

Entitlement Based District Planning In Bihar

The Background

The PRI system is very much in place in Bihar and the Panchayati Raj Act 2006 is also providing a legitimate grounding to function as local self-governance for planning, implementation and monitoring of development programmes in their local areas. But, the hard fact is that there is a capacity gap in terms of human resources, infrastructure and expertise to perform the desired functions of PRI system. Despite efforts since 1985, the District Plan could not be formulated. There is lack of clarity on sources of fund due to dearth of information on resource envelope meant for district level and below. The wish list does not match with the sources of fund, hence the planning process becomes an unimplementable exercise.



Keeping the above mentioned key challenges, Department of Planning & Development, with support from Capacity Development for District Planning (CDDP) project, supported by UNDP which form an integral part of Gol - UN, Joint Programme on Convergence conceptualized the concept of Entitlement Based District Planning and rolled out the same in all 38 districts of Bihar.

The Thrust

In order to ensure interregional and social equity, Bihar has started entitlement-based approach in planning and implementation of schemes.

Entitlement refers to basic human rights, constitutional statutory provisions and schematic rights for individual or group of individuals (such as based on educational rights, scholarships, health security); for families (such as housing, food, wage employment, livelihood). It also includes the norms on which a facility (like roads, irrigation facilities, electricity, schools, health centres etc.) is to be extended to any area such as village, panchayat, block, district or group of districts. Based on such well-defined entitlements, development schemes are dovetailed to ensure their universal realisation. Plan should be prepared from panchayat level upwards based on the actual requirement within the premise of entitlements well-articulated in various schemes.

The Strategy

Different government schemes should be dovetailed in their Annual Plan properly to realise those entitlements on priority basis. The approach should be to go for universal realisation of

such rights and entitlements rather than restricting oneself to certain targets. Such efforts would also be helpful in better monitoring and evaluation and reducing malpractices and corruption and also bridging Inter-regional disparity. And accordingly a circular was developed based on Entitlement Based Approach. To actualize the process, planning entitlement was defined as part of the circular of district planning, which is by and large an alternative *modus operandi* to implement the Integrated & Inclusive District Planning guideline of Planning Commission, Gol by involving the all the tiers of panchayats.

Entitlement Approach

During drafting the circular for district planning for the year, it was strongly felt to define the types of entitlements for enumerating the probable expenditure (requirement of annual fund to meet the needs, in relation with the entitlements defined above, of the district) under each of the schemes. Further based on the norms of the schemes, entitlement has been classified in the following categories:

1. Individual (including group of individuals)Entitlement
2. Household Entitlement
3. Institutional Entitlement
4. Area Based Entitlement

During the planning process, some other set of local needs would also be articulated which may not fall within the existing premise of constitution and statutory provision, schematic entitlement & resource envelope of the district and down below, which would give us an opportunity to prepare a perspective plan of the local areas and its prioritization in relation with the norms of various schemes and fund availability. These would be an important guide in deciding the expenditure priorities of the district over the long term.

District Planning

To unfold the District Planning to the lowest rung of the development ladder, the following two- pronged strategy is adopted:

1. Enumeration of annual requirement of fund at all levels based on the entitlement and norms of the development schemes through a consultation process and assessing the trend of the expenditure & resource outlay of past years.
2. Involving the community in the planning process, facilitating the process to articulate their needs and creating a ratified shelf of projects; matching the same with the requirement of fund & resources available at all levels.

The Process

The above-stated concept of district planning is the pivotal force to steer the process of district planning in Bihar. It



has been suggested to consider district as a unit of planning for the year 2011-12 and ensure participation of all possible stakeholders like district level offices, societies, officials, PRIs, civil societies and community representatives in the annual planning process. Additionally, efforts are also being made to define the state, district, block and panchayat sector schemes as the district should only plan for the district sector scheme. Since the district planning process was steered considering district as a unit of planning, with an integrated approach to plan for all the 11 sectors identified by Planning Commission and for inculcating better understanding on the implementation of various nature of schemes amongst all the possible stakeholders, it was necessary to narrate the various types of the schemes, which are being implemented based on the fund flow mechanism.

Under various national flagship programmes (NFPs), there is a component of district plan based on the specified parameters and norms. Immediately, it is not necessary to repeat the process of planning for NFPs as their line departments are already preparing the plan, but it is always necessary to integrate the plan of the NFPs in the annual district plan document. Following are some of the NFPs under which there is a provision of district plan:

- MGNREGS
- NRHM
- TSC

SSA In the month of November 2010, department of Planning & Development oriented the key representatives of state line departments, Regional/District Planning Officers, project staff of Gol-UNJPC on the concept process and formats for district planning. And accordingly, the Regional/District Planning Officers convened a district level workshop to orient the district level officials on district planning process under the chairmanship of District Magistrate. Through video conferencing, efforts were also made to explain the concept and need to all the DM and their respective district level officials.

Through consultations and meetings, scheme-wise data and information (like requirement of fund for each of the district sector schemes) was collected by the district planning office and consequently district plan documents were prepared in all districts of Bihar. As part of the district planning, SWOT analysis for each of the sectors along with the district was also carried out. Subsequently, the district plan (requirement of fund) was presented and discussed before the District planning Committee (DPC). DPC vetted the district plan and finally submitted it to the Department of Planning & Development. Now, there is a need to review each of the district plans and communicate the final outlay under district sector schemes to all the districts.

Major Achievements

- Better assessment of requirement of resources has lead to better allocation of resources at the district level and below
- Feasible to roll out the concept to all the possible tiers
- Better monitoring (planning cum monitoring tool)

- Better implementation of schemes
- Government is now better informed about the resources and its application
- Informed decision-making
- Less chances of corruption and leakages
- Better People's participation (less scope for wish list wide scope for actual needs)
- Outcome orientation in the planning process

Lessons Learnt

It is vital to have a detailed status (district wise/block wise/panchayat wise) against each of the entitlement and norms articulated under various schemes. To unfold the process of district planning to the lowest tier, it is essential to have a team of dedicated government officials and professionals to provide strategic guidance and support to the District Planning Office in a sustainable manner.

