

Jhargaan: Convergent Planning for Decentralized Development

The Background

As the 11th Five Year Plan envisages, decentralized planning is crucial to materializing such development. Decentralized planning requires different government departments, specialized programmes, local rural and urban governments and other institutions to work in a convergent manner in planning, positioning resources and implementing programmes as that desired development outcomes are achieved.

Government of India - UN Joint Programme on Convergence (Gol-UNJPC) is being implemented in Jharkhand since April 2009. One of the key objectives of Gol - UNJPC is to provide support to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) at the district level through decentralized, integrated and participatory planning and convergence of development programmes and schemes.

A review-cum-planning meeting of project was organized at Ranchi in Aug. 2009 to discuss the project activities, MDGs, convergence of various development schemes, model village / Panchayat. In the same month, a decision was taken in the DRDA management committee meeting: Gumla to experiment Convergence activities in a village named "Jhargaan".

The Thrust

The "Model Convergence Village Initiative" was based on the following criteria:

- Accessibility to the village from headquarter;
- Availability of some basic infrastructure
- Presence of tribal population;
- Community already organized (presence of women SHGs) to certain extent evidence of people's participation in earlier Govt. schemes;

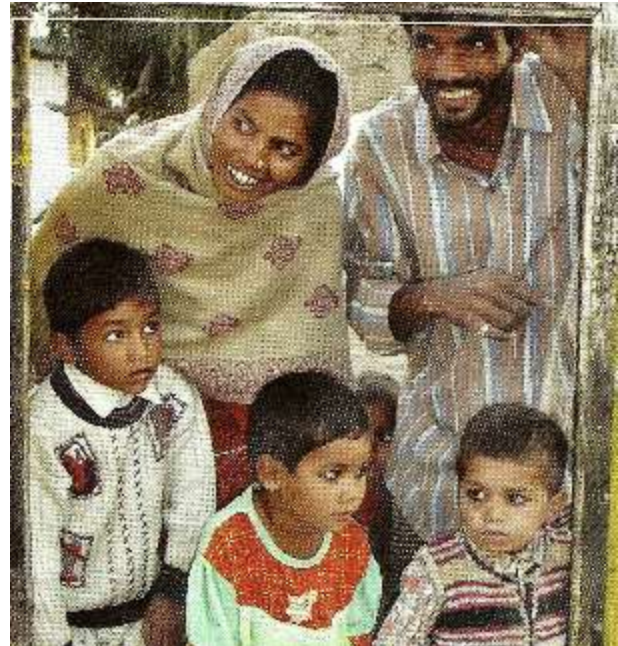
The Strategy

Following are the strategic components of Model Convergence Village Initiatives:

- a. To develop a few villages as laboratories of convergence where all the communities, Government departments, Non-Government Organizations (NGOs), Private agencies and other stakeholders came together to work for the overall progress of the villages;
- b. To develop a need based comprehensive village development plan of the villagers by the villagers, with technical support from departments and NGOs;
- c. To implement the plan in the time way with sufficient ownership partnership of people;
- d. To demonstrate a model for replication' in other villages of the district;

The Process

A survey was conducted with the help of village volunteers, following which a joint meeting was held of almost all the department heads of the district at the DPO office. The condition



of the village was analyzed, following the baseline survey, and ideas were shared to formulate an action plan for the next steps to be taken in this direction. It was agreed that the plan for the village will be developed on the basis of certain indicators agreed upon by the community.

In the next phase, all the district level officials visited the village and had initial interactions with the village community, Mahila Mandals, and Gram Pradhan. These meetings were held in series and the officials went around the village to observe the various prospects of development related to their departments, like irrigation, agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, education, health, nutrition etc.

District representatives from credible NGOs like PRADAN also participated in the process and took the responsibility of community organization and identifying and preparing beneficiaries for various livelihood opportunities. Banks played their role in organizing the farmers and other entrepreneurs to link them with the various schemes and benefits available with the bank.

Exposure visits were conducted for the selected community members, youths and Mahila Mandal members of the village to other parts of the district where good activities and initiatives had been taken up by the villagers and SHGs on livelihoods such as vermicomposting, fishery, lemon grass production, agriculture and horticulture, poultry and other social issues. The process went on with regular visits of officials from the district and block to the village for developing proposals on different development issues with the villagers

and then getting approval through the Gram Sabha. These plans were compiled to develop the village plan.

The key indicators covered through Village Index Card (VIC) are as follows-	The key indicators covered through Urban Ward Index Card (UIC) are as follows-
1. Basic Village Information	1. Basic Ward information
2. Demographic information	2. Demographic information
3. Health indicators	3. Health indicators
4. Education indicators	4. Education indicators
5. Infrastructure indicators	5. Livelihood indicators
6. Livelihood indicators	6. Infrastructure indicators
7. Natural Resources indicators	7. Social Category and Institutions indicators
8. Social Category and Institutions indicators	8. Gender indicators
9. Gender indicators	

Seeing the success of

this initiative, the model convergence village initiative was later termed as Total Village Development Programme (TVDP) by district administration. The second model convergence village Tilwari was selected, contrasting to the criteria adopted for Jhargaon, as this village is situated on one of the remotest part (60 kms away from district headquarters) of the district in the forested and hilly region. The village lacked the availability of basic infrastructure. This village is also a tribal dominated village. A number of initiatives were taken for empowering the local people in a participatory manner:

1. *Community Mobilization and Capacity Building*
2. *Strengthening of SHGs and Farmer's Club/Fishery development Co-operatives*
3. *Village Development Committees*
4. *Poverty Alleviation Programmes*
5. *Education and Literacy Programmes*
6. *Health*
7. *Infrastructure Development*
8. *Village Information Centres*
9. *Social Issues*

In both the villages, they have started drives to keep the villages clean. They are organizing participatory village sanitation campaigns. For this they have decided days and time and the community members come together to clean the streets, pathways and drains every week.

The district administration has planned to develop the model villages with solar system based drinking water supply for all the households here. The Village Development Committee will be capacitated to implement and maintain this system through a water user committee, where the users will be contributing the charges periodically.

In the second phase solar system based lighting systems will also be installed in these villages, covering both household level and street lights. This will start with provisions at the central places of the villages, namely the AWC and the multi-purpose buildings, thereby fulfilling the felt need of the community who expressed that their children are unable to study at night due to unavailability of electricity supply. On provision of the solar lights, these children will be able to continue their studies at these places at night.

This initiative triggered series of actions in many spheres. Its effects can be mostly felt at the village level.

Major Achievements

1. *There is a visible change in the community as people in these villages are more organized, proactive and open to the development process.*
2. *They have come closer to the district administration and able to identify their problems and needs collectively.*
3. *A sense of ownership towards the assets being created in their villages is developing.*
4. *Community leaders, Panchayat representatives and local government functionaries have played strategic and front-running roles in the process of planning and execution of different activities.*
5. *At the institutional level, for the first time such a large section of Government functionaries were directly involved in the entire process of development, decentralized planning, execution and monitoring along with the community.*

Lessons learnt

This paradigm shift yielded unprecedented results. Though it will be too early to comment upon any impact level results, yet the acceptability and involvement of community in this convergence model has built up a momentum towards the set objectives. These villages will be hand held for two years so that the entire envisaged process of development in these villages gets in motion and the community becomes self-reliant, taking on its own development path. It has been demonstrated that if the community and policy supports, nothing can stop the sustainable progress of our villages.

SUMMARY

The Jhargaon GOI-UNJPC case study is an experiment to achieve sustainable development at the local level through convergence and achieving Millennium Development Goals at the district level through Decentralized Planning and convergence of varied development programmes and schemes.

