

Community Monitoring For MDGs

The Background

In this context, a community monitoring tool, People's Assessment on Health, Education Livelihood- 'PAHELI', was first developed in 2006 by PRATHAM Mumbai Education Initiative with UNDP support and guidance under the Strengthening State Plans for Human Development (SSPHD) project. This step was taken in order to attain the desired local participation in a meaningful way as it was essential for citizens to have the understanding and ability to analyse local situations for facilitating local action in terms of sustainable development.

The Strategy

Strengthening service delivery is a key strategy to achieve MDGs. This includes strengthening the delivery of interventions related to health, education, drinking water, sanitation etc. Efficient and effective service delivery is a key requisite for effective governance. Access, utilization, availability and coverage are essential to determine whether people are receiving the services they need. For monitoring the service delivery, community monitoring is a vital tool to pin down social and public accountability and responsiveness from service providers. In fact, Community Monitoring process is a strong instrument for empowerment of people as well.

1. Under the Government of India - UN Joint Programme on Convergence (JPC), implemented by the Planning Commission (PC) in partnership with State governments and State planning departments in seven UNDAF States (Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan, an innovative pictorial community tool has been rolled out for effectiveness of service delivery development programmes and to inclusive growth by ensuring participation of disadvantaged social groups.
2. The core group comprising of representatives of various UN agencies identified four thematic sub groups on Health and Nutrition, Water and Sanitation, Education, Life and Livelihoods. Each thematic group reviewed the existing indicators of PAHELI tool and made suggestions according to the technical aspects and current development context. Various consultations were held on the select thematic groups where experts, social activists, academicians and NGOs provided inputs to strengthen the human development indicators.

The Thrust

For effective decentralised planning, it is vital for people to have a strong monitoring tool for assessing the status of key human development locally. These processes help citizens to measure status reports thus generated and facilitate stakeholders and service providers to fill the gaps in service delivery and primary needs. The availability of tool kit and assessment

of status of key indicators lead to strengthening the bottom-up district planning by participatory methods.

Community Monitoring

Community monitoring of public services is necessary to ensure that services reach those for whom they are meant, especially for those residing in rural areas, the poor, women and children. It is an essential step towards empowering marginalized groups and communities. Involving local communities in the decision-making and planning processes is meaningless if they are not given the right to review the local schemes. By monitoring their local schemes and processes, people become capable of managing the development processes on their own. It also helps in sustaining development processes independently as people can make choices as per their needs and also voice their concerns accordingly.

The Process

PAHELI aimed to facilitate this process in the three following ways:

1. 1 Developing basic "tool kit" that can be used by ordinary people to understand the status of basic human development in their locality;
2. 2 Developing a simple set of processes that can be used by citizens to generate their own information in order to understand the current status of human development in their area;
3. Designing simple ways so that the status of human development indicators could be understood by a wider local cross-section of the population in a district;

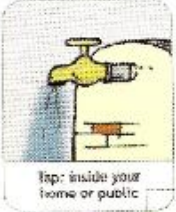
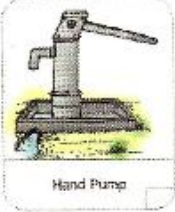

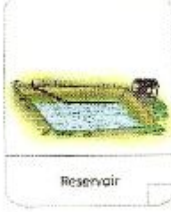
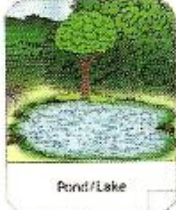

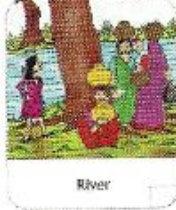

The PAHELI project attempted to *develop and pilot* indicators and user-friendly processes that could be used by ordinary citizens, leading to a basic District Report Card. PAHELI used a questionnaire-cum-observation survey sheet at the household level and a questionnaire cum observation schedule at the village level. Pictorial sheets were used for higher engagement of respondents and of people in the community.

To carry out the survey effectively, it was imperative to focus on training of the Master Trainers as well as volunteers who will be involved in the survey. A two tier training regime was meticulously planned

Instruction:

- Please tick (✓) the relevant box. Tick ONLY ONE option.
- Ask the questions to an adult woman in the household- others can help as well.
- Ask the respondent about the usual practice in the household for most of the year.

1- What type of source do you collect drinking water from (primary source)?

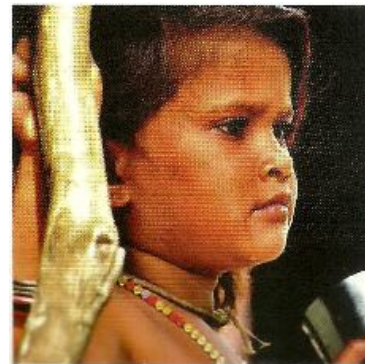
for the same. The main objective of the workshop was to pilot the tools and come up with a doable version of the tools.

Four broad domains were identified and a set of simple indicators were developed for the survey. The four sectors were: Life & Livelihoods; Water & Sanitation; Mother & Child Health; and Education & Literacy.

In the second phase (or PAHELI-2011), the PAHELI project was spread out in 60 villages in one pilot district of each of the UNDAF States (Nardoi in Uttar Pradesh, Sundargarh in Orissa, Udaipur in Rajasthan. Gumla in Jharkhand, Raipur in Chhattisgarh, Nalanda in Bihar and Rajgarh in Madhya Pradesh) covering 20 sample households in each village. This initiative was supported by UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA under the GoI-UN Joint Convergence Programme. This was a much enhanced version of the earlier PAHELI tool and additional indicators (related to the national goals and MDGs) were also added to capture the impact of new schemes and programmes.

Major Achievements

1. Linking of indicators to important schemes and norms;
2. Linking to planning in government and other departments involved in planning;
3. Integrating with existing information and processes; and
4. The biggest challenge was to keep indicators aligned with measureable MDG goals on one hand and linked to key social sector programmes on the other. At the same time, the actual measurement and analysis must be doable by ordinary people. The key to the success of PAHELI was the balance that was built between rigour and simplicity. PAHELI was carried out by one local organization each at the district level.



Lessons Learnt

It needs to be considered that PAHELI is not a one-off experiment. Its implementation has to be followed through on a sustained basis. Local district governments should ensure that regular feedback from communities needs to be taken so that the findings can be integrated in the district planning process. Capacities of project officials and community based organisations should be built to undertake the exercise in a sustainable manner.

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