177	177	177	366
Semi pucca house	283	283	283	517
Good conditioned kuchha house	507	507	507	1012
Weak kuchha house	917	917	917	893
Jhopdi in own land	1181	1181	1181	1267
Jhopdi in occupied land	105	105	105	361

Source: Self Evaluation Data

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 5 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16.

**Table 5: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	19.74	18.20	7.05	6.57	6.68	5.45	4.95	3.25
Krishi o Sanslishtha	43.84	39.85	53.65	48.55	93.75	46.25	211.45	112.55
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	6.32	5.22	1.00	00.46	6.22	00.62	1.20	00.58
Silpa o Parikathamo	149.65	114.85	65.12	18.42	65.25	28.32	53.85	21.88
Janaswasthya	7.42	6.25	21.00	10.11	37.91	29.29	351.77	93.82
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>226.99</b>	<b>184.39</b>	<b>147.82</b>	<b>84.13</b>	<b>209.81</b>	<b>109.95</b>	<b>623.22</b>	<b>232.10</b>
Salary etc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>								

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

The two areas in which there has been lot of expenditure all through the period are agriculture and infrastructure. In 2015-16 budget for health has increased significantly. Very little investment can be seen in case of women and child. Field visit to the GP has also corroborated this. The activities undertaken following the plans were however not available for detailed analysis. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.



### **Problems identified by the GPs**

The data available from the financial year plans of 2008-09 and 2009-10 have been analysed in terms of sector-wise development.

### **Sector: Education**

There are 11 primary schools in 11 Gram Sansads, 9 SSKs, 19 ICDS Centres, 12 Iswarchandra Janachetana Kendras, 1 Higher Secondary School, 1 High Madrasa and 1 MSK.

The problems identified were:

- Many students are not enrolled – precise number is not available.
- Many students have drop-out – precise number is not available.
- 19 Anganwadi centres do not have proper infrastructure.
- Not enough Higher Secondary Schools.
- Very few students have undertaken vocational training.
- Anganwadi Centres do not have sources of water and toilets.
- There is no library in the Anganwadi area.
- Infrastructure of 4 Primary Schools is in dilapidated condition.
- The SSKs do not have any proper infrastructure.
- The MSKs do not have proper infrastructure.
- The GP does not have any computer training centre.

The solutions proposed were:

- 19 Anganwadi Centres need improved infrastructure.
- 19 Anganwadi Centres need water and sanitation facilities.
- 4 Libraries are needed in the Gram Panchayat area.
- Vocational training facility is required.
- 1 Higher Secondary School is required.
- 9 SSKs are required.
- 1 MSK is required.
- 2 computer training centres are required.

### **2013-14 Plan:**

#### **Situation Analysis:**

- There are 28 ICDS centres in the GP.
- There are 11 Primary Schools and 9 SSKs.
- 1 Higher Secondary School and 1 MSK.

#### **Problems identified:**

- Continuity of effort in awareness generation cannot be maintained.
- All ICDS centres do not have their own building.
- No scope for adult education.
- Adult Education centres do not have rooms for reading and also shortage of volunteers.

Education in West Bengal is primarily controlled by the Education Department rather than the Gram Panchayat. Funds available to the GP is quite small while the problems identified are

quite a handful. We can also see that the education budget of the GP has gone down over the years. In 2008-09 the budget was Rs 1598455 while in 2013-14 it had gone down to Rs 175000. From the information made available on the physical assets, it can be observed that number of ICDS centres have gone up from 19 to 28 but other demands made in 2008-09 has remained unfulfilled.

### **Sector: Health**

#### **2008-09, 2009-10 plan**

#### **Available Resources:**

- 1 Primary Health Centre
- 2 Sub-Health Centres
- 220 families have healthy toilets
- 19 ICDS centres
- 108 tube wells
- Monthly meeting of health upasamiti held regularly.
- Health workers regularly go the Subcentres and PHC.

#### **Problems:**

- PHC does not have adequate infrastructure and beds.
- Number of sub health centres is less than required.
- Sub Health Centres do not have adequate infrastructure including toilets.
- Tube wells do not have cement floors (chatal)
- Not enough trained “dai”
- PHC does not have any ambulance
- PHC does not have any waiting room or boundary wall.
- 1538 families do not have toilets.
- PHC does not have any infectious disease ward.
- NSV scheme has not been successful in the GP.
- PHC does not have facility for ligation.

#### **Possibilities:**

- Beds in PHCs need to improve number of beds.
- Sub health centre facilities need to improve.
- 2 new sub health centres are required.
- 12 cemented floors of tube wells required.
- 1538 families need toilets.
- We need adequate number of trained midwives.
- PHC should have ambulance facility.
- PHC should have waiting room and boundary wall.
- PHC should have separate ID ward.
- PHC should have ligation operation facility.

#### **2013-14 plans:**

#### **Resources Available:**

- 1 PHC and 2 Sub Health Centre
- 28 ICDS centres
- 3 Health workers, 1 link worker, 8 ASHAs.
- 131 SHGs with 1310 women members.
- 41 families fed under SAHAI programme.

Public Health is primarily controlled by the Health Department of Government of West Bengal. Gram Panchayats have a minor role. From the data provided by the plans it can be seen that between 2008-09 and 2013-14 the number of PHCs and Sub Centres have remained the same although there was demand for more sub health centres. An important addition has been the ASHAs. Number of ICDS centres have also gone up. As the graph shows, the health budget of the GP has gone up significantly between 2008-09 and 2013-14.

**Sector: Agriculture:**

**2008-09 & 2009-10**

**Available Resources:**

- Fertile land
- 78 ponds
- 1 large canal
- 6 mini tube well
- 17 shallow pump
- 22 acres' forest conservation
- 3 agricultural cooperative society
- 1 marketing society
- 1 veterinary hospital

**Problem:**

- Scarcity of proper irrigation system
- Lack of enthusiasm of farmers to examine lands
- Lack of cattle rearing experience
- 1 agricultural cooperative society is not working
- Marketing society is not working. Infrastructure is very weak
- Lack of infrastructural facility in the veterinary hospital.
- Lack of enthusiasm to cultivate other crops
- Farmers are habituated to use excess fertilizer

**Possibility:**

- 12 tube well is needed for irrigation
- 62 ponds need to be conserved
- 1 gate is needed to conserve water of pond
- Distribution of HYV seeds
- Workshops to be conducted for farmers to train them about soil testing techniques
- Workshops to be conducted to train for cattle rearing
- Farmers should learn to produce crops in different way

- To warn farmers about the negative impact of excessive fertilizer

**Resource available 2013-14:**

- Afforestation, soil conservation, tube well, ponds in GP
- Government aided agricultural equipment
- Fertile land for rice and vegetable production

Budget on agriculture was the highest for the period 2012-13 followed by a decline in budget estimate for the next period.

**Sector: Women, Children and social development**

**Available resources:**

- 54 women self-help group received fund
- 376 old person received old-age subsidy
- 6 widows received subsidy
- 77 person got ST subsidies

**Problems:**

- 398 old persons are not getting old-age pension
- Many widows and handicapped persons are not getting subsidy

**Possibilities:**

- More self-help groups need to formed. Workshop should be organized to generate awareness regarding self-help group formation
- 398 old persons have income under poverty line but do not have BPL cards. They should be provided with old-age subsidy.
- 57 widows should get widow subsidy.
- 62 handicapped persons should get subsidy.
- Family control awareness generating programmes should be organized.

**Available resources:**

- 133 Self-Help-Groups
- 28 Anganwadi centre
- 4 sub health centres and 7 health workers
- 581 old persons and 4 physically challenged persons receive Government aid
- 358 widows receive government aid

From the data given it could be seen that budget on women, children and social development has fallen drastically, though there is huge want for this sector's development. We can see that in 2008-09 the budget was Rs.6205000 and it started declining over the period and during 2013-14 it is only Rs.1597000.

**Sector: industry and Infrastructure:**

**Available resources:**

- In Gram Sansad Maharajpur-II and Kulda-I there are small sized firms producing Zari
- Mat production from date palm's leaves

- Cottage industries manufacturing fire crackers and nylon ropes
- 2km National highway
- 4 km state highway
- 2 km pucca road
- 75 km boulder road
- 42 concrete culvert
- 35 km kuchha road
- 1 weekly market in the GP
- GP has one bank one post office
- 11 play grounds
- 1 community hall

**Problems:**

- Lack of availability of raw materials
- Lack of market structure
- Lack of proper training and infrastructure to generate and manage resources
- No construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana
- The weekly market is not organized properly
- Uneven play grounds

**Possibilities:**

- Increase availability of raw materials
- Improvement of market structure
- Improvement of proper training and infrastructure to generate and manage resources.
- At least 5 all seasons roads should be constructed under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana
- Proper infrastructure of the weekly market in at least 5 Gram Sansads
- Play grounds should be properly maintained
- Kuchha roads should be upgraded into boulder roads

**Available resources:**

- 55 km kuchha road, 80 km boulder road, 10 km national highway and culvert
- 11 primary schools, 28 ICDS centres, 4 sub healthy centres, Panchayat Office, Bank, PO and High Madrasa

**Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field**

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- One of the first striking point about the GP is that the GP office is located within a different GP of Panchkuri II.
- For the population of 25080, there are 13 sansads.
- Members those are present for the discussion are elected gram panchayat Pradhan and member along with Sanchalaks Krishi and Sanchalaks poshu o pranisampad. Apart

from that, job assistant, Nirman Sahayak, Jeevika Sahayak, block members were also present.

- Panchkuri received support from BRGF and SRD. Only one, among those present had actually participated in the SRD planning. On recalling the planning process, he mentioned of talking about resource mapping, social meetings, and supports given to vulnerable people. The plan used to be made based on the need identification such as identification of BPL families. Another said that the plan identified actions, which were later placed before the gram sansad for approval. Planning was done from the gram sansad level upwards. They said that they still continue the practice of Upa Samiti based planning. However, this SRD process of planning has been discontinued after the end of the project.
- The Pradhan said that he was not a member during the SRD period, as a result he is not aware of the SRD planning process.
- Now plans are prepared after consultation in gram sansad with prioritisation also takes place at the gram sansad level. Priorities are based on those activities that would benefit the maximum. This is followed by action plan. The action plan is approved at the gram sabha level. This is then sent to the block for approval. The usual practice is to add 20% to the budget and send it to the block.
- Delay in fund transfer is common and therefore work cannot be completed on time. The activities, which are not completed are carried over to the next year. Planning is currently done schematically rather than sector-wise as was done during SRD period. Apart from fund transfer, fund shortage is also an issue. As a result, activities demanding more investment are generally avoided because the block does not allot funds for such activities. For example, making a *morrum* road may take Rs.50 lakhs but it has to be done every year. On the other hand, constructing a concrete road will cost Rs. 2 crores, but it is relatively more permanent. The GP however cannot construct a concrete road because of fund shortage for that year.
- Interestingly, nobody in the GP knew how to ascertain their entitlement under various untied sources of both fourth State Financial Commission (SFC) or 14<sup>th</sup> Central Finance Commission (CFC). The GP does not have a clear idea about the proposed amount they are entitled to under 14<sup>th</sup> Central Finance Commission.
- Though with the fund they have and about to receive under 14<sup>th</sup> CFC, they have planned to use for piped water supply scheme.
- There is a huge delay in receipt of fund. For example, the plans for 2016-17 was submitted to the block on 31st January, 2016, they have not received any fund for 2016-17 till end of the year. . Normally, the fund comes within a year. They have received only one instalment of 14<sup>th</sup> CFC in 2015-16 amounting to Rs. 20 lakhs only. The second instalment for that year has not been received yet. Nothing has come for 2016-17 also at the time of the field visit.
- Depending on MGNREGS's fund alone is risky. Around Rs. 60 lakhs are due to labours under MGNREGS. Collecting the fund from the portal is a big hassle. The labours are refusing to join for work. No one got any payment even before the pujas. The other

problem is that if they don't do the work listed in MGNREGS, the plan will be cancelled.

- This GP has low water table. They had been spending a lot for drinking water. The block authorities forbid them to spend on ICDS. Investment on ICDS is being made mostly from the block. Apparently, most of the work under MGNREGS are also reportedly implemented by the block.
- Priorities on other sectors involved: (a) Women and child development focuses on toilets, water in ICDS; (b) Education focusses on arrangement for drinking water in schools and Health focuses on Pucca drain, pipeline for water, drinking water, water tank tube-well platform; (c) Agriculture focusses on mini deep tube-well, plantation of trees, land development, drainage, canal, ponds etc.
- The receipt of CFC fund has been delayed in respect of ISGP GPs also. The district has received only 8 instalments as against total 10 instalments the state is entitled to.
- The participants admitted that since the block did not insist on SRD type plans, the process was abandoned after the project ended.
- Main livelihood of the GP is agriculture. Wheat, vegetable, sesame, peanuts are grown in small areas. Rice is the main produce. But profitability of producing rice is very low. 75% of the area are double cropped. The youth is opting largely for non-agricultural occupation in the town area. There are some handicraft artisans producing fire crackers and ropes.
- The current political profile of the GP is: 13 TMC members and 11 Independent members. In Panchayat Samiti, there are 3 members and all from TMC.

Achievements of the GP according to the GP functionaries:

- Now, 80% of the GP area is irrigated. Surface water schemes are more than those dependent on ground water.
- They have reportedly spent Rs. 1 Crore for Swachh Bharat Mission. As a result, when Swachh Bharat Delhi team had visited the GP, they were satisfied with the work of the GP.
- Education - drinking water has been provided in school.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

It can be seen from the above table that Tax collection has gone up between 2009-10 (Rs.102839) to 2015-16 (Rs. 153678) and Non-Tax Revenue has also gone up during these years. Overall there is a growing trend, from Rs. 11700 in 2009-10 to Rs. 163678 in 2015-16. However, the group admitted that the OSR collection is still low.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	1.02	0.11	1.14	1.13	0.33	1.46	1.45	0.95	2.41	1.63	1.36	3.00

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

## **Conclusion**

Based on the above discussion certain conclusions can be made. The fund flow to the Gram Panchayat has increased significantly between 2009-10 to 2015-16 as a result of which the budget the GP has increased substantially. The majority of the funds however are from centrally sponsored schemes like MGNREGS but depending on it resulting to be risky. As now the MGNREGS fund arrival is delayed. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of GP.

The additional support received by the GP from BRGF and SRD have resulted in improved capacity to plan, need identification, action plans, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. It was unfortunate the SRD process was abandoned at the end of the project.

What is significantly missing in Gram Panchayat planning in this GP is planning for livelihood. Group discussions revealed that agriculture is in a state of crisis, with paddy cultivation not being profitable any more. However, the Gram Panchayat planning has not addressed the issue although they have identified the problem. The literacy rate of the GP is very poor, in spite it is just being 5 kms away from the Medinipur Sadar town. Though the planning is not focusing much on it. Regarding OSR, the GP is eager to collect more taxes but failing to implement it.



## Case Study 5: Ajabnagar II

Ajabnagar II is located in Ghatal Block of Paschim Medinipur district, West Bengal. The GP has received support only under BRGF. However, it has not received any support from SRD or ISGP projects. This is a flood prone area with 70-80% of the area being affected.

### I. Demographic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 19223. As the Table shows, within the GP Muslim community shares the maximum number of population, followed other community and SC community.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	4,809	19,223	8,381	7,542
SC	661	4,468	NA	NA
ST	-	10	NA	NA
Muslim	101	7,778	NA	NA
Other <sup>100</sup>	2,768	6,967	NA	NA
BPL <sup>101</sup>	1,279	NA	NA	NA

Source: Source: Data Sheet of 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7,626	90.99	6,863	90.00	14,489	90.99

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

Table 2 show the literacy rate of the GP. The table is indicating that there is a good percentage both among male and female are literate in the GP. The literacy rate of the GP is higher than the district literacy rate (79.04), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

### II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 2 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16 in an alternative manner. To understand the trends in budget and expenditure. However, the GP only could provide the information listed below. So, much cannot be concluded from the give figures.

**Table 2: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artha o Parikalpana	130,000,00.00	14,51,362.00	25,80,000.00	20,39,863.00
Krishi o Sanslistha	2,00,000,00.00	48,562.00	37,70,451.00	2,14,118.00
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	7,50,000.00	6,72,589.00	9,75,000.00	5,28,471.00

<sup>100</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class

<sup>101</sup> Out of 4809 household, 1279 are BPL households

Standing Committee	2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Silpa o parikathamo	2,05,000.00	62,01,769.00	3,22,000.00	25,50,430.00
Janaswastha	15,000,00.00	4,39,551.00	2,16,000.00	19,25,824.00
Sub-Total	3,54,55,000.00	88,13,833.75	78,63,451.00	72,58,706.00
Salary etc.	15,55,000.00	12,42,000.00	16,95,000.00	14,73,000.00
Total	3,70,10,000.00	100,55,833.75	95,58,451.00	8,73,17,06.00

Source: Ajabnagar 2 Gram Panchayat

Budget and expenditure data was available for only 2013-14 and 2015-16. It can be seen from the above table that the majority of the funding has been allocated for Silpa o Parikathamo (infrastructure). This is also corroborated by field visit to the GP. However, it was not possible to get data on how the budget has been spent.

### **Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field**

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- The GP has received only BRGF support.
- According to GP members the primary problem 10 years back were mostly communication, bad roads, drinking water, dilapidated school building, houses, lack of infrastructure, mainly the building, for the ICDS centres. People contributed to set-up bamboo foot bridges. However, for the past 5-6 years, things have been improving in the GP. Now the problem is relating to ICDS centres, however it is being regularly discussed in the GP. As a result, they have been able to construct pucca buildings, construct toilets, installed tube-well and kitchen sheds in the ICDS centres using the BRGF.
- The newly elected Pradhan and members of gram panchayat did not receive any special training for planning before taking up the post after their election. They are following the BRGF guidelines for planning. Based on the guideline, now priorities are being decided in the gram panchayats. This is preceded by sansad-wise priorities worked out in the gram sansads without any additional facilitation.
- Initially they found the MGNREGS processes quite difficult. It took them about one year to get accustomed with the details of the mandated procedures. Once they have understood the procedure, they utilised MGNREGS towards improving communication, irrigation by excavating water bodies.
- Mostly through MGNREGS more employment has been generated in the GP, thus increasing the income level of the people. In the Financial year 2015-16, around Rs. 2.5 Crores were spent under MGNREGS. On an average 77 days of job were provided to active job card holding families in the financial year 2015-16.
- Though agriculture is the main occupation in the GP, yet other sources of income for the GP are from remittance of migrated labour and non-farm work in Ghatal town. In about 55-60% families at least one person has migrated out for work. Migration take place for work in goldsmith, silversmith and zari and manson works in Mumbai, Delhi,

Cuttack, Gujarat, etc. Some are engaged in copper works. About 1000 persons are engaged in producing *agarbattis* (incense sticks). There are 90 active SHGs. These SHGs take loan from the bank for buying cows, goats and for agriculture purposes.

- Agricultural produce includes rice and potatoes (in small quantity). Paddy is produced in the Boro season in the flood affected areas of the GP. In spite of the rice being the main crop of production, yet in the recent times, cultivation has proven to be non-profitable. Farmers are still continuing cultivation just to continue the farming process and for their subsistence by arranging their own food sources. Non-availability of labourers due to MGNREGS and migration, also contributing towards non-profitability in the agriculture sector. As per the members, funds from the 3<sup>rd</sup> SFC and 13<sup>th</sup> FC were used for improving the irrigation system. The fund was also utilised in repairing and restoring the old cluster mini-deep tube wells in the area.
- As per the Saha Sabhapati of the Panchayat Samiti, the basic development issues of the GP were: (a). Most families depend on remittances; (b). RLI schemes, which have been handed over to the community are non-functional; (c). The fees for Cluster mini deep tube wells or RLIs are quite considered somewhat prohibitive by the farmers since the water from the RLIs is fully managed by government. For using the mini deep tube-well the farmer has to pay Rs.816/ acre. The community managed RLIs cost the farmer Rs. 3500/ acre. Mini deep tube wells cost around Rs. 4500/ acre. Making the entire farming activity a very expensive one. Once jute used to be cultivated here but now it is not grown anymore; (d). Agriculture is not profitable – due to non-availability of labour, which is caused by combined effect of MGNREGS and migration. They also get fund from SDRF project of DM Department. The GP are mostly dependent on MGNREGS for development related work. All priorities are determined at the sansad level; (e). Delay in payment under MGNREGS is proving to be a big problem. Currently, Rs. 60 lakhs are due in the MGNREGS fund receivable making delay in payment.
- Responding to the queries on tasks of further improvement work need to be undertaken by the GP, members are of the opinion that though ICDS centres have sheds but that need to be concretised. In spite of the GP being flood prone, still there is no proper flood centre. The all-weather roads are yet to be connected to all the habitations of the GP. Explaining the current approaches, the claim was made towards 14<sup>th</sup> CFC fund, which was being used to reduce the recurring expenses of the Gram Panchayat by creating permanent assets. Piped water supply is also a priority. This project also attracts 50% or more contribution from the people. They have decided to do away with tube wells and temporary bamboo bridges.
- Member from Sheetalpur Dakshin sansad said of collecting about Rs. 13 lakhs from people to build infrastructures in his areas. They have introduced *jolgheri* bundh in their sansad area to irrigate during dry seasons. Sanchalak Janaswasthya said that mostly child-related infrastructures have been constructed by her Standing Committee. The GP has ensured 100% institutional delivery. However, on further enquiry leads to the fact that plans are not prepared according to sub-committee wise.

### Own Source Resource (ORS)

The OSR collection in respect of demand is better. In the last few years OSR fund has been used for construction of cremation facilities in each Gram Sansad. As this is a flood prone GP, Panchayat has to hire boats for distribution of relief materials and medicines, etc. at the time of annual flood sessions. So, the fund money is used in hiring boats. They are also planning to build community latrine in low lying land, as the individual landholding is too meagre for household toilets. The OSR has been also used for the purpose of tube-well repairing, constructing culvert, funeral pyre and providing piped drinking water to the households.

**Table 3: The Own Source Resource (OSR) of the GP**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	NA	NA	NA	00.85	00.54	1.40	00.89	5.31	6.20	1.92	17.07	18.99

Source: GP Financial Data Base

From the above table it can be seen that GP's overall tax collection has increased from Rs. 85,754 to Rs. 19,2,190 in 2009-10 to 2105-16 respectively. Similarly, Non-Tax has increased from 54248 to 1707530. Total OSR has increased from 140002 to 1899720. This is a healthy trend.

### Conclusion

Based on the above discussion certain conclusions may be made. The fund flow to the Gram Panchayat has increased significantly between 2009-10 to 2015-16 as a result of which the budget of the GP has increased substantially. The majority of the funds however are from centrally sponsored schemes like MGNREGS. Out of 100 days of work, the GP currently could provide for 77 days of work to the workers which is quite remarkable. The fund has been used mostly for construction of roads.

The GP has only received the BRGF support. Additional input in the form of SRD and ISGPP was not received. Now they are looking forward for the ISGPP intervention and handholding support it will get from it along with the additional financial support. Significantly, missing in Gram Panchayat planning in this GP is planning for livelihood. Group discussions revealed that agriculture is in a state of crisis, with paddy cultivation not being profitable any more. However, the Gram Panchayat planning has not addressed the issue although they have identified the problem.

## Case Study 6: Joania Gram Panchayat

Joania Gram Panchayat is situated in Krishnagar I Block of Nadia District. It has received support from both SRD and ISGPP.

### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 22368. As the Table shows, within the GP other community shares the maximum number of population, followed SC community and Muslim community.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	4,123	22,368	11,577	10,791
SC	2,133	8,936	NA	NA
ST	503	5,060	NA	NA
Muslim	415	4,132	NA	NA
Other <sup>102</sup>	1,072	4,240	NA	NA
BPL <sup>103</sup>	1,635	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 22368, only 13034 are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
7,505	64.83	529	51.24	3,034	58.27

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP (58.27%) is lower than the district literacy rate (75.58), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

### II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 1 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16. Sector-wise expenditure data was not available.

**Table 3: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	11.30	NA	18.52	NA	20.42	NA	20.91	NA
Krishi o Sanslishtha	5.64	NA	28.45	NA	20.20	NA	32.50	NA
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	32.36	NA	9.80	NA	6.50	NA	30.37	NA
Silpa o Parikathamo	161.86	NA	165.39	NA	104.73	NA	193.58	NA
Janaswasthya	20.18	NA	44.13	NA	25.02	NA	14.27	NA

<sup>102</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>103</sup> Out of 4123 households, 1635 are BPL households.

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Sub-Total	231.36	NA	266.30	NA	176.87	NA	291.64	NA
Salary etc.	14.24	NA	87.75	NA	16.94	NA	1.18	NA
Total	245.60	105.92	285.05	99.38	19.38	265.09	292.82	209.62

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation and expenditure details, the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “*shilpa o parikathamo upasamiti*” (industry and infrastructure) which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. However, there is no data availability on what the infrastructural items they were investing in. Field visit to the GP has shown that they have built good roads. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### **Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field**

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- This was a SRD GP. But some of the SRD processes such as Para baithak, social maps, resource maps, etc. have been discontinued. However, they are still using the information generated during SRD to plan. The focus of planning is mostly on infrastructure. VGDI<sup>104</sup> is being used effectively for planning.
- Among the major problem of this GP is the low level of literacy. The proportion of illiteracy is high among the STs and minorities, which are pulling down the overall literacy level of the GP.
- The road connectivity was a major problem for many years. Direct communication to this GP is still a big problem. There is no direct bus stop in the GP. Bus drops passengers in the main road, from there a van might bring one to Valuka. Coming from Valuka to the GP office at Joania is still a big problem.
- Among the other major problems are drinking water and sanitation. Restrictions are being imposed on works that can be done under MGNREGS. Earth works are being restricted. The kind of work that is being promoted would not promote livelihood.
- Schools used to be a problem. There was no Madhyamik school ten years back. Now they have one MSK, two junior high, and Madhyamik school. 4 ICDS buildings have been constructed by the GP.
- Due to the improvement in infrastructure the farmers are getting higher prices for their produce. Sweet peas, pumpkin, tomato production is yielding good profit. Rice production is not incurring much profit, and hence the farmers are shifting to vegetable and flowers.
- Young men from roughly about 10 % households have migrated out of the household.
- New problems emerging in recent times – the people now want electricity, black top road, electrification of primary schools (17 schools).

<sup>104</sup> VGDI – Vulnerable Group Development Index

- At present, almost all deliveries are institutionalised. Ten years back 60% of deliveries used to take place at home.
- Expenditure in the last year of 2015-16 was around Rs. 2.5 crores. On an average the GP has around Rs. 40 lakh as unutilised fund. Minimum amount required for maintenance would be around Rs.1 crore. Unfortunately, they have not received any fund to work with during this working season.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the table below that Tax Revenue collection has gone up between 2009-10 (Rs.58605) to 2015-16 (Rs.291007) and Non-Tax Revenue has also gone up during these years. Overall there is a growing trend, from Rs. 176765 in 2009-10 to Rs.372447 in 2015-16. However, the group admitted that the OSR collection is still low.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	00.58	1.76	2.35	1.24	2.71	3.95	1.91	2.29	4.21	2.91	3.72	6.63

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- Tax collected in 2014-15 was Rs. 200,000 and in 2015-16 it was Rs. 2,91,000. 80 % of people pay taxes here.
- The members felt that compared to the size of the GP the number of staff are inadequate. Especially the absence of technical manpower would prove to be a major hindrance in maintaining handed over assets.

### Conclusion

In keeping with the general trend, bulk of the budget has been spent on infrastructure. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of GP.

The additional support received by the GP from SRD, and ISGP have resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. Though SRD style of planned intervention has stopped but the documentation process of the GP is well kept. The GP has preserved the financial documents dating back to 1976. The GP has also modelled itself as an ideal GP, since within the GP building compound there is an ICDS centre and a Health Sub-centre. With the recent ISGP intervention, the GP anticipate of expecting to achieve more of its desired goals than before. Through the help of the ISGP guidance and financial assistance, the GP has built a community toilet in one of the markets. The community toilet is now being maintained by the shop owners of the market. Paddy cultivation is not profitable at present but GP is not able to address the problem through planning. Planning for livelihood is not a priority at the moment.



## Case Study 7: Ainkola Gram Panchayat

Ainkola Gram Panchayat is situated in Datan I Block of Paschim Medinipur District, which has received BRGF support. The GP also received support from both SRD and ISGP.

### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 19700. As the table shows, there is no ST population but a sizeable SC and Muslim population apart from general castes and OBC.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	3,832	19,700	10,106	9,594
SC	625	1,379	NA	NA
ST	0	1,995	NA	NA
Muslim	795	4,556	NA	NA
Other <sup>105</sup>	2,412	11,770	NA	NA
BPL <sup>106</sup>	2,227	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 19700 only 9081 are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5,270	52.15	3,811	39.72	9,081	46.09

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP (46.09%) is significantly lower than the district literacy rate (79.04), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

**Table 3: Service Delivery Institutions within the GP**

Index	2016-17
No. of Voters	13,580
Sub-health Centres	3
No. of Primary Health Centres	1
Primary Schools	14
Secondary Schools	1
Higher Secondary Education	2
Cooperative Societies	4
No. of Post Offices	3
No. of RIO	1
No. of ICDS	26
No. of Sishu Shiksha Centres	5
No. of Job Card holders (NREGS)	3,320
No. of Small Industries	213

<sup>105</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>106</sup> Out of 3832 households, 2227 are BPL households.



Index	2016-17
No. of Market Complex	1
No. of Weekly Markets	3
UBI Bank Micro Bank	6
No. of Sangha	6
No. of Sub-sangha	11
No. of SGHs	140

Source: Self Evaluation Data

Table 3 shows the numbers of different educational institutions and health care centres present in the GP. One of the significant feature is that this GP has around 26 ICDS centres and 14 Primary schools. The number of job card holders under MGNREGS is only 3320. For the population of 19700 there only one primary health centre and 3 sub-health centres.

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16. The data regarding expenditure could not be furnished by the Gram Panchayat.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expd	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	290.27	-	26.36	-	30.97		56.12	-
Krishi o Sanslishtha	1.50	-	76.46	-	89.73	-	151.26	-
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	33.11	-	1.46	-	00.45	-	8.55	-
Silpa o Parikathamo	422.50	-	652.45	-	526.28	-	604.40	-
Janaswasthya	12.00	-	79.71	-	142.25	-	424.43	-
Sub-Total	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Salary etc.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	759.38	210.29	836.45	166.43	789.68	179.78	862.76	400.63

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation, it can be seen that the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “shilpa o parikathamo upasamiti” which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. However, there is no data on what the infrastructural items they were investing in. Field visit to the GP has revealed that the bulk of the expenditure has been on infrastructure. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- Pradhan, Upa Pradhan, Karmadhyakshas of Panchayat Samitis' Sanchalaks, Sabhapati of PS and Jt. BDO were present for the discussion. Later the local MLA of the area has joined the meeting.

- 13 members of staff including 3 contingency staff were also present.
- The Karmadhyakshas of the Panchayat Samiti could recall the SRD process in detail. Needs of the people used to be ascertained through para level meetings (*para baithak*). The detailed methodology helped to raise lot of demand from the people. Social and resource maps of the area used to be prepared. However, SRD couldn't address many of the problems, because of fund shortage. ISGPP combined with NREGS addresses the problems better because of increased flow of funds.
- Due to acute political conflict, which started from 2006, the GP could not plan properly for the first three years of SRD. Even under ISGPP they could not plan till 2013. However, 2014 onwards, they could resume the planning process as per the guidelines of ISGPP.
- According to the GP members, the transition from SRD to ISGP is logical. There is no point in collecting the information afresh every year. The social and resource maps were collected initially during SRD, which gave them the idea of what is required by the people.
- Plans are now prepared Upa Samiti wise. Under *Nari o Sishu Upa Samiti*, (women and children subcommittee) children park was developed. 22 out of 27 ICDS have been made *pucca*. Under *Shiksha o janaswasthya* (education and health) 19 drinking water facilities especially submersible, toilet for ICDS were constructed. This committee took active part in organising awareness camps on various health issues including institutional delivery, early marriage and so on.
- *Shilpa o Parikatham* Upa Samiti (industry and infrastructure) constructed 19 concrete roads, 150 *morrum* roads, 171 earthen road, protection walls, 15 culverts and cremation facility in each sansad area. 78 social forestry schemes have also been implemented. Their priority was ICDS, so they assisted in concretisation of the 22 ICDS centres. The 14th CFC allotment for the financial year 2016-17 has been utilised for constructing facilities in the cremation ground and/or cemetery such as waiting room and pyre. They have also dug and constructed 52 ponds for agriculture purposes.
- The primary occupation of the GP is agriculture - producing rice, vegetable and betel leaves. There are instances of migration, mostly from amongst the minorities. Paddy is cultivated during the Aman and Boro seasons. Generally, farmers here are making profit with assistance from the GP in the form of irrigation, water harvest, land levelling, etc. They have mechanised agriculture using Powertiller, Drumseeder, which has further helped.. Profit is by higher production and better marketing. Production cost is around 600 per quintal, and price is around 1000 - 1200 per quintal.
- Apart from agriculture, some are involved in handicrafts or making *jhuri* (baskets).
- Around 3000 of 4000 plus families still are reported to be without toilet.
- Speaking on the major problems, the GP highlighted the areas beyond their planning intervention in spite of those areas being crucial for GP planning. (a) Certain areas are missing from the SECC<sup>107</sup> list. Eight enumeration blocks covering four sansads were not featured in the list; (b) There are PMGSY<sup>108</sup> roads, which have been shown

<sup>107</sup> SECC – Social and Economic Caste Census

<sup>108</sup> PMGSY – Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

constructed but are yet to be constructed; (d) Health is a major problem as there is only PHC in the GP which is non-functional with no doctors and bed there. The nearest hospital is at Dantan Block, which is around 17 km away; (e) *Khadya Suraksha* (Food security) cards have not been allocated to the Sorrarong tribe of Paschim sansad (Sansad no. 5) of Ainkola GP, Dantan – I, which is one the deprived areas.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the table below that Tax Revenue has gone up between 2009-10 (44553) to 2015-16 (259082) and Non-Tax Revenue has also gone up during these years. Overall there is a growing trend, from 13450 in 2009-10 to 381365 in 015-16. However, the group admitted that the OSR collection is still low.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	00.44	00.13	00.58	00.63	00.41	01.04	00.62	5.58	6.21	2.59	3.81	6.40

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- The GP, despite its general enthusiasm about developing their area, didn't seem to be very enthusiastic about raising their own source revenue. The tax collector opined that if taxes are increased then the poor will not be able to pay taxes.

### Conclusion

Based on the above discussion we may arrive at certain conclusions. The fund flow to the Gram Panchayat has increased between 2009-10 to 2015-16 as a result of which the budget the GP has also increased.

The planning of the GP has had a bias towards infrastructure projects. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of GP. However other sectors have been relatively neglected.

The additional support received by the GP from SRD, BRGF and ISGP have resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. Special mention could be made here that due to the intervention of SRD and ISGP, sector-wise planning is undertaken. The mentoring system was praised by the GP as this ensured a friend-in-need all the time whenever they needed some help.

Significantly in Gram Panchayat planning, the GP has actually planned for livelihood especially agriculture in providing machines for agriculture, land levelling, water harvesting, linking the producers to the market. Both through ISGPP and MGNREGS, the GP have able to solve many problems. Though number of job card holder of MGNREGS is only about 3320. The major problem the GP faces is of tax collection as they feel people are reluctant to pay more taxes.

## Case Study 8: Chandipur Gram Panchayat

Chandipur Gram Panchayat is situated in Uluberia I Block of Howrah district. It has received both the support of SRD and ISGP projects.

### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 31773. The GP has a sizeable Schedule Caste population.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	7,073	31,773	16,509	15,264
SC	2,133	9,533	NA	NA
ST	0	12	NA	NA
Muslim	1,692	10,173	NA	NA
Other <sup>109</sup>	3,248	12,055	NA	NA
BPL <sup>110</sup>	974	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, total population of the GP is 27066 out of which 85.19% are literate.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
15,995	96.89	11,071	72.53	27,066	85.19

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP is higher than the literacy rate of the district (83.85%) and also higher than the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

Table 3 represents the information regarding basic service delivery institutions in the GP. There are 32 ICDS centres, 19 Primary Schools, 3 Madhyamik and Higher Secondary School, 1 Primary health Centre and 5 Sub-health Centres and 72 SHGs.

**Table 3: Service Delivery Institutions within the GP**

Index	Number
Primary Health Centres	1
Sub-health Centres	5
ICDS Centres	32
V.E.C	16
Primary Schools	19
Madhyamik and Higher Secondary Schools	3

<sup>109</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>110</sup> Out of 7073 households, 974 are BPL households.

Index	Number
Prabahaman Shiksha Kendra	17
Setupathakram Kendra	8
S.G.S.Y SHGs	72
Gram Sansad	16
Mouza	12
Panchayat Sansads	19
Panchayat Samiti Sansads	3
Sishu Siksha Kendra	2

Source: Self Evaluation Data

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	12.57	3.17	6.41	9.04	16.33	11.80	19.87	14.80
Krishi o Sanslishtha	25.65	00.13	13.78	5.15	10.42	00.67	24.10	31.86
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	12.16	8.85	2.00	00.19	1.92	7.96	4.59	4.73
Silpa o Parikathamo	108.38	52.06	49.01	53.40	76.69	51.41	128.03	66.17
Janaswasthya	60.31	8.79	19.45	18.61	23.15	13.83	32.28	21.03
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>219.07</b>	<b>73.02</b>	<b>90.67</b>	<b>86.41</b>	<b>128.53</b>	<b>84.18</b>	<b>208.88</b>	<b>138.61</b>
Salary etc.	7.56	8.15	18.60	13.94	18.18	15.62	19.18	14.09
<b>Total</b>	<b>226.63</b>	<b>81.18</b>	<b>109.27</b>	<b>100.36</b>	<b>146.71</b>	<b>99.81</b>	<b>228.07</b>	<b>152.71</b>

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation and expenditure details, the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “*shilpa o parikathamo upasamiti*” which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. However, there is no data on what the infrastructural items they were investing in. Field visit to the GP has also corroborated this. Apart from infrastructure, planning for budget allocation was also done for the health sector. But the health budget is minimal as compared to the population and budget allocation for infrastructure. The activities undertaken following the plans were however not available for detailed analysis. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below.

- During the first two years of ISGP the investment was mostly on roads and tube wells. Then the need for a remunerative asset was felt. A community hall was planned as it served as a flood relief centre and also as a remunerative asset.
- The GP was asked whether politics influence the planning process. Chandipur GP was candid about the question and said that politics do play a role in the planning process. The original plans coming out of the Gram Sansads are sometimes distorted to suit political needs. When asked how this is done they group said that supplementary plans are prepared to accommodate the politically motivated activities.
- The plans, which could not be taken up by the GP with its current financial and human resource capacities, are referred to higher tiers but the response is not always positive. This results in some gaps remaining in the planned activities.
- According to the GP members, ISGPP intervention has provided them emotional and technical support, computerization of certificates, GPMS, effective implementation of panchayat acts etc. The institutional functioning of the GP has improved.
- In the gram sansad meetings the GP identifies the problem and demand of the people. Generally, the demand is for infrastructure. People also claim for benefits available under schemes for personal benefit. For infrastructure, the demand is for concrete roads, drains, sources of drinking water. The proposals are placed before the respective Upa Samitis for their approval within the budget allotted. In November of every year, the plans so prepared are placed before the gram sansad again. There the plan activities are prioritised and placed before the gram sabha for finalisation. Before the gram sabhas they test the plans under Environment and Social Management Framework (ESMF). As per the GP members, none of the plans have failed to pass the ESMF test so far.
- The Vulnerable Group Development Index (VGDI) test is also being run before it is placed in the Gram Sabha. VGDI covers SC/ ST/ Women headed household etc. However, one member suggested that not taking into account the status of infrastructure of the areas inhabited by the vulnerable people while preparing the initial list deprives areas with poor infrastructure. He feels that there could be areas with worse infrastructure arrangements in areas not inhabited by households identified as vulnerable.
- The gram panchayat members are not sure whether investment for infrastructure in areas inhabited by the vulnerable groups reduce their vulnerability. Nobody checks the efficacy of the plan in reducing the particular identified vulnerability of the area; for example: Sansad No. 6 is the most backward region of the GP, but they have not been able to improve the status of education or health in the area despite fairly good investment under the plan. Another member opined that in Sansad No. 6, the primary focus should have been in construction of vats as the major crisis in that area is that of waste dumping.
- Population density of the GP is very high. This area is highly industrialised. There are chemical, bitumen, steel industry in the area and they are polluting the environment. Unplanned industrialization in the area generate a huge quantity of solid and non-degradable waste.

- The GP has the problem of disposing off this waste scientifically. People of large area of Chandipur use only canal water for their daily requirement which are regularly being polluted by these industries. Apparently, they have not adopted any pollution control mechanism. The planning process doesn't provide any mechanism for addressing this problem.
- Regarding tax payment, most of the industries pay their tax to Maheshpur GP, although they fall within the jurisdiction of Chandipur GP. According to them it could be possibly because the rates charged by Maheshpur is lower, or they get other benefits from that GP. But the OSR generated by this GP is not adequate to take care of this huge load of environmental sanitation.
- Major occupations of the area are, apart from industrial employment are agriculture, pisciculture, and zari. The GP needs large technical schemes such as river lift irrigation for improving agricultural potential of the area which is beyond their technical competence.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the table below that Tax collection has gone up between 2009-10 (580510) to 2015-16 (1287189) and Non-Tax Revenue has also gone up during these years. Overall there is a growing trend, from 72068 in 2009-10 to 194464 in 2015-16. However, the group admitted that the OSR collection is still low.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	5.80	00.72	6.52	11.88	00.94	12.82	8.40	1.06	9.47	12.87	1.94	14.81

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- The GP feels legally disempowered. They presently collect about Rs.12 lakhs in tax and Rs. 2 lakhs in non-tax. They feel that the amount could go up to about Rs. 42 lakhs if the GP had been legally empowered with penal action against those who do not pay the tax.

### Conclusion

To conclude, it may be said that the focus of planning has been on infrastructure. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need of the people.

The additional support received by the GP from ISGP has resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. The mentoring system was praised by the GP as this ensured a friend in need all the time whenever they needed some help.

The major problem the GP is currently facing is that of pollution from the industries situated there. Pollutants and chemical wastes are released in the water bodies causing water pollution.

Another problem the GP is facing regarding industrialization in the area is low tax collection. The industries located in the GP are paying taxes to the adjoining Maheshpur GP. As a result, the GP cannot make these industries accountable for the environmental degradation of the area. The GP members are sceptical regarding the VDCI both in identification of the vulnerable groups as well as assistance provided to them.

### **Case Study 9: Hallyan Gram Panchayat**

Hallyan Gram Panchayat is situated in Bagnan II Block of Howrah District. It has received the supported under the SRD.

#### **I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features**

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 27448. The GP has a sizeable Muslim and SC population.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	6,346	27,448	14,194	13,254
SC	643	2,767	NA	NA
ST	0	0	NA	NA
Muslim	1,866	9,332	NA	NA
Other <sup>111</sup>	3,837	15,349	NA	NA
BPL <sup>112</sup>	2,673	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 27448, only 20882 are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
11,315	79.72	9,567	72.18	20,882	76.08

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

From Table 3, we get the information on other service delivery institutions in the GP. There are 19 ICDS, 18 Primary Schools, 2 Higher Secondary Schools and 3 Co-operatives.

The literacy rate of the GP (76.08%) is lower than the literacy rate of the district (83.85%) and also the state literacy rate (77.08) but higher than the national literacy rate (74.04).

**Table 3: Service Delivery Institutions within the GP**

<sup>111</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>112</sup> Out of 6346 households, 2673 are BPL households.



Index	2006-07
Primary Schools	18
Higher Secondary School	2
Cooperative Societies	3
No. of Post Offices	2
No. of RIO	1
No. of ICDS	19
Library	1
Gram Sansad	18

Source: Self Evaluation Data

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	12.98	12.98	4.70	4.70	5.50	5.50	6.50	6.50
Krishi o Sanslishtha	43.38	43.38	15.50	15.50	35.00	35.00	45.50	45.50
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	13.60	13.60	1.20	1.20	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Silpa o Parikathamo	152.00	152.00	35.75	35.75	72.95	72.95	103.45	103.45
Janaswasthya	27.46	27.46	8.05	8.05	9.65	9.65	16.65	16.65
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>249.43</b>	<b>249.43</b>	<b>65.20</b>	<b>65.20</b>	<b>123.80</b>	<b>123.80</b>	<b>172.80</b>	<b>172.80</b>
Salary etc.	16.27	16.27	17.00	17.00	20.00	20.00	30.00	30.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>265.70</b>	<b>265.70</b>	<b>82.20</b>	<b>82.20</b>	<b>143.80</b>	<b>143.80</b>	<b>202.80</b>	<b>202.80</b>

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation and expenditure details, the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “shilpa o parikathamo upasamiti” which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. Field visit to the GP has also corroborated this. However, there is no data available on what the infrastructural items they were investing. Apart from infrastructure, health sector has been prioritised in terms of both planning and budget allocation. The activities undertaken following the plans were however not available for detailed analysis. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- The current woman Pradhan of the GP, is also the former ASHA worker. She is well acquainted with the support required for public health in her GP.

- The present members are of the opinion that the sansad meetings raises public demands, which are sometimes beyond the capacity of the Gram Panchayat. This creates misunderstanding.
- GP could provide 20 days of work on an average under NREGS. The scheme was used to install two tube-well, build brick soling road, repair of ICDS buildings, building wooden bridges and sluice gates for irrigation. People are demanding work for land development and levelling, so they could do floriculture.
- 4th Saturday meetings are held regularly.
- Less than 20% of the activities identified in the gram sansad meeting could be taken up by the GP. The plans prepared by the GP excludes those activities which are technically not feasible at the GP level. Activities up-to Rs.1.5 lakh is generally taken (such as three for earthwork) up at GP level. Rest are not included in the plan but treated as referred activities. Upto Rs. 3 lakh of non-earthwork related activity are approved at block. Amount beyond that is sent to district. These restrictions however are not applicable for projects under BEUP<sup>113</sup>.
- 9 RLIs have been installed in this GP by WRDD<sup>114</sup>, since the minister of the directorate is from this GP. All the RLIs are now managed by beneficiary committee. These are very new and issues of maintenance are yet to emerge.
- According to the Pradhan, with the change of political regimes, plans are better implemented. However, it was not possible to judge whether she is saying this on the basis of evidence or not. Health centres have been more functional. All families have been covered under JSY<sup>115</sup>. Three sub-health centres have been constructed in the GP from MSDP<sup>116</sup>.
- The GP has recently taken over a piped water supply scheme, however is not able to manage it without technical ability.
- During the SRD period, many things were planned but the only hurdle was of inadequate funds to implement all the plans. The difference with the earlier system is that at present if the sansad meetings are not held the distinguished members of the locality are consulted for drawing up the plans. The Pradhan, however aid that she was not aware of what processes followed in SRD.
- The Nirman Sahayak claimed of being proud of a project where a pond in Rajballabhpur was re-excavated in 2014. They built an approach road using the soil generated from the re-excavated pond to the nearest SSK and connected it to the habitation served by the SSK. The roads in surrounding areas were developed also. The re-excavated pond created jobs, which lessened the necessity of the local people to migrate in search of livelihood. This brought some social change in the area and according to them are real development of the vulnerable.
- Primary occupation in the GP are agriculture-based - mostly paddy, flower and some vegetables. Paddy has ceased to be profitable, however still people cultivate for their own consumption. Paddy cultivation is gradually being abandoned in favour of

<sup>113</sup> BEUP – Bidhayak Elaka Unnayan Prakalpa

<sup>114</sup> WRDD – The Water Resources Development Directorate

<sup>115</sup> JSY - Janani Surukha Yojana

<sup>116</sup> MSDP – Multi-Sectoral Development Programme

pisciculture. There is a problem of changing the character of the land through prescribed conversion process. The BDO, who was present during the discussion, is of the opinion that they are initiating a step to facilitate the land conversion officially. Unless the land is formally converted, institutional finance cannot not be provided for pisciculture.

- Percentage of people migrating for occupation from this area is not very high. A small percentage migrates to Middle East. They are usually Muslims.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the table below that tax collection has gone up between 2009-10 (Rs. 50195) to 2015-16 (Rs. 70558). On the other hand, non-tax revenue has gone down during these years from Rs. 156875 in 2009-10 to Rs. 51330 in 2015-16. However, the group admitted that the OSR collection is still low.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	00.50	1.56	2.07	00.29	1.24	1.53	00.32	00.53	00.85	00.70	00.51	1.21

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- Total OSR collection for financial year 2016-17 was Rs. 2.40 lakh. Total expenditure (2015-16) of the GP was Rs.2.5 crore. This shows that as of now the GP is earning only a small percentage of its total budget through OSR. This means that their freedom to do what they want to do is limited.
- The GP explained that taxes are paid by the poor mainly compared to the well-off of the GP.

### Conclusion

Based on the above discussion we may arrive at certain concluding statements. Planning of the GP has had a bias towards infrastructure projects. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of the GP.

The additional support received by the GP from SRD have resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. The mentoring system was praised by the GP as this ensured a friend in need all the time whenever they needed some help. The Pradhan being a woman and an ex-ASHA member, health sector is getting some attention. However planning as per the SRD system was stopped after the completion of the project in 2011. This is again being revived under GPDP from 2016-17 onwards. Group discussions revealed that agriculture is in a state of crisis, with paddy cultivation not being profitable any more. However, Gram Panchayat planning has not addressed the issue although they have identified the problem.

## Case Study 10: Birohi II Gram Panchayat

Birohi II Gram Panchayat is situated in Haringhata Block of Nadia District. This GP has received support under SRD project. It was not part of the first phase of ISGP project but is included in the second phase of the project from 2016.

### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 15580. The GP has a sizeable Scheduled Caste and Muslim population.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population over the period**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	3,500	15,580	8,031	7,549
SC	1,715	7,634	NA	NA
ST	0	0	NA	NA
Muslim	1050	4674	NA	NA
Other <sup>117</sup>	735	3272	NA	NA
BPL <sup>118</sup>	1500	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 15580, only 10368 are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
5,461	67.99	4,907	65.00	10,368	66.55

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP (66.55%) is lower than the district literacy rate (75.58), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

Table 3 represents the type and number of educational institutions, health and different working groups.

**Table 3: Service Delivery Institutions within the GP**

Index	2013-14
Primary Schools	9
Sishu Siksha Kendras	3
Health Sub-Centres	2
No. of ICDS	18
SGSY groups	159
SHG	31

Source: Self Evaluation Data

<sup>117</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>118</sup> Out of 3500 households, 1500 are BPL households.

Table 4 represents the number of gram sansad present in the GP followed by number of members.

**Table 4: Number of Gram Sansad and Members**

Post	Number
Gram Sansad	12
Male Member (Gen)	1
Female Member (Gen)	1
Male Member (SC)	4
Female Member (SC)	6
Male Member (ST)	-
Female Member (SC)	-
Male Member (Minority)	2
Female Member(Minority)	1
Total	15   Male: 7   Female:8

Source: Self Evaluation Data

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	13.05	-	19.86	-	25.77	5.66	46.56	17.45
Krishi o Sanslishtha	60.05	-	47.40	-	40.70	7.22	114.80	70.18
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	17.77	-	3.58	-	5.65	00.4	00.36	00.6
Silpa o Parikatham	192.50	-	57.67	-	83.98	82.15	125.33	79.04
Janaswasthya	46.00	-	31.02	-	21.17	24.05	51.36	7.96
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>329.38</b>	<b>104.43</b>	<b>159.55</b>	<b>90.10</b>	<b>177.28</b>	<b>119.14</b>	<b>338.42</b>	<b>174.71</b>
Salary etc.		9.94		1.70		00.79		1.04
<b>Total</b>	<b>329.38</b>	<b>114.38</b>	<b>159.55</b>	<b>91.80</b>	<b>177.28</b>	<b>119.94</b>	<b>338.42</b>	<b>175.75</b>

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation, the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “*shilpa o parikatham upasamiti*” (industry and infrastructure subcommittee) which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. Field visits to the GP has also confirmed that the GP has primarily invested in infrastructure such as roads, culverts, ICDS centres. Field visit to the GP has also corroborated this. Apart from infrastructure, the GP is allocating budget on *Krishi o Sanslishtha and Janasathwa*. The activities undertaken following the plans were however not available for detailed analysis. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### **Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field**

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- This GP has received support in the second phase of SRD.
- The GP is 4.5 kilometre from NH 34 to Haringhata Bazar. Connectivity has improved over the years.. 90% of the major roads of this GP have been converted into black top.
- GP plans are prepared from sansad. These Sansad meetings now are well publicised. It is usually announced through loudspeakers..
- The GP has continued the sub-committee wise plan preparation process. Infrastructure is the main focus. They think that they should only spend on activities which are fully under their control.
- Sanitation has been a priority for the GP. This GP was the first GP to be declared ODF in this block.
- Solid and liquid Waste management is a problem for the Gram Panchayat.
- In case of SHGs, the proposals submitted by them are not always translated into action. Earlier they used to do social work. But with introduction of ASHA social agendas of SHGs have been reduced.
- The current Pradhan is a woman and was an active member of the SRD process as a member of the GUS. According to her lack of awareness of the citizens about administration is the main problem. Therefore, people should be made aware of the administration process.
- According to the Pradhan, road connectivity has improved. But the most backward village in this GP is Parmajhdi (population about 3000), which is like an island and is still disconnected. A bridge is badly required to connect that area. The cost of the bridge is around Rs. 5 Crore. The people of this area have to make a detour of about 10 kms, which can be solved if the bridge is constructed. However the GP at present does not have the funds to construct this bridge.
- Ten years back the problem of the GP was taking the agriculture produce to the market. A bank was opened in the GP office three years back. Irrigation and drainage is not a problem now. The dried-up ponds however, continue to create problems for the fishermen. Deep tube wells have since been installed. Agriculture is now mostly tractor dependent. The GP now has a soil testing facility also.
- There are 23 ICDS centres, of which only 9 have their own building. The GP is not able to find out a suitable land for these ICDS centres. People will only donate land if they are assured a job. Proposed construction of AIIMS within a short distance of this GP has hiked the price of land enormously in these areas. One suggestion made was that a portion of the entitlements, with a fixed upper limit, may be allowed for procurement of land.
- Primary occupation of people residing in this GP is agriculture. More than 80 % of the working population is engaged in agriculture comprising rice, jute and vegetables. Rice has ceased to be profitable. Electricity and fertilisers has become costlier, so has cost

of labour. For vegetables, the turn-over is faster. Flower cultivation is limited. There is also large banana plantation.

- The average land holding is low - 1 bigha to 5 bigha.
- There are instances of migration from 10% families. No skill development institutions in the area. There is an ITI under construction in the block.
- Irregularity in arrival of funds has resulted in a problem. They are yet to receive some instalments of 3rd SFC. Only one instalment of 14th CFC have been received so far. NREGS payment is also irregular.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the above table that Tax Revenue has gone up between 2009-10 (126193) to 2015-16 (487614) but Non-Tax Revenue has gone down during these years. Overall, there is a growing trend, from 171883 in 2009-10 to 135317 in 2015-16. However, the group admitted that the OSR collection is still low.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	1.26	1.71	2.98	1.51	00.44	1.96	1.55	00.45	2.00	4.87	1.35	6.22

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

### Conclusion

Based on the above discussion we may arrive at certain concluding statements. The fund flow to the Gram Panchayat has increased between 2009-10 to 2015-16 as a result of which the budget the GP has increased. The majority of the funds however are from centrally sponsored schemes like MGNREGS and therefore the planning of the GP has had a bias towards infrastructure projects. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of GP. However, there are still some gaps as the bridge to connect village Parmajhdi has not been constructed because of paucity of funds..

The additional support received by the GP from SRD resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. The mentoring system was praised by the GP as this ensured a friend-in-need all the time whenever they needed some help. However the SRD style sectoral planning was discontinued after the end of the project.

What is significantly missing in Gram Panchayat planning in this GP is planning for livelihood. Group discussions revealed that agriculture is in a state of crisis, with paddy cultivation not being profitable any more. However, the Gram Panchayat planning has not addressed the issue although they have identified the problem.

## Case Study 11: Basudevpur II Gram Panchayat

Basudevpur Gram Panchayat is situated in Uluberia II Block within Uluberia Subdivision of Howrah District. The GP received support from both SRD and ISGP.

### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

No demographic information is available from the any the sources mentioned below as well as from the GP.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	4,515	21,383	10,919	10,464
SC	0	4,513	0	0
ST	0	0	0	0
Muslim	0	0	0	0
Other <sup>119</sup>	0	0	0	0
BPL <sup>120</sup>	0	0	0	0

Source: Census of India 2011

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 21383 only 17079 are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
9,277	73.22	7,802	65.31	17,079	69.37

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP is lower than the district literacy rate (83.31), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

Table 3 shows the numbers of different educational institutions and health care centres present in the GP. One of the significant feature is that this GP has around 29 ICDS centres, 3 SSKs and 10 Primary schools.

**Table 3: Service Delivery Institutions within the GP**

Index	Number
No. of Primary Schools	10
No. of High School	1
No. of Sishu Shiksha Kendra (SSK)	3
No. of Madhyamik Siksha Kendra (MSK)	Nil
No. of ICDS	29
No. of SHGs	145
No. of Health Sub-Centres	3
No. of Ayurveda Dispensary	Nil

<sup>119</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>120</sup> Out of 4515 households, no data available on BPL households.



Index	Number
No. of Homeopathic Dispensary	Nil
No. of Rural Library	1
No. of Bank	1
No. of Post Office	1
No. of College	Nil
No. of Government Hospital	1
No. of Village Market	1

Source: GP Self Evaluation Data

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	35.15	13.62	28.76	14.29	23.24	18.09	24.83	22.84
Krishi o Sanslishtha	43.50	2.79	20.10	10.16	27.90	16.14	48.00	28.30
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	14.60	8.13	8.27	3.75	5.80	2.28	4.25	2.06
Silpa o Parikathamo	83.34	46.08	40.10	31.04	48.29	33.08	69.60	74.15
Janaswasthya	27.69	5.41	16.85	9.96	12.40	4.25	16.60	15.84
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>204.29</b>	<b>76.05</b>	<b>114.08</b>	<b>69.04</b>	<b>117.63</b>	<b>73.86</b>	<b>163.28</b>	<b>143.21</b>
Salary etc.	12.97	14.81	17.95	11.83	17.02	8.32	20.62	17.33
<b>Total</b>	<b>204.29</b>	<b>76.05</b>	<b>114.08</b>	<b>69.04</b>	<b>117.63</b>	<b>73.86</b>	<b>163.28</b>	<b>143.21</b>

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation and expenditure details, the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “*shilpa o parikathamo upasamiti*” which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said that the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. Field visit to the GP has also corroborated this. Apart from infrastructure, the GP has also allocated budget for *Krishi o Sanslishtha* but lack of prioritization in the sector, made it a neglected one. The activities undertaken following the plans were however not available for detailed analysis. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- Narrating his experience of the SRD process, the Pradhan stated that during those days the funds were inadequate. Equal distribution of funds among all Sansads was the norm. As a result, the activities that could be taken up were small in nature.
- Earlier the plan and budget was mostly based on the demands raised by the members.
- The *Sanchalaks* opined that after ISGP intervention, the quality of the infrastructure has improved. According to the Pradhan, planning process is now more scientific. They

can now respond to the demands of the gram sansads more effectively. Tendering process has improved. As a result, they get more work done and at a lesser expense. Quality of works done under MGNREGS is inferior to that of ISGP as mostly unskilled persons are provided for under the former. Also, now the MGNREGS wages reaches directly into the beneficiaries' account, along with the surety of receiving it. Hence the workers remain unaccountable for the poor quality of work they are doing under MGNREGS.

- On an average the GP spends around Rs. 60 lakhs under MGNREGS. Around Rs.12 lakh is still due for labour, and the total due is around Rs. 16 lakhs.
- The main problems identified in the GP then are of roads, drinking water, and electricity.
- Roads have been upgraded. But for drinking water, people still mostly depend on hand pumps. Piped water has been arranged only in one Mouza. The remaining two mouzas are still dependent on hand pumps. Installing piped water supply schemes in these two mouzas are under consideration.
- The major livelihood sources in this GP are cultivation of Aman rice and *Paan* (Betel leaves). *Zari* (embroidery) was a major activity in this GP but there is a recession at present. Export to Bangladesh has also gone down.
- Migration for work is from about 10% families. Industrial complexes at Birshibpur and Dhulagarh provide employment of sorts to about 50% of the families here.
- Rice cultivation has ceased to be economically viable. People are still producing rice out of habits and mostly for their own consumption. Labour prices have gone up also.
- Paddy is cultivated in irrigated areas during winter ("boro dhaan"). The profit is marginal or nil. It is also mostly done for personal consumption. The land here is not very suitable for vegetable cultivation. Some vegetable is cultivated in the banks of Damodar.
- Betel leaf cultivation is going down due to shortage of skilled workers. Industries are pulling in quite a lot of labour. The market for Betel leaves is also down, as a large section of potential customers prefer substitutes like *guthka*, *paan masala* etc. Mostly *bangla paan* is grown in the area, but the area under betel leaf cultivation is also coming down.
- The members are of the opinion that they cannot extend much support to promote alternative livelihood. Line departments do not operate below the PS and different technical specialists are not functional at GP level.
- The GP is plagued by irregular fund flow. They have received only one instalment of 14<sup>th</sup> CFC till end of November 2016. The GP has to make several payments even though fund flow is irregular, which causes lot of difficulty. For example, the GP has to pay the remuneration of the Volunteer Facilitator for testing water quality, fees for water testing lab, maintenance of the computers. The GP uses OSR to tide over the shortage.
- Maintenance of assets will also take its share. The by-laws peg the fees and rates at old level. The GP could perhaps collect much bigger amount if the rates are revised. In 2015-16 demand was around Rs.11 lakh, collection was Rs.7.21 lakh. They feel that if there is a proper assessment by third party the taxes would also go up considerably.

- According to the members, they could handle a total investment equal to four times that of the present expenditure of Rs. 1.41 crores with the existing personnel.
- Regularity of fund flow is a big problem. Entitlements under 3rd SFC for financial year 2013-14 was received only in the last financial year 2015-16. Slow and weak internet connectivity often denies them access to MGNREGS portal and draw the funds. MGNREGS is a subsidiary occupation for most of the workers working here.
- VECs<sup>121</sup> have been dismantled. Panchayats have no connection with the education system now. The expenditure booked under the head 'education' consists of activities like setting up boundary walls and tin roof for schools, maintenance and upgradation of SSKs etc.
- For agriculture, the GP maintains the main canal which irrigates large areas within the GP, and distribute mini-kits. Almost 50 % of the total cultivators are provided mini-kits by the Agriculture department through the GP.
- Investment in public health is mostly confined to sinking of tube wells. But water is not tested regularly.
- This GP has started its own solid waste management and drinking water purifier unit with the ISGP support. Each household has agreed to pay Rs. 20 per month.

#### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the table below that Tax collection has gone up between 2009-10 (42199) to 2015-16 (721289) and Non-Tax Revenue has also gone up during these years. Overall there is a fluctuating trend for NTR from 77564 in 2009-10 to 165744 in 2013-14 to 201240 in 2015-16.

**Table 6: Own Source Resource (OSR) of the GP**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	00.42	00.77	01.19	1.54	1.98	3.52	2.00	1.65	3.66	7.21	2.01	9.22

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- OSR of this GP is increasing. A major proportion of this fund is being spent on repair of tube well, and meeting other emergencies. They feel that OSR can and should go up.

#### Conclusion

Unlike most other GPs the annual budget has declined between 009-10 to 2015-16. Major investment has been on the infrastructure development of the GP. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of GP. However, quality of the works done under MGNREGS is an issue as the GP is not able to pay workers promptly. As the payment is delayed, the GP finds it difficult to pull up workers for non-performance.

<sup>121</sup> VEC – Village Education Committee

The additional support received by the GP from SRD and ISGP have resulted in improved capacity to plan, better documentation and improved gram sansad meetings. The mentoring system was praised by the GP as this ensured a friend in need all the time whenever they needed some help. With the help of ISGPP intervention both in terms of handholding and financial support along with the state government support, the GP was able to construct a Solid and Liquid Waste Management Plant and RO Water purifier plant. The GP now plans to sell the water of the RO plant to the people as package drinking water for a minimal charge.

The GP presently does not have the capacity to plan and implement projects related to livelihood issues. There is a gap between the Block level livelihood related departments and the GP.

## Case Study 12: Kamalpur Gram Panchayat

Kamalpur Gram Panchayat is situated in Ranaghat II Block of Nadia district. It has not received any additional support from SRD, BRGF or ISGP.

### I. Demographic and Socio-economic Features

Total population of the GP as shown in Table 1 is 33740. The GP has a sizeable SC and Muslim population.

**Table 1: Number of male and female population in 2013-14**

Index	Total Household	Total population	2013-14	
			Male	Female
Population	6,650	33,740	17,204	16,536
SC	3,189	17,544	NA	NA
ST	0	1417	NA	NA
Muslim	938	4,792	NA	NA
Other <sup>122</sup>	2,523	9,987	NA	NA
BPL <sup>123</sup>	2,667	NA	NA	NA

Source: Census of India 2011 and 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

As per the 2011 Census of India, out of the total population of 33740, only 26206 are literate in the GP.

**Table 2: Literacy Rate (Census 2011)**

Male		Female		Total	
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
13,867	80.60	12,339	74.62	26,206	77.67

Source: 4<sup>th</sup> State Finance Commission

The literacy rate of the GP (77.67%) is higher than the district literacy rate (75.58), the state literacy rate (77.08) and the national literacy rate (74.04).

From Table 3 it could be seen that most of the people are engaged in agriculture sector followed by business, service and other sectors. Very few are engaged in micro and small scale industries. Most houses are pucca in comparison with the kaccha houses.

**Table 3: Service Delivery Institutions within the GP**

Index	Number
Person employed in Agriculture, Animal husbandry and fishing	6967
Industry (Micro and Small)	82
Business	1780
Service (Teaching and Job, etc.)	450
Others	550
Pucca House	3525
Party Pucca House	4310

<sup>122</sup> In the 4<sup>th</sup> SFC there is no explanation of what consist in the other category. Generally other category consists of general caste and other backward class.

<sup>123</sup> Out of 6650 households, 2667 are BPL households.

Index	Number		
Good Kaccha House	1794		
Weak kaccha House	170		
Huts (jn other's land)	30		
Total Voters	Total:25777	Male:13679	Female:12098

Source: Self Evaluation Data

Table 4 represents the number of gram sansads and members. It could be seen that male representation is more than the females. No male representation is reported from ST community.

**Table 4: Number of Gram Sansads and Members**

Post	Number		
Gram Sansad	18		
Gram Development Samiti	18		
Gram Development Samiti with Bank account	10		
Male Member (Gen)	4		
Female Member (Gen)	3		
Male Member (SC)	10		
Female Member (SC)	6		
Male Member (ST)	0		
Female Member (ST)	1		
Total	24	Male: 14	Female:10

Source: Self Evaluation Data

## II. Total Plan Size and Sector-wise Analysis

Table 4 shows the sector-wise financial data of estimated budget and expenditure details for the financial year 2009-10 to 2015-16.

**Table 4: Sector-wise Budget and Expenditure Estimation (In Lakhs)**

Standing Committee	2009-10		2011-12		2013-14		2015-16	
	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt	Bdgt	Expt
Artho o Parikalpana	-	29.35	19.42	43.89	43.89	26.42	53.26	30.48
Krishi o Sanslishtha	-	43.55	3.35	3.35	49.45	27.43	54.90	22.52
Nari o Sishu Unnyan	-	18.20	00.82	00.82	00.63	00.17	14.90	2.52
Silpa o Parikatham	-	55.61	45.67	45.67	120.44	97.21	187.07	244.25
Janaswasthya	-	24.81	2.06	2.06	17.04	7.87	4.41	44.00
Total	184.47	86.19	171.52	71.34	2.31	159.10	314.55	343.78

Source: Gram Panchayat Form No: 36

From analysing the budget estimation and expenditure details, the maximum budget has been allocated every year for the “*shilpa o parikatham upasamiti*” (industry and infrastructure), which is responsible for infrastructure development. Therefore, it could be said that the GP is mainly incurring expenditure in the infrastructure sector, which is the priority area of planning. However, there is no data availability on what the infrastructural items they were investing.

Field visit to the GP has shown that they have built good roads. The activities undertaken following the plans were however not available for detailed analysis. It was also not possible to estimate whether there were deviations from the plans in course of implementation.

### **Planning Experience: Discussion in the Field**

The study team carried out FGDs and interviews at the GP and in one sansad of the GP. The results of the discussion are presented below:

- There are 29 Gram Panchayat members for the population of around 40,000.
- The session started with the discussion on the current problems faced by the GP. The members were of the opinion that road connectivity to every part of the GP is a problem, which affects farmers in transporting their produce. Cold storage is the urgent requirement in the GP especially for horticulture. .
- The previous Pradhan who was present in the meeting said that the main problem in 2003 was communication. Most roads were not usable during rainy seasons. They did not have the funds to make pucca roads. Livelihood was also a problem. Electricity was also a big problem.
- The present Pradhan, said that there were some cases of acute hunger.. Land was unirrigated. Members of SC and ST group remained unemployed during rainy seasons. They used to come over for relief (GR). Arsenic was also a problem. Problem of electricity is now largely solved. But even now there are quite a few households in five villages, where electricity has not reached. With the construction of roads, drainage is now emerging as a problem.
- Discussion on health and education issues highlighted the fact that the functioning of the sub-health centres is still a problem. Not all of them have adequate infrastructure. Gastro-enteritis used to be a major problem earlier which now stands reduced. Sanitation drive has resolved the problem. The incidence of home delivery is quite high. The distance of hospital at Ranaghat is about 18 kms. VHSNC meetings are held in each para (hamlet). The funds come to GPs accounts and passed is on to the VHSNC accounts. Fourth Saturday meetings are also regularly held.
- There was no higher secondary school in the area earlier. Now there is a higher secondary school and even a girl's college.
- The GP regularly holds Gram Sansad meetings to ascertain their needs.
- The Social welfare expenditure of the GP has increased because they try to help the poor from their own fund. During puja and other occasions, they also provide street lights in the area.
- The earthwork of most of the roads were prepared under MGNREGS with the plan for getting the metal top done from some untied funds such as ISGP or 14<sup>th</sup> CFC.
- Untimely receipt of funds, increases the maintenance cost of such facilities. The expenditure for maintenance will also rise. Rs. 50 lakhs due under MGNREGA of which Rs. 41 lakhs are for labour payment.
- The GP has received only one instalment of 14<sup>th</sup> CFC in the last financial year (2015-16) and nothing during this financial year 2016-17 till November 2016. The GP doesn't prepare an integrated plan. The implementation of the integrated plan is neither

monitored nor acted upon by any other tiers. They insist on scheme wise plans generally. As this is not an ISGP or SRD GP, they do not prepare Upa- Samiti wise plan.

- Apart from planning for development work the GP has to adjudicate family and community disputes by hearing both parties.
- According to the GP functionaries, the number of staff allocated to this GP is not commensurate with the population load of the GP.
- Primary occupation of the people of the GP is agriculture. Three crops are produced in a year. The most important crops are paddy, jute and mustard. Presently the farmers are shifting towards horticulture as paddy has ceased to be profitable. . 1 *bigha* of land yields 26- -28 *munds* of paddy. For this they need 6 ploughs, fertilizers etc. incurring a total cost comes to around Rs.7000 – 8000 and the profit per *bigha* is Rs. 1000 - 2000 at the most. Large areas in the GP are unirrigated. Vegetable cultivation and horticulture is profitable but risky. If the price falls they can't store as they don't have a cold storage. Increasing fertilizer cost is another problem.
- The flowers grown here are despatched by flower wholesalers of the area directly to Delhi. The contacts are now direct and no intermediaries are involved. Profit on an average is between Rs. 10,000 -15,000 per *bigha*.
- Migration is quite common. There have been migrations from almost each household. Some have gone to Middle-East also. However there is no training programme for skill development by the GP itself.

### Own Source Resource (OSR)

- It can be seen from the above table that Tax Revenue has gone up between 2009-10 (Rs. 20806) to 2015-16 (Rs. 531375) and Non-Tax Revenue has also gone up during these years. Overall there is a growing trend, from Rs.185578 in 2009-10 to Rs. 448097 in 2015-16.

**Table 6: OSR of the GP from FY 2009-10 to 2015-16**

Year	2009-10			2010-11			2013-14			2015-16		
	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total	Tax	Non-Tax	Total
OSR	2.08	1.85	3.93	3.83	2.43	6.27	4.52	3.31	7.83	5.31	4.48	9.79

Source: Gram Panchayat Financial Data

- The OSR was high in the last financial year (2015-16) because new ration cards were being issues as against payment of taxes. The performance may not be repeated during the current year since there is not yet to issues.

### Conclusion

The fund flow to the Gram Panchayat has increased significantly between 2009-10 to 2015-16 as a result of which the budget the GP has increased.. The majority of the funds however are from centrally sponsored schemes like MGNREGS and therefore the planning of the GP has had a bias towards infrastructure projects. Focus was given on concrete road construction,



which was a genuine need of the GP. Field visits have shown that condition of roads have improved significantly, and this was a genuine need expressed by the people of GP.

What is significantly missing in Gram Panchayat planning in this GP is planning for livelihood. Group discussions revealed that agriculture is in a state of crisis, with paddy cultivation not being profitable any more. However, the Gram Panchayat planning has not addressed the issue although they have identified the problem. Interestingly, the GP in the last financial year has collected good amount of OSR due to the condition placed by it regarding ration cards. However, they are not optimistic about collecting similar amounts in future as there is no new conditionality which can be imposed to incentivise tax collection.

As this GP, has not received any support under BRGF, SRD and ISGP, the GP plans are schematic and not holistic.

# Chapter 5

## CONCLUSIONS

The twelve case studies were undertaken with the following objectives initially in mind:

- (i) Describing the Planning process followed by the respective GPs.
- (ii) Identifying the role played by SRD/ISGPP initiatives in promoting decentralized planning in respective GPs
- (iii) Specifying the collateral factors essential to effective decentralized planning and identify gaps,
- (iv) Identifying the factors affecting the participation of people in decentralized planning.

The study was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Gram Panchayat level data was collected from the various administrative data sources available at the Gram Panchayat to ascertain the budgetary allocation of the Gram Panchayats. Primary data was also collected from the GP through a questionnaire. This data explained the sectoral trends in terms of budget allocation and spending. This analysis was followed by field visits to each of the GPs to understand what the Gram Panchayats have done through planning, what could not be done and what are the problems faced. The study team also tried to understand how the process of planning has changed over the last decade or so.

Fortunately, the various Gram Panchayats did not reveal widely varying trends and therefore certain conclusions may be drawn, although one needs a larger study to say that these are representative of the entire state.

### **1. Overwhelming emphasis on infrastructure projects**

Analysis of quantitative data from the Gram Panchayats as well as field visits to the Gram Panchayats have shown that in all twelve cases the Gram Panchayats have spent most of their funds to build roads, culverts, ICDS centres etc. In all cases the maximum budgetary allocation has been for Shilpa o Parikathamo Upasamiti (Industry and Infrastructure Subcommittee). Since the Gram Panchayat does little for building industry, the funds have been largely spent on building infrastructure. This was definitely an important need expressed by the people of the Gram Panchayats in the Gram Sansad meetings. The GPs have correctly responded to the need and the field visits in all GPs have shown that the quality of roads have significantly improved. All-weather roads have become the norm, culverts have been built and ICDS centres have been constructed. This does not mean that all demands have been fulfilled but there is no doubt that the situation has improved vastly in the last decade.

The Gram Panchayats which have received additional support from ISGP project have utilised the additional financial support almost exclusively for infrastructure, which was the mandate of the World Bank. Since for all Gram Panchayats the most important source of funding is MGNREGS, the GPs have spent most of the funding on building infrastructure as per the

guidelines of the scheme. The Finance Commission funds are also mostly used for infrastructure and maintenance.

## **2. Less emphasis on human development, especially women and children**

While good infrastructure has a positive impact on society as a whole, there has been less emphasis of sectors such as Health, Education and Women and Child. Budgetary allocation for these sectors in all 12 GPs has been quite small. Field visits have also shown that the GPs have done some work in this regard, but generally these sectors have not been a priority for them.

Before jumping to hasty conclusions, we must note certain complexities in this regard. First, the Gram Panchayats have very little control over the Education and Health System of the state. In health, there is a fourth-Saturday meeting aimed at integrating health issues and there has been a community health initiative named CHCMI but the Health Department does not devolve any fund to the Gram Panchayats. The same is true of the School Education Department. The Gram Panchayats of the state function largely on the basis of Ministry of Rural Development funds and Finance Commission funds and therefore there are limitations set by the guidelines which pushes them towards building infrastructure rather than focussing on human development issues. The second complexity is although they have built several ICDS centres, they have accounted for them under “infrastructure” rather than women and child.

Therefore, the neglect of the human development sectors is also due to inadequate devolution of fund, function and functionaries by the state government.

## **3. Popularity of the mentoring system among the GPs.**

In 2005-06, the state government began experimenting with a system of mentoring of Gram Panchayats first under the SRD project and then under the ISGP project. This system has now run for ten years. All the GPs visited said that the mentoring system has been helpful to them in several ways. First, it has helped them to plan. Second, their management system has improved. Third, the mentors have helped whenever they needed some kind of a help. The study team did not receive any negative complain against the system. Response was universally positive.

## **4. Stoppage of SRD style planning after the end of SRD project**

In 2005-06 the Strengthening Rural Decentralisation project (SRD) initiated an intense participatory form of planning. This planning process started at the hamlet level and resulted in a two-tier plan – (a) the Gram Sansad (ward) level and (b) at the GP level. The planning process was also sectoral – health, education etc, rather than schematic (NREGS, Finance Commission etc). This form of planning went on in the project GPs till the end of the project in 2010. Field visits to the Gram Panchayats where SRD was initiated has however shown that the SRD system of planning was stopped at the end of the project and the state government did not continue with this system after British Government’s support came to an end. The system, in other words, was not institutionalised.

Since the system of planning developed under SRD was not institutionalised, the GPs went back to schematic planning where they did not get support after SRD. This is also because the Block level officials demand schematic plans rather than SRD style sectoral plans.

It is also worth mentioning here that the Gram Unnayan Samiti, the ward level implementation arm of the GP, was discontinued after the 2013 election although it is not as yet officially disbanded.

## **5. Impact of ISGP project on planning**

The study has tried to understand how the ISGP project has impacted on the GP level planning process. In terms of method of planning the ISGP system is less participatory than the SRD process although it follows a system of limited participatory planning – needs are expressed in the Gram Sansad and plan follows a sectoral method.

There are two important ways in which ISGP has positively impacted the planning process – (a) instead of spreading the resources thinly among all wards, ISGP has made Gram Panchayats focus on certain major projects involving substantial sums of money but that would have an impact on the GP as a whole; and (b) it has developed a Vulnerability Group Development Index by which the most vulnerable sections are identified in the GP and the plans put emphasis on their well-being.

However, it is still not possible to understand the impact of the plans at the outcome level – whether vulnerability is reducing over time or not. Existing GP level data cannot understand whether poverty, malnutrition and other forms of vulnerability is reducing or not in the GP.

## **6. How politics influence GP plans**

Finally, how politics influences the planning process is still a grey area for scholars. In course of field work the study team got some insight into this question in one Gram Panchayat of Howrah where the GP functionaries chose to open up. It was explained by them that although there is a well laid out administrative system of planning following from the Gram Sansad meeting there is a loop hole in the system. A Gram Panchayat can revise plans by creating subsidiary plans. This is how political or elite influence can short-circuit the administrative system and distort the participatory planning process.

## **7. Limitations and way forward**

The study had to be conducted within certain limitations. It was not possible to carry out a large-scale sample survey because of fund limitations. As a result, it was not possible to generalise the conclusions regarding the entire state. However, when the study was presented before the state level experts in April 2016, they agreed that the conclusions were applicable across the state. Nonetheless, it may be worthwhile to carry out a study with a representative sample in future.

The study was also limited to some extent by the fact that the Gram Panchayats were not always able to furnish the data that was requested for. As a result, the tables presented in the case

studies sometimes have certain gaps. In future, it may be worthwhile to do a large-scale study of Form 36 generated by the Gram Panchayats.

The study was able to get some clues as to how local politics affects planning. However, a more systematic ethnographic study would be able to unearth greater complexity.

Finally, as has been mentioned above, there is inadequacy of data by which it is possible to understand whether a Gram Panchayat's planning is having the desired impact or not. Maintenance of such data would make analysis easier in future. There is need to develop a monitoring framework with the help of suitable database, which needs to be developed for future analysis of the planning processes and its outcome.