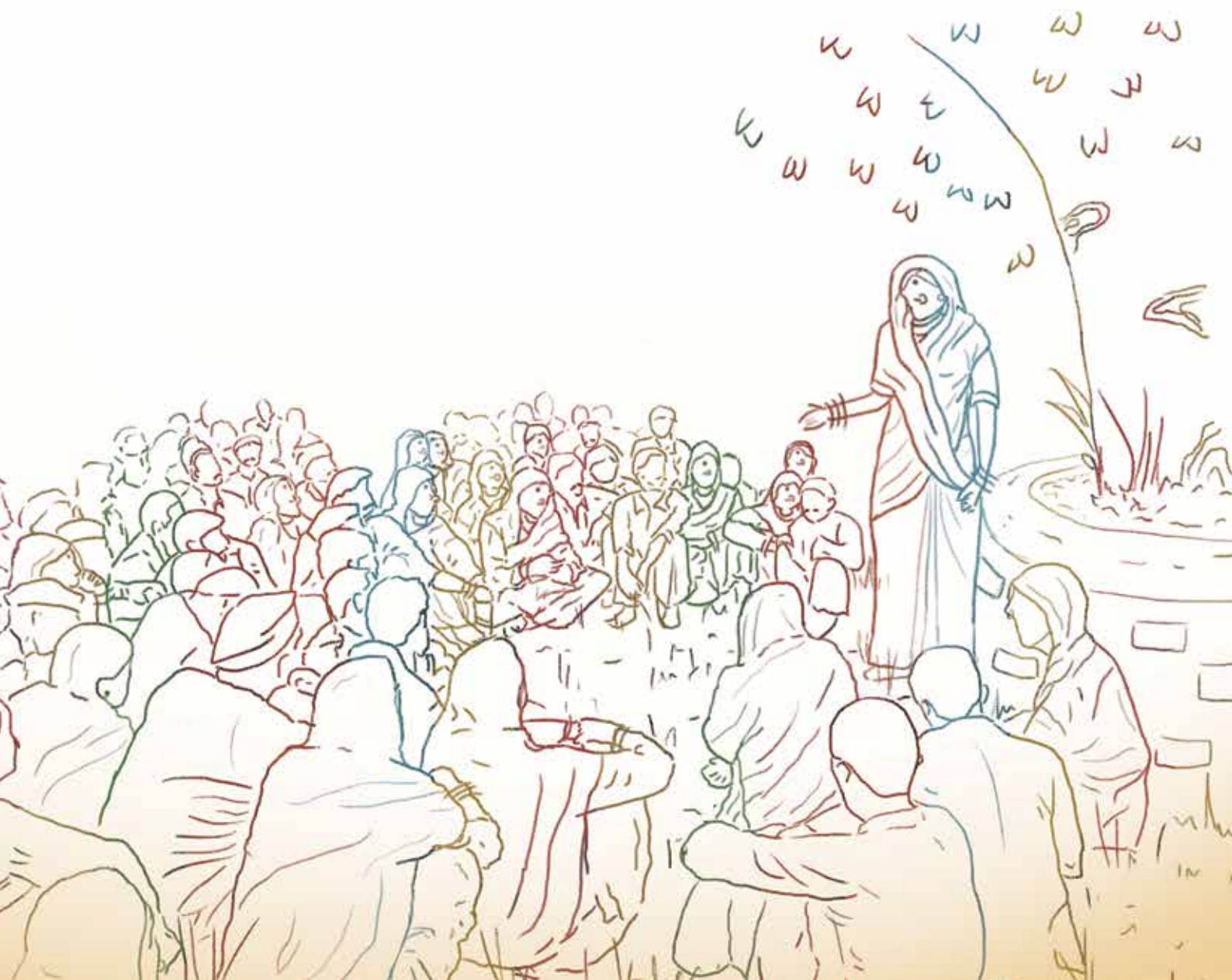


# Training Module

## Localising SDGs: Strategies for Policy Engagement with Local Governments





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# 1 Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), a radical agenda of the United Nations was adopted by all its member states in 2015. The aim of the agenda is to eliminate poverty in all its dimensions and to reduce inequalities by 2030. Considering India's large population and economic growth, India is expected to play a pivotal role in achieving the SDGs globally<sup>1</sup>. India too on its part, with the phrase, 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas,' meaning "Collective Effort, Inclusive Development", has made a commitment to implement SDGs by aligning its national and state development plans and schemes with these goals.

However, in view of effective implementation of the goals, assessing the ground reality and acknowledging the prevalent inequalities across geographical regions and communities are essential. In the economic front, though the country has shown some progress, it is yet to 'trickle down' to the rural poor, small and marginal farmers, and a vast number of poor and marginalized people<sup>2</sup>. According to a World Bank report, one out of 5 Indians is poor and 80 percent of India's poor live in rural areas<sup>3</sup>. Among the poor, 62 percent live in 7 low incomes States<sup>4</sup> that continue to lag behind in the development index.<sup>5</sup>

The Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Schedule Castes (SCs), in particular, traditionally face continued deprivation in all aspects of socio, economic and human development including health, education, employment, sanitation, housing etc. According to the World Bank, poverty is highest among the STs at 43% followed by SCs at 29%, other backward classes (OBCs) at 21%, and others with 12%<sup>6</sup>. India also stands far behind in achieving gender equality. India ranked at 122 among 189 countries on the Gender Inequality Index (GII). The labour force participation rate of women in India in 2018 is 23.6 percent when compared to men at 78.6 per cent. Moreover, the average adult man in India gets twice as many years of schooling as the average adult woman<sup>7</sup>. When it comes to children, more than 42.7 million children in India are out of school.<sup>8</sup> While these structured inequalities associated with caste, ethnicity, religion and gender has pushed communities to social exclusion and vulnerability, other factors like disability, sexual orientation, age, occupation, language and many others leads to further vulnerabilities.

The environment is also under increasing stress and there is a need to strengthen the sustainability dimension to address new and emerging challenges.<sup>9</sup> As per the Human Development Index 2019, India emitted 1.6 tonnes per capita of carbon dioxide emissions in 2016 – the bottom third of all 189 countries for this indicator<sup>10</sup>. The emergency measures imposed to curb COVID-19 may worsen the situation further. The growing loss of livelihood and economic impact may further push the Socially Excluded and Vulnerable Population (SEVP) groups into poverty and multiple disadvantages.

Hence, all efforts to achieve SDGs in India needs to a) acknowledge multiple forms of vulnerabilities caused by these intersecting factors and to identify the SEVP groups b) address the SDG indicators through disaggregated data, focussed policies and schemes, adequate budgeting for welfare schemes and a multi-stakeholder approach c) strengthen local governments to integrate SDGs into the local

<sup>1</sup>Oxfam India, The Future We Want – Implementation of the SDGs, <https://www.oxfamindia.org/knowledgehub/policybrief/future-we-want-implementing-sdgs> accessed on 03 December, 2020.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid

<sup>3</sup>World Bank, India's Poverty Profile, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2016/05/27/india-s-poverty-profile> accessed on 07 December, 2020

<sup>4</sup>The World indicates Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh as low income states.

<sup>5</sup>World Bank, India's Poverty Profile, <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/infographic/2016/05/27/india-s-poverty-profile> accessed on 07 December, 2020

<sup>6</sup>Ibid

<sup>7</sup>UNDP, Human Development Report 2019, India highlights accessed from <https://ruralindiaonline.org/library/resource/human-development-report-2019/> on 07 December, 2020

<sup>8</sup>International Labour Organisation, Child Labour in India, [https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new-delhi/documents/publication/wcms\\_557089.pdf](https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---sro-new-delhi/documents/publication/wcms_557089.pdf) accessed on 03 December, 2020.

<sup>9</sup>Oxfam India, The Future We Want – Implementation of the SDGs, <https://www.oxfamindia.org/knowledgehub/policybrief/future-we-want-implementing-sdgs> accessed on 03 December, 2020.

<sup>10</sup>UNDP, Human Development Report 2019, India highlights accessed from <https://ruralindiaonline.org/library/resource/human-development-report-2019/> on 07 December, 2020

development process and, importantly d) empower civic participation, primarily of SEVP groups in the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of SDG implementation at all levels.

### **Purpose of the Training Module:**

Civil society organisations (CSOs) are at the forefront of development and social justice work in India. They have played a pivotal role in realising people's right to education, work, environment, health and dignified life. Achieving SDGs in India requires a great involvement and participation of CSOs in areas of Awareness Building, Social Monitoring and Policy Engagement.<sup>11</sup>

Specifically, CSOs can play an active role in localising SDGs through community mobilisation and policy engagement with local governments. They can effectively accelerate the work of local governments to achieve desirable impact by:

- Empowering the socially excluded and vulnerable population groups,
- Ensuring implementation of SDGs through community participation in planning,
- Serving as agents of accountability by facilitating policy engagement and
- Monitoring through data collection, tracking progress and reporting.

In view of this, this module is designed to build the capacities of CSOs and community practitioners who engage in SDG work with communities and local governments.

### **Intended Use of the Training Module:**

This module is envisaged to help community practitioners and CSOs

- » To acquire basic overview and information on a) Sustainable Development Goals, b) Structure, role and functions of local governments and c) Community mobilisation and policy engagement.
- » To evolve localised policy engagement strategies together with SEVP groups for policy engagement with the local governments.
- » To acquire skills in developing localised indicators, evidence based data, tracking progress and reporting.
- » To familiarise with tools that are essential in community mobilisation, community/stakeholder mapping, identifying development priorities, awareness raising, and synchronising SDGs in the local development plans.

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<sup>11</sup>The Role of CSOs in Sustainable Development Agenda, <https://forus-international.org/en/news/the-role-of-csos-in-the-sustainable-development-agenda> accessed on 10 December, 2020.

# 2 Overview of SDGs and their Relevance for Local Governments

## 1. What are the Sustainable Development Goals?

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), also known as the '2030 Sustainable Development Agenda', is a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030. SDGs are conceptualised to address some of the most pressing global challenges and inequalities related to poverty, hunger, health, gender equality, education, work, water, sanitation and environment. The SDGs, a set of 17 goals – with their 169 targets and 230 indicators – envisage to achieve sustainable development in three dimensions: economic, social and environment - in a balanced and integrated manner.

## 2. Principles of Sustainable Development Goals:

**Realising Human Rights and Gender Equality:** Grounded in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international rights instruments, the SDGs seek to realise human rights of all and gender equality.

**Leave No One Behind:** SDGs pledge to 'Leave No One Behind' and 'to reach the furthest behind first'.

**Universal and Global:** SDGs apply to all the countries in the world regardless of income levels.

**Indivisible and Interrelated:** SDGs are all-encompassing and interconnected in all its dimensions and at all levels: between goals and between countries.

**Multidimensional and Integrated:** SDGs focus on achieving economic growth, social justice, and environmental stewardship in a balanced and integrated manner.

**Inclusive:** SDGs call for inclusion of all levels of government (Local, State, National, Global); all stakeholders and all people at all stages of planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting.

**Measurable:** SDGs put particular emphasis on the need to measure performance and results through a set of indicators so as to evaluate achievement.<sup>12</sup>

## 3. Leave No One Behind (LNOB):

Leave no one behind is the central, transformative promise of the Sustainable Development Goals<sup>13</sup> that endeavours to 'reach the furthest behind first'. It aims at ensuring inclusion of SEVP groups and reaching people who are left behind in the development process. LNOB is an anti-discrimination agenda that captures three concepts: ending extreme poverty, reducing inequalities, and addressing discriminatory barriers, which could arise from aspects of social identities, geography or other vulnerabilities.<sup>14</sup>

### 3.A. Who is Left Behind?

People get left behind when they lack the choices and opportunities to participate in and benefit from development progress. All persons living in extreme poverty can thus be considered 'left behind'.<sup>15</sup> However, it is important to understand the underlying root causes and the contributing factors. The five key factors provided by the UNDP framework may help to identify who is left behind and why.

<sup>12</sup>UNDP, Learning Module I: Localising SDGs [https://www.learning.uclg.org/sites/default/files/documents/tguide\\_final.pdf](https://www.learning.uclg.org/sites/default/files/documents/tguide_final.pdf) accessed on 09 December, 2020

<sup>13</sup>Leave No One Behind, <https://unsdg.un.org/2030-agenda/universal-values/leave-no-one-behind> accessed on 09 December, 2020

<sup>14</sup>Elizabeth Stuart and Emma Samman, Defining 'Leave No One Behind' <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/resource-documents/11809.pdf> accessed on 09 December, 2020

<sup>15</sup>UNDP, What does it mean to leave no one behind, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/what-does-it-mean-to-leave-no-one-behind.html> accessed on 09 December 2020

Discrimination	Communities which experience discrimination based on caste, gender, ethnicity, age, class, disability, sexual orientation, religion, nationality, indigenous, migratory status etc.
Geography	Communities which live in Districts/States that have very low development index and have no/poor access to infrastructural facilities, education, health services, adequate housing, water, sanitation etc.
Governance	Communities which live under poor governance in difficult political situations.
Socio – Economic Status	Communities that are on the lowest strata of the socio-economic ladder due to low income, lack of housing, lack of land ownership or jobs and lack of education etc.,
Shocks and Fragility	Communities that are affected by natural calamities, hate crimes and violence, conflicts, displacement, health emergencies and other unexpected economic setbacks.

### 3.B. Understanding Intersectionality:

Intersectionality refers to the way in which multiple forms of discrimination – based on gender, caste, ethnicity, religion, sexuality, disability, class, etc. – overlap and interact with one another to shape how different individuals and groups experience discrimination<sup>16</sup>. Most of the individuals and communities face multiple disadvantages at the inter-sections of caste, gender, religion, occupation, disability, age, sexual orientation, social status etc. In particular, the furthest behind face intersecting disadvantages stemming from more than one factor. The multi-dimensionally vulnerable individuals and communities, for example, are more vulnerable to setbacks from shocks; many also face discrimination, entrenched inequalities and/or political or social exclusion<sup>17</sup>.

### 3.C. What does it mean to Leave No One Behind in Action?

To ensure that no one is left behind in the development agenda, the government should undertake an integrated approach, drawing on mutually reinforcing “levers” to *examine, empower and enact change*.<sup>18</sup>

<b>Examine</b> Understanding who is left behind and why	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data Collection and Analysis</li> <li>• Making available of disaggregated and people driven data and information and</li> <li>• Tracking progress of those furthest left behind relative to everyone else.</li> </ul>
<b>Empower</b> Enabling civic empowerment and voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness building on their right to development;</li> <li>• Ensuring the full and meaningful participation of SEVP groups in decision-making and</li> <li>• Providing safe and inclusive mechanisms for civic engagement.</li> </ul>
<b>Enact</b> Enacting inclusive, catalytic and accountable strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing integrated equity focussed SDG policies and interventions;</li> <li>• Allocating adequate budgets to support rights holders and</li> <li>• Addressing the intersecting disadvantages and deprivations that leave people behind.</li> </ul>

## 4. Localising SDGs: SDG Implementation Process in India

Localizing refers to the process of adapting, implementing and monitoring the SDGs at the local level. In other words localization relates to

- Integrating the global goals into the local government process
- Identifying how local governments can support the achievement of the SDGs at State/National levels by means of action carried out from the bottom-up.
- Promoting local best practices for State/National adoption.

In India, given its federal governance structure, localisation of SDGs is seen as the responsibility of all the three levels of the government<sup>19</sup> - Central, States/Union Territories (UTs) and Local Governments. As a

<sup>16</sup>Gender Development Network, <https://gadnetwork.org/gadn-resources/2017/11/20/intersectionality-reflections-from-the-gender-development-network> accessed on 04th January, 2021

<sup>17</sup>UNDP, What does it mean to leave no one behind, <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/what-does-it-mean-to-leave-no-one-behind-.html> accessed on 09 December 2020

<sup>18</sup>Ibid

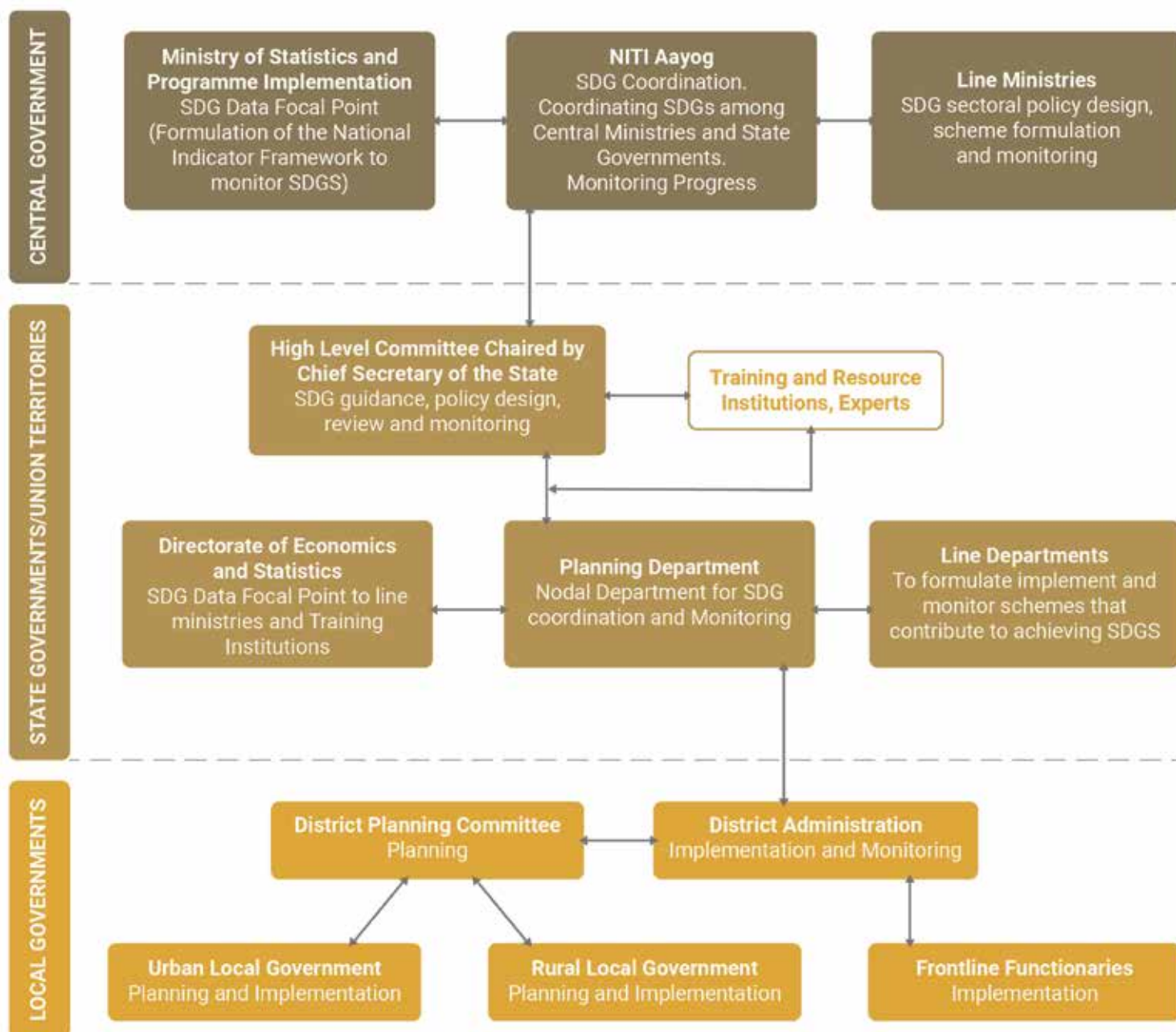
<sup>19</sup>NITI Aayog, Localising SDGs – Early Lessons from India 2019, [http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/LSDGs\\_July\\_8\\_Web.pdf](http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/LSDGs_July_8_Web.pdf) accessed on 05 December, 2020



first step in the localisation process, the Government of India has demarcated the roles and functions of different governments in the implementation of SDGs. It has also identified different institutions and assigned them specific mandate to deliver on the SDGs. While the central government will facilitate the localisation process through coordination, allocation of resources and capacity building tools **'the responsibility of planning, implementation and monitoring most of the functions related SDGs lies within the mandate of State government/UTs and Local governments'**.<sup>20</sup> The State governments and UTs are expected to play a pivotal role in designing, executing and monitoring development policies and interventions by

- Preparing vision documents and action plans to guide their efforts on the SDGs;
- Setting up the implementation and coordination structures at different levels;
- Mapping of all development programmes implemented in the State on the SDGs
- Identifying the State-specific indicators for monitoring the SDGs;
- Preparing capacity building resources and tools in local languages;
- Aligning the State budgets with the SDGs.

### Roles and Functions of Central/State/Local Institutions in implementing SDGs:



<sup>20</sup>Ibid

## Other Central Government Institutions:

### Finance Commission

To make recommendations – devolution of taxes between the Centre and the States. 15th Finance Commission – specific task to use SDG as framework to provide incentive grants to the States

### Comptroller and Auditor General of India

Conducting audit on the preparedness to achieve the SDGs

### National Training Institutions

Designing tools and programmes for capacity development

### Parliament

Session on SDGs with the members of both house and a dedicated meeting on the SDGs with parliamentarians at the end of the every Parliament session

## 5. Local Governments and Sustainable Development Goals:

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments Acts in 1992 provided constitutional mandate for decentralization of governance and creating units of local self-governments at the rural and urban areas. These local governments are vibrant democratic units that have ample opportunities for community participation in the political process. Community being involved in the decision-making process, the local governments are the best agencies to implement SDGs. Local government can provide faster responses to local needs, improved delivery of basic services, better information flows, more sustainable projects and more accountability and transparency<sup>21</sup>. Secondly, local governments are expected to play an effective role in the planning and implementation of functions related to the 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule and 18 subjects listed in the Twelfth Schedule of the Constitution by the Panchayats and Municipalities respectively. Many SDGs and their targets are directly relevant within the purview of these subjects, thereby the functions of local governments can directly contribute in achieving SDGs. Thirdly, the local governments also take up functions related to the implementation of the State and Central government development schemes; thus, they can integrate SDG targets in their development plans and reach out to SEVP groups effectively. Finally, with the provision for representation of Women, SCs and STs in the electoral process of local governments, the aspirations and needs of the SEVP communities can be better presented and addressed.

### Sustainable Development Goals

- Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere.
- Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.
- Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.
- Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.
- Goal 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.
- Goal 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.
- Goal 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and protective employment and decent work for all.
- Goal 9: Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation.
- Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries.
- Goal 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
- Goal 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.
- Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.
- Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.
- Goal 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.
- Goal 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.
- Goal 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

<sup>21</sup>CIVIC, People's Participation in Urban Local Governance - Power to the People. <https://civicspace.in/2019/10/30/peoples-participation-in-urban-local-governance-power-to-the-people/> accessed on 21 December 2020.

# 3

## Overview of the Roles and Responsibilities of Panchayats

Panchayats or Rural local governments are institutions of local self-governance, which look after the administration of an area or small community in a village or a group of villages. The history of the village level Panchayats in India goes back to hundreds of years. The present Panchayat Raj system is based on the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992) that gave local self-governments constitutional status and recognition as a third tier of government. This Act has endowed Panchayats with such powers and authority as may be necessary to function as institutions of self-governance. It contains provisions for devolution of powers and responsibilities to the Panchayats for preparation of plans for economic development and social justice, and for implementing the same in relation to twenty-nine subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution<sup>22</sup>.

### 1. Key Features of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992):

The 73rd Amendment Act (1992) of the Constitution provides powers to the States/Union Territories to determine the various aspects of the Panchayats in their States, based on the following provisions:

#### Mandatory Provisions

- States to have a democratically elected 3-tier Panchayat system
- Establishing the Gram Sabha as the electorate body to which the Panchayat would be accountable
- Constitution of a State Election Commission as an independent body to conduct elections
- Reservation for women is not less than one-third of the total seats
- Reservation for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in proportion to the population
- Provision of finances for the Panchayats through Appointment of State Finance Commission to make recommendations with regard to the financial powers of the Panchayats

#### Discretionary Provisions

- States to determine the scope of the functions of Panchayats in relation to the 29 subjects listed in in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- States to authorise Panchayats to levy and collect taxes, duties, tolls and fees as stated in the State Panchayat Raj Act and Rules.

### 2. Structure of Panchayats:

**A. Three Tier Panchayat System:** Part IX of the Constitution of India provides for setting-up of three tiers of Panchayats (only two tiers in case of States or Union Territories having population less than 20 Lakhs).

**(i) Gram Panchayat at village level:** The village Panchayat is the lowest unit comprising elected representatives of the village/group of villages. The elected President or Sarpanch supervises and coordinates the various activities of the Panchayat, nominates members for various standing committees, represents the Village in the Panchayat Samiti as its spokesman and coordinates activities with other administrative institutions.

**(ii) Panchayat Samiti at Block level:** The State government shall constitute a Panchayat Samiti or Block-level Panchayat with the name of block/Mandal/Taluk. Panchayat Samiti consists of members who are directly elected by the people through universal adult franchise and ex-officio members such as MLAs, MPs, and Block Development Officers of that area.

<sup>22</sup>Statistical Year Book of India, [http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/Statistical\\_year\\_book\\_india\\_chapters/LOCAL%20BODIES-WRITE-UP\\_0.pdf](http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/Statistical_year_book_india_chapters/LOCAL%20BODIES-WRITE-UP_0.pdf) accessed on 07 December, 2020

(iii) **Zilla Parishad (ZP) at District level:** The State government shall constitute a ZP bearing the name of the district. The ZP shall consist of Chairman of Zilla Parishad elected by the Chairman of Panchayat Samitis in the district, elected members and ex-officio members such as MLAs, MPs, SDMs, Collector and Deputy Collector.

#### **B. Gram Sabha:**

A Gram Sabha is the soul of Panchayat and consists of all persons registered in the electoral rolls within the Panchayat area. A vibrant Gram Sabha is essential to promote transparency and accountability in administration and enhance public participation in the planning and implementation of schemes<sup>23</sup>. The powers and functions of Gram Sabha is enumerated in the State Law. According to the State Panchayat Raj Acts, the Gram Sabha must meet at least two to four times in a year. For people's convenience, in most of the States, four national/international days such as Republic Day, Labour Day, Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti have been identified as reference dates for these meetings. While Gram Sabha is free to discuss any issues related to the Gram Panchayat, there are some agendas which have to be discussed necessarily. These include - Statement of Accounts, Budget of the Gram Panchayat for the next financial year, Reports of the Vigilance Committee, Recommendations of the Ward Sabha/Mahila Sabha and Bala Sabha, Gram Panchayat Development Plans and the Budget proposed for the grant allocation from the 15<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, Implementation of development schemes, and other proposals from the ward sabhas.

#### **C. Standing Committees in Panchayats:**

A number of subjects have been devolved to the Panchayats by the State and Central Schemes. All these subjects cannot be discussed in the meeting of the Gram Panchayat. Many states, therefore, have formed subject-wise Standing Committees of the Panchayats to give a focused attention to various subjects. The standing committees cover wide range of subjects including Finance, Audit and Planning, Social Justice, Education, Public Health, Family welfare and rural sanitation, Public works and Agriculture etc. The Standing Committee will formulate its own plan keeping the broad policy of the State and the local needs in mind<sup>24</sup>. However, the structure and functions of the standing committees vary from State to State.

### **3. Local Governance in the Tribal Areas**

Article 244 of the Constitution envisages three categories of Tribal Areas, namely:

- Areas notified as 'Scheduled Areas' in the specified States (Fifth Schedule)
- Areas listed as 'Tribal Areas' in the Sixth Schedule in North Eastern Region
- Areas not covered in the above two categories

#### **A. The Fifth Schedule and Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA):**

The Fifth Schedule to the Constitution relates to administration and control of the Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes other than those in North-East States. The Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) was enacted in 1996 which extended Part IX of the Constitution to the Schedule V Areas. PESA promotes people-centric governance and provides a central role to the Gram Sabha<sup>25</sup>. The PESA act has made it mandatory for states having scheduled areas to make specific provisions for giving wide-ranging powers to Tribals on matters relating to decision making and development of their community. This act gives radical governance powers to the tribal communities and recognises its traditional community rights over local natural resources. It accepts the validity of "customary law, social and religious practices, and traditional management of community resources"<sup>26</sup>.

This act enjoins the State governments to endow Gram Sabhas and Panchayats at the appropriate level with three types of powers<sup>27</sup> in areas of a) Development, b) Dispute resolution as per traditional

<sup>23</sup>Gram Sabha, [https://tnrd.gov.in/panchayatraj\\_inst/grama\\_sabha.html](https://tnrd.gov.in/panchayatraj_inst/grama_sabha.html) accessed on 11 December 2020

<sup>24</sup>Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Roadmap for Panchayati Raj, [https://www.panchayat.gov.in/documents/20126/0/Panchayati\\_Raj\\_Final\\_pdf\\_02-5-11.pdf/Saa0a6bd-bdfa-0144-b89b-cd7a78d79981?t=1554872219971](https://www.panchayat.gov.in/documents/20126/0/Panchayati_Raj_Final_pdf_02-5-11.pdf/Saa0a6bd-bdfa-0144-b89b-cd7a78d79981?t=1554872219971) accessed on 09 January 2021

<sup>25</sup>Ibid

<sup>26</sup>Abhijit Mohanty Armed With a Toothless Law, the Plight of the Adivasi Worsens, <https://thewire.in/politics/pesa-tribal-advansi-rights> accessed on 09 January, 2021

laws and customs and c) Ownership and management of natural resources. Besides, it also directs the State government to not make any law which is inconsistent with these. A total of 10 States are covered under PESA. These States are: Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan and Telangana<sup>28</sup>.

#### **Powers of Gram Sabha under PESA<sup>1</sup>**

- Safeguard and preserve the traditions and customs of the people, their cultural identity, community resources and the customary mode of dispute resolution.
- Approve plans, programmes and projects for social and economic development before such plans, programmes and projects are taken up for implementation by the Panchayat at the village level.
- Identification or selection of persons as beneficiaries under poverty alleviation and other programmes.
- Certification of utilisation of funds by the Panchayat for the plans, programmes and projects for identification or selection of persons as beneficiaries under the poverty alleviation and other programmes.
- Right to be consulted before making acquisition of land in the Scheduled Areas for development projects and before re-settling or rehabilitating persons affected by such projects in the Scheduled Areas.
- Right to plan and manage minor water bodies in the Scheduled Areas.
- Recommendations prior to grant of prospecting licence or mining lease for minor minerals and for grant of concession for the exploitation of minor minerals by auction in the Scheduled Areas.
- Power to enforce prohibition or to regulate or restrict the sale and consumption of any intoxicant.
- Ownership of minor forest produce.
- Power to prevent alienation of land in the Scheduled Areas and to restore any unlawfully alienated land of a Scheduled Tribe.
- Power to manage village markets.
- Power to exercise control over money lending to the Scheduled Tribes.
- Power to exercise control over institutions and functionaries in all social sectors.
- Power to control over local plans and resources for such plans including tribal sub plans

#### **B. Tribal Areas under Sixth Schedule of the Constitution:**

The Sixth Schedule of the Constitution under Article 244 identifies and designates certain tribal areas and provides for autonomy in the administration of these areas through Autonomous District Councils (ADCs). Along with ADCs, the Sixth Schedule also provides for separate Regional Councils for each area constituted as an autonomous region. The Sixth Schedule which seeks to safeguard the rights of tribals covers 10 areas in the Northeast that are registered as autonomous districts – three in Assam, Meghalaya and Mizoram and one in Tripura. The Sixth Schedule endows Councils with powers of legislative, judicial, executive, and financial, collection taxes and fees, entitlement to royalties and indication of resources to be credited to Councils.

**C. Other Arrangements in the Panchayat Raj System<sup>29</sup>:** Article 243M of the Constitution also exempts some areas, not being either Schedule or Tribal areas, from the provisions of Panchayat Raj. These are areas in the States of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram (b) the hill areas of Manipur for which District Councils exist and (c), the district of Darjeeling, which is exempt from the constitution of District Panchayats. In addition, the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is exempted from the application of the Provisions of Part IX of the Constitution, and therefore, has created a rural local body architecture through a legislation passed by the State legislature.

#### **4. Roles and Functions of Panchayats:**

The Gram Panchayats provide two type of functions:

- a) Basic services and development work related to functions devolved to them as per the 11<sup>th</sup> Schedule of the Constitution of India. However, it is subjected to the interpretation of the State laws. The State government determines the scope of the functions of the Panchayats. In some States, the Panchayats take up functions related to all 29 subjects, but in some States their work is limited with few subjects.

<sup>27</sup>Frequently asked questions, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, <https://www.panchayat.gov.in/documents/20126/0/FAQ+++PESA+++12042019.pdf/5cfb9c63-9e55-8522-63fd-15e13407c26c?t=1555072755144> accessed on 18 December 2020

<sup>28</sup>Ibid

<sup>29</sup>Centre for Policy Research, 'Rural Local Body Core Functions and Finances – A Study for the fourteenth Finance Commission', [http://accountabilityindia.in/sites/default/files/pdf\\_files/Rural%20Local%20Body%20Core%20Function%20and%20Finances.pdf](http://accountabilityindia.in/sites/default/files/pdf_files/Rural%20Local%20Body%20Core%20Function%20and%20Finances.pdf) accessed on 20 December, 2020.

- b) Functions related to the implementation of the State and Central government schemes – The Panchayats are the agency for implementation of these schemes. For this purpose, the Panchayat works in collaboration with respective line departments.

**List of 29 subjects enumerated in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution<sup>30</sup>**

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 1. Agriculture                    | 16. Health and sanitation                 |
| 2. Poverty alleviation programme  | 17. Khadi, village and cottage industries |
| 3. Land Improvement               | 18. Family welfare.                       |
| 4. Education                      | 19. Rural Housing                         |
| 5. Minor Irrigation               | 20. Women and child development           |
| 6. Vocational education           | 21. Drinking Water                        |
| 7. Animal Husbandry               | 22. Social welfare                        |
| 8. Adult and non-formal education | 23. Fuel and fodder                       |
| 9. Fisheries                      | 24. Welfare of the weaker sections        |
| 10. Libraries                     | 25. Roads                                 |
| 11. Social Forestry               | 26. Public distribution system            |
| 12. Cultural activities           | 27. Rural Electrification                 |
| 13. Minor Forest Produce          | 28. Maintenance of commun                 |
| 14. Markets and fairs             |   |
| 15. Small scale industries        |   |

### **5. Financial Powers of the Panchayats:**

As per Article 243-H of the Constitution, State Legislatures have been empowered to enact law authorising a Panchayat to levy and collect taxes, duties, tolls, and fees as stated in the State Panchayat Raj Act and Rules. However, Panchayats are heavily dependent on grants from Central and State Governments. The sources of Panchayat funds are:

- a. Own resources of the Panchayats from local taxes, fees, non-tax revenues like auction of Panchayat lands or ponds etc.,
- b. Basic grants from the State Finance Commission
- c. Basic grants from the Central finance commission
- d. Funds for the Central/State sponsored schemes

The Fifteenth Finance Commission (FC-XV) has allocated Rs. 60,750 crore for twenty-eight States for Panchayats in 2020-21 of which 50% of the recommended grant will be Basic grants (untied) and the remaining 50% as tied grants. The basic Grants are untied and can be used for location-specific needs, except for salary or other establishment expenditure. The Tied Grants are to be used for the basic services of (a) sanitation and maintenance of open-defecation free (ODF) status and (b) supply of drinking water, rain water harvesting and water recycling<sup>31</sup>.

### **6. Gram Panchayat Development Plan<sup>32</sup>**

Gram Panchayats have been mandated to prepare Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) for economic development and social justice. GPDP provides the opportunity to bring together communities and their elected representatives in the decentralized planning processes. GPDP is a platform to reflect on the development issues, perceived needs, and priorities of the socially excluded and vulnerable communities, and for convergence of schemes related to 29 subjects listed in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution. Some of the issues that can be focussed in GPDP include:

<sup>30</sup>People's Plan Campaign for Gram Panchayat Development Plan, Ministry of Panchayat Raj and Ministry of Rural Development. [https://gdpd.nic.in/resources/files/Rev\\_Booklet\\_on\\_People\\_Plan\\_Campaign\\_310802.pdf](https://gdpd.nic.in/resources/files/Rev_Booklet_on_People_Plan_Campaign_310802.pdf) accessed on 18 December 2020

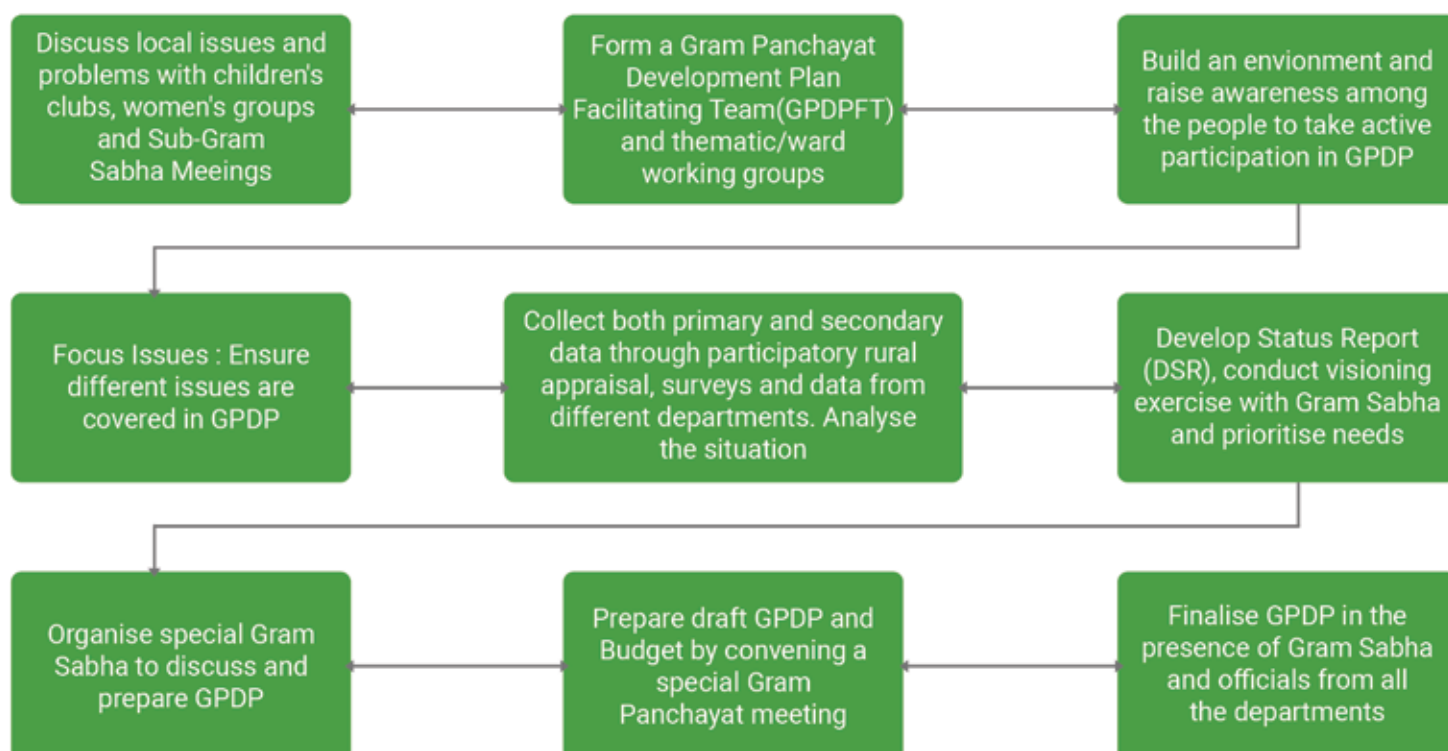
<sup>31</sup>Ibid

<sup>32</sup>Ibid

1. **Basic services** like water supply, sanitation, sewage and solid waste management, storm water drainage, maintenance of community assets, roads, street-lighting, and cremation grounds etc.
2. **Economic Development and Poverty Reduction** includes aligning actions with SDGs, increasing employment and income generation opportunities and converging various schemes.
3. **Human Development** includes improving the quality and access to Anganwadis, schools and hospitals.
4. **Social Development** includes improving well-being of socially excluded and vulnerable communities like SCs, STs, OBCs including minorities, persons with disabilities, elderly people, women, children, distress migrants, manual scavengers, victims of trafficking etc.,
5. **GPDP and its linkages with SDGs** – GPDP to include SDG framework as a consolidating tool for action and impacts on the ground on a range of issues.
6. **Women and Child Protection and Development** – Gender mainstreaming across all activities is an internal part of preparation of GPDP. Activities for empowerment of women and children should be included.
7. **Other focus areas** include Ecological and Environmental development, Infrastructure Development, Good Governance, Skill Building, Public Service delivery, Spatial Planning and enabling E-enablement of Panchayat

### Gram Panchayat Development Plan Preparation Process:

The GPDP planning process is comprehensive and requires community participation and involvement at all stages. The Gram Panchayat President together with all Gram Panchayat members and Gram Sabha is expected to prepare and submit a comprehensive GPDP for the approval of grants from 15th Finance Commission. GPDP is conducted from 2nd October to 31st December, every year across the country, under the People’s Plan Campaign (PPC). Some of the important steps in planning process include the following<sup>33</sup>:



<sup>33</sup>Ibid

# 4

## Overview of the Roles and Responsibilities of Municipalities

The origin of urban local government had very deep roots in ancient India. Based on historical records, excavations and archaeological investigations, it is believed that some form of local government did exist in the remote past<sup>34</sup> in towns and cities. After Independence, local governance became a state subject and many states have passed important legislations. However, these bodies had no permanency and existed as per the whims of state governments. The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 also known as Nagarpalika Act, is a landmark initiative of the Government of India that recognised urban local governments (municipalities) as legitimate third-tier governments and gave them Constitutional status. This Act makes the constitution of urban local governments mandatory and restricts the powers of the State governments to dissolve municipalities.

This Nagarpalika Act has mandated States for setting up<sup>35</sup> of

- State Election Commissions (SEC) to direct elections to municipalities every five years.
- State Finance Commission to decide upon the sharing of Central and State funds with urban local governments and make recommendations concerning the taxation powers of the municipalities, revenue sharing, and grants-in-aid.
- District Planning Committees to decentralise the process of planning for development so that the needs of the citizens in the local communities are effectively addressed.
- Metropolitan Planning Committees for metropolitan areas with a population of 10 lakh or more to prepare a draft development plan for the area as a whole.

Importantly, this act mandates reservation of seats and posts to SC/STs, in proportion to their population and 33.3% representation to women within the SC/ST quota as well as in general, so as to ensure the representation of weaker sections in the political process.

### 1. Constitution of Urban Local Governments (Municipalities)

As per Article 243Q, every State should constitute three types of municipalities in urban areas, based on the population of the area, the density of the population therein, the revenue generated for local administration, the percentage of employment in non-agricultural activities, and the economic importance or such other factors<sup>36</sup>.

**Nagar Panchayat:** Nagar Panchayat for a transitional area, which means an area in transition from a rural area to an urban area.

**Municipal Council:** A Municipal Council is constituted for a smaller urban area; and

**Municipal Corporation:** A Municipal Corporation is constituted for a larger urban area.

### 2. Composition of Municipalities:

Article 243R of the Constitution makes the provision for the composition of Municipalities. All the seats in a Municipality are filled by persons chosen by direct election from the territorial constituencies in the Municipal area and for this purpose, each Municipal area shall be divided into territorial constituencies to be known as wards. The Chairperson of a Municipality will be elected based on State law.

### 3. Powers and Functions of Municipalities:

The 74th Amendment Act envisaged that the municipalities would go beyond the traditional functions such as public health, sanitation, solid waste management, etc. The act intends Municipalities to play a crucial role “in the preparation of plans for local development and the implementation of development

<sup>34</sup>Statistical Year Book of India, [http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/Statistical\\_year\\_book\\_india\\_chapters/LOCAL%20BODIES-WRITE-UP\\_0.pdf](http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/Statistical_year_book_india_chapters/LOCAL%20BODIES-WRITE-UP_0.pdf) accessed on 07 December 2020

<sup>35</sup>CIVIC, People’s Participation in Urban Local Governance- Power to the People, <https://civicspace.in/2019/10/30/peoples-participation-in-urban-local-governance-power-to-the-people/> accessed on 21 December 2020.

<sup>36</sup>Statistical Year Book of India, [http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/Statistical\\_year\\_book\\_india\\_chapters/LOCAL%20BODIES-WRITE-UP\\_0.pdf](http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/Statistical_year_book_india_chapters/LOCAL%20BODIES-WRITE-UP_0.pdf) accessed on 07 December 2020



plan projects and programs including those specially designed for urban poverty alleviation.” Hence, the Act has suggested a list of 18 functions in the Twelfth Schedule for municipalities in addition to the main task of “planning for economic development and social justice’ . However, it left it to the individual States to decide which functions, if at all, they chose to entrust to municipalities, and which of these to be mandatory and which discretionary<sup>38</sup>.

#### List of 18 Subjects enumerated in the Twelfth Schedule

1. Urban Planning, including own planning;
2. Planning for economic and social development;
3. Roads and Bridges;
4. Water supply for domestic, industrial and commercial purpose;
5. Public health, Sanitation, conservancy and solid waste management;
6. Fire Services;
7. Urban forestry protection of the environment and promotion of ecological aspects;
8. Safeguarding the interests of weaker sections of the society, including handicapped and mentally retarded;
9. Slum improvement and up gradation;
10. Regulation of land use and construction of building;
11. Urban poverty alleviation;
12. Provision of urban amenities and facilities such as parks, gardens and playgrounds;
13. Promotion of cultural, educational and aesthetic aspects;
14. Burials and burial ground, cremations, cremation grounds and electric crematoria;
15. Cattle pounds, prevention of cruelty to animals;
16. Vital statistics including registration of births and deaths;
17. Public amenities including street lighting, parking lots, bus-stops and public conveniences;
18. Regulations of slaughter house and tanneries.

#### 4. Financial Powers of the Municipalities:

Article 243X of the Constitution provides the provision to the States to authorise Municipalities to levy, collect appropriate taxes, duties, tolls, and fees etc. Besides it has set up the recommended allocation of funds to local bodies through five-year plans and finance commissions (Central Finance Commissions, State Finance Commissions). Thus, over and above their own revenue, most local bodies depend significantly upon the devolution of resources and grants from the State and Central governments; and borrowings from financial institutions.<sup>39</sup> Hence the sources of income for Municipalities are:

- a. Own Tax Revenues – e.g. Property tax, advertisement tax, vacant land tax
- b. Own non-tax revenues – e.g. Municipal charges, sale and hire charges
- c. Assigned (shared revenues) – e.g. Profession tax, stamp duty
- d. Grant in aid from the Central and State Finance Commissions under various projects, programmes and schemes
- e. Borrowings – Loans for capital works
- f. Other Receipts – e.g. Sundry receipts, lapsed deposits, fees, fines etc.

#### 5. Formation, Composition and Functions of Ward Committees:

##### A. Formation of Ward Committees:

Since the municipality is a huge urban area, Article 243S of the Constitution makes the provision for the constitution and composition of the fourth tier of local area committees, called ward committees, to carry out the functions of the Municipality. The Act gave State governments the option to form ward committees, either for every single ward or for two or more wards based on the population. A member of a Municipality representing a ward within the territorial area of the Ward Committee shall be a member of that Committee. Ward committees are democratic platforms where citizens can participate in civic matters in their neighbourhoods and seek accountability of municipalities.

<sup>37</sup>CIVIC, People's Participation in Urban Local Governance- Power to the People, <https://civicspace.in/2019/10/30/peoples-participation-in-urban-local-governance-power-to-the-people/> accessed on 21 December 2020.

<sup>38</sup>Ibid

<sup>39</sup>Municipal Corporation Budgets, <https://openbudgetsindia.org/budget-basics/municipal-budget.html> accessed on 28 December, 2020

## **B. Composition of Ward Committees:**

The composition of the ward committee varies from State to State depending on the State Laws. Article 243S of the Constitution gives the power to States to decide on the composition and the territorial area of the Ward Committee. Some states like Andhra Pradesh, Greater Mumbai, Tamil Nadu, Delhi, and Haryana have only elected ward councillors as the members of the ward committees. In other states, the ward committees have members nominated either by the State or by Mayor, Municipal Commissioner, or the elected representatives<sup>40</sup>. The nominated members are either residents of the ward, or those having knowledge and experience in municipal administration including civil society organisations. However, it varies from State to State. For example, in West Bengal, the Councillor nominates 9-11 wards committee members while the local body nominates 2-3. In Kerala, a Ward Committee consists of a minimum of 58 members: 15 members of RWA (Resident Welfare Association), 20 of neighbourhood groups, heads of all educational institutes, and 20 persons (representatives of trade unions, voluntary organisations, doctors, agriculturists, industrialists, engineers etc) nominated by the councillor jointly with the chairman and one representative from each political party. In Karnataka, the State government nominates the members. No State has opted for direct election of wards committee members so far.

## **C. Functions and Financial Powers of the Ward Committees:**

The functions of the ward committees have been left to the State legislatures to decide. Hence, very limited functions have been delegated to ward committees wherever they have been constituted. In most of the States, the ward committees are largely advisory bodies with no or limited financial powers<sup>41</sup>. Only a few states like West Bengal, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra have conferred financial power. In a few places like Mumbai, the ward committees have links with several voluntary and civil society initiatives. The two successful examples for the formation and effective functioning of ward committees are Kerala and West Bengal<sup>42</sup>. In Kerala and West Bengal ward committee functions include preparation of the list of works, prioritization and implementation of schemes for development and selection of beneficiaries<sup>43</sup>. The two states have gone ahead from other states in building proximity between the citizens and government and also ensuring representation from all walks of life including civil society organisations<sup>44</sup>.

## **6. Setting up of Area Sabhas through Community Participation Law:**

To foster citizen's participation in the decision-making process in urban areas, the States were mandated to enact a Community Participation Law (CPL) under the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) scheme. The law involves the constitution of Area Sabhas enabling further decentralisation below the ward committees. This law has been made mandatory for the States to avail funding under JNNURM<sup>45</sup>. According to the gazette notification, the Area Sabha can forward proposals for schemes and development programmes to the Ward Committee, select eligible persons from the area for beneficiary-oriented schemes, cross-check the eligibility of those getting welfare assistance from the government, identify deficiencies in water supply, sanitation arrangements, street lighting, assist activities in public health centres, besides cooperating with the Ward Committee.<sup>46</sup>

Some of the salient features of the Act include:

- a. The area for constituting an Area Sabha would include the entire geographical territory in which all persons mentioned in the electoral roll of any polling booth in such territory or if the government decide two or more polling booths (not exceeding 5) are ordinary residents.
- b. Each Area Sabha would be governed by an Area representative
- c. The election of the office of area Sabha would be conducted by the State Election Commission.

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<sup>40</sup>Ibid

<sup>41</sup>Ibid

<sup>42</sup>Ibid

<sup>43</sup>CIVIC, People's Participation in Urban Local Governance- Power to the People, <https://civicspace.in/2019/10/30/peoples-participation-in-urban-local-governance-power-to-the-people/> accessed on 21 December 2020.

<sup>44</sup>Ministry of Urban Development, 'Enhancing Public Participation through effective functioning of Area Sabhas', [http://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/TERI\\_Sabhas\\_Report28.pdf](http://mohua.gov.in/upload/uploadfiles/files/TERI_Sabhas_Report28.pdf) accessed on 28 December, 2020.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid

<sup>46</sup>Chitra V.Ramani, "All you wanted to know about Area Sabhas", The Hindu <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/bangalore/all-you-wanted-to-know-about-area-sabhas/article4379588.ece> accessed on 28 December, 2020

The Area Sabha in urban areas can be equated to the Gram Sabhas in the Panchayats, although they don't exercise the same power as the Gram Sabhas. So far, not all States have enacted Community Participation Law, and those States that enacted CPL are not in conformity with the provisions of JNNURM requirements.

State Municipal Corporation Acts, Town and Country Planning Acts, Community Participation Laws, Act and Rules of different States can be accessed in the link <http://janaagraha.org/asics/knowledge-centre.html>

# 5

## Community Centric Approach in Policy Engagement and Accountability

### 1. What is Policy Engagement?

Policy engagement is an action directed to create change by facilitating people to participate in decision – making process which affects their lives<sup>47</sup>. It is about creating ways for the community to speak up on important issues that affect them and directing decision-makers toward a solution. It is a process of putting a problem on the agenda, providing a solution to that problem, and building support for acting on both the problem and solution<sup>48</sup>. It involves working with other people and organisations to make a difference<sup>49</sup>. It also requires a set of targeted strategies and actions directed at decision-makers in support of a specific change. Effective policy engagement involves influencing policy decision-making and implementation<sup>50</sup>, by:

- educating leaders, policymakers, or those who carry out policies;
- reforming existing policies, laws, and budgets, developing new programs;
- creating more democratic, open, and accountable decision-making structures
- and procedures

### 2. Key Components of Policy Engagement

In a policy engagement process, the techniques and strategies may vary, but some of the following elements form building blocks for effective policy engagement.

**Policy Objectives and Messages:** Problems can be complex. In order they achieve a desirable change, the goal must be narrowed down into an objective and a set of action points or specific indicators.

**Knowledge and Data:** Data and research are essential for making informed decisions<sup>51</sup>. Data will be the base to build evidence, set realistic goals, and make the arguments more persuasive.

**Targeted Audience:** It is necessary to identify the affected community, concerned duty bearers and other stakeholders who can influence the decision-making process. Empowering the community and understanding the role, functions, and powers of the duty bearers will be essential to planning an effective engagement action plan.

**Coalition Building:** The success of the policy engagement depends on the number of people who support the cause. The facilitating organisation and the community should collaborate with other organisations, entities, and individuals who can influence the decision-making process and contribute their expertise, skills, and resource for a cause.

**Strategies and Action Plans:** Influencing decision-makers to take action is important. This involves adapting multiple strategies and evolving a detailed policy engagement action plan including constant engagement and dialogue with duty bearers, community empowerment, awareness-raising, building capacities, and effective communication.



<sup>47</sup>Ritu Sharma, An Introduction to Advocacy – Training Guide, Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA)

<sup>48</sup>Ibid

<sup>49</sup>Ibid

<sup>50</sup>Ibid

<sup>51</sup>Ibid

**Monitoring and Evaluation:** Monitoring and evaluating the implementation of a policy engagement plan is critical to hold duty bearers accountable and verify if duty bearers have acted upon the policy demands.

### **3. Community Centric Approach to Policy Engagement:**

The need for community-centric approach in development has been increasingly recognised across the globe. Community centric approach to development considers community members to be experts in matters concerning their lives and communities and values community knowledge and wisdom. It is a holistic approach grounded in the principles of empowerment, human rights, inclusion, social justice, self-determination, and collective action<sup>52</sup>. In this approach, the community will place their needs and aspirations at the core of the developmental agenda; claim their rights and entitlements as 'rights holders' (instead of beneficiaries); initiate collective decision making; negotiate with duty bearers and hold the duty bearers accountable. This direct interface between the communities and the duty bearers on policy decisions, planning, and implementation is necessary to lead a more equitable and sustainable development. The civil society organisations which focus on community development have to integrate this approach and should facilitate policy engagement as a community-owned led process.

#### **Key Features to be mindful of in a Community Centric Policy Engagement Process:**

##### **A. Reaching the Furthest Behind First**

Community is defined as people living in a particular area, considering themselves as a unit with shared interests and want to achieve something together. However, in Indian society, communities or social groups are divided based on caste, ethnicity, language, religion, the region of origin, and occupation with hierarchical, exclusive, and discriminatory identities. In this kind of discriminatory social stratification, some communities are made poor by being socially discriminated, economically exploited, culturally silenced, and politically rendered powerless<sup>53</sup>. Those communities who are socially excluded and vulnerable should be at the core of the developmental agenda, their needs and aspirations should be prioritised and they must lead the policy engagement process towards sustainable development.

##### **B. Gender and Intersectionality**

It is important to take an intersectional approach in the policy engagement process. While addressing issues related to oppression and discrimination, be mindful of two main points:<sup>54</sup>

- a. While all women are subject to gender discrimination in one way or another, it is not just gender but also caste, ethnicity, socio-economic class, and other factors that shape their experiences of discrimination, marginalisation and oppression.
- b. An individual's /communities' particular experience of intersecting discrimination is unique; it is not simply the sum of different discriminations.

##### **C. Access to Justice to the Socially Excluded and Vulnerable Population Groups**

The core objective of policy engagement on SDGs is to create ways for the SEVP groups to have access to their rights and entitlements. Hence, the engagement of SEVP groups with the duty bearers is not limited to get access to some development schemes, but it should be driven to address barriers to accessing justice in legal, social, economic, and political domains. Eg. Land rights of Tribals and Dalits, Access to Justice on incidents of violence, Ownership of local resources, Exercising PESA etc.

##### **D. Engagement in Planning, Implementation, Monitoring, and Reporting**

Policy engagement is not a one-time event, but a process where people take active participation in all the decision-making process – Planning, implementation, monitoring, and reporting. Being vigilant at every step and a constant engagement at all levels of the decision making process and implementation will make the local governments accountable.

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<sup>52</sup>Joseph Xavier, Development Anchored in Community Intelligence, Indian Social Institute and Caritas India, 2020

<sup>53</sup>Ibid

<sup>54</sup>Gender Development Network, <https://gadnetwork.org/gadn-resources/2017/11/20/intersectionality-reflections-from-the-gender-development-network> accessed on 04th January, 2021

# 6

## Strategies of Policy Engagement with Local Governments in Achieving SDGs

Policy engagement with the local governments requires different strategies aimed at influencing decision-making at the local governments. It includes awareness raising and communication, community empowerment, data collection, social marketing and many other tactics depending on the local situations<sup>55</sup>. It involves many specific, short-term and long-term activities to reach the desired impact in the lives of the communities<sup>56</sup>, especially Socially Excluded and Vulnerable Population (SEVP) groups. The following are some of the strategies that one could adapt to strengthen community participation in the decision-making process and thereby to influence duty bearers to commit integration of Sustainable Development Goals into the development agenda. These strategies are interrelated and are essential in localising SDGs.

### 1. Identifying Issues and Situational Analysis

In depth understanding about the community and the data on various developmental issues is the foundation for all future engagements with the local government and the corresponding line departments. The process of undertaking a situational analysis and identifying issues relevant to the communities involves gathering a broad array of data, facts, figures, realities, vulnerabilities, histories and experiences and analysing the same to arrive at a common understanding of development needs<sup>57</sup>. The purpose is to develop a realistic and comprehensive picture of the community and build evidence, to engage with the decision-makers constructively.

#### Objective:

- Create community data using localised indicators on the SDG framework.
- Identify the SEVP groups and their needs in the respective local Panchayat/Municipality (or Ward)
- Examine and assess the data to understand various gaps and key development issues affecting SEVP groups.

#### Action Points:

- 1. Identify the geographical location:** Choose a Panchayat area or a geographical area of a Municipality (or ward) if it is an urban locality.
- 2. Community Mapping:** Undertake a community mapping exercise in order to assess the various resources and services available in the Panchayat/Ward. Involve the community members in this process.
- 3. Vulnerability Mapping:** Identify the different communities that live in the Panchayat/Ward and undertake a basic vulnerability mapping that would help to classify the socially excluded and vulnerable communities. Depending on the local context you may choose to classify the communities based on the caste, religious categories, or opt for a sector wise classification, (women, children, Dalits, Tribals, Youth, People with disabilities, etc) or classification based on their social-economic status.
- 4. Need Assessment and Data Collection:** A need assessment of the individuals, SEVP groups, and the village is crucial to understand the key issues and challenges faced by the community. A combination of field research through household surveys and community interaction is recommended to collect data and understand the vulnerabilities. Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) and Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) techniques, focussed group discussions,

<sup>55</sup>Ritu R Sharma, An Introduction to Advocacy – Training Guide, Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA)

<sup>56</sup>Ibid

<sup>57</sup>Joseph Xavier, Development Anchored in Community Intelligence, Indian Social Institute and Caritas India, 2020

and transect walk could be effectively utilised to develop a 'big picture' of the community and identify critical issues. Adopting these methods will facilitate a process of collective analysis and learning<sup>58</sup> and ensure community participation. It is important to ensure equal gender representation of community members. To understand the experiences of marginalised groups, organising sectoral-wise discussions (Dalits, Tribals, Women, Transgender communities, Children, Elderly, the Person with Disabilities, Religious and Ethnic minorities, Refugees, Migrants, etc.) is recommended. Secondary data can be an additional resource and can be sourced from various resources including Mission Anthonia (MA) data, Socio-Economic Caste Census, and data from different life departments. It is important to note that some communities like the migrants or refugees might be excluded from some such secondary data and that efforts are taken to ensure data and information about such communities are also included.

5. **Develop localised indicators using the SDG framework:** The global SDG indicators <https://ourworldindata.org/sdg-tracker-update> and National Indicator Framework can be a base to develop localised indicators. These localised indicators are essential to assess the situation and to incorporate SDGs targets into Panchayat/Municipality developmental plans.
6. **Data Analysis:** Once the data is gathered, analyse the data involving the community and other stakeholders.<sup>59</sup> Identify the major issues that need to be addressed under each goal and the communities that are worst hit.

**Tools:**

1. **Community Mapping:** A community map is a map showing important places in the Panchayats/ Ward that includes water bodies, health services, schools/colleges, markets, place of worships, places where people meet/socialise, and so on<sup>60</sup>.
  - Divide the community into peer groups to make separate maps to get a cross section of views.
  - Ask participants to draw a map showing all the places that are important to them and that provide different services.
  - Discuss what is shown on the map and also analyse the places/institutions (services) that are missing from the map.
2. **Vulnerability Matrix<sup>61</sup>:**

Name of the Communities	Vulnerability Factors					
	Experiences of Discrimination	Geographical Location – Low development Index	Socio Economic Status	Governance Issues	Shocks and Fragility (Natural Calamities, Communal violence)	Any Other

<sup>58</sup>Ibid

<sup>59</sup>Refer the subsection 3 on this chapter about different stakeholders.

<sup>60</sup>International Hiv/Aids Alliance, Tools Together Now – 100 participatory tools to mobilise communities for HIV/AIDS. [http://www.alliancein-dia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014\\_AllianceIndia\\_Tools-Together-Now-100-Participatory-Tools-to-Mobilise-Communities-for-HIV-AIDS-English.pdf](http://www.alliancein-dia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014_AllianceIndia_Tools-Together-Now-100-Participatory-Tools-to-Mobilise-Communities-for-HIV-AIDS-English.pdf) accessed on 28 December, 2020

<sup>61</sup>Refer Section II for the detailing of the vulnerability factors. Depends upon the local context, add other vulnerability factors

### 3. Data Analysis (summary) Matrix – SDG Framework

SDG Goals & Targets	SDG Indicators	Localised Indicators	Key Issues and Challenges		
			Facts/Figures (Quantitative Data)	Challenges faced by the Community (Qualitative)	Affected Communities

#### Useful Resources:

1. SDG Indicators: <https://ourworldindata.org/sdg-tracker-update>
2. National Indicator Framework: <http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/National%20Indicator%20Framework%20for%20circulation.pdf>
3. How to localise targets and indicators of the post-2015 Agenda. [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/localization\\_targets\\_indicator\\_web.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/localization_targets_indicator_web.pdf)
4. Participation Learning and Action Tools. International Hiv/Aids Alliance, Tools Together Now – 100 participatory tools to mobilise communities for HIV/AIDS. [http://www.allianceindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014\\_AllianceIndia\\_Tools-Together-Now-100-Participatory-Tools-to-Mobilise-Communities-for-HIV-AIDS-English.pdf](http://www.allianceindia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014_AllianceIndia_Tools-Together-Now-100-Participatory-Tools-to-Mobilise-Communities-for-HIV-AIDS-English.pdf)

## 2. Mapping of Goals, Relevant Schemes, and Line Departments:

The government of India has committed to achieving SDGs by aligning SDG goals with the ongoing 'developmental and social inclusion schemes and programmes'<sup>62</sup>. To draw a detailed engagement action plan, it is essential to map both the Central and State government schemes that are key to achieving SDGs. Since the local governments play a key role in the implementation of the schemes along with the line departments, it is important to map the role of duty bearers at the concerned line department and also assess the role of Panchayats/Municipalities in the implementation of these schemes. This exercise is essential to precisely describe the engagement agenda, seek accountability, and monitor implementation.

#### Objectives:

- Map the Central and State government Schemes and Programmes that aids in achieving SDGs
- Understand the role of Panchayats/ Municipalities in the implementation of the schemes.
- Assess the current status of implementation and challenges faced by the SEVP Communities.

#### Action Points:

1. **Map Government Schemes:** Map the central government and State government development schemes. You may refer to the SDG mapping done by NITI Aayog for central government schemes. [https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-01/SDGMapping-Document-NITI\\_0.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-01/SDGMapping-Document-NITI_0.pdf). Please check if your State has done a similar mapping. Else, create one based on the assessment of different government schemes in consultation with the local panchayats and line departments.
2. **Assess Implementation Status of Different Schemes:** Once you have done the mapping, assess a) the applicability of the schemes in the concerned Panchayats/Municipalities, b) the implementation status of the scheme c) Experiences and challenges faced by communities to access the schemes and e) Inclusion of SEVP groups especially migrants and non-citizens (refugees) as beneficiaries of the schemes.

<sup>62</sup>NITI Aayog, Localising SDGs Early Lessons from India 2019, [https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-07/LSDGs\\_July\\_8\\_Web.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-07/LSDGs_July_8_Web.pdf) accessed on 05 December, 2020.



- 3. List out the Roles and Functions of Panchayats and Line Departments:** Clearly define the role of Panchayats/Municipalities and the concerned department referencing government orders and in consultation with the concern duty bearers and Panchayat/Municipality members and draw the linkages between them.

**Tool: Matrix for Mapping Schemes and Programmes in the SDG Framework**

SDG Goals	Central Government Schemes	State Government Schemes	Nodal Ministry (Centre & State)	Concern Line Department (Implementing Agency) and their role	Role of Panchayats/ Municipalities	Status of Implementation in the Panchayat/ Municipality	Challenges and Experiences of Communities

**Useful Resources:**

- SDG Mapping of Central Government Schemes by NITI Aayog: [https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-01/SDGMapping-Document-NITI\\_0.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2019-01/SDGMapping-Document-NITI_0.pdf)
- SDG Index Dashboard - <https://sdgindiaindex.niti.gov.in/#/ranking>
- Localising SDGs Early Lessons from India 2019 (to access State-wise SDG Plans) - [https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-07/LSDGs\\_July\\_8\\_Web.pdf](https://niti.gov.in/sites/default/files/2020-07/LSDGs_July_8_Web.pdf)

**3. Stakeholder Mapping and Formation for Local SDG Action Groups:**

Networking is one of the core components of policy engagement. Overall development and realisation of SDGs cannot be achieved in isolation or by being connected with only one particular facilitating organisation<sup>63</sup>. Collaboration with multiple stakeholders provides opportunities to access different skills, expertise and experiences and sometimes also help provide access to resources needed and the opportunity to leverage more people to initiate broader actions<sup>64</sup>. The path to achieving SDGs requires an unprecedented level of cooperation and collaboration among key development actors that includes SEVP groups, civil societies, government bodies and other actors like development experts, academia, health professionals, local business enterprises, media professional, etc.

**Objective:**

- Identify and map the different stakeholders who could play an active role in achieving SDGs.
- Develop a database of different stakeholders in the region.
- Constitute local SDG Action Groups with the leadership of SEVP groups.

**Action Points:**

- 1. Identify and prepare a database:** Identify and prepare a database of
  - a. Community Groups:** Community groups include self-help women’s groups, Children and Youth clubs, Community Volunteers and other organised groups who could play an active role in community mobilisation and organisation.
  - b. Civil Society Organisations and People’s Movements:** This includes like-minded organisations, networks, movements, individuals, activists at the local, block, and district level who could contribute in areas of a) community mobilisation b) knowledge building on thematic issues

<sup>63</sup>Joseph Xavier, Development Anchored in Community Intelligence, Indian Social Institute and Caritas India, 2020.

<sup>64</sup>Ibid

c) building linkages with Panchayats/Municipalities d) legal interventions and public campaigns and e) State and National level Policy Engagement.

- c. **Elected Representatives/Government Officials/Service Providers:** Identify and build rapport with the elected Panchayat/Municipality members, Ward Committee/Area Sabha committee members, Officials from the line departments, and other frontline functionaries like Anganwadi workers, School Teachers, ASHA health workers, Village Development Officers, etc. Networking and building a relationship, continuous interaction and engagement with duty bearers at different levels are key to integrate the SDG agenda into the Panchayat/Municipality development plans.
- d. **Other Actors:** The Other development actors include development experts who are members of ward committees, Academia, Media Professionals and Volunteers. Identify individuals and institutions that could play an active role in influencing duty bearers and support the SDG agenda.
2. **Map the Power Analysis of different stakeholders:** Different stakeholders can contribute differently to the process. A power analysis helps map stakeholder relationships, potential areas of contribution, and identify possible channels of influence as well as risks of conflict.<sup>65</sup>
3. **Organise Brainstorming Sessions, Consultations, and Discussion Forums on SDGs:** Hold a series of brainstorming sessions, discussion forums, and consultations on localising SDGs. This could be a platform for sharing experience, information, assessing needs, challenges, and evolving joint action plans. Besides, this could create space for the community to have a direct interface with duty bearers and other actors involved in the process.
5. **Initiate Local SDG action Groups:** Initiate a local SDG action group and several thematic working groups to spearhead the process of integrating the SDG Agenda into the local developmental action plan. The SDG local action team works to coordinate between each thematic groups while the thematic groups work on different issues. Ideally, this group should be led by the SEVP groups with not less than 50% representation.

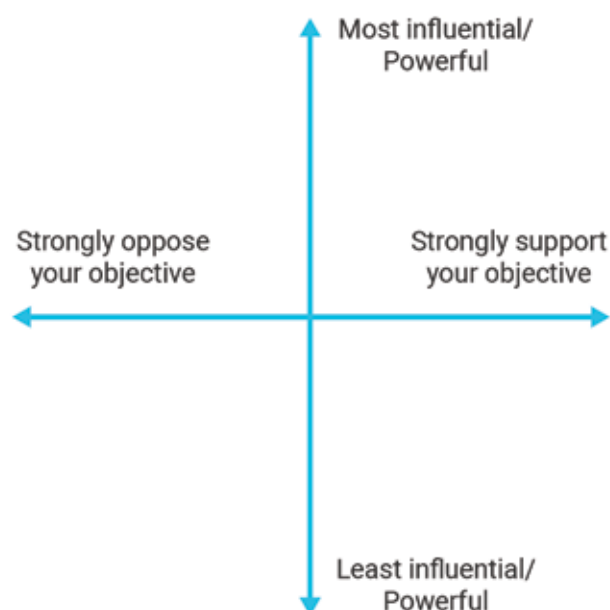
#### Tools:

1. **Power Analysis:** Power analysis can be done in different ways depending on the purpose and context. In the context of policy engagement with the local governments, the following two methods could be helpful.
  - a. Listing Stakeholders<sup>66</sup> and defining their strength and areas of contribution.
    - Vulnerable Stakeholders
    - Powerful stakeholders
    - Implementing stakeholders
    - Knowledgeable stakeholders
    - Other affected stakeholders
  - b. Graphically categorise stakeholders<sup>67</sup> according to their level of power and their interest or position regarding the objectives of the policy engagement with the local governments using the XY axis.

<sup>65</sup>Jacques-Edouard Tiberghien, Power Analysis Briefing, Review of Tools and Methods, <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Tiberghien%2C%202012.pdf> accessed on 11 January, 2021

<sup>66</sup>Ibid

<sup>67</sup>Ibid



**2. SDG Local Action Group Matrix:**

List of Stakeholders	SDG Local Action Group – Coordinating Team	SDG Thematic Action Groups			
		Theme 1	Theme 2	Theme 3	Theme 4
Ensure a minimum of 50% Gender Representation Ensure a minimum of 50% representation of SEVP groups					
SEVP Groups with a minimum of 50% representation of Women					
Other Community Representatives					
Facilitating Organisation					
Civil Society Organisations					
Other Actors					
Frontline Functionaries					
Elected Panchayat/Ward Committee members					
Officials from the line department					

(Duty bearers may or may not represent in SDG Local Action Groups depends on the local context)

**4. Building Awareness and Community Ownership on SDGs**

Policy engagement with the local governments can succeed only with community participation. Empowering the community through awareness-raising and building ownership of SDGs is essential to foster community participation in the decision-making process. Rather than limiting the process to just providing information, it should focus empowering communities to build critical consciousness along with leadership and knowledge management. The process should equip communities to affirm and assert their identity as citizens, claim their rights and entitlements as rights-holders and hold the duty bearers accountable.<sup>68</sup> This requires strengthening the community with relevant skills and capacities, knowledge of schemes and laws, procedures, and the ability to negotiate and dialogue with duty bearers.

<sup>68</sup>Joseph Xavier, Development Anchored in Community Intelligence, Indian Social Institute and Caritas India, 2020

## Objectives:

- Empower SEVP groups to assert and claim their rights and entitlements as rights holders,
- Equip SEVP groups with knowledge and information on various schemes, SDGs, and the functioning of local governments
- Enable SEVP groups to strategize and negotiate with duty bearers for the inclusion of the SDG agenda in the development plans.

## Action Points:

- 1. Build Knowledge and Skills:** Conduct a series of training sessions aimed to build capacity of community members on the values enshrined in the Constitution and various laws, SDGs, welfare policies and schemes, and on the roles and functions of local governments. The training should be a mix of theoretical knowledge and practical procedures – right from filling of forms, online access, information about different nodal offices and governance structures<sup>69</sup> (panchayat/Municipalities, various departments, and administrative offices at the local, block, district, or state levels). The objective of the training should be to ensure communities are familiar with different schemes and programs that have a direct impact on their lives and on how to access them by the end of the training.
- 2. Evolve engagement strategies and tools:** Through the participatory process evolve various engagement strategies and tools that the SEVP groups can adopt to claim their rights. Introduce various democratic spaces such as Gram Sabhas in Panchayats, Standing Committees, Area Sabhas in Municipalities, Volunteering at GPDP facilitating team that provide scope for citizen's participation in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of development programmes. Discuss various campaign strategies and tools such as filing RTIs, organising public hearing in the presence of eminent personalities, presenting petitions, registering online complaints, Public Interest Litigations, Press release, Media interview, Poster and social media campaigns, public meetings, and participation in grievance day (*Jan Sunvai*) organised by the government.
- 3. Create space to Interface with Duty Bearers:** During training sessions, create opportunities for communities to have a direct interface with duty bearers. Getting government officials on board as resource persons, exposure visits to government offices and Panchayats/Municipalities and inviting duty bearers as a guest for community events can be explored.
- 4. Adopt Innovative and Participatory Tools for training:** Adopt a participatory process throughout the training process along with input sessions by the experts. The participatory process builds critical thinking and ownership. Be sensitive to the community's needs and availability while scheduling training sessions. Formal and Informal approaches should be thought through.

## Tools:

### 1. Community Drama<sup>70</sup>:

This tool involves participants acting a drama to highlight the issues and challenges faced by them or to explain procedures of handling different situations.

- Divide the participants into 3 or 4 four groups (sector-wise). Give one situation/scenario to each group. Eg. Children's group can act in a drama about their safety concerns and put forth their demands b) Women can explain their challenges in fetching water c) Scenario on discussing unemployment issues with the Panchayat leader d) Scenario on negotiating with government officials on the Aadhar identification process.
- Ask each group to develop a drama and perform for about 10 to 15 minutes.
- When the activity is complete, encourage the participants to discuss the situation, challenges, learnings, and solutions. The Facilitator can add inputs as required.

<sup>69</sup>Ibid

<sup>70</sup>International HIV/AIDS Alliance, Tools Together Now – 100 participatory tools to mobilise communities for HIV/AIDS. [http://www.alliancein-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014\\_AllianceIndia\\_Tools-Together-Now-100-Participatory-Tools-to-Mobilise-Communities-for-HIV-AIDS-English.pdf](http://www.alliancein-india.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014_AllianceIndia_Tools-Together-Now-100-Participatory-Tools-to-Mobilise-Communities-for-HIV-AIDS-English.pdf)

2. **Graffiti wall**<sup>71</sup>: This tool involves participants decorating a wall by writing or drawing all of their opinions, feelings, and ideas. This can be used for multiple purposes. For example, this tool can be used for individuals and communities to express their concerns, fears, needs, and demands. This tool can be also used to explain practical procedures while getting access to welfare schemes etc. Graffiti walls work well with large groups of young people, but adults can do them too.

- In a workshop setting, get participants to cover a whole wall with flipchart paper.
- Distribute drawing and painting materials to participants
- Ask them to write/draw their concerns, fears, needs, and demands.
- Once complete, discuss what the graffiti wall means to them.

Alternatively,

- Divide the participants into small groups.
- Give each group a scenario/situation. Eg. How to file an RTI.
- Give each group one chart, few paper cut-outs (or sticky notes), and sketch pens. Ask the group to write the different steps involved and other activities one should do while filing RTI in each cut-out and place it in order.
- Once it is done, ask each group to present and initiate a plenary discussion, with additional inputs.
- Different groups can focus on a different scenario and all charts can be put up on the wall.

3. **Other tools include** Focussed Group Discussions, Debating, Documentary Screening, Movie Analysis, Problem Tree techniques.

## 5. Building Capacities of Local Government Members on SDGs:

The elected leaders of local governments can integrate SDGs in the local development plan only if they have the understanding and information about the concepts and perspectives on development. This would require a complete understanding of the principles of assigning development functions to the local governments and the various legal provisions that they are entitled to lead the development process. Besides, they also need awareness about SDGs and their core principle of leaving no one behind. Hence, building the capacities of local government members with adequate knowledge, information and skills is an integral part of the policy engagement.

### Objective:

- Conduct training for local government members on the development perspectives and SDGs.
- Coordinate with other civil society organisations that work with civic bodies and Panchayats and integrate SDG localisation process in their agenda.
- Explore capacity building programs organised by the State and Central government for Local government members on the various functions of Panchayats/Municipalities.

### Action Points:

1. Explore the various training programs that are facilitated by the State /Central government on a) SDGs, b) the functioning of local governments and c) the Preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans, etc. Different training programmes may be coordinated by different ministries. Source and provide information to the local government members about the different training programmes and ensure their participation.
2. Collaborate with other civil society organisations that work with civic bodies and Panchayats on building the capacities of local government members at the District/ State level. Integrate SDG localisation process in their ongoing training agenda.

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<sup>71</sup>Ibid

3. Organise a capacity-building program at the local level integrating both components of a) Development perspectives and SDG localisation process & b) Role and functions of Panchayats. The capacity building program should motivate members of the local government to set development targets and ensure implementation.

## 6. Prioritising Issues and Evolving a Policy Engagement Action Plan:

When we have clear data on all issues affecting the SEVP groups, it is important to prioritise issues, based on what the SEVP group members think are most urgent and require immediate attention. Once the prioritisation exercise is done, evolve policy solutions and a concrete policy engagement action plan. The policy engagement action plan should be SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound and linked to the availability of resources. Facilitate the conversation in such a way that everyone's voice and concerns are heard and listened to.

### Objectives:

- Prioritise issues based on the urgency and needs of SEVP groups.
- Evolve policy solutions for the issues identified and prioritised.
- Evolve a detailed Policy Engagement Action Plan.

### Action Points:

1. Facilitate the SEVP communities to prioritise issues. It is ideal to develop a set of criteria by the community members on the basis of which the prioritisation exercise is undertaken<sup>72</sup>. Prioritisation doesn't mean only addressing important issues, but it is a process of grading issues in an order of importance based on the availability of resources and time required to sort them out. While some issues can be addressed in year 1 and other issues can be taken in the following years. Keep in mind that the concerns of SEVP communities get prioritised over others and dimensions of intersectional vulnerabilities are given due importance.
2. Map the availability of resources with the local Panchayats/Municipalities, grants in aids from State and Central finance commission, and budget allotted under different schemes that can be effectively utilised.
3. Generate a discussion on how to address these issues that are prioritised considering the resources and avenues available and arrive at a list of solutions for each issue. Based on this, evolve an intervention strategy with detailed policy engagement action plans. The documents prepared by the government of India and UN bodies on what local governments do can be referred to, in order to prepare the policy engagement action plan.

### Useful Resources

1. Sustainable Development Goals and Gram Panchayats: <https://www.in.undp.org/content/dam/india/docs/Gram%20Panchayat%20Brochure.pdf>
2. Sustainable Development goals and urban bodies – The future we want. <https://issuu.com/unitednationsindia/docs/sdgs-local-bodies>
3. The Sustainable Development goals what the local governments need to know [https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/the\\_sdgs\\_what\\_localgov\\_need\\_to\\_know\\_0.pdf](https://www.uclg.org/sites/default/files/the_sdgs_what_localgov_need_to_know_0.pdf)

### Tools:

#### 1. Matrix scoring (Direct matrix ranking)<sup>73</sup>

This tool uses a grid to compare and list things in order of importance.

<sup>72</sup>Joseph Xavier, Development Anchored in Community Intelligence, Indian Social Institute and Caritas India, 2020.

<sup>73</sup>International Hiv/Aids Alliance, Tools Together Now – 100 participatory tools to mobilise communities for HIV/AIDS. [http://www.alliancein-dia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014\\_AllianceIndia\\_Tools-Together-Now-100-Participatory-Tools-to-Mobilise-Communities-for-HIV-AIDS-English.pdf](http://www.alliancein-dia.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2014_AllianceIndia_Tools-Together-Now-100-Participatory-Tools-to-Mobilise-Communities-for-HIV-AIDS-English.pdf)

- Agree on a set of criteria for prioritisation and list out different issues that emerged
- Draw a matrix – a big rectangle with rows and columns
- Write all problem at the top of each column
- Write the criteria for prioritisation in the boxes in the left-hand column of the matrix
- Agree to a scoring method. For example, numbers 1-10, where 1 is very low and 10 very high
- Give each individual/group to score in each cell
- A sample grid is given below with examples

Problems/ Prioritisation Criteria	Problem 1 Registration under unorganised workers	Problem 2 Access to MGNREGA	Problem 3 Getting ST Certificate	Problem 4 Initiating an employment loan for self-help groups	Problem 5 Skill Training for youth	Problem 6 Transport facilities
Affects the livelihood needs of SEVP groups						
Can be addressed by the Local Governments						
Time-Bound: Can be achieved within a year						

## 2. Prioritisation Matrix:

SDG Goals	Problems identified	Top 5 Issues to be focussed on in 3 years	Top 2 or 3 issues to be focussed in Year 1	Policy Solutions / Actions (SMART) to be undertaken for the year 1	
				Within the scope of the functions of Panchayats/ Municipalities	Central and State Government Schemes

## 3. Policy Engagement Action Plan Matrix

SDG Goals	Policy Solutions / Action to be undertaken in year 1 (SMART)		Engagement Strategies	By Whom	When	Monitoring Indicators
	Functions of Local Governments	Central & State government schemes				

## 7. Synchronising SDGs Implementation Plan with the Local Government Development Plans

The policy engagement process will be successful only if the local governments integrate SDGs goals in the developmental plan, allocate an adequate budget, and implement the same. This requires relationship building, systematic follow-up, and constant dialogue, identifying the right type avenues and spaces, and a lot of negotiation with elected representatives at the local government. Importantly, this can be achieved only if the SEVP groups are strengthened with relevant skills and capacities, adequate data, knowledge of laws and procedure, and the ability to negotiate with the duty bearers and hold the local governments accountable. Adapting all the above strategies and approaches should aid to this stage.

## Objectives:

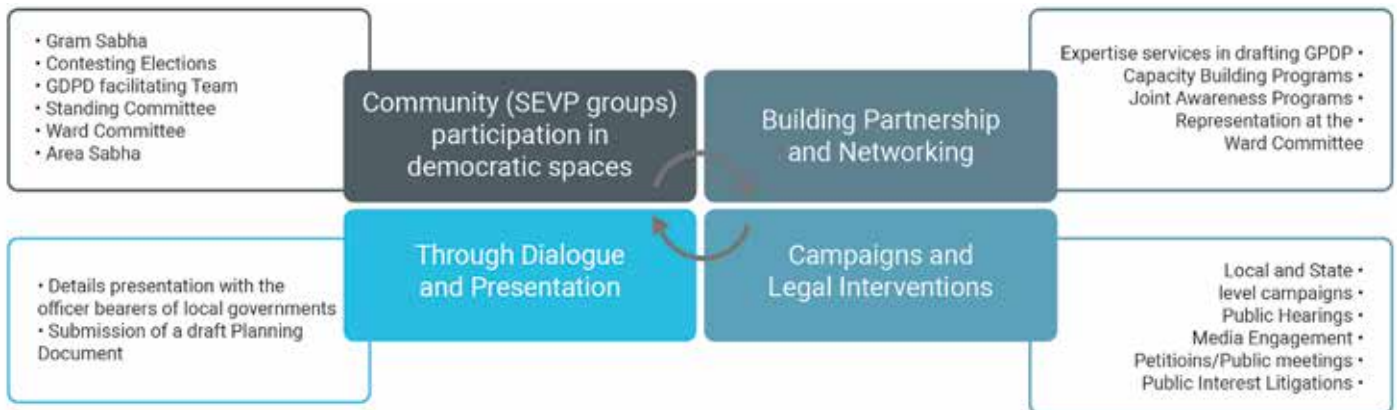
- Explore all possible avenues and approaches to integrate SDG goals into the local developmental plans
- Ensure the goal wise actions points are integrated into the local developmental agenda and adequate budget is allocated for implementation.

## Action Points:

The synchronisation of SDGs into developmental plans can be done in different ways. Some of the important approaches could be

- 1. Empower Communities to Capitalise All Democratic Spaces:** The local governments are vibrant democratic units that have ample opportunities for community participation in the political process. Ensure SEVP groups participate at the forums like Gram Sabha, Standing Committee meetings, GPDP facilitating team, and Area Sabha and put forth their needs and demands. Community members should attend these forums with full preparation and present draft plans to be included. Importantly, empower SEVP groups to take over political power in decision making by contesting in elections at the local level.
- 2. Build Partnership and Networking with Local Governments:** Facilitating organisations can explore opportunities for networking with local governments in the areas of capacity building of Panchayat/Municipality members, awareness raising about different schemes, expertise service for drafting GPDP, knowledge building on thematic issues and representation at the Ward Committee. This will open up a lot of opportunities for integration of the SDGs.
- 3. Initiate Dialogues and Presentation:** Meeting with decision-makers or other important audiences is where preparation meets opportunity<sup>74</sup>. Taking appointments with different Panchayat forums (Zilla Panchayat to Gram Panchayat) and Municipalities and making an effective presentation on the inclusion of SDGs can be done. Solid preparation and effective presentation with clear data are key to persuade and inspire the decisions makers. A draft plan on how can it be done will add more effect and there are times, that may be taken up and adapted. Besides, it also requires constant dialogue and interfaces with duty bears at different occasions and forums, consistent follow-up, and negotiations with the duty bearers. Community leaders should ideally lead to this process.
- 4. Campaigns and Legal Interventions:** If the above approaches don't work, or if the issues need larger attention and public opinion, initiate local or District or State level campaigns depending on the context. A combination ix of various effective tactics like constant media engagement, Public hearing, Poster and Signature campaigns, Appeals and Petitions, Social media campaigns, Public meetings, and webinar series could be explored. For example, State level campaigns could be organised to create awareness about the GPDP. Although funds have been allocated for GPDP in both 14 and 15th finance commission, it has not been effectively utilised due to a lack of awareness and capacity building of the Panchayat leaders. Initiate legal interventions if required.





## 8. Important points to remember:

- Understand that each community has its own needs and assets, as well as its own culture and social structure, history, strengths, and conflicts that define a unique web of relationships. Be sensitive to identify and highlight how the interconnectedness between social relations and social structures play out. At the same time, cultural and customary practices that lead to any form of discrimination or exclusion shouldn't be encouraged or tolerated.
- Leave No One Behind, the core mantra of SDG should be the guiding principle and it has to be integrated with all aspects of the policy engagement. The facilitating organisation should create spaces and opportunities for communities (SEVP groups) to take leadership on the policy engagement process.
- Engage the community in all decision-making processes. In situations of networking with other stakeholders, the role and functions of communities should not be undermined. Community members especially SEVP groups should lead the process.
- While planning, the gender dimension should be integrated under all goals. Special focus needs to be laid on goals related to gender equality. Gender mainstreaming, the Intersectional approach, adequate representation of women from SEVP groups should be an integral part of the process without which, SDGs can be achieved.

## 9. Challenges in Policy Engagement with Local Self-Governments:

Change happens slowly and achieving any policy change through policy engagement will most likely be a gradual process that will take time, energy, persistence and tenacity. The process is never really finished<sup>75</sup>. There may be a lot of challenges one may encounter while engaging with duty bearers at the local level. Some of the challenges that we could foresee while engaging with local governments could be

- Since the power of local governments varies from State to State, the functions of the local governments may be limited in a few States. They may not have the power to make important decisions concerning the development or don't have control over the local resources, thus they may not in a position to facilitate certain development programs at the local level. In situations like this, the local organisations should have a wider network with other civil society organisations across the state/centre and have a State-level policy engagement agenda.
- If States have not conducted Panchayat elections at regular intervals, there will not be any Gram Panchayat to negotiate with. In such situations, a campaign or a legal intervention is essential to build public opinion and draw the attention of the duty bearers at the State level for effective functioning of local governments.
- Lack of capacity building and awareness among local government leaders about the role and functions of local governments, the GDPD Submission process, and localising SDGs may be a major hindrance. As part of the policy engagement, ensure the members of Panchayats/ Municipalities undergo adequate training on these subject areas.

<sup>75</sup>Ritu R Sharma, An Introduction to Advocacy – Training Guide, Support for Analysis and Research in Africa (SARA)

- There are situations where elected leaders are not valued as 'democratic representatives' but merely treated as 'local Administrators' by the bureaucrats, This may hinder the process and may result in a lack of cooperation from the officials in the local administrations or line departments. In such situations, the elected leaders have to assert their powers with the due support from the community.
- Caste and gender discrimination continue to dominate governance despite reservations in the local government for women, SCs, and STs. Elected women leaders and leaders from the SC and ST communities continue to face discrimination and violence. In such a situation, the dominant community that has accumulated the local resources may not cooperate with elected leaders. On the other hand, if the elected leaders hail from the dominant community, they may not prioritise the needs of SEVP groups in the development agenda. This requires strategies to address discrimination of all kinds and multiple approaches to eradicate discrimination.
- Although the elected leaders of the local government should be politically independent, they may have their associations and political ties which will result in favouritism and exclusion of certain communities. In situations like this community empowerment is crucial to deal with the political powers.
- Although the local self-governments have opened up avenues for people from SEVP groups to exercise political power, it is a sad reality that most institutions of the government are controlled by dominant communities. This may restrict the participation of the SEVP groups in the policy engagement, and duty bearers may demonstrate a discriminatory attitude towards them. SEVP communities are to be empowered to challenge those discriminatory practices and assert themselves as rights holders.
- Some of the large-scale projects sanctioned by the State/Central government or policies might have an adverse impact on the lives of the local communities. This might have affected their livelihood, health, education, land rights, and environment. In such geographical locations, even if those areas come under PESA, the local governments' power could have been subsided or nullified. This might require movement-building, national-level campaigns, legal interventions, and State/Central level policy engagement.

# 7 | Monitoring Implementation of SDGs at the Local Level

Monitoring and tracking the progress of SDGs is an integral part of the SDG Agenda. At the global level, the 17 SDGs goals and 169 targets will be monitored and reviewed using a set of global indicators. In India, the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) in consultation with NITI Aayog, Central Ministries, and State Governments had prepared [National Indicator Framework \(NIF\)](#)<sup>76</sup> which will serve as a tool for tracking national progress<sup>77</sup>. Some States have developed State Indicator Framework by adapting national indicators to their context. Some States have developed State-specific data dashboards, while some have aligned their existing dashboards to the SDG indicators<sup>78</sup>.

However, there is no micro-level data available to track progress at the local level. The current statistical system aggregates data only at the national and state levels<sup>79</sup>. A micro-level disaggregated data is essential not only to track progress but also to identify development gaps at the local level. In the absence of such data, there cannot be a comprehensive understanding of the development realities of the SEVP groups and other communities. Moreover, tracking the progress of SDGs at the local level will be difficult, thus the 'actual progress report' of the SEVP groups may get excluded in the State or National reviews. Hence, monitoring and tracking the progress of SDGs at the local level through localized indicators and reporting the same at the State and National review is essential in order to realise the core principle of 'leave no one behind' in its true sense.

Policy engagement is not a one-time exercise, but a process where people take active participation in all the decision-making processes – planning, implementation, monitoring and reporting. Monitoring SDGs through data collection and reporting is crucial to drive the development agenda further and decide the future course of action. The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/41/41/Add.2 on 'Civil society participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'<sup>80</sup> encourages civil society 'to have a stake and a role in tracking progress towards achieving the SDGs by developing appropriate indicators for particular country contexts.' The civil society organisations at the local level have to play a dual role of empowering communities to monitor SDGs and help to report and at the same time. They should also facilitate local governments to monitor the SDG implementation and take part in the State/National review process.

## 1. Monitoring Implementation of SDGs by the Local Governments:

Based on the localised indicators that have been developed to identify issues and analyse situations, you can monitor and evaluate the progress of SDG implementation in your respective Panchayat/Municipality. Community monitoring and evaluation of the local plans and implementation and preparing a shadow report is essential to highlight the experiences of SEVP groups. Analyse the local plans and implementation process through different angles like Policy, Resource allocations, Institutional mechanisms, Implementation and other factors. Importantly, corroborate the government records with community experiences. For example, the number of beneficiaries in the records might vary with the actual number of beneficiaries. A sanctioned Anganwadi or Health centre might be there in records, but not in reality. Assess the sustainability and quality aspects and record both qualitative and quantitative data. A goal/thematic wise analysis will be helpful to strategize your follow up policy engagement action plans. This exercise has to be done by:

- a. Analysing Government documents and records like budget allocation and statement of accounts of the local governments, records at the Panchayats/Municipalities, Government Orders, Development plans of the local governments. Source them through government websites and Right to Information Act.

<sup>76</sup>National Indicator Framework, <http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/National%20Indicator%20Framework%20for%20circulation.pdf> accessed on 12 January, 2021

<sup>77</sup>NITI Aayog, Localising SDGs – Early Lessons from India 2019, [http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/LSDGs\\_July\\_8\\_Web.pdf](http://niti.gov.in/writereaddata/files/LSDGs_July_8_Web.pdf) accessed on 5th December, 2020

<sup>78</sup>Ibid

<sup>79</sup>Ibid

<sup>80</sup>Human Rights Council, 'Civil society participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development' <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/41/Add.2> accessed on 13 January, 2021

- b. Documenting Community experiences through focussed group discussions, Survey Questionnaire, Interviews of the duty bearers, videos and photo documentation.

Once it is done, validate the self-assessment done by the local governments based on your findings and analysis.

SDG Goal:							Key findings
SDG Target	SDG State Indicators	Localised Indicators	Status Report				
			Inclusion in the Local Plans	Budget Allocation	Implementation Status – Quantitative Data	Implementation Status – Qualitative (Community Experiences/ Quality assessment)	

## 2. Facilitating Local Governments to monitor SDGs:

Encourage local governments to:

- **Develop Localised SDG indicators:** As part of the SDG implementation plan, encourage your local governments to develop a set of localised indicators specific to the Panchayat or the Municipality, and evaluate the SDG implementation. They may adapt the National/State framework, to align while reporting. The local indicators can be simple and specific to the local needs and issues. This exercise will enable the local government to understand the development gaps and strategize their future course of action.
- **Share Local Information for State/National monitoring and Reporting:** Encourage your local governments to share the gathered information with the respective departments at the State and National level and ensure it is used in the State/National monitoring and reporting. This will pave the way for the inclusion of local challenges, concerns and achievements in the SDG progress reports.
- **Participate in the Review of State and National Plans:** The participation of local and regional governments in the national follow-up and review of the implementation of the SDGs is key. This will enable the local government to take ownership of SDGs, build their capacities about the State and National process, input into the State/National plans from local perspectives and to harness the best experiences to transfer knowledge<sup>81</sup> to other Panchayats/Municipalities.

## 3. Disaggregated Data for State/National Policy Engagement and Action

Once you have completed analysis at the local level, ensure that you share the data and findings with the wider civil society network at the State/National level for further action in terms of a) Providing inputs to voluntary national review or preparing Shadow reports b) Preparing State and National policy engagement plan c) Facilitating exchange of strategies and best practices with other groups and organisations and d) Building public opinion on the development needs of the SEVP communities.

## 4. Reviewing Policy Engagement Action Plan

While monitoring the implementation of SDGs by the local governments, one needs to undertake a self-assessment of our policy engagement efforts and to review if the perceived strategies and plans work in favour of achieving the policy engagement goal. If a strategy does not work, one needs to try multiple approaches until the goal is reached. Hence, constant monitoring and periodic evaluation of the policy engagement plan is essential to make necessary changes in the policy engagement action plan. The plan must connect to the outcome of the progress made in achieving SDGs at the local level.

<sup>81</sup>UNDP, Learning Module I: Localising SDGs [https://www.learning.uclg.org/sites/default/files/documents/tguide\\_final.pdf](https://www.learning.uclg.org/sites/default/files/documents/tguide_final.pdf) accessed on 09 December, 2020

While it can be done through different methods, a simple retrospective analysis might work well with the communities.

What worked and why	What did not work and why
How can we improve: Key Learnings & Opportunities	Perceived Challenges and Mitigations

## 5. Voluntary National Review: Role of CSOs

Voluntary National Review (VNR) is a process through which countries assess and present progress made in achieving the SDGs and the pledge to leave no one behind. The purpose of VNRs is to present a snapshot of where the country stands in SDG implementation, to help accelerate progress through experience sharing, peer-learning, identifying gaps and good practices and mobilizing partnerships<sup>82</sup>. Civil society organisations can plan an active role in the review process. The Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/41/41/Add.2 recommends<sup>83</sup> the following:

- States to implement multi-sector mechanisms and platforms to ensure civil society contribution to the VNR, including through, online platforms, written submissions and reporting.
- States to disseminate the draft VNR reports to relevant stakeholders including civil society organisations to make observations on the reports before their presentation to the high-level political forum on sustainable development. It further recommends to include civil society comments in the final report.
- Civil society to take part in the review process at the global level through shadow or alternative reporting on national efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda. The high-level political forum should identify spaces in which civil society shadow reports can be presented or shared with States.
- The outcomes of the VNR and its presentation at the high-level political forum should be widely disseminated among civil society actors at the national and local levels.
- Civil society should develop collaborative endeavours at the local level to identify the priority areas of people’s concerns and build their capacities to hold government institutions accountable.

<sup>82</sup>OHCHR, [https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SDGS/Pages/2020VoluntaryNationalReviews.aspx#:~:text=Voluntary%20National%20Review%20\(VNR\)%20is,to%20leave%20no%20one%20behind](https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/SDGS/Pages/2020VoluntaryNationalReviews.aspx#:~:text=Voluntary%20National%20Review%20(VNR)%20is,to%20leave%20no%20one%20behind) accessed on 13 January 2021

<sup>83</sup>Human Rights Council, ‘Civil society participation in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ <https://undocs.org/A/HRC/41/41/Add.2> accessed on 13 January, 2021

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### **Wada Na Todo Abhiyan**

Wada Na Todo Abhiyan (WNTA) is a national campaign focused on promoting Governance Accountability to end Poverty, Social Exclusion & Discrimination, through tracking government promises and commitments at the national and international levels. WNTA emerged from the consensus among human rights activists and social action groups who were part of the World Social Forum 2004 (Mumbai). The purpose was to create an environment through focused and concerted effort and try to make a difference in India where one-fourth of the world's poor live and experience intense deprivation from opportunities to learn, live and work with dignity. In this regard, WNTA highlights the aspirations and concerns of the most marginalized sections of the society – Dalits, Adivasis, Nomadic Tribes, Minorities, Women, Sexual Minorities, Children, Youth and the Person with disability to the government through People's Manifestoes before elections. Further, WNTA reviews and monitors the performance of the government on its promises and plans towards the marginalized sections on the framework of Constitutional mandates, National development goals and International commitments set in the UN Millennium Declaration (2000) / The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals. We work to ensure that the concerns and aspirations of the marginalized sections are mainstreamed across programs, policies and development goals of the central and state governments.

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