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All India Institute of Local Self-Government*

- ★ Aiding Local Government in Bangladesh - Panacea or Pandora's Box?
- ★ Community Resilience Building – Objectives, Principles, Methods, Stages, Community Participation, and Role of Grampanchayat
- ★ An Analysis of Village Development Plans (VDPs) under Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) in Karnataka
- ★ Public Transportation in Uttar Pradesh: A Policy Analysis of Intracity Connectivity

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Editorial

Sustainable lifestyles and water security

A kilogram of chocolate takes 17,196 litres of water to produce; seems alarming, even outrageous. Yet that is the water footprint of chocolate. Efforts to track and compute the water footprints of various products, individuals and communities have resulted in bringing about sharper focus on the impacts of our habits, and lifestyles on the water situation on the planet. Several parts of the world, notably some developing world cities are facing acute water stress and putting at risk the well-being of local populations. Rapid urbanisation, industrialisation, and unsustainable human activity have had deep impacts. The situation is further exacerbated by climate change which is causing erratic rainfall patterns and affecting natural water sources.

The world observes World Water Day on 22nd March every year to bring greater focus on the subject and to encourage wider participation in addressing the challenges. The theme for this year is 'Water for Peace'. The theme draws attention to the role that water plays in the stability and prosperity of the world. Water sources are commonly shared across countries and within countries across states/provinces/regions. Therefore the ability of a community to access adequate, quality water is interlinked with its neighbours and is often uneven and uncertain. This provides the context for the theme 'Water for Peace'. SDG 6 provides the overarching framework for action.

Coming back to the water footprint, as against that of chocolate, the footprint of cabbage is 237 litres per KG, cucumber 353, lettuce 238, maize 1222, rice 2497, beef 15415 and pork 5988. The water footprint of a product is the total volume of water used to produce the product including all stages of its production. So water consumption and therefore water security is impacted greatly by the choices we make regarding our food. While on the subject of food, one must remember that globally agriculture accounts for about 70 percent (78 percent in India) of

freshwater consumption. Therefore what we grow and how also greatly affect sustainability with regard to water use. Rice, wheat, cotton and sugarcane which form the large bulk of our agricultural output are also among the most water intensive crops. On the other hand, millets require about 25 percent of the water required by sugarcane and 30 percent that of rice. So appropriate crop choices can have a healing effect on the deteriorating water situation; at the same time farmers can be protected from the vagaries of the weather and unpredictable rainfall, and their incomes safeguarded.

In addition to agriculture and food, all items of daily use in our lives have a water footprint and thus go towards impacting water use and conservation. Paper including our daily newspaper, the plastic bottle we use, the clothes we wear, the shoes on our feet and all else. It takes 83 litres of water to produce one pound (450 grams) of plastic; about 2400 litres of water for one new cotton T-shirt; about 5 litres to make one A4 sheet of paper; about 8000 litres for a pair of leather shoes. Power (majorly thermal) generation, and extraction/refining of fossil fuels also involve the use of large quantities of water. Each of these items with a significant water footprint at an individual level gets magnified at the community level. So every time, one of us throws out or discards an item of everyday use, or wastes a unit of electricity or a litre of petrol, there is a big impact on water security in addition to other environmental costs like waste management and pollution.

So the water consumption patterns flow greatly from our lifestyles; not surprisingly citizens of different countries have differing water footprints. While estimates could vary, one puts the water footprint of the average global citizen at 1385 cubic metres (13,85,000 litres) per year. For Indian and Chinese it is about 1085 cubic metres. For a USA citizen it is way higher at 2840 cubic metres. The UK citizen falls somewhere in between at 1700 cubic metres.

Surely then, anthropogenic factors have led to the looming water crisis facing the world today; in fact several regions are right in the midst of the crisis already. On the one hand is the human activity of encroachment into natural water bodies, over extracting of ground water, and waste-dumping. All these are causing the depletion of the quantity of fresh water and deterioration in its quality, often making it unfit for human consumption. On the other hand is the lifestyle choices we make, namely the kind of crops we wish to grow, the kind of foods we consume, and our lifestyle choices (use of plastic, use-and-throw tendency, fast fashion) that tend to increase our water footprint. There is urgent need for us to consciously re-orient our habits and lifestyles using the principles of a circular economy so that our average water

foot print keeps declining and we move towards more sustainable lives. We must embrace the principles and practice of 'Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repurpose, Recycle' with great passion and commitment. This will support the need for sustainable water use while also enabling control other challenges such as waste management and land/water/air pollution.



Aiding Local Government in Bangladesh Panacea or Pandora's Box?

Nizam Ahmed

Abstract

This paper explores the role of grants in improving the capacity of local government in Bangladesh to deliver what is required of it. Over the years the financial base of the Union Parishad – the lowest unit of rural local government – has substantially improved mostly because of the free-flow of resources from the center and international sources. While an 'easy' availability of resources has helped UP diversify its range of services, at least up to certain extent, there is no evidence of any marked improvement in its capacity to undertake functions including mobilization of resources. In fact, the policy of aiding the UP has deepened its dependence [on superior governments] and discouraged autonomy.

Keywords: Grants-in-aid, Union Parishad, Decline of autonomy, Decentralization, Fiscal transfer

Local governments are pervasive; they span the globe. Rarely can one now find a modern state that does not have an organized system of local government. However, local councils generally act as a subordinate partner in the process of governance in the majority of countries of the Third World. In only a few countries do they possess general competence power. Nowhere can one find a local government system that can survive on its own. Everywhere there is a trend toward central dependence; in other words; local governments in most of the countries of the world depend upon superior governments, among other things, for power and resources. The scope and scale of such dependence, however, varies from one country to another. Variations can be noticed among different units of local government even within the same country. What is, however, commonly found is that the so-called 'self-sufficient' status of local government has, to a large extent, changed in almost

every country and its dependence on other (higher) levels of government has increased. The latter has become interventionist in many cases, taking away functions previously granted to local government and intervening in its working, among other things, by exercising greater control over the purse.

The 'power of the purse' enjoyed by local government has declined in many cases, and dependence on superior government(s) has increased. The ratio of (central/state) grant as a percentage of total income of local governments has increased significantly in many cases (Boadway and Shah, 2007; Fjeldstad, 2001; Bird, 1978). The extent to which such dependence is likely to make local government an extended arm of the superior government and/or encourage partnership between different levels is difficult to ascertain. Suffice it to mention here that the rationale for grants-in-aid to local government is justified on several grounds of which the following are important. First, central government may be required to correct the spillovers of costs and costs between different communities. Second, it is intended that some minimum standard in the provision of services is ensured. Third, it is intended to equalize the fiscal positions of different communities. Fourth, it helps reduce the gap between the responsibilities allocated to a level of

government and its revenue raising capacity (Scott, 1979: 86-87). King (2014: 10) finds the following reasons as important: firstly, grants serve to correct externalities generated by projects that include a certain area; secondly, they tend to balance the level of derived taxes and revenues with the citizen needs for public services; and thirdly, it has introduced the concept of equalization grants to mitigate fiscal disparities in incomes of different regions.

Grants are intended to ensure both vertical equalization and horizontal equalization (Jones: 1981; King, 2002; Bird and Smart, 2002). One can clearly notice some kind of inequality in fiscal power between a superior government and a local government, with the former enjoying some kind of monopoly control over the most lucrative sources of revenue. More importantly, while central sources of revenue are progressive in nature, those (sources) granted to local government (for example, property tax) are often regressive in nature. Such vertical inequality can be minimized, if not eliminated, at least to a certain extent, through following a liberal grants-in-aid policy. On the other hand, local councils differ in size, population, and particularly resource base. Some councils may have access to important sources of revenue, while others may have partial access. Some sources of revenue may be found in one

area, while other areas may lack them. It is not unlikely to find rich areas having the capacity to provide high class services, while poorer areas have lower quality services. Grants-in-aid can help redress such inequalities and thereby encourage different local councils to provide at least a minimum of services that local people need. Intergovernmental grants supposedly transfer some tax revenue raises in progressive manner to compensate for 'disabilities' of certain local government areas (Jones: 193). Usually, such transfers are allocated according to a formula-based mechanism, which takes into account various socioeconomic factors such as the size of population, area, poverty, as well as access to health facilities (Boex and Martinez-Vazquez, 2006).

However, while there is a strong case for grants-in-aid, there is no 'one best way' of ensuring intergovernmental fiscal transfer. Nor is there any unanimity on the extent to which such transfers impact local accountability and responsiveness. Different types of transfer are seen (Fjeldstad, 2001); these may have differential impact on local government autonomy. For example, grants may be general (block grant) or these may be specific and meant for some specific purposes. Grants may have also some matching requirements, or these may be non-matching. The purposes for which grants are advanced may also have

differences. For example, general-purpose grants usually result in more autonomy for local authorities than do selective grants, but the latter are preferred by the central government as they allow a change in expenditure to be achieved at a lower cost (Scott: 88). Similarly, local decision-making is influenced by central government more cheaply by matching than by non-matching grants. However, although matching (or conditional) transfers make local governments more susceptible to central influence and control, they also have the important political advantage of introducing an element of local involvement, commitment, accountability, and responsibility for the aided activities (Bird and Smart, 2002). Such grants may be particularly important with respect to capital investment projects (Bird and Smart, 2002).

Intergovernmental grants, however, may have some important drawbacks: first, the grants funds may not be spent as wisely as if they were raised locally; second, these may reduce the volume of locally raised taxes that would have been collected had there been no grant; third, these may lead to a higher level of public spending than is desired by the public (Jones: 193; Dahlbark et.al., 2008). Intergovernmental transfers may crowd out local revenues whereby the inflow of external transfers can sap the incentive for LGAs to collect their own

dues (Buettner & Wildasin, 2006; Bradford & Oates, 1971; Zhuravskaya, 2000). Recent empirical evidence, however, also shows that financial support from the central government can facilitate rather than hinder revenue collection at the local level in different ways: first, intergovernmental grants can expand the tax base by stimulating local economies through transfer spending (fiscal stimulus); second, citizens are more likely to pay taxes in exchange for better public services, which are largely financed by transfers (public services) and third, fiscal transfers pay for the direct costs of tax enforcement (Masaki, 2018: 174-175).

One thing to be stated here is that the philosophical basis of local government in many countries has undergone considerable changes. Unlike in the past (e.g. early days of local self-government) when local government in developing countries was justified, among others, as a training ground for nationalist political leaders to have their first lesson in democratic governance, the emerging view is to look upon local government more as an instrument of economic development and service delivery. It is thus not unlikely that for fulfilling long term interests of their localities, many councils have to accept conditional grants. When confronted with choosing between two competing values – autonomy versus cash – many

councils will prefer the latter. Grants, besides encouraging the implementation of costly but important programs, will also help local politicians become more risk-averse; they will not be required to tax their own support base to generate funds for local development. Herein lies one of the important logics for grant.

This paper explores the role of grants in local government in Bangladesh. Although local government in Bangladesh predates similar institution in many developing countries, its size is very small. Local outlays are estimated to account for 8.0 per cent of the total government outlays and local government tax revenue accounts for an extremely insignificant amount of the total tax revenue in Bangladesh (World Bank, 2020). The role of the Union Parishad (UP) - the lowest unit of rural local government - has declined more than the other councils. The actual expenditure of the UP decreased from 11.13% of the total local government outlays in 1992-93 to 9.72 per cent in 1997-98. Some of the functions, which were transferred from the UP to the middle-tier – Upazila Parishad (UZP) – in the 1980s, have not yet been returned to the former. The other councils have also failed to make any significant impact. Several factors account for the decline of local government, of which the opposition of the centripetal forces, particularly the bureaucracy and the

Members of Parliament (MPs) are crucially important. Both have long remained opposed to any meaningful decentralization of powers to local councils. Bangladesh's 'development partners' also did not appear to be much interested in local government reforms, at least until recently. They were rather more interested in promoting the interests of NGOs, which have had a mushroom growth over the decades. The government also for some time appeared to be keen to work with NGOs than with local councils.

However, some changes in the attitude of the government and donors to the need for revitalization of local government are noticeable in recent years. Both have followed a liberal grants-in-aid policy, pumping additional financial resources to local councils, particularly to the UP. The average budget of the UP has increased manifold mostly because of the availability of resources from the outside. Lack of mediation by intermediate councils and/or officials gives the UP greater freedom of action. This represents a new shift in central policy, although the extent to which it is intended to promote partnership between the two levels of government is not clear. The explicit goal of central intervention, as evident from different documents (GoB, 2011a, 2017, 2022; Ahmed et.al., 2011; Ahmed et.al., 2014; World Bank, 2020), is to help the

UP build/strengthen its capacity to undertake functions more efficiently and effectively. The political rationale of the grants-in-aid policy is at least as important as are other objectives and will be explained in a subsequent section.

This paper will particularly focus on identifying the implications of the measures taken to (re)define relations between the center and the UP. Special emphasis will be given on analyzing the significance of direct fiscal relations between the two levels of government. The paper argues that the new directions in central policy, notwithstanding some positive features, do not represent a radical departure with the past. These appear to be centrist in direction and focus, lack any element of decentralization, and are not devoid of political objectives. The overall objective is to strengthen central control over the locality rather than allowing local councils to emerge as viable units of local self-government.

The Union Parishad (UP) in the Framework of Local Government System

There exists a three-tier local government system in rural Bangladesh. At the top of the hierarchy of local councils is the Zila Parishad (ZP) and, at the base, the Union Parishad (UP). The middle tier – the

Upazila Parishad (UZP) – is the newest of the three councils; while the ZP and UP have existed for more than 150 years. The UP, as a unit of local government, predates similar bodies in many countries of the Third World. It has also retained its representative character for a period much longer than the other two councils. The ZP remained under bureaucratic tutelage until recently, while the UZP has experienced both expansion and decline. The UP is composed of a directly-elected chairman, and has 12 members – nine elected from general seats and three (women) from reserved seats. Under the existing UP law, three women are directly elected to the UP, with each having a constituency three times larger than a member elected from a general seat. Women candidates thus have to spend more time, energy and resources to get elected to the UP.

Traditionally, the UP performed a range of functions that were considered to be very important. Many functions now performed by the central government, especially in the fields of health and education, used to be undertaken by local councils – UP and ZP – during the British rule. Available evidence suggests that a certain percentage of local council expenditure was intended for providing such services. Tinker (1967: 203) observes that although about one-half of the resources of the Union Board – the precursor of the present-

day UP – had to be allocated to upkeep the village police, there was a growing residuum for other services. In 1937, the Union Boards' expenditure included seven-and-a-half lakhs on roads, three lakhs on drainage and conservancy, and ten lakhs on water supply. But the responsibility for these services has gradually been taken over by the higher levels of government. The health services were nationalized in the 1950s; while the responsibility for primary education was taken over by the central government in 1973. Although the Union Parishad Act passed by the Parliament in 2009 has empowered it to exercise some kind of supervision over central government officials providing health, education and other services at the local level, the UP lacks any formal responsibility for these services.

In recent years, the functions of the UP have increased manifold. Such increase is not as pronounced in the service areas as in other sectors. The central government still retains responsibility for 'core' services; while the UP has been overburdened with regulatory, quasi-judicial and development functions. But the UP does not appear to have the capacity to shoulder the heavy responsibility vested on it mostly because of its inability to raise resources. Income from internal sources does not appear to be sufficient to defray even recurrent expenditure. One can notice a clear

imbalance between what is expected of the UP and its ability to live up to that expectation. The UP thus heavily depends upon central government grants to carry out the responsibilities vested on it. The government also appears to be more responsive to demands for allowing the UP play a greater role in the delivery of services at the local level now than before. In fact, the government's commitment to improving local governance is set forth in the National Strategy for Accelerated Poverty Reduction (NSAPR). The NSAPR identifies local governance as one of eight priorities in the medium term strategic agenda for Bangladesh. Strengthening local governance through community participation and oversight received important recognition in the government's PRSP. In fact, following the PRSP recommendations, the GOB took important steps to strengthen local governance, particularly through the introduction of the UP Block Grant mechanism. The role of the UP in local governance is thus widely recognized.

Local Revenue: Development and Decline

The UP is the lowest but probably the most important unit of local government. It is much closer to the people and has survived longer than any other unit. It performs a range of functions that local people find very useful. But it has faced financial problems since its inception. The Local Government (UP) Act of 2009 provides for granting a number of sources from which the UP can raise revenue. Experience shows that income from 'internal' sources is very insignificant. What is disturbing is that such income has decreased over the years: from more than 50% of the total income to less than 25%. One study has confirmed that nearly half of the (sample) UPs failed to raise even 10% of their income from internal sources, while own revenue constituted at most 20% of the total income in case of the other half of the [sample] UPs (Kabir, 2015: 68).

Table 1: UP Receipt

Types of Receipt	Types of Internal Receipt	Financial Year					2017-2018
		2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011	
Internal	Tax receipt	24.4	14.0	14.0	14.0	8.9	6.5
	Non-tax receipt	28.9	17.7	17.7	17.7	15.8	
Government Grant		46.7	68.3	68.3	68.3	75.3	93.5

Source: GoB (2011b: 318); World Bank (2020:35).

Reasons for the inability of the UP to mobilize resources from its own sources are many and varied. Local leaders often refer to the poverty of the rural people as the main reason for the poverty of the UP. This argument, however, cannot be accepted at its face value. In fact, there exists better opportunity now to mobilize more resources locally than at any time before. Some of the sources, if properly explored, can help UP mobilize huge resources. As examples, reference can be made to the provision that now exists in the UP Act requiring the sharing of land development tax and tax on transfer of immovable property with UP. Provisions also exist for sharing of lease money (auction) on hat-bazaar (local markets), ferry ghat and jalmahal (water bodies). If properly utilized, these could provide a buoyant source of income. But the UP fares badly in raising resources locally. It is not unlikely that many of those who benefit less from UP services may have to pay more, while some may receive greater benefit at less cost.

Explaining the Decline

All UPs do not have similar access to different important sources of revenue as stated above. Many UPs, because of their location, cannot raise sufficient resources to defray day-to-day expenditure which has increased manifold over the decades. The gap between income and expenditure has

widened; this, in turn, has increased the dependence of the UP on outside sources. However, probably the most important reason accounting for the poverty of the UP is that it prefers to remain poor. It does not want to overcome this situation by demanding more sources of revenue and/or making the maximum use of whatever sources are available. The inability of UP or lack of its efforts in tapping untapped revenues, as Ullah & Ponquan (2011) observe, stem from several factors. Firstly, the tradition of weak enforcement has induced non-compliance which has now posed a threat of potential conflict and challenge to establish a compliance culture. Secondly, establishment of compliance is not feasible due to lengthy time, costly process, perception of local political pain and above all, UP has to rely on local administration and police authority for legal supports which require prudent local coordination. Thirdly, since no visible benefits are linked to tax payment, UP functionaries are not perceived any accountability to central government (Ullah & Ponquan, p. 29). The administrative framework for collection of own sources of revenue is poorly structured for success. The collection process is potentially heavily politicized with political leaders rather than tax professionals collecting taxes or making decisions on tax liabilities and appeals (Fox & Menon, p. 24).

Uddin has identified the following reasons for weak financial base of the UP: lack of effective initiatives by the chairman to collect taxes which originates mainly from the fear of losing popularity, lack of efficient manpower, lack of clear knowledge regarding taxation rules and procedures, reluctance of people to pay taxes, lack of public awareness, poor provision of UP services, lack of accountability and transparency, absence of appropriate monitoring system, nepotism and favoritism, interference by the influential people, local politics etc. combine to make the taxation system of UPs very weak and ineffective (2015: 55-57). Resistance to proposals for granting more sources to the UP is also not uncommon. Even national legislators do not want to allow the UP to have access to more sources of income. As an example, reference can be made to the success of the lawmakers in halting a proposal for giving additional sources of revenue to the UP in the early 1990s.

In 1993 a local government reform commission recommended several important measures to strengthen the financial base of the UP, among other things, by transferring to it part of the immovable property tax (IPT), introducing the provision for matching grants and granting additional sources of tax revenue to local councils. The government rejected the first two suggestions but accepted the proposal

for granting more sources of revenue to the UP. However, the task of giving the proposal for expanded tax base legislative effect turned out to be extremely difficult mainly because of the resistance of government backbenchers and the opposition lawmakers. The Local Government (Union Parishad) (Amendment) Bill, 1993, introduced in the House on 10 February 1993, provided, among others, for raising the number of tax sources from 5 to 14. The bill also provided for abolishing those UPs which failed to raise 75% of the taxes (Daily Star, July 5, 1993). But lawmakers belonging to both government and opposition thwarted the move towards empowering the UP in respect of raising resources.

The unity of the opposing political actors – government and opposition – could be seen as an exception. Usually the two divided along party lines, with government members supporting whatever measures – moral or immoral – moved by the government and the opposition opposing measures even though these were likely to benefit the nation. What united the two to adopt a common strategy in this case is not difficult to ascertain. Many MPs need the support of the local leadership to get elected to the national legislature as well as to establish and retain their dominance in the locality. None wanted to create problems for the local councilors by granting them more

sources of revenue. In fact, local councilors mostly want to survive on central grant. The more the grant, the better is the scope for establishing close relationship with the electorate. This helps councilors undertake programs for local development without taxing their own support base. Decisions to impose/collect additional taxes risk making councilors unpopular among the electorate. They mostly want to remain risk-averse. The government also often agrees to demands for more grant than adopting measures for fiscal decentralization mostly for political reasons. It helps strengthen central control in the locality. Experience shows that military governments initially used this strategy to establish a support base in the locality with the ultimate objective of civilianizing their rule. But the successive democratic governments also have followed a similar strategy, although they claim to have solid support among the electorate. This paradox needs to be explained.

Aiding the UP: The Conventional Approach

The UP, like other local councils, owes its origin to legislation made by the center. The successive governments have amended old legislation and introduced new laws, redefining the scope of operation of the UP. Responsibilities bestowed on the UP are categorized into two groups: compulsory and optional. However, some kind of imbalance in the formal scope of power and the ability of the UP to discharge responsibilities bestowed on it has long been noticed. Since its birth, the UP has depended upon higher level councils and the government for aid to build up its capacity. There has, however, been a major increase in the share of grants in the overall income pattern of the UP in recent years. Grants, as a percentage of total income of the UP, increased from 7.2 in 1975-76 to 30.1 in 1976-77. It remained almost steady at that level between 1977 and 1980, but decreased in the 1980s. The share of grants increased again in the 1990s and the trend has continued until now. In general, as the following Table shows, there was nearly a seven-fold increase in government grant between 2006-2007 and 2010-2011.

Table 2: Government Aid to UP

(Million Tk.)

Types of grant	Financial Year				
	2006-2007	2007-2008	2008-2009	2009-2010	2010-2011
Government Grants	1717	3115	3987	5103	7938
Works Program Grants	1609	2865	3664	4689	13708
Total	3336	5980	7651	9292	21646
Grant as % of total receipt	46.7	68.3	68.3	68.3	75.3

Source: GoB (2011b).

Traditionally the UP has received three kinds of grants – general purpose grants, specific grants and block development grants (Siddiqui, 2005). General purpose grants are of three types – developmental, compensatory and budget deficit. On the other hand, the specific grants are given to the UP under three separate but similar types of programs – the Rural Works Program (RWP), Food for Works Program (FFWP) and Test Relief Program (TRP). In 2004 the Government introduced discretionary Basic Block Grants (BBG) for UPs on a flat rate basis used mostly for small infrastructure investment and maintenance in the core local public goods sectors (roads, education, sanitation, water and the like). Besides BBG, Annual Development Program (ADP) allocations are also being provided to UPs. ADP allocations are distributed through Upazila Parishad (UZP). Apportionment of ADP block grant is 90% for general and 10% for operational performance. General grant allocation is based on: population 50%, land area 30%, and backwardness 20%. Because of the availability of different kinds of grants, the average income of a UP has increased manifold.

Conventionally, grants to the UP were made through other organizations; there was no direct link between the UP and the central government. During the British period

and the early years of the Pakistani rule, central grants were routed to the UP through the ZP (called District Board). However, since the introduction of the Thana Parishad in the 1960s which was later renamed UZP, central grants are processed to the UP through the TP/ UZP. Under the existing arrangement, a certain amount of ADP grant is made available to the UZP for distribution among the constituent units (UPs) according to a formula. But experience shows that such grants are often given to different UPs equally in violation of rules made by the central government mostly to discourage resentment and conflict. The center has traditionally remained loath to decentralize fiscal powers to local government, particularly to the UP. Attempts at allowing the UP to diversify its sources of income have witnessed widespread political and bureaucratic resistance.

Several drawbacks, however, characterize the traditional grant system. Besides discouraging local ownership, it also appears to be discriminatory providing unequal benefits to different groups of people. Those who are weak and disadvantaged including women receive less benefit than those who have traditionally exercised power. Those responsible for administering grants often remain unaccountable for much of what they do. Delay in the transfer of funds is quite common.

There were instances, as Siddiqui observed, “when such grants were deliberately withheld by UZP chairmen in order to 'sort out' UP chairmen who did not fall in line with the former” (1991: 62). Moreover, the extent to which aid can help the UP build its capacity to undertake the functions assigned to it remains unexplored.

Aiding the UP: International Dimension

In recent years, there has been an upsurge in national and international interest to strengthen the UP. Besides the government, many donors have also expressed interest and in fact provided funds for direct transfer to the UP. The decision to have some kind of direct donor-government-UP interaction did not take place all on a sudden; it followed six years of experiment in Sirajgonj where different ideas and options related to the strengthening of the UP with outside support were field tested, and the results turned out to be quite encouraging. Part of the Sirajgonj model has already been replicated throughout the country under the Local Government Support Project (LGSP), while other innovative components were further pursued under the Learning and Innovation Component (LIC). Encouraged by the successes of the Sirajgonj experiment, the government initiated a new policy

aimed at strengthening the UP – providing direct support to the UPs, provided they satisfy a number of conditions. In July 2006 the government introduced LGSP-1 as a nation-wide program for five years, with funds start flowing from 2007 to ensure larger fiscal transfers to the UP. It was a nationally-owned and executed project, although a substantial percentage of the expenditure had been provided by the development partners. World Bank/IDA provided \$111.5 million to support the project, while the government contributed \$78.4 million. In 2007, UNDP, DANIDA and UNCDF, as an effort to supplement the LGSP-1, decided to support a new component called Learning and Innovation Component (LIC). These donors agreed to provide \$18.8 million to implement the component. Two more LGSPs were implemented between 2011 and 2022. The following discussion, however, mostly focuses on LGSP-1.

Nature of aid

Initially, the project activities remained confined to a number of UPs in a number of districts. But later LGSP had been rolled out nation-wide, with almost all UPs claiming a stake in LGSP grant transfer. LGSP had five components: fiscal transfer, institutionalizing local accountability, capacity building, performance review

and policy development, and social protection pilot. Separate allocations were earmarked for each component, with the fiscal transfer component receiving the maximum IDA allocation (\$87.1 million), and the social protection pilot, the minimum (\$2.1 million). The IDA allocations were distributed to the other three components in the following manner: institutionalizing local accountability (\$3.2 million), capacity building (\$16.4 million), and performance

review and policy development (42.7 million). As stated above, a sixth component – LIC – was later added, with funding from UNDP, UANIDA and UNCDF. This component subsequently had become important in its own right. LIC UPs were eligible for several other grants such as supplementary block grant (SBG), performance-based grant (PBG) and finally transition block grant (TBG); non-LIC UPs remained outside the scope of SBG, PBG and TBG.

Table 3: Foreign Aid to UP (2006-2011)

Name of Grant	Name of Program	Grant Amount (\$ 000)	Year started	No. of unions covered	Donor(s)
Extended Block Grant (EBG)	LGSP1 (2006-2011)	189, 900, 000*	2007-2008	Almost all	World Bank
Supplementary Block Grant (SBG)	LGSP-LIC (2007-2011)	18, 118, 000	2007-2008	362 (6 districts)	UNDP, DANIDA UNCDF
Performance-Based Grant System (PBG)	LGSP-LIC (2007-2011)	312, 000	2010-2011	117 (6 districts)	UNDP, DANIDA UNCDF
Transitional Block Grant (TBG)	LGSP-LIC (2007-2011)	724, 000	2011-12	362	UNDP, DANIDA UNCDF
UP Revenue Mobilization Pilot	LGSP-LIC 2011	Technical Assistance	2011-12	30 (6 districts)	UNDP, DANIDA UNCDF

Source: Ahmed, Mensi, Monem & Akhter, 2011; GoB (2011a).

*Part of the grant provided by government.

Initially no UP was automatically eligible to receive any of these grants; each was required to satisfy a number of criteria. To be eligible to receive EBG, a UP was required to fulfill the following conditions: no adverse or disclaimer audit opinion, existence of an official UP bank account, post of UP

secretary filled, open budget meeting, letter of commitment from UPs interested in joining LGSP and participatory planning and budgetary process. Only those UPs which satisfied the criteria for EBG could claim other types of grants. Criteria of eligibility for SBG included: regular

opening of the UP office, village court made operational, all standing committees formed, UP's participation in BGCC meetings, holding monthly meetings regularly, and ensuring participation of women (members) in UP monthly meetings. For PBGs, UPs were required to satisfy several other conditions in addition to those stated above, of which a few were significant, particularly conditions that related to assessment and collection of taxes and making standing committees operational.

While almost all UPs were eligible to claim a share of the LGSP grant, only the LIC UPs, which were located in six districts, could claim a share of the other three types of grants. Less than one-third of the LIC UPs had received performance-based grants. The LGSP-LIC was required to generate five outputs: making increased financial resources available to UPs in equitable and appropriate ways, ensuring that improved public expenditure systems for local government institutions (UPs) were developed and used, establishing and implementing enhanced mechanisms for local accountability, and establishing more effective framework for capacity development support.

Administering LGSP-LIC aid

A multi-tier management structure was devised to implement the various

components of LGSP-LIC. These included: a Block Grant Coordination Committee (BGCC) at the Upazila level, a Ward Development Committee (WDC) at the ward level, a Union Parishad Planning Committee (UPPC) at the Union level, a Union Facilitating Team (UFT) and a Scheme Supervision Committee (SSC) for each scheme. Two facilitators – one at the District level and another one at the Upazila level – facilitated the work of different committees and people associated with the program. At the national level, the primary responsibility for providing policy guidance and leadership of the project rested with a Project Steering Committee headed by the Secretary of the LGD, while a National Project Director (NPD), enjoying the rank of and Additional Secretary, looked after the day-to-day activity of the project. The management structure devised for planning and implementing LGSP has both similarities and dissimilarities with the LIC structure. Both had a similar structure at the top.

But the structure at the local level had some significant differences. LIC sought to introduce some organizational innovations; in contrast, LGSP sought to work through the existing organizational procedures. For example, women had a special role to play in the planning and implementation of LGSP-LIC schemes; they held the position of vice-chair in different WDCs and had one-

third of representation in one-third of SSCs. No one could be a member of both the WDC and SSC. Members of the SSCs in LIC UPs were elected at an open meeting; they in turn elected a chairman and a secretary; in contrast, chairman of the UP in a LGSP UP headed all SSCs. The maximum number of SSCs that could be formed in a LGSP-LIC UP was nine; in contrast, three SSCs could be formed in a LGSP UP. In both cases, however, UP accounts were audited by private audit firms.

Exploring the Impact of Aid: Encouraging Autonomy or Deepening Dependence?

Aiding the UP is argued to be necessary to build its capacity to perform better, i.e. to make it better capable of doing what is expected of it. As development is now identified as one the main functions of UP, it is imperative that some kind of assistance is provided as it cannot mobilize resources necessary to do it. The extent to which the policy of aiding the UP has been successful or otherwise is difficult to assess. Available evidence shows that the policy (of aiding) has both strengths and weaknesses. One clear evidence of positive effect is that the UP can now do more than before mostly because of the availability of resources. One estimate shows that a total of 10242 schemes were implemented with LGSP-LIC funds,

costing TK. 6900, 221, 347 between 2008 and 2012. The number of beneficiaries of this investment was estimated to be 13569632 (Ahmed, Mensi, Monem & Akhter, 2011). A World Bank evaluation (2011) of expanded block grants (EBGs) made available to the UP under LGSPI found it to be very useful. EBG activities can be attributed towards greater empowerment of women representatives at the grass root level. The female UP members closely associate themselves with the design and planning, involving the local populace, and implementing the schemes (World Bank, 2011). EBG allocations have been made on the basis of a minimum “floor” and the population size of UPs, a formula that was considerably more equitable than the “equal shares” allocations made by regular ADP allocations (Pillay, Akhter, Monem & Olsen, 2010, p. 7).

The primary objective of fiscal transfers to UPs was to enhance their infrastructure and service delivery potential and to create greater fiscal incentives for citizen engagement in local governance. To a large extent the project succeeded in realizing these objectives. One major problem is that often transfers are made late, thereby causing uncertainty in the planning and budgeting of the UP. Another problem is that using population as the criteria to distribute grants risks causing horizontal inequalities, whereas as

stated in an earlier section, an important logic underlying intergovernmental resource transfer is to correct horizontal inequalities. It is thus not unlikely to find a Union with a large population and a good infrastructure system will be benefitted more from EBG than a unit having less population and an underdeveloped infrastructure system. LGSP UPs, however, scored better than their non-LGSP counterparts in ensuring fiscal discipline. Those who complied with the requirement of auditing the accounts of the UP by a chartered accountancy firm, and thereby becoming eligible for grants, have increased in number. The problem with engaging so many commercial audit firms (which reflects the preference of the WB) is that it may in the long run compromise with the standard of auditing, and secondly and more importantly, it questions the efficacy, if not legitimacy, of the supreme audit institution in the country, i.e. the office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG). It may further discredit the audit institution.

The LGSP-LIC also had some major achievements. According to the final evaluation report, the project contributed to: Improving the image of UP and by the same token consolidated the local governance system through transparency, participation, open budget, and nonpartisan processes - compared to some other funding

programs which are seen as rather politicized; and also promoting local democracy and building social capital at grassroots level (sense of togetherness and common interest) to the extent that local communities learnt how to work together and how to relate positively to their elected officials, contributed to fostering community confidence in UP capacity to deliver local services, and demonstrated to national authorities that UPs can perform effectively when provided with the proper support and supervision; enhanced accountability of local elected officials and staff to their constituency, and to some extent, improved relationship between the different tiers of government (central government, Zila, Upazila and UP) (Ahmed, Mensi, Monem & Akhter, 2011).

However, the extent to which aid can help the UP build its capacity to undertake functions assigned to it remains unexplored. In particular, as LGSP-LIC experience showed, the aiding policy did not have any major success in improving the capacity of the UP to mobilize greater amount of resources locally. More importantly, as Table 4 shows, many LIC UPs failed to improve their capacity to raise resources; there remained a major gap between assessment and collection of local revenue. More importantly, LIC UPs actually became more resource dependent on the center; self-reliance still remained an illusion.

Table 4: Collection as % of Assessment

Year	LIC UPs					
	Sreeula	Khalilnagar	Satkapon	Auskandi	Lemua	Bakshmahmud
2006-2007	-	75.6	21.1	-	-	50.3
2007-2008	-	94.4	19.4	-	89.6	47.6
2008-2009	-	38.7	20.4	-	27.5	56.1
2009-2010	25.9	44.4	36.9	19.3	24.9	-
2010-2011	28.4	87.7	-	-	26.8	-

Source: Source: Ahmed, Mensi, Monem & Akhter, 2011

Table 5: Sources of Income (in %)

LIC UPs	2010-11		2009-2010		2008-2009		2007-2008		2006-2007	
	Aid & others	Own revenue	Aid & others	Own revenue	Aid & others	Own revenue	Aid & others	Own revenue	Aid & others	Own revenue
Sreeula	94.8	5.2	96.9	3.1	77.4	22.6	na	na	na	na
Khalilnagar	na	na	98.2	1.8	98.6	1.4	95.9	4.1		
Satkapon	na	na	94.6	5.4	97.3	2.7	94.7	5.3	89.7	10.3
Auskandi	na	na	93.9	6.1	95.1	4.9	na	na	na	na
Lemua	na	na			97.1	2.9	10.4	89.6		
Bakshm-ahmud	na	na	-	-	95.7	4.3	90.0	10.0	89.4	10.6

Source: Source: Ahmed, Mensi, Monem & Akhter, 2011

Another major weakness of the transfer system is the lack of control over the use of resources to meet local priorities. The UPs own revenue sources definition is somewhat misleading and virtually UPs have no direct control even over resources generated from respective UPs jurisdictions. Such a practice of regulating and controlling of the financial resources by the central government functionaries keeps the local UPs ever resource poor and resource dependent on the central government (Ullah & Ponquan: 29). The incentives that inter-governmental

transfer system creates for local behavior are generally, although relatively benign or positive, creates problems. As Fox & Menon (2008: 25) observe:

Local governments have little control over the use of resources and do not know when national government will give the money. The total amount of transfers is determined by ad hoc decisions within the ministry of Finance and is not determined relative to tax collections or any other measure of economic activity. Linking the vertical transfers to tax collections

would provide local governments with a more reliable revenue source.

LGSP-LIC also did not score well in promoting UP accountability. Also, capacity building was defined in a restricted sense, focusing only on training, and paying less attention to other important dimensions. The participatory process of budgeting and planning (used as a precondition to be entitled to EBG) cannot be seen as a universal success. Ullah & Ponquan (31) have observed that only some influential and party line political leaders articulate and express their views in the gatherings and common people are usually passive in such meetings. The format in which the budget is presented to the public is defective. Nor can the budget meeting be considered as a real success. In fact, the extent to which it can be seen as a cultural event or an event for deliberating over issues of policy significance is difficult to ascertain. Budget meetings are organized in pomp and in a grandeur manner. People may thus be attracted more to have a fun than to contribute in any significant manner to the annual financial statement of the UP. Moreover, poverty and illiteracy often discourage many people from attending budget meetings. Political pressure and local ruling party intervention cannot also be seen as uncommon (Ahmed, Mensi, Monem & Akhter: 67).

Innovation without Reform?

As stated in an earlier section, the introduction of LGSP and LGSP-LIC marked the beginning of a new trend in relations between the central government and the UP. Never before in the past did the UP receive as much amount of grant as it could claim between 2006 and 2011 when its income increased manifold. What is particularly important to note is that part of the grant, as in the past, was hypothecated; while the UP had the discretion to use other part the way it considered the best. No new functions have been transferred to the UP. In fact, the scope of operation of the UP still remains more or less the same as it was in the immediate past. Nor have any new sources of revenue been granted to it. Nor is there any real need, as some have argued, for granting the UP additional sources of revenue. As Uddin (2014: 9) has observed: "It must be admitted that considering the existing circumstances, the UP tax regime (Model Tax Schedule, 2013) is quite comprehensive for revenue purposes. It will not be useful to look for new or additional tax bases and the urgency is to improve the capability of tax collection of UPs. UPs generally fail miserably to exploit the existing sources. Measures to effectively exploit the existing sources would be a better option than to look for new tax bases".

Too many organizational innovations have been attempted, resulting in lack of coordination and duplication of activities. Many conditions set to make the UP eligible for grants should have been fulfilled in order to be eligible for regular grants. This implies the weakness of the central authority in enforcing its authority. Conditions set are routinely being performed in local councils in other countries. This could be seen as a disincentive; in the long run, it may be seen as a disadvantage. As different studies have shown, UPs are not good performers (Rahman et. al. 2016; Kabir, 2015). Those who perform well do not have access to any special incentive; all UPs are entitled to LGSP grants. Here one can notice a fusion of interests of the World Bank and the government. The latter, through rapid expansion, can try to bring the whole network of rural local government under its control. To adopt a selective approach for a long time many cause disenchantment and risk opposition (to government) among those councils which are neglected. The government thus finds it politically more beneficial to adopt a 'whole country' approach while distributing LGSP grants. As a bank, interests of the World Bank lie in the expansion of its 'loan network'. The more the coverage, the better. The rapid expansion of LGSP thus reflects an example of convergence of interest of the bank as well as the government. Political rationale has apparently

outweighed administrative or economic rationale.

What the new LGSP and its different variants have sought to do is to identify alternative ways of doing things so that the UP can become an effective institution. The basic assumption is that better financial support may act as stimuli in making the UP a more effective instrument of service delivery. It represents a 'soft' approach to making the UP operational, among other things, by not disturbing the existing status quo. Availability of grants on a regular basis provided the UP can meet some soft conditions has discouraged local mobilization of resources. Locally elected councilors do not have to tax their support base. Nor does it impose any liability on the central government to decentralize power and functions to the local level of government. The central government is not obliged to commit anything to strengthen local government in the country. Some kind of competition among different UPs could be noticed, although it is difficult to specify the extent to which such momentum will sustain. It is not uncommon to find UPs unethical/fraudulent tactics to become eligible for LGSP grants. Some UPs were alleged to have taken advance from contractors promising them to award contracts and deposited that amount to the UP bank account to show success in raising resources locally [as

a condition to become eligible for LGSP grants].

Conclusion

Aiding local government can be seen as a world-wide phenomenon. Rarely can local government survive on its own. In most of the countries of the world local councils depend upon superior governments, especially for financial support. Such dependence, however, does not have uniform effects. It may have more damning effect in some countries than in others. In general, aiding local government is justified not only from local standpoint; superior governments also benefit from such resource transfer as it is likely to help improve their image among the local population. Such transfer may cause change inertia and conservatism that characterize local policy process in many countries. It may also make local councils more transparent and accountable. However, the experience with aiding the UP in Bangladesh shows a mixed result. While enabling the UP to undertake more and diverse activities, thereby making it more visible to the local people, the policy of aiding can nevertheless be seen as providing some kind of disincentive to the local council to explore alternative sources of revenue to become self-reliant. It deepens dependence and discourages autonomy. What is needed most is to have some kind of arrangement for

balancing the two – autonomy and dependence, a task that seems to be difficult but not impossible to accomplish. One way to do this is to make provisions for a matching grant requirement and/or the sharing of revenue, none of which seems to be forthcoming in the short run. Part of the reason is that there is no serious demand from the local government for any such redefinition of central-local relations. Local government leaders appear to be satisfied with the existing arrangement, especially in respect of financial matters. As a result, the UP in particular and, local government in general, is likely to remain an extended arm of the central government.

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COMMUNITY RESILIENCE BUILDING Objectives, Principles, Methods, Stages, Community Participation and Role of Grampanchayat

Dipak Kokate

Concept of community resilience

The concept of resilience has evolved in less than a decade from a term used within the disciplines of material sciences and environmental studies to become a concept used liberally and enthusiastically by policy makers, practitioners, and academics across a plethora of disciplines (Cork, 2010; McAslan, 2010). The term “resilience” takes on different meanings within disciplinary boundaries and is often not clearly defined or explained (Cork, 2010). Simply put, in its broadest application resilience describes how well a system is able to adapt positively when faced with adversity and cope with abnormal or unexpected threats without changing beyond recognition. The concept of resilience can be used to discuss any system (ecological, social, economic, mechanical, etc.), and within each system it can be considered at different scales from the micro to the macro, the individual to the societal (Gibson and Tarrant, 2010).

Community resilience is used to describe the interconnected network of systems that directly impact human society at a grassroots community level, including the socioeconomic, ecological, and built environments. A community is resilient when: ...members of the population are connected to one another and work together, so that they are able to function and sustain critical systems, even under stress; adapt to changes in the physical, social or economic environment; be self-reliant if external resources are limited or cut off; and learn from experience to improve itself over time. While the resilience of individuals, families, or specific organizations are key components of community resilience, as a whole a resilient community is greater than the sum of its parts (Parker, 2010). Meaning that a resilient system is a complete, complex, and interconnected system which contains “many more links than we can comprehend with simple cause and

effect models” (Cork, 2010). A resilient community is socially connected and has infrastructure that can withstand disaster and foster community recovery. Resilient communities promote individual and community wellbeing and cohesiveness to strengthen their communities for everyday, as well as extreme, challenges. Example of community resilience - Resilience is the ability to “bounce back.” Specific examples of strengthening resilience within communities can include increasing access to health-related resources and services, engaging and prioritizing vulnerable or marginalized groups, and increasing community social connections and collaboration. Community resilience is a measure of the sustained ability of a community to utilize available resources to respond to, withstand, and recover from adverse situations.

The term community resilience is used to describe the interconnected network of systems that directly impact human society at a grassroots community level, including the socioeconomic, ecological, and built environments. Community resilience refers to the ability of a community to withstand and recover from adverse situations, such as natural disasters, economic downturns, or social disruptions. It involves the collective capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions within a community to

adapt, respond, and bounce back in the face of challenges. A resilient community has accessible human services, health systems, and infrastructure that help to prepare and recover from unexpected situation. Community disaster resilience is very important as this is the ability to prepare for anticipated hazards, adapt to changing conditions, and withstand and recover rapidly from disruptions. Activities, such as disaster preparedness—which includes prevention, protection, mitigation, response and recovery—are key steps to resilience.

However, resilience is not always a desirable trait. Core to the concept of resilience is a strong focus on avoiding any significant changes to the essential character of a system and perpetuating key structures and functions of that system. In other words, resilience acts to conserve the status quo (Cork, 2010), and this function can become undesirable if the status quo fails to address issues that will inhibit the long-term viability and sustainability of a system. For this reason, resilience cannot be considered in isolation from adaptability and transformability (Cork, 2010). Arbon et al. (2012).

Understanding, measuring, and assessing community resilience requires a keen awareness of the links and relationships between the different scales of governance and different

systems which are directly and indirectly affecting communities. Developing strategies for building and enhancing community resilience requires an understanding that vulnerability at any level translates to an increased vulnerability in other areas of the larger system. As an example, in a community where the transportation system is vulnerable to extreme weather events such as flooding or extreme snowstorms, this causes vulnerabilities elsewhere, as disruptions to transportation impact people's abilities to get back to work as well as the community's access to a constant supply of food and fuel. Although several theoretical models articulating the factors that contribute to community resilience do exist (Norris et al., 2008; Pfefferbaum et al., 2007, 2008), as a result of the sophisticated level of systems thinking necessary to understand community resilience, there is currently limited evidence for what practical strategies are most effective for building and enhancing community resilience (Chandra et al., 2010).

Community Resilience and Nonviolent Social Crisis

Community resilience is being used as a tagline to deal with expectations of long-term crises, such as reduced availability of natural resources and creeping environmental changes including climate change.

'Localization' movements have emerged, seeking to make food, water, energy, livelihoods, and money much more local and hence less dependent on external factors or national support. Localization is seen as building community resilience by being able to deal with crises in the absence of external support.

An example is concerns about limited fossil fuel supplies, because the cost becomes prohibitive, supply is disrupted, or diminishing resources – all of which are linked. Consequences envisioned of limited fossil fuel supplies include food availability being reduced because vehicles have limited petrol to transport supplies to markets; blackouts during hot and cold temperature extremes because electricity generating plants depending on fossil fuels must shut down; and emergency services being unable to respond promptly due to petrol restrictions. Making food, water, energy, and manufacturing more locally based reduces dependence on fossil fuels.

Localization also helps to build community resilience against other major disruptions, such as economic instability, a rapid decrease of water resources.

Building community resilience to social crisis is much more than considering what happens externally to

a community. It is also about the community itself. The construction and perpetuation of poverty can be due to deliberate exploitation of people and the construction of a social order favoring those with power, a process termed 'quiet violence' (Hartmann and Boyce, 1984), which effectively precludes a community resilient to anything. Vulnerability and lack of capacity to reduce it, and to build resilience, are aggravated by poverty, preventing any opportunity to 'bounce forward' after other hazards impact. Due to the persistent, ongoing crisis of poverty, it is hard enough just trying to 'bounce back' to the original state of poverty, so community resilience becomes a dream rather than a goal, blocked by the same powers, which create and perpetuate poverty in the first place.

Factors in community resilience

One of the components of community resilience is the ability of the economy to function during and after experiencing a shock. The primary consideration here is the need for economies to continue functioning; there is considerable latitude to rebuild or innovate in recovery efforts as long as previous levels of performance can be achieved. The ability of a local economy to withstand shocks is generally linked to the diversity of industries that make up the economy, the connections between and within

industries (complexity), the education, and experience of the workforce, and the governance models that are employed. Scale is also an important consideration; local economic recovery may be linked to the presence or absence of robust supply chains, as well as the resilience of firms in other places that take part in the broader economy. Community resilience is influenced by various factors that contribute to a community's ability to withstand and recover from adversity. These factors can be grouped into several categories:

1. **Social Capital and Networks:** Strong social networks, trust, and cohesive relationships among community members enhance resilience by facilitating cooperation, mutual support, and information sharing during times of crisis.
2. **Community Engagement and Participation:** Active engagement of community members in decision-making, problem-solving, and resilience-building activities fosters a sense of ownership, empowerment, and collective responsibility.
3. **Leadership and Governance:** Effective governance structures, leadership, and institutions play a crucial role in guiding resilience-building efforts, coordinating

responses, and allocating resources in a transparent, inclusive, and accountable manner.

4. **Economic Stability and Diversity:** Diverse economic opportunities, local businesses, job markets, and financial resources contribute to community resilience by reducing dependency, creating buffers against economic shocks, and fostering adaptive capacity.
5. **Physical Infrastructure and Environmental Resilience:** Well-designed infrastructure, including transportation, communication, housing, and utilities, enhances a community's ability to withstand and recover from disasters, climate change impacts, and environmental degradation.
6. **Access to Resources and Services:** Adequate access to essential resources, such as food, water, healthcare, education, and social services, improves community resilience by addressing basic needs and supporting well-being, particularly among vulnerable populations.
7. **Education and Knowledge:** Education, awareness, and access to information about risks, hazards, and resilience strategies empower individuals and communities to make informed decisions, adopt preventive measures, and respond effectively to emergencies.

8. **Cultural and Social Factors:** Cultural values, traditions, and norms can influence resilience by shaping attitudes, behaviors, and coping mechanisms within communities. Respect for diversity, inclusivity, and traditional knowledge enhances social cohesion and adaptive capacity.
9. **Adaptive Capacity and Innovation:** Communities with high levels of adaptive capacity can quickly adjust to changing circumstances, learn from experiences, and innovate in response to challenges. Flexibility, creativity, and openness to new ideas contribute to resilience.
10. **Government Policies and Support:** Supportive policies, regulations, incentives, and investments from local, regional, and national governments can strengthen community resilience by promoting sustainable development, risk reduction, and capacity building.
11. **External Support and Partnerships:** Collaboration with external stakeholders, including non-governmental organizations, businesses, academia, and international agencies, can provide additional resources, expertise, and technical assistance to support resilience-building initiatives.

12. Social cohesion and Economic stability: Strong relationships, trust, and networks among community members can enhance resilience by fostering cooperation and mutual support during difficult times. Diverse economic opportunities, employment options, and access to resources can help communities withstand shocks and recover more quickly from economic downturns.

13. Infrastructure and environmental resilience: Well-designed infrastructure, including transportation, communication, and utilities, can reduce vulnerability to disasters and facilitate recovery efforts. Additionally, preserving natural resources and ecosystems can enhance a community's ability to withstand environmental challenges.

14. Effective governance and leadership: Transparent, inclusive, and accountable governance structures can facilitate coordination and collaboration among stakeholders, leading to more effective responses to crises.

15. Access to healthcare and social services: Adequate healthcare facilities, social services, and support systems can improve community members' ability to cope with and recover from health-

related crises, such as pandemics or public health emergencies.

By addressing these interconnected factors and promoting holistic approaches to resilience building, communities can enhance their capacity to thrive in the face of adversity and uncertainty. Building community resilience often involves a combination of proactive measures, such as disaster preparedness planning, infrastructure improvements, social programs, and community engagement initiatives. By investing in these areas, communities can become more resilient and better equipped to navigate and recover from various challenges and adversities.

Need of the community resilience

Community resilience is essential for several reasons:

- 1. Adaptation to Change:** Communities face various challenges, including environmental threats, economic fluctuations, and social disruptions. Resilience enables communities to adapt to these changes, mitigating their impact and ensuring sustainable development.
- 2. Disaster Preparedness and Response:** Resilient communities are better prepared to respond to disasters such as natural calamities, public health crises, or human-

made emergencies. They can mobilize resources, coordinate efforts, and support affected individuals and families effectively.

3. **Socioeconomic Stability:** Resilience-building activities, such as job training programs, small business support, and social safety nets, enhance communities' socioeconomic stability. This stability reduces vulnerability to shocks and strengthens local economies.
4. **Health and Well-being:** Resilient communities prioritize health and well-being, promoting access to healthcare services, mental health support, and community wellness programs. This focus on holistic well-being fosters stronger social bonds and improves overall quality of life.
5. **Environmental Sustainability:** Resilience efforts often involve sustainable development practices that protect natural resources, mitigate climate change impacts, and enhance ecosystem resilience. By safeguarding the environment, communities can ensure long-term viability and prosperity.
6. **Social Cohesion and Inclusion:** Resilient communities foster social cohesion, trust, and inclusivity, ensuring that all members have a voice and are supported during

times of need. This sense of belonging strengthens community bonds and reduces social disparities.

7. **Effective Governance and Leadership:** Resilient communities benefit from transparent, accountable governance structures and visionary leadership that prioritize resilience-building initiatives. Good governance enhances coordination, collaboration, and resource allocation for maximum impact.
8. **Learning and Innovation:** Resilience-building fosters a culture of learning and innovation within communities, encouraging experimentation, adaptation, and continuous improvement. This dynamic approach enables communities to stay ahead of emerging challenges and seize opportunities for growth.

Overall, community resilience is not just about bouncing back from adversity; it's about thriving in the face of challenges, building stronger connections, and creating a better future for all members. By investing in resilience, communities can build a more sustainable, equitable, and prosperous society.

Objectives of community resilience building

An important objective of community resilience is the ability to

handle disaster. Planning for community resilience to specific disasters has typically been very specific, often seeking to address specific components of urban infrastructure without considering broader resilience concerns. The modern approach is broader in that it considers all aspects of physical infrastructure as well as the ability of citizens themselves to engage and work toward recovery and reorganization after the fact. The concept of disaster resilience has been adopted by municipalities and urban planners looking for targeted ways to limit the impact of increasingly frequent natural disasters; this may include efforts to flood-proof cities, safeguard critical infrastructure for energy, water, communications, and sewage, and plans to support and reconnect residents in the wake of disaster. The objectives of community resilience building aim to enhance a community's ability to withstand and recover from various challenges and crises. These objectives include:

1. **Risk Reduction:** Identify and mitigate risks within the community, including natural disasters, economic downturns, social disruptions, and public health emergencies. Implement measures to minimize the likelihood and severity of adverse events.

2. **Vulnerability Reduction:** Address underlying vulnerabilities within the community, such as poverty, inequality, inadequate infrastructure, and environmental degradation. Strengthen the community's capacity to cope with and adapt to stressors and shocks.

3. **Capacity Building:** Build the capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions within the community to respond effectively to challenges and crises. Provide training, education, and resources to enhance knowledge, skills, and readiness.

4. **Social Cohesion:** Foster social cohesion, trust, and solidarity among community members to promote mutual support and collective action. Strengthen social networks, partnerships, and community resilience.

5. **Infrastructure Development:** Invest in resilient infrastructure and built environment to reduce physical vulnerabilities and enhance the community's ability to withstand disasters. Improve access to essential services, including healthcare, education, water, and sanitation.

6. **Economic Stability:** Promote economic stability, diversification, and sustainability within the

community. Support livelihoods, entrepreneurship, and local businesses to create opportunities for growth and prosperity.

7. **Health and Well-being:** Enhance access to healthcare services, mental health support, and social services to promote well-being and resilience. Address social determinants of health, such as poverty, housing, and education, to improve health outcomes.
8. **Environmental Sustain ability:** Protect and conserve natural resources, ecosystems, and biodiversity within the community. Implement sustainable practices, such as renewable energy, waste management, and climate change adaptation, to enhance environmental resilience.
9. **Disaster Preparedness and Response:** Develop and implement emergency preparedness plans, evacuation procedures, and response protocols. Build community awareness, readiness, and capacity to respond effectively to emergencies and disasters.
10. **Policy Advocacy and Collaboration:** Advocate for supportive policies, regulations, and investments at local, regional, and national levels to strengthen community resilience. Build partnerships with government

agencies, NGOs, academia, and other stakeholders to promote collaborative action and shared responsibility.

By pursuing these objectives, communities can build resilience that enables them to thrive in the face of adversity and uncertainty, ensuring the well-being and sustain ability of current and future generations.

Principles of community resilience

The principles of community resilience guide efforts to strengthen communities' ability to withstand and recover from challenges. Here are some key principles.:

1. **Inclusivity:** Resilience efforts should involve all segments of the community, including marginalized groups, to ensure that diverse perspectives and needs are considered and addressed.
2. **Empowerment:** Communities should be empowered to take ownership of their resilience-building efforts, enabling them to identify priorities, develop solutions, and implement strategies that best suit their unique circumstances.
3. **Collaboration:** Building resilience requires collaboration among various stakeholders, including government agencies, community

organizations, businesses, and residents. By working together, these stakeholders can leverage their respective resources and expertise to achieve shared resilience goals.

4. **Adaptability:** Resilience strategies should be flexible and adaptable to changing conditions and emerging threats. Communities must be prepared to adjust their approaches based on evolving risks, feedback, and lessons learned.
5. **Sustainability:** Resilience-building efforts should promote long-term sustainability by considering the social, economic, and environmental impacts of interventions. Sustainable practices help ensure that communities can continue to thrive in the face of future challenges.
6. **Prevention and Preparedness:** Investing in prevention and preparedness measures, such as early warning systems, emergency planning, and infrastructure improvements, can reduce the likelihood and severity of disasters and enhance communities' ability to respond effectively.
7. **Social Capital:** Strengthening social connections, trust, and networks within communities enhances their ability to mobilize resources, share information, and

support one another during times of crisis.

8. **Equity:** Resilience efforts should prioritize equity and address underlying social, economic, and environmental disparities that can exacerbate vulnerabilities within communities. Fair distribution of resources and opportunities helps build a more resilient and inclusive society.
9. **Learning and Innovation:** Embracing a culture of learning and innovation allows communities to continuously improve their resilience strategies, incorporate new knowledge and technologies, and adapt to evolving challenges.

By adhering to these principles, communities can build stronger, more adaptive, and inclusive systems that enable them to thrive in the face of adversity.

Methods of community resilience building

The Right to Information Act 2005(RTI) is an Act of the Parliament of India to provide for setting out a practical regime of the right to information for citizens. In the process of these provisions of the Act, any citizen may appeal for information from a public authority (a body of government or influential of state) which is required to respond

expeditiously with Community resilience building involves a range of methods and approaches aimed at enhancing a community's ability to withstand and recover from various challenges and crises. Here are some key methods:

1. **Risk Assessment and Planning:**

Conducting comprehensive risk assessments to identify hazards, vulnerabilities, and capacities within the community. Developing resilience plans that outline goals, priorities, and strategies for addressing identified risks and building adaptive capacity.

2. **Community Engagement and Participation:**

Engaging community members in resilience-building processes through participatory approaches, such as community meetings, focus groups, surveys, and workshops. Empowering residents to contribute their knowledge, skills, and perspectives to resilience initiatives.

3. **Education and Awareness:**

Raising awareness and promoting education about risks, hazards, and resilience strategies within the community. Providing information, training, and resources to help individuals and groups understand their roles and responsibilities in building resilience.

4. **Social Cohesion and Networking:**

Fostering social cohesion, trust, and solidarity among community members through social activities, networking events, and collaborative projects. Building strong social networks and partnerships that facilitate cooperation, mutual support, and collective action during times of crisis.

5. **Infrastructure and Environmental Improvements:**

Investing in resilient infrastructure, such as flood barriers, stormwater management systems, and earthquake-resistant buildings, to reduce physical vulnerabilities and enhance the community's ability to withstand disasters. Implementing environmental conservation and restoration projects that protect natural resources and ecosystems.

6. **Economic Development and Livelihood Support:**

Promoting economic stability and diversification through job creation, entrepreneurship, and skills training programs. Supporting small businesses, cooperatives, and micro-enterprises to build resilience to economic shocks and downturns.

7. **Health and Social Services:**

Strengthening access to healthcare services, mental health support, and social services within the

community. Establishing community health centers, counseling programs, and emergency response teams to address health-related crises and promote well-being.

8. Disaster Preparedness and Response:

Developing and implementing emergency preparedness plans, evacuation procedures, and response protocols. Conducting drills, simulations, and exercises to test readiness and improve coordination among emergency responders and community members.

9. Capacity Building and Training:

Building the capacity of individuals, organizations, and institutions within the community to respond effectively to challenges and crises. Providing training in disaster risk reduction, first aid, communication, leadership, and other relevant skills.

10. Policy Advocacy and Institutional Strengthening:

Advocating for supportive policies, regulations, and investments at local, regional, and national levels to strengthen community resilience. Building partnerships with government agencies, NGOs, academia, and other stakeholders to enhance institutional capacity and promote collaborative action.

By employing these methods in a holistic and integrated manner, communities can build resilience that enhances their ability to thrive in the face of adversity and uncertainty.

Stages of community resilience building

The process of building community resilience typically involves several stages, each with its own objectives and activities. While the specific steps may vary depending on the context, here are the general stages of community resilience building:

1. Assessment and Planning:

- Conduct a comprehensive assessment of the community's strengths, vulnerabilities, and needs.
- Identify key stakeholders and establish partnerships to support resilience-building efforts.
- Develop a resilience plan that outlines goals, priorities, and strategies based on the assessment findings.

2. Capacity Building:

- Enhance the community's capacity to address resilience challenges through training, education, and skill-building initiatives.
- Foster leadership development and empower community members to

take active roles in resilience-building activities.

- Strengthen local institutions, organizations, and networks to support coordinated action and collaboration.

3. **Risk Reduction and Mitigation:**

- Implement measures to reduce the likelihood and impact of hazards, such as natural disasters, economic downturns, or social disruptions.
- Invest in infrastructure improvements, land-use planning, and environmental conservation to minimize risks.
- Promote sustainable practices and technologies that enhance resilience to future threats.

4. **Preparedness and Response:**

- Develop emergency preparedness plans and protocols to guide community responses to disasters and crises.
- Conduct drills, simulations, and exercises to test preparedness and improve coordination among stakeholders.
- Establish communication systems and disseminate information to ensure timely warnings and alerts.

5. **Recovery and Adaptation:**

- Support the recovery and rehabilitation of affected communities following disasters or crises.
- Provide assistance, resources, and services to help individuals and businesses rebuild and recover.
- Promote adaptive strategies and innovations that enable communities to bounce back stronger and more resilient.

6. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- Monitor progress towards resilience goals and outcomes, using indicators to track performance and identify areas for improvement.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of resilience-building interventions and initiatives, incorporating feedback from stakeholders.
- Adjust strategies and plans based on lessons learned and evolving risks and priorities.

Throughout these stages, community engagement, participation, and collaboration are essential for success. By actively involving community members in resilience-building efforts and fostering partnerships among diverse

stakeholders, communities can enhance their collective capacity to withstand and recover from challenges.

Community participation in community resilience building

Community participation is essential for effective community resilience building. Here are some ways in which community participation contributes to resilience:

- 1. Local Knowledge and Expertise:** Community members possess valuable local knowledge and expertise about their environment, social dynamics, and vulnerabilities. Their insights can inform resilience planning and decision-making, ensuring that strategies are contextually relevant and effective.
- 2. Ownership and Empowerment:** Engaging communities in resilience-building processes fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment. When individuals and groups are actively involved in identifying priorities, setting goals, and implementing solutions, they become more invested in the outcomes and are motivated to contribute to their success.
- 3. Social Cohesion and Trust:** Participation in resilience-building activities strengthens social

cohesion and trust within communities. Collaborative efforts bring people together, foster positive relationships, and build solidarity, enhancing the community's ability to support one another during times of crisis.

- 4. Inclusivity and Equity:** Community participation promotes inclusivity and equity by ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives are heard and considered. By actively engaging marginalized groups, including women, youth, elderly, and people with disabilities, resilience efforts become more responsive to the needs of all community members.
- 5. Resource Mobilization:** Community participation facilitates resource mobilization by leveraging local assets, networks, and social capital. Through voluntary contributions, collective action, and partnerships with external stakeholders, communities can access additional resources and support for resilience-building initiatives.
- 6. Adaptation and Innovation:** Communities are better positioned to adapt to changing circumstances and innovate in response to emerging challenges when they actively participate in resilience-building processes. Experimentation, learning, and

adaptation become integral parts of community resilience strategies, enabling communities to evolve and improve over time.

7. **Effective Implementation:** Community participation enhances the effectiveness of resilience-building interventions by fostering community buy-in, compliance, and accountability. When community members are involved in decision-making and implementation, projects are more likely to be tailored to local needs, culturally appropriate, and sustainable.

To facilitate community participation in resilience building, it is essential to create opportunities for engagement, provide adequate support and resources, foster inclusive decision-making processes, and promote transparent communication and collaboration among all stakeholders. By harnessing the collective wisdom, creativity, and resilience of communities, we can build stronger, more adaptive, and resilient societies.

Role of grampanchayat in community resilience building

Gram Panchayats, as local self-governing bodies in rural areas of India, play a crucial role in community resilience building. Here are some ways in which Gram Panchayats contribute to resilience:

1. **Local Governance and Decision-Making:** Gram Panchayats are responsible for local governance and decision-making, making them well-positioned to understand the needs, priorities, and vulnerabilities of their communities. They can lead resilience-building efforts by coordinating with community members, identifying risks, and developing tailored strategies.
2. **Infrastructure Development:** Gram Panchayats oversee the planning, construction, and maintenance of local infrastructure, including roads, bridges, water supply systems, and community buildings. Investing in resilient infrastructure improves the community's ability to withstand disasters and provides essential services during emergencies.
3. **Disaster Preparedness and Response:** Gram Panchayats play a key role in disaster preparedness and response by developing contingency plans, establishing early warning systems, and organizing evacuation procedures. They can mobilize local resources, coordinate relief efforts, and provide support to affected communities during and after disasters.
4. **Health and Sanitation:** Gram Panchayats are responsible for ensuring access to healthcare services and sanitation facilities in

rural areas. Promoting public health measures, hygiene practices, and disease prevention initiatives enhances community resilience by reducing vulnerabilities to health emergencies and pandemics.

5. **Livelihood Support:** Gram Panchayats can support livelihood diversification, skill development, and income-generating activities to improve the economic resilience of local communities. Encouraging entrepreneurship, agriculture, and cottage industries creates opportunities for sustainable livelihoods and reduces dependency on external assistance.

6. **Natural Resource Management:** Gram Panchayats play a crucial role in managing natural resources, including land, water, forests, and biodiversity. Sustainable management practices, conservation efforts, and ecosystem restoration enhance environmental resilience and reduce vulnerabilities to climate change impacts.

7. **Community Engagement and Awareness:** Gram Panchayats can facilitate community engagement and awareness-raising activities on resilience-building topics, including disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation, and emergency preparedness. Promoting education, training, and information sharing empowers

community members to take proactive measures to protect themselves and their surroundings.

8. **Social Welfare and Inclusivity:** Gram Panchayats promote social welfare programs and initiatives to support vulnerable groups, including women, children, elderly, and persons with disabilities. Ensuring inclusivity, equity, and social cohesion strengthens community resilience by fostering solidarity, mutual support, and collective action.

9. **Advocacy and Networking:** Gram Panchayats can advocate for policy reforms, resource allocation, and institutional support at higher levels of government to strengthen community resilience. Building partnerships with other local governments, NGOs, and stakeholders enhances collective efforts and expands access to expertise and resources.

By leveraging their local knowledge, authority, and networks, Gram Panchayats can effectively lead community resilience-building initiatives and empower rural communities to withstand and recover from various challenges and crises.

Positive Effect of community resilience building

Community resilience building has numerous positive effects that

contribute to the well-being and sustainability of communities. Some of these include:

1. **Enhanced Preparedness:**

Communities that invest in resilience building are better prepared to face and respond to various challenges, including natural disasters, economic downturns, and public health emergencies. Preparedness measures such as early warning systems, evacuation plans, and emergency supplies help minimize the impact of crises and save lives.

2. **Improved Response and Recovery:**

Resilient communities exhibit greater capacity to respond effectively and recover quickly from disasters and shocks. Strong social networks, collaborative partnerships, and coordinated efforts enable communities to mobilize resources, provide support to affected individuals and families, and rebuild infrastructure and livelihoods in the aftermath of crises.

3. **Reduced Vulnerability:**

Resilience-building initiatives address underlying vulnerabilities within communities, such as poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation. By promoting inclusive development, social cohesion, and sustainable practices, resilience efforts help

reduce vulnerabilities and enhance adaptive capacity, making communities more resistant to future threats.

4. **Promotion of Social Cohesion:**

Community resilience building fosters social cohesion, trust, and solidarity among community members. By coming together to address common challenges and support one another during times of need, communities build stronger bonds and relationships, which contribute to overall well-being and quality of life.

5. **Empowerment and Capacity Building:**

Resilience-building activities empower individuals and communities to take ownership of their futures and actively participate in decision-making processes. Through education, training, and skill-building initiatives, communities develop the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to navigate and overcome challenges independently.

6. **Economic Stability and Growth:**

Resilient communities are more economically stable and dynamic, attracting investment, fostering entrepreneurship, and creating opportunities for sustainable development. By diversifying livelihoods, strengthening local economies, and promoting

innovation, resilience-building initiatives contribute to long-term prosperity and growth.

7. **Environmental Sustainability:** Resilience-building efforts often include measures to protect and conserve natural resources, mitigate climate change impacts, and promote environmental sustainability. By adopting eco-friendly practices, preserving ecosystems, and reducing carbon emissions, communities enhance their resilience to environmental risks and contribute to global sustainability goals.
8. **Health and Well-being:** Resilience-building initiatives promote public health, safety, and well-being by improving access to healthcare services, sanitation facilities, and nutritious food. By addressing social determinants of health, such as poverty, housing, and education, communities create conditions that support healthier lifestyles and reduce health disparities.

Overall, community resilience building has far-reaching positive effects that extend beyond crisis response and recovery. By fostering adaptive capacity, promoting social cohesion, and empowering communities, resilience initiatives contribute to sustainable development, inclusive growth, and a brighter future for all.

Challenges in community resilience building

Building community resilience can face various challenges, including:

1. **Limited Resources:** Communities may lack the financial, human, and technological resources needed to invest in resilience-building initiatives. Limited funding, staffing, and infrastructure can hinder the implementation of comprehensive resilience plans.
2. **Social Disparities:** Socioeconomic disparities, discrimination, and unequal access to resources can undermine community resilience efforts. Marginalized groups may face greater vulnerabilities and barriers to participation, exacerbating existing inequalities.
3. **Fragmented Governance:** Fragmented governance structures and jurisdictional boundaries can hinder coordination and collaboration among stakeholders. Misaligned policies, competing priorities, and bureaucratic hurdles may impede effective resilience planning and implementation.
4. **Short-Term Focus:** Short-term priorities and political cycles may overshadow long-term resilience goals, leading to a lack of sustained investment and commitment. Addressing immediate needs often

takes precedence over proactive measures to build resilience.

5. **Complexity of Risks:** Communities face multifaceted risks, including natural hazards, economic instability, social unrest, and public health crises. Understanding and addressing the interconnected nature of these risks requires comprehensive and interdisciplinary approaches.
6. **Community Engagement:** Engaging diverse community members in resilience-building processes can be challenging. Limited participation, lack of trust, and communication barriers may hinder effective collaboration and decision-making.
7. **Resistance to Change:** Resistance to change and inertia within communities and institutions can impede resilience-building efforts. Cultural norms, vested interests, and fear of disruption may hinder the adoption of innovative practices and solutions.
8. **Data and Knowledge Gaps:** Inadequate data, research, and information sharing can hinder evidence-based decision-making and planning. Data gaps, lack of access to relevant knowledge, and insufficient capacity for data analysis may limit the effectiveness of resilience strategies.

9. **External Pressures:** External factors, such as globalization, urbanization, and climate change, can exert additional pressures on communities, affecting their ability to build resilience. Addressing these systemic challenges requires collective action and international cooperation.

Overcoming these challenges requires sustained commitment, collaboration, and innovation from governments, civil society, businesses, and communities themselves. By addressing underlying vulnerabilities and building adaptive capacity, communities can enhance their resilience and better withstand future shocks and stresses.

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An Analysis of Village Development Plans (VDPs) under Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) in Karnataka

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Abstract

Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been the central points of village development among the three rural local bodies, with the responsibility for developing and implementing a large number of programs in each village. Therefore, every Gram Panchayat needs to prepare a village development plan for carrying out these works as per their priorities and resource availability. A Village Development Plan (VDP) is a plan outlining the desired developments according to the villagers – to bring about changes in the quality of life within the villages. The passage underscores the challenges faced in implementing Village Development Plans (VDP) in Gram Panchayats (GPs) in Karnataka, particularly under the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY). The VDPs, pivotal for rural development, aim to address the specific needs and resource capacities of each village. However, despite their importance, there has

been a noticeable lack of interest and participation from key stakeholders, including Members of Parliament (MPs), Zilla Parishad/Gram Panchayat (ZP/GP) officials, and local representatives.

Over the past five years, the VDPs have struggled to achieve their objectives due to insufficient engagement and awareness among villagers and authorities. The study reveals a significant discrepancy between the data presented in the VDPs and the actual conditions prevailing in the Gram Panchayats. While MPs are expected to play a facilitating role, and District Collectors are involved in the planning process, there appears to be a disconnect between these officials and effective on-the-ground implementation.

The decision to adopt a five-year systematic VDP cycle has not translated into successful execution, primarily due to the lack of commitment from key players. The

study suggests a shift in approach, emphasizing the importance of conducting baseline and physical surveys before formulating VDPs. Accurate data collection is deemed essential for understanding household conditions and perceptions about village development. Additionally, the study recommends involving the Gram Sabha in cross-checking data and promoting community participation to enhance the authenticity and effectiveness of the VDPs.

A critical concern highlighted is the inadequate preparation of VDPs, with several instances where plans deviate from program guidelines. The VDP, considered the most crucial document in the development process, has failed to encapsulate key requirements and address pressing issues in some cases. To address these challenges, the study underscores the need for increased awareness, community participation, and a meticulous data collection process to ensure the success of VDPs in Gram Panchayats, not only in Karnataka but across the entire country.

Key Words: Village Development Plan, Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, Gram Panchayats, Member of Parliament, Gram Sabha.

I. Introduction

Gram Panchayats (GPs) have been the central points of village

development among the three rural local bodies, with the responsibility for developing and implementing a large number of programs in each village. Therefore, every Gram Panchayat needs to prepare a village development plan for carrying out these works as per their priorities and resource availability. A Village Development Plan (VDP) is a plan outlining the desired developments according to the villagers – to bring about changes in the quality of life within the villages. VDP prepared for identified SAGY GP with special focus on enabling every poor household to come out of poverty. Hence VDP assumes a greater place in the implementation of SAGY and the study analyses its situation analysis, participatory techniques like social mapping, resource mapping and need matrix. Prior to the plan formulation, there will be a systematic environment creation and social mobilization, which will be led and guided by the MP himself/herself. The arranging procedure in every rural region will be a participatory exercise by the District Collector. The MP will assume a facilitating role pertaining to this work. In this context, policymakers and government officials decided to have five years of systematic VDP for each SAGY GP. The Village Development Plan has been prepared by the SAGY GP with professional and technical support from officials, Nodal Officer, practitioners, professionals and other experts (NGOs and other

organizations), both from within and outside the GP. The main aim of VDP is to ensure that the plan is really responsive to local needs and people's priorities and has to include detailed situation analysis covering different aspects and themes. Under the SAGY, we need to collect the quantitative data, baseline survey and qualitative information from the participatory assessments for preparing the VDP. CMDR has conducted a study on process and situation analysis of SAGY and observed that many GPs have conducted several meetings of the Gram Sabha to find out problems of the village and prepared VDP based on GS information. But few GPs prepared systematic plan for village development with the help of NGOs, officials and other experts. Ultimately, SAGY could not succeed due to lack of cooperation between the department and GPs, lack of funds and negligence of MP about SAGY.

The purpose of preparing VDP is to identify and prioritize developmental issues of the GP and develop such instruments that encourage active people/community participation and effective utilization of local resources in resolving the development issues in five-year term perspectives. The VDP is mainly based on the social, economic and livelihood analysis of a village community, leading to the identification and prioritization of development problems and

preparation of five-year based development plan of a village. The development activities identified in VDP could also be included in the Annual Action Plan or Jama Bandhi prepared by the GP. The GP has to handle the identification data, finalize the tools to collect the data, review the data and present the data in front of GS for their approval. The present study has focused on how to collect village information as well as collect basic household information, and how this information would be useful in the process of identifying the serious problems in a GP and finding the best ways to resolve them. Due to lack of interest among MP, ZP/GP officers, representatives, villagers, and lack of information, the VDP has not been successful for the last 7 years. In this background, the present study makes an attempt to understand the MP, ZP/GP officials and representatives' perceptions about the VDP in Karnataka and also to describe the adequate information needs to collect through the baseline survey to prepare an effective village plan.

II. Theoretical and Empirical Studies on Decentralised Planning

There are many studies conducted by researchers on decentralised planning. Based on available literature, they can be broadly categorized into two groups, theoretical and empirical.

There are three schools of thought on conceptual decentralised planning idea by scholars. These are (i) Fiscal Federalism (ii) Public Choice and (iii) New Development Administration. An understanding of the three schools of thought on the concept of decentralized planning is very important for implementation of local level planning in India. The Planning Commission set up a Working Group on District Planning under the Chairmanship of C.H. Hanumantha Rao in 1984. This was a major event in the history of Decentralized Planning in India. This group advocated the concept of integral area planning within the framework of multi-level planning. (Mahipal, 2008). Decentralisation to regional or local levels allows officials to disaggregate and adapt development plans and programs to the needs of heterogeneous regions and groups; leads to greater equity in allocation of government resources; develops administrative capability for economic development; and institutionalises participation of citizens in the planning process (Seetharam, 1988). The Government of Kerala launched the People's Plan Campaign (PPC) in 1996 and it has remained as a popular experiment in mobilizing people for the local planning process. In Karnataka, the system of Decentralized Planning outlines the political-administrative structure, describes the decentralized planning

process showing bottom-up and top-down linkages, evaluates plan formulation strategy and planning priorities, and critically examines the implementation of decentralized plans (Aziz, 1993; Babu, 1997). It may be concluded that local governments have done better in implementation than at plan formulation. The Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) in Karnataka initiated (vide order No. GP90 ZPS2015, dated 22/9/2015), the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) in all GPs since 2015 based on the People's Plan and existing Action Plan of GPs, to all GPs in the State. Apart from GPDP a Village Development Plan (VDP) under SAGY is a plan outlining the desired developments according to the villagers – to bring about changes in the quality of life within the villages. VDP prepared for identified SAGY GP with special focus on enabling every poor household to come out of poverty.

The objectives of VDP are situation analysis, participatory techniques like social mapping, resource mapping and need matrix. Prior to the plan formulation, there will be a systematic environment creation and social mobilization, which will be led and guided by the MP himself/herself. It is also focused for achieving economic development, social justice, welfare, and environment protection, all to be accomplished with people's

involvement. The present study makes an attempt to understand the MP, ZP/GP officials and representatives' perceptions about the VDP in Karnataka and also to describe the adequate information needs to collect through the baseline survey to prepare an effective village plan. We have collected data from all 38 GPs and selected households that are selected under SAGY in Karnataka.

III. Findings from the Study

IIIa. VDP and Gram Sabha Meetings

Gram Sabha is a forum for implementation of any schemes in the village level. As per the guidelines, the GPs had to convene Gram Sabha

meetings for preparing village development plan for implementing SAGY. We tried to understand whether all GPs have conducted special SGSY Gram Sabhas for preparing VDPs. The GPs were asked whether they had organized gram sabha, women GS, and Children GS to discuss about SAGY. Table 1 shows that more than 94.74% of GPs had organized gram sabha to have discussion pertaining to Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana. GP members discussed about the preparation of VDP and selection of works in the model village. Overall it had definitely helped in implementing SAGY programme. As per GP officials, GP could not conduct special women gram sabha and children gram sabha to discuss issues under SAGY programme.

Table No.: 1 – Organisation of Gram Sabhas about VDP

	Yes	No	Total
GP organize grama sabha meetings to discuss SAGY	36 (94.74)	2 (5.26)	38 (100%)

Source: Primary data

IIIb. Preparation of Village Development Plan (VDP) under SAGY:

A Village Development Plan (VDP) is a plan outlining the desired developments according to the villagers – to bring about changes in the quality of life within the villages. VDP prepared for identified SAGY GP with special focus on enabling every

poor household to come out of poverty. Hence, VDP assumes a greater place in the implementation of SAGY and the study analyses its situation analysis, participatory techniques like social mapping, resource mapping and need matrix. It was found that all of the selected gram panchayats had prepared village development plans for implementation of SAGY work. Table 2 provides information regarding the

process of preparation of village development plan. It is interesting to know from the table that 15 GPs prepared VDPs on their own, and 13 (34.21%) prepared with the help of NGOs. Some GPs prepared VDPs based on the discussion and issues raised in Gram Sabhas. It was found that 94.74% of them had uploaded VDP tracking templates on the website and only 5.26% of them had not uploaded (See table 2). We observed during field visits that some GPs prepared good VDPs and social mapping for development of GP as per

MP instructions and with the help of NGOs. They carried out the works as per VDP in the initial one or two years. Later, due to lack of interest of among the MP, Nodal officers, other line departments, representatives and due to political conflicts, GPs stopped the works and just updated the works which were done by the GPs and showed them as SAGY works. Hence, only 30% VDP works completed in SAGY by some GPs and some GPs completed more than 70% works listed in VDP.

Table No.: 2 – Preparation of Village Development Plan

	Yes	No	Total
Village development plan (VDP) prepared by GP	38	00	38
Preparation of VDP			
Particulars	No. of GPs	Percentage	
By GP itself	15	39.47	
GP with the help of NGO	13	34.21	
Through Gram Sabha	5	13.16	
GP Officials (PDOs)	5	13.16	
Total	38	100.00	
GP uploaded VDP Tracking Templates on the website			
Details	Yes	No	Total
GP uploaded VDP Tracking Templates on the website	36 (94.74%)	2 (5.26%)	38 (100%)

Source: Primary data

III c. Baseline Survey:

Baseline Survey is a part of VDP under SAGY, it helps to understand the actual situation of the GP. It helps to identify the problems of village and

provide basic infrastructure, amenities and services as well as the potential for the economic and human development. As per our survey data, only 31.6% GPs (see table 3) conducted baseline survey for SAGY and most of the GPs

used Census data and baseline survey which were carried out in the year 2012 for SBM and also used GPDP data.

Some of the GPs assigned this task to NGOs and other institutions for preparing VDP.

Table No.: 3 – Status of Baseline Survey

	Yes	No	Total
GP carried out baseline survey in connection with SAGY in 2015	12 (31.6%)	22 (68.4%)	38 (100.0%)

Source: Primary data

Village Development Plan (VDP) under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) and GPDP

The Village Development Plan has been prepared by the SAGY GP with professional and technical support from officials, Nodal Officer, practitioners, professionals and other experts (NGOs and other organizations), both from within and outside the GP. The main aims of VDP is to ensure that the plan is really responsive to local needs and people's priorities and has to include detailed situation analysis covering different aspects and themes. Under the SAGY, we need to collect the quantitative data, baseline survey and qualitative information from the participatory assessments for preparing the VDP. CMDR has conducted a study on process and situation analysis of SAGY and observed that many GPs have conducted several meetings of the Gram Sabha to find out problems of the village and prepared VDP based on GS information. But few GPs prepared

systematic plan for village development with the help of NGOs, officials and other experts. Ultimately, SAGY could not succeed due to lack of cooperation between the department and GPs, lack of funds and negligence of MP about SAGY.

III.d. Evaluation of the Implementation of SAGY by GPs

As per guidelines of SAGY, each SAGY GP should have monitoring committee for assessing the performance of work done by each GP and need to prepare progress report for updating the work. We also tried to understand whether each GP constituted the monitoring committee for assessing the implementation of Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana. Table 5 shows that while 30 GPs had monitoring committees, 8 GPs did not have any such arrangement. For each SAGY, DC, AC, CEO, Tahasildar, MP, Nodal Officer, PDO, MLA, Village Elders are members of the Monitoring

Committee. This table also indicates that 92.11% of the GPs had prepared progress reports under SAGY and only 7.89% did not prepare progress report. In the process of evaluating SAGY scheme it is the progress report that gains significant place. In these progress reports, the status of all the activities undertaken by the members of GP would be mentioned. As per

SAGY guidelines the GPs prepared progress report of SAGY on a quarterly basis and to upload the same on SAGY website. Table 4 indicates that 26 out of 38 GPs prepared progress report of SAGY on a quarterly basis and only 5 had prepared once in a half year. Interestingly, only one GP had prepared progress report of SAGY on a yearly basis.

Table No.: 4 – Status of Monitoring Committee and Preparation of Progress Report

Particulars	Yes	No	Don't Know
Monitoring Committee for SAGY	30 (78.95%)	7 (18.42%)	1 (2.63%)
Preparation of Progress Report	Yes	No	Total
GP prepared progress report under SAGY	35 (92.11%)	3 (7.89%)	38 (100%)
Frequency of Progress Report			
	No. of GPs	Percentage	
Quarterly	26	74.29	
Half yearly	5	14.29	
Yearly	4	11.43	
Total	35	100	

Source: Primary data

IV. Impression/Opinion of GP members and the Villagers about SAGY

IV a. Opinions of the GP members and the Villagers about SAGY

We have collected information from various stakeholders and their perception about SAGY. GP

representatives and villagers have provided their valuable opinions pertaining to the implementation of SAGY scheme. The opinions provided by the GP representatives and villagers relating to SAGY are of high value. A majority (31) of the GP members have indicated that the programme of SAGY is a good programme. Only two members said that it is not a good

programme and said that GP doesn't have much role in this programme. As per them, GP need to follow the instructions of MPs and nodal officers and cannot take any individual decision regarding the implementation of SAGY. A few GP members (5) were

neutral. Table 6 depicts that the majority (65.8%) of the villagers spoke positively about the programme. It was also found that the impression of the majority of the people was good towards SAGY programme.

Table No.: 5 - Responses of GP members and Villages towards SAGY

Particulars	GP Members		Villages	
	No. of GPs	Percentage	No. of GPs	Percentage
Good	31	81.58	25	65.79
Bad	2	5.26	4	10.53
Neutral	5	13.16	9	23.68
Total	38	100.00	38	100.00

Source: Primary data

IV b. Major Hurdles of SAGY

We tried to understand why GP has not succeeded in the implementation of the SAGY programme. As per our data most of GP officials opined that lack of

funds, political conflict, lack of interest by the MPs, Lack of plan and lack of coordination between GPs and other line departments are major hurdles in the SAGY.

Table 6: Baseline Survey conducted by GP

Reasons	Number of GP	%
Lack of funds	27	70.0
Lack of Plan (VDP)	21	55.0
Political conflict	17	45.0
Lack of interest by the MPs	15	40.0
Lack of coordination between GP and other line departments	23	60.0
Others	6	15.0

Source: Primary data

V. Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on VDP

We conducted one FGDs in each division; totally four FGDs have been conducted in the entire GP. We also discussed with ZP, TP and GP staff regarding VDP under SAGY activities and why it has failed at GP level. Overall, we observed that VDP is not successful due to the following reasons:

- GP conducts special GS/WS with regard to VDP but GS minutes are not followed in GB meetings:
- Few people have participated in VDP meetings.
- GP does not collect information from each household and community.
- There is no action on VDP after preparing VDP Report.
- There is no proper database for preparing VDP. Approximate and proxy data is used to prepare VDP.
- Line departments have not provided accurate data to GP.

VI. Conclusion

Effective village planning is essential for comprehensive development. This paper reveals that Village Development Plans (VDP) in

Gram Panchayats (GPs) are often hastily prepared without necessary information, driven by external pressures from higher authorities (ZP/TP). The absence of a clear authority responsible for VDP implementation at various administrative levels, coupled with the suboptimal functioning of Gram Sabhas, compounds these challenges.

To address these issues, the study underscores the importance of conducting a baseline survey to identify actual problems and facilitate effective planning at both village and GP levels. Detailed household information and perceptions obtained through the baseline and physical surveys under Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) are deemed crucial. The recommendation is to organize information hamlet-wise, street-wise, and social group-wise to enhance the implementation of schemes and programs within the village.

Authentic data collection is emphasized as vital for preparing comprehensive and long-term development plans at both village and ward levels. The study advocates for activity mapping and social mapping in conjunction with baseline surveys to create awareness and ensure sound planning for village development in each state. While GPs have prepared VDPs and uploaded tracking templates

on websites, the study notes that the majority lack proper baseline surveys. However, those with monitoring committees for Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana implementation show better progress. Regular submission of progress reports to Zilla Parishads indicates positive engagement in the SAGY program.

Major suggestions from the paper include the necessity for better planning, project integration, transparency, and accountability for the successful implementation of the SAGY program. Additionally, the study advocates for participatory and inclusive VDP exercises, paying special attention to women, youth, and weaker sections. Active involvement of at least 3/4th of Gram Sabha members in meetings and the approval of development plans is considered crucial for program success. Overall, the study underscores the importance of proper data collection, transparency, and community participation at the GP level for the success of VDPs in the entire state and country.

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Public Transportation in Uttar Pradesh: A Policy Analysis of Intracity Connectivity

Harshit Agrawal

Abstract

Public transportation serves as a lifeline for every city. Public transport could range from metro rails to Rapid Bus Transit, including privately owned Intermediate Transport such as autorickshaws. Recently, there has been a rise in the debate on Sustainable Urban Transportation and Green Urban Mobility as a way forward to improve access and mobility for people and mitigate the environmental impact of transportation. However, the objectives of sustainable transportation would remain incomplete and unachievable if it did not consider how social factors of gender, age, physical ability, and economic status impact an individual's mobility.

Urban Local Bodies, or UBLs, are generally responsible for managing cities' transit networks. Nevertheless, most of the time, policy formulation occurs at the State and Central levels.

Therefore, there remains a gap in the implementation of urban transportation. The present research delves into four different policies—Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), 2005; Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), 2015; Smart City Mission, 2015; Uttar Pradesh Electric Vehicle Manufacturing & Mobility Policy, 2022 and critically evaluated them in the light of Uttar Pradesh transit mission.

Keywords: Public transportation, Mobility, Uttar Pradesh, Policy-making and Intracity

Introduction

If urban centres are the catalysts for the growth of the economy and prosperity, then the transportation network is what maintains those engines spinning. Connecting individuals to opportunities and businesses to markets is a critical

aspect of economic development, as it increases the possibility for equitable growth, welfare of communities and prosperity in society. The United Nations emphasises in “Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (to) provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons” (UN, 2015, p. 26).

The developing world's public transport networks are beset by persistent incompetence and corruption, crammed and unreliable services, clogged roads that slow down transit vehicles, and a sometimes disorderly and disorganised setting for operation. In any case, routes are not intended to serve those in poverty, and in many cities, dwellers are so impoverished that they cannot pay even reduced fares. Because of this, persons who live in poverty in developing nations suffer from a poor degree of mobility and accessibility—particularly with regard to jobs (Pucher et al., 2004).

Intracity public transportation networks serve as a means of not only reducing the time and distance between two places but also allowing individuals, especially marginalised

and poor communities, to have better access to public services. According to Pirie (1981), accessibility is synonymous with reachability and convenience. Pirie argued that the concept of accessibility should be understood as the capacity to receive services as opposed to minimising the actual distance between a source and a destination.

However, the political economy fostered by neo-liberal ideas has contributed to the drafting of policies that envisioned 'modern' cities and their transportation network as automobile-centric—meaning the local transit system should heavily rely on private vehicles. Neo-liberalist views on state and government have also led to the development of an understanding both at the state and local level that the function or role of the government is to create an environment where individuals and their automobiles have the highest potential for growth.

Urban theorists criticised and termed such phenomenon as elitist in nature. They argued that such an approach marginalised the interests of the rest of society while catering to the mobility necessities of the wealthy few. According to Govind Gopakumar (2020), the city has changed from having busy roadways with pushcarts, pedestrians, vendors, and cyclists to ones that are congested with cars.

Many of these private vehicles are the result of the deliberate 'bourgeoisification' of the city, where the adoption of automobile ownership and travel is the goal.

Urban theorists and planners from different schools of thought, including feminists, postcolonial theorists, cultural geographers, and others, have all challenged the idea of 'futuristic cities'- a vision gaining popularity worldwide. Loosely defined futuristic cities would entail minimalist governance supported and guided by sustainable policies and advanced technologies. However, urban planners have questioned the impact of these policies and asked how these policies would disproportionately impact the urban poor, women, elderly and other marginalised groups (Jain & Moraglio, 2014; Deore & Lathia, 2019).

In the last decade, this unequal and asymmetrical burden borne by the 'othered' communities in the cities has come to the centre of policy discussions and formulations. These discourses have been manifested in people-oriented policies like Smart City Mission, which has departed from the earlier policies of a top-down approach to adopting a more localist approach to development. This approach has also influenced how states and cities design their transit policies, specifically at a city level, to improve both connectivity and accessibility for all.

The Planning Landscape of Uttar Pradesh

In the Indian context, it is noteworthy that the responsibility for planning predominantly rests with the government, which primarily focuses on formulating macro-development or master plans. The assumption of user neutrality is commonly accepted, with limited emphasis on active participation from individuals (Desai, 2007). However, the limitation of this central approach to planning was acknowledged in the late 1980s when the Central and State governments began to realise why implementing policies at the grassroots level was not coming to fruition.

The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments were a direct result of this realisation. They established a consistent three-tier system of urban local bodies, giving rise to three different types of local governments: municipal corporations, which are for large urban areas; municipal councils, which are for relatively smaller urban areas; and Nagar Panchayats, or city councils, which are for areas that are moving from rural to urban status. The establishment of district and metropolitan planning committees and ward committees at the municipal level were among the other significant aspects of this constitutional amendment (Ashok, 2022). However, the possibility of successful

decentralisation is constrained by India's constitutional framework. The Indian Constitution does not provide municipalities with a great deal of authority since each state must pass a state legislative act to transfer authority to municipalities (Murthy & Maya J., 2015; Visakha, 2021).

In the matter of transportation and connectivity, the Indian Constitution does not lay down clear principles. The Constitution's Seventh Schedule comprises detailed lists outlining the subjects the separate governments (Union, State, or both) must administer. However, no list specifically mentions urban transport. Despite this, the division of responsibilities suggests that the framers of the Constitution intended the federal government to be responsible for interstate transportation systems but not intrastate or intracity transportation systems. Until 1986, the central government did not have a separate ministry for urban transport. Instead, the ministries responsible for different modes of transportation, such as railways and roads, also handled urban transport issues. In 1986, the government created a separate ministry for urban transport to address the need for integrated planning and coordination with other aspects of urban development. However, the responsibility for urban transport in state governments remains unclear and

varies from state to state (Agarwal & Chauhan, 2011).

No separate or uniform law directly governs and regulates the transit policies in Uttar Pradesh. The Uttar Pradesh transport policies are formulated under the ambit of multiple laws which entrust various departments to implement those policies. Following is the list of laws concerning public and private transportation in Uttar Pradesh.

1. **The Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation Act of 1950** created the Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation as a statutory organisation tasked with providing efficient, adequate, cost-effective, and well-coordinated road transport throughout the state. It also specifies the corporation's functions, powers, duties, and those of its officers and staff.
2. **The Uttar Pradesh Urban Planning and Development Act of 1973** provides for the planned development of various parts of Uttar Pradesh, as well as problems related to it. It also creates Development Authorities, the Housing and Development Board, and Special Area Development Authorities for various sections of the state.
3. **The Uttar Pradesh Motor Vehicles Taxation Act, 1997**, governs the

imposition and collection of motor vehicle taxes in Uttar Pradesh. It also outlines the rates, exemptions, and penalties for various vehicle kinds and their owners and users.

4. **The Uttar Pradesh Road Development Fund Rules 2014** establishes a fund to develop, maintain, and improve roads and bridges in Uttar Pradesh. It also describes the fund's origins, management, use, audit, and accountability.
5. **The Uttar Pradesh Road Safety Policy 2014** intends to reduce the incidence of road fatalities and crashes in the state by implementing a comprehensive and integrated strategy for road safety. It also describes the state's vision, goals, approaches, and plans of action for increasing road safety.

Understanding the Structural Organisation of Transportation Policy in Uttar Pradesh

The government of Uttar Pradesh, through its various departments and directorates, plans and executes the public transportation policies for the state. However, each department is tasked with a different aspect of the state's transit mission. For instance, the Department of Urban Housing and Planning is authorised to develop metro rail projects in different cities

(Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Ghaziabad, Gorakhpur) of the state. At the same time, the Directorate of Urban Transport is mandated with the Rapid Bus Transit System in different cities.

Therefore, the central problem within this mechanism lies in its dependence on each department functioning correctly. However, a fractured implementation of transit policies could not achieve comprehensive connectivity and accessibility for all people. The state government also lacks a supervising agency or a body that could function as a bridge between various departments for the effective execution of the state's transit vision. As in the case of Metro Rails and Rapid Bust Transit System, both modes of transportation are increasingly used by people to manage congested automobile traffic, improve time efficiency, reduce cost, and impact on the environment. However, many times, due to the complex system of decision-making, different modes of public transportation do not work in tandem with each other.

The following figure, i.e. Figure-1, illustrates the different agencies in the Uttar Pradesh government mandated to manage different aspects of the State's transport policies. Apart from the following departments, the Transport Department under the Commissioner's Organisation "deals with various transport-related matters like issuance

Figure 1 - Organisational Functioning of Uttar Pradesh Government (Transport sector)



of driving licenses, registration of motor vehicles, grant and renewal of permits, collection of taxes/fees, road safety regulations and all other regulatory and enforcement functions assigned to it under the provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988¹.

Intracity Transportation in Uttar Pradesh: A Policy Brief

For many years, the vast majority of Uttar Pradesh's cities have struggled with public transportation in the city, which has hampered both people's

mobility and the expansion of the local economy. These issues originate from a lack of public transit, subpar utilisation of the available transportation infrastructure, inadequate urban bus routes and services, and a lack of synergy between land use and transportation planning. These factors encourage a shift towards privatised modes of transportation. The difficulty with better bus transportation is offering a high-calibre service at a reasonable cost. Assessing various public transport technologies in light of the city's features is equally crucial.

To map and analyse the extent of intra-city connectivity in Uttar Pradesh, four different governmental policies drafted with the intent to improve public transportation and mobility will be evaluated to highlight how these policies have an impact on the everyday lives of the people residing in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Following is the list of policies—

- A. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), 2005
- B. Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), 2015
- C. Smart City Mission, 2015
- D. Uttar Pradesh Electric Vehicle Manufacturing & Mobility Policy, 2022

Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JnNURM), 2005

The Indian government established the US\$20 billion fund for the JnNURM project in 2005 to provide fundamental amenities and upgrades to urban infrastructure for the impoverished in 65 cities selected under the mission during the ensuing seven years. One of the stated objectives of the mission was to transform urban transportation, “including roads, highways, expressways, MRTS, and metro

projects” (Ministry of Urban Employment and Poverty Alleviation and Ministry of Urban Development, 2005).

The government of India's JnNURM initiative offered incentives for organised public transportation mechanisms or rapid bus transit systems in cities with a population of 10 lac or more. Seven cities from Uttar Pradesh were selected, out of which Agra, Allahabad, Kanpur Lucknow, Meerut and Varanasi were from Category B or cities with a million or more people, and only Mathura was from Category C or cities with less than a million people. In order to guarantee a Sustainable Transport System, the Indian government suggested the following state and local-level reforms.

State-Level Reforms

- Establishing, with the necessary legal support, a city-level Unified Metropolitan Transport Authority (UMTA) for each selected city to enable coordinated project planning and execution for urban transport and integrated management.
- Creation of a State-level Dedicated Urban Transport fund.
- Modifying city byelaws and master plans to integrate transport and land use through urban density in

conjunction with Mass Rapid Transit System or MRTS lines and surrounding districts.

- Appointing a single state department to handle all urban transportation-related concerns, as opposed to several departments that do so now.
- Establishing an institutional and regulatory framework to allow for the regular revision of all public and intermediate public transport systems' tariffs.
- The entire tax burden on urban buses, municipal bus services, and BRTS will be waived or reimbursed by the state government and Local Bodies².

District-Level Reforms

- Creation of a city-level Dedicated Urban Transport Fund.
- A policy for advertisements that, according to applicable laws, uses the money from advertisements on public transportation, intermediate public transportation, and public utilities for public purposes.
- Parking policies, such as those that prohibit parking on arterial and ring roads and provide multi-level parking garages with park-and-ride facilities in city centres, are used to increase the appeal of public

transportation by reflecting the true worth of the area occupied by the parking fee.

- A well-run and effective city bus system that uses Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) through a city-specific Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) for bus services, preferably on Public-Private Partnership (PPP) under comprehensive contracts wherein the government encompassing different institutions performs the roles of planning, coordinating, contracting, monitoring, supervision, and management of shared services and infrastructure, etc³.

The State of Uttar Pradesh created DPRs for seven cities—Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Mathura, Allahabad, Varanasi, and Meerut—in accordance with the aforementioned framework. Initially, 1310 buses were suggested for the aforementioned cities in the DPRs or Detailed Project Reports. The Government of India accepted the DPR, and the Ministry of Urban Development gave the State Government fifty per cent of the project's cost (Rs. 326.89 crores) in the form of additional central assistance. The State's Urban Development Department was to fund twenty per cent of the remaining amount, and the remainder, or thirty per cent, was supposed to be covered by parastatals,

²Official Website of Uttar Pradesh Urban Transport Directorate / About the Directorate (uputd.gov.in)

³*Ibid.*

such as the Development Authority, Municipal Corporation, Housing Board, and Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation carried out the project's implementation⁴.

The JnNURM policies that the Uttar Pradesh government implemented for urban transit have improved the standard of living in cities. Both the quality of NMT infrastructure and the use of public transit have increased. A more sustainable and effective transport system has been achieved through the use of an integrated approach to transport planning.

Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation, 2015

On June 25, 2015, the Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT) was introduced in 500 deliberately selected cities throughout the nation. The mission is to create the fundamental urban infrastructure, which includes stormwater drainage, non-motorized urban transportation, sewage and septage management, water supply, and the creation of parks and green areas. One of the stated purposes of the mission is to “reduce pollution by switching to public transport or constructing facilities for non-motorized transport, e.g., walking and cycling”⁵. The broad component of urban transport includes the following sub-areas under it.

- I. “Ferry vessels for inland waterways (excluding port/bay infrastructure) and buses.
- II. Footpaths/walkways, sidewalks, foot over-bridges and facilities for non-motorized transport, e.g., bicycles).
- III. Multi-level parking.
- IV. Bus Rapid Transit System (BRTS)”⁶.

Of the 61 cities covered under the AMRUT scheme in Uttar Pradesh, 14 are Municipal Corporations/ Nagar Nigams, and 47 are Nagar Palika Parishads. The state government has committed to funding at least 20% of the project costs along with the share of the Union, with the remaining amount to be borne by the ULBs or Urban Local Bodies. RCUES Lucknow has been nominated as the implementing agency for Parks, Green spaces, and transport⁷.

Though the AMRUT scheme encapsulates the revamping of cities' public transport to curb pollution and increase mobility, the UP government has prioritised other aspects of the scheme and allocated minimal funds towards the development of urban transport⁸.

The increased demand for transportation has placed a strain on the existing infrastructure, causing it to deteriorate and become increasingly

⁴Official Website of Uttar Pradesh Urban Transport Directorate (uputd.gov.in)

⁵Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation -AMRUT: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India (mohua.gov.in)

⁶<https://www.myscheme.gov.in/schemes/amrut>

⁷State Annual Action Plan 2016-17 (Up) Under Amrut.Pdf

⁸State Annual Action Plan (Saap) Of Uttar Pradesh Under Amrut 08-02-2016.Pdf (Up.Nic.In) & Final 3rd State Annual Action Plan (3rd Saap) For Fy: 2017-18 To Fy 2019-20 Of Uttar Pradesh Under Atal Mission For Rejuvenation And Urban Transformation (Amrut)

inadequate. This has resulted in overcrowded cities and traffic congestion. These problems have a significant impact on people's lives, affecting their health, safety, and quality of life (TNN, 2014).

Smart City Mission, 2015

The Smart City Mission represents a departure from the conventional understanding of urban planning. In its Smart City Mission (2014), while defining a 'smart city', the plan acknowledges that "there is no universally accepted definition of a Smart City. It means different things to different people. The conceptualisation of Smart City, therefore, varies from city to city and country to country, depending on the level of development, willingness to change and reform, resources and aspirations of the city residents" (Ministry of Urban Development, 2015, p. 5).

Guideline 2.4, which elaborates on the core elements of the infrastructure, includes efficient urban mobility and public transport as a target that urban local bodies should work for espousing in their respective cities. Guideline 3, which enlists certain features for a smart city, included two components with respect to promoting 'green mobility', i.e. a) "Creating walkable localities — reduce congestion, air pollution and resource depletion, boost the local economy, promote interactions and ensure security. The

road network is created or refurbished not only for vehicles and public transport but also for pedestrians and cyclists, and necessary administrative services are offered within walking or cycling distance; b) Promoting a variety of transport options — Transit Oriented Development (TOD), public transport and last mile para-transport connectivity" (Ministry of Urban Development, 2015, p. 7).

Ten Smart Cities of Uttar Pradesh, namely Agra, Aligarh, Bareilly, Jhansi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Moradabad, Prayagraj, Saharanpur and Varanasi, were selected in 5 rounds. Subsequently, the Hon'ble Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh announced during the budget session for the year 2019-20 the extension of Smart City Mission to the remaining 7 Nagar Nigams, namely Ayodhya, Firozabad, Ghaziabad, Gorakhpur, Mathura, Meerut and Shahjahanpur which were not covered under the Central Smart City Mission. The Directorate of Smart Cities Mission has been set up under the Directorate of Local Bodies to oversee the work in the 17 Smart Cities which have been formed in the existing 17 Nagar Nigams of the state. Out of these 17, 10 Central Smart Cities are being managed through SPV (Special Purpose Vehicle) formed under the Companies Act 2013, while the respective Nagar Nigams directly manage the remaining 7 State Smart Cities⁹.

The Uttar Pradesh state and Union government are collaborating on 542 projects valued at Rs 10,124 crore to transform cities into "smart" towns. Of them, 343 projects totaling Rs. 4757 crores have already been finished, and work on 199 projects is moving quickly forward. The Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) and Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) will be operational in ten cities in the state, including Agra, Aligarh, Bareilly, Jhansi, Kanpur, Lucknow, Moradabad, Prayagraj, Saharanpur, and Varanasi, at an estimated cost of Rs 2,000 crore. Systems for intelligent traffic management are particularly beneficial for controlling traffic in urban areas. ITMS is being used to keep an eye on and respond to instances of overspeeding, riding without a helmet, driving in the wrong way, and making needless stops on the road (ANI, 2023).

In view of the positive outcomes that ITMS is achieving in ten cities throughout the state, the government is currently attempting to establish the facility in seven additional UP cities. To build an intelligent traffic management system, work is being done in Ayodhya, Firozabad, Gorakhpur, Ghaziabad, Mathura-Vrindavan, Meerut, and Shahjahanpur for Rs 271 crore. In addition, these seven cities are building smart parking and smart roadways, among other

facilities, for Rs 253 crore. (ANI, 2023)

Uttar Pradesh Electric Vehicle Manufacturing & Mobility Policy 2022

In August 2019, Uttar Pradesh became one of the first states to introduce an Electric Vehicle Manufacturing and Mobility (EVMM) Policy. The Government of Uttar Pradesh has chosen to introduce a New 'Electric Vehicle Manufacturing & Mobility Policy' in 2022 in response to the current trends since the EV industry has changed significantly over the past few years, and the Central government has taken numerous steps to boost the sector in India. The initiative's goal is to encourage the use of clean, sustainable transportation options and infrastructure in Uttar Pradesh, making it one of India's most electric vehicle-adopting states. Additionally, it hopes to become one of India's top investment destinations worldwide for the EV ecosystem.

One of the stated objectives of the policy is "to enable (a) transition to eco-friendly transportation system, particularly in cities" (GoUP, 2022, p. 8).

The Policy acknowledges that access to infrastructure for charging electric vehicles is a significant factor in their popularity. Therefore, in the

context of promoting green mobility within cities, it lists the following initiatives for the promotion of charging infrastructure: -

- “The State Government shall promote the creation of charging/swapping infrastructure in a grid of 3km X 3km in cities and urban conglomerates.
- The State Government shall promote the creation of charging/swapping facilities in public parking spaces, Metro stations, Bus depots/ Terminals, petrol pumps, government buildings, Corporate Buildings, Educational/ Health Institutes, shopping malls, other commercial places, Group Housing societies and RWAs, Gram Sabha land, etc.
- The Urban Local Bodies shall implement city parking policy reforms to develop public charging/swapping facilities in parking spaces. In the short term, local authorities may identify spaces for reservation in public parking for EV charging.
- The State Government is coordinating with NITI Aayog and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in formulating a ‘Comprehensive Electric Mobility Plan (CEMP)’ for Lucknow. This initiative shall be extended to all 17 Cities with Municipal

Corporations, which may extend to other cities in the later phases with the help of NITI Aayog or any other institution” (GoUP, 2022, p. 10).

Apart from these policies, the government of Uttar Pradesh has taken other measures to improve urban sustainable mobility for instance, under PM-eBus Sewa, a flagship program under the Central government. The objective of the programme is to use a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model to promote environmentally friendly, affordable public transportation in Indian cities. Uttar Pradesh aims to get a giant share of 1,800 e-Buses out of 10,000 under the PM e-Bus Scheme. In large cities, the U.P. intends to run about 150 buses, while in smaller ones, about 50 buses. In addition to operating 100 buses in each of the cities, namely Meerut, Agra, Aligarh, Bareilly, Firozabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Gorakhpur, Moradabad, Prayagraj and Varanasi, the proposal calls for operating 150 buses in Ghaziabad, Kanpur and Lucknow (THE HINDU BUREAU, 2023).

Discussion and Conclusion

While Uttar Pradesh and India have a number of policies and programmes aimed at improving the results of green mobility, a clear goal and strategy are required to implement a workable, sustainable transportation policy. The majority of current policies operate in

accordance with their specific responsibilities, but while having interconnecting and shared objectives, there is need for better inter- or intra-agency collaboration.

Users of public transportation suffer from congestion on the road networks that are used by both private automobiles and public transportation. It makes public transport less dependable and predictable, which discourages usage. It also lengthens travel times to destinations and raises the likelihood of traffic accidents. Therefore, the ability of a city's public transportation providers to function to their maximum capacity is hampered by congestion brought on by the large number of private vehicles on the road (Ponkshe, 2020).

Transportation plays a significant role in the structural growth of a city. Transit routes frequently interconnect essential locations, including industrial and retail districts, residential neighbourhoods, and tourist attractions. Researchers refer to this as an urban form. The way that cities and their residents use their urban design is frequently linked to the planning of new transit paths and the upkeep of current ones. The distance, travel time, and convenience of usage all play a significant role in choosing the mode of transportation. It is crucial to situate the transit decision-making process within the local environment in

order to ascertain public engagement, the planning authority, and the implementation agency. These domains of activity are essential to guarantee that a project meets community needs, is approved by regional planning authorities, and is carried out purposefully and precisely. (Rodrigue, 2020).

Feminist urban theorists have challenged traditional Western and mainstream methods of urban planning, which has been characterised by dividing the cities into zones meant for specific functions with residential, workplace, markets and other leisure spaces distinctly situated from each other (Beall, 1996). In such a scenario, transportation plays a vital role, especially for women, the elderly and the poor, who have lesser access to private automobiles than upper and middle-class men.

Though Indian cities are conventionally not designed with an intricate and neatly laid plan which separates work from home, the present trajectory seems to be moving forward in this direction, even after adopting a people-oriented policy approach. Moreover, the expansion of traditional inner cities with an earlier urban landscape marked "by its human scale, the pedestrian distances and familiarity of the surroundings to an urban scene with huge malls, wide roads and tall buildings" (Desai, 2007, p. 8).

Therefore, it is essential to understand the relationship between public policy, public transportation, mobility and accessibility in the light of our ever-changing cities.

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Local Government Quarterly is being published by All India Institute of Local Self-Government by incorporating research papers and articles contributed by diverse stakeholders including academicians, urban planners, practitioners and others with, among others, the following objectives:

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Report Review

World Happiness Report 2024

Read the report here:
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World Happiness Report 2024 was released on March 20, 2024 which is observed every year as World Happiness Day. Since 2016, this report is issued every year. It is also much awaited and keenly followed especially among those interested in this fascinating subject of happiness and well-being.

Among the key takeaways of the report is the ranking of countries. This year 143 countries have been ranked. Finland secured the top slot for the seventh consecutive year. Nordic countries have dominated the rankings with Denmark and Iceland retaining their second and third positions. Sweden comes in fourth in this year's ranking. The United States of America, the world's largest economy slipped out of the top 20.

Happiness, in many ways, is an elusive concept and defies proper

articulation in commonly understood ways; as also the term well-being. Further, a human being may be happy for part of the day and not so happy during another part of the day. So how do we capture his condition correctly; as happy or as not happy? Therefore the subject ignites curiosity in all of us and this World Happiness Report is possibly one tool that can help unravel the mystery. World Happiness Report is possibly one tool that can help unravel the mystery.

The World Happiness Report is a partnership of Gallup, the Oxford Wellbeing Research Centre, the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network, and the WHR's Editorial Board. The report is produced under the editorial control of the WHR Editorial Board.

Chapter 1 of the Report is titled Happiness and Age: Summary. It starts off by saying that as per conventional wisdom the young in the west are the most happy and this tapers off in mid-age and again improves as one approaches old age. However, since 2006-10, happiness among the young has fallen sharply in North America. It has also fallen in Western Europe though less sharply. Alongside Happiness has risen sharply across the counties of Central and Eastern Europe. In South Asia, Middle East and North America, it has fallen across all age groups.

This chapter 1 also is a summary of the contents of all the remaining chapters, upto chapter 5. This is useful as it not only outlines the subjects of each chapter but also delves into the contents in brief of each of the chapters from 2 to 5.

In the Chapter 2 summary, while discussing the nation rankings, it observes that some Eastern Europe countries have moved into the category after the top 10 (11-20). Partly due to this USA (23) and Germany (24), and others have moved down. Looking at the age groups, happiness among the young in North America has fallen so much that they have fallen behind the old. In Eastern and Central Europe, the young are much happier than the old while in Western Europe it is even across age groups. In other regions, it mostly tends to decline with age. The Summary of Chapter 2 contains a snapshot of several other findings in this Chapter. These include changes since 2006-10 by age group, inequality of happiness, positive and negative emotions, and benevolence.

The following paragraphs summarize Chapter 3 which deals with Child and Adolescent well-being and related trends, challenges and opportunities. In most countries, life satisfaction drops gradually from childhood into adolescence and into adult life. Those in the 15-24 age bracket report higher life satisfaction than older persons. While in Sub-

Saharan Africa, Life Satisfaction among the young has increased, it has fallen in other regions. While discussing the differences based on gender, the report says that generally the information pertains to higher income countries because in other countries, it is not tracked. Yet, it says, girls report lower life satisfaction till the age of 12 and even widens at 13 and 15. The commentary here is somewhat sketchy possibly due to inadequate information.

The Report then summarizes Chapter 4 which deals with the elderly. It specifically highlights the issue of dementia and its association with well-being. With an ageing global population, the well-being of this cohort is important to track. Dementia is linked to impaired quality of life and well-being. Higher levels of prior well-being are robustly associated with lower risk of future dementia; in other words increased well-being is positively linked to prevention of dementia.

The next summary, of Chapter 5, is very interesting. This chapter deals with India, with special emphasis on the older population. In India older age is associated with higher life satisfaction, disproving that such correlation exists only for the high income countries. However within this cohort, women report lower life satisfaction than men. Those older persons with higher levels of education reported higher life satisfaction.

Chapter 2, is titled Happiness of the Younger, the Older, and Those in Between. This Chapter as with the others, starts with 'Key Insights' a kind of pointwise summarized information that is contained in the chapter – though in greater detail than the summary in Chapter 1. As stated earlier this chapter is about the happiness in different life stages (age) and those in different generations. Here discussing age-wise rankings, it notes that 'Rankings differ a lot for the young and the old'. In the USA and Canada the rankings favour the old; rankings for those aged 60 or more are about 50 places higher than for those under 30; whereas in Central and Eastern Europe the reverse is true. Rankings for the young are about 40 places higher than those for the old. It further discusses rankings by global regions. Central and Eastern Europe were found to have the largest increases, for all age groups. East Asia had large increases especially for the older ages. On the other hand, life evaluations in South Asia fell in all age groups, especially the middle ages. In the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, it fell twice as much for the young as for the old. During 2021-2023, negative emotions among females were more pronounced than those in males almost everywhere, with the gender gap greater in higher age groups.

Among other contents of this chapter, there is a graphical representation of the Country

Rankings by Life Evaluation 2021-2023. This gives the position of each of the 143 countries surveyed. Six independent variables are used to arrive at the positive effect and the negative effect which go to determine the rankings. These six variables are: *GDP per capita, healthy life expectancy, having someone to count on, freedom to make life choices, generosity, and freedom from corruption*. There is then a table ranking each country by age group - the young, lower middle, upper middle, and the old. This is available in Table 2.2 under Chapter 2. Figure 2.5 in the same Chapter gives the change in the index between 2006-10 and 2021-23. This makes for interesting reading.

Chapter 3 is titled **Child and Adolescent Well-being: Global Trends, Challenges and Opportunities**. Among the Key Insights of this chapter, it is stated that Life Satisfaction gradually drops from childhood to adolescence to adulthood. However this trend is recently reversing in North America, Australia and New Zealand. On the other hand the trend is the reverse in Sub-Saharan Africa where the young experience higher life satisfaction than the older ages. Females start reporting lower Life Satisfaction than males by the age of 12 and this grows during ages 13, 14. This has been amplified during the pandemic. Such data is hard to come by for most countries except the high-income countries and therefore these

data represent these richer countries. This chapter contains several graphs and charts which represent the findings in an easy to understand manner. The conclusions at the end of the chapter give a snapshot of the findings.

Chapter 4 is titled **Supporting the well-being of an ageing global population: Associations between well-being and Dementia**. Among the key insights, it states that with the growing population of the aged, the number of cases of Dementia will also grow. It also states that Dementia is linked to lower quality of life and lower well-being. Therefore Dementia prevention is critical to ensure the well-being of the aged. Greater well-being is associated Dementia prevention, the report notes. Among those living with Dementia, environment changes, enhancing autonomy, competence and relatedness could lead to improved well-being. In the initial paragraphs, Dementia is defined as *an age-related clinical syndrome that results in progressive or persistent loss of memory and thinking abilities, which in turn can negatively impact well-being*. It further notes that since there is no known cure for this condition, it is necessary to focus on prevention of Dementia. Well-being is positively linked to Dementia prevention and therefore support for and promotion of well-being is an important strategy. While pursuing well-being in earlier stages of life is vital in preventing Dementia in later years, it is also

necessary to pursue the well-being of those living with Dementia and their care givers. In later parts of this chapter, various dimensions of this subject are dealt with a great amount of rigour and sensitivity. Figure 4.4 depicts pictorially the various activities and interventions that support well-being of people living with Dementia. These include physical activity, outdoor activities, story-telling, cultural arts interventions, and social engagement/support groups.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to India. It is titled **Differences in Life Satisfaction among older adults in India**. There are several Key Insights at the beginning of the chapter which are of much interest. One states that *Older age is associated with higher life satisfaction in India, refuting some claims that the positive association between age and life satisfaction only exists in high-income nations*. This is a matter of satisfaction for readers. Another insight states that on average the older male is more satisfied with life than the older female: But taking all other measures into account the older female reports higher life satisfaction than the older male. Since this seems contradictory at first reading, more information is to be sought by reading the chapter further. Satisfaction with living arrangements, perceived discrimination, and self-rated health emerge as the top three predictors of life satisfaction in this study. This is another key insight of this chapter. In

the beginning the trends of ageing in India are discussed. Here it makes an interesting observation that *zeroing in on the factors that contribute to life satisfaction is central to creating policies and programs that can improve the quality of life in older ages*. Thereafter the statistical methods and variables used for the study are described. Various tables, charts and bar graphs depict the findings among different profiles of people in the older age groups and their life satisfaction levels. This chapter is of much interest to Indians especially those working in

the areas of mental health and well-being of Indians.

Overall the World Happiness Report 2024 is yet another in a series which addresses the complex subject of happiness and well-being among humans. Delving into the subject with emphasis on age-related well-being and life satisfaction, the Report opens several dimensions for study, research, and policy action. The Report is a welcome addition of knowledge to the realm of this subject.

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OBJECTIVES

The main emphasis of the Institute's work is to see that the local bodies can contribute more effectively to the development process and provide the citizens with better living conditions by meeting their aspirations in terms of required amenities, infrastructure and better environmental conditions, thus contributing to social and economic development of the society as a whole by better management of the human settlements. While these are the long-term objectives, the immediate ones are:

- ❖ To advance knowledge of the principles and practices of Local Government by conducting research and by organising training courses and programmes at various centres in India for officials and elected representatives in the local bodies.
- ❖ To strengthen and improve Local Government Institutions by improving their performance through education, orientation and bringing them together for common endeavor by organising specialised conferences, conventions and seminars.
- ❖ To make available a platform for members of local bodies and officials for exchange of views and ideas related to urban development and administration.
- ❖ To represent the views of local authorities supported by research work to the concerned higher authorities from time to time.
- ❖ To publish bibliographies, articles, books and other literature on matters of interest to local bodies.
- ❖ To publish journals, bulletins and other literature on different aspects of Local Government and on the working of Local bodies in different states.
- ❖ To undertake research studies in public administration, problems of local bodies and also in related topics of urban and environmental factors and arrange for their publication etc.
- ❖ To establish and maintain an information-cum-documentation service for local bodies.
- ❖ To undertake consultancy assignments in various areas of urban development and problems of local bodies with a view to improve and develop organisational, managerial and operational efficiency.

In view of the above, the Institute has been collaborating with the relevant government departments, Central and State, Universities, Organisations and Research Institutions. The work of the Institute covers several aspects involving a multi-disciplinary teamwork.

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