A CASE STUDY OF FIELD ADMINISTRATION

GOVERNMENT AT THE GRASSROOTS

RASHMI SHARMA

प्रदान Pradan
PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTION

Government at the Grassroots

A Case Study of Field Administration

Author
RASHMI SHARMA

प्रदान Pradan
PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTION

ABOUT PRADAN

PRADAN set up in 1983, has been working on large scale rural poverty alleviation in seven states of India, touching lives of nearly four million poor people. It promotes sustainable livelihoods which are integrated with work on issues of gender and good governance, through women-led self-help groups (SHGs). These women's SHGs are organized further into Village Organizations and Federations at village and block levels. The larger women's collectives besides economic empowerment, are addressing issues related to rights and entitlements access by members and functioning of basic services like health and education. This study was undertaken as part of a European Union supported project to understand the supply side context which may impact efforts by women when they interact with public systems. PRADAN partnered with Ms. Rashmi Sharma, a senior bureaucrat with wide experience in grassroots governance to undertake research on functioning of eight key departments at district level and below, which have significant impact in lives of disadvantaged communities.

ABOUT THE STUDY

The working of government in India is the subject of much discussion, accompanied by frequent criticism focused on the inefficiency of government institutions, and their insensitivity to citizens' needs and demands. However true such commentary may be, it usually generates more heat than light, and while we are aware of the many deficiencies in the working of government, we know much less about why these deficiencies exist. Notably, in India, public administration and management is a highly underdeveloped field of study, and field-based studies and analysis are sparse. The lack of adequate analysis of government structures and processes makes it difficult to comprehend why government working is not satisfactory, and identify appropriate reforms. Instead, 'administrative reforms', if they are attempted at all, are often based on guesses, or address some peripheral aspect of administration.

In this context, the attempt in this study is to analyze one aspect of government functioning, i.e., how government works on the ground, or 'field administration'. Given the paucity of previous work in this area, a case study of one district in Madhya Pradesh, exploring a wide range of issues was undertaken. The study showed deep fault lines in the administrative system, which have been described in the report. Hopefully, this analysis will be a step in creating a better understanding and a more informed debate about the institutional structure at the grassroots.

However, one study is only a beginning. More studies on various aspects of field administration should be undertaken to build a firm and detailed picture. While some findings of the study may be valid in all states, there will be many state-specific variations. Further, cross-state comparisons are needed for greater clarity. Moreover, as the funds available for the study were finite, some useful explorations had to be left out. This study does not address urban administration, an important area, given the rapid urbanization rate in the country. Additionally, at the grassroots, the focus was on a block with a substantial Scheduled Tribe population. Studies in other types of areas would yield rich information too.

Notably, name of the district that was studied has been withheld. While this is not an ideal situation, there is need to protect the identity of the interviewees, for obvious reasons.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Rashmi Sharma is a Senior Visiting Fellow at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER) and a former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer. She has worked in several capacities in the central and state government in India, especially in school education and local government. She had also published several academic articles and two books, 'Local Government in India: Policy and Practice' and 'The Elementary Education System in India'. At present, she is engaged in researching and writing about the structure and working of government at the grassroots.

FIELD RESEARCHERS

Debate, Bhopal: Amitabh Singh, Leena Kanhere, Bikas Kumar Sharma, Brajesh Patel
Samarthan, Bhopal: Rajkumar
Synergy, Harda: Vishnu Prasad
Independent Researchers: RN Syag, Sayanti Sur

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES AND BOXES

List of Tables

LIST OF TABLES AND BOXES

List of Boxes

LIST OF TABLES AND BOXES

List of Tables in Annexes

LIST OF TABLES AND BOXES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report is the work of many people and organizations. PRADAN supported the research under the European Union project, 'Improving Access to Information of Public Schemes in Backward Districts in India. Madhu Khetan from PRADAN provided support and suggestions throughout the course of the study. Without her help, this study would not have been possible. At the inception stage, comments from Anirban Ghose and the Research Advisory Committee set up by PRADAN were important in refining and improving the design. I am especially grateful to Mrs. Nirmala Buch and Mrs. Anshu Vaish for their valuable inputs.

In the project, three organizations, i.e., Debate, Samarthan and Synergy, as well as individuals, were partners. They provided critical inputs for the design of the study and tools, and did the fieldwork, which was difficult and demanding. The district and block level fieldwork was carried out by several individuals, i.e., by Amitabh Singh and Leena Kanhere with the help of Bikas Kumar Sharma and Brajesh Patel from Debate, all of whom dug out a plethora of facts and issues. Extremely detailed and revealing sub-block and village level work was done by Sayanti Sur. Moreover, Yogesh Kumar from Samarthan provided valuable inputs at the inception stage. The task of chasing government employees, getting information and interviewing them proved to be tough, and required a great deal of patience and persistence. Without these researchers, this study would not have been possible.

Some of the results of this study were presented at a seminar at the Centre for Advanced Studied on India (CASI) at the University of Pennsylvania, USA and formed the basis of a lecture delivered at the Institute of Rural Management, Anand (IRMA). I am grateful to Professor Devesh Kapur, the then director of CASI, and Professor Shambhu Prasad at IRMA, for providing the opportunity, and all the seminar participants for their insightful and thought-provoking comments.

Various people at PRADAN were extremely helpful and supportive regarding a number of administrative issues.

Finally, the several Panchayat representatives, government officials and workers, who agreed to be interviewed, made a valuable contribution.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

This study, supported by the project 'Improving Access to Information of Public Schemes in Backward Areas' of PRADAN, is placed in the context of widespread dissatisfaction with government services and responsiveness. In the last decade and a half, laws to make public institutions accountable to the people, i.e., the Right to Information Act (RTI), the Right to Education Act and state public service guarantee acts, have sought to increase the accountability of government agencies to citizens. However, to address the inadequacies of government institutions, an equal emphasis on improving their capacity to deliver and respond is needed. The problem of 'poor implementation' that dogs all policies and programmes in India, points to deep systemic problems. These systemic issues need to be delineated and addressed.

The subject of this study was the working of government at the grassroots, or, 'field administration'. As there are hardly any previous studies on the subject, a case study of one district in Madhya Pradesh, exploring a broad range of issues, was undertaken. The aim of the study was to delineate and analyze the structure, functioning and dynamics of government field administration, and identify the changes needed to enhance its effectiveness and responsiveness to citizens. Moreover, the focus was on government functioning in less developed rural areas.

In the study, the overall structure of field administration in the sample district was delineated and analyzed. In addition, 8 sample departments, i.e. Revenue, Forest, Panchayat and Rural Development (P&RD), School Education, Public Health and Family Welfare, Women and Child Development (WCD), Public Health Engineering (PHE) and Cooperation were selected for detailed study. Across these departments, 41 organizations, which included 21 supervisory departmental offices, 7 Panchayats , and 13 grassroots institutions, were studied in detail. To study grassroots institutions, 5 sample villages in a sample block with over 40% population of scheduled tribes (STs) were selected. The grassroots institutions studied included 5 primary schools, 5 Anganwadi Centres (AWCs), 3 sub-health centres (SHCs) and 2 cooperative societies. During the study, interviews were conducted with 95 people, including elected Panchayat Representatives (PRs), officials, grassroots workers, NGO personnel and journalists, and 13 focus group discussions (FGDs) held with people from different social groups in the 5 sample villages.

Socio-Economic Context

The sample district had a population of 12.4 lakh, as per the 2011 census, comprising 16.5% Scheduled Castes (SCs) and 15.9% STs. It had 921 villages and 12 towns. The economy of the district was based primarily on agriculture and allied activities. The average land holding size was small, i.e., 2.26 hectares, and nearly 60.6% workers derived their main income from casual labour. Though almost 70% of the gross cropped area of the district was irrigated, in the sample villages, the irrigated area varied from below 37% to over 71%. In 3 of 5 sample villages, a few upper caste and other backward classes (OBC) families held much of the land, which they leased out informally for farming. In 2 sample villages, there were no well-off persons. In the sample block, the forest was a source of livelihoods too, as poor people collected minor forest produce and fuel wood for consumption and sale. The opportunity of wage labour in agriculture

was declining, because of mechanization, as were livelihoods from the forest, as displaced villages were being resettled in the forest. The need for more livelihoods opportunities was experienced as the most important need by people in FGDs.

The infrastructure available was uneven. All the sample villages had all-weather roads connecting them to the main district roads, but some hamlets within the villages did not have all-weather connections to the main village. Nearly all, i.e., 98%, villages had electricity, but there was load shedding for 6 or more hours. For drinking water, hand pumps were available in all the villages, but the underground water level was falling, and several hand pumps had dried up. In the summer, drinking water fell short. Less than 20% villages in the district had tap water. Three sample villages had tap water supply, but only to some parts of the village, or only for some time. Lack of drinking water was identified as the second most important problem in the FGDs.

There were primary schools in all the villages and upper primary schools for every 2-3 villages, but high school and higher secondary schools were sparse. Health facilities were quite limited. The district had 26 health centres with doctors, one per 54 villages, and 173 sub-health centres (SHCs), i.e., one per 5 villages, managed by auxilliary nurse midwives (ANM). There was an average of more than 2 AWCs per village, and the sample villages had between 1 to 10 AWCs.

Role and Structure

The scope of field administration was wide, encompassing various aspects of law and order, infrastructure creation and maintenance, socio-economic development, social services and revenue collection. The district administration was organized along three axes. In the first axis, i.e., the 'departmental axis', organizations of 37 state government departments existed at various levels, and had strong linkages with the state level department offices. In the second axis, i.e., the 'DC axis' the District Collector (DC) functioned as the administrative head of the district. In the third axis, i.e., the 'local government axis', elected local governments at three levels in rural areas, and municipalities in urban areas, were responsible for socio-economic development and provision of civic services.

The district was a critical geographic unit of administration, and all except 4 of 37 departments had district-level supervisory offices. But below the district, there was no common geographical unit of administration for all the departments, though there were 2 broad sub-district layers. In the first sub-district layer, departments adopted two types of geographical units, i.e., the sub-division and block. Among the 8 sample departments, 3 worked as per sub-divisions, though the boundaries of these sub-divisions were different, 3 worked as per the block, the Revenue Department had a separate unit, the tehsil, and the Cooperation Department created units as per commercial logic. Below the block, the units were even more varied. Consequently, coordination below the district level was difficult. Moreover, as the number of departments was large, some departments had a very skimpy structure in the district, so that their outreach was very limited. Sixteen departments had no organization below the district level, and only 12 departments had organizations below the block level. Within the departments too, the structure was not optimal. In some departments, a single organization performed many functions, while in others there were multiple organizations for the same function.

The 37 departments had various types of organizations in the district, comprising supervisory offices at various levels, and 5072 other types of organizations. Among

the latter, the largest number provided social services, such as schools, AWCs, hospitals etc. Other organizations included law enforcement agencies, such as revenue courts, police stations and jail; commercial organizations, which bought and sold goods or provided loans, such as the Mandi (agriculture market), cooperative banks, public distribution system shops etc.; and technical institutions such as water testing laboratories and teacher training institutes. In addition, departments formed two types of committees: inter-departmental committees for coordination, review and decision-making at the supervisory levels, and committees with membership of citizens to increase public participation.

There were two coordinating agencies in the district: the DC and the Panchayats. The coordinating role of the DC in regulatory matters was undisputed, but for socio-economic development in rural areas, the demarcation between the role of the DC and Panchayats was fuzzy. The law gave Panchayats a substantial role as leading institutions for socio-economic development. But in practice, the district level departments worked as per the directions of their state offices, not Panchayats. Coordination of these activities was done by the DC, rather than the Panchayats, as departments delegated powers to the DC.

The role of the departmental offices was defined through laws and 'schemes' which specified the activities to be undertaken, unit costs, etc. Among the 8 sample departments, the Revenue and Cooperation departments functioned on the basis of various extant laws, while the departments concerned with socio-economic development functioned mainly on the basis of schemes. In other words, the organizations of these departments did not work towards outcomes, such as reducing child malnutrition, but carried out activities pre-defined in schemes, such as providing supplementary nutrition to children, irrespective of whether it had an impact on the child's nourishment status. The departments that worked mainly through law had a little more freedom, as they applied general principles of law to specific cases. Only the Forest Department worked on the basis of a 10 year plan, prepared to address the needs on the ground. Thus, the manner in which the role of district administration was defined restricted the scope to respond to context-specific needs.

Panchayats existed at three levels: the Zilla Parishad (ZP) at the district, Janpad Panchayat (JP) at the block and Gram Panchayat (GP) for 1-4 villages. Each GP had a Gram Sabha (GS), which comprised an assembly of all voters. The political wing of the Panchayats, comprising elected PRs, was an egalitarian structure, as PRs were drawn from all sections of society because of reservations for SCs, STs, OBCs and women. For example, in the sample GPs, 40% PRs were very poor. During interviews, several PRs said that they had stood for elections to work for the community. However, most women PRs said that they had contested elections as per the wishes of their family, when a seat got reserved for women. In such cases, the husbands acted as de facto PRs. However, some women PRs, who had experience in political movements and self-help groups (SHGs), were very active.

Because of the lack of clarity about the role of Panchayats, their administrative structure was amorphous. For example, the ZP could be visualized in 3 concentric circles: a 'core' ZP, with its own small staff; programme managers of various schemes, who reported to the chief executive officer of the ZP, as well as to the departmental offices at the state level; and departments that sought approval of the ZP from time to time on various issues. ZP and JP PRs were generally dissatisfied, as though as per law the Panchayats were the leading agencies for socio-economic development, in practice they had few powers. The GPs functioned mainly as implementation agencies for different departments.

Human Resources

There were 11,769 government personnel in the district. Functionally, they could be categorized as supervisors and experts, working at the at the district and sub-district level, grassroots workers, working at sub-block and village level, clerks and helpers. Second, 78.3% were 'regular' employees with long-term tenures till retirement, and 21.7% were contractual employees. Third, the regular employees were divided in 4 classes, whereby class 1 employees had the highest status and class 4 the lowest. Less than 2% employees were categorized as class 1, 7%, as class 2, 71% as class 3 and nearly 20%, as class 4. Most grassroots workers were classified as class 3. The contractual employees were not formally classified in any way, but they were of two types: those working in a supervisory capacity as programme managers and experts, and others as grassroots workers.

Personnel management was highly centralized, and recruitment, promotion and posting of employees was done by state level departmental offices, except for a few contractual grassroots workers. The role of field administration was limited to the day-to-day supervision of employees, appraising their performance which became the basis of future promotions, and imposing minor punishment in case of some grassroots employees. The DC had some authority over departmental officials as she appraised their performance. But though the chief executive officer of the ZP was also expected to appraise the performance of officials concerned with socio-economic development, the latter often submitted their appraisal format directly to the DC.

The regular employees were drawn from various departmental 'services'. In a particular service, such as of sub-engineers, people with prescribed basic qualifications were recruited through a common selection process. In the services either personnel with general qualifications were recruited and trained after recruitment, or personnel with specialized qualifications were recruited. From among the 8 sample departments, 4 recruited generalists, 2 recruited specialists, and 2 recruited both types. The specialist recruited were engineers, doctors, para medical staff and teachers. The sample departments hired 26 types of grassroots workers, and 3 hired specialist grassroot workers i.e., engineering diploma holders and teachers. Thus except for teachers, grassroots workers were not required to be very skilled.

The sample supervisory organizations had very limited managerial and expert staff, as each department set up its own offices and institutions. The sub-division and block level organizations had just one manager, assisted by clerks and helpers. Of the 10 district level organizations studied, 5 had only one officer, a manager or expert, though the district had a population of over 12 lakh. The DC's office too had only 6 other officers, though the DC had access to officials of other departments. Similarly, among grassroots institutions, the staff was inadequate for the activities anticipated. For example, at the AWC, one Anganwadi worker (AWW), with the assistance of a helper, was expected to provide cooked meals and pre-school education to children in the 3-6 years age group, provide supplementary nutrition packets to children in the 0-3 years age-group as well as pregnant and lactating mothers, identify malnourished children and get severely malnourished children admitted to the Nutrition Resource Centre, counsel mothers through home visits, ensure that mothers and children were vaccinated, and take up other departmental activities.

There were structural gaps in expertise, because offices of any one department were manned by personnel from 2 or more services. While the personnel of a service had similar qualifications, departmental

activities required a complex set of skills. In addition, 3 types of expertise gaps cut across departments. One, there was no expertise for human resource management across the district, in spite of the large work force. Two, officials did not have access to legal experts, though they handled issues with complex legal implications. And finally, expertise for social communication and mobilization was available only in a few departments, and inadequately, though this was an important aspect of the work. Moreover, departments where personnel were drawn mainly from specialist services had either no, or very little, management expertise, though they managed a large number of institutions and big programmes. Further, some departments lacked experts even for their core activities. For example, WCD, charged with addressing child malnutrition, had no nutritionist.

The government employees interviewed were educationally well-qualified. All the supervisory employees were college educated, and some had advanced specialist qualifications. Among grassroots workers, nearly two-thirds were college educated. Generalists recruited to a service were provided induction training for 2 months to 2 years. The in-service training varied across departments. In Forest, School Education, Public Health and WCD, employees were trained frequently, but in other departments training was patchy. The in-service training programmes were structured around new government programmes and policies, rather than systematic skill development of employees.

A large number of posts were vacant. In the sample supervisory offices, the vacancy for managers and experts was 40.5%, for technical and accounts personnel 44.4%, for office workers, 31.8%, and for office helpers 16.3%. Among the 24 types of grassroots workers across the sample departments for whom information was available, the vacancy rate was 20%. But for some types of grassroots workers, the vacancies were much higher. For 10 types of grassroots workers, more than 30% posts were vacant, which could be expected to have a serious impact on work. If 10% vacancies are considered acceptable, then the vacancy situation was tolerable for only 6 out of 24 types of workers.

The service conditions of regular and contractual workers differed significantly. Along with lack of job security, contractual employees had lower salaries than the regular employees, no pensions, no benefits for housing, medical treatment etc., and no avenues for promotion. Some contractual grassroots workers were paid less than the minimum wage. Consequently, contractual grassroots workers were extremely dissatisfied, and had formed unions which agitated for better working conditions. From time to time, the government gave in to their demands. Two types of workers, i.e., teachers and GP secretaries, had managed to improve their salary and tenure significantly through such agitations. Thus, for contractual workers, the path to improving salaries and other service conditions was not hard work, but skillful agitation and negotiation.

The regular employees at the supervisory level were generally satisfied with their salary, but many at the grassroots were not. Most regular employees were dissatisfied with promotions, as these were very few, and some employees were never promoted through their careers. Moreover, the postings of regular employees were patronage-based. While some officials were reported to be involved in rent-seeking rackets along with powerful politicians, others said during interviews that they had been transferred unfairly for doing the right thing. The average tenure of heads of district offices was less than a year, so that there was no continuity of leadership. The lack of promotion avenues on the one hand, and patronage-based postings on the other, created a perverse incentive for regular employees: they did

well by pleasing patrons, not by working hard. Many supervisors complained about the deteriorating ethos among grassroots employees. The low motivation level of employees was indicated by the fact that many did not stay in their place of posting.

Infrastructure and Finance

The infrastructure in the sample organizations was patchy: good in some offices and poor in others. The district level offices generally had adequate buildings and furniture, though the building of the District Institute of Education and Training was in such a poor condition that training programmes could not be conducted properly. At the sub-district level, the infrastructure in many offices was quite poor. For instance, out of 10 such offices, seating space was inadequate in 6, 3 had no or inadequate toilets, 7 had poor drinking watar facilities and 4 were not clean. While computers were available in all supervisory offices, sub-district officials lacked vehicles, which inhibited their touring. Except for ramps in some offices, there were no facilities for the differently-abled. Among grassroots institutions, GPs, schools and cooperative societies had well-kept buildings with adequate space, but those of the SHC were in very poor condition. The AWCs had the worst infrastructure, and many were run in rented buildings.

As in the case of human resources, the state level departmental offices controlled finances tightly. Nearly all the the funds of departmental organizations, as well as Panchayats, comprised allocations under various schemes, or for salaries and office expenditure. Consequently, few activities other than those specified in schemes could be undertaken, even by Panchayats. Limited untied funds were available for Members of Parliament (MPs), Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and block and district PRs to sanction projects of their choice, but no organization had funds to undertake need based activities.

Of the 11 offices for which information was available, the annual allocation varied from Rs.9.5 lakh to 74 crore. In 9 offices, the expenditure was more than 80% of the outlay. But the expenditure in the sample district and block offices of the School Education Department, which had the biggest outlay among all sample departments, was 55.8% and 29% of the outlay respectively, mainly because of lack of manpower. The field administration collected 7 types of taxes and royalties, i.e., sales tax, excise duty, entertainment tax, land revenue, royalty on minerals, registration fees and stamp fees. But the amount of revenue collected was small (e.g. Rs.278 crore in 2015-16), which, was less than the annual budget of many departments, and was deposited in the state exchequer.

The GPs were expected to levy taxes and generate income through other means, but the amounts were very small and GPs did not take initiative to generate revenue. At the grassroots, schools, AWCs and SHCs lacked funds for the upkeep of buildings, essential equipment and activities such as photocopying. Agriculture cooperative societies were mandated to follow numerous government instructions, but also function as business organizations and be self-supporting. The government fixed interest rates and price of commodities, and often waived famer loans. As a consequence, many cooperative societies incurred losses.

Working Context and Ethos

Field officials functioned in the context of extreme centralization and hierarchy. Their activities were defined by centralized schemes. State departmental offices set targets, and reviewed constantly. Additionally, they issued numerous directions. For example, in the School Education

Department, the school time-table, the pace at which various lessons would be taught, the mid-day meal menu, etc. were decided at the state level. Consequently, when field officials were asked to state the most important decisions that they had taken in the previous six months, they identified minor decisions, such as to repair equipment, doing work-division among staff, etc. Some commented that they had little autonomy to act as per the needs on the ground. In Panchayats, there was political centralization in the form of directions from political parties. Though political parties did not have a formal role in Panchayats, PRs often split along party lines while making decisions. But this control was not complete, and at times, PRs across parties collaborated to resolve local issues. However, administratively, Panchayats too implemented schemes, achieved targets and filed progress reports.

Hierarchy was very important. Several officials said that they could not question senior officials, even when they were unreasonable. This reduced the space for thinking through issues. Another feature of the hierarchy was that the actual work was done by junior most officials, who were the least qualified, while senior officials only supervised, so that the best skills were not used in formulating proposals and executing projects. Moreover, the state government undertook frequent campaigns on various issues in quick succession. Officials reported that before one campaign could take off, a new one began, and long-term tasks were neglected.

An important context in which the field administration functioned was the existence of networks among politicians and officials for rent-seeking. The scale of rent-seeking can be assessed from the fact that while the PRs and journalists interviewed said that rent-seeking was very systematic, and most officials were involved, a majority of the officials denied it, as possibly, they too engaged in it. In FGDs, people said that they had to pay bribes to get every government service, for which there were fixed rates. PRs and journalists pointed out that there was extensive illegal mining of sand from the river bed, which was only possible with official collusion. Some officials also said that rent-seeking was rampant, and even described systems whereby various officials took a 'cut' and money was extorted from people.

The community too created its own pressures on government officials. These pressures were rooted in a high degree of poverty and low levels of education on the one hand, and growing awareness of rights on the other. It was not easy for officials to communicate either information, or rules and procedures, and many people were apathetic about their long-term interests. For example, the attendance of children in sample schools and AWCs was poor. At the same time, there was considerable pressure from people for immediate benefits, such as subsidized houses. Encouraged by the widespread rent-seeking in government, many powerful and well-off individuals attempted to benefit by pressurizing and bribing government officials to act unethically.

In keeping with the context of extreme centralization and hierarchy, when field officials were asked what the most important activities in their office were, they identified these as implementation of programmes, following directions from higher level offices and supervision of those below. They also reported spending the most time on these activities. When officials were asked what their role was, they described it in the same terms. So powerful was the command and control ethos, that even the basic mandate of an office could be ignored, and officials performed a range of activities outside their mandated role. Out of 15 sample offices of 6 departments (excluding Revenue and PR & RD departments, whose role was coordination), in 11 offices, officials had performed various government duties related

to elections, sanitation, a plantation drive, and activities of a religious and cultural orientation. Teachers and AWWs were involved in such activities the most, because of their numbers and village level presence. This engagement ate into the time available for substantive work.

The work sphere of the Panchayats reflected their marginalization. The ZP and JP PRs saw their role as fulfilling people's needs and bringing about socio-economic development, but admitted that the Panchayat had not succeeded in fulfilling this role. Moreover, though the Panchayats were mandated to meet 12 times in the year, in 2016-17, the sample ZP had met 4 times, the sample JP, 12 times. A ZP PR commented that there was little point in holding meetings as the ZP had no powers. In 3 sample GPs, 5-8 meetings had been held. In the fourth sample GP no records of meetings were kept and in the fifth, there was complete institutional collapse, the GP office remained closed, and the husband of the woman Sarpanch and GP officials colluded in pilfering funds.

In all the Panchayats, husbands of women PRs attended meetings along with them. PRs who were daily wage labourers did not attend meetings regularly, as they lost a day's wages. An analysis of the minutes of 3 sample meetings in the ZP and JP showed that the most common activity in the ZP meetings was to review the working of the departments, while in the JP, instead of a review, it was censuring officials. Most GP PRs and officials viewed the GP as a programme implementation agency, specially of construction work. In the sample GPs, the main achievements were seen in terms of construction works undertaken in various schemes.

Processes of Administration

The processes of working were in tandem with the overall working ethos. As government officials saw their role as implementors of directions from above, analysis and strategy formulation were scarce. For example, the type of information maintained and its use in the sample offices reflected a concern with reporting, scheme implementation and day to day working. These departments maintained three common types of information: information on progress in achieving targets of schemes to report to higher level offices; information concerned day-to-day working, such as salary and leave records, availability of medicines, court dates, etc.; information concerned with scheme implementation, especially beneficiary related information.

Moreover, given the fragmented structure, all this information was not available at any one place for the district, but remained with separate district offices. Most of the officials interviewed said that they were satisfied with the existing data base and more information was not needed. Additionally, some officials admitted that they sometimes fudged information, because of the emphasis on achieving targets. Officials also reported that they did not consult resource agencies. For example, WCD officials charged with reducing domestic violence, were oblivious of the strategies followed by the SHG federation in the district, which had done considerable work in this area. When asked if they needed more technical support, many officials did not give a clear reply, and this seemed to be an issue that they had not thought about much.

In many instances, long and tedious processes were followed. For example, schools were expected to maintain 20 registers, and Anganwadi Centres, 15. Processes became rigid and tedious because of extreme centralization, as information had to be sent constantly to centralized agencies. Moreover, inflexible processes were introduced to counter the high-level of rent seeking. For instance, for the recruitment of

AWWs, done at the district level, there were rigid criteria for selection, in which officials had no discretion. In spite of this rigidity, the process of recruitment was examined and approved by two committees, and the list of those selected was published and objections invited before actually making recruitments.

Supervision was oriented around getting orders implemented. Rather than getting feedback from the ground and modifying strategies, supervisors, under pressure themselves, insisted that workers follow orders received from their senior officers, even if these were impractical or pointless. Additionally, the supervisors interviewed viewed disciplinary action as the main human resource management tool. However, its effectiveness can be gauged from the fact that in case of regular employees, district officials had very limited powers. Further, interviewees gave examples of politically powerful employees who could not be touched, and related incidents when employees approached politicians when punished, and the latter interfered. But in the case of contractual staff, discipline could be harsh and arbitrary. The AWWs interviewed constantly feared being punished and related instances of unfair punishment. Thus, the highly valued disciplinary action often set incentives incorrectly.

A great deal of coordination was needed as there were a large number of departments, but it was difficult. The Panchayats could not coordinate as they lacked authority over employees. The PRs interviewed said that employees did not provide them with information and ignored the Panchayat resolutions. The main method of coordination was through the DC, who chaired committees with membership of several departments and took frequent meetings. But the DC was found to be chair or member secretary of 82 committees, difficult for any one individual to handle, and committee meetings were postponed often.

The mechanisms to ensure accountability were inadequate. Internal accountability functioned mainly in terms of review by senior officials of junior officials. This had limitations, as many officials participated in rent-seeking rackets, and protected each other. Financial audit by the Accountant General addressed limited issues. The Public Service Guarantee Act provided some day-to-day accountability to the people. It was, however, limited to some services. For example, it was effective in ensuring that certificates were provided in time, but could not be used to ensure that grassroots institutions, such as schools, functioned well. People used RTI occasionally, and at times, it was misused to blackmail. The social audit threw up gross misutilization of funds at times, but usually, it was mechanical, and many people did not understand the intent. The biggest problem with all the external accountability mechanisms was that even if they revealed wrongdoing, redressal was not guaranteed.

The two thrusts for improving administration were increasing use of technology, especially digital technology, and privatization of services. Officials reported positive as well as negative experiences with the increasing use of technology. On the positive side, technology enabled better communication and systematic working. For example, as the use of mobile phones became common, PHE officials could get information about hand pumps that needed repair quickly; through the revenue court management software, casework management improved; a computerized software had made monitoring, record keeping etc. easier in the Cooperation Department, and so on.

On the negative side, technology had increased centralization, reviews had become more frequent via video-conferences and the demand for data and reports had increased substantially. With the direct benefit transfer (DBT), GPs could do nothing when payment of wages was stalled. Moreover, as digital

technology was introduced at great speed, there were many glitches. In the sample villages, many students could not get their scholarship money because they could not make the right entries, or because of software problems. There were instances of pointless use of technology too, such as an application whereby farmers could give a feedback on their crop assessment, which no farmer used.

Similarly, privatization of services had its limitation too. Over the last two years, hand pump repair had been contracted out. To begin with, it was difficult to find local private contractors. Subsequently, in the first year, as the work done by the contractor was unsatisfactory, the PHE Department resumed doing the technical work itself, and the contractor only provided labour and transportation. But problems of delay etc., continued here too.

Administration on the Ground

In the above scenario, while the government attempted to provide a large number of services through its wide network of institutions, it succeeded only to a limited extent. First, in the context of a scattered residential pattern, while access to low-cost services was available, higher cost services were sparse. For example, AWCs were available in every village, but hospitals were often at a distance, and in the sample villages, people sometimes consulted traditional healers and dubious 'doctors' without medical qualifications. Second, because of the administrative deficiencies described above, only simple services, such as subsidized food through the public distribution system, could be provided successfully. But GPs struggled with the more complex task of providing tap water, though money was available. Third, because of extreme centralization contextual needs were ignored. For example, all AWCs, set up as per population-based criteria, had the same staff. However, the number of children in the 26 AWCs across 5 sample villages varied from 25 to 92. Additionally, in some AWCs, there were almost no malnourished children, but in others there were many.

The problems of the administrative system were reflected clearly in the inadequate quality of grassroots institutions. For example, in the 5 sample AWCs, though there was no indication of gross neglect by any AWW, because of their unrealistic workload, 3 AWWs neglected pre-school education. Moreover, observations of AWCs showed their most frequent activity to be filling up registers, as these were monitored stringently. The low skills of the health workers were visible in an extremely unhygienic vaccination of children witnessed by the researcher. In the sample schools, as teachers were provided on the basis of the number of students enrolled, the primary schools had 2-4 teachers, so that one teacher attended to 2 or 3 classes at one time. School observation showed that teachers engaged with students for around only half the school time, and were busy preparing information, attending meetings etc. in the remaining time. In 3 out of the 5 sample schools, there were children of grade 4 and 5 who could not read. Better off parents preferred to send their children to private schools.

Because of the faulty administrative system, the interaction of grassroots workers with the community was full of conflict. Often, workers did not have the autonomy to address people's needs, such as when wage payments through DBT were stalled. The lack of skills had its impact too. For example, teachers saw the students as problematic, as they did not have the skills to teach children from deprived backgrounds. Moreover, with rent-seeking, officials sometimes behaved like oppressive tyrants, as they extracted money from poor people. For example,

forest beat guards extorted money from poor tribals by confiscating their axes etc. Additionally, given the inadequacies in service delivery and rent-seeking, people complained often to senior officials, which added to the conflict.

Gram Sabhas were impacted by centralization too. A scrutiny of GS minutes of the sample GPs showed that their agenda comprised discussion of various government schemes and campaigns, and transaction of GP business, such as selection of beneficiaries, and not people's needs and demands. Attendance in the GSs was scanty. Similarly, most of the grassroots committees existed only on paper. The most active committee was the School Management Committee cum Parent Teacher Association. (SMC-PTA). But in the 5 sample schools, only in one were parents active. In 2 schools the SMC was dysfunctional and in another 2, teachers took the lead, while parents attended reluctantly. Forest Management Committees (FMCs) met sporadically, if at all, and beat guards simply obtained people's signatures as needed. One beat guard said that discussions in the FMC meetings revolved around the agenda of the department, and people's issues were neglected.

Finally, because of the deficient administrative system, it was difficult to solve problems and reach goals. For instance, though inadequate livelihoods was identified as the most important issue by people in FGDs, centralization came in the way of addressing it. There was no district level analysis or plan about it. National programmes, i.e., the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS) were implemented with varying effectiveness. In the NRLM, credit flow to SHGs had improved, but little headway was made in creating and strengthening livelihoods opportunities. As per state directions, there was no focus on small and marginal farmers, and an initiative to get SHGs to supply items purchased by government was in jeopardy, because of rent-seeking and subsequent enquiries. In MGNREGS, in two GPs, the MGNREGS daily wage was much lower than the market wages in the city and elsewhere, and people did not want to work at MGNREGS wages. But, as these GPs had been allotted targets like others, officials met them by showing more labourers on paper while paying higher wages to fewer. At the same time, in another sample village, people were forced to work for lower wages than MGNREGS wages, as adequate work was not available. Delay in wage payment was another disincentive.

In case of drinking water, the second important problem identified by people, the splitting of administration into numerous small sections blocked a solution. The core issue was that the water table was falling and ground water sources were drying up. But the district branch of the PHE Department could do little about it, as it was the responsibility of a separate state level agency. Water conservation and rain water harvesting was required, but this was not being done with the speed required. PHE was basically a technical department, and its staff for community mobilization was inadequate. At the same time, illegal mining on river banks, a consequence of wide-spread rent-seeking, exacerbated the problem as water became more exposed to the sun, and evaporated faster.

Malnutrition could not be addressed because of lack of contextual strategies. The attendance of children at the AWCs was poor, as their parents took them along to work, so that many children did not get the supplementary nutrition every day. Moreover, in many families, supplementary nutrition for mothers and children of 6 months to 3 years age, provided weekly in packets, was cooked at one go and eaten by whole family. People found it difficult to keep their severely malnourished children in the Nutrition

Resource Centre, where beds remained vacant. In sanitation, in the rush to meet targets, the whole block had been declared open-defecation free, but in 4 sample villages, all the toilets had not been constructed. An estimated 12%-40% people across the villages continued to defecate in the open. Other sanitation practices were neglected, to focus on the target of building toilets.

The Way Ahead

The results of this study indicate that a radical reform of field administration is needed. However, one study is not adequate to make recommendations for reform, and delineating the precise nature of reforms is a separate exercise, and requires discussion in wider forums. However, a few reform ideas are put down for deliberation.

The first shift that is needed is conceptual. At present, the underlying premise regarding field administration is that its role is to carry out orders from above. However, as this study showed, this does not lead to optimal results. Instead, field administration needs to be re-conceptualized as an organization, or set of organizations, to analyze the local situation and respond to it. This has important implications for the structure, human resources and modes of working.

Instead of separate offices to mirror departments at the state level, which tend to be skimpily staffed and lack the different types of needed expertise, there can be 5 or so organizations at the district level, concerned with law enforcement & general administration, agriculture, livelihoods & allied activities, infrastructure development & maintenance, social welfare and revenue collection. These organizations can have offices at two sub-district levels: the block, and a common sub-block level, so that coherent sub-district administrative structures are created to allow for local decision-making and response.

The organizations concerned with agriculture, livelihoods and allied livelihoods activities, infrastructure development & maintenance, and social welfare should be controlled by local governments. The role of field organizations needs to be defined against broad goals, in place of implementation of schemes. This requires and overhaul of the financial structure, and a move away from scheme-tied funds to untied funds, to be expended as per local plans as formulated by local governments. This structure will reduce the extreme centralization that comes in the way of responding to the context, and to some extent, mitigate hierarchical functioning, as achieving meaningful goals will replace following orders as the mode of operation. If there are a smaller number of organizations, each organization can have varied expertise and an experienced manager or administrator. The three main gaps in expertise identified, i.e. human resources, law, and social communication & mobilization, would have to be addressed, along with the more specific gaps for specific tasks. However, 'expertise' need not be seen in terms of formal qualifications only, and should include significant work in an area. The current policy of not filling up posts is irrational, as many critical posts remain vacant, and needs to be discontinued.

To increase the motivation of government personnel, the policy of hiring low paid contract workers and regularizing them subsequently needs to be abandoned, as it creates a perverse incentive. Similarly, the play of patronage in the transfer and posting system needs to be eliminated, to orient employees towards achievement of goals, and reduce rent-seeking. The inadequate infrastructure and lack of sanitation at grassroots institutions would have to be addressed to create a more positive working environment, and grassroots employees

need to be provided appropriate travel allowance etc.

Changing the working style at the grassroots is difficult without a parallel change at other levels of government. But some broad protocols for working methods can be developed, to include situational analysis, consultation, weighing pros and cons, managing junior officials, taking feedback etc. These will serve as a signal to employees, and requisite training can also be provided. While the use of technology should be promoted, a slower pace, where all the problems of a particular technology are sorted out before it is taken to scale, would lead to better results. Similarly, instead of viewing privatization as inherently efficiency promoting, the pros and cons in various situations should be examined rationally.

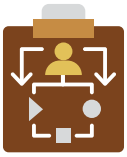
While external accountability mechanisms such as RTI need to be strengthened, internal accountability, such as reviews based on goal achievement, need to be developed too, as there are some aspects that only people within the system understand fully. Eliminating rent-seeking is a major challenge, as it is widespread across different levels of government. Elimination of patronage-based transfers and postings would address it to some extent. A Lok Pal-like body at the field level, to which citizens can complain, can also be put in place.

Notably, among all the needed reforms, reforms in two areas, human resources and elimination of rent-seeking, are essential. Unless these change, other reforms would not be successful. ■

Government at the Grassroots

A Case Study of Field Administration

1 CONCEPT AND DESIGN



Introduction

In the last decade and a half in India, civil society groups as well as central and state governments have initiated laws and processes to enable citizens to exercise their rights effectively and to make government accountable to citizens. The Right to Information Act 2005, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009, various public service guarantee acts, the mandated social audit under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MGNREGA) 2005, are part of this broad framework. The impetus for these initiatives has been the dissatisfaction with the quality of government services and the responsiveness of government employees, coupled with the perception of a high level of rent-seeking. In this approach, avenues have been created to empower citizens to assert their rights and thus force an improved response from the government agencies.

While citizen awareness and action are key in enabling people to access social services provided by the government, the government's orientation and capacity to respond to such pressures is equally important. For example, numerous studies and surveys show that though there is a strong community demand for high quality education, the government response is inadequate. For real solutions to emerge, this inadequate government response too needs to be addressed, and to be addressed, it needs to be analyzed. In other words, we need to know why government response is inadequate, identify the fault-lines and undertake necessary reforms.

Constraints in government responsiveness can be of two types. The first concerns policy. Problems emerging from policy can include a lack of intention to address an issue, or a policy of negligence, or, there may be an intention to address the problem but the policy in place may be insufficient or defective. In such cases, government responsiveness would vary across sectors. For example, the policy regarding livelihoods could be quite effective, but that regarding health less so. This would clearly require the scrutiny of specific policies.

The second possible constraint is of 'poor implementation', i.e., where policies and programmes exist and may be reasonably sound, but the outcome on the ground is disappointing, because the policy does not play out as envisaged. As the general dissatisfaction with government services indicates, this scenario is ubiquitous across government initiatives in India. While lack or inadequacy of policy exists, and rightly receives a fair amount of attention from policy-makers, civil society organizations and scholars, 'poor implementation', seen almost universally across government programmes, is rarely analyzed, though it renders even the best conceived policies and programmes ineffective. The consistency with which 'poor implementation' is seen in government functioning points to a larger and systemic problem. It indicates that a scrutiny of the structure and functioning of field-level government agencies and local governments that are expected to respond to people's needs and to administer programmes and policies, is necessary.

There are few rigorous studies on how government works on the ground[1] and why it fails to deliver so often. In fact, public administration and management as an academic field itself is highly underdeveloped in India, so that the understanding of the functioning of government, especially at

[1] A comparatively recent, well known account is 'Red Tape: Bureaucracy, Structural Violence and Poverty in India' by Akhil Gupta (2012), which is an anthropological study, rather than one in public administration. The author too remarks on the lack of studies in this area.

the grassroots, remains limited. This study, as part of the project 'Improving Access to Information of Public Schemes in Backward Areas' of Professional Assistance for Development Action (PRADAN), addresses this gap. It analyzes the structure and functioning of field administration and local government to examine the working of government on the ground and its relationship with the community.

As there is a paucity or even absence of studies on field administration, rather than asking specific questions about one or few aspects of field administration across several districts, this research is in the form of a case study, where a wide set of questions are explored in a single district. The aim is to gain insight into the structure of district administration, human resources, processes of working and the manner in which field administration relates to the community, and to identify key characteristics and concerns. From this analysis, key areas of reform are identified

Objective

The aim of the study was to delineate and analyze the structure, functioning and dynamics of government field administration and Panchayats in one district and identify the changes needed to enhance their responsiveness to citizens. The objectives of the study were:

- Examine government and local government institutions in terms of the administrative structure, human resources, infrastructure and finance.
- Analyze the work ethos and processes of working of government and local government institutions.
- Delineate the government-citizen interface and government service delivery in light of the structure and functioning of government and local government institutions.
- Identify key areas and strategies for strengthening field administration and local government to enhance responsiveness to citizens.

The detailed topics for study are provided in Annex A.

Design

Overview

Given the goals of the project under which the study was undertaken, the reference point of the case study was the working of government and local government institutions in less developed rural areas. In the study, the socio-economic situation of the district and five sample villages, located in a block that was socio-economically less developed, was analyzed, to delineate the context and people's needs. This was matched with a scrutiny of the working of a range of government institutions, in terms of their structure and processes as well as their relationship with the people. The institutions studied included departmental institutions that came in direct contact with the community on a day-to-day basis, as well as supervisory institutions and local governments.

Methods

The case study aimed to get as complete a picture as possible of the working of a range of government and local government institutions. Consequently, several methods were used. These were:

- Analysis of documents of various offices and institutions such as publications and minutes of meetings.
- Office interaction in selected institutions, including a visit to the office and interaction with 2-3 knowledgeable persons
- Interviews with officers, village level workers, Panchayat Representatives (PRs), journalists and Non-Government

Organization (NGO) representatives

- Observation of local village institutions such as schools, Anganwadi centres (AWCs), sub-health centres (SHCs).
- Observation of sample villages and interaction with 4-5 knowledgeable persons
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) with people in the sample villages

Sample

Area

The study was conducted in a district[2] with an agriculture-based economy, which contained rural and urban areas, as well as a block with a significant tribal population, which was selected as the sample block. However, as some data was maintained for tehsils rather than blocks, a sample tehsil, which largely overlapped the block, but was not co-terminus with it, was also treated as a sample unit when it became necessary. Five sample villages (see Table 1.1), of varying sizes and population composition were selected in this block. The population of these villages ranged from less than 800 to over 6000. They were located at varying distances from the block headquarters and the nearest town, and varied in terms of the percentage of scheduled caste (SC) and scheduled tribe (ST) population. Three of these villages had active self-help groups (SHGs) and two did not.

Organizations, Interviews and Focus Group Discussions

Eight government departments were selected for detailed study. To provide a broad overview of district administration, regulatory departments as well as departments concerned with socio-economic development were included. In addition, to get a picture of the district administration at various levels, for each selected department, departmental organizations were selected at the district, sub-division, tehsil/ block, sub-block and village level for detailed study.

Table 1.1: Profile of Sample Villages

(V= Village, the sample villages are numbered as VI, V2, V3, V4 and V5, R= Revenue village, F=Forest village, HQ=Headquarter, Y= Yes, N= No)

Village	Forest/ Revenue Village	Total Population	Distance from tehsil HQ (In km)	Distance from block HQ (In Km)	Distance from GP HQ	Sarpanch belonging to village	Active PRADAN SHGs Y/N	Total village area (hectares)[3]	% Land under individual ownership[4]
V1	R	6,003	2.5	23	HQ	Y	N	626.87	76.04
V2	R	4,678	40	20	HQ	Y	Y	1,870.65	52.67
V3	R	3,365	17	0.5	HQ	Y	Y	1,719.65	56.80
V4	R	1,048	8	30	1.5 km	N	N	2,28.12	67.13
V5	F	789	31	11	800 meter	Y	Y	564.34	Not available

In all, 41 organizations were studied, which included 11 organizations at the district level, 3 at the sub-division level, 7 at the tehsil/ block level and 20 at the sub-block and village level. The organizations studied across departments are provided in Box 1.1

[2] The name of the district has not been provided to maintain the anonymity of interviewees.
[3] Source: District Census Handbook
[4] Source: Patwari records

Box 1.1: Departments, Organizations and Panchayats Studied

Name of Department	Department Role	Organizations Studied				Theme Explored
		District	Sub-division	Tehsil/ Block	Sub-block/ Village	
Revenue	Regulatory and Coordination	District Collector's Office Superintendent Land Records	Sub-Divisional Magistrate	Tehsil	Nil	Mutation in land records
Forest	Regulatory and Socio-developmental	District Forest Office	Sub-Divisional Office (Forest)	Nil	Nil	Provision of forest produce for people's needs or Nistar
Panchayats and Rural Development	Socio-developmental	Zilla Parishad	Department has no organization	Janpad Panchayat	Five Gram Panchayats	Provision of housing
Education	Socio-developmental	District Education Centre District Institute for Education and Training	Department has no organization	Block Education Office Block Resource Centre	Five Primary Schools	Teacher behaviour
Women and Child Department	Socio-developmental	District Programme Office District Women Empowerment Office	Department has no organization	Child Development Project Office Block Women Empowerment Office	Five Anganwadi Centres	Child mal-nutrition
Public Health	Socio-developmental	District Chief Health and Medical Office	Department has no organization	Community Health Centre	Three Sub Health centres	Ante-natal care
Public Health Engineering	Socio-developmental	Executive Engineer Office	Sub-Divisional Office (PHE)	Department has no organization	Department has no organization	Repair of hand pumps
Cooperation	Socio-developmental	District Marketing Office	Department has no organization	Nil	Two Cooperative Societies	Provision of seed and fertilizer to farmers
Number		11	3	7	20	

A total of 95 interviews were conducted. Seventy eight interviews, with 20 PRs and 58 government officials, were semi-structured. Another 17 unstructured interviews were conducted with one PR, 12 officials, two NGO representatives and two journalists to obtain information on various issues. In the 5 sample villages, 13 FGDs were conducted. These were of three types: with poor people, better off people and women (Table 1.2).

To understand the processes within government during interviews, questions regarding common processes such as supervision, consultation with experts etc. were put to the interviewees. In addition, in each department, a specific theme was explored in greater detail (Box 1.1) to provide additional insights.

Table 1.2: Number of Institutions Studied, Interviews and Focus Group Discussions Conducted

	District	Sub-division	Tehsil/ Block	Sub-block/ Village	Sub-Total
Number of Organizations Studied at Various Levels					
Departmental organizations and DC	10	3	6	15	34
Local governments	1	NA	1	5	7
Total number of organizations studied	**11**	**3**	**7**	**20**	**41**
Semi-structured interviews					
Panchayat representatives	2		3	15	20
Government officials	9	3	9	37	58
Sub-total	**11**	**3**	**12**	**52**	**78**
Unstructured interviews					
Panchayat representatives	1	0	0	0	**1**
Government officials	10	0	0	2	**12**
NGO representatives		2			**2**
Journalists		2			**2**
Sub-total					**17**
Total number of interviews			**95**		
Number of villages studied			**5**		
Number of FGDs conducted			**13**		

Conduct of Study

The study began in July 2017. Initially, the design and tools of the study were developed, discussed with an advisory committee and improved. Subsequently, research teams for the field work were identified. The design and tools were discussed again with the research teams and refined after field testing. The fieldwork of the study began in October, 2017 and the report was completed in June, 2019.

Structure of the Report

This report is divided into nine chapters. The rationale and design of the study have been described in the first chapter. The second chapter depicts the socio-economic context of the district and sample villages. The third, fourth and fifth chapters contain an analysis of the role and structure of the field administration and local governments, the human resources, infrastructure and finance, respectively. The sixth and seventh chapters delineate the working ethos and processes of the field administration and local governments. In the eighth chapter, the relationship of the field administration and local governments with the community is depicted. Finally, in the ninth chapter, key areas for reform are outlined. ■

2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

Introduction

The sample district had a population of 12.4 lakh as per the 2011 census, a little lower than the average district population at the state and national levels, and an area of 6,703 square kilometers[5]. Its population density was lower than the state and national averages (Table 2.1). The population density of the sample block, which had a population of 1.3 lakh and an area of 693.3 square kilometers, was even lower. Nearly 69% of the district population was rural, which was close to the national average, but lower than the state average. However, the rural population of the sample block at 83% was higher than the state average. As per the 2011 census, the district had 961 villages, of which 921 were inhabited, and 12 towns. The sample block had 119 villages, of which 108 were inhabited and no town. Instead, it abutted a town 17 kilometers from the block headquarters', which was the tehsil headquarter.

Table 2.1: Sample District and Block Demographics Compared to State and National Averages[6]

	Sample District	Sample Block	State	All-India
Total Population	12.41 lakh	1.30 lakh	13.97 lakh per district	20.41 lakh per district
Population Density (Persons per Square kilometer	185	187	236	325
Males	52.25%	51.88%	51.79%	51.54%
Females	47.75%.	48.12%	48.21%	48.46%
Sex Ratio (Number of Females per 1000 Males)	914	927	931	940
SC Population	16.51%	15.29%	15.62%	16.62%
ST Population	15.89%	40.26%	21.09%	8.2%
Rural Population	68.58%	83.03%	72.37	68.8%
Urban Population	31.42%	16.97%	27.63%	31.20%
Hindu Population	94.67%	93.66%	91.14%	80.5%
Muslim Population	4.21%	1.08%	6.36%	13.4%
Christian Population	0.38%	0.26%	0.28%	2.3%
Other Religions	0.76%.	5.0%	2.22%	3.8%
Total Literacy Rate	75.29%	64.2%	69.32%	74.04%
Literacy Rate Men	83.35%	71.3%	78.73%	82.14%
Literacy Rate Women	66.45%	56.5%	59.24%	65.46%
Literacy Rate SC	71.65%	70.0%	66.16%	66.10%
Literacy Rate ST	59.95%	Not available	41.2%	58.96%
Number of Households	2.56 lakh	26,436	3.04 lakh per district	Not available

[5] District Census Handbook 2011
[6] District Census Handbook 2011, Census of India 2011

The population in the 5 sample villages ranged from less than 800 to over 6,000. Village 1, the largest village, was situated at a national highway, in close proximity to a busy town. Village 5, the smallest village, was classified as a 'forest village' because of its proximity to the forest (Table 2.2).

In the district, nearly 95% of the population was Hindu, a little over 4% were Muslims, and 0.43% Christians, while in the block, the population comprised 94% Hindus, 1.1% Muslims and 0.26% Christians (Table 2.1).

Table 2.2: Sample Village Population and Literacy Rate as per 2011 Census[7]

(V= Village, the sample villages are numbered as VI, V2, V3, V4 and V5)

Village	Total Population	% Male	% Female	%SC	%ST	Number of Households	% Total Literate	% Male Literate	% Female Literate
V1	6,003	52.24	47.76	22.99	12.24	1,323	83.96	90.48	76.89
V2	4,678	51.80	48.20	12.70	70.35	935	64.03	73.03	54.34
V3	3,365	50.88	49.12	10.37	36.37	689	75.99	82.47	69.16
V4	1,048	50.67	49.33	10.21	79.77	222	63.49	73.63	48.41
V5	789	50.19	49.81	15.97	80.48	157	47.06	54.05	40.0

Social Profile

As per the 2011 census, the district had 914 women for every 1,000 men, which was lower than the average sex ratio for the state (931:1000) and country (940:1000). The SC population of the district at 16.5%, and of the sample block at 15.3%, was around the same as the state and national averages, while the ST population at 15.9%, was higher than the national average, but lower than the state average. The ST population in the block, at 40.3%, was much higher. The literacy rate of the district at around 75% was marginally higher than the national average and significantly higher than the state average. As per the all-India pattern, the literacy rate for women was lower than that of men (by around 20%), of SCs a little lower than the average literacy rate (by 4%) and for STs, significantly lower (by 15%). The literacy rate for ST women was the lowest among all categories, less than 51%. In keeping with the high ST population in the sample block, the literacy rate at 64.2% was much lower than the district, state and national averages.

Among the 5 sample villages, village 1 and village 3 were large villages, with mixed population belonging to SC, ST, general and other backward castes (OBC) categories. In three villages, i.e. villages 2, 4 and 5, the ST population was high, comprising 70% to 80% of the total population. In all the villages, households from general and OBC categories were economically well off and enjoyed the highest social status, while the tribals were the poorest. In villages 4 and 5, almost all the people were poor (Table 2.2).

The residential pattern in villages 1, 2, 3 and 5 was generally mixed, but the most marginalized communities lived separately. In village 4, different castes and tribes lived separately. There was some intermixing among various social groups on festivals, marriages etc., but no inter-dining and inter-marriage. If lower caste persons were financially well off or politically powerful, there was intermingling with upper castes (for details see Box 2.1).

[7] Source: District Census Handbook 2011

Of the 5 sample villages, in 3, where PRADAN was present, there were active SHGs, but in the other two villages, these did not exist. The SHGs undertook savings and economic activities, addressed social problems such as domestic violence, and took up issues such as the functioning of the school with the authorities.

Box 2.1: Social Composition, Economy and Civil Society in Sample Villages

Social composition	Economy	Civil society
Village 1		
There are more than 15 castes of SC, ST, OBC and general categories. The OBCs are the dominant group. They are big land owners and also own shops, dhabas[8], marriage halls and petrol pumps. STs are the least well-off, followed by SCs. Many government servants and retirees are settled in the village and form part of the well-off class. There are 15 colonies, where the residential pattern is mixed, but an SC caste of low social status resides in one colony. People of all castes participate in social gatherings such as festivals and marriages, but there are unwritten rules about the seating pattern. Generally, the SCs sit at the back and the upper castes at the front. Inter-caste marriage is not practiced. STs who are financially well off or have a position in the Gram Panchayat are welcomed in the houses of higher castes.	Around 70% land belongs to a few OBC and upper caste families, who let it out to share-croppers. One such person is a local political leader and controls 120 acres of land, registered in the names of his family members and others. Additionally, he has encroached on about 80-90 acres of land. The STs were resettled in the village after being dislocated from elsewhere and do not own agricultural land. Poor people are engaged in daily wage labour in agriculture and construction sites in the nearby town, selling fire-wood to dhabas, and collecting mahua leaves[9] to brew and sell liquor. The availability of work within the village has been declining over the years as land-owners increasingly use machines for agriculture. Around 65% population goes to cities and towns for daily wage work. The poor also migrate to nearby big villages during the harvest season. Women collect and sell fuel-wood and engage in wage-labour. Some work as plant protectors, Accredited Social Health Worker (ASHA), Anganwadi workers, Sahayikas and cook midday meals in schools. Children help in domestic work during school holidays. Not many children are seen working, but a few work in the dhabas.	There is no caste association in the village, but one lady in the village heads district level SC association. There are 2 dysfunctional SHGs.
Village 2		
There are 18 castes of all categories, but more than 70% people belong to the ST category. The general and OBC families are well off and are money lenders, shop and orchard owners. An SC caste has the lowest social status. There are 15 colonies. In some, only STs stay, but some have a mixed residential pattern. The STs inter-dine among themselves, but there is no inter-marriage between tribes. The SCs are not welcomed to the kitchens of upper-castes, although most people deny the fact.	Nearly 65-70% of the cultivable land is owned by a few families. The well-off people own mango-orchards, tent-houses, road-side hotels and shops. Some STs own around 2.5 acres of land on an average, including homestead land. The poor, almost half the people, are share-croppers and agricultural labourers, and collect MFP. When there is a bad crop, the share croppers do not get the compensation provided by the government. Though the returns from the crop are poor, they have to pay the price for the lease. The daily agricultural wage inside village is Rs.120-130 (lower than the MGNREGS wage). Young people and men migrate during the harvest season. Agents of big farmers from adjoining districts come to the village and hire young boys and girls at a rate lower than MGNREGS wages. Women engage in poultry, MFP and fuel-wood collection, wage-labour, work as ASHAs, AWWs and Sahayikas, and cook midday meals at schools. Children collect MFP, work in family farms and in snack shops.	There is no caste association in the village. There are 35 SHGs. The activities include weekly savings which are substantial. They also do poultry rearing. The SHGs have many women leaders who are members of the SHG federation. Some have received training in women's rights and legal issues. They have addressed violence against women, made efforts to improve schools, monitored Anganwadi Centres, initiated infrastructure development such as road-construction, resolved problems with electricity bills etc. They have also expanded the SHG network in neighboring villages and provided training.

[8] A dhaba is a small restaurant.

[9] Mahua trees grow in the forest, and the leaves are used to make silk, brew liquor, make dona pattal (leaf bowls) and the flower is edible and also used for medicinal purposes.

Social composition	Economy	Civil society
Village 3		
There are 22 castes in the village. Families from the OBC category are the richest. Tribals are the poorest group. Many retired government servants are settled in the village. Some have moved elsewhere and rent out their houses. There are 13 colonies in the village. The residential pattern is fairly mixed but Muslims live in one colony and tribals are settled on the fringes of the village. In social gatherings, such as marriage, death anniversary etc., almost all castes invite each other, but there are separate eating spaces. Money and social class ease out some differences, particularly for men. Women generally do not interact across castes.	Families from an OBC caste occupy almost 80% agricultural land. The poorest people work as daily wage-labourers in construction works in the nearby town and during the harvesting season, migrate to neighboring districts. However, because of mechanization, availability of farm work is declining and wages are low. The agricultural wage inside village is Rs.150 per day, lower than MGNREGS wage. Other occupations include agriculture and shop-keeping. People also catch fish and work as auto-riksha drivers.Women collect firewood, and work as teachers, ASHAs, AWWs, Sahayikas and cook midday meals in schools. SC and ST women work as agricultural labourers and share-croppers. A group has been formed by an NGO of 20-25 people to collect and store mahua flowers, which are then dried and processed as sweets and sold in fairs in cities and are in high demand.	There is no caste association in the village. There are 37 SHGs. SHGs do savings and credit and rear poultry. They have addressed violence against women. Some women function as Kanooni Sakhi (legal helpers) and members of Gram Suraksha Samiti. They have helped victims of attempt to rape to get redressal from the police. Women belonging to the SHG federation interact more with other castes, though there are limits to which other castes can touch the cooking stove and religious corners in the house.
Village 4		
There are castes of all 4 categories but nearly 80% people are tribals, and form the dominant group. An SC caste has the lowest social status. There is only one well-off family. They stay outside the village and have rented their house. The various castes stay in separate colonies. The SCs and STs sit and chat together, but do not inter-dine. There is no inter-marriage among tribes.	People are engaged in agriculture as well as wage labour and collecting and selling MFP and fuel wood. Collecting firewood and selling to dhabas is the most common activity for women. They also collect MFP and work as wage-labourers. A handful of women work as ASHAs, AWWs and Sahayikas, and cook midday meals at schools. Children collect MFP.	There is no caste association in the village. There were 2 SHGs some 3-4 years ago, but these are now dissolved due to conflicts. Now there are 2 SHGs who prepare mid-day meals for schools.
Village 5		
The village comprises people from SC and ST categories, and a few OBCs. More than 80% people are STs. SCs are the richest and have more contact with outsiders. They have good quality land, which has helped them acquire a high status in the village. Tribals believe that they rank above the SCs and do not see themselves as below OBCs. OBCs consider the STs backward and of the lowest strata. There are 5 colonies, and people live near their relatives in these colonies. However, all colonies are situated close to each other and many share homestead boundaries. There is discrimination but it has reduced over time. There is inter-dining among SC and ST families, though family members object to cooking stoves being touched by other castes.	The main occupations are farming and wage labour within and outside the village. The poor are mostly landless. They migrate as farm labour during the harvesting and weeding seasons and in the summer. Other occupations include fishing and cattle grazing. Three young adults are employed in the army and one in a nearby factory. Three people work as supervisors in livelihoods societies formed by an NGO. One young girl is engaged in the Common Service Centre, and one man works as MGNREGS Sahayak in the Gram Panchayat. Women engage in poultry, collection of MFP, selling wood, and wage labour within and outside village. Children collect MFP.	There is no caste association in the village. There are 12 SHGs. Their main activities are savings and credit and poultry rearing. The SHG groups have been active in challenging caste discrimination and have formed new SHGs in other areas.

Economic Profile

The district economy was based primarily on agriculture and allied activities. Additionally, in the sample block, the forest provided some sources of livelihoods and resources such as fuel wood for daily needs. Economic activity in other sectors was limited. However, as per a senior official of the state, the district was doing well in agriculture, and as it had water and cheap labour, industrialists were interested in the district, and it had a tourist spot as well.

Land

As per the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data, 43.6% households in the sample district and 28.4% in the sample tehsil owned land (Table B.1, Annex B). Among the households that owned land, the average land-holding size was small. The Agricuture Census 2011 data showed that around a third of the farmers in the district and the sample tehsil were marginal famers with less than one hectare of land, while another third were small farmers, with less than two hectares of land (Table B.2, Annex B).

The sample villages showed a highly skewed land-holding pattern in three villages, i.e. villages 1, 2 and 3, where a large portion of the land was owned by a small number of people of OBC and general categories, who contracted it out informally for farming. In villages 4 and 5, there were no large farmers. In all the villages, a high proportion of the population were landless or marginal farmers. Moreover, displacement had impacted 4 of these villages and further reduced land holdings. In villages 3 and 4, the original inhabitants were tribals, but many newer, displaced communities had been settled. In village 4, according to the original inhabitants, the new settlers were given their land. Consequently, the original inhabitants were left with very little land, and on further sub-division over generations, the average household land holding was 0.4-0.5 acres (Box 2.1).

The land-holding pattern was pivotal to the village economy. The landless and marginal land-holders depended on casual labour and share-cropping for their livelihoods. Share-croppers could not avail of many government benefits. In village 3, poor women complained that when there was a bad crop because of natural calamities, landowners got compensation, but share-croppers did not, though landowners had many other sources of income. They wanted a rule by which the poor share-croppers would also get compensation for crop loss. Moreover, share-croppers could not access inputs such as subsidized credit and fertilizer, which was available to land holders. In this village, some families had been working for big farmers as labourers for generations, and had to remain satisfied with whatever wages they got, i.e., they worked almost as bonded labour. On the other hand, in this village, big farmers earned significantly from the share-croppers not only by leasing land, but also by selling grains, which they stored, to them during the lean season or social occasions such as marriage (Box 2.1).

Agriculture and Allied Activities

The district had a major dam, and the level of irrigation was high compared to the national average. In 2016, the net sown area of the district was 3.14 lakh hectares, which was 46.8% of the total area of the district. The gross cropped area was 6.48 lakh hectares. A large swathe of the area was cropped twice and even thrice. Of the gross cropped area, 69.5% was irrigated. The major source of irrigation was canal irrigation, followed by tube wells and wells[11]. The main crops were wheat, paddy, pulses, i.e., chana, tuwar and urad, and oil seeds, i.e., soya bean. In the sample villages too, these crops were grown and people planted vegetables in their

[10] The SECC data break up is available for tehsils. Consequently, data for the sample tehsil that covered most of the block, but was not co-terminus with it, has been provided
[11] Source: District Agriculture Census Handbook 2016

backyards (Table B.3, Annex B).

Though in general, the district had a large percentage of irrigated area, investigations in the sample villages showed a high degree of variation. Among the sample villages, not every village had adequate irrigation. The percentage of irrigated land of the total cultivated land in the villages varied from below 37% to over 71%. The agriculture productivity varied too. It was reported to be highest in village 1, which had a high level of irrigation and good soil and lowest in village 2, which had neither (Table B.3, Annex B). Moreover, water availability was becoming more uncertain. One sample village, village 5, was close to a reservoir and its cropping system was based on the fertile field that emerged as water from the reservoir receded after the monsoon. People reported that in recent years, the monsoon had become more uncertain and erratic, and the back-water of the dam receded much faster, so that wheat fields could not be irrigated. For a few families enjoying traditional fishing rights, the struggle had increased manifold. Moreover, mechanization had reduced the work available to farm labourers. In village 3, because of mechanization of agriculture, people could not find agricultural work within the village and many migrated (Box 2.1).

In all the villages, the better off farmers sold a large part of their produce, while share-croppers and marginal farmers generally consumed most of it, exchanged some for commodities, or sold in times of distress. Moreover, while big farmers living in villages close to the Mandi (agriculture market) sold their produce there, farmers in remote villages, and small farmers, often relied on private traders. Among the sample villages, in villages 1, 2 and 3, the big farmers sold their produce in the Mandi regularly, as it was nearby, and they could easily use their own transport or hire local transport at cheap rates. But in village 5, villagers did not take the extra produce to the Mandi. Instead, they sold it to local traders, who brought vehicles to the village to collect the produce. The traders set up weighing scales at a centralized place in the village for villagers to bring their produce, or their staff visited door-to-door. Since the last 3 years, the produce had been bought by a single trader. The local traders had a strong network in the area, and got news about who had how much to sell, and when the sale would be. At such times, their carts roamed the village at regular intervals. In village 2, vehicles of local traders and money-lenders plied in the village during the harvesting season to procure produce from farmers' doorsteps at a cheap price, which they then sold in the Mandi.

In all the sample villages, share-croppers and marginal farmers also sold some produce in the local weekly markets at prices lower than Mandi prices to purchase groceries and vegetables. In village 4, as the average land holding was quite small, most of the farmers sold their produce in the local weekly markets only when in distress or short of cash. Sometimes, people sold a part of their produce to those who had suffered a loss. People negotiated with traders for groceries or fertilizers in exchange of grains. Some took loans in kind of groceries, fertilizers etc., and paid these with produce and cash, with interest, at harvest time.

Another important source of income was animal husbandry, mainly cows, cattle, goats and poultry. In 2015-16, the district had 21.5 lakh cows and cattle, which was 175% of the human population, 0.58 lakh goats i.e. nearly half the human population, and 0.81 lakh poultry animals. In the sample block, there were 0.22 lakh cows and cattle, 0.1 lakh goats, 0.43 lakh poultry animals[12]. As the sample block had a high tribal population, people were more likely to own goats and poultry than cattle and cows.

Forest

In the district, 2,740.8 square kilometers of the area (40.9% of the total area) was

[12] Source: District Agriculture Census Handbook 2016
[13] Source: Provided by official

classified as forest area[13]. In the sample block, situated near the forest, the forest was a source of livelihoods and fulfilling daily needs. Among the 5 sample villages in 3, the forest formed an important part of the economy. Women and children collected minor forest produce (MFP) such as tendu leaves, mahua flowers and seeds, harra, baheda, tubers, medicinal herbs, shogan fruit etc, for consumption and sale. Further, the forest provided fuel wood, and was a grazing resource for cattle and goats. In the other two villages, people collected fire-wood and mahua for consumption and sale. Women and children especially were involved in collecting MFP and firewood (Box 2.1).

Forest resources were dwindling. In village 2, villagers said that as displaced villages were being settled in the area, the forest itself was moving away. They had to walk longer distances to graze cattle. There was increasing pressure on fuel-wood, and villagers reported walking double the distance than earlier. In village 4, the forest was quite close to the village. However, a displaced village had been resettled nearby the previous year and resettlement of another village was expected. The villagers feared that such resettlements would make it difficult for them to graze cattle and collect fuel-wood. In this village, selling firewood was an important source of livelihoods for women. In village 3, villagers said that as the forest cover had reduced significantly in the last 7-8 years, grazing cattle and collecting firewood had become a challenge (Box 2.1).

Other Economic Activities

The opportunities in sectors other than agriculture were limited. There was sand mining and to a lesser extent soil mining on the banks of a river that flowed through the district. Though detailed data was not available, as per the District Statistical Handbook 2016, limited employment was available in the food, wood and non-metallic industries, as well as in shops, commercial institutions, hotels and cinema halls (Annex B, Table B.4). As per the SECC data, in 4.72% households there were earnings from government and public sector jobs in the district, (sample tehsil: 9.67%), in another 0.56% households, from private sector jobs (sample tehsil: 3.09%), and a few households had a registered, non-agricultural enterprise. Destitute households and those living on alms were 0.52% (tehsil 0.33%) of the total (Table B.1, Annex B). In the sample villages, occupations other than agriculture and allied activities included low-level government jobs, shop-keeping, working as construction labour, selling firewood, MFP collection and liquor brewing (Box 2.1).

Employment and Income

As per the 2011 census, workers (main and marginal) comprised 38.5% of the total population in the sample district, and 41.0% in the sample block. From among the workers, more than 72% were men, while among non-workers, more than 60% were women. In the sample villages, workers ranged from 34.5% to 56.3% of the total population. Men comprised 52% to 80% of the workers, while women comprised 52% to 62% of the non-workers. In the sample district, among the workers, around three-fourths were classified as main workers and one-fourth as marginal workers. In the sample block, 63% were classified as main workers and 37% as marginal workers. In the sample villages, the percentage of main workers and marginal workers among total workers varied widely, from 24% to 84% and 16% to 76% respectively. In all cases, men formed the majority of main workers. At the district and block, 80% and 78% of the main workers were men. Among marginal workers, women comprised a little over half at the district and block level (Annex B, Table B.5).

A large proportion of the workers comprised agricultural and other types of casual

labourers. As per the census 2011 data, 38% workers in the sample district and 49% in the sample block were classified as agricultural labourers. In the sample villages, agricultural labourers comprised 28.7% to 68.5% of the workers. A large chunk of workers was classified as 'other workers', i.e., 35.5% in the district, 30.6% in the block and 5.6% to 55.16% in the sample villages. In the sample villages, where the number of agricultural labourers was low, that of 'other workers' were high. The percentage of cultivators in the district was 24.4%, in the block 18.8%, and in the villages ranged from 10.5% to 35.4%. This was corroborated by the SECC data, which showed that for 58.4% households in the district, the major source of earning was manual casual labour, while for the sample tehsil it was 62.2% (Tables B.1& B.6,Annex B).

In the sample villages, those who had little or no land did share-cropping or worked as casual labourers in agriculture or construction. A large number of people worked in nearby towns as casual labourers. People migrated outside to nearby cities for work at construction sites and to nearby villages during the harvest season. People also worked in dhabas, as porters at bus stands in cities, or in nearby brick-kilns. A few people were local government workers. In the sample villages, women were engaged in MFP and fuel-wood collection, wage-labour, work in local government jobs and cooked midday meals at schools. Children below the age of 14 attended school, but in holidays and after school, collected MFP and worked in family farms (Box 2.1, Table 2.3).

The SECC data showed very low earnings for a large proportion of the population. In 75% households in the sample district and 79% households in the sample tehsil, the highest earning member earned less than Rs.5,000 per month. Only in 10% households in the district and 9% in the tehsil, the highest earning member earned more than Rs.10,000 per month. Ownership of assets such as vehicles and refrigerators revealed a similar picture (Table B.1, Annex B).

In the sample villages, the wealthy were big land owners, shop and restaurant owners or ran small businesses, such as petrol pumps. People employed in the army and local government jobs as well as retirees had reasonable incomes, though some workers such as Anganwadi workers and Sahayikas (helpers) had very low income. As village 1 was near a city, people were able to get wages of around Rs.300 per day, substantially higher than the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme (MGNREGS) wages. But in village 2, people were forced to work for low wages even outside the village and the village functioned as a cheap labour bank for neighbouring areas. In villages 4 and 5, there were no well-off people to speak of, though some people were better off than others. People worked as labourers within and outside the village. In village 4, women said that they lived in hardship, earning their livelihoods as daily wage labourers and selling bundles of firewood in the hotels and dhabas in the city for which they walked 7-8 kilometres daily. Selling firewood and MFP provided very low returns. In village 4, many in the younger generation were educated, but could not get jobs. In one FGD group, two young men had passed class 12 about 8-10 years ago, and now engaged in casual labour work to sustain their families. In village 5, women who had been supported by PRADAN and reared poultry had some continuous, though small income. A few SC and OBC households had cattle (Box 2.1, Table 2.3).

FGDs in the villages showed that lack of employment and low wages were persistent problems. In all villages, people wanted more livelihood generation activities. The lack of livelihood opportunities created social problems too. For example, one hamlet, close to the forest, was infamous for producing and selling mahua liquor, which was a of source livelihoods. Some children were seen

to work in restaurants and would be out of school as a consequence. Interviews with district and block PRs, as well as officials of the Panchayat and Rural Development department showed that they identified the major need of the people as inadequate livelihoods.

Table 2.3: Non-agriculture-based Occupations and Earnings in Sample Villages

Occupation	No. of Villages in which Practiced	Earnings
Work in army	3	Rs.20,000-25,000 per month
Constable	4	Rs.10,000-12,000 per month
Teacher	1	Rs.25,000-over Rs.30,000 per month
Gram Panchayat secretary	1	Rs.15,000-20,000 per month
Gram Panchayat MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak	4	Rs.9,000 per month
Data entry operator	1	Rs.3,000-5,000 per month
Anganwadi worker	5	Rs.5,000 per month
Sahayika	5	Rs.2,500 per month
Peon	1	Rs.25,000 per month
ASHA	5	Variable: paid on a case to case basis
Work in Common Service Centre	2	Rs.3,000-10,000 per month
Work in nearby factory	1	Rs.15,000-20,000 per month
Shop owners	4	Variable
Employed by NGO/ association formed by NGO	2	Rs.150 per day, Rs.10,000 per month
Labourers in construction	2	Rs.200-300 per day
Fire wood selling	4	Rs.50-90 per day
MFP collection	1	Not available
Brewing and selling mahua liquor	2	Not available

Infrastructure

Roads

The district had 1,912.4 kilometers of road, of which 50.2% comprised pucca or all-weather roads. The road length in the sample block was 408.1 kilometers, of which 15.2% were all-weather roads[14]. All the villages in the district were connected to the highway by all-weather roads. In all the sample villages too, the access road to the village was good. But the bus service, which had been privatized, was uneven. In two sample villages, no bus service was available within the village and villagers had to walk, drive or hire vehicles to nearby villages to get a bus. Of the three villages where bus service was available within the village, in two villages, one near the town and the village in which the block head quarter was situated, there were frequent buses, but in the third village, buses were infrequent (Box 2.2). The cost of travelling to the nearest town depended on the distance. The one-way cost to the nearest city at its lowest was Rs.10, i.e., the two-way cost was around 7% of the daily wage in MGNREGS. At its highest, the one-way cost was Rs.40, and the two-way cost was around 29% of the MGNREGS daily wage. Thus, in villages at a distance from the city, the travel cost for casual labour was a substantial part of the wage.

Moreover, the status of roads inside the village was uneven, and many hamlets where

[14] Source: District Agriculture Census Handbook 2016

poor people lived were connected to the main village by very poor roads. In village 1, the hamlets farthest from the nearby city lacked good roads. In village 2, the roads connecting the hamlets were in poor shape. In two hamlets, where poor people and resettled families lived, the access was very difficult. Similarly, in a tribal hamlet in village 3, though the distance between the hamlet and the main village was only one kilometer, a stream in-between made it difficult to walk through and the connecting road became muddy during the monsoon (Box 2.2). In village 4, in a FGD in one hamlet, people said that as there was no road, they could not take up poultry rearing.

Box 2.2: Roads, Water and Electricity in Sample Villages

	Roads	Drinking Water	Electricity	Other
V1	There is a good access road from outside. There is regular and frequent bus service to the nearest town and the one-way ticket costs Rs.12 to Rs.14. A bus stand has been constructed by the Rotary Club. But the farthest hamlets of the village are not connected by pucca road.	There is no tap water, as the community has not contributed their share to start one. There are 38 hand pumps of which 28 are functional. The Panchayat has repaired 5 hand pumps in 2016-17. There is acute drinking water problem in the summer.	Nearly all the houses have electricity connections. For agriculture, big farmers have permanent connections, rest have temporary connections. There is 6-8 hours of load shedding in the summer.	There are many shops selling groceries, cloth, hardware, stationery along with tea stalls, dhabas, tyre-repairing stores, petrol pumps and a marriage-hall. A sulabh souchalaya (public toilet) has been constructed but not yet inaugurated. Almost all households have television sets. Newspapers are available at the Panchayat office and roadside stalls.
V2	There is a good access road from outside. There is no bus stand in the village and villagers have to go to a nearby village to which auto rikshas are available for Rs.10 one way but people usually walk or use motorcycles. The bus service is regular and the one-way fare to the nearest town is Rs.35 to Rs.40. The connecting roads between hamlets are in poor condition.	There is no tap water supply. There are 57 hand pumps (out of order status not available) and a few wells. When hand pumps get out of order, often mechanics do not arrive in time and the residents contribute money to get the hand-pump repaired. There is acute water crisis in the summer.	Around 95% houses have electricity. For agriculture, most people have temporary connections. In summer, there is load-shedding for 8-10 hours daily.	There are small grocery shops in nearly every hamlet and one vegetable stall. There are stationary, mobile recharge, meat and shoe stores, food and snacks shops, carpenter shops, and a weekly haat (market). Many households have television sets. Regional newspapers are available in shops etc.
V3	There is a good access road from outside. Buses are regular and frequent. The one-way fare to the nearest town is Rs.35 to Rs.40. But the roads inside the village are of variable quality. Some parts of the village become inaccessible during rains. A few auto rikshas ferry people from one hamlet to another for Rs.10.	There is tap water supply in some parts of the village. Water charges have been increased from Rs.60 per month to Rs.80 per month, but the Panchayat struggles to maintain the supply. Many people do not pay charges on time. There are 20 hand pumps, seven of which do not function, and six wells. During summer, as the water table goes down, people shift from hand pumps to wells,	Almost all households have electricity connections, but there is load shedding. For agriculture, big farmers have permanent connections, while others have temporary connections. In many houses, electric connections were disconnected a week before the fieldwork because bills had not been paid.	There is a big market place, which has stores that sell groceries, stationary, shoes, meat, as well as mobile recharge and carpenter shops. There is a branch of the State Bank of India. There are many small eating places and stalls. There is a weekly haat (market) where green vegetables are bought and sold. Many households have television sets and regional newspapers are available.

	Roads	Drinking Water	Electricity	Other
V3		and some people have to fetch water from outside the colony.		
V4	There is a good access road from outside. Buses to the nearest town are regular but infrequent and the one-way fare is Rs.30 to Rs.35. There are jeep taxis which ferry 12 to 15 people at a time and charge Rs.10 to Rs.12 per head. For two hamlets, the access is poor as there is no pucca road, where many accidents occur.	There is tap water supply and users pay Rs.60 per month. There are 7 hand pumps and wells. No hand pump needs repair, but all except one or two dry up in the summer. No one has to go outside the village to fetch water.	Almost all households have connections, but recently due to unpaid bills, electricity supply has been discontinued. During summer, there is load-shedding for 8-10 hours per day. Very few households have electricity connections for agriculture. A few have temporary double phase connections which cost nearly Rs.15,000.	There are 7 shops in the village including tea stalls, which also sell some snacks, tobacco products, and stationery such as pens and note books. Four households have television sets.
V5	There is good road access from outside and inside the village. The nearest bus stand is 7 kilometers away. No vehicles are available to reach it, except on the weekly market day, and people walk or use motor cycles. A local vehicle that picks and drops teachers to the bus stand charges Rs.10 one-way. The one-way fare to the nearest town is Rs.20 to Rs.30.	Tap water supply has started recently. There are 12 hand pumps of which 5 are functional, 5 non-functional, and 2 have poor quality water. There is a community well. Hand pumps dry up in the summer in three hamlets, and people use the community well. No one goes outside the village to fetch water.	All except 3 households have electricity. Electricity is supplied between four to six hours a day. The average charges are between Rs.250 to 350 per month. Electricity is available for irrigation. The charges are between Rs.8000-12000.	There are 5 shops which sell groceries, tobacco, packaged snacks, make up and sometimes petrol and diesel. Around 10-12 households have television sets. The newspaper comes when teachers bring it to the school. Men go to markets in other villages to access newspapers. There is a computer centre to access government digital data supported by NGOs[15].

Drinking Water

The main source of drinking water in the district comprised public hand pumps, from which villagers fetched water. In towns and some villages, tap water was available. Wells and ponds too were sources of drinking water. As per available data, all the habitations in the district had hand pumps. Moreover, 19.1% habitations in the district and 26.7% habitations in the sample block had tap water supply[16]. In interviews, officials expressed concern that the ground water level was declining, because of which many hand pumps were drying up.

In the 5 sample villages, there were a total of 134 hand pumps, and in 4 villages, where information was available, 28.6% were out of order. Water scarcity, especially in the summer, was a major problem. In fact, it was reported as the most important problem in several FGDs, and by many PRs. For example, in village 3, some people had to fetch water from outside the village, and the ex-Sarpanch identified it as the most important problem of the people. In a hamlet where the poorer people lived, there was acute water scarcity. People often got drinking water from a community well, which was used by cattle as well. In the summer, they dug holes in the sand and waited for them to fill up with water. Recently, some rich farmers had dug a bore for irrigation near this hamlet, which had further lowered the water level, and the hand-pump, which had provided adequate drinking water except for summer, had become dysfunctional (Box 2.2).

There was tap water supply in 3 of the 5 sample villages. The tap water schemes were inadequate in many ways. In village 3, tap water was available in around half the village.

[15] By Digital Empowerment Foundation and PRADAN

[16] Source: Executive Engineer, Public Health Engineering, District Statistical Handbook 2016

In village 4, tap water connections were available throughout the village, but water did not reach the farthest end of a colony where the poorest people lived, as the pressure was not sufficient. In village 5, depending upon electricity availability, the system ran twice a day for a total of 2-3 hours (Box 2.2).

Electricity

As per information available from district officials, 98% of the villages in the district had electricity connections, though in the sample block, 20 villages lacked electricity. In the sample villages, nearly all the households had electricity connections, though a few did not. But electricity was not supplied throughout the day, and there was 'load shedding' for 6-10 hours in villages 1, 2, 3 and 4, while in village 5, electricity was supplied only 4-6 hours per day. For agriculture, in village 1 and 3, big farmers had permanent connections, and the rest had temporary connections (Box2.2). Electricity bills were a major bone of contention between the people and the department. In villages 3 and 5, electricity had been disconnected a week before the fieldwork because bills had not been paid. In village 5, many households had received electricity bills of Rs15,000 to Rs.35,000, and the families had no idea why these sums were due, as they usually paid a flat amount of Rs.250 to Rs.350 per month. Even people without electricity connections had received bills.

Education and Health

Government education facilities at the primary level (classes 1 to 5) were widespread and in the district, on an average, there was more than one school per village. For the upper primary stage (classes 6 to 8), on an average, one school was available for 2.5 villages, so that children in more than half the villages travelled outside the village to access it. At subsequent stages, the education facilities were limited and on an average the number of villages served by a high school (up to class 10) and a higher secondary school (up to class 12), were 5.7 and 13.3 respectively (Table 2.4).

The number of schools in the sample villages varied from 1 to 12. The larger villages had more schools, and also schools that included higher grades. Villages 1 and 3 had schools up to grade 12, village 2 up to grade 10, village 4 up to grade 8 and village 5 up to grade 5. In village 1, there was also an Industrial Training Institute (ITI) and a Skill Development Institute. Additionally, in village 3, there were two government boys' residential primary schools, two government girls' residential primary schools and one government girls' residential middle school, which catered to the whole block[18]. The

Table 2.4: Educational Institutions and Health Services in the Sample District[17]

	Number	Average No. of Villages and Towns covered by one Facility	No. of students enrolled		Number	Average No. of Villages
Primary Schools	1,142	0.8	54,048	District Hospital	1	933
Schools with Middle Sections	368	2.5	42,067	Civil Hospital/ Community Health Centre	8	116.6
Schools with class 9 and 10	161	5.8	17,173	Public Health Centre	17	54.8
Schools with class 11 and 12	70	13.3	24,462	Sub-Health Centre	173	5.4

[17] Source: Information obtained from officials
[18] These have been excluded from Table 2.5 as they served the whole block.

	Number	Average No. of Villages and Towns covered by one Facility	No. of students enrolled		Number	Average No. of Villages
Colleges	11	88.8	18,206	Anganwadi Centre	1,771	0.53
Polytechnic	2	466.4	NA			
ITI	6	155.5	NA			

villages had between 1-8 primary schools, and 0-3 middle schools. The availability of private schools was limited: villages 1 and 3 had private primary schools and village 1 had a private upper primary school. There were no private high schools and higher secondary schools.

health centres with doctors in the district (Table 2.7). If all the government medical facilities with full-time doctors are taken together, on an average, one facility served around 36 villages and towns. There was an average of one SHC for 5 villages. None of the sample villages had a medical facility with a doctor and 3 out of 5 had a SHC.

Table 2.5: Availability of Schools, Sub-Health centres and Anganwadi Centres in Sample Villages

School type	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
Government Primary	3	8	5	2	1
Private Primary	2	0	1	0	0
Government Middle	1	3	1	1	0
Private Middle	1	0	0	0	0
Government High School	1	1	2	0	0
Private High School	0	0	0	0	0
Government Higher Secondary	1	0	1	0	0
Private Higher Secondary	0	0	0	0	0
Total Schools	9	12	10	3	1
Sub-Health Centres	1	1	1	0	0
Anganwadi Centres	8	10	5	2	1

In the district, there was one district hospital with 300 beds, two civil hospitals with 60 and 30 beds, six community health centres (CHCs) with 30 beds each, 17 public health centres (PHCs) with 5-10 beds each, and 173 sub-health centres (SHCs) which had nursing staff, where the doctor was expected to visit once a week. Thus, there were a total of 26

There were 1,771 Anganwadi Centres, i.e. centres to provide nutrition, health and pre-school education support to children below the age of six and pregnant and lactating mothers, in the district, which worked out to more than two per village on an average. The sample villages had between one to 10 AWCs, a total of 26.

Other Infrastructure

As per official sources, there were 12 railway stations in the district. No public transport other than trains was available, as the state had privatized road transport. Private buses were available to reach major towns and block headquarters. In the interior areas, jeep taxis were available. All the villages were connected with Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) mobile towers and the district had 68 such towers. In addition, there were 94 branches of nationalized banks, 13 branches of the cooperative banks and 175 post offices[19].

In the sample villages, several households had television sets. In villages 1, 2 and 3, newspapers were available in the shops within the village, but in village 5, the newspaper only became available when the teachers brought it or some men accessed it from another village. Villages 1 and 3 had a large number of shops and facilities such as marriage halls. In village 2, there were a small number of shops for daily needs scattered across the village. In villages 4 and 5, however there were just 7 and 5 shops respectively, where groceries, tobacco and small food stuff could be purchased. Among the sample villages, only village 3 had a bank branch (Box 2.2). ■

[19] Source: District website

3 ROLE AND STRUCTURE

Introduction

This chapter elucidates and analyzes the role and structure of district administration, i.e., what institutions comprise it, how they are inter-related and the manner in which their role is defined. This analysis is the base for understanding the working of district administration. Moreover, the structure of institutions is examined in terms of how it can facilitate and hamper different types of activities.

The administration of the district was organized along three axes. One axis was the 'departmental axis'. In this, offices of 37 state government departments existed in the district at various levels. In this axis, the field offices had strong linkages with their state level department offices. The large number of department offices was indicative of two characteristics of field governance. One, that field administration encompassed a wide range of subjects pertaining to law enforcement, socio-economic development, social justice, land management, provision of infrastructure and revenue collection. In other words, the government attempted to provide many services to citizens. The second characteristic that this plethora of departments revealed was 'departmentalism' or that each state department functioned autonomously and set up its 'own' field organization, rather than working through a set of common organizations.

The second and third axes were organized around the district. In the second axis, the 'DC axis' the District Collector (DC) functioned as the administrative head of the district. The DC was responsible for regulatory issues such as land management and law and order, but also played a role in socio-economic development and social welfare activities. The DC had supervisory powers over the department officials of the district, and financial powers as delegated by the departments. In the third axis, the 'local government axis', elected local governments at three levels in rural areas, i.e. the Zilla Parishad (ZP) at the district, Janpad Panchayat (JP) at the block and Gram Panchayat (GP) for 1-4 villages, and municipalities in the urban areas were responsible for socio-economic development and provision of civic services. Notably, for socio-economic development, there were two coordinating agencies in the district: the DC and the Panchayats.

In addition to the above three streams, Members of Parliament (MP) and Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) had three types of formal roles in district administration. They were members in Panchayats, headed some committees, and had funds at their disposal to sanction development works in the area. State ministers also played a role, when they were made 'in charge' of a district, or headed a committee. However, the formal role of ministers, MPs and MLAs was limited and sporadic.

Parallel to the district administration was an independent judicial system, comprising one court of the district judge, one special court for crimes against SCs and STs, 6 courts of additional district judges and 15 courts of magistrates. Also, some services, such as post offices and public sector banks, were provided by the central government and did not form a part of the district administration.

The working of district administration was impacted by the role and structure of each stream of administration, as well as the dynamics among them. Consequently, in this chapter, the role and structure of each stream of administration, and the inter-relationship among various streams, are delineated.

Area Types

The role and structure of the three streams of administration were linked to the broad classification of the geographical area of the district. To begin with, the area of the district was divided into two broad categories: rural and urban. As per the 2011 census, of the total district area of 6,703 square kilometers, 98.2% of the area was classified as rural and 1.8% as urban.

The rural area was further sub-divided into 'revenue' and 'forest' area. Most of the rural population lived in the revenue area, in villages known as 'revenue' villages. The forest area, along with the forest, had 'forest villages, i.e., small settlements of people at the edge of the forest. The forest area was sub-divided into 2 categories: reserved forest and protected forest. In the district, of the total forest area, 65.7% area was classified as reserved forest, while 34.3% was classified as protected forest[20].

Another division was 'tribal' and 'non-tribal' area. The tribal area had a large population of STs and there were some special provisions for it in the fifth schedule of the Constitution. The sample block was a fifth schedule block. In this block, special programmes for STs were in operation and there were protections in law regarding ownership of land for tribals. Moreover, the sample district had two area chunks which were under the control of the Defense Ministry of Government of India. In these areas, district administration operated in a very limited way.

Departments

The departmental field offices corresponded to departments at the state level. In terms of focus, these could be divided into four types (Table 3.1). The large majority, i.e., 25, were subject focused, or dealt with a particular theme of governance, such as education, health, policing or management of forests. Cutting across subject focused departments were four client or beneficiary focused and five expertise focused departments. The beneficiary focused departments were concerned with the protection and welfare of vulnerable sections of society: SCs, STs, women and children etc. Five departments, i.e., Finance, Planning, Economics and Statistics, Law, Public Relations, Public Service Management had expertise in an area of governance, which was applicable across subject and beneficiary oriented departments.
Of these, however, the district office of the Law Department functioned like a subject-focused department, providing legal aid to those who needed it, instead of providing expertise to other government departments. Three departments were of a hybrid nature. Notably, though a large number of departments had offices in the district, there were no offices of the department dealing with human resources.

In terms of their main goals, the departments could broadly be classified as 'regulatory' i.e. focused on enforcing the law and maintaining order, 'revenue collecting', i.e. collecting government revenues, and 'socio-developmental' focused on providing social infrastructure, economic development, livelihoods and social services, though many departments combined more than one goal (Table 3.1). As can be seen, the thrust of two-thirds of the departments was on socio-economic development and delivery of social services. Six departments were concerned with law enforcement. Only one department was concerned mainly with revenue collection, though three regulatory departments, i.e., Mineral Resources, Revenue and Transport, also collected revenues. This picture indicates that substantial activities of field administration concerned socio-economic development and provision of social services, followed by law enforcement, and revenue collection was

[20] Source: Obtained from officials

not a major activity in the district. From among the 8 sample departments, Revenue was a regulatory department, Forest was a hybrid department and the rest were socio-developmental departments.

the department exclusively for the district. Among the exceptions, the offices of two departments managed more than one district. One, the Cooperation Department

Table 3.1: Types of Departments in the District

Type	No.	Departments
Department Types in Terms of Focus		
Subject Focused	25	Animal Husbandry, Commercial Taxes, Commerce Industry and Employment, Cottage and Rural Industries, Energy, Fisheries, Food Civil Supply and Consumer Protection, **Forest**, Higher Education, Home, Horticulture and Food Processing, Housing and Environment, Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (Ayush), Jail, Mineral Resources, **Panchayat and Rural Development, Public Health Engineering, Public Health and Family Welfare, Revenue, School Education**, Social Justice, Technical Education and Skill Development, Transport, Urban Administration and Environment, Water Resources
Beneficiary or client focused	4	Backward Classes and Minority Welfare, Labour, SC and ST Welfare, Women and Child Development
Expertise focused	5	Planning, Economics and Statistics, Public Relations, Public Service Management, Finance, Law
Hybrid	3	Cooperation, Farmer Welfare and Agriculture, Sports and Youth Welfare
Department Types in Terms of Goal		
Regulatory	7	Home, Finance, Food Civil Supply and Consumer Protection, Jail, Mineral Resources, Revenue, Transport
Revenue Collection	1	Commercial Taxes
Socio-Developmental and Social Services	28	Animal Husbandry, Backward Classes and Minority Welfare, Commerce Industry and Employment, Cottage and Rural Industries, **Cooperation**, Energy, Fisheries, Higher Education, Horticulture and Food Processing, Housing and Environment, Farmer Welfare and Agriculture, Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (Ayush), Labour, Law, **Panchayat and Rural Development**, Planning, Economics and Statistics, **Public Health Engineering, Public Health and Family Welfare,** Public Relations, Public Service Management, SC and ST Welfare, **School Education,** Social Justice, Technical Education and Skill Development, Urban Administration and Environment, Sports and Youth Welfare, Water Resources, **Women and Child Development.**
Hybrid	1	**Forest**

Department Structure

Administrative Units

The importance of the district as a key unit of administration was illustrated by the fact that all the departments, except four, had offices that oversaw the activities of

offices served two districts. Some 20 years prior to this study, the boundaries of the district had changed, as the previous larger district was bifurcated into two districts. Separate administrative infrastructure for the Cooperation Department in the two new districts was not considered financially viable, so the department continued to

function as per the old integrated district. Two, the Water Resources Department had a set up to manage a multi-district irrigation project. Additionally, for the departments of Higher Education and Technical Education & Skill Development, there were no district level institutions to oversee the activities of the department, as colleges and institutions of these were managed from the state level.

For the purpose of administration, the district was divided into smaller geographical units, which varied across the departments. Below the district, there were three levels of administrative units: the sub-division, the tehsil or block or equivalent unit, and sub-block or village level units. Notably, below the district, the departments had different administrative units, and there was no single unit of administration. Generally, in the regulatory departments, established in the colonial period, sub-divisions were the next unit. Development departments generally did not have offices at the sub-division, but at the block, which was smaller than the sub-division. Below the sub-division and block, departments had different units.

A closer scrutiny of the administrative units of the sample departments reveals a still more complicated picture (Box 3.1). First, the departments varied in the extent to which they included the various area types such as forest, urban and schedule five areas. Between Revenue and Forest, there was a clear division in terms of land types: the forest area was the domain of the Forest Department, while the Revenue Department operated in rural and urban 'revenue' areas. From among the sample departments, four, i.e., School Education, Public Health, Women & Child Development (WCD) and Cooperation operated in all three types of areas. Panchayat and Rural Development (P&RD) Department operated in all rural areas: revenue and forest. For urban areas, there was a separate department and separate local governments. The Public Health Engineering (PHE) department operated only in rural areas. The municipalities were responsible for supplying drinking water in urban areas, and the department provided technical advice if consulted.

Box 3.1: Departmental Units of Eight Sample Departments

(Y= Yes, N=No)

Department	Units of Departments			Whether Include	
	Sub-Division level	**Tehsil/ Block/ Equivalent**	**Sub-Block level**	**Urban Area**	**Forest Area**
Revenue	Sub-Divisions: 5	Tehsil: 8	RI Circles: 25 Patwari Halkas: 427	Y	N
Forest	Sub-Divisions: 3 Ranges: 7 Territorial + 3 Production Sub-Ranges: 30 Beats: 138			N	Y
Panchayat and Rural Development	Nil	Block: 7	Clusters: 66 Gram Panchayats: 428	N	Y
School Education	Nil	Block: 7	Jan Shiksha Kendras: 48	Y	Y
Public Health and Family Welfare	Nil	Block: 7	Primary Health Centres: 14 Sub-health Centres:152	Y	N

Department	Units of Departments			Whether Include	
	Centres : 152				
Women and Child Development	Nil	Projects: 9	Supervisor circles: 65	Y	Y
Public Health Engineering	Sub-Divisions: 4	Nil	Nil	N	Y
Cooperation	No fixed units, organizations are started on the basis of commercial logic.			Y	Y

Second, administrative units with the same names were not the same. Though Revenue, Forest and PHE had 'sub-divisions' as units, these sub-divisions were different. The Revenue Department had 5 sub divisions, the Forest Department had 3 and PHE, four. As noted above, these departments differed in the area types in which they operated. The sub-divisions of the Revenue and Forest departments were in different areas altogether. But the PHE department, though akin to development departments in terms of role, had sub-divisions like the regulatory departments. These differed from the Revenue Department sub-divisions: they did not include urban areas and covered larger portions of the rural area.

Four departments, i.e., P & RD, School Education, Public Health and Family Welfare and WCD, had no sub-divisions, and adopted the block, of which there were seven, as the unit below the district. However, while blocks of School Education and Public Health departments included urban and rural areas, the WCD Department had set up separate projects in urban areas. As P& RD functioned only in rural areas, its blocks comprised rural areas only.

The Revenue Department functioned as per a different unit along with the sub-division: the tehsil, which was of a similar size as the block but not co-terminus with it. There were 8 tehsils against 7 blocks. Further, the tehsils were very uneven units. The population of various tehsils varied between 2.41 lakh to 0.58 lakh and the area varied between 1,359 square kilometers and a mere 172 square kilometers. Among the blocks, the variation was much less. The population of the largest block was 1.67 lakh and of the smallest, 1.01 lakh, while the area varied from 1,057 square kilometers to 498 square kilometers. In the sample district, four tehsils and blocks shared the same boundaries, two tehsils cut across two blocks, one tehsil cuts across three blocks and one tehsil was part of a block. The sample block did not share the boundary with the tehsil, which was larger.

Finally, below the block, the administrative units were even more varied across departments. For example, each sample department had a different name for its sub-block unit, and these were located in different places, as is indicated by the different number of sub-block units across the departments (Table 3.2). Only two departments, Revenue and P&RD, had created a common sub-block unit: the number of 'Patwari Halkas' had been increased from 214 to 427 around 10 years ago to match the number of Gram Panchayats.

The basic units of the district were towns in urban areas and villages and habitations in rural areas. As per the 2001 census, in the sample district, there were 961 villages (899 revenue villages and 62 forest villages) of which 921 were inhabited, and 12 towns (seven statutory towns and five census towns)[21]. In the sample block, there were

[21] Statutory towns are places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee. Census towns are places which have a population of at least 5,000, where 75% or more male population is engaged in non-agricultural pursuits as main occupation and the population density is at least 400 persons per square kilometer. (Source: censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/data_files/kerala/13-concept-34.pdf)

119 villages, of which 11 were forest villages and 108 were inhabited. There was no municipality, though a small part of a town was part of the block.

The villages varied in size. The average village population was 886 persons as per census 2011. The largest village had a population of 9,557 while the smallest village had merely 7 people. More than a third of the villages in the sample district and block were small villages, with a population of less than 500 (Table 3.2)[22]. In terms of area, the largest village in the district was 4,975.9 hectare and the smallest village, 13 hectares.

Types of Departmental Organizations

The departments had various types of offices and institutions at different units or levels (Box 3.2). These can be classified into two broad types. The first were management organizations, which supervised grassroots institutions, employees and the implementation of government programmes. These existed at various levels, depending on the administrative unit adopted by the department. As noted above, all departments had such organizations in the district except

Table 3.2: Villages as per Population Category in Sample District and Block

	Total Number	Percentage Villages with Population							
		Unin-habited	Below 200	200-499	500-999	1,000-1,999	2,000-4,999	5,000-9,999	More than 10,000
District	961	4.2	7.8	26.5	32.0	21.2	7.4	0.7	0.1
Block	119	9.2	8.4	28.6	21.0	21.0	11.1	0.8	0

The units, revenue village and forest village, were used by all the sample departments except PHE. The PHE Department used the unit 'habitation', which was a contiguous area from the point of view of supplying drinking water. The sample district had 1,397 habitations in 961 villages and the sample block had 243 habitations[23] in 119 villages. Thus many villages comprised more than one habitation, i.e., areas that were not contiguous. While revenue villages were fixed, habitations changed, such as when new colonies came up. For forest land, the working units, which had similar trees and vegetation and needed similar activities, were called 'working circles', which were divided into 'felling series' and these were further sub-divided into 'coups'. For administrative purpose, the basic unit was 'beat'.

Higher Education and Technical Education & Skill Development, which were managed from the state departments. For two departments, i.e., Cooperation and Water Resources, the management office was situated at the district headquarter, but was responsible for more than one district.

The second broad category was of non-management organizations. These can be divided into four types. The first type, with the largest number of organizations, provided social services such as schools, Anganwadi Centres, hospitals etc. Among these, educational institutions and AWCs were the largest in number. The second type was law enforcement agencies, i.e., revenue courts, police stations and jail. The third type of organizations was commercial, which

[22] Source: District Agricultural Handbook 2016

[23] Data obtained from officials.

bought and sold goods or provided loans. These included the Mandi, the cooperative banks, PDS shops etc. Finally, there were technical institutions such as water testing laboratories and teacher training institutes (Table 3.3). In addition, some services in the district, i.e. 175 post offices and 94 public sector banks, were managed directly by the central government.

Some institutions were hybrid types, i.e. performing a supervision role as well as providing a service. Among the sample departments, health centres at the block level provided health care as well as managing employees and programmes. Revenue agencies functioned as courts and management agencies.

Box 3.2: Departmental Offices and Institutions in the District

(N: No office or institution)

Department	District		Sub-Division		Tehsil/Block		Sub-Block	
	Name	No	Name	No.	Name	No.	Name	No.
Animal Husbandry	Deputy Director Office	1	N	N	N	N	Veterinary Hospital	14
	Divisional Veterinary Centre	1					Dispensary	30
	Artificial Insemination Centre	1					Cross-Breeding Centre	16
Backward Classes and Minority Welfare	Assistant Director	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Commercial Taxes	District Excise Office	1	N	N	N		N	N
Commerce, Industry and Employment	District Industries Centre	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Cooperation	District Cooperative Bank	1	N	N	N	N	Cooperative Bank	12
	District Marketing Office	1					Godowns	6
	Deputy Registrar Cooperation	1					Cooperative Societies+ SHGs + Federations converted into Cooperative Societies	530+ 403+ 10
							Public Distribution Shop	441
Cottage and Rural Industries/ Gramodyog/	District Khadi Evam Gramodyog Board	1	N	N	N	N	Resham Utpadan Kendra	30
	Assistant Director Sericulture	1						

Department	District		Sub-Division		Tehsil/Block		Sub-Block	
	Name	No	Name	No.	Name	No.	Name	No.
Energy	Superintending Engineer	1	Divisional Engineer/ Sub Divisional Office	4	N	N	N	N
	Energy Development Corporation	1						
Farmer Welfare and Agriculture	Deputy Director Agriculture	2	Sub Divisional Office Agriculture	2	Senior Agriculture Development Office	7	N	N
					Agriculture Mandi	6		
Finance	Treasury	1	N	N	Sub-treasury at Tehsil	8	N	N
Fisheries	Deputy Director Fisheries	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection	District Food Office	1	Additional Food Officer	2	Food Inspector at Tehsil	8	N	N
Forest	Territorial Forest Division	1	Sub Divisional Office, Forest	3	N	N	Range Offices	10
	Tiger Reserve	1					Nistar Depot Consumer Depot Commercial Depot	30 2 1
Higher Education	N	N	N	N	N	N	Degree Colleges	11
Home	Superintendent of Police	1	Sub Divisional Office, Police	4	Additional District Prosecution Office	14	Police Station	18
	District Commandant, Home Guards	1					Police Chowki	13
	District Prosecution Office	1						
Horticulture and Food Processing	Deputy Director Office	1	N	N	Senior Horticulture Development Office	7	Nursery	7
	Assistant Director Farm	1					Farm	3
							Training Centre	4

Department	District		Sub-Division		Tehsil/Block		Sub-Block	
	Name	No	Name	No.	Name	No.	Name	No.
Housing and Environment	Deputy Director, Town and Country Planning Office	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy	District Ayush Hospital	1	N	N	Ayurvedic Public Health Centre	9	Ayush Hospital and Dispensary	34
Jail	Superintendent, Central Jail	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Labour	Assistant Labour Commissioner Office	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Law and Legislative Affairs	Legal Aid Office	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Mineral Resources	District Mining Office	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Panchayat and Rural Development	Zilla Parishad[24]	1	N	N	Janpad Panchayat	7	Cluster	66
							Gram Panchayat	428
Planning, Economics and Statistics	District Planning Office	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Public Health Engineering	Executive Engineer	1	Sub Divisional Office (PHE)	4	N	N	N	N
	Sub Divisional Office Mechanical		Water Testing Lab	4				
Public Health and Family Welfare	Chief Health and Medical Office	1	N	N	Civil Hospital	2	Public Health Centre	17
	Civil Surgeon	1			Community Health Centre	6	Sub-Health Centre	173
Public Relations	Deputy Director	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Public Service Management	District Lok Sewa Kendra Manager Office	1	N	N	Lok Sewa Kendra	9	N	N
Revenue	District Collector	1	Sub-Divisional Magistrate	5	Tehsil	8	Revenue Inspector	25

[24] Statutory towns are places with a municipality, corporation, cantonment board or notified town area committee. Census towns are places which have a population of at least 5,000, where 75% or more male population is engaged in non-agricultural pursuits as main occupation and the population density is at least 400 persons per square kilometer. (Source: censusindia.gov.in/2011-prov-results/paper2/data_files/kerala/13-concept-34.pdf)

Department	District		Sub-Division		Tehsil/Block		Sub-Block	
	Name	No	Name	No.	Name	No.	Name	No.
SC and ST Welfare	Assistant Commissioner Tribal Welfare Office	1	N	N			N	N
	ST Finance and Development Corporation	1						
School Education	Deputy Director Education	1	N	N	Block Education Office	7	Jan Shiksha Kendra	48
	District Education Office	1			Block Resource Centre	7	Primary School	1,142
	District Institute of Education and Training	1					Upper Primary School	539
							High School	91
							Higher Secondary School	70
Social Justice	Deputy Director Office	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Sports and Youth Welfare	District Sports Office	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Technical Education and Skill Development	Employment Exchange: 1	1	N	N	N	N	Polytechnic	2
							Industrial Training Institute	6
Transport	Regional Transport Office	1	N	N	N	N	N	N
Urban Administration and Environment	District Urban Development Agency	1	N	N	N	N	Municipalities	12
Water Resources	Superintending Engineer	1	Executive Engineer	3	N	N	N	
Women and Child Development	District Programme Officer	1	Bal Grah	4	Child Development Project Office	9	Anganwadi Centre	1,771
	District Women Empowerment Office	1			Block Women Empowerment Office	5		
	Juvenile Justice Board	1						
	One-Stop Centre	1						

Table 3.3: Non-Management Agencies of State Government

Department	Agency	No.
Law Enforcement		
Home	Police Station/ Police Chowki	31
Jail	Central Jail	1
Revenue	DC court	1
	SDM court	5
	Tehsil court	8
Women and Child Development	Juvenile Justice Board	1
Sub-total of Law Enforcement		**47**
Social Services		
Livelihoods		
Animal Husbandry	Veterinary Centre	14
	Cross-Breeding Centres	16
	Dispensaries	30
Horticulture	Nurseries	7
	Farm	3
	Training Centre	4
Sub-Total of Livelihoods		**74**
Health		
Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy	Ayush hospital and dispensary	34
	Ayurvedic PHC	9
Public Health and Family Welfare	District Hospital	1
	Community Health Centre and Nutrition Resource Centre	8
	Public Health Centre	17
	Sub-Health Centre	173
Sub-Total of Health		**242**
Education		
School Education	Primary Schools	1,142
	Upper Primary Schools	539
	High Schools	91
	Higher Secondary Schools	70
Higher Education	Degree Colleges	11
Technical Education	Employment Exchange	1
	Polytechnic	2
	ITI	6
Sub-Total of Education		**1,862**

Department	Agency	No.
Women and Children		
Women and Child Development	One Stop Centre	1
	Bal Grah	1
	Anganwadi Centres	1,771
Sub-Total of Women and Children		**1,773**
Others		
Public Service Management	Lok Sewa Kendra	9
Sub-total of Social Services		**3,960**
Commercial		
Cooperation	District Cooperative Bank	1
	Cooperative Banks	12
	Cooperative Societies	530
	Godowns	6
	Public Distribution Shops	441
Farmer Welfare and Agriculture	Agriculture Mandi	7
Forest	Nistar Depot	30
	Consumer Depot	2
	Commercial Depot	1
Sub-Total of Commercial		**1,030**
Technical and Training		
Cottage Industries	Resham Utpadan Kendra	30
Public Health Engineering	Water Testing Laboratories	4
School Education	District Institute of Education and Training	1
Sub Total		**35**
Total		**5,072**

Along with the above organizations, the departments had formed committees. These were of two types. The first type of committees, which had decision-making and coordination roles, existed mainly at the district level (Table 3.6), but there were some at the sub-division and block level too.

At the district level, of the 37 departments, 24 had formed 82 such committees. These committees had other officials as members, and some also had non-official members. These committees planned, monitored schemes, sanctioned loans or other benefits, etc.

Table 3.6: Types of Department Committees at District Level

Type of Committee	Number of Committees	Percentage of Total
Overall Coordination	2	2.4
Sectoral/Subject Planning and Development	16	19.5
Scheme Planning, Implementation and Monitoring	25	30.5
Sanction Projects/ Activities	6	7.3
Sanction Loans/Grants/ Land Lease/ Benefits	8	9.8
Sanction Licenses and Fix Reserve Price	1	1.2
Appointment of Staff/ Fix Salaries/ Promotions/ Postings/ Grievances	7	8.6
Ensure Law Implementation	5	6.1
Assist Beneficiaries in Projects	1	1.2
Regulate Private Institutions	4	4.9
Purchase	1	1.2
Others	6	7.3
Total	**82**	

The second type of committees existed at the village level and had been formed to get public participation in departmental activities and also manage programmes and institutions at the grassroots. Some committees received funds for departmental activities.These usually comprised grassroots workers and nominated village members.

From among the 8 sample departments, the School Education Department had formed the School Management Committee cum Parent Teacher cum Parent Teachers Association (SMC-PTA). The committee comprised two PRs, the school headmaster and parents of meritorious students and had the mandate to monitor the school, prepare school development plan and monitor the utilization of the grants received by the school. Another committee, which was a joint committee of the Public Health, WCD and PHE departments, was the 'Tadarth Samiti' comprised grassroots workers of these departments and nominated villagers. The mandate of this committee was to supervise and coordinate activities of Public Health and WCD departments, make village plans and ensure community participation. The Forest Department had formed Forest Management Committees. These were mandated to protect the forests, prepare a plan and receive departmental funds to execute various projects. The committees comprised PRs, nominated members and grassroots workers of the Forest Department.

Penetration

As noted above, nearly all the departments were represented at the district level. But the extent to which departmental institutions were present below the district varied widely (Table 3.4). Sixteen departments, i.e., 43% of all departments, had no presence below the district at all. Consequently, these were not easily accessible to ordinary people. Another 3 departments had presence at the sub-division level, but none below and 4 departments had presence at the block

level, but not below. These 7 departments (19%) were accessible with some effort. In all, 23 out of 37 departments, i.e., 62% had no institution easily accessible to people.

Of the remaining 14 departments, two, i.e. Higher Education and Technical Education and Skill Development had marginally more institutions than the number of blocks but no management offices at the district level, so that people's complaints could not be addressed within the district. These departments could not meaningfully be said to have a sub-block presence. Only 12 departments had a presence below the block level, of which two had a presence at the village level. Departments with a sub-block level presence included Animal Husbandry, Cooperation, Cottage and Rural Industries, Forest, Home (Police), Horticulture and Food Processing, Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (Ayush), Panchayat & Rural Development, Public Health & Family Welfare, Revenue as well as two departments with presence in every village, i.e. School Education and Women & Child Development. Thus people had reasonable access to institutions of 12 departments, i.e., less than a third of the total number of departments.

Among the sample departments[25], all except PHE had a sub-block presence, and there was no department with only a district level presence. However in Revenue, below the block, in some 'Revenue Circles', there were buildings, while in others these were simply declared the headquarter of the Revenue Inspectors, and in case of Patwari Halkas, some villages were simply declared the headquarters of the Patwari, and there were no buildings. The PHE department penetrated up to the sub-division level[26], though it had appointed block coordinators for social mobilization. In the summer, when there was a water crisis, sub-engineers were asked to sit in the Janpad Panchayats. The district and sub-division level officials were of the opinion that a block level presence was not needed as officials were in contact with the JP, went to the field, and their phone numbers were available. As per the officials, earlier, when there were no mobiles, people had a lot of trouble in getting in touch with the department. But now, people could register their complaints easily.

However, in the PHE department a disconnect was observed between what the officials said and the actual situation on the ground. For example, all the four

Table 3.4: Penetration of Departments

Departments with only District Level presence	Backward Classes and Minority Welfare, Commercial Taxes, Commerce, Industry and Employment, Fisheries, Housing and Environment, Jail, Labour, Law, Mineral Resources, Planning Economics and Statistics, Public Relations, SC & ST Welfare, Social Justice, Sports and Youth Welfare, Transport, Urban Administration and Environment	16
Departments with Sub-Division presence	Energy, **Public Health Engineering,** Water Resources	3
Departments with Tehsil/ Block presence	Farmer Welfare and Agriculture, Finance, Food Civil Supply and Consumer Protection, Public Service Management	4
Departments with Sub-Block presence	Animal Husbandry, Cooperation, Cottage and Rural Industries, Forest, Home (Police), Horticulture and Food Processing, Indian Systems of Medicine and Homeopathy (Ayush), **Panchayat and Rural Development, Public Health and Family Welfare,** Revenue	10
Departments with presence in every village	**School Education, Women and Child Development**	2
Others	Higher Education, Technical Education and Skill Development	2

[25] When the study was planned, departments that affected people's lives were selected.
[26] At one time, a block office of PHE in only the sample block had been set up, but was discontinued.

departmental officials interviewed declared that out of order hand pumps were repaired within a day or two. But in the 5 sample villages, 28.6% hand pumps were out of order. In one village, in FGDs, people said that they hired technicians from the market to repair hand pumps, and contributed money to pay them. In another village, tribal women complained that the hand pump was out of order most of the time, and it took weeks to repair out of order hand pumps as the mechanic came according to his convenience. They too contributed money to get hand pumps repaired at times. The causes of this disconnect between the departmental perceptions and those of the people may partly be the outcome of the lack of adequate departmental presence.

Role of Departments

Role Definition

The role of the departmental field agencies was not spelt out clearly in any document. Instead, it was framed by laws, rules and codes, through schemes whereby funds were provided for specific activities, and in some cases, plans prepared by the district agencies. The management of public assets of the department, such as schools or land, was an important aspect of the role as well. The main laws, rules, codes and schemes administered by the sample departments, along with the plans prepared and the grassroots institutions managed, are provided in Table C.1, Annex C.

Whether the basis of the departmental role was law, schemes or plans, had important consequences for how rigidly the role of field agencies was defined, and their autonomy to take up varied activities as per the context. In general, as laws, rules and schemes were formulated by the central and state government, they introduced centralization in the role definition. In contrast, a department which functioned on the basis of an area-based plan could take the context into account. Moreover, the rigidity of role-definition differed among departments that functioned on the basis of laws and rules and those that functioned on the basis of schemes. Laws and rules stated general principles, which the departmental officials applied to specific cases. Consequently in departments working as per laws and rules, it was possible to assess each case as per merits against general principles. Schemes, on the other hand, tended to be much more specific: activities, procedures and unit costs were pre-defined. Consequently, departments that functioned on the basis of schemes could take up only certain types of activities. Moreover, as can be seen from Table C.1 at Annex C, the central government, rather than the state government, dominated the agenda, as most major laws and schemes were formulated by the central government[27].

Among the sample departments, the Revenue and Cooperation departments functioned on the basis of laws and codes. These departments did not have schemes and did not prepare plans, though in the Cooperation Department, projects could be funded on a case to case basis. Five departments, focused on socio-economic development, i.e., P&RD, School Education, Public Health, WCD and PHE functioned mainly on the basis of schemes, though, P&RD, School Education and WCD also had laws that guaranteed citizens' rights. Thus in five out of eight sample departments, the role was defined rigidly, through schemes. Planning was the main basis of the functioning of only one department, i.e., the Forest Department which worked as per a carefully prepared 10-year plan and law. Management of grassroots institutions was an important role in four departments, i.e., School Education, Public Health, WCD and Cooperation. In three departments, i.e. Revenue, Forest and PHE, management of public assets was an important role.

[27] In central schemes, the state put in a financial contribution, but the scheme activities are identified by the centre.

Departmental Authority

An important characteristic of the departmental structure in the district was that state level offices of the departments exercised considerable authority over the district offices. First, as noted above, the activities of the field offices were framed by laws and schemes formulated by the centre or the state. As nearly all the funds were tied to schemes, the main activities of field departments were decided at the state level. The finance personnel were embedded in the departments, and funds moved from state to district departmentally. No integrated district plan or budget existed.

Second, the state level offices of the departments exercised tight control over human resources. Except for a few posts at the grassroots, personnel were hired at the state level. In fact, the hiring of high and mid-level officials was not even in the hands of state level departments: It was undertaken by the Public Service Commission. But departments exercised complete control in transfers, promotion and punishment, except for minor punishment of lower level functionaries. So much so, that there was no 'Human Resource' department in the district. Personnel were simply managed centrally.

Role Gaps, Overlap and Conflict

Rigidly defined roles meant that there were often gaps in the activities of the departments. For example, in WCD there was almost no focus on the economic empowerment of women, because no major scheme addressed it. In PHE, even though officials were aware of the broad goal, their activities were restricted to scheme parameters. Their main mandate was installing and repairing hand pumps, though the real problem was that the underground water table was falling, and hand pumps were drying up. Installing new hand pumps and repairing old ones thus had a limited impact. But they were confined to this role.

In addition, the large number of departmental offices functioning autonomously led to role overlap. To begin with, there were two coordinating mechanisms: through the Revenue Department and through Panchayats. While for regulatory work, Revenue was undisputedly the coordinating department, for development work, there was role confusion, as both were responsible. There was role overlap among other departments too. Some of this confusion arose because subject-based departments existed alongside client-based departments, and the role of client-based departments was not envisaged clearly. For example, in the sample block, the Assistant Commissioner Tribal Welfare had the following role in the subjects of other departments:

School Education: Monitor schools, appoint teachers, manage hostels for SC and ST students.

Higher Education: Motivate ST children for higher education and ensure that they get scholarships, provide hostel facilities to college-going ST children, pay for medical treatment up to Rs.5-10 thousand, and prepare ST children for government jobs.

Women and Child Development: Undertake awareness programmes regarding nutrition for ST children

Power: Get electricity line in the tribal area by coordinating with different departments.

Forest: Ensure that STs get land rights in The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act 2008 and ensure rehabilitation.

Out of the five departments, in four, the SC & ST department undertook activities that were already an activity of the subject department. Only in the case of Higher Education, it took some client- specific activities. Moreover, in the sample block which had a high percentage of ST population, the staff for school education was the staff of the SC & ST Welfare Department, and appointments

of teachers etc. were made by the SC & ST Department, while in other blocks, this role was performed by the School Education Department. Yet it was hard to see how this improved the education of tribal children in any way. Notably, the SC & ST Welfare department lacked expertise and authority on the subjects that it addressed.

Similarly, pre-primary education was handled by both the School Education and WCD departments. This did not mean that the two departments shared their expertise with each other. It meant instead, that both managed separate pre-school centres. Further, the Revenue as well as Farmer Welfare and Agriculture Department estimated the quantum of crops sown and there was a degree and competition visible here, as a Revenue Department official asserted that they did better crop estimations, because they had intensive knowledge about the area.

Role and Structure within Sample Departments

As shown in Box 3.2 and Table 3.3, departments had various types of organizations. The extent to which departments split functions among organizations or combined them was highly variable. Among the 6 sample non-coordinating departments, i.e., other than, Revenue and P&RD, in 5 departments, i.e., Forest, School Education, WCD, PHE and Cooperation, the work of the department was split across several organizations at the supervisory level, though the grassroots organization remained the same. In the Public Health Department, it was split among organizations at the district level but not at the sub-district level (Box 3.3).

The splitting was the most extreme in the case of the School Education Department, where the work was divided among three streams of organizations. The stream led by the District Education Officer (DEO) was the oldest stream. To this, a District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) was added in the late 1980s. Subsequently, in the mid 1990s, the District Programme Coordinator (DPC) stream was set up to implement Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The DEO and DPC streams had separate offices at the block level, i.e., the Block Education Offices (BEOs) and the Block Resource Centres (BRCs). However, the DIET had no outreach below the district level. In addition, the department had created Jan Shiksha Kendras (JSKs), i.e. higher secondary and high schools, which, with the assistance of some staff, monitored elementary schools.

The district had schools up to various levels, i.e. up to class 5 (primary), up to class 8 (upper primary), up to class 10 (high school) and up to class 12 (higher secondary). The DEO stream managed all activities related to classes 9-12, as well as establishment matters of elementary school teachers such as appointment, transfer, disciplinary action etc. The DPC stream was responsible for programme implementation, provision of various types of student benefits, and academic supervision and guidance for classes 1-8. The DIET conducted the pre-service teacher education course. The DPC stream and the DIET were both responsible for in-service teacher training. Thus, division of work among the departmental organizations was not logical and there was a high degree of role overlap. The administrative work was divided between the DEO and DPO and the academic work between the DPO and DIET. The work of classes 1-8 was divided among various organizations, while that of classes 9-12 was handled solely by the DEO. A district level official said that there were problems in the work of classes 1-8 being split across two separate offices. Sometimes, the DPO stream did an inspection, got the teacher suspended by an order of the DC and the DEO, handling establishment, did not get to know.

Because of excessive splitting, some organizations were very small or had a very truncated role. The DIET had never been strengthened adequately, and since the mid-1990s, much of its role had been taken over by the DPC stream.
The functions of the BEO office were limited to disbursement of salaries and general supervision of schools. The BRC was responsible for academic supervision, as well as programme implementation which included administrative work such as provision of textbooks, bicycles etc. Thus, the role of the DIET and BEO was marginal and had been taken over by DEC and BRC. This structure was created as a consequence of central government programmes, rather than actual thought about building appropriate organizations.

In PHE too, the role was split across several organizations. The PHE department had been divided into two streams, 'civil' and 'mechanical'. The office of the Executive Engineer (civil) was responsible for programme implementation and the general situation for drinking water in the rural area of the district, and had four sub-divisional offices (SDOs). In parallel was an SDO (mechanical) in the district, who was responsible for installing new hand pumps and repairs which needed sophisticated equipment, who reported to another Executive Engineer. In addition, the Jal Nigam at the state level was responsible for multi-village tap water supply schemes based on surface water. It was establishing separate programme implementation units in districts. Since the potential for such schemes in the sample district was low, it had no such unit.

In the Forest Department, the work was divided among two separate administrations, on the basis of area classification, i.e., one for a tiger reserve area, and second for the remaining forest area of the district. These two were managed by separate officials. In the tiger reserve, which spanned many districts, and was governed by the Wildlife Protection Act 1972, the focus was on protecting tigers and other wildlife. In the other area within the district, called the 'division', the department undertook various activities to protect the forest, such as planting trees, soil and water conservation, guarding the forest, felling trees when needed, managing depots to grade, store and auction forest produce and providing people with forest produce for their daily needs, known as 'Nistar'. These divisions appeared logical, as in the tiger reserve area, people were not allowed to enter, and in the division, community access and participation was anticipated.

In WCD, at the time when the fieldwork of this study was conducted, there were two streams of management organizations. One, comprising the District Programme Office (DPO) at the district and the Child Development Project Offices (CDPOs) at the block level, was concerned with children from the 0-6 age-group and pregnant and lactating mothers. There were separate CDPOs for urban areas, i.e. nine CDPO offices in seven blocks. The second, District Women Empowerment Office (DWEO) and five Block Women Empowerment Offices (BWEOs), handled issues related to women's empowerment, orphans, and juvenile justice. There were seven blocks, but five BWEOs. In blocks where there were no BWEOs, the work of BWEOs was done by the CDPOs in charge of the urban areas. As per an official, the second stream was created in 2013 to enable promotions of some departmental functionaries. Notably, by the time the study ended, these two streams had again been merged into one, headed by the DPO. In addition, in WCD, there were specialist organizations. The Juvenile Justice Board, comprising of a first-class magistrate and two social workers was responsible for hearing cases of children who had transgressed the law. The One Stop Centre was a centre where victims of domestic

violence could stay and get medical and legal help.

The grassroots organizations of the WCD Department were the Anganwadi Centres or Anganwadis. The main role of the AWC was to cater to the needs of children below the age of six and unborn children through their mothers. It provided services related to nutrition, health and early childhood education. Its core clients were children under the age of six and pregnant and lactating mothers. In recent years, the mandate had widened to include activities related to adolescent girls and women affected by domestic violence.

The Cooperation Department had three types of organizations, which performed different functions. The Deputy Registrar Cooperatives was responsible for the management of the cooperative societies, including registration, elections, inspection and audit. The Cooperative Bank, with a capital of Rs.600 crore, provided loans to farmers[28]. The District Marketing Officer (DMO) was responsible for ensuring supply of inputs such as seeds and fertilizers to the societies and managed godowns (storage rooms) for storing supplies. Below the district, there were three types of organizations: branches of the Cooperative Bank, cooperative societies and go-downs. In the district, there were 12 branches of the Cooperative Bank. There were 530 cooperative societies of various types (Table 3.5). In addition, during the course of the study, 403 SHGs and 10 SHG federations were converted into cooperative societies.

The widest outreach was that of Primary Agriculture Cooperative Society (PACS), which were of three types: Large Area Multipurpose Society (LAMPS) for tribal areas, Village Service Societies (VSS) and Village Large Service Societies (VLSS) for non-tribal areas. In spite of separate nomenclature, all PACS did the same kind of work, which included the sale of fertilisers and seeds, providing loans to farmers, and recovering the same. The PACS were financed by branches of the Cooperative Bank. In addition, from time to time, some PACS were declared procurement centres for agriculture produce, and oversaw Public Distribution System (PDS) shops.

There were 99 PACS in the district, with 1,500 to 3,000 members in each. They were governed by a board of directors. There were elections every five years and 11 members were elected to the board. The board of directors was the final decision-making authority regarding the operation of the society, increasing membership etc. The election to the board was usually un-opposed. Around 20-25 people filled the form and then decided among themselves. As per the officials interviewed, people were not interested in getting elected to the board.

[28] The Cooperative Bank has a board and a manager. The board is selected by the societies. Elections are held every five years and 11 people are elected to the board.

Table 3.5: Types of Cooperative Societies

Society	Number
Primary Agriculture Cooperative Society (PACS)	109
Milk Producer Society	114
Prathmik Upbhogata Bhandar (Consumers Societies)	71
Loan Cooperative Society	66
Matsya Palan Sangh (Fisheries Producers Societies)	40
Vanopaj Sahkari Samiti (Society of Forest Produce Collectors)	13
Housing Society	8
Others	109
Total	**530**

In the Public Health Department, the Civil Surgeon's office was the earliest office, responsible for managing the district hospitals, as well as departmental programmes. In 1995, a separate office of the Chief Health and Medical Officer (CHMO) was created to oversee public health in rural areas. The CHMO was the overall head of the department. The Civil Surgeon was given the role of managing the district hospital and overseeing public health in urban areas. In the CHMO's office, there were units dealing with malaria, tuberculosis, media and education etc. In 2006-07, as the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), now called the National Health Mission (NHM), was started, a District Project Management unit of NRHM was added in the CHMO. The district hospital had 300 beds and specialists in medicine, surgery, gynecology, ophthalmology, orthopedics, pathology, radiology, eyes, nose & throat (ENT), dentistry and tuberculosis. It also had a trauma centre and a centre for the care of new born children needing special care.

Below the district, 5 community health centres (CHCs) with 30 beds, and two civil hospitals which were upgraded CHCs with 60 and 100 beds, existed at the bock level. The CHC, headed by a block medical officer (BMO), functioned as a hospital and clinic and also managed programmes. Added to these were 14 primary health centres (PHCs), with 5-10 beds. At the field level, there were 173 sub-health centres, each manned by an auxiliary nurse and midwife (ANM) and a multipurpose worker (MPW) and a doctor from the PHC was expected to make weekly visits. These centres were expected to provide antenatal care to pregnant women and treatment for fever, common cold, flu, cough, anemia, diarrhea, malaria, tuberculosis etc. Thus in the Public Health department, at the district level, the administrative and medical organizations were separate, but at the block level these were combined.

Box 3.3: Role and Structure of the Field Administration in Sample Departments

	Role	Structure
Revenue	The department has specific responsibility for maintaining and updating land records, management of public land, summary resolution of land related disputes and collection of land revenue. It plays a critical role in the management of calamities such as droughts, earthquakes etc. and in maintenance of law and order. At the district and sub-division level, it is a coordinating department.	The department is headed by the District Collector, who is also the administrative head of the district. There is also a SLR exclusively for land-related matters. At the sub-division, there are offices of SDM and at the tehsil level, of Tehsildar. The DC's, SDM's and Tehsildar's offices also function as revenue courts. At the grassroots, there are RIs and Patwaris.
Forest	The department protects and manages the forest area, for which a ten year plan is prepared. It is responsible for tree plantation, cutting of old trees and prevention of forest crime, for which it registers cases. The laws in terms of activities permitted are far more stringent in the reserved forest than in the protected forest. Cases of major crime are presented in court while those of minor crimes decided on by forest officials. The department provides various types of forest produce to ordinary people through Nistar and consumer depots for the rural and urban population respectively at subsidized rates and through commercial depots to business persons by auction. It also provides compensation for loss of life, limb and animals by wildlife.	The forest area of the district is divided under two administrations. One is of a tiger reserve area with rich wildlife, spanning three districts. The second was of the Divisional Forest Officer for the remaining forest area of the district. Under the DFO, there are three SDOs Forest. Below that level, the area is divided in two ways. There are seven territorial ranges managed by rangers. The territorial ranges are further subdivided into 30 sub-ranges, managed by deputy rangers and 138 beats, managed by beat guards. In parallel, the area is divided into three production ranges, which are concerned with felling of trees.
Panchayats and Rural Development	The department focuses on creation of livelihoods and infrastructure in the rural areas. It also regulates Panchayats. Panchayats are responsible for socio-economic development in the rural areas, for which they are coordinating institutions.	There are Panchayats at three levels, the Zilla Parishad at the district level, the Janpad Panchayat at the block level and Gram Panchayats for 1-4 villages.
School Education	The department has responsibility for education from primary to higher secondary levels and adult literacy. It manages government schools, ensures enrolment of all children in elementary education, organizes pre-service and in-service teacher training, provides text books and other student benefits and conducts examinations and tests.	The work is divided among three streams of organizations, i.e. streams led by the District Education Officer, the District Institute of Education and Training and the District Programme Coordinator. While the DIET is a stand-alone structure at the district level, the DEO and DPO have separate offices at the block level, i.e. the Block Education Officer and the Block Resource Centre. In addition, the department had created Jan Shiksha Kendras, which are higher secondary and high schools to monitor elementary schools with the assistance of some staff. At the field, there is a network of schools providing various levels of education.

	Role	Structure
Public Health and Welfare	The department provides basic health services through hospitals and health centres which can be accessed by citizens. It focuses specially on maternal, child and preventive health care. It is responsible for public education and activities such as surveys, health camps and campaigns for a range of health issues. It is responsible for regulating private health care.	At the district level, the chief health and medical officer is the overall head of the department. There is a separate district hospital run by the civil surgeon. Below the district, at the block level, there are five community health centres and two civil hospitals which are up-graded CHCs. Added to these were 14 primary health centres, and 173 sub-health centres.
Women and Child Development	The department is concerned with the nutrition and health of children in the 0-6 year's age group and of pregnant and lactating mothers, as well as adolescent girls. It runs centres for the pre-school education of children in the 3-6 year's age group. It is also responsible for the empowerment of women, with focus on preventing mortality of the girl child, addressing domestic violence, protection of children in difficult circumstances and juvenile justice.	There are two streams of management organizations. One, the District Programme Office, and the Child Development Programme Office at the block level, is concerned with children from the 0-6 year age group. The second, District Women Empowerment Office and 5 Block Women Empowerment Offices, handle issues related to women's empowerment, orphans, and juvenile justice. The grassroots organizations of both streams of the WCD Department are the AWCs. There are also specialist organizations. The Juvenile Justice Board is responsible for hearing cases of children who transgress the law. The One Stop Centre is a centre where victims of domestic violence can stay and get medical and legal help.
Public Health Engineering	The department aims to provide safe drinking water. It installs and maintains hand pumps, sets up tap water schemes in villages, tests the quality of water and takes up activities for water conservation, re-charging and rain water harvesting.	There are two streams, 'civil' and 'mechanical'. The office of the Executive Engineer (civil) is responsible for programme implementation and the general situation for drinking water in the rural area of the district. The SDO mechanical is responsible for installing new hand pumps and repairs which needed sophisticated equipment.
Cooperation	The department promotes and regulates co-operative societies in agriculture, fisheries, housing etc., and monitors their functioning. It provides input and marketing support to farmers' cooperative societies.	At the district level, for two combined districts, the Deputy Registrar Cooperatives is responsible for the management of the cooperative societies, including registration, elections, inspection and audit. The cooperative bank provides loans to farmers29. The District Marketing Officer is responsible for ensuring supply of inputs such as seeds and fertilizers to the societies and manages go-downs for storing supplies. Below the district, there are three types of organizations: branches of the Cooperative Banks, cooperative societies and go-downs.

[29] The Cooperative Bank has a Board and a manager. The Board is selected by the societies. Elections are held every five years, and 11 people are elected to the Board.

District Collector and Revenue Department

The Revenue Department, often considered the face of the government in the district, had its offices and officials at five levels. The District Collector (DC) was the head of the department, there were offices of the sub-divisional magistrates (SDMs) at the sub-division. Tehsil offices were manned by tehsildars and naib tehsildars. At the sub-block level, there were revenue inspectors (RIs) at the revenue circle, and Patwaris at the Patwari 'Halkas'.

The direct function of the Revenue Department was management of land. Revenue officials were guardians of public land and property. Patwaris maintained detailed land records and collected land revenue, RIs played an important role in land measurement, while the DC, SDM, Tehsildar and Naib Tehsildar functioned as 'revenue courts' and resolved land-related disputes. At the district level, the land-related work was divided between the DC, who heard appeals of lower courts and other types of land-related cases and a superintendent of land records (SLR), who oversaw the maintenance of land records.

In addition to land-related work, revenue officials performed many general functions. These were the widest in the case of the DC. The breadth of the DC's role can be assessed from the fact that the DC had powers under 71 central and state acts, through which the DC had legal authority in a wide range of matters pertaining to land, law and order, various types of public assets, protection of citizens and in some cases, recovery of funds. These powers established the DC as a key law enforcing authority. The DC was thus the custodian of rule of law in the district.

Moreover, the DC was considered the administrative head of the district, and the focal point of authority and coordination.

However, this coordinating role needs to be seen against the role of the other two streams, i.e., the tight control of state level departmental offices over their field offices on the one hand, and the role of Panchayats in socio-economic development on the other. As noted above, state departments exercised strict control over programmes, human resources and finance. But there were some sources of the DC's authority. One, the DC wrote the annual appraisal report of district departmental officials, except in the case of Police and Forest departments, which became a basis for promotion. Consequently, officials generally wanted to be in the DC's good books. Second, the DC's opinion was taken seriously by the chief minister (CM) and the chief secretary, who in turn had authority over the departmental heads at the state level. Finally, district officials often needed support of the DC to coordinate with other departments.

Apart from a general authority, the DC exercised authority as delegated by the departments from the state level. Departments gave authority to the DC by defining her powers in law, appointing her as chairperson of various decision-making and supervisory committees, as well as by delegating powers regarding personnel and financial approval. However, each department took its own decision regarding these issues and consequently, the DC's authority over different departments varied.

From among the 8 sample departments, the DC had little authority over 3 departments. The DC had little say in the Forest Department, as forest land was out of her purview. Similarly, the DC's authority over the Cooperation Department was limited, as cooperatives were not envisaged as a hierarchical structure, but as people's organizations, regulated by law through the District Registrar, Cooperation. The PHE DWepartment had provided powers to the DC only in case of emergencies.

On the other hand, two departments, i.e., School Education and WCD, had delegated substantial powers to the DC. In both the departments, disciplinary powers over junior officials and powers of financial sanction had been delegated to the DC. The School Education Department had gone so far as to declare the DC 'Mission Director' for SSA, and the officials interviewed said that state level officials often talked to the DC on various issues rather than the departmental officials. One department, i.e., the Public Health and Family Welfare Department, while not involving the DC in human resource and financial management, had involved the DC in planning and strategizing (Box 3.4). The relationship of the DC with P&RD is discussed in the next section.

The extent to which the departments involved the DC in their work can be judged from the number of committees they formed with the DC as chairperson. Among six sample departments other than Revenue and P&RD, while two departments, i.e., PHE and Forest, had formed no committee with the DC as chair, two departments, i.e., Public Health and Cooperation had one committee each, and two departments, i.e., School Education and WCD, had several committees (Table C.2, Annex C). The picture that emerged of the DC's authority was that it was considerable, but ill-defined and patchy. Consequently, the DC's capacity to coordinate was uneven.

Box 3.4: Relationship of Sample Departments with DC and Panchayats

	Control by DC and SDM	Control by Panchayats	Activities Assigned to Panchayats
Revenue	DC and SDM have complete authority.	Nil	Gram Panchayats do undisputed mutation.
Forest	Officials attend DC's meetings.	Officials attend meetings of Standing Committee of Zilla Parishad and Janpad Panchayats.	Gram Panchayats give proposals for works in forest villages, for new depots, demand for timber, bamboo etc. and department sanctions.
Panchayat and Rural Development	CEO ZP takes directions from the DC. CEO JP takes directions from SDM.	Departmental heads are chief executive officers of Panchayats and report to them.	All P&RD activities are undertaken by Panchayats.
School Education	DC is Mission Director SSA, and the state office dialogues with DC. Most departmental committees are chaired by DC. DC writes the annual appraisal report of the district officials and has powers of minor punishment of junior officials. DC gives financial sanctions. DC and SDM inspect schools.	Officials attends meetings of standing committees of ZP and JP. ZP supervises midday meals. The Gram Panchayat has the right to inspect schools, and the GP Sarpanch/ Panch is member of the School Management Committee.	GPs do repair of schools and other construction work.
Public Health and Family Welfare	DC heads the decision-making committee in National Heath Mission. DC writes the annual appraisal report of the district heads.	Officials attend standing committee meetings of ZP and JP. ASHAs are selected in Gram Sabhas. GPs appoint ASHAs.	Panchayats assist in organizing health camps.

	Control by DC and SDM	Control by Panchayats	Activities Assigned to Panchayats
Women and Child Development	DM and SDM chair ICDS monitoring committee and the ICPS committees. DC writes the annual appraisal report of the district head and has powers of minor punishment over staff. DM and SDM chair the Anganwadi worker selection committees. Financial sanctions are given by DC. Information and communication programmes have to be approved by DC, DC and SDM inspect AWCs.	Off icials attend meetings at the ZP and JP. Sarpanch is the chairperson of Child Protection Committee. GP PRs are members of Village Health and Sanitation Committee.	GPs construct Anganwadi Centres. GPs are encouraged to adopt AWCs.
Public Health Engineering	DC can take decisions during emergencies.	Officials attend meetings at the ZP and JP. New works are started after approval of Gram Sabha. GPs give completion certificates of works and are involved in site selection.	GPs and JPs provide information about out of order hand pumps and complaint registers are maintained at JP. Tap water schemes are transferred to GPs when installed. Panchayats are active when there is water scarcity, department takes help of GPs for awareness generation, and GPs are given water testing kits and trained.
Cooperation	DC is chairperson of a committee that investigates fraud.	No role or contact with Panchayats.	No role or contact with Panchayats.

Below the district, the SDM's authority, like the DC's, was defined as per law for land related and law enforcement issues. With respect to socio-economic development and social welfare, the SDM was in many ways expected to be like a mini-DC and was often asked to play a coordinating role in the sub-division. But he did not write the performance appraisal reports of departmental officials in the sub-division and had no financial powers. Consequently, the departments attempted to evade his control, often leading to a situation where the SDM had responsibility without authority. To quote the SDM interviewed:

'Other departmental offices try to avoid our control. They tend not to share the progress of their work. Sub division level offices of health, education and WCD tend to listen to their district level officers and if we say anything about the progress of their schemes, they speak directly to their district authorities and avoid us. We do not have administrative control over them. It is important to ensure that either these offices are under the control and supervision of SDM office or they are completely independent.'

Below the SDM, revenue officials were not expected to play a significant coordinating role. As a result, the mechanism for coordination through the Revenue Department grew weak below the district level and was non-existent below the sub-division level.

Panchayats

Overview

As mandated in the Constitution and the Panchayat Raj Evam Gram Swaraj Act 1993, (or Panchayat Act), the district had a Zilla Parishad at the district headquarter, Janpad Panchayats at the block headquarters and 428 Gram Panchayats. A GP was constituted for a single village if it was large, while for smaller villages, GPs were formed by combining 2-4 villages. Among the 5 sample GPs, 3 had more than one village (Table 3.6), so that in 3 GPs, there was a 'headquarter' village, along with smaller out-lying villages. In the district, the population of the largest GP was 9,557 and the population of smallest GP was 1,200. All the voters in a GP constituted a Gram Sabha.

Table 3.6: Population, Geographical Area and Villages in Sample Gram Panchayats

GP	Population (2011 census)	Geographical Area (in Hectares)	Number of Villages in GP
GP1	6,289	854.4	1
GP2	4,678	1,870.7	1
GP3	4,096	2,043.5	2
GP4	2,207	958.5	4
GP5	2,168	1,128.7	3

The boundaries of the ZP and JP were coterminous with the district and block respectively and were fairly stable over time. But GP boundaries were subject to change. Firstly, the state government changed GP boundaries from time to time. For example, among the sample GPs, the boundary of GP4 was changed twice: in 1986 a neighbouring GP was assimilated in it and then it was separated again, as in the late 1990s, the state government had increased the number of GPs significantly. Secondly, at times, GPs near urban areas got assimilated in the urban areas. Among the sample GPs, GP1 was expected to be assimilated in the neighbouring municipal corporation. Such boundary changes meant that a GP-wise data base could not be created easily.

The general tendency of the state government was to increase the number of GPs over time, and GPs got smaller. Because of the small size, it was difficult to provide adequate staff at the GP. Consequently, a new structure of 'cluster' had been created for a group of GPs. There were 66 clusters in the district, each containing 6-10 GPs. A large GP was declared as the headquarter GP of the cluster. However, the cluster was more a territorial administrative division than an office or institution.

Panchayat Representatives

Each Panchayat was divided into wards, and a Panchayat Representative was elected from each ward. The presidents of the ZP and JP were elected indirectly, i.e., by the ward representatives, while the GP president, the Sarpanch, was elected directly by the people. There was reservation for SCs and STs in proportion to their population, 50% reservation for women, as well as for OBCs in seats for PRs and as well as chairpersons. Additionally, in the sample block, a schedule five block, there was reservation for STs for the Janpad chairperson and all the GP Sarpanches. Because of reservations, in the all the sample Panchayats, SCs, STs and women were well represented (Table 3.7). In addition to the elected members, the MLAs whose constituencies fell in the Janpad area and one fifth of GP Sarpanches were members of the JP. Further, all JP chairpersons of the district, and MPs of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha with constituencies in the district, were members of the ZP.

Table 3.7: Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe and Women Representatives in Sample Panchayats

(NA: Not Available)

	ZP	JP	GP1	GP2	GP3	GP4	GP5
Number of PRs	15	20	21	NA	21	21	21
%SC PRs	13.3	25.0	28.57	NA	9.52	19.05	9.52
% ST PRs	20.0	40.0	47.62	NA	52.38	80.95	90.48
% Women PRs	53.3	50.0	47.62	NA	52.38	47.62	52.3
President gender	M	M	M	NA	M	F	F
President Social group	OBC	ST	ST	NA	ST	ST	ST
Vice President gender	F	M	F	NA	F	M	M
Vice President social group	General	OBC	ST	NA	OBC	ST	ST

Note: Information regarding GP2 could not be obtained as it was dysfunctional.

Role of Panchayats

The role of Panchayats was not articulated clearly in any one document. As per the Panchayat Act, Panchayats were expected to prepare plans for economic development and social justice and ensure their implementation (Box 3.5). In addition to the Panchayat Act, several other acts such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005, National Food Security Act 2013, Right to Education Act 2009, The Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act 2005, too provided for a role for Panchayats. Further, Panchayats were assigned roles in some schemes. Moreover, the state government issued orders from time to time to Panchayats, to assign new roles.

Box 3.5: Functions of Panchayats as per the Panchayat Raj Evam Gram Swaraj Act 1993

Zilla Parishad	Janpad Panchayat	Gram Panchayat
Prepare plans for economic development and social justice for the district	Prepare plans for economic development and social justice and integrate GP plans and submit to ZP	Prepare plans for economic development and social justice and submit to JP
Ensure execution of plan	Ensure execution of all works and projects	Ensure execution of all works and projects entrusted to GP
Supervise works of JP and GPs	Supervise works of GPs	Monitor committees of Gram Sabha and allocate funds to them
Recommend projects to state government. Administer and control employees transferred by the state government to Panchayats	Recommend projects to ZP, provide emergency relief in cases of natural calamities, manage local pilgrimage sites, ferries, public fairs, markets	Consider applications for establishing colonies in the GP area

In practice, the Panchayats did not play the role envisaged in the Panchayat Act. As noted above, activities for socio-economic development and social welfare were taken up as per provisions of schemes. The state offices of departments transferred scheme funds to their departmental offices, not Panchayats, except in the case of rural development. As P&RD Department was responsible for Panchayats and rural development, it worked solely through Panchayats. As in the case of the DC, departments varied in the extent to which they involved the Panchayats (Box 3.4).

Though Panchayats were to plan for economic development and social justice, in the ZP and JP, no plan was prepared. Their actual role was ambiguous. During interviews, officials of the ZP and JP were unclear about the extent of ZP's and JP's authority. For example, officials in the ZP could not identify the departments under the control of the ZP. Files of some departments, i.e., School Education, SC&ST Welfare, Social Justice, WCD, Public Health, Horticulture and Fisheries passed through ZP officials, but they were not very certain about the issues on which various departments sought comments or approval. In practice, the coordinating role in socio-economic development was played mainly by the DC, as is indicated by the fact that the DC and not the ZP president or the chief executive officer (CEO) ZP, chaired the departmental committees. Moreover, the CEO ZP reported to the DC, and the CEO JP to the SDM. So much so, that though many departmental heads were supposed to submit their annual appraisal reports for the remarks of the CEO ZP, interviews revealed that they sent these straight to the DC.

While the role of the ZP and JP was fuzzy, the GPs acted as implementation agencies for the programmes of P&RD department and undertook some activities of other departments. For instance, they undertook construction work for School Education and WCD departments, which also involved them in grassroots committees and in the case of PHE, the tap water schemes, once set up, were handed over to the GPs (Box 3.4). As discussed in detail in chapter six, construction works as per government schemes dominated the agenda of the GPs.

Changing Role

The role and powers of Panchayats changed constantly. Notably, in the mid-1990s, Panchayats and Gram Sabhas had been empowered considerably, but these powers were reduced with the change of government in the mid-2000s. Changes made by the state government are illustrated in two of the themes of the study, i.e., 'mutation', and hand pump repair.

'Mutation' is the change in title in land records of a property that occurs when the holder of a property dies, or disposes of the property through a sale or gift deed. There are two types of mutation: undisputed mutation, i.e., when all the heirs agree about the change to be affected, and disputed mutation, where there is dispute among potential heirs. The powers of both types of mutation for agricultural land originally lay with the tehsildar. But in 1995, as Panchayats were empowered, GPs were given the power for undisputed mutation (along with undisputed division of land). As the government changed in 2004, these powers were withdrawn and given back to the Revenue Department. But, in 2016, in the context of widespread farmer dissatisfaction and the demand of GP PRs, these powers were given to GPs once again. Similarly, in the mid 1990s, hand pump repair was handed over to the ZP, but shifted back to the PHE department in 2005.

Another important development was that while over the years, successive Central Finance Commissions (CFCs), which recommend how revenues and funds should be divided between the central

and state governments, had been giving a larger share of funds to Panchayats of all tiers, in 2015, the 14th CFC had provided a grant only for the GPs. This had reduced the funds available with the ZP and JP and consequently, their role, considerably.

The outcome of the constantly changing role was increased role confusion on the one hand, and a high level of dissatisfaction on the other. For example, the ZP PRs had agitated six months before the fieldwork for this study. To quote a ZP PR:

'We have no powers. We have asked the CM for powers. At least some files should come to us so that we know what is going on. The CM offered to give us a red light on our car, and state minister status, but I said, take away this yellow light also, but give us powers. I cannot even transfer a GP secretary. The CM is not able to give us powers because MLAs don't want it.'

One ZP PR said that while earlier, the ZP could sanction new hand pumps, now PHE officials refused to install new hand pumps without the recommendation of the MLA. To quote another ZP PR:

'I would like to bring back the system of Panchayati Raj based on the power and authority given in 1994. I would like the monetary powers to be restored.'

Similarly, a JP member said that: 'Earlier we had some power related to monitoring works. At present we do not have any power'.

Structure of Panchayats

The Panchayats were political as well as administrative organizations. The PRs constituted its political aspect. They were supported by officials, with the CEOs for the ZP and JP and secretary for the GP as the administrative heads.

The political working of the Panchayats was through Panchayat meetings in which PRs participated and took decisions. In addition, the Panchayat Act mandated Panchayat standing committees for various subject areas. In the ZP and JP, a minimum of five committees, i.e., the General Administration Committee, Agriculture Committee, Education Committee, Communication & Works Committee and Cooperation & Industries Committee were mandated. The sample ZP and JP each had seven standing committees, i.e. General Administration Committee, Agriculture Committee, Education Committee, Communication and Works Committee, Cooperation & Industries Committee, Health and Women & Child Welfare Committee, Forest Committee, for various aspects of their work. These committees were expected to prepare sectoral annual plans and review the activities in their subject areas. The General Administration Committee had the responsibility to integrate the sectoral plans into one.

In the General Administration Committee, chairpersons of all committees were members. For other committees, PRs elected members from among themselves. The chairperson of the General Administration Committee was the president of the ZP or JP, and of the Education Committee the vice president of the ZP or JP. For the rest of the committees, members elected chairpersons from among themselves. The district heads of various departments were the member secretaries of the standing committees and it was their responsibility to organize the meetings, prepare the agenda, present facts and figures, implement the decisions of the committee, report action taken etc.

The Madhya Pradesh Gram Panchayat (Term of Office of Members of Standing Committees and Procedure for the Conduct of Business) Rules 1994 provide for three committees at the GP level:

- General Administration Committee: For approval of GP plan, budget & accounts,

taxation and other financial matters, land development, agriculture production, civil supplies, revenue, 20-point programme, social programmes for SC/ST/OBC

- Construction and Development Committee: For planning, managing implementation of construction works, village khadi and cottage industries, gardens and parks, rural electrification, forest, public health engineering, dairy, agriculture and irrigation

- Education, Health and Social Welfare Committee: For inspection of schools, certification of teachers' attendance, promotion of non-formal education, adult literacy, promotion and inspection of all welfare schemes.

Among the sample GPs, no standing committees had been formed in one GP and another GP was dysfunctional itself. In 3 GPs, the committees had been formed as mandated in the rules with slightly different nomenclature. The Sarpanch was the chairperson of all committees, and various GP members were included in them.

The administrative structure of the Panchayats was impacted by the departmental structure, as well as the diffused role. Given an administrative structure without a coherent sub-district unit, the JP could access only the departments represented at the block level. The boundaries of the GP corresponded to the Patwari Halka of the Revenue Department, but were not co-terminus with the units of any other department. Thus at the GP level, and to a great extent at the JP level, the structure made planning for the area and coordination among departments difficult. Only the ZP had potential access to nearly all departments, as they were represented at the district.

But, because of the lack of clarity about its role, the administrative structure of the ZP was diffused. Broadly, it could be said that the ZP was structured as three concentric circles. At the centre, was the 'core' ZP, with its own staff and activities, not related to any other department, such as Panchayat meetings and works taken from own funds. In the second circle, were offices related to mainly P&RD schemes, which were transferred to the ZP or JP, i.e., Prime Minister Awas Yojna (PMAY), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), MGNREGS, Swachch Bharat Mission (SBM) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme. For each of these, along with detailed scheme guidelines, separate staff was posted, separate scheme specific budgets were made and accounts maintained. The scheme staff reported on a day to day basis to the CEO ZP and sought his approval on many issues. Finally, in the third concentric circle, several departments, which ran their schemes and programmes independently, also took some approvals from the ZP, and were reviewed by it.

The JP had its own core staff, and a couple of programme offices, but its capacity to coordinate was much less, as many departments had no offices at the block level, and the JP had no authority over the departments that were present. At the GP level, there was attempt to coordinate departmental functionaries, such as inviting them to GP and Gram Sabha meetings, and some supervision by the GP, but the GP had no say in the day-to-day working of the departmental staff.

Concluding Remark

The above discussion shows that the government attempted to provide a very wide range of services, undertook developmental activities of varied types and there was a focus on vulnerable groups. A large and complex institutional structure existed in the field, spanning a range of management offices, educational institutions, hospitals,

courts, cooperative societies, veterinary centres, training centres and so on. The mandate of field administration was wide, encompassing the rule of law, economic development and provision of social services for all social and age groups.

However, the administrative structure was fragmented, as 37 departments functioned autonomously through their own offices in the field. Nearly half the departments did not penetrate below the district level. There was role overlap among the departments and among organizations within departments. The mechanisms for coordination were weak, especially below the district level. Local governments were disempowered. Moreover, the role of the departmental offices, especially those concerned with socio-economic development and social welfare was defined rigidly, through schemes, whereby the activities to be undertaken were pre-defined.

The implications for this structuring are that, on the one hand, government agencies of many types were present and potentially capable of providing nearly all the services that people may require. This presence is the strength of field administration. However, on the other hand, there were structural weaknesses that constrained this potential. The disempowerment of local governments, which represent local needs and interests, reduces the sensitivity to local needs. As departmental offices function according to pre-designed schemes, context specific solutions to problems are ruled out. This was exacerbated by the fact that coordination across departments was difficult, especially below the district, so that when a problem required a cross-departmental solution, it could not be handled below the district level. ■

4 HUMAN RESOURCES

Introduction

As elucidated in the previous chapter, there were a large number of government organizations to address a wide range of issues in the district. To man these organizations, a sizeable number of personnel, of varied expertise, were employed in the departmental and local government organizations. These government servants played an important role in responding to people's needs and in translating government policy into action. The goal of this chapter is to comprehend this work force, and its capacity to deliver.

The personnel that existed in the district can be classified in four broad ways. First, government employees were either 'regular' employees, i.e., were eligible to work till they retired, unless removed through due process for corruption or incompetence, and temporary or contractual employees, hired on contract for a fixed time period. As per information available with the DC's office, there were a total of 11,769 employees in the district, of which 78.3% were regular employees and 21.7% contractual employees.

In the second classification, which denoted an employee's hierarchical position in the system, the regular employees were divided into four 'classes' with class one employees being the most senior, and class four employees the most junior. Of the regular employees, 176, i.e. less than 2%, were class one employees, 664, i.e., 7%, were class two employees, 6,545, i.e., 71%, were class three employees and 1,826, i.e., nearly 20%, were class four employees. Thus class three employees formed the bulk of the employees in the district. The contract employees were not officially classified in any way, but were of two types. The first type were programme managers and experts working in supervisory positions and the second type were grassroots workers.

As per the third classification, regular personnel belonged to various 'services', such as revenue services, police services, engineering services, etc. Employees belonging to a particular service were required to have the same minimum qualifications, and were recruited through the same open competitive examination based selection process. Most employees in the district belonged to numerous state services, i.e., were recruited by the state government. Among these, the senior employees were recruited through an independent body, i.e., the Public Service Commission, and the junior employees through other bodies. Notably, as a rule, each department had its own services. In the district, three officials belonged to all-India services, i.e., were directly recruited by the central government, or promoted or selected from state services. These were the DC from the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), the Superintendent of Police from the Indian Police Service and the District Forest Officer from the Indian Forest Service. A very small number of junior officials from these services were also posted from time to time at some posts.

Finally, the departmental staff could be divided into five functional categories, i.e. field staff, which actually delivered services and executed projects; managerial and supervisory staff, which managed departmental programmes and supervised field staff and institutions; experts; office workers; and helpers. As can be seen from the Box 4.1, field workers were fairly low down in the hierarchy, and worked at the sub-block level. Supervisory staff and experts were higher up in the hierarchy, and worked

at the district, sub-division and block level. Office workers and helpers were attached to offices at various levels.

degree and diploma holders, and engineering degree and diploma holders, respectively, were recruited. Two departments hired both

Box 4.1: Types of Government Employees

Employee Role	Regular/ Contractual	Categorization	Level at which situated
Supervisory and managerial	Mainly regular, but some on contract	Mainly class 1 and 2, some class 3	District, sub-division, tehsil, block
Experts	Mainly regular, but some on contract	Mainly class 1 and 2, some class 3	District, sub-division, tehsil, block
Field workers	Regular and contract	Class 3	Sub-block
Office workers	Mainly regular, but some on contract	Class 3	District, sub-division, tehsil, block
Helpers	Regular and contract	Class 4	District, sub-division, tehsil, block

Types of Personnel in Departments

The core human resources of each department were drawn from two or more services of the department. Personnel of some departmental services had specialist skills, such as medical or engineering degrees, while others comprised people with graduate degrees who were trained in departmental work subsequently. Out of the 8 sample departments, 4 departments, i.e. Revenue, Forest, WCD and Cooperation, hired people with degrees in a broad range of subjects and trained them subsequently in departmental work. In two departments, i.e. School Education and PHE, personnel with specialized qualifications, i.e., teaching types of personnel. In the Public Health Department, at the senior levels, doctors with medical degrees were hired, and para medical staff was hired in hospitals and health centres. However, the field workers of the department did not have any specialist qualifications. The P&RD Department hired generalists, but supplemented this with an engineering service (Box 4.2).

Moreover, there were different services to work at junior and senior levels for the same type of work. For example, in the Revenue Department, there were four services from which officials working at different levels were drawn. Similarly, in the PHE Department, there were two engineering services for senior and junior levels.

Box 4.2: Types of Personnel in Sample Departments

Department	Basic Cadre of Supervisory and Expert Staff	Field Cadre	Additional Personnel
Revenue	People with general degrees are recruited and trained subsequently. Cartographers and tracers are recruited at junior levels.	Revenue inspectors and Patwaris are recruited and trained subsequently.	E-governance expert at sub-division has been added.
Forest	People with general degrees are recruited and trained subsequently.	Forest or beat guards are recruited and trained subsequently.	Nil

Department	Basic Cadre of Supervisory and Expert Staff	Field Cadre	Additional Personnel
Panchayat and Rural Development	People with general degrees are recruited and trained subsequently. Engineers are also recruited.	Panchayat secretaries and MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayaks are recruited and trained subsequently.	Programme managers are hired for specific schemes, and are usually people with general degrees.
School Education	Trained teachers are promoted.	Trained teachers are recruited.	Inclusive Education Coordinator to assist differently-abled children, sub-engineers and MIS coordinators have been added.
Public Health and Family Welfare	Doctors, nurses and other medical staff are recruited. Staff is also recruited for education and media.	Auxiliary nurse and midwives are recruited. They have no medical qualifications and are trained by the department. Multi-purpose workers, i.e. male workers similar to the ANM have been declared a dying cadre. ASHA is recruited locally in the Gram Sabha and trained.	Programme managers, staff for monitoring and evaluation have been added.
Women and Child Development	People with general degrees are recruited and trained subsequently.	Anganwadi workers are required to have school education and are trained after recruitment.	Nil
Public Health Engineering	Engineers are recruited.	Technicians with specialized qualifications are recruited.	Social mobilizers, water testing technicians, i.e. chemists, and lab technicians have been hired.
Cooperation	People with general degrees are recruited and trained subsequently. Market specialists are recruited in the District Marketing Office.	Managers of cooperative societies are recruited by the societies.	Nil

Some departments had added personnel on contract as programme managers or experts. Among the departments that hired people with general degrees, Forest and WCD departments did not hire any additional specialists on contract. The departments that hired specialist personnel, i.e., School Education, PHE, and Public Health, had added programme personnel of various types. In the School Education Department, specialists in the education of differently-able children, sub-engineers and Management Information Systems (MIS) personnel had been added, as provided in SSA. Notably, though the department managed a large number of institutions and teachers, and undertook extensive community contact, no administrators or specialists in human resource management were hired. In the Public Health Department, a programme manager, media officers and monitoring and evaluation personnel had been added in NHM. In PHE, community mobilizers as well as technical staff in the water testing laboratories had been added. The P&RD Department had a complex structure. While the core employees of the department were people with general degrees and sub-engineers, there were several 'programme officers', appointed for specific schemes in the Panchayats.

The sample departments differed in the types of grassroots employees that they hired. In the 8 sample departments, there were 26 types of grassroots workers

(Table 4.1). Of these 8 departments, 3 hired grassroots workers with specialist qualifications, which included six categories of teachers with teaching degrees in the School Education Department, two types of engineering diploma holders in PHE and one type of engineering diploma holder in P&RD. In other words, the specialists among grassroots workers comprised teachers and engineering diploma holders. Thus, from among the 26 types of grassroots workers in the sample departments, 9 types had specialist qualifications.

Table 4.1: Grassroots Employees of Sample Departments

(HQ= Headquarter)

Worker	Role	Institutional Set Up	Vacancies		
Revenue			**No. of Posts**	**Filled**	**Pecentage Vacant**
Revenue Inspector	Monitor work of Patwari in crop assessment, land measurement, map modification, mutation	Some have office, some do not	59	52	11.9
Patwari	Maintain and update land records, assess and maintain data of agricultural cropping and production, assist tehsildar/ GP in revenue cases	Allotted area with HQ	215	169	21.5
Kotwar	Make announcements in the village, get information about births and deaths, act as a witness in land-related cases etc	Allocated area within village	885	866	2.1
Forest					
Deputy Ranger	Implement departmental activities to protect forest	Allocated area	81	56	30.9
Forest Guard	Patrol and protect forest, oversee plantation in the monsoon season, supervise cutting, measure produce and transport to the depot, maintain records	Allocated area	235	178	24.3
Panchayats and Rural Development					
Sub-engineer	Supervise civil works of JP and GPs	Allotted area	44	34	22.7
Panchayat Coordination Officer	Supervise Gram Panchayats	Allotted area	70	56	20.0
Assistant Development Officer	Supervise schemes of rural development	Allotted area	30	15	50.0
GP Secretary	Organize meetings of GP and Gram Sabha and record minutes, ensure implementation of all the schemes and activities of the GP, manage finances, including purchase of materials, disbursement of funds, report to Janpad, attend meetings	Works in GP	421	415	1.4
MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak	Do on-site supervision of MGNREGS and PMAY works and maintain records, act as assistant GP secretary, other work of GP as allotted	Works in GP	421	404	4.0
School Education					
Principal Higher Secondary School	Manage higher secondary school, the Jan Shiksha Kendra and teach.	Works in school	57	47	17.5

Worker	Role	Institutional Set Up	Vacancies		
			No. of Posts	Filled	Pecentage Vacant
Principal High School	Manage high schools and teach	Works in school	60	25	58.3
Lecturer/ Equivalent	Teach grades 9-12	Works in school	585	308	47.4
Upper Primary Teacher/ Equivalent	Teach classes 6-8, undertake enrolment drives, supervise mid-day meals, ensure children get scholarships and other benefits, organize and participate in SMC meetings	Works in school	2,315	1,832	20.9
Primary School Teacher/ Equivalent	Teach classes 1-5, undertake enrolment drives, supervise mid-day meals, ensure children get scholarships and other benefits, organize and participate in SMC meetings	Works in school	4,850	3,043	37.3
Guest Teachers	Teach classes as assigned	Works in school	Information not available		
Public Health and Family Welfare					
ANM/ Lady Health Visitor[30]	Manage sub-health centre, provide check-ups, vaccinations, supplements and referral services for maternal and child health, implement government schemes and programmes	Works in sub-health centre	311	214	31.2
Male Health Worker	Assist the ANM in managing the sub-health centre, provide vaccination and other medical services for maternal and child health, implement government schemes and programmes	Works in sub-health centre	153	69	54.9
ASHA	Act as a link between the community and health services by facilitating institutional delivery and access to medical services, participate in health-related activities, including antenatal care and care of malnourished children.	Allotted area	1,230	1,191	3.2
Public Health Engineering					
Sub-engineer	Prepare project estimates to send to SDO, involved in implementation, contact contractors to ensure pace of work	Allotted area	17	10	41.2
Hand pump Technician	Inspect hand pumps, take feedback from people during field visits and on phone, register complaints and resolve them, provide fortnightly and monthly reports regarding the status of hand pumps.	Allotted area	37	18	51.4
Women and Child Development					
Supervisor	Supervise AWCs and all activities, do house visits, counsel mothers of malnourished children, help in admission to Nutrition Resource Centre, report progress	Allotted area and HQ.	65	57	12.3
Anganwadi Worker	Run AWC, distribute supplementary nutrition to mothers and children, ensure vaccination, provide education to children, provide health and nutrition education to mothers, identify malnourished children, get severely malnourished children admitted to Nutrition Resource Centre, organize committee and mothers' meetings, fill registers etc.	Works in AWC	1,772	1,759	7.3
Sahayika	Assist the AWW in serving meals and other activities, fetch children to and fro.	Works in AWC.	1,571	1,564	4.5

[30] The Lady Health Visitor (LHV) is a senior ANM.

Worker	Role	Institutional Set Up	Vacancies		
			No. of Posts	Filled	Pecentage Vacant
Cooperation					
Go-down In-charge	Take care of the stock in go-down, maintain go-down, provide stock to purchaser and maintain records.	Works in go-down	6	4	33.3
PACS Manager	Manage the cooperative society	Works in cooperative society office	Information not maintained		
Total			15,490	12,386	20.0

Of the 8 sample departments, in 4, the structure of the grassroots bureaucracy had been stable over several decades. In two departments, i.e., Revenue and Forest, field employees, i.e., Patwaris and beat guards respectively, were 'regular' employees. In two departments, WCD and Cooperation, temporary field employees had always been hired. In WCD, local women were hired as Anganwadi workers (AWWs) since AWCs had been set up in 1975. In the Cooperation Department, cooperative society managers, hired on contract, were employees of the cooperative societies rather than the government, though the government had recently notified their service conditions.

In four departments, i.e. P&RD, School Education, Public Health and PHE, from the mid-1990s onwards, the structure of the grassroots bureaucracy had changed dramatically. In two departments, new types of grassroots workers had been added. In the P&RD Department, a new contractual grassroots worker, the MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak, had been hired since the MGNREGS began in 2006. In the Public Health Department, a new employee, the accredited social health worker or ASHA, had been added since 2006, while the male multi-purpose worker (MPW) had been declared a 'dying cadre'. In addition, in the School Education Department, the department had begun to hire 'guest teachers' against vacancies, though these were not seen as long-term employees.

Three departments, i.e., P&RD, School Education, and PHE, had earlier hired regular employees as field workers, but had subsequently declared these 'dying cadres' and replaced them with temporary workers. Of these, several changes had come about in the working conditions of teachers in the School Education Department and GP secretaries in P&RD since. In PHE, technicians responsible for hand pump repair had been replaced with temporary workers since 2010.

While some grassroots employees worked in institutions that provided social services, such as schools, sub-health centres, AWCs and cooperative societies, others were simply allotted an area with a designated headquarter. Of the 26 types of grassroots employees in the eight sample departments, 13 types, or half, worked in institutions and the other half were simply allotted an area. For the latter, no offices or working spaces had been created at the grassroots.

Personnel Structure in Sample Organizations

In this section, the staff structure in the sample department offices, the DC's office

and Panchayats is examined against the role of these organizations.

Supervisory Sample Organizations

The role and personnel structure of the sample supervisory offices at the sub-division, tehsil and block level (Box 4.3) shows that in several of these offices, very limited managerial and expert staff was envisaged. All the sub-division and block level offices had only one officer or manager, except the tehsil, which was better staffed than other offices, and the community health centre, which functioned as a health clinic as well as programme implementing agency. For example, in the Revenue Department, though the SDM had wide duties, he was the only officer in the office, and the rest were office clerks and helpers. Moreover, as the sample SDM's office was not notified, the clerical staff was drawn from various departments, and not trained and experienced in the legal and coordination work of the office.

Out of the ten district level offices studied, five, i.e. half, had only one officer, though the district had a population of more than 12 lakh. In the DFO office, there was an Additional DFO, but he doubled as the SDO Forest for a sub-division. The WCD offices too worked with very skimpy staff. This limited manpower in each office was an outcome of the large number of departments and organizations. At the district level, offices supported by SSA and NHM were better staffed.

Box 4.3: Staff Structure of Sample Offices at District, Sub-Division and Block Level

	Role and Main Activities of Office	Staff Structure	Gaps and Issues
Revenue			
Superintendent Land Records	Management, maintenance and up-dating of land records, including computerization, management of RIs and Patwaris.	3 posts of SLR (Diwani, Nazul and regular), 6 assistant SLRs (ASLRs), 2 cartographers, 4 tracers, clerks and helpers.	All the SLR posts and 2 ASLR posts are vacant. An ASLR is in charge of SLR. Most cartographer and tracer posts are also vacant.
Sub-Divisional Magistrate	Management of rural and urban public land, hear cases of land-related disputes, maintain law and order, acting as an authority as per various acts, general coordination of activities of sub-division.	One officer, the SDM, aided by an e governance consultant and clerical staff.	Only one officer, no personnel with rigorous legal training, no expert in disaster management, no one to manage extensive public dealing. Clerical staff has been drawn from various departments and is inexperienced.
Tehsil	Management of rural and urban public land, summary settlement of land-related disputes, supervision of revenue collection and land records, management of calamities, law and order work from time to time.	One Tehsildar, one additional Tehsildar, one Nayab Tehsildar, assisted by readers, clerical personnel to maintain land records, typists and helpers.	Though the office does extensive legal work, there are no personnel with rigorous legal training. There is no one to manage extensive public dealing.
Forest			
District Forest Office	Management of the forest, provision of Nistar rights to people and administration of forest villages, functions as court for forest related crime and offences.	DFO and additional DFO who doubles as the SDO Forest, assisted by clerks and helpers.	There are no botanists, zoologists or social mobilizers.

	Role and Main Activities of Office	Staff Structure	Gaps and Issues
Sub-Division Office, Forest	SDO(F) is the key institution for implementing the work plan and assists in planning, and functions as court for forest related crime and offences	SDO(F) assisted by clerks and helpers.	There are no botanists, zoologists, social mobilizers or accountants.
Panchayat and Rural Development			
Zilla Parishad	Formal role is overall socio-economic development of the district, but in practice, the ZP monitors a few schemes	There is a core staff of the ZP and staff provided in different schemes. The ZP staff includes one chief executive officer, 3 assistant project officers, 2 accounts officers, 3 accountants, one project economist, one assistant statistical officer, and clerks, drivers, guards and helpers. Scheme related staff comprise separate programme managers, programme officers, MIS personnel, accountants, clerks for each scheme.	CEO ZP is posted from the IAS, state revenue service, or from among assistant directors of PR& RD. This does not ensure a CEO with appropriate training and experience. Similar staff is duplicated in each scheme: programme managers, accountants, data entry operators. There are a large number of vacancies.
Janpad Panchayat	Formal role is overall socio-economic development of the block, but in practice, the JP monitors a few schemes	Core staff includes CEO JP, one assistant accounts officer and two accountants, clerks, timekeeper, peon, watchman. Scheme related staff: MGNREGS: Additional programme officer, Assistant accounts officer, assistant cartographer SBM: Block Coordinator Watershed scheme: Technical officer, engineer For supervision, there are 4 sub-engineers, 5 assistant development extension officers and 7 Panchayat coordination officers.	The own staff of JP is very limited, as is the programme staff.
School Education			
District Programme Coordinator	Role is development of the education system in classes 1-8, which includes ensuring enrolment of all children in 5-14 age groups in school, and improving the quality of education, and implementation of SSA.	The District Programme Coordinator is the overall in charge. There are 5 assistant project coordinators in charge of academics, community mobilization, gender, finance, enrolment and retention, education of differently abled children, and monitoring BRCs and schools. There are clerks and helpers.	All staff except coordinators for differently-abled children are drawn from among the teachers; the office lacks managerial expertise, and expertise in community contact.
District Institute of Education and Training	Responsibility for teacher training, research and academic support to schools.	23 academic staff are envisaged, including a principal, senior lecturers, assistant lecturers and a librarian.	Only 3 out of 23 academic staff envisaged are posted.
Block Education Officer	Overall management of school education	The staff comprises BEO, area organizer, accountant, clerks and helpers.	The role of the office is ill-defined, and staff is meager. The area organizer is attached to the district office.

	Role and Main Activities of Office	Staff Structure	Gaps and Issues
Block Resource Centre	Provide academic support to schools to ensure quality of education, and manage SSA	The staff includes BRC coordinator, 5 block academic coordinators (BACs) and 2 posts of resource persons for differently-abled children, one sub-engineer, one MIS officer, 2 accountants, data entry operators and helper.	Out of 5 BAC posts, 2 are filled, of 2 posts of resource persons for differently-abled children one is filled, out of 2 accountant posts, one is filled.
Public Health and Family Welfare			
Chief Health and Medical Officer	Supervise provision of health services in the district, reduce infant mortality, promote maternal health, control malaria and tuberculosis (TB), prevent polio, etc.	There are 7 doctors: including one CHMO, 2 district health officers, district vaccination officer, district malaria officer, 2 TB doctors, one district health public nursing officer; one media extension and information officer (MEIO), 2 Deputy MEIOs, one district education officer. Under NHM, one programme manager, one assistant statistical officer and one media officer has been added,	There are many vacancies. Media officers do not have special media related training. Administrative support is inadequate.
Community Health Centre	Act as referral centre for the neighboring PHCs (usually 4), for patients requiring specialized healthcare services; also responsible for overseeing government programmes in the field.	Staff includes 6 doctors, i.e., one medical specialist, one surgeon, one gynecologist and 3 general doctors, and one block extension and education officer. In addition, there are 5 nurses, 3 ANMs, 2 lab technicians, 2 pharmacists, one accountant, 3 computer operators, one enumerator, one dresser, one ward boy, one X-Ray attendant, one care-taker, one cook, one peon. Under NHM, one block programme officer, one block community mobilizer, one accounts manager has been added.	Half the doctors' posts are vacant. There is inadequate number of ward boys.
Women and Child Development			
District Programme Officer	Address malnourishment and health of children in the 0-6 age groups and of pregnant and lactating mothers; pre-school education of children in the 3-6 age group.	One programme officer, two assistant directors, 2 clerks, one driver.	There is no nutritionist or specialist in early childhood education. Both the posts of assistant director are vacant.
Child Development Project Office	Address malnourishment and health of children in the 0-6 age groups and of pregnant and lactating mothers; pre-school education of children in the 3-6 age group.	The staff comprises one CDPO, one assistant CDPO, 3 clerks, one driver, one helper	There is no nutritionist or specialist in early childhood education.
District Women Empowerment Office	Address domestic violence and protect children such as orphans, street children etc.	There is one DWEO, 4 clerks and one helper	There is very skimpy staff, no gender specialist or legal expert.
Block Women Empowerment Office	Address domestic violence and protect children such as orphans, street children etc.	There is one BWEO, one computer operator	There is very skimpy staff, no gender specialist or legal expert.

	Role and Main Activities of Office	Staff Structure	Gaps and Issues
Public Health Engineering			
Executive Engineer (PHE)	Oversee repair of hand pumps, and installation of tap water schemes; ensure safe drinking water; educate people, manage field staff, issue tenders	There is an executive engineer (EE), draftsman, information, education and communication (IEC) coordinator, MIS coordinator, accountants and clerks.	There is only one officer, an EE, who does the technical and administrative work.
Sub-Divisional Office (PHE)	Install new hand pumps and repair old ones, test water for potability, install tap water schemes, inform community about the importance of drinking safe water and protecting water sources etc.	An assistant engineer is the head, assisted by clerks. There are block level IEC coordinators to mobilize the community.	
Cooperation			
District Marketing Office	Store and supply inputs to farmers such as fertilizers, seeds, agriculture equipment, pesticides etc.	One district marketing officer assisted by 7 field assistants, one assistant accounts officer and 2 peons.	

Grassroots Institutions

Among 7 sample departments, leaving out P & RD, which is dealt in the subsequent sections, 4 had grassroots institutions, i.e., schools of the School Education Department, sub-health centres of Public Health Department, AWCs of the WCD Department and cooperative societies of the Cooperation Department. PHE did not penetrate below the sub-division level at all. In the Revenue and Forest Departments, Patwaris and beat guards were simply allotted an area, and there was no office building.

In primary schools, teachers' posts were provided as per the number of students, i.e., a minimum of two teachers, and one teacher for every 30 students. Consequently, in the 5 sample primary schools, though the number of teachers was in accordance with the number of students enrolled, there were fewer teachers than classes, as the enrolment of students was limited. Two schools had 2 teachers, another two had 3, and one had 4. As a result, one teacher handled more than one class at a time, though the curriculum, textbooks and time-table were provided by the department on the assumption that there would be one teacher per class. As shown in chapter 8, this was an important feature for the working of the school (Box 4.4).

The staff at the AWC comprised an Anganwadi worker and a Sahayika (helper). When this is matched against the long list of tasks of the AWC, the manpower was very inadequate. During interviews, when AWWs were asked about the changes that they had seen in their work over the years, it became clear that the scope of their work had expanded considerably. Earlier, only one small meal was provided to children in the age-group 3-6, but now breakfast and a third meal for malnourished children had been added. Activities related to adolescent girls and domestic violence had also been added. Yet, the staff strength was the same. Three of the 5 AWWs interviewed complained of excessive workload, especially in comparison to their salary. The unrealistic workload was apparent in discussions with the best qualified and most committed AWW of the 5 interviewed, who took work home, and sought help from her husband, and even children, to complete it. During interviews, supervisory officers said that the AWC was inadequately staffed and one more worker

was needed at each AWC. They admitted that with the present staff, there was almost no pre-school education.

The sub-health centre had seen changes in its work sphere as well as its staffing pattern. When SHCs were established, the staffing pattern had included an ANM and a male multi-purpose worker. However, MPWs had been declared a dying cadre, and female ANMs were being recruited instead. In addition, an accredited social health worker, a worker paid on task basis, was provided since 2012, one for a population of 1,000. In the sample villages, there were 1-3 ASHAs. Among the 3 sample SHCs, each had an ANM, one had 3 ASHAs and another had two. None had an MPW. As in the case of AWWs, the ANMs reported that their sphere of activities had increased significantly over the years. Along with immunization and antenatal care, which were their core tasks, ANMs were involved in numerous surveys, health camps, deworming and pulse polio campaigns etc. Two of the 5 ANMs interviewed said that the workload was beyond the capability of one person, and they needed an MPW, or at least another ANM. Officials at the district and block level concurred with this view.

The PACS were not government institutions, but self-managed cooperative societies. But the staffing structure followed a fairly uniform pattern. In the 2 sample PACS, there was a manager for the day to day management, assisted by clerks. There had been no change in the personnel structure for the last 33 years.

Box 4.4: Role and Staff Structure of Sample Grassroots Institutions

Institution	Main Tasks Performed	Staffing Structure
Gram Panchayat	Organize GP and Gram Sabha meetings, implement programmes: Panch Parmeshwar, MGNREGS, PMAY, SBM; maintain civic services: roads, drinking water, markets, abattoirs etc.; collect revenue, generate income, maintain accounts	One secretary, one MGNREGS Sahayak, one chowkidar (guard), one safai karamchari (cleaner)
Primary Schools	Teach five grades, ensure all children are enrolled, provide mid-day meals, ensure children get scholarships and other benefits, organize SMC meetings.	A teacher is posted for every 30 students, with a minimum of two teachers.
Sub-Health Centre	Provide primary healthcare to the community, and implement government programmes related to maternal and child health care, diarrhea, malaria etc.	One ANM and one MPW. A doctor to visit once a week. ASHAs to assist.
Anganwadi Centre	Keep the AWC open from 9 am to 4 pm, provide two cooked meals to children of 3-6 years age who attend the AWC, provide weekly take home packaged meals to children of 6 months-3 years age group and pregnant and lactating mothers, assess children for malnourishment and identify moderately and severely malnourished children, provide a third take-home meal to malnourished children, motivate and assist mothers of severely malnourished children to enroll in the Nutrition Resource Centre, follow up with severely malnourished children when they return from the NRC, visit homes of pregnant and lactating mothers and mothers with malnourished children to provide nutrition and health advice, ensure timely vaccination of children in the 0-6 age group, mothers and adolescent girls with the help of the health staff, provide supplements such as iron, folic acid etc. to mothers and adolescent girls, provide pre-school education to children, provide sanitary napkins to adolescent girls, identify families and girls entitled to benefits under incentive schemes	One Anganwadi Worker, one Sahayika.
LAMPS	Procure fertilizers and seeds, provide information to farmers about availability followed by distribution as per the demand and need of individual members, keep records of these transactions, including stock registers.	One manager, 2 clerks, one data entry operator, one guard.

District Collector

The core office of the DC comprised the District Collector, one additional collector, one additional district magistrate, four deputy collectors and a large clerical and helper staff, with total staff strength of 94. Thus, the managerial staff of the DC's office was modest. But, through her authority over departmental staff, the DC had access to a wide range of expertise, and capacity to coordinate. However, as noted in the previous chapter, the main authority over personnel remained within the departments.

Panchayats

The structure of human resources in the Panchayats may be understood by examining the capacities and skills of Panchayat Representatives, and the staff structure.

Panchayat Representatives

As noted in chapter 3, there was equitable caste and gender representation among PRs. Moreover, an analysis of the socio-economic status of 84 GP PRs in the sample GPs showed a good representation of the poor. Half the PRs were engaged in casual unskilled labour, an indicator of poverty. Nearly 40% PRs owned no land, 11% were marginal farmers, 37% were small farmers, and a mere 13% owned more than 5 acres of land. A little more than half the PRs owned motorcycles, and 7% had cars or jeeps. Around 18% had no personal transport and 23% had a bicycle. It can be estimated from these figures that at least 40% PRs were very poor (Table 4.2)[31].

Table 4.2: Socio-economic Background of Representatives of Sample Gram Panchayats

Total Number of PRs: 84			
Education:	**Percentage PRs**	**Occupation**	**Percentage PRs**
No education	28.6	Only unskilled wage labour	21.4
Class 5 and below	11.9	Farming, fishing/ poultry and wage labour	4.8
Class 8	20.2	Farming and wage labour	28.6
Class 9 or 10	19.1	Skilled and unskilled wage labour	2.4
Class 11 or 12	11.9	Sub-Total for PRs who engage in unskilled labour	57.1
With college education but no degree	3.6	Farming	19.1
With college degree	4.8	Skilled labour	1.2
		Farming and ASHA/ husband PDS salesman	3.6
Political Affiliation		Contractor	3.6
Members not willing to say/ no party	71.4	Contractor and unskilled wage labour	1.2
BJP	22.6	Contractor and farming	1.2

[31] The same information about the ZP and JP PRs could not be obtained. The ZP members interviewed were post-graduates. One had been a cooperative society member and another had been elected to the ZP for the second time. The Janpad Panchayat President had studied only up to class 5, but had been a GP Sarpanch for 3 terms. One woman member had studied up to class 12, but another had no formal education and could only sign her name. Neither had had any experience in public life before becoming Janpad members.

Total Number of PRs: 84			
Education:	**Percentage PRs**	**Occupation**	**Percentage PRs**
Congress	1.2	Housewife	3.6
Husband supports congress	1.2	Driver	2.4
Samajwadi Jan Parishad Party	3.6	Shop / dairy farm owner, vehicle on rent	4.8
		Shop owner	2.4
		Sub-total for PRs who do not engage in unskilled labour	42.9
Land owned (family)		Vehicle ownership (family)	
None	39.3	None	17.9
0-2.5 acres	10.7	Bicycle	22.6
2.5-5.0 acres	36.9	Motorcycle	52.4
More than 5 acres	13.0	Car/ jeep	7.1

In the GPs, the education level of the PRs was low. More than a fourth of the PRs had had no education, and only one fifth had moved beyond class 10. A mere 8.2% had college exposure, and 4.8% had completed a college degree (Table 4.2). PRs rarely had any experience in public life. However, a few PRs had had experience of working in women's federations, radical politics and a fishery cooperative.

In the ZP and JP, PRs usually identified with some political party. In the ZP, the president belonged to the Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). One member of ZP, who belonged to Congress, was knowledgeable and raised many issues, and argued with facts and logic. As per the CEO JP, in the Janpad Panchayat, 80% of the members were from BJP. However, at the GP level, most PRs were not willing to admit to any affiliation with a political party. In the ZP and JP and some GPs, a few PRs had earlier participated in a radical political movement.

The PRs were a mixed lot, not only in terms of their socio-economic status and political affiliation, but also in terms of what they wanted to achieve. When PRs were asked why they had become PRs, they gave two types of responses (Annex D, Table D.1).

The first motivation, stated by a majority of the PRs, was to do good work for the area, help people, and raise local issues in appropriate forums. In case of some PRs, this motivation was very strong. In one GP, two of the PRs interviewed had fought the election as they wanted to rectify the failings of the previous GP, which had been defunct and corrupt. In another GP, PRs who had been members of a radical political party and of a women's federation were asked to stand for elections by people, and were committed to working for the deprived. All these PRs were extremely active. To quote one such JP PR:

'As a JP member, I am able to address many small problems of the people. If I get to know of a water problem, I get a hand pump installed. I ensure timely payment of MGNREGS wages and that there is no corruption. I write letters and give press statements. If some teachers are not working properly, I talk to them. If the Forest Department has not made payments, I ensure that they do.'

A second reason, stated by 5 out of 7 women PRs interviewed, was that a seat reserved for women had become vacant, and they were asked by their families to contest

elections, so that their husbands or other family members could exercise control. Notably, one male GP PR interviewed had become a GP member because his wife was the Sarpanch, and as a PR, he could direct her. However, one ZP PR and one GP PR interviewed, women who had participated in a radical political movement and in women's federations, were exceptionally motivated and active.

Another motivation, not stated, but visible, was that some PRs were simply using the Panchayat for personal gain. An extreme case was of one sample GP, which was not functional, as the husband of the Sarpanch was engaged in rent-seeking, and had scant interest in the GP. In every GP, there were PRs who attempted to use their position for personal gain.

Moreover, an odd situation had arisen in one GP. During the elections, persons who had not paid electricity dues were barred from contesting. As there were many such people in the GP, several seats were left vacant because of disqualification. Over the next 6 months, people who had paid their bills were asked to contest, and were elected. As a result, several people, who were interested in contesting elections but had not paid their electricity bills could not contest, while many uninterested candidates were elected, and remained uninterested.

Panchayat Personnel

The personnel structure of the ZP was haphazard (Table 4.3). The CEO ZP could be drawn from the IAS, the state revenue service, or promoted from among CEOs of Janpad Panchayats. Thus, there was no specific training or experience that the CEO was expected to have. Though expected to coordinate the departments related to socio-economic development, his authority over the personnel was indeterminate. He was supposed to write the annual appraisal report of the district heads of these departments, but in actual fact, the district heads often sent their appraisal report straight to the DC.

As noted in chapter three, the structure of the ZP was fuzzy. The core ZP comprised three posts of assistant project officers (APOs), a project economist and an assistant statistical officer, along with clerks and helpers. The APOs were on contract, but transferable. To this core staff was added scheme-specific staff for 5 schemes, placed in separate units. This included five programme managers, three additional programme personnel, one MIS personnel, four accounts personnel and six clerks or data entry operators (Table 4.3). Notably, scheme staff of the same type, i.e., programme managers, accountants and clerks, was repeated across schemes. The only exceptions were a technical project officer and a social audit officer in MGNREGS, and a trained geologist in the Integrated Watershed Management Programme. If the staff for all the schemes had been combined, a more complex skill set for community mobilization and planning could have been created. Moreover, four out of five schemes hired their own accountants, and the consolidated accounts of the ZP were not maintained anywhere.

Table 4.3: Posts Sanctioned and Filled in Schemes in the Zilla Parishad

	MGNREGS		Watershed		SBM		MDM		NRLM		Total	
	Sanc-tioned	Filled	Sanc-tioned	Filled	Sanc-tioned	Filled	Sanc-tioned	Filled	Sanc-tioned	Filled	Sanc-tioned	Filled
Programme Manager	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	5	5
Programme Officers	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	3	2
MIS Officers	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Accounts Personnel	2	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	1	5	4
Clerks	2	0	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	4
Helpers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

In the sample JP, there was a CEO from the SC& ST Welfare Department, and staff of 3 schemes. For MGNREGS, there was an assistant programme officer, assistant accounts officer, a cashier, an assistant cartographer and a computer operator. There was block coordinator for SBM. As a watershed project was in progress under Integrated Watershed Management Programme in the block, there was a geologist and an engineer. For field-work, there were four sub-engineers, five assistant development extension officers and seven panchayat coordination officers in the JP, who supervised the GPs as well as on-going work in the various schemes.

The GPs had bare minimum staff, i.e. the GP Secretary and the MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak who also functioned as the assistant secretary. They were assisted by a guard and a sanitation worker. The GPs also hired operators for tap water schemes as needed, and of these there were 2 in 2 sample GPs. Compared to the functions of the GP, the staff was very limited, and there was no accountant.

Expertise

Types of Experts

As noted above, the departmental personnel were drawn from two or more services, and either had specialized qualifications at the time of joining, or were trained subsequently. Personnel who joined after specialized training were teachers, engineers, doctors and para-medical staff. As all members of a particular service had similar specialist qualifications, or were trained alike, a department usually had only one or two types of expertise. Yet the programmes that the departmental offices undertook demanded several types of expertise, such as in management, finance, community mobilization, issues related to marginalized groups, along with the core subject areas.

This meant that the departmental offices often lacked the expertise needed to perform their role, as can be seen by the manpower composition of the sample departments (Box 4.3). Nearly all the departmental offices had some expertise related to finance. But a common characteristic was that though they managed large number

of personnel, especially School Education, which had 4,850 teachers, and WCD, which had 1,782 AWWs, there was no human resource expert, or any person especially for personnel management, looking at issues such as motivation, assessment, addressing grievances etc. Not surprisingly, in the School Education Department, teachers regularly filed cases related to pay, promotion, punishment etc. in relevant courts, and officials spent a great deal of time dealing with them.

Management expertise was concentrated in the offices of two coordinating departments, i.e., Revenue and P&RD. This expertise was available to the other departments in a very limited way, because departments functioned autonomously on a day-to-day basis, Panchayats were marginalized and revenue officials were very few, and overburdened with work. Consequently, the offices of departments such as School Education, WCD, and PHE managed a large number of institutions and big programmes without any trained administrators. For example, nearly all the personnel in the School Education Department comprised teachers, who were promoted to or selected for administrative positions, and there were no education administrators. But in the DPC office, there was a great deal of administrative work related to planning, managing schools and teachers, distributing benefits to students such as bicycles, scholarships etc., as well as community mobilization, addressing issues of gender and social deprivation, construction, etc. All this was handled by teachers on deputation or after promotion, who instead of using their teaching skills, did work that they were not trained for. Moreover, the teachers and supervisors interviewed resented doing work not related to education.

Similarly, the main staff of the Public Health Department was doctors, nurses and other health staff. Limited management expertise, i.e., one programme manager with a post graduate qualification in social work or business administration had been provided in NHM. The department managed large public health programmes, for which doctors acted as administrators. The two doctors interviewed said that they did not like the administrative part of their work, and one was very dissatisfied as most of her time was spent doing administrative work. The department also lacked legal expertise required to oversee the several laws under its ambit. Further, though it had several media officers, they were not trained in mass communications.

Another problem area was interaction with the community. Though departments regularly handled large campaigns, held camps and provided information to the community, except for Public Health and PHE, none had any specialists in this area. There was a public relations officer (PRO) at the district level, who assisted the DC in dealing with the media. But there were no personnel who could assist officials in communicating better with the people. To quote an official in an office with extensive public dealing:

'There should be one PRO type of person who can tell people where they need to go. At present people who need help from various offices all come to my office, and then I tell them where to go and what to do. Our office does not have a system of tracking what happens to people who are directed to other departments.'

Similarly, no legal expertise was available to the district administration, though it dealt with matters with complex legal implications on a daily basis. The single legal aid officer at the district level provided assistance to people, not officials. Revenue officials did not have degrees in law. When recruited, they were trained in a very general way in law, general administration and socio-economic development. They passed numerous

quasi-legal orders and dealt with a host of legal issues. Yet, there was no legal expert available for consultation.

There were also more specific types of expertise gaps in the sample offices. For example, the key mandate of the DPO and CDPO in the WCD Department was to tackle child malnutrition. Yet these offices had no nutritionists. Moreover, they had no specialists in early childhood education, though they ran a huge network of AWCs that were expected to provide pre-school education. This lack of expertise was visible in the programmes that had been formulated in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Child Health and Nutrition Mission, which allowed the district to take its own activities to address malnutrition. The initiatives taken included selection of individuals as 'Atal Bal Palaks' to adopt AWCs, tours by doctors to give health check-ups through a 'smile van', and planting vegetables etc. in the homes of malnourished children. While these initiatives may have been useful, no district-specific issues related to nutrition habits and deficiencies were identified or addressed. Further, these offices lacked expertise to monitor the construction works of AWCs. Not surprisingly, the WCD officials interviewed said that they needed doctors and sub-engineers.

In the same vein, the DIET faculty were lecturers of higher secondary and high schools, though their core work related to elementary education. As already noted, in the ZP, the same type of personnel was repeated in various schemes, instead of creating a composite team, which could advise on various facets of rural development.

Qualifications and Experience

The district, sub-division and block level officials interviewed were well-qualified and experienced as a rule. Of the 9 district level officials about whom information was available, 7 had five years or more of college education. Of these, 4 had an MA or M.Sc., one had an advanced medical degree, one an advanced engineering degree and another an MBA. Two district level officials had a BA or B.Sc., i.e., three years of college education. At the sub-district, i.e., sub-division and block level, of the 12 officials interviewed, 10 had five years of college education, which included a doctor with advanced medical degrees, one had a BA, and one had a three year diploma in civil engineering (Table 4.4).

Among the 32 grassroots staff interviewed (five Kotwars have not been included), information regarding qualifications was available for 31. Of these, 20, i.e., nearly two-thirds had college education and another 3, i.e., 9.7% had diplomas after school. More than a quarter had post graduate degrees, and all the five teachers interviewed had teacher training degrees or diplomas, in addition to basic college degrees. A little more than a fourth had not studied beyond school. These employees were ANMs and AWWs. Among the five ANMs interviewed, four had completed higher secondary, while one had studied only up to class ten. Among the five AWWs interviewed, three had completed higher secondary education and two had studied only up to class eight. As per supervisory officials, the less educated ANMs and AWWs were older, recruited at a time when many educated local women were not available. They found it difficult to cope with the work (Table 4.4 and Table D.2, Annex D).

Table 4.4: Qualifications and Experience of Government Officials Interviewed

	District	Sub-division	Tehsil \Block	Sub-block/ Village
Qualifications				
Postgraduate/ Engineering Degree/ Medical Degree/ MBA	7	2	8	8
Graduate	2	0	1	12
Civil Engineering Diploma	0	1	0	1
ITI Engineering Diploma	0	0	0	1
Nursing Diploma				1
Class 11/ 12	0	0	0	5
Class 10	0	0	0	1
Class 8	0	0	0	2
Not Available	0	0	0	2
Total	9	3	9	33
Experience				
Less than 5 years	0	0	0	2
5-10 years	1	0	0	6
10-15 years	1	0	2	9
15-20 years	0	1	3	4
More than 20 years	7	2	4	9
Not Available	0	0	0	3
Total	9	3	9	33

Training

Interviews showed that departments that recruited employees with non-specialized degrees provided them foundation training after recruitment for a time period of two months to two years. The duration of the training was low for grassroots workers, e.g., two months for AWWs, six months for Patwaris and beat guards, though for ANMs it was 18 months, and higher for those recruited at the senior level. Departments that recruited specialist staff provided no or short term training when employees joined.

Subsequent in-service training varied from department to department. In the Forest Department, officials of all levels reported that they had received training on management of forest from time to time. However, in the Revenue Department in-service training was patchy. For example, one official interviewed reported being trained by the Survey of India, another on elections and making caste certificates and a third had had no training after the initial foundation training. A Patwari had received a one hour training on the Geographic Information System (GIS) from which he had got little. He said that the training was theoretical, which almost no trainee Patwaris understood.

School Education, Public Health and WCD officials and workers were trained often. All the officials in the School Education

Department had been trained in a wide range of subjects. Teachers were trained frequently; all the teachers interviewed had been trained at least once in the last two years. In the School Education Department, there were periodic changes in the pedagogy and textbooks, for which teachers were trained. Officials of the Public Health Department too reported that every time a new campaign or programme was launched, training was organized by the state government. For AWWs, four training programmes at the block level were scheduled every year, and there was a week-long residential training at the district level every two years.

Service Conditions

Recruitment

The recruitment of staff was generally done at the state level, except for some grassroots personnel, and sporadic recruitment of computer operators and helpers. Barring some recruitments in the latter category, among the 8 sample departments, in 3, i.e., Revenue, Forest and PHE, no employees were recruited in the district. In 4 departments, employees were recruited in the district. These included GP secretaries and MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayaks in P&RD, guest teachers in School Education, ASHA in Public Health, and AWW and Sahayika in WCD departments. In the Cooperation Department, the cooperative societies hired their own staff (Box 4.5). For the district level recruitment of grassroots workers, the criteria and process were usually fixed by the state government.

Moreover, in recent years, centralization in recruitments had increased. For instance, Patwaris and primary school teachers, earlier recruited at the district level, were now recruited at the state level. During interviews, some supervisory officials supported this centralization, as better qualified candidates got hired, while others said that many people from outside the district joined and then began to negotiate for postings outside the district.

Salary, Promotions and Benefits

In terms of service conditions, such as salary, allowances, tenure, leave etc., the most critical distinction was among regular and contractual employees. The service conditions of these two types of employees differed widely, even when they performed the same work. The regular personnel were paid salaries equivalent to those of central government employees, which were fixed by 'pay commissions' after much deliberation, were inflation protected, with small incremental increases (3% of salary) every year built in. They had a variety of other benefits such as house rent allowance, paid medical treatment, pensions etc., though pensions had become less liberal over the last two decades. They had security of tenure, i.e., worked until they retired at a pre-determined age, unless removed for ill-discipline or incompetence after a due process of enquiry.

In contrast, not only did the contractual workers not enjoy security of tenure, but they were paid less than the regular staff, and had no benefits. As one district level contractual official remarked, 'there is no insurance, pension, transfer policy, house rent, gratuity etc.' The salary was often inadequate. For example, for the PHE social coordinator at the block level, the required qualification was a post graduate degree in social work and experience of working with GPs. Her work encompassed coordinating with the GPs, organizing school rallies, discussing water-related issues in villages, and keeping a record of how tap water schemes were functioning. But her salary was a mere Rs.12,700 per month.

The second important marker for service conditions was the place of the employee in the departmental hierarchy. As grassroots employees were usually class three employees, they were paid less than

supervisory staff who were class one and class two employees (Box 4.5). While this may appear 'logical', in practice, the tasks performed by grassroots workers, such as teaching, running an AWC, managing a GP, were often extremely complex, as these workers negotiated constantly with the community, and were the face of government for the people.

The remuneration of grassroots contractual employees was often absurdly low. In PHE, hand-pump technicians appointed on contract were paid a mere Rs.6,500 per month and the contract was renewed every month. In WCD, AWWs got an honorarium of Rs.5,000 per month, and the Sahayika, Rs.2,500 per month[32]. As Box 4.1 and Box 4.5 show, an AWW's duties were substantial, but the AWW was paid less than the minimum wage of an unskilled worker. In contrast, a supervisor, who was 'regular', was paid 5 to 13 times (depending on the seniority of the supervisor) of what an AWW was paid. Similarly, the 'guest teachers' in the School Education Department were hired for 10 months at a time when there were vacancies, and paid a paltry Rs.3,000 per month.

In some departments, the older grassroots employees were regular and the younger ones were on contract. Though both did the same work, their service conditions were very different. Moreover, drivers and helpers who were regular staff had higher salaries than GP secretaries, AWWs and other contractual workers, who did substantial work. This anomaly was visible sharply in the Nutrition Resource Centre in the sample block. The manager of the NRC, a contract employee, was paid Rs.10,000 per month. She was assisted by 2 ANMs, one of whom was a regular employee and was paid around Rs.20,000 per month, and the second, on contract, was paid Rs.10,000 per month.

Box 4.5: Service Conditions of Selected Grassroots Workers

Worker	Recruitment and Training	Service Conditions
Revenue		
Revenue Inspector	Recruited through an on-line test at state level; Given basic training after recruitment.	Permanent; Salary: Rs.30,200 to Rs.1,10,000; Eligible to be promoted as Naib Tehsildar.
Patwari	Recruited through an on-line test at state level; Given basic training after recruitment.	Permanent; Salary: Rs.25,100 to Rs.82,100; Eligible to be promoted as RI after an examination.
Forest		
Beat Guard	Required qualification is class 12, passing a physical fitness test is mandatory, recruited at state level. Given probationary training for six months.	Permanent; Salary Rs.18,000 - Rs.25,000 per month; Eligible to be promoted as deputy ranger after an examination.
Panchayats and Rural Development		
GP Secretary	Need to be graduates as per new regulations and computer skills are an added advantage; Recruited by district board through examination; Training provided through Panchayat Training Centres.	Semi-permanent; Salary: Rs.24,000 per month; No promotion avenues.
MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak	Should be a graduate and a resident of the village and have computer skills; Recruited through examination at the district level.	Temporary; Total Salary Rs.9,000 per month; No promotion avenues.

[32] The AWWs get Rs.600 annually to purchase a uniform.

Worker	Recruitment and Training	Service Conditions
School Education		
Sahayak Adhyapak Grade 3	Required qualifications are class 12 and D. Ed; Recruited at state level through examination; Annual training provided through DIET/ BRC.	Semi-permanent; Salary around 50% of regular teachers when study began, but equivalent before study ended; Promotion up to Varishtha Adhyapak, but cannot become headmasters.
Guest teacher Grade 2	Recruited in case of vacancies, most qualified persons living nearby are selected; Get no training.	Salary: Rs.3,500 per month, no other benefits
Women and Child Development		
Supervisor	Essential qualification is BA; Trained on various issues from time to time; Appointed at the state level.	Permanent; Salary: Rs.25,300 to Rs.80,500 per month; Promoted as assistant CDPOs and CDPOs over time.
Anganwadi Worker	Minimum qualification is grade 12; Selected by district committee as per pre-defined criteria; Foundation training of one month and in-service training from time to time is provided.	Temporary; Paid Rs.5,000 per month; No promotion avenues.
Public Health and Family Welfare		
ANM	Must have passed class 10; Recruited at state level.	ANMs are regular, but temporary ANMs have been appointed because of vacancies.
ASHA	Appointed for every 1,000 population (lower population in tribal areas); Only local married women can be ASHAs; The minimum qualification required is class 8 in rural areas and class 12 in urban areas; In rural areas, if no woman who has passed class 8 is available, women who have passed class 5 can be hired; Selected in the Gram Sabha.	Paid on the basis of services delivered; There are 38 types of services for which an ASHA can be paid; The minimum amount paid is Rs.2,000 per month.
Public Health Engineering		
Sub-engineer	Required qualifications are diploma in civil engineering; Recruited at the state level; Training organized at state level.	Permanent; Salary: Rs.9,300-Rs.34,800.
Hand pump Technician	Required qualification is ITI diploma; Trained when hired and from time to time by state.	Some contractual, some permanent; Salary for permanent Rs.5,200 to 20,200; Contractual mechanics paid Rs.65 per hand pump; around Rs.6,500 per month, contract is renewed every month.
Cooperation		
PACS/ LAMPS Manager	Mostly recruited by the board of the cooperative society. Some deputed from the cooperative bank.	Not strictly government employees; As per service rules prepared in 2018, minimum qualification is graduation; Salary varies from society to society: between Rs.8,000 to Rs.10,000 per month.

The situation of the staff hired on contract as part of various schemes was even more precarious. The future of MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayaks, recruited on contract to implement the scheme, was uncertain. Their payment came in bits and pieces: a basic remuneration as MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak of Rs.5,000, Rs.2,000 for coordinating toilet construction, Rs.2,000 for the data and record keeping under PMAY, totaling to Rs.9,000. They had not retirement or medical facilities. Both the MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayaks interviewed said that this did not match their workload.

Contract employees were not eligible for promotions. For instance, the AWW's job was visualized as a dead-end job. Among the

5 sample AWWs, one was highly educated and worked extremely hard. But no upward mobility was possible. Promotion avenues were limited for regular employees too. As a rule, departments had different services to work at different levels. For example, in the PHE Department, there were two engineering services, for junior and senior levels. Consequently, promotion avenues were limited.

The supervisory regular employees were generally satisfied with their salary, but those on contract were extremely dissatisfied (Table 4.5). To quote one district official on contract, who was paid a salary of Rs.30,600:

'My salary is very less. I am monitoring the work of village and block level staff and if my salary amount is leaked to them, they will stop paying attention to my instructions.'

At the grassroots, several regular employees, and nearly all contractual employees, were dissatisfied with their salaries. One Patwari complained that Patwaris and police constables had more responsibilities than grassroots staff in other departments but were paid less. Similarly, beat guards of the Forest Department were dissatisfied with their salary. They also reported that they did not get salary on time. All the 5 AWWs interviewed complained of underpayment. As per one official of the P&RD Department, the low salary of the GP secretary made corruption essential for survival.

Though regular employees were entitled to promotion, most employees were dissatisfied with the speed of promotion. One block level employee had not been promoted for 32 years. He said that when he joined, he was not told that he would have to work on a single post throughout his career. Another block level employee had not been promoted after 20 years of service. He resented the very limited prospect of promotion against the huge workload. At the grassroots, the chance of promotion was even smaller. Patwaris could be promoted as RIs on passing an examination, and no further. But even these promotions did not take place regularly. One Patwari stated that in his tenure of 11 years, he had not observed any departmental exams taking place, and that he wanted regular promotions. Similarly, beat guards could be promoted as deputy rangers, but no promotions had taken place for several years.

Table 4.5: Satisfaction of Officials Interviewed with Salary and Promotion

	Number of Supervisory Employees		Number of Grassroots Employees	
	Regular Employees	Contractual Employees	Regular Employees	Contractual Employees
Salary				
Satisfied with salary	12	0	4	3
Not satisfied with salary	6	2	6	14
No comment	1	0	5	0
Promotion				
Satisfied with promotion	4		0	
Not satisfied with promotion	12		7	
No comment	3		8	

Additional Costs and Extra Work

Many grassroots workers who were interviewed said that they had to use their own money for government work. The GP secretaries complained that their travel expenses were not reimbursed. AWWs had to attend meetings, but their travel expenses were not paid on time because of lack of budget. Patwaris were given Rs.200 per month for travel, which was inadequate. To quote a Patwari:

'Most of my work is in the fields and I need an uninterrupted supply of petrol, which is getting increasingly expensive. I have to spend on petrol from my salary, like other Patwaris. Luckily, my area of work lies in a radius of 8-10 kilometres and my condition is a bit better than some other Patwaris, who have to travel as much as 75 kilometres.'

Grassroots employees often worked in difficult circumstances. All the four beat guards of the Forest Department interviewed said that they were expected to be on duty 24 hours a day, stay in the forest, and guard it day and night, while they were paid poorly. They had great difficulty in getting any leave. Moreover, as they lived in the forest, it was difficult to send their children to good schools, or get high-quality medical attention. Further, they did not have any weapons to protect themselves, and reported being nervous as they patrolled the forest at night, and feared being accosted by criminals.

Postings

All the regular employees were transferable, from one post to another equivalent post, and from one place to another in the same post. Temporary grassroots workers were usually not transferable, as they were supposed to be local. However, posts of GP secretaries, originally appointed for a particular GP, had been made transferable.

Postings were important to employees. On the one hand, when employees were posted in places with inadequate physical and social infrastructure, children's schooling, basic facilities and travel time became problems. On the other hand, postings in cities were coveted. Postings that provided opportunity for graft and personal enrichment were also in demand. As one district level officer commented when asked if he was happy in his assignment:

'I like my present assignment. I have no option but to like the present assignment. If I start disliking, there is a long queue waiting to remove me and grab the post.'

Postings were done at the state level, often even in the case of grassroots employees. The criteria for postings were neither transparent, nor logical in a professional sense. For example, in the sample JP, the whole team was new, and there was a great deal of confusion about the role of the organization. Moreover, the heads of district level offices had short tenures, usually less than a year (Table 4.6), which made little professional sense, as the officer got little time to understand the district and deliver results, before he moved on.

Table 4.6: Number of District Heads of Offices Posted in Last 10 Years

Official	Number of Officers Posted in last 10 Years
District Collector	8
District Forest Officer	5
Chief Executive Officer Zilla Parishad	7
District Education Officer	6
District Programme Coordinator (School Education)	4
Chief Health and Medical Officer	15
District Programme Officer, WCD	4
Executive Engineer, PHE	5
District Marketing Officer, Cooperation	7

In fact, transfers and postings were a mechanism through which state level politicians built patronage and rent-seeking networks. Many officials were complicit with politicians in rent-seeking, and got postings of choice. For example, one of the three DCs who held office during the fieldwork of the study, was related to a minister. He had a poor reputation among state officials, and the journalists interviewed said that he promoted the cause of the ruling party and was corrupt. In other instances, upright officials were denied good posts and sometimes victimized. During the course of the fieldwork of this study, an official was transferred because he started an enquiry against the supporters of a powerful local politician. As per other officials, as the enquiry began, the politician got some lawyers to insult the official publicly. The official was inexperienced, and was rude to the lawyers in return. The lawyers then went on strike, and the official was transferred.

When questioned about transfers and postings, most interviewees were non-committal. But 5 among 21 supervisory officials interviewed of the Forest, P&RD and PHE departments said that they had been victimized, and frequent transfers impacted work adversely. To quote a sub-divisional level official:

'I have had 8 transfers. I have worked honestly and never done anything wrong for anyone. For working honestly, as punishment, I was transferred. But that does not bother me. I will keep doing my work without caring for anyone.'

Another district level employee said that:

'I have been transferred 15 times since 1990. There should be a proper transfer policy to ensure at least three years in one assignment.'

Yet another sub-division level officer said:

'Normally, an official is transferred after three years. But if you act against some powerful person then you will be transferred in one or two years. The more active you are, the shorter tenure you get.'

The consequence was that while employees who had patrons got postings of choice, ordinary employees had difficulty in getting their reasonable requests heard vis-à-vis postings. As one employee told the researcher:

'Who understands my situation, my health is not good, and not much time is left in my retirement. I am suffering from cancer and yet I have been assigned this responsibility where there is lot of pressure and staff is very inadequate.'

In fact, transfers were so highly politicized that sometimes it became impossible to manage different types of pressures. One School Education official related an experience where the department attempted to rationalize postings of teachers, as there were too many teachers in urban schools and too few in schools in small villages. Just as the exercise was complete, orders came from the state headquarters to not implement it. Now, he said, no one wanted to even try such an exercise, and finally, guest teachers had to be recruited because it is not possible to rationalize postings of teachers.

An exception was the District Education Centre (DEC) stream of School Education Department. Here, officials who were interested in working in the post were selected from among the department personnel, through an examination.

Cadre Management

In addition to postings, many other personnel related decisions were arbitrary, leading to resentment and hardship for employees, and also litigation. A block level employee related an experience:

'From our batch, 89 people were suddenly transferred to the SC&ST Welfare Department, without taking any options etc., and now we have to serve in tribal blocks. We went to court against this decision, and won. The government filed an appeal in the Supreme Court, which was turned down. But nothing has happened. It is difficult to take children to the tribal belt. Everyone should be made to spend some time in tribal areas instead of only some people being there all the time.'

Similarly, in School Education, the idea of a 'DIET cadre' was floated, but never worked. An advertisement was issued in 2010. Teachers came to DIETs, but found that they had to work hard, spend longer hours than in the school, and tour a great deal. There was no incentive. So many left and there was a shortage of staff in DIETs. Those who stayed needed to stay in the district head-quarters.

An Anachronism

An unusual grassroots employee was the Kotwar, an employee of the Revenue Department, who acted as a mediator between the government and villagers, providing information to the government about the village, and passing on government orders to the villagers. The post was hereditary, and for their service, Kotwars were given a piece of land to cultivate, called 'seva bhoomi' (service land). However, they were not owners of this land, could not sell it, but could only use it as long as they served as Kotwars. In revenue villages, Kotwars who had less than 5 acres of service land got Rs.600 per month, those with more than 5 acres, Rs.400 per month, while those with no land, got Rs.2,000 per month. From among the 4 Kotwars interviewed in revenue villages, one had no land, one had less than five acres of land and two had more than five acres of land. In the sample forest village, the Kotwar had no land but was paid only Rs.1,000 per month.

The Kotwars interviewed were dissatisfied. They said that their work load had increased, as they were asked to attend numerous events, and act as peons in the GP office, while people did not respect them as they had respected their fathers. To quote one:

'I have to attend all events, such as the visits of the MPs or MLAs in the area. Then, I am mocked by the constables who are posted there to maintain law and order.'

They saw their compensation as highly inadequate. They had formed a union, which demanded that they be given ownership rights on the land, and a salary equivalent to that of a peon hired on contract at a daily wage rate (known as 'collector rate'), and pensions when they retired. They, however, had little success.

Vacancies

In the sample offices, there were a large number of vacancies. Among managers and experts, 40.5% posts were vacant, among technical personnel 44.4%, among accounts personnel 31.8%, among office workers 28.1% and among office helpers 16.3% posts were vacant (Box 4.3, Table 4.7). An office as important as the DC's office had 3 deputy collectors against the sanctioned strength of five. In addition, one deputy collector had a serious health problem, so could do very little work. In the district, all BEO posts except one were vacant (only the BEO post of the sample block, which belonged to the SC&ST Welfare Department, was filled up).

Table 4.7: Posts Filled and Vacant in Sample Offices

Name of Office	Managerial/ Expert/ Programmatic		Technical Computer/ Statistics/ Cartographer/ Para Medics		Accounts		Clerk		Helper	
	No. of Posts	No. Filled	No. of Posts	No. Filled	No. of Posts	No. Filled	No. of Posts	No. Filled	No. of Posts	No. Filled
Revenue										
Collector	9	6	0	0	0	0	57	52	33	28
SLR	8	4	6	1	0	0	16	11	13	13
SDM	1	1	1	1	0	0	7	7	1	1
Tehsildar	3	3	0	0	0	0	11	11	10	9
Sub total	21	14	7	2	0	0	91	81	57	51
Forest										
DFO	1	1	0	0	2	3[33]	3	2	2	2
SDO	1	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	2	2
Sub total	2	2	0	0	2	3	6	4	4	4
Panchayat and Rural Development										
ZP	12	10	3	1	7	5	33	11	8	7
JP	3	2	0	0	4	1	9	5	6	4
Sub total	15	12	3	1	11	6	42	16	14	11
School Education										
District Education Centre	6	6	3	3	2	2	6	6	1	1
DIET	23	3	2	1	1	1	8	1	6	3
BEO	1	1	0	0	1	1	2	2	1	1
BRC	8	4	3	3	2	1	1	1	2	1
Sub total	38	14	8	7	6	5	17	10	10	6

[33] One accountant had been attached from another office.

Name of Office	Managerial/ Expert/ Programmatic		Technical Computer/ Statistics/ Cartographer/ Para Medics		Accounts		Clerk		Helper	
	No. of Posts	No. Filled	No. of Posts	No. Filled	No. of Posts	No. Filled	No. of Posts	No. Filled	No. of Posts	No. Filled
Public Health and Family Welfare										
CHMO	14	9	NA	NA	1	0	NA	NA	NA	NA
CHC	9	6	7	7	1	1	4	4	7	3
Sub total	23	15	NA	NA	2	1	NA	NA	NA	NA
Women and Child Development										
DPO	3	1	0	0	0	0	3	3	1	1
CDPO	2	1	0	0	0	0	3	2	3	2
DWEO	1	1	0	0	0	0	4	3	1	1
BWEO	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
Sub total	7	4	0	0	0	0	11	9	5	4
Public Health Engineering										
Executive Engineer	2	2	NA	1	NA	1	NA	5	NA	6
Office of SDO	2	2	NA	0	NA	0	NA	1	NA	9
Sub total	4	4								
Cooperation										
DMO	1	1	0	0	1	1	7	5	2	1
Total	111	66	18	10	22	15	174	125	92	77
Percentage Vacancy	40.5		44.4		31.8		28.1		16.3	

Note: Separate information about the paramedic, clerical and helper posts about the CMHO could not be obtained, as these are maintained for the whole district.

The situation was serious at the grassroots too. Overall, 20% posts of grassroots workers were vacant (Table 4.1 and 4.8). But in case of some types of grassroots workers, the vacancies were much higher. Among the 26 types of grassroots workers identified, information regarding vacancies was available for 24 types. Among these for four, more than 50% or more posts were vacant, for two between 40-50% posts were vacant, for four between 30-40% posts were vacant, i.e., for ten out of 24 types (41.6%), the vacancies could be expected to have serious impact on work. If 10% vacancies are considered acceptable, in the sense that they do not affect work significantly, then, the vacancy situation was tolerable for only 6 out of 24 (25%) types of workers. As per the DC, the most major problem of the district was of vacant posts.

Table 4.8: Vacancies across Different Types of Grassroots Workers

Percentage of Vacancies	Number of Types of Workers
50% or more	4
40-49%	2
30-39%	4
20-29%	5
10-19%	3
0-9%	6

Many officials interviewed said that as employees retired, posts were simply not filled up. This was clearly a state government decision, possibly to reduce expenditure on salaries. For example, in the Public Health Department, no ANMs had been recruited since 2016. In the PHE department, the last recruitment of sub-engineers had been in 2010, and nearly 50% posts were vacant.

Vacancies also existed where specialized skills were needed, and remuneration in government did not keep pace with the market. In the Public Health Department, there was a serious crisis because of vacancies. Nearly a third of the total posts, and more than two-thirds of class 1 posts were vacant (Table 4.9). Notably, even a small vacancy, such as that of a ward boy or dresser, could cause considerable problems in a medical centre. In the sample CHC, against the posts of six doctors, there were three, of which one was studying for a post-graduate degree and was often not available, and another was handicapped and could not tour, which created a huge burden on the CHC head. There was no lady doctor, so a nurse handled deliveries. Supporting staff was also inadequate.

Table 4.9: Vacancies in the Public Health Department

Class of Post	Total Posts	No. Vacant	% Vacant
Class I	90	64	71.1
Class II	98	39	39.8
Class III	967	286	29.6
Class IV	227	42	18.5
Total	1,382	431	31.2

This problem became more acute as contractual staff on low salaries was hired for technical jobs. In PHE, in water testing laboratories, staff had been appointed on contract, but because of inadequate salaries, employees had left. For example, in three laboratories in the district, out of 6 chemists, only 3 remained, of which two had been transferred outside the district, so the three laboratories had only one chemist. There was a post of a laboratory assistant in each laboratory, but after recruitment, only two out of three joined, and one had left, so the three laboratories had only one laboratory assistant. In the JP, of 6 engineers who had joined a few months before the field work of the study, two had left. As per officials, in the state, 1,000 hand pump technicians had been appointed on contract in 2010, and only 700 remained.

In some cases, posts were not filled up because the post was not attractive, and personnel resisted the posting. The DIET was in a pathetic position. Of 23 academic posts, three were filled. A posting in the DIET was considered a punishment posting because the DIET was located in an area where living expenses were high and education and health facilities were inadequate. In the BRC, instead of five BACs, there were only two. As per officials, the BACs were required to work very hard, and teachers were not willing to apply for the post.

There were also procedural problems. For guest teachers, the process of making recruitments every year itself became a hindrance in filling up vacancies. In the year of field work of the study, guest teachers could not be recruited for three months after the academic session began. Then district officials received oral orders to recruit a person immediately, and give her the highest marks later in the recruitment test. In the Revenue Department, the posts of Patwaris increased when Patwari Halkas were made co-terminus with GPs. But new Patwaris were not hired. Consequently, Patwaris continued to work as per the old Patwari Halkas.

As noted above, the workload of many grassroots employees was unrealistically heavy. The situation was made worse by the

large number of vacancies. For example, as per norms, a PHE technician was expected to attend to the repair and maintenance of 40 hand pumps. But because of vacancies, each technician was actually responsible for 200-300 hand pumps. Among the four Patwaris interviewed, one had charge of three Halkas, while the other three were in charge of two Halkas. Two Patwaris said that they were waiting for more workers to join, and one was extremely resentful. Vacancies increased the workload of many supervisory officers too. Four of the supervisory officers interviewed held two charges. While one thought he could handle both the charges, the other three officials said that they found it difficult. During interviews, supervisory officials said that it was very difficult to work because of the vacancies, and many grassroots officials complained of excess work.

Vacancies impacted the quality of work adversely. For instance, in the sample CHC, four ward boys were needed for three shifts, but the CHC had only one. There was no one to get the patient from the door on a stretcher. There was no dresser, as he had been attached to the district hospital. The post of the compounder was vacant. An official interviewed said that while the CHC building had improved a lot and was quite good, there was not enough manpower. He would have preferred a more modest building, but more ward boys. The acute vacancy situation in the DIET meant that only urgent tasks could be done, and monitoring, training, research etc. was not possible.

Impact

Unionization and Protest

Given the above scenario, it was not surprising that grassroots employees had formed federations and unions. Of these, the federations and unions of contract employees were very active, and agitated constantly for better service conditions.

Interviews with grassroots staff revealed that Gram Panchayat secretaries, MGNREGS Sahayaks, teachers, AWWs and PHE technicians had active unions.

For example, the federation of AWWs and Sahayikas demanded salaries of Rs.8,000-10,000 per month for AWWs and Rs.6,000-7,000 per month for Sahayikas, as well as to be made permanent and given retirement benefits. Just before the field work for this study began, they had protested in the state capital and sat on a strike in Delhi. Consequently, 3 day's wages had been deducted from their remuneration. During the field work too, many AWWs and Sahayikas went to Delhi to protest against their increasing workload and stagnant salary. This constant agitation impacted work. To quote a block level official:

'AWWs constantly demand higher salaries. They get nothing at retirement and so have worries. These problems should be sorted out. Today also they are doing a 'gherao' of the Vidhan Sabha (a form of protest), because of which, the AWCs are closed.'

In the sample departments, two types of contract employees had made substantial gains as a result of their union activities. The most notable case was that of teachers. Before 1995, three types of teachers were hired, i.e., lower division teachers to teach classes 1-5, upper division teachers to teach classes 6-8, and lecturers to teach classes 9-12. In 1995, the regular teachers were declared a 'dying cadre' and converted into Shiksha Karmi (education worker) type 1, 2, 3 and paid a nominal monthly salary of Rs. 500, 700 and 1,000 respectively. Over the years, as they agitated for better pay and regular tenures, the government acceded to their demands bit by bit. When the fieldwork of this study began in October 2018, teachers, i.e., Sahayak Adhyapak, Adhyapak and Varishtha Adhyapak to teach classes 1-5, 6-8 and 9-12 respectively, were paid around half the salary of regular teachers.

As the study ended, in March 2019, they had obtained salary equivalent to regular teachers, and had become state government employees, to be hired at the state level.

Similarly, the post of GP secretary was originally a regular government post, but in 1994, the cadre was declared as a 'dying cadre' and temporary 'Panchayat Karmis' began to be recruited. This happened because the number of GPs was increased from 14,000 to 31,000, while only 7,000 posts of GP secretary were filled. Possibly to reduce the financial burden, the state government decided to create a new 'honorary' post of Panchayat Karmi, paid Rs.500 per month as honorarium, and appointed for a particular GP. In 2012, the honorarium of the GP secretary increased from Rs.500 per month to around Rs.13,000 per month. During the course of the study, an increase in the remuneration of the GP secretaries of Rs.6,000-8,000 was announced, as per the demand of federation of GP secretaries.

Thus, a pattern of contractual employees slowly gaining the advantages enjoyed by regular employees was visible. Notably, at the time of hiring, many eligible candidates with better qualifications may not have applied, given the terms of employment, and less qualified individuals would have been engaged. However, subsequently, the salary and service conditions of the people hired improved through collective protest and bargaining. The result was a less qualified work force, without the anticipated savings on salaries. Moreover, for contractual workers, the selection processes were often less rigorous. For example, the School Education officials claimed that several politically connected people had been employed as teachers, and their work ethic was poor.

Among the regular employees studied, the Patwari union was not very active. But the federation of beat guards named 'Van Karamchari Sangh' was vocal in seeking better protection for the beat guards and compensation in case of harm. The president of the federation had filed an application under the Right to Information Act, asking for information about leave given to beat guards.

In addition to unionization, employees often approached the courts for personnel related matters. For example, in the District Education Office of the School Education Department, where personnel matters of teachers were handled, around two days a month were spent on court cases instituted by teachers, usually regarding salary, promotion and other service matters. Similarly, in the BEO's office many teachers who had retired recently had instituted court cases regarding salary and pensions. In the Public Health Department, cases had been instituted in courts as some posts had been wound up. In the Forest and PHE departments, daily wage workers had instituted a court case to get regularized.

Motivation

The above conditions impacted the motivation of personnel. To begin with, the incentive structure was skewed, and did not promote good performance. For regular employees, promotions were very few, and did not provide an adequate positive incentive. In addition, postings were patronage based, so that employees did better by aligning with powerful politicians than by working hard. The contract workers were not eligible for promotions, were dissatisfied with their salaries and working conditions, and spent a lot of time agitating and pressing for their demands.

One indication of poor motivation was that many supervisory officials interviewed did not live in their headquarters, as they were supposed to, and some lived so far away that it seriously affected their work. Among the officials interviewed, while six district level officials lived in their headquarter, three did

not, and instead, preferred to stay in the state capital. Of the 12 sub-district employees, four lived in their headquarters, but these were employees posted in a city. Only one employee posted as the block headquarter lived in a close by village, and six lived in a nearby town and one in the state capital. Grassroots employees rarely lived in their headquarters, unless they belonged to the village. Among the five teachers and four Patwaris interviewed, none lived in the village, through all the AWWs did, as AWWs were locals. Beat guards admitted that many did not live in the beat area as they were supposed to.

Moreover, during interviews, a lack of commitment to work was a recurring theme. For example, Forest Department officials said that the staff of the new generation was not sincere and did not like to work in the field. They returned home after 5.30 pm, and did not stay in the field at night. Another district official said:

'In the department, around 5% of people work with complete sincerity. I am among that 5%.'

To quote a School Education official: 'I am unhappy about the teachers. There is no commitment among teachers. Nowadays, teacher unions are forever demonstrating or sitting on dharna.'

While senior officials made adverse comments about grassroots workers, discussion with these workers revealed that their conditions of working demotivated them. The most committed AWW complained of serious problems because of overwork. She wanted to quit the job, but could not because of pressure from her husband. Another described how, during a time-bound survey, she became sick and lost weight, as she was unable to eat on time.

Concluding Remark

The government had created nearly 12,000 posts in the district, and hired and trained a wide spectrum of workers. Moreover, as a rule, government workers at all levels were well-educated. But, as the above discussion shows, the approach to human resources was poorly thought through and half-hearted. First, there were structural problems, so the government machinery lacked expertise. Each department recruited staff with one or two skill sets, so that though government offices undertook complex programmes, they lacked the varied set of skills that these required. Moreover, expertise in human resource management, law and social mobilization was either missing or very scanty across the government structure. This problem was exacerbated by a large number of vacancies, so that human resources for many critical services were very sparse.

Second, the service conditions of the staff created a perverse incentive structure. One, a large number of poorly paid workers were hired on contract, especially at the grassroots, and had no avenues for career advancement. These workers agitated continuously for better working conditions, and the government gave in bit by bit. Thus the terms of service for these workers improved not by doing good work, but by agitating successfully. For regular government servants too there were few avenues for promotion, and one tool of providing incentives was blunted. Additionally, the postings of government servants were based on patronage. While many officials involved in rent-seeking rackets did well, some who were upright suffered.

Third, the cutting edge government

machinery that managed government institutions and programmes was especially weak. Grassroots workers, who actually implemented government programmes, and were the face of the government on the ground, were paid the least, and had none or very small promotion avenues. Most of the poorly paid contractual workers were grassroots workers or implementers. In other words, the importance of human resources for optimal outcomes was not recognized, creating a lack of needed expertise and a perverse incentive structure, and weak capacity for implementation. ■

5 INFRASTRUCTURE AND FINANCE

Introduction

Facilities such as clean offices, adequate space to sit, computers, vehicles for touring etc., are essential, and create a positive working environment, which in turn, enhances motivation as well as productivity. Moreover, for organizations to deliver on their mandate, adequate funds as well as the autonomy and skills to use these funds appropriately and optimally are necessary. In this chapter, the infrastructure and funds available to the field organizations, and its impact on work, are examined.

Office Infrastructure at the District, Sub-Division and Block Level

The infrastructure and facilities in the 20 sample supervisory offices were found to be varied (Table 5.1, Table E.1, Annex E). In general, district level institutions had superior facilities compared to sub-district offices, though the picture also varied from department to department.

In terms of the condition of the buildings, 40% offices, i.e., 3 district level offices out of 10, and 5 sub-district level offices out of 10, were in poor condition. In some offices, floors, doors and windows were broken, in others the plaster and paint on the wall was peeling. Moreover, in 5 district and 6 sub-district offices, there was inadequate space for employees to sit[34].

The most horrific condition was of the DIET building. Though the DIET stood on a large campus of ten acres and had a big building with three training halls, principal's room, staff room, library, classrooms, hostels, teachers' quarters etc., the building was dilapidated: the roof leaked, windows and doors were broken, there was no electricity, and the surrounding campus was unkempt, with tall, waist-high grass. So poor was the building that training programmes could not be conducted seriously. Because the hostels were uninhabitable, trainees stayed 50 kilometers away. They arrived after 11 am and left by 4 pm, because very few buses plied from the DIET to the place of stay. No food was arranged for the trainees, they were simply handed over money. During training, many trainees submitted written complaints about the condition of the classrooms, availability of water, toilets etc. Some trainees took up these issue through the newspapers and the disorganization in training was often in news in the local newspapers. The DIET was not able to address these complaints for lack of funds. The principal had written several times to the state and national government, but there had been no resolution.

Toilets, drinking water, sanitation and facilities for the differently-abled were problem areas in the sample office. Among the 20 offices, 11 had separate toilets for men and women, 8 had a common toilet, and in one there was no toilet. The drinking water facility was adequate in only 9 of 20 offices. In several offices, water had to be fetched from a nearby source and stored. In one office, employees brought their own water bottles to the office. Only 10, i.e., half the offices, were clean. Toilets were often dirty. There were no facilities for the differently-abled to speak of, a mere 6 offices out of 20 had ramps.

The availability of furniture, computers and stationery, though not fully satisfactory, was good. Furniture was adequate in 15 of the

[34] During the course of the study, the DC's office was moved into a spacious new building. Several other offices, i.e. Assistant Commissioner Tribal Welfare, Lok Sewa Kendra, Election Officer, E-Governance, District Planning Officer, Mining Officer, Food Officer, Treasury Officer, Project Officer District Urban Development Authority (DUDA), the New Urban Tehsil Office, were also housed in the building.

20 offices. All the offices except one had computers, though in some sub-district offices these were old and slow. Stationery was adequately available in 18 offices. While there were vehicles in district level offices, this was a problem area in several sub-district offices. Only 4 out of 9 sub-district offices had a full-time vehicle. These officials were expected to tour extensively, and the lack of vehicles impacted their work adversely. For example, though the PHE Department had hired district and block coordinators to educate people about rain water harvesting, keeping water sources clean, sanitation, using water testing kits etc., they could not go to the field regularly for lack of vehicles. Moreover, at the district, though heads of offices had vehicles, other officials did not. For instance, a district level junior School Education Department official said that he could not tour because of the lack of a vehicle. Or, officials had poor quality vehicles, which made touring difficult. To quote one official:

'I have been allotted one vehicle, but it is 20-25 years old, and not road-worthy.'

Table 5.1: Office Infrastructure in Sample Offices

	Number of Offices		
Building Condition	**District**	**Sub-division**	**Tehsil/ Block**
Good condition	7	2	3
Poor condition	2	1	4
Dilapidated	1		
Seating Space			
Adequate space	5	1	3
Adequate space but unusable	1		
Inadequate space	4	2	4
Toilets			
Separate for men and women	6	1	4
Single toilet for men and women	4	1	3
No toilet facility		1	
Toilet in poor condition	2		2
Drinking Water			
Adequate availability	6	2	1
Broken facility	1		
Water available from a hand pump			1
Water fetched from outside and kept in a pot/ can	2		5
Employees get water bottles from home	1		
No water facility		1	
Sanitation			
Clean	5	2	3
Not very clean and/ or dirty toilets	4		4
Extremely unhygienic	1		
Information not available		1	

	Number of Offices		
Building Condition	**District**	**Sub-division**	**Tehsil/ Block**
Facilities for disabled			
None	7	1	4
Only ramp	2	1	3
Information not available	1	1	
Furniture			
Adequate furniture in good condition	8	2	5
Inadequate furniture/ Furniture in poor condition	1	1	2
Un-repairable furniture	1		
Vehicle			
Office vehicle/ vehicles available	8	2	1
Full-time vehicle on contract	2		1
Vehicle hired when needed			1
Vehicle not available		1	3
Information not available			1
Computer			
Computer available	10	2	7
Computer not available		1	
Telephone			
Telephone available	10	2	4
No Telephone		1	3
Stationery			
Stationery adequate	10	2	6
Stationery inadequate		1	1

Table 5.2: Number of District and Sub-district Offices with Poor Infrastructure

	Number of offices	
Total offices : 20	**District**	**Sub-division/ Tehsil/ Block**
Building in poor condition/ dilapidated	3	5
Inadequate seating space	5	6
Inadequate furniture/ Furniture in poor condition	2	3
Vehicle not available	0	4
Computer not available	0	1
No telephone	0	4
Stationery inadequate	0	2

	Number of offices	
	District	**Sub-division/ Tehsil/ Block**
Single toilet for men and women	4	5
Toilet in poor condition/ No toilet facility	2	2
Broken drinking water facility/ available from hand pump/ fetched from outside and kept in pot/ can/ no water facility	4	6
Not very clean and/ or dirty toilets	5	4

Infrastructure in Grassroots Institutions

Gram Panchayats

The 4 sample GP offices had adequate seating space and furniture for employees, and the buildings were in good condition. However, only one GP had a clean toilet, in two the toilet was dirty and one did not have a toilet. The GP buildings did not have tap water, and water was fetched from some nearby source. Three GPs did not have any facilities for the differently-abled, and one had a ramp. All the GPs had computers, printers and internet facilities. They did not have vehicles. Vehicles could be rented, but not for all employees. In one GP, the MGNREGS Sahayak was a woman, and to visit construction sites, she either walked or her husband ferried her on a motor cycle. In two GPs, no shortage of stationery was reported, but in another two, stationery fell short. In one GP, staff reported spending their own money to purchase stationery (Table 5.3).

Table 5.3: Infrastructure in Sample Gram Panchayat Offices

Number of GPs (out of 4)	
Sitting space adequate	4
Building in good condition	4
Adequate furniture in good condition	4
One clean toilet	1
One toilet not clean	2
No toilet	1
No tap water, water fetched from a nearby source	4
No vehicle, can be hired on rent	4
Computer printer, internet installed recently	4
Adequate stationery	2
Inadequate stationery	2
No facility for differently-abled	3
Ramp available	1

Schools

As per officials, all the schools in the district had basic infrastructure such as buildings. The school buildings in the 5 sample schools had 3-5 rooms and 3 had a playground as well. In 3 schools, the buildings needed repair, and in one school cleanliness was not maintained. All the schools had separate toilets for boys and girls, though in one school, these lacked water. Hand pumps for drinking water were either in the campus, or nearby (Box 5.1). In one school, a fence had been provided by the GP 5 years ago, but the local people had pilfered the wires and pillars, and motor-cycles and bicycles often passed through the campus during the school hours. In all the schools, children sat on mats on the floor, while teachers sat on chairs.

Blackboards were available in all the classrooms in all the sample schools. All had library books. But in one school, these were very few. In another school, while the middle school students were encouraged to borrow books, the primary school students did so only occasionally. In a third school, though children were encouraged to read the books during school hours, the teacher did not allow then to take books home, for fear that they would get damaged. Except for one school, teaching-learning materials such as chart papers, number and alphabet charts, sketch pens etc. were available. In two schools, various types of games and teaching-learning material made by children and teachers were available.

Box 5.1: Infrastructure in Sample Schools

(S1, S2, S3, S4, S5 are schools located in sample villages V1, V2, V3, V4, V5 respectively)

School	Building	Toilet and Drinking Water	Library, Books and Other Teaching-Material
S1	The building has four rooms and a hall. There is a playground. The building condition is poor, the walls are cracked and floor is broken. The school compound is clean. Students clean the classrooms.	There are separate toilets for boys and girls, with water can. The hand pump is at a distance of 150 meters, children carry water in buckets.	Many Hindi story books are stored in a cupboard. Students of classes III to V can borrow books for a week. An issue and return register is maintained. The school also has chart papers, sketch pens, alphabet charts, globe and number-cards.
S2	The school building has four rooms. There is a playground. Building is well- maintained, white washed and clean.	There are separate toilets for boys and girls. There is a hand pump in the campus.	Story books are stored in a cupboard. The books are issued mainly to middle school students. Primary school children are allowed to get books issued only on limited occasions. The school has number and alphabet charts, pictorial charts of vegetables etc.
S3	The building has three rooms and a hall. There is no playground. The building is new and the school is clean	There are separate toilets for boys and girls. There is a hand pump close to the school.	Hindi story books are stored in a cupboard. The school has chart papers, sketch pens, crayons, alphabet and number charts, balls, bats, as well as picture stories, paper toys and earthen lamps made, decorated and painted by children.
S4	There are two classrooms across two buildings. The classroom in the old building needs repairs, while the one in the newer building is in good condition. There is a small playground. The school is very clean.	There are separate toilets for boys and girls. There is a hand pump in the campus.	There are many Hindi story books in a cupboard, which are displayed outside daily. Children are allowed to read these during school-hours. A register for borrowing books is maintained. The school has chart papers, sketch pens, number and date cards, alphabet and numerical blocks, abacus, boxes of different geometric shapes, embossed plastic charts of animals, birds, insects, fruits and flowers, story charts charts made by teachers and a map of India. There is a a carom-board set, skipping ropes etc. All these are accessible to students

School	Building	Toilet and Drinking Water	Library, Books and Other Teaching-Material
S5	The building has three classrooms of which one is used as a staff room. There is no playground. The walls of the building are damp and the building is not clean. The room where the midday meal is prepared is unhygienic.	There are separate toilets for boys and girls, both without water. There is a hand pump in the campus.	The corner of the staff room is used as library. There are three story books along with alphabet and number books. There is an old globe that is kept in a cupboard. There are no games or play material.

Sub-Health Centres

As per information provided by officials, all the sub-health centres in the district had buildings, except 25 centres, which were new, and were housed in rented buildings. Among the 5 sample villages, 3 had sub-health centres. All three had buildings, but these were in poor condition. Basic equipment such as instruments to measure blood pressure and glucose levels, vaccines etc. was available (Box 5.2). The area of operation of each ANMs comprised 5 to 7 villages. They had to do numerous surveys in their area, for which they had to carry medical instruments, vaccines, registers etc. The ANMs interviewed said that the equipment was heavy and difficult to carry. They had asked for transportation facilities, but their requests had been ignored.

Box 5.2: Infrastructure and Equipment in Sample Sub-Health Centres

(V = Village)

V1	There are three rooms and one small hall. Building is quite poor, and the walls need paint. There is electricity, and toilet facility. The Centre has vaccine boxes and ice-packs, weighing machine, BP instrument, medicines, malaria kit, anemia kit, vaccine vials, disposable syringes and needles, cold-chain monitors and related accessories.
V2	The condition of the building is not good, and the outer and inner walls have black patches. There are three rooms and one small hall. There are a few old furniture pieces stacked at one corner. The ANM carries equipment with her.
V3	There are three rooms and one small hall. The building needs repair. In one room ASHA sits and distributes medicines in the OPD hours. There is one delivery/labour-room, which is no longer used for delivery, but to store beds, equipment, lime, bleaching powder etc. One room is meant as the ANM's residence with an attached bathroom facility. Another bathroom is attached with the labour-room.

Anganwadi Centres

The infrastructure was the poorest in case of AWCs. In the district, out of 1771 AWCs, less than a third (29.6%) had their own buildings. Another 34.9% were housed in other government buildings such as schools and 35.5% were housed in rented buildings. In the sample villages, from among 26 AWCs, six (23%) were housed in rented buildings. From among the 5 sample AWCs, 4 had their own buildings, and in the case of the fifth, a small forest village, the AWC was run in a room in the government primary school. However, the buildings were not well maintained. All AWCs except one were found to be clean, but no AWC had a functional toilet (Box 5.3).

The department did not have funds for repair and upkeep of AWC buildings, and GPs varied in their response to these needs. In one AWC, a toilet had been constructed just outside the AWC, but was now just a pothole, because the GP had closed the underground tank of the toilet to construct a primary school nearby, and then neighbors had dumped garbage in the toilet and lit a fire.

In another AWC, the AWW had requested the GP to undertake repairs of the AWC, but to no avail. In protest, she had stopped doing some

work assigned to her by the GP. In contrast, in a third GP, the AWW reported that the GP undertook repair etc., whenever she requested.

In all the sample AWCs, one or two walls were painted with pictorial-stories, alphabet and number charts, the rules and guidelines for the AWC, and charts and posters related to pregnant women, malnourishment and immunization. Standard health equipment, which included a blood pressure machine, weighing machine, tape for measuring mid-arm circumference and Salter scale, was available in all the AWCs. The standard educational equipment included alphabet & number charts, slides, plastic horses, flying saucers, bats & balls, footballs, pre-school kit containing alphabet and number books, little story books, and was available in all AWCs. Moreover, in 3 AWCs, the AWWs had provided additional equipment in the form of hand-made toys and chalk (Box 5.3).

Box 5.3: Infrastructure in Sample Anganwadi Centres

(AWC1, AWC2, AWC3, AWC4, AWC5 are Anganwadi Centres located in sample villages V1, V2, V3, V4, V5 respectively)

	AWC 1	AWC 2	AWC 3	AWC 4	AWC 5
Ownership	Own	Own	Own	Own	Room in government school
Building condition	Good, but poor air circulation	Small, run down, poor air circulation	Building is old and walls are discoloured	New building, ceiling and walls not painted	Old building, but airy
Toilet	No	No	No	Dysfunctional toilet	Toilet in school but not used by AWC or children
Cleanliness	Clean	Not very clean	Clean	Clean	Clean
Drinking water	Available	Information not available	Available	Available	Information not available
Stories and posters on walls	Available	Available	Available	Available	Available
Standard educational equipment	Available	Available but kept inside trunks, children play outside	Available	Available	Available but kept inside trunks, children play outside
Additional educational equipment	Rubber models of vegetables, fruits, shapes, paper models of dolls, birds, sun, moon etc. hanging from beams	None	Dolls and birds made of fiber hanging from beams, two locally made clay bullocks.	Chalks bought by AWW herself	None

Large Area Multi-purpose Societies

The buildings of the two sample LAMPS were in good condition but the seating space was inadequate. They had adequate furniture, computers and stationery. However, they lacked toilets and drinking water facilities, had no vehicles and no facilities for differently-abled persons.

Grassroots Employees without Offices

Some grassroots employees had no defined office space. In the 8 sample departments, these included Patwaris of the Revenue Department, beat guards of the Forest Department, and sub-engineers and technicians of the PHE department. Of these, beat guards were provided residence in their area of work, and could use these to do paper work.

Patwaris used the facilities of the tehsil office as available. However, not having a proper place to work was a problem, as they used large registers, maps and other documents. One Patwari reported that he, along with 5 other Patwaris, had hired two office rooms, for which they shared the rent. According to him, this was a common practice. Another Patwari said that he could not afford to hire a place, and worked from the tehsil office. He was compelled to work on Sundays and holidays when he got access to the computer system. Yet another Patwari worked from his home and the tehsil office. One of the demands of the Patwari association was a proper place to work.

While technicians of the PHE department worked mainly in the field, the sub-engineers did some paperwork and used the SDO's office. Like the Patwaris, they had to do so by turns.

Funding Pattern

The main source of funds for departmental field institutions as well as Panchayats were grants from the state government. GPs were empowered to levy taxes and raise funds through other income sources, but the actual amounts were very small. Cooperative societies were expected to run as business organizations, though the state government paid for the establishment of the District Registrar's office and the DPM office. Two sample departments, i.e. School Education and WCD, attempted to get community contribution, though this was a very minor source of funds.

As noted in chapter three, the field administration did not have a significant role in revenue generation. The field administration collected seven types of taxes and royalties, i.e., sales tax, excise duty, entertainment tax, land revenue, royalty on minerals, registration fee and stamp fee. The total revenue collection in the district in 2015-16 was Rs.278 crore[35], which, as shown below, was less than the annual budget of many departments. In any case, these revenues were deposited in the state exchequer, and were not an income of the district. From among the 8 sample departments, one department, i.e., Revenue, raised land revenue, but in 2015-16, this was a mere 0.03% of the revenue collected in the district. The Forest Department sold forest produce and deposited it in the state treasury.

The state government transferred funds to the district in three ways. The largest chunk of funds was transferred departmentally, and could not be transferred from one department to another at the district level. In addition, some funds were allocated to Panchayats and municipalities. A third modality was the Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme (MPLAD)

[35] District Agriculture Census 2016

and Members of Legislative Assembly Local Area Development Scheme (MLALAD) funds, whereby MPs and MLAs were allocated funds to sanction needed projects in their constituencies. As funds from the state government were provided mainly along departmental lines, there was no consolidated picture of the total funds sanctioned and spent in the district. Just as the district was not a unit of planning and decision-making with regard to human resources, it was not in case of financial resources.

Moreover, the transfer of funds within departments, apart from salaries and office expenditure, was mainly through schemes, which meant that only the activities specified in schemes could be undertaken. Of the 7 sample departments, barring the Cooperation Department, in 5 departments i.e., P&RD, School Education, Public Health, WCD and PHE, funds were available mainly in various schemes. In the Forest Department, funds were available for activities identified in the plan and in the Revenue Department funds were received only for salaries and office expenditure.

Departmental Funding

It was not possible to get an accurate picture of outlays and expenditure across the sample departments because the departments varied in the manner in which they expended funds. In 6 sample departments (barring P & RD and Cooperation, which are discussed in subsequent sections) there were 3 ways in which funds were expended. One, for some activities, money disbursed directly from the state level to the accounts of employees, vendors and beneficiaries, and the relevant office did not maintain the information. This was the case in the DMO, where all major financial transactions took place at the state level, and the DEO office in School Education, where funds for teachers' salaries, the biggest item of expenditure, were credited to various drawing and disbursing officers across the district, and funds for civil works were provided directly at the state level to the Public Works Department. The DMO and DEO did not maintain consolidated accounts for the district.

Second, in two departments, i.e. PHE and WCD, all the expenditure was made by the district office, so that the amount expended for the whole district was available, but disaggregated information regarding sub-divisions and blocks was not accessible. Third, in some offices, i.e., the DPC stream of School Education and Revenue, funds were transferred to the block or tehsil offices respectively. Finally two departments, i.e. Public Health and Forest, followed a hybrid pattern. In Public Health, NHM funds were transferred to CHCs, but non-NHM funds were expended directly from the district, and in the Forest Department, funds for a few limited activities were transferred to the SDOs.

In PHE and WCD departments, as all financial transactions took place from the district office, the sub-division and block offices had no funds at all. Till two years ago, these offices had funds of their own. But subsequently, the state government decided that all financial transactions would be undertaken at the district level. All the bills of the expenses incurred by these offices were presented to the district office, which made the payments[36]. The sub-division and block officials of these departments reported that work was obstructed as payments were delayed. Many minor works had to be done on credit, and often, officials could not get an advance, and sometimes had to spend from their pockets. As per one official, even after spending from pocket, money was not reimbursed for a long time. To quote a grassroots official of the PHE Department:

[36] As per one official, all the financial transactions had been shifted to the district office to reduce the number of drawing and disbursing officers.

'We have no funds at our level. Because of lack of funds, even many small things cannot be done: such as cutting pipes, making rings, welding etc.'

Increasing centralization of finances was visible in the Public Health Department too. Officials reported that while earlier, untied funds were received for information, education and communication (IEC) activities, recently, the state had begun to allot these funds separately for different activities. Officials said that there were no funds for the school health programme, blood donation camps, cancer awareness camps, but these activities had to be done.

The highest outlays were in the DPC office of the School Education Department at more than Rs.74 crore, followed by the CHMO office at Rs.66.8 crore in 2016-17. The district level offices of WCD and PHE had outlays between 5 and 15 crore[37]. In the Revenue Department, finance was not an important aspect and was restricted largely to office expenditure. Even the DC's office received funds mainly for establishment and some funds under the CM discretionary fund. The sample SDM office, as it was not notified, received no funds and had no budget of its own, but was supported by the tehsil. In the tehsil, funds were available mainly for running the office (Table 5.4).

Of the 11 offices for which information was available, in 9 the expenditure was more than 80% of the outlay in 2016-17. But the expenditure in the DPC's office and BRC office was low at 55.8% and 29% of the outlay respectively, mainly because of the lack of manpower. In the DPC office, funds for in-service training of teachers could not be spent as per the annual plan, because a large number of teachers' posts were vacant. Funds earmarked for differently-abled children could not be spent, because limited personnel to undertake these activities were available. In the BRC, funds could not be spent on school supervision because monitoring could not be done due to the paucity of staff. Because vacant BAC and CAC posts were not being filled, salaries on these posts were not spent.

In other instances, the processes were long-drawn and funds could not be spent. In the EE PHE's office, funds remained unspent in some activities because tenders could not be floated. In the DC's office, the CM Discretionary Fund was not fully used because departments did not send proposals. In WCD, for some activities, funds were provided from the state but directions as to how these were to be spent were not received, and the funds could not be used.

Table 5.4: Budget and Expenditure of Sample Offices in 2016-17

(Rs. in lakh)

	Allocation	Expenditure	Percentage Expenditure	Comment
Revenue				
District Collector	835.72	823.41	98.5	
SDM	Nil	Nil	Not applicable	Expenditure is incurred by Tehsildar office
Tehsildar	39.40	41.62	105.6	
School Education				
DEO	121.69	124.78	102.5	Major expenditure is by the state office
DPC	7,406.13	4,129.94	55.8	
BEO	9.52	8.36	87.8	
BRC	9.51	2.76	29.0	

[37] Information about the outlays and expenditure in the DIET and CHC could not be obtained.

	Allocation	Expenditure	Percentage Expenditure	Comment
Public Health				
CHMO	6,681.58	5,919.45	88.6	Some NHM fund is transferred from district and block level; all other expenditure is from CHMO office
WCD				
DPO	1,499.42	1,499.3	100.0	Office makes all expenditure in the district
CDPO	Nil	Nil	Not applicable	Office gets no funds
DWEO	659.16	656.8	99.6	Office makes all expenditure in the district
BWEO	Nil	Nil	Not applicable	Office gets no funds
PHE				
EE	592.41	527.73	89.1	Office makes all expenditure in the district
SDO	Nil	Nil	Not applicable	Office gets no funds
Cooperation				
DMO	45.14	74.90	165.9	Major expenditure is by the state office

Usually, funds were received in 3-4 tranches. The state departments varied in their efficacy in providing timely funds. School Education and PHE departments were generally able to provide funds on time. However, officials of WCD and Forest departments reported getting funds late. In WCD, officials said that landlords of AWCs housed in rented buildings did not get rent on time, and pressurized the AWWs and supervisors, who remained tense. Often, parents were not paid for the stay in NRC in time.

Funds in Grassroots Institutions

At the grassroots, workers struggled to get funds for essential activities. The elementary schools got two types of funds: Rs.5,000 annually for the maintenance of the school and a contingency fund of Rs.5,000 per year. The school maintenance fund was spent for repairing and painting the school, and sometimes to purchase equipment, whereas the contingency fund was used for photocopying, buying new registers etc. The government also deposited money separately for events organized from time to time.

Among the 5 teachers interviewed, while one said that the funds available were adequate, 4 said that they were not. Schools could not get funds for extra equipment and maintenance easily. One teacher said that the school needed two fans, but the BRC had rejected the proposal. He had tried to persuade the SMC-PTA to contribute, but got no response. Another reported that he had requested parents to do voluntary work for activities such as cleaning weeds during the monsoon, but they had refused.

The sub-health centres received no funds. Till 2012, an annual grant of Rs.10,000 for maintenance and running expenses was provided in the account of a CBO committee. But the committee was dissolved and the funds ceased. ANMs said that they spent their own money on maintenance, photocopying etc when matters became urgent, which was not reimbursed.

The AWCs received an annual grant of Rs.2,400. The AWWs interviewed found this to be very inadequate, and said that sometimes money was not available for the most essential activities. For example, one AWW had wanted the toilet repaired but could not get funds. When the supervisor

visited the AWC, she asked her to get the toilet cleaned. But the AWW was not willing to pay Rs.200 per month needed to get the toilet cleaned. Already, she was paying the Sahayika travel expenses to fetch the midday meal, which was cooked in a school. Other AWWs claimed that they spent their own money to travel to meetings and take children to the NRC. One AWW said that she had borne the expense of repairing and whitewashing the walls of the AWC. She said that she was often told to spend from her own pocket on the understanding that the money would be reimbursed, but often it was not. Another AWW reported spending an average of Rs.400-450 per month on photocopying.

Panchayat Finance

Like the departments, the funds available with Panchayats too were mainly scheme funds. The ZP and JP had no own sources of income. They received grants for office expenditure, as well as for the schemes that they implemented. In addition, each ZP and JP PR was provided a sum of Rs.10 lakh and Rs.4 lakh respectively, to expend on relevant projects. Before 2015, the ZP and JP had received a central government grant, as recommended by the Central Finance Commission (CFC), but since 2015, as per the recommendations of the 14th CFC, this grant was provided only to GPs. Consequently the financial position of the ZPs and JPs had deteriorated substantially.

The research team found that the ZP and JP did not prepare consolidated accounts, and the officials were not able to provide the total amounts received and expended. Consequently, researchers had to collect information from the different wings of the ZP, and in the JP, a clear picture simply could not be obtained. In the ZP, the total funds received in 2016-17 were Rs.131.05 crore and the expenditure was Rs.124.36 crore (Table 5.5). The largest expenditure was for PMAY, followed by MGNREGS. For the Midday Meals Scheme, funds were sent directly by the state office to the accounts of SHG groups that prepared the meals. MGNREGS wages too were transferred directly to the accounts of workers from the state level. The ZP had exceeded its establishment expenditure and had applied to the state government for reimbursement.

Table 5.5: Allotment and Expenditure in the ZP in 2016-17

(Rs. in Lakh)

	Allotment	Expenditure
Establishment	32.03	93.30
MGNREGS	1,645.28	1,645.28
Integrated Watershed Scheme	381.82	381.82
Swachh Bharat Mission	920.00	957.36
PMAY	10,125.60	9,358.40
Total	**13,104.73**	**12,436.16**

During interviews, ZP and JP PRs said that the Panchayat had hardly any funds to spend as per its priority. In the words of a ZP PR :

'Our powers have been declining. In 1994, each Janpad Panchayat member got Rs.10 lakh, which would be equivalent to around Rs.40 lakh today, but now he gets only Rs.5 lakh. The GPs have all the financial powers now. The powers of municipalities in urban areas are increasing.'

To quote a Janpad official: 'We do not have any funds and we do not have any work. We are implementing the works of the state and centre. Running the office of Janpad is the most difficult job.'

In case of GPs, the main funds were available in the scheme 'Panch Parmeshwar'. Notably, GPs were entitled to untied funds as per the 14th CFC grant, but the state government had converted these funds too into a scheme, Panch Parmeshwar, mainly to construct roads and drains, leaving only

20% funds untied, to be spent as per the GP's priorities. In addition, from time to time, GPs got the funds from ZP and JP ward members, in MPLAD and MLALAD schemes, and from departments for specific projects, where they acted as the implementation agencies. The GPs could execute works of up to Rs.15 lakh.

The taxes levied by the GPs included house tax and street light tax. But the sample GPs appeared to view tax collection as optional. In three out of four sample GPs, there was no, or minimal, tax collection. In one GP, the new secretary has started collecting house tax, which had not been collected earlier. Another GP rented out its building for marriages etc., and earned a small income. To run the tap water scheme, GPs collected fees, but this was an uphill struggle, and PRs said that people were reluctant to pay.

In 2016-17, the funds available with four sample GPs varied from Rs.14 lakh to Rs.2.62 crore. In one GP, Rs.2.23 crore for a tap water scheme had been received. If this is discounted, the funds available in the GPs varied from Rs.14 lakh to Rs.39.3 lakh. The expenditure, available for 3 GPs, varied from 2.6% to 79.8%. The funds available for the tap water scheme in one GP could not be spent because of lack of community contribution which was necessary. If this is discounted, the expenditure varied from 17.1% to 79.8% (Table E.2, Annex E). Thus the GPs were unable to either raise revenue, or expend the funds that they had, adequately.

Cooperation Department

In the Cooperation Department, the sample office of the DMO procured stocks from fertilizer and seed companies and distributed these to agriculture cooperative societies, which in turn provided these to the farmers. The companies to supply seeds and fertilizers were selected at the state level, and the DMO was informed about the quantities to be obtained from specific companies. All financial transactions were centralized at the state level, and the DMO office received funds only for minor office expenditure. In 2016-17, the DMO had made purchases worth Rs.239.33 crore and sales worth Rs.221.85 crores. There was a net loss of Rs.13.29 crores, but as all financial transactions were centralized, this was not a concern at the district level.

At the grassroots, the PACS undertook two main financial transactions: they earned a commission for the sale of fertilizers and seeds, and provided loans to farmers after obtaining finance from the cooperative bank. The rate of commission on seeds and fertilizers was decided by the state government. The loan limit to farmers was decided by a committee headed by the DC on the basis of the area owned by the farmers, and the crop sown. The rate of interest was fixed[38]. Thus PACS were neither government departments, nor business organizations. They were bound by numerous government directions, but expected to be financially autonomous. They were expected to generate business through various banking and commercial activities. However, the rates for nearly everything, i.e., interest, prices of various commodities etc. were fixed by the government.

In the district, the working capital of each PACS varied between Rs.1-2 crore. Each member contributed a share capital of Rs.100, but this added up to a very meagre amount. The government had recently decided to provide a grant of Rs.42,000 per year to PACs as management expenses, but this was a very inadequate, as the monthly management expenses were around Rs.1-1.5 lakh. As per district officials, half the PACS were in a bad state financially, because of poor loan recovery. Loan recovery was poor because governments waived loans from time to time, and farmers waited

[38] No interest was charged if the loan was repaid within one year. If the loan was paid the second year, the interest rate was 12% and if paid in the third year, the interest rate was 15%.

for such waivers, rather than paying dues. Moreover, when PACS procured agriculture produce as per government directions, they incurred losses because of wastage etc.

As commercial organizations bound by central directions, PACS were not financially viable. For example, from among the two sample LAMPS, the credit limit of one had been reduced as it was not able to repay the money it owed to the cooperative bank. The manager explained that as their commission was quite low, they had to take a loan to supply food grains to the PDS shops, which they could not repay. He added that the society was quite small, and there was not much growth in agriculture. People were poor, and recovery was only 60-70%

Financial Sanction

Designated officials at various levels had the powers to sanction expenditure. In all the offices studied, no one except the head of office could sanction any significant funds. The general pattern was that the head of office had fairly high sanctioning powers for activities that had been approved in a scheme or a plan, but very limited sanctioning powers for other activities. For example, in School Education, both the district officials could spend funds for approved activities in SSA and RMSA, but for other types of expenditure, their powers were limited to Rs.10,000 (Box 5.4). Many departments, especially School Education and WCD, had delegated substantial financial powers to the DC. Below the district level, officials had very minor powers of sanction, if at all, except for the CEO JP. This financial centralization led to cumbersome processes and officials complained that approvals were often delayed. As the a PHE official stated:

'The work is done at the sub-division, while approval is by the EE's office and SE's office. This takes time.'

Box 5.4: Financial Powers of Heads of Offices of Sample Offices

Department	District	Sub-division/ Tehsil/ Block		
	Office	Powers	Office	Powers
Revenue	DC	Varied powers for different activities as delegated by the departments	SDM	None
			Tehsildar	Can sanction compensation for crop damage etc. as per specified norms
Forest	DFO	Can sanction all activities approved in a plan	SDO	Construction works up to Rs.2 lakh, repair works up to Rs.50,000
Panchayat and Rural Development	CEO ZP	Works up to Rs.25 lakhs	CEO JP	Works up to Rs.15 lakh
School Education	DEC	Can sanction all activities approved in a plan Rs.10,000 for others	BRCC	Office expenses up to Rs.10,000
	DIET	Rs.50,000		
Public Health	CHMO	Rs.10 lakh	BMO	Rs.2 lakh under NHM
Public Health Engineering	EE	Issue and approval of tender up to Rs.10 lakh. Technical sanction up to Rs.20 lakh, Administrative sanction: Nil	SDO	Approve expenses up to Rs.500
Cooperation	DMO	Rs.10,000 for repair of go-downs and transportation		

Concluding Remark

As in the case of human resources, the government had created substantial physical infrastructure for offices and institutions in the district. But, there were gaps, especially at the grassroots. The gaps were most glaring in the case of AWCs, where the investment in providing appropriate buildings was minimal, in spite of the fact that ending child malnourishment is an important national goal. Moreover, the upkeep of the physical infrastructure at the grassroots was poor in schools, AWCs and SHCs. Given that these institutions are the focal points of the delivery of social services, this neglect gave a negative signal to the service providers as well as citizens. In the same vein, the fact that many government offices, especially at sub-district levels, did not have adequate drinking water provisions, were not clean, and lacked facilities for the differently-abled, hampered those who worked there. It also put a question mark on the government's goals of ensuring sanitation and supporting the differently-abled.

Substantial funds were available for programmes of socio-economic development and social welfare. But as in the case of human resources, the state level departmental offices controlled finances tightly. Funds were tied with schemes, even for local governments. This meant that it was difficult to undertake context-specific activities. Even agriculture cooperative societies were mandated to follow numerous government instructions. But they were also expected to function as business organizations and be self-supporting. As a consequence, many cooperative societies incurred losses.

Curiously, where funds were available in an untied form, i.e., MP and MLALAD funds, and funds provided to block and district PRs, they were available with individuals, and not organizations. While some public representatives could choose a few projects, no field organization had the financial autonomy to take up activities as per local needs. Moreover, centralization was increasing. Direct transfer to accounts of vendors and beneficiaries from the state level whittled the possibility of local decision-making further. It was assumed that local institutions would simply implement centrally designed schemes. ■

6 WORKING CONTEXT AND ETHOS

Introduction

The administrative structure, human resources, infrastructure and financing pattern described in the previous chapters, set boundaries to the work of the field organizations. The field organizations could undertake activities that they were mandated to do, and what was possible with the given human, infrastructure and financial resources. In addition, the activities of these organizations were shaped by the general working ethos of the government system or certain work and behaviour patterns that were the norm, as well as community pressure.

In this chapter, to begin with, the general working ethos, or behaviour and practices accepted as the 'norm' is delineated. Sometimes, these were written out in the form of rules or orders, but more often, they were informal practices. Thus, while as per rules, there was no bar on questioning the judgement of a senior officer, in practice, this was unacceptable. This is followed by a depiction of the approach of the community to the government, and the pressures it generated. Subsequently, the power relations in the Gram Panchayats, illustrating these pressures are described. Finally, the chapter shows how 'work' got defined, and how field-level government actors perceived their role.

Centralization

Departments

As the previous three chapters show, centralization at the state level was visible in role articulation, as well as the management of human resources and finances. In the social sector, schemes contained specific activities, and as funds were tied to schemes, officials could not take up activities outside the schemes. Regulatory departments had more freedom as officials took independent decisions as per the general provisions of law. The state offices of the departments recruited personnel and posted them.

In addition to the above, state offices issued detailed directions regarding day-to-day activities. For example, in School Education, not only were the curriculum, textbooks and school timings decided at the state level, but the department also specified the school time-table, the number of schools to be inspected per month by various officials, the number of teacher training programmes to be held, the teacher training calendar, subjects for research for the DIET, the midday meal menu, how teachers would mark attendance, etc. Similarly, during the course of the fieldwork, the Revenue Department issued orders for Tehsildars to sit in the court minimum three days a week. Moreover, the department had directed that all undisputed mutation cases be resolved and records up-dated as part of a state-level campaign. As noted earlier, the level of centralization had increased in recent years. For instance, one Patwari remarked that while earlier, he had been free to take decisions about land measurement and crop-records, now he had to follow what senior officials told him to do.

Consequently, field officials had little autonomy, and took few important decisions. When officials were asked to identify the most important decisions that their office took, they identified day-to-day tasks. No decisions regarding strategy, or new initiatives were taken. Similarly, when officials were asked to identify the most important decisions taken in the six months prior to the field work, they mentioned implementation of a government programme or direction,

or decision on a case. The two exceptions here were activities in WCD as per a scheme, i.e., Atal Yojna, which allowed the district to select a few activities, and an enquiry started by the SDM, into irregularities of the municipality, indicating autonomous action (Box 6.1).

In the same vein, the district administration could not fill up vacant posts or hire experts. Officials watched helplessly as the manpower dwindled. For human resources, the most important activity in the district was that senior officials wrote the performance appraisal report of junior officials, which became a basis for promotion. Apart from this, the autonomy of field administration was limited to supervisory activities, i.e., work division among persons posted to an office by the state government, day-to-day monitoring and some minor punishment to grassroots employees (Box 6.1).

Box 6.1: Decisions that Field Administration can Take and Most Important Decisions Taken

Department	Decisions made by Field Administration	Office	Most Important Decisions Taken by Office in Last Six Months
Revenue	Decisions in revenue cases as per law, decisions in law and order situations as per law work division among staff	SDM	Conduct of enquiry into illegal construction in municipality and submission of report to collector
		Tehsildar	Decisions in court cases
Forest	Decisions in cases of forest crime as per law	DFO	Decision to implement activities identified in the plan
		SDO (F)	Preparation of annual Nistar Patrak
Panchayat and Rural Development	Scheme specific activities such as preparing MGNREGS labour budget, planning to achieve targets	ZP	Enhancing efforts to get the district declared ODF and completing PMAY works
		JP	Enhancing efforts to get the district declared ODF and completing PMAY works
School Education	Work allotment in office, punishment of errant teachers by cutting salary up to one week, deciding who will go for training, organization of training such as timing, food, stay and getting experts, tenders to private agencies for publicity	DPO	First and second installment for construction provided to GPs, proposed stopping increment of the teachers who were found cheating in the examination, and got approval
		DIET	Fixing place to conduct training
		BEO	Disciplinary action against teachers
		BRC	Work division among BACs
Public Health	Organizing implementation of programmes, repair of equipment, emergency expenditure, printing, advertisement expenditure	CHMO	ANM and ASHA training
		CHC	Redistribution of work because of vacancy of two doctors
Women and Child Development	Changing sectors of supervisors, hiring AWWs as per approved criteria, removing AWWs, deciding who will go for training, where to build AWC, which AWC to repair, shifting rented AWCs, activities under Atal Yojna, preparing DIRs for women affected by violence and counselling	DPO	Buying the 'smile van' and visiting villages along with an expert team for children's health-check, creating a model AWC with financial approval from DC
		DWEO	Organization of Mahila Sansads after approval of DC, preparing DIRs as per state guidelines
		CDPO	Removing 2 AWWs
		BWEO	Preparing DIRs as per state guidelines

Department	Decisions made by Field Administration	Office	Most Important Decisions Taken by Office in Last Six Months
Public Health Engineering	Technical sanction under Rs.20 lakh, tender under Rs.10 lakh, work division among staff once they have been posted, give show cause notice to errant staff, dicide which hand pump should be repaired	EE	Selection of habitations to install new hand pumps, priority setting for hand pump repair, priority setting for repair of tap water schemes that have closed down
		SDO (PHE)	None, routine activities were carried out
Cooperation	Work division among staff once they have been posted	DMO	None, routine activities were carried out

As noted above, funds were tied up with schemes. Consequently funds were often not available for simple but necessary activities. For example, the School Education Department did not have funds to clean school bathrooms. The officials' capacity to take initiative, use their discretion and respond appropriately to the situation was also limited. To quote a block level official:

'We got news of a child marriage and conducted a raid. But later it seemed wrong to conduct a raid on the day of the marriage. I felt that there should be camps in every village to tell people that there will be action in case of child marriage. But there is no fund for this activity.'

Centralization also meant that uniform targets were set, irrespective of the context. For example, in the sample block, officials found it difficult to achieve targets in PMAY, in which grants were given to beneficiaries to construct their own house within a certain time frame. The JP was given a yearly target and monitored. But officials said that the sample block did not have an adequate number of vendors and masons. To quote an official:

'To centre the roof, there are only three vendors in the block. For 40 houses to be brought to the roof level in three weeks, adequate material and vendors are simply not available. If we get vendors from outside, they charge a higher price and beneficiaries cannot pay that. The cost of transportation is high.'

Thus officials were often expected to achieve targets that were unrealistic in their context. Further, targets could de-focus attention from the quality of work and the process. An NGO representative, who worked closely with the district administration, said that the mad race for numbers resulted in poor quality work. He related how in the previous year, officials ran around trying to fulfil a target for digging wells, when the water table was going down.

Panchayats

The Panchayats functioned in a context of political as well as administrative centralization. As noted in chapter three, PRs struggled with state politicians for more powers and autonomy. Moreover, though as per law, political parties were not recognized in Panchayat elections, interviews with PRs and officials revealed that in practice, they played an important role. Significantly, MPs and MLAs were members of the ZP and JP. During interviews, PRs said that MPs and MLAs were very influential, and officials listened to them, rather than the PRs. Notably, as shown in chapter four, state level politicians had a great deal of influence in the posting of officials. In the sample ZP, a highly placed MLA exercised considerable influence.

There was evidence of centralized political control in the decision-making of the ZP and JP. In interviews, PRs said that once the Panchayat was formed, PRs often split along party lines on various issues, and the

opposition members generally criticized the ruling party. Some district and block PRs admitted that they received directions from their party leaders, and took stands as per these directions. For example, during the course of the fieldwork for the study, PRs of the opposition party in the state had protested against a particular scheme of the government, as this was the party stand.

While most GP PRs were not willing to disclose their political affiliation, they admitted that political parties had influence. In one GP, a ward member from the opposition party complained that applications given by him were not considered seriously for political reasons. In another GP, the secretary said that he never met members of the two parties together. In a third GP, the secretary reported that whenever he went to the Janpad for official work, he was asked about his party-affiliation.

However, this control was not complete. PRs often agreed on many local issues of development. To quote one ZP member:

'On the issue of development we are all one. We all want that Panchayat resolutions should be respected by the officials'.

So much so, that one ZP member of the ruling party admitted that sometimes they asked opposition members to raise issues which, if raised by them, would displease their political party leaders. Moreover, PRs who were active could become influential, irrespective of the party to which they belonged. In the ZP and the JP, members who belonged to SHG federations and a radical political party were influential because they were very active.

In GPs too, political party influence could be countered. In one GP, the Sarpanch and a few other PRs had contested elections because they were dissatisfied with the previous GP, which was very corrupt and ineffective. They had not been backed by the political party they supported, but had won because of people's support. However, bigger political leaders interfered with the GP. The GP secretary reported an incident where the GP Sarpanch decided to distribute small plots to a large number of people for housing. But the MLA of the area had already declared that people would get somewhat larger plots, in which case fewer people stood to benefit. As the GP began to carve out smaller plots, some beneficiaries complained to the MLA. The MLA insisted on having his way and even tried to get the Sarpanch arrested when he refused to cooperate. The Sarpanch eventually gave in.

In addition to political centralization, the high degree of administrative centralization impacted the Panchayats too. Panchayats had hardly any untied funds to take up projects as per their decisions, and had to follow departmental schemes. In interviews, ZP and JP PRs said that policies and programmes were centrally directed and officials responded to orders from above. To quote a ZP member:

'The ZP is like a post office to carry messages below. The entire Panchayati Raj system has been converted into a laboratory for the Principal Secretary or the Additional Chief Secretary.'

Moreover, as noted in chapter three, district and sub-district department heads followed the directions of their departments and to some extent the DC, and paid little heed to the ZP and JP. For example, ZP PRs said that in the meetings of standing committees of the ZP, departments sent junior staff. In the JP, PRs said that they found it difficult to play the coordination role expected of them, as department officials did not listen to them. An additional indication of departmental control was the establishment of various departmental committees, rather than working through the Panchayats. As per a Panchayat official:

'There are too many parallel committees like irrigation committee, water user committee and forest produce committee etc., which reduce the powers of the Janpad. The Antyodaya Committee is headed by the DC and they monitor the activities of the Janpad, but there is no role of JP PRs.'

The GPs too had meagre funds for projects outside government schemes. For example, in one GP, the Sarpanch said that the GP could not even make a small foot-bridge that was needed. In another, the MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak commented that the GP had no power to construct even a drain to dispose the sewage water, but had to wait for a scheme. The sphere of autonomy of the GPs was in selection of sites and beneficiaries as per defined parameters for various government schemes. However, this too was quite limited. For example, in one GP, the Panchayat had found out that some of the neediest households' names were not enlisted in the PMAY beneficiary list. They applied to JP to allow them to modify the list, but the application was rejected. In one GP, a woman PR interviewed opposed the imposition of schemes and targets, and often challenged the Panchayat to do works that the villagers needed, not what the government wanted for them. However, these proposals were discarded in GP meetings for lack of provision in the scheme.

Additionally, GPs received detailed targets and instructions regarding execution of schemes, and the GP secretaries reported a great deal of pressure from senior officials. Monthly reports regarding progress of schemes had to be sent to the CEO Janpad. The GPs often got sudden orders from the department to call special Gram Sabhas, to address the prevailing government priority. This disrupted the GP. For example, in one GP, the Sarpanch could not be present for the social audit, as the date was fixed centrally, and he had to go to the court on the same date. The secretary in one GP reported being repeatedly called to the Janpad to update the progress, as the GP has no internet facility. An important tool for controlling GP PRs was that the PR Act provided powers to the SDM and DC to take action against PRs. During interviews, PRs said that such action could sometimes be arbitrary.

Hierarchy

As in most large organizations, the division of responsibility and authority in district administration operated on the basis of hierarchy. At higher levels, more qualified and experienced officials were provided; they had greater authority and were expected to supervise the subordinate offices. However, the hierarchy did not operate in the form of a rational division of authority and responsibility, but in a manner that interfered with work.

One feature of the hierarchy was authoritarianism, whereby senior officials could not be questioned. For example, an AWW related an instance when she was asked to take charge of 2 AWCs, and she asked for a written order, she was punished with a salary deduction. To quote a block level official:

'If you ask questions, seniors either scold you, or start action against you.'

This authoritarianism reduced the capacity in organizations to make decisions after detailed discussions and adequate feedback from the ground. Moreover, senior officials could make impossible and illogical demands, which the junior officials could not refuse. To quote a grassroots official:

'We have to keep our phones on all the time, as a call can come at any time of the night to attend a meeting on the next day. At twelve in the night, we are asked to provide data the next morning. But, one cannot say that it is midnight and the work can only be done the next morning. These days, humans have no

values left and they treat the subordinate ground staff like a flock of animals.'

Another junior official described a scenario where his supervisor had made him and his colleagues sign a declaration that they would never switch off their mobile phones. If an employee's phone was switched off because the battery had died, the supervisor deducted a day's salary.

At best, senior officers were paternalistic, and at worst, punitive. In the relationship between seniors and juniors, obedience and punishment occupied a far greater space than encouragement and support. When asked how they motivated their juniors, officials usually talked about control and punishment. To quote a block level official:

'I manage to get principals to obey me. For this I have to create pressure and motivate in various ways. Junior officers are scared of me but also respect me. If a junior official has made no mistake, no senior officer or public representative can pull them up. I protect them.'

Yet another block level official said that:

'If there are shortcomings, I give notice and take action.'

So great was the belief in disciplinary action that one official had set herself a monthly target of the number of junior employees to take action against.

If supervisors chose to be harsh and punitive, they could not be questioned easily, as is visible in the statement of a block level employee:

'My supervisor is a very harsh person and I am very scared of him.'

Some supervisors adopted a more supportive approach. For example, one AWW said that her supervisor was demanding about work, but was not abusive, praised good work at many forums, and protected the AWWs. Another AWW reported that the supervisor had been understanding and helpful during her and her child's illness. A few officials said that they preferred counselling and support over punitive action. But working in a collegial style to achieve common goals was a personal choice, made by only a few supervisors. To quote a Patwari:

'Much depends on the person who sits in the chair. Recently, a new officer has been posted and there is a lot of imposition. Once I worked with a fine SDM who consulted with the RIs and Patwaris on how difficult targets could be achieved. He gave guidelines and asked for our suggestions. Working with such people is fun. But this is rare in the government structure.'

Employees either suffered in silence, or tried to neutralize the supervisors deviously. One AWW got little support from her supervisor, who would not grant her leave even in emergencies. In case of a crisis, she talked directly to the CDPO and got leave, which the supervisor did not like, and taunted her.

A second feature of the hierarchy was that junior officials were disempowered. The poorer infrastructure at sub-district and sub-block offices, noted in the previous chapter, reflected their place in the hierarchy, not work needs. To this was added the casual treatment of junior officials. In the PHE Department, as a new office of a senior official was established at the district headquarters, the rooms of the SDO's office were taken over by that office. Now, the SDO's office functioned in one room, and the staff had very little space to sit, or keep documents. Then, a year ago, even the computers of the office were taken away by a senior officer. The staff complained that it was very difficult to work. Similarly, to get financial approvals, 3 district officials said

that they had to stand outside the room of the senior officers for approval or signature.

In this scheme of things, the sub-district officers had a difficult time. Though supervisors, they were fairly low down in the hierarchy. Consequently, their authority was often questioned. To quote a block level official:

'Officials want to take orders from district level and do not listen to us. I give directions to officials and report to district head if they don't follow.'

A third feature of the hierarchy was that the actual work was done by the lowest level, or by grassroots functionaries, who were the least skilled and least empowered. For example, in the PHE Department, when it was decided that some work was to be taken up, a proposal and an estimate was prepared by the sub-engineer. The proposal was presented on file by the sub-engineer to the SDO, who sent it to the EE. The EE gave technical sanction, and sent it to the Superintending Engineer for an administrative sanction. Once the administrative sanction was obtained, the file was sent back to the sub-engineer for implementation. Similarly, in the GPs, the sub-engineers monitored instead of providing technical assistance. Thus the skills of the more qualified officials were not used in actually making the proposal, but only in scrutinizing and rectifying it. In the context, where the salary and other benefits of many grassroots functionaries had been lowered considerably, and such functionaries were de-motivated and dissatisfied, this operation of the hierarchy was especially harmful.

In fact, some senior officials passed on even their work to the junior officials. One sub-divisional official said that since he was posted at the district headquarter, he had to manage the entire district office. In the same office, employees commented that higher level officials passed on the responsibility of decision-making to the second in-command. Thus responsibility and authority tended to get split, with junior-most officials having many responsibilities without capacity or authority.

The importance of hierarchy can be estimated from the fact that hierarchy had been built into even the Panchayat Act, though Panchayats were envisaged as democratic and egalitarian institutions. The higher tier Panchayats were expected to supervise the lower tier Panchayats. Thus, the sample JP had provided training and guidelines to the GPs, and supervised its work. However, unlike departmental offices, the hierarchy here was much weaker. Panchayats at all levels took their own meetings and passed their own resolutions.

Campaigns

Along with centralization and hierarchy, the field administration was tasked with a large number of campaigns. At the national and state level, political leaders focused on undertaking 'missions' and 'campaigns' to achieve specific goals, rather than improving the day-to-day administration, and constantly announced 'new' initiatives. At the time of the fieldwork for this study, the Revenue Department was winding up a campaign to update all entries of undisputed mutation, an activity that should be carried out as part of ordinary working. In the course of this campaign, revenue officials admitted that, to achieve a specific goal, others had been neglected.

Often, state departments asked officials to undertake multiple campaigns, without taking into account the capacity on the ground. A Public Health Department official declared that campaigns should be stopped, as these led to neglect of day-to-day work. To quote:

'At present, there is a programme going on to vaccinate all children for measles at one go. Recently, there was a workshop at the state

level for this and the training of block and sub-block officials has just begun. This had not yet started, that Mission Indra Dhanush (a vaccination programme) began, in which there has to be a house-to-house survey.'

Another official said: 'Now a new campaign has been started, in which we have to visit homes of high risk pregnant women in villages, and update their photos on WhatsApp every day. We have to locate 15% high risk women, whether or not they exist. If we don't do it, we will get a show cause notice. But senior officials don't understand that if we go to the field, there will be no one in the out patient department (OPD). Then again, we will get a show cause notice, and the patient will have to return home.'

Similarly, during the course of the study, the officials of the Cooperation Department were frequently ordered to procure one agriculture crop or the other, sometimes without adequate preparation. Consequently, there were many glitches in payments and often a high degree of dissatisfaction among farmers.

The outcome of this mode of working was the neglect of long term goals, in favor of short term gains. Some officials said that the regular work of their department, which could have slow, but long-term impact, was neglected. In the Public Health Department, the annual plan could not be followed, because the government constantly introduced new campaigns. To quote a Public Health official:

'The department is distributing money in various schemes so that people can benefit. Instead of this, we should focus on how the quality of the department can be improved. There should be adequate manpower and infrastructure. Distributing money is not a long-term solution.'

The continuous emphasis on 'new' initiatives could complicate matters. For example, for rural housing, there were three similar schemes. The original scheme was Indira Awas Yojna (IAY), a central government scheme, to provide modest houses to the houseless and those with poor quality houses. To this, the state government had added the Mukhya Mantri Rural Housing Scheme, which provided more limited benefits. A couple of years before this study began, IAY was replaced with the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna, which provided more liberal benefits than IAY. Subsequently, the other housing schemes were discontinued in the sense that new beneficiaries were not selected for them. However, the old beneficiaries were not allowed to shift to the new scheme, and the ZP implemented three similar schemes, keeping separate accounts, making separate reports, and so on.

The Informal System

Along with the above, the field administration functioned in a powerful unstated and informal system of patronage and rent-seeking. Notably, patronage-based functioning and rent-seeking were not limited to sporadic activities, but pervaded all, and were important aspects of government functioning.

Political Patronage

As shown in chapter four, politicians had a great deal of say in the posting of officials, which were important to the officials for personal reasons, prestige attached to various posts, and rent-seeking. This laid the foundation of an informal system based on patronage, as pleasing politicians could get an official a posting of choice, and displeasing them could cause hardship, such as frequent transfers. Thus postings and transfers were the key tools for the exercise of political patronage. In the district, some officials were known to be 'close' to some politically powerful persons, and were feared. Moreover, in the sample district, even the administrative structure showed its influence:

the smallest tehsil had been carved out at the behest of a rich and politically powerful family in the district[39]. The tehsil cut across three blocks, and officials complained of the problems in coordination.

Additionally, political actors influenced the day-to-day working of the district administration. When district and sub-district officials were asked about their interaction with politicians, they reported that the politicians they interacted with most often included PRs, MPs, MLAs, ministers, and local leaders of political parties (Table 6.1). Of these, only PRs had a formal role in administration, while ministers, MPs and MLAs were expected to be influential in policy making at the state level rather than implementation in the district[40]. But politicians who were powerful at the state-level, exerted significant influence. When officials were asked who the most powerful politician of the area was, most mentioned a powerful state-level politician, who was an MLA from the district. He belonged to a rich land-owning family that had a foot in both the major political parties. Two other politicians seen as influential were also MLAs with clout at the state level.

When officials were asked about the type of contact they had with politicians, they reported both positive and negative interactions. Of the 21 supervisory officials interviewed, only 4 said that they usually did not have any contact with politicians. Three of these were block level officials and one was a district official but not head of office. Seven officials made positive comments about the contact that they had with politicians, two made positive as well as negative comments, four said that they were not willing to talk on the subject and four made negative comments (Table 6.1).

Officials who reported positive contact with politicians said that politicians helped them get in touch with problems in the field. PHE officials reported getting information about out of order hand pumps. One official said that politicians moderated the interaction between officials and the people. Officials also reported getting help in coordination and resolving problems. One official remarked that a powerful MLA tried to understand the progress in the district and solve problems and had a big contribution in building the sports complex. Another said that MLAs had used their fund to construct AWCs and had provided chairs in 175 AWCs. Yet another official remarked that important politicians helped at the state level when there were problems. They got money for the district and helped in getting approvals for schemes. Thus politicians strengthened contact with the community and negotiated for the district at the state level.

Table 6.1: Experience of Officials Interviewed Regarding Contact with Politicians

	Number of Officials
No contact	4
Not willing to say	4
Negative comment	4
Positive comment	7
Comments with positive and negative elements	2

[39] As the study neared completion, a new tehsil, i.e., an urban tehsil at the district head quarter, was declared by the new government.

[40] MPLAD and MLALAD acknowledge the need for MPs and MLAs to have more direct intervention in their constituencies by funding specific projects, but do not envisage a role in district administration.

Officials who reported negative contact complained about unethical demands. A senior official said that politicians wanted favours for their followers, and never lobbied on behalf of the common man. To quote another official:

'There is always political pressure. It is mostly about giving people benefits from government schemes, and also about not taking action against those who transgress the law. Politicians want that the work of their party workers should get done.'

One official said that ministers and MLAs often got officials to do their personal work and pay for it too. He related an incident when he paid for the travel of a minister and his associates within the district from his pocket, and another time when he had to spend personal money to arrange a vehicle for the minister's relatives to go sight-seeing

Along with the threat of transfers, officials feared public humiliation at the hands of politicians. One official said that sometimes, when ministers and MLAs wanted something done which was not possible as per rules, they insulted officials in public meetings. In the district, no one wanted to be posted in a particular area, because the powerful local MLA regularly humiliated officials in public forums. One official was not willing to be posted in that area even though his wife was working there. As per some officials, the MLA was a sand mining baron, did not care for any rules, but insisted that the demands of his associates be met. If an official did not do so, he pulled up the officer publicly. So sometimes officials did what he asked out of fear. Thus officials often felt constrained in enforcing the law. To quote an official:

'We need protection. I want to take action against illegal sand mining. But politicians become dominant.'

As politicians had considerable influence in the posting of officials, they often had 'their' person in place. When senior district officials themselves were connected closely to politicians, it became doubly difficult for other officials to refuse their demands. During the course of the study, as an interview with a senior official was going on, he received a call from a minister about the transfer of a grassroots worker. He then called a junior official and asked him to take care, because the minister was closely connected to the DC. Another official related a story:

'There is a trust here with a huge amount of land, whose trustee passed away. There was an application from new trustees to donate the land to some other NGO. I found no merit in the case. As I decided to reject it, I began to receive communication from various quarters. My boss asked me to pass a favourable order in the case, as a powerful politicians wanted it. There was a lot of pressure, so I prepared an order and also wrote my resignation and went to meet the boss. Finally, the boss relented.'

At the grassroots too, the experience with politicians was mixed. Politicians worked for public good, but also pressurized grassroots employees to dispense favours unethically. For example, the PHE workers reported that politicians usually monitored out of order hand pumps and also helped in getting funds. However, this was not the experience of all grassroots workers. One Patwari said that politicians pressurized him to add people's names to below poverty line (BPL) cards, sometimes for the right reasons and sometimes for the wrong ones. Another said that a politician had made recommendations on behalf of various people for adding names to the PMAY list, and had offered to get him bribes. Given their junior position, this created unique difficulties for grassroots personnel, who had to be very careful. One Patwari said that whenever a politician made any request, he simply nodded. If the request was doable and involved no risk, then he complied, but if it was risky, he explained to the politician in person. Another Patwari said that some politicians treated government employees as their personal workers or helpers, and asked them to do anything, anytime.

Powerful politicians attempted to influence the Panchayats too. Local politicians tried to get funds from the GPs. An ex-Sarpanch of a sample GP, who was still very influential, and a sitting Sarpanch of another GP, said that local political leaders pressurized the PRs to provide them 3-5% of the Panchayat funds, or give donations to organize political functions. The sitting Sarpanch admitted that he contributed if he could, or asked the villagers to contribute. In one GP, the secretary reported constant pressure from the MLA for approval of specific projects to benefit his supporters.

Rent-seeking

A second context in which the officials worked was that of wide-spread graft or 'corruption'. The ubiquity of rent-seeking can be inferred from the fact that while nearly all the non-officials interviewed and people in FGDs said that there was a very high degree of corruption, most officials denied that there was any corruption in their office. Among the 21 supervisory officials interviewed, ten said that there was no graft in their office, four said that they had no information of any corruption, two said that there was possibly some minor corruption at junior levels, while four admitted that there was widespread rent-seeking, and one did not comment. Yet, three of the five district and block PRs interviewed were emphatic that there was a high degree of corruption (Table 6.2).

The denial of rent-seeking by officials indicated that they were themselves complicit in well-organized networks. In contrast to officials, PRs said that rent-seeking was highly organized, with those at the top benefitting. One PR alleged that the then DC, connected closely to a powerful politician, was himself involved in rent-seeking. To quote another PR:

'There is lot of corruption. Community members are forced to pay for getting benefits under various schemes. Officials have a system and they follow that system that allows them to make money under each scheme. They provide benefit to the powerful and influential.'

A journalist interviewed remarked that in the district, private colonizers were benefitting by bribing senior district officials and illegal sand mining was going on unabated, openly. There was a sand mafia, and officials themselves were trading illegally in sand. These officials were powerful and no one could touch them.

One beat guard described the following system: 'When an AWC building in a village for Rs.10 lakh is sanctioned and there are orders for the construction work be started, the ranger and deputy ranger fix their share of the money as 20% and 10%, respectively. The construction is then done for Rs.8 lakh, and the rest is distributed among the staff.'

The same beat guard went on to describe how beat guards extorted money from villagers. Villagers often took wood from the forest without permission to repair their houses. When a person repaired his house, the beat officers visited the house, noted details such as dates of repair, materials used etc., threatened to confiscate the wood, and pressurized the family to give them at least Rs.5,000 for taking the wood illegally. The beat guard added that the final negotiated price for such illegal use of wood was Rs.3,000 per house. Moreover, beat guards retained axes and carts of the villagers in the forest, threatened to institute cases against them, and asked for Rs.2,000 to return the same, the negotiated price usually coming to Rs.1,000. According to the interviewee, 95% of the beat officers practiced this form of extortion. Some beat officers also charged Rs.100 to sign the caste certificates.

The existence of the rent-seeking nexus can be inferred from the fact that two beat guards reported that when they caught persons engaged in forest theft, there was pressure from senior officials and the local

politicians to release them. They felt at such times that they had no other option but to let the offenders go, and in the words of one, 'be on the safe side and retain the job'.Some officials acknowledged their own unethical practices. To quote an official:

'Corruption is an insect imbibed by every government servant.'

A health official said that there were cases of doctors and other workers asking for money, though they were supposed to provide services were free of charge. Two officials said that people went to middlemen or touts to get their work 'speeded up'. Moreover, there was constant action around rent-seeking, even when officials denied it. For example, in the last 10 years, several CHMOs had been suspended or transferred because of the allegations of corruption.

Table 6.2: Views of Officials and Panchayat Representatives on Rent-Seeling

	Number of Officials	Number of PRs
No corruption in my office	10	0
No information/ cases	4	0
Minor corruption by a few junior officials	2	0
Not sure	0	2
No comment	1	0
Widespread corruption	4	3

Rent-seeking was prevalent in Panchayats too. In the bureaucracy, graft was not easily visible, because officials could do the right paper work, and rent-seeking networks formed a protective facade. But the less sophisticated Sarpanches of the GPs often got caught. In one sample GP, in the previous tenure, there had been an embezzlement of Rs.50 lakh by the then secretary and the woman Sarpanch's husband. The Sarpanch and secretary were suspended and sentenced to prison. The female ST ex-Sarpanch was still in prison and the ex-secretary was out on bail.

In the same GP, the incumbent secretary admitted to providing a 'share' to higher level officials, and met them regularly. However, he also felt that it was important to maintain credibility to stay out of trouble. Consequently, he had not made much money in the GP where he worked, as he wanted acceptance from the people. He said that he used good quality materials and got the best price. In fact, he worked as a contractor in nearby GPs. As a contractor, he gave the Sarpanch and secretary of the GP which contracted the work, 15% of the estimated project cost. He remarked that he had to make a profit from it too, while maintaining the quality of the work. He said that this was the established system. No one was bothered, the villagers got a road and they were happy. He acknowledged that he had earned substantial money in the block, as it was tribal, and the person doing the scam only needed to keep his or her eyes and ears open. He cited the example of a JP PR (the husband of a female PR), a well-known criminal, with whom he had an agreement. The secretary did not demand a cut on profits from the JP works, and in turn, the JP member's husband did not interfere with the secretary's gains as a contractor from nearby GPs.

Another GP had many politically active PRs, and was rife with allegations of rent-seeking. A woman ST member said that people from other hamlets had reported to her that the Panchayat staff demand money for services. She tried to prevent this in her ward and always asked women whether they had paid any bribes. Most reported paying between Rs.500 to Rs.2000, depending upon the work. In the same village, in FGDs, SHG women said that the Panchayat staff demanded money to release money in beneficiaries' accounts under PMAY. While the secretary of the GP claimed that there was no corruption, the MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak said that corruption had increased exponentially in recent years. Frequent campaigns and functions meant that tent-dealers, contractors and suppliers benefitted, and government workers made fraudulent petrol and other bills.

In a third GP, the secretary claimed that after the introduction of the direct benefit transfer (DBT) mode of payment, rent-seeking had reduced significantly. The secretary said that the dangers of corruption for government officials had increased, as the beneficiaries had become smart. They gave a bribe, and simultaneously dialed the CM helpline to complain. The secretary felt that he was fortunate, as no one demanded money from him, except small sums for tea and snacks, which he could manage. He said that he was fortunate as their JP representative was not corrupt. Additionally, he was related to a ZP representative, who was also not corrupt. So no political leader or influential person approached him for money. These comments too, showed the pervasiveness of systematic rent-seeking.

Rent-seeking had led to complete institutional collapse in one sample GP[41], as GP officials collaborated with the husband of the Sarpanch to pilfer funds. The former secretary of the GP had been transferred for mishandling funds for construction of toilets. During the course of the fieldwork, the MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak too was suspended on charges of corruption. Villagers informed that during a social audit, it was found that many people, who on paper had been given funds to construct toilets, had not actually received any funds and no toilets had been constructed. In one ward, 25 people, who had not received any money for toilet construction, had been threatened with the cancellation of PDS coupons for not constructing toilets. The villagers were alarmed and took loans to construct toilets. They were assured by the Panchayat they would get money on completing the toilet, but this was not forthcoming. The residents were still in debt at the time of the fieldwork. In another hamlet, a contractor was appointed to construct toilets, but did a shoddy job, and the toilets were already on the brink of collapsing. The so-called beneficiaries were made to sign a paper, and alleged that the Panchayat staff had got the money deposited in their own bank accounts.

The JP representative for the GP was worried as he had provided the GP with Rs.10 lakhs for two consecutive years to install hand-pumps. But when he demanded the accounts, he was ignored. Additionally, a road constructed by the GP had begun to crumble within 4-5 months. The Panchayat gave the entire work to a contractor who employed the villagers as labourers for less than the wage provided under MGNREGS. Moreover, the labourers had not received their wages for over 6 months. When the workers asked for wages, the contractor told them to ask Sarpanch, who in turn told them to ask secretary, and the secretary told them to ask the contractor. People said that the muster-roll had been filled thrice for the same work. Moreover, PMAY buildings had not been constructed according to the SECC list. The MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak had got two houses for his family, ignoring the beneficiary-list.

[41]Details about this GP could not be obtained during fieldwork

The Community

The district administration functioned in a social context of a high degree of poverty and exploitation, as well as low levels of education among the community on the one hand, and an increasing awareness and assertion, on the other.

As shown in chapter two, the tribal population was exploited by non-tribal, better off groups. Additionally, poor people with no, or very limited, education comprised a large part of the population. Their powerlessness had important repercussions for administration. Many of the poor, especially tribals, did not fight for their rights adequately. For example, as per the Patwari of one sample village, the tribals were not even aware that they were legal owners of the land cultivated by other castes, and had moved to the periphery of the village.

Moreover, they were often not able to derive full benefit from government programmes. For instance, when each sample AWC was visited three times, the average number of children present in the AWCs over three visits varied from 24% to 47%. The poorest people were daily wage earners, and often took small children to the work site, who then could not attend the AWC. Health officials and grassroots workers complained that many tribals still had faith in traditional healers, shamans etc., and consulted doctors after their disease was at an advanced stage.

Because of limited education, problems with procedures etc. arose often. For example, one revenue official commented that whereas literate applicants from the urban areas knew what they wanted as per specific laws, rural people simply wrote their problem, wanted relief and were not concerned about the legal position. When the application was not accepted, they saw the authorities as purposefully unjust. Similarly, a WCD official said that sometimes people complained that they did not get benefit under the Ladli Laxmi scheme, but this was because they did not complete procedures etc.

In this context, it was difficult for government officials to provide information. As per a P&RD Department official, many people remained hazy about provisions and processes of schemes even after several explanations. Similarly, a Public Health Department official said that during field visits, people talked about issues other than health. The lack of education meant that government workers had to make a great deal of effort, and spend time with people to do a good job. Illustrated here is a case of public dealing by a Patwari as observed by the researcher:

'During our conversation, many people and farmers came to the Patwari for their work. The Patwari heard them out calmly and made suggestions, or provided assistance as needed. However, three poor farmers were unable to understand him. The Patwari tried several times, but could not get his point across. He then asked the farmers to leave photocopies of their documents with him.'

However, along with exploitation and poverty, the field administration had to deal with increasing awareness and pressure from the community too. Several officials, who had worked for 20 years or more, said that over time, people had become more demanding and vocal, and were more likely to complain when dissatisfied. To quote one revenue official:

'Farmers are more aware. They know everything. They don't depend on the Patwari. Earlier they depended on the Patwari to make an application.'

Another revenue official said:

'People call a lot on the mobile. The phone starts ringing at six am and people call at night. The mobile has made public dealing a problem.'

Similarly, a beat guard said that the department could no longer count on the villagers, as people demanded money for jobs that they had earlier done voluntarily, such as putting out forest fires. The combination of poverty, exploitation and lack of education on the one hand and increasing awareness on the other, had important repercussions for the type of pressure that the community exerted on the field administration.

One, there was a demand for immediate benefits, but the appreciation of possible long-term gains was inadequate. For example, a School Education Department official pointed out that people always asked for uniforms, bicycles, books etc., but there was never a demand from the community that the school should function well. In the sample schools, teachers complained that many students attended school irregularly. In one school, teachers had spoken to the parents of irregular students, and also asked the students' peers to bring them to school, but it had not worked. In another school, the teacher said that barely a tenth of the children in the village were regular. She said that parents did not send their children to the school even after repeated requests. She had been sending a message daily to the parents of two students to talk to her, but without any results. In another village, which had a high degree of malnourishment, in an FGD, with the poorest people showed a lack of interest in the AWC. During the FGD, the researcher asked a parent whose small son was playing nearby, if he attended the AWC, and the parent said that he did not, as the boy was not interested. Officials of the School Education Department said that people did not tell names of the teachers who came late, and School Education and WCD officials said that people did not attend the meetings that they organized.

A second outcome was unethical behaviour from the community, to maintain the power structure, as well as to benefit from the government schemes. Many people supported and used the rampant rent-seeking within the government system for personal gain. Patwaris reported being pressurized by powerful people to manipulate land records. As per one Patwari, when there was crop-loss due to natural calamities, he was often offered bribes by big farmers and local leaders to record higher than actual amount of crop-loss, so as to get more compensation from the government. When poor people applied for their land to be measured, powerful people who had encroached on the land, pressurized and bribed the Patwari to not to measure poor farmers' lands so that their illegal encroachment would not come to light. Another Patwari reported that many male heirs tried to bribe him to exclude their sisters' names as heirs, to grab the property. People also bribed to record their irrigated land as un-irrigated to avail benefits from certain schemes. A third Patwari said that making BPL cards was challenging, as there was constant pressure from political leaders and the rich persons to record their land-holding in a way to get their names included[42]. To quote a junior revenue official:

'Recently, a Patwari and a RI were beaten up because they did not measure land to benefit a powerful person. This has happened to me three times during the course of my service. Once I lodged an FIR[43] but had a tough time in court.'

Similarly, as per P&RD officials, those who were not eligible for benefits under various schemes tried to give incorrect information to get the benefits, or complained to higher authorities. In 3 out of the 4 sample GPs, PRs and officials reported that beneficiaries had indulged in malpractice. Many beneficiaries had taken money for toilet construction but had used it for other purposes; some had even spent it on alcohol. In one GP, people had got themselves photographed standing

[42] In the process of making a BPL card, a Patwari verifies and enters the amount of land that a family has while therest of the process is followed by the GP secretary.

[43] First Information Report

in front of somebody else's toilet, uploaded the photograph and got the money. Thus for a toilet constructed for one family, 3-4 families took the subsidy money. The secretary of the GP said that many people also got false BPL cards.

The lack of civic sense was a problem too. In the GPs, PRs chafed at the lack of community cooperation in sanitation, i.e., disposal of garbage and use of toilets. In one sample GP, a PR was concerned that many of the young adults did not have their names in the voter list, or have bank accounts and, were not interested. In another GP, the secretary gave an example of a local lawyer who was threatening to call the CEO Janpad as the Panchayat had demanded tax, even though he had been given a valid receipt.Lack of understanding contributed to the problem. In an FGD, women admitted that they had no interest in the Panchayat, and only got to know about schemes etc. when the men discussed it in the house.

It was not easy for the GPs to obtain cooperation from the community. In one GP, more than Rs.two crore had been sanctioned for the renewal of a tap water scheme, but could not be used as community contribution that was a pre-condition was not forthcoming. The Sarpanch proposed that all families contribute according to their financial capacity, but people were not willing. Moreover, the residents questioned the Sarpanch's intentions, alleging that he must be gaining something out of road and drain construction. In another GP, a tribal PR said that he had given proposals for a particular road more than ten times before it was approved in the Gram Sabha. The residents of his ward were impatient for the road and badgered him constantly, but rarely attended the Gram Sabha.

Power Relations in Gram Panchayats

This community dynamic of unequal power relations and the fight-back was illustrated most sharply in the GPs. Attempts at elite capture were made by male, land-owning PRs, of OBC or general category, usually aligned to the ruling party, who attempted to dominate the GP and misuse their position. In one GP, other PRs had nick-named such a PR 'crorepati'[44]. He tried to take all the GP projects to his ward. He knew many contractors and suppliers, who gave him a cut from the project money. In the previous year, he had misused project money to construct a road and a drain in and around his residence. Further, an ST PR from the GP said that in Panchayat and Gram Sabha meetings, propertied PRs from the OBC community acted superior and pressurized the Panchayat to open works in their area. The ST PR accepted that as STs were backward and people of low standing, they had to mind their language. To quote the GP secretary:

'Earlier the SC and ST communities used to work for OBC and general caste people as bonded or wage labourers. Till date, the upper caste people do not see them as equals. But upper castes also want the benefits that poor ST and SCs are entitled to. When they do not get them, they create obstacles and nuisance in the Panchayat.'

Similarly, it was common for husbands of women PRs to assume the rights of a PR. In one GP, the husband of the female Sarpanch, who was also a ward member, acted as de-facto Sarpanch. He took the documents to the house for her to sign, and took her with him to meetings, if needed. The villagers too accepted him as the real Sarpanch and talked to him about GP matters. The husband of the Sarpanch focused on benefitting

[44] Equivalent of millionaire or billionaire.

himself. The secretary said that no PR was willing to take an active part in the Panchayat, and people abided by whatever he decided. The PRs only challenged his decisions if their own interest was affected. This lack of interest was problematic, as sometimes urgent decisions remained pending for days. Sometimes, the MGNREGS Sahayak had to roam the village and take signatures of the PRs to make the quorum. In an FGD, SHG women said that the Sarpanch needed a push from fellow women or the secretary to go to the Panchayat.

However, dominant PRs often faced stiff opposition. In one GP, strong political opposition countered the attempts of a politically dominant PR to take all the benefits to his ward. The secretary of the GP reported that one acquaintance of the PR had obtained a contract for sand mining from a small river bed in the GP, and was demanding a no objection certificate from the GP. However, the GP PRs did not agree and the attempt failed. Political leaders from the district headquarters tried to pressurize the secretary and even offered bribes, but he managed to dodge the issue. Another dynamic of this GP was that the ex-Sarpanch, who belonged to a radical political party, had been suspended, but continued to work as the unofficial Sarpanch. A temporary Sarpanch had been chosen, but he was a daily wage labourer, lacked experience and could not attend the GP meetings regularly. As per the ex-Sarpanch, rich PRs and upper caste MPs and MLAs wanted to supply material, labourers etc. for the construction works undertaken by the GP. But he had learned to deal with these pressures strategically. When some new work was to be started, he gathered public opinion, so as to be able to resist pressures.

In another GP, the Sarpanch, who had been a PR for nearly 15 years, was himself a powerful person. Two PRs from satellite villages said that the GP focused on the main, i.e., Sarpanch's village, and other villages were neglected. One ST member from a satellite village, along with a few residents and PRs had lobbied with the DC for a road, and succeeded. Similarly, an SC PR from another satellite village fought in the GP and got some development works sanctioned.

In a third GP, well off upper caste group had obstructed the work of road and drain construction on the pretext that the workers were doing sub-standard work. In reality, the richest person in the village wanted his workers to be hired. The tribal Sarpanch visited the site along with other PRs, and proposed that the work be stopped. The PRs then protested, and requested him to supervise the work and guide the workers. The rich man understood and withdrew. As per the PR, ST PRs were gradually learning strategies to cope with influential people, though it was still not easy to confront them. Similarly, in another GP, an active woman tribal PR reported that she faced problems in the construction of a road. A few well off families objected to the material being dumped in front of their houses. She was even abused and withdrew for a while. Then she decided to stand firm. She stopped her household and other livelihood related work and instead, worked as a labourer in that construction work to resolve the conflict. For the road, land had to be taken from both SCs and STs. The SCs who were relatively influential, indirectly approached her to take the land from the STs, but she again stood firm and ultimately all had to give a share of their land for the road.

Definition of 'Work'

Main Activities

The 'work' or activities that the field offices undertook were in keeping with the ethos described above. The main activities of the sample offices were listed after discussion with officials (Table 6.3, Box 6.3). In keeping with the scenario of centralization and hierarchical functioning, the important

activities of the field administration related to the implementation of programmes, and following directions from higher level offices and supervision of those below. In other words, field offices followed orders and implemented schemes. As an official said:

'We follow government orders fully and issue them to subordinate offices for implementation.'

Assessing the situation on the ground and strategizing were not important activities. As can be seen, planning was undertaken by few offices (Box 6.3). Planning was a serious activity only in the Forest Department, where, a carefully prepared, ten year plan to protect the forest was the basis of all activities. In the Revenue, WCD and Cooperation departments, there was no planning at all. In P&RD, School Education and PHE, scheme specific plans, that contained the activities specified in the scheme, were made, and subsequently became 'targets' for implementation. In the Public Health Department, an annual plan was prepared. But this could often not be followed, because it was overtaken by other instructions from the state level. To quote a Public Health official:

'We make an annual plan, but the government keeps starting new programmes and campaigns. All these have stringent time limits. When we focus on one campaign, the other is neglected. The plan is neglected anyway.'

As human resource management was highly centralized, here too, the role of field offices was minor. The most important activities related to human resources was writing annual appraisal reports and maintaining leave and other records. The other activities that were seen as important were taking disciplinary action against grassroots workers, and allocation of work among them. Recruitment of AWWs was undertaken in WCD, while the EE (PHE) continued services of contract technicians. Disciplinary action against grassroots functionaries was taken by the SDM and WCD offices, though other officials could recommend such action.

As noted in chapter five, in financial management too, the role of field administration was limited. Activities comprised sanctioning funds as per schemes or guidelines, disbursing salaries, and making payment for expenses incurred. Of the 20 sample offices, 8 sanctioned funds as provided in the schemes, and 3 sanctioned cases for compensation and financial assistance as per state guidelines. Coordination activities were similarly limited as each office followed instructions from above. Community oriented work was a main activity very few times, while reporting to senior officials was often a main activity.

Table 6.3 Main Activities of Supervisory Sample Offices

	Number of Offices out of 20 Reporting as Main Activity		
	District Level	Sub-division/ Block Level	Total
Planning			
Plan preparation within scheme	3	2	5
Annual plan preparation	2	1	3
Prepare 10 year plan	1	1	2
Personnel			
Write Annual Appraisal Report	10	10	20
Maintain leave and other records	9	6	15
Work division among grassroots personnel	0	3	3
Take disciplinary action against grassroots personnel	1	4	5
Recruit grassroots personnel	1	1	2
Continue services of grassroots personnel	1	0	1
Finance			
Manage scheme/ plan funds	5	3	8
Sanction financial compensation/ assistance	0	3	3
Allot works to private parties through tenders	1	0	1
Transfer funds to institutions/ beneficiaries	2	1	3
Pay service providers	2	0	2
Check if DBT funds have reached beneficiaries	0	1	1
Implementation	10	9	19
Supervision			
Supervise work of junior officials	9	9	18
Inspect institutions/ depots/ stores	3	5	8
Inspect construction works	2	2	4
General supervision	0	1	1
Inspect private institutions	1	0	1
Provide technical support/ training to grassroots personnel	2	1	3
Coordination	2	2	4
Community related			
Meet complainants, sort out people's problems	1	1	2
Public hearing	1	1	2
Undertake programmes for community awareness	1	0	1
Reporting to and following orders of superior authority			
Meetings/ video-conferencing	6	3	9
Report to superior office	5	3	8
Collect/ compile data for reporting	0	2	2
Understand/ follow directions of superior office	1	2	3

Box 6.2: Main Implementation Work in Sample Offices and Panchayats

	District		Sun-division	
Department	Office/ Panchayat	Main Implementation Activities	Office/ Panchayat	Main Implementation Activities
Revenue	SLR	Maintenance of old land records	SDM	General administration, law and order, enquiries, court work.
			Tehsildar	Enquiries, court work, correct entries in land records, provide certificates and copies of records, make revenue recoveries, function as executive magistrate
Forest	DFO	Hearing cases regarding forest crime, preparation of Nistar Patrak	SDO (F)	Hearing cases regarding forest crime
Panchayat and Rural Development	ZP	Organize meeting of ZP, organize workshops, scheme related work by programme officers	JP	Organize meeting of JP
School Education	DPO	Form resource groups, train resource persons, make route chart to deliver student benefits to BRC office, organize admission of students to private schools	BRC	Organize teacher training, organize campaigns, fairs, organize distribution of benefits, organize achievement surveys, tests, visit schools for academict support, assist in admission of students to private schools
	DIET	Run D.Ed. programme	BEO	Nil
Public Health	CHMO	Organize campaigns, camps etc., register private doctors	CHC	OPD, organize health camps, check-up and care of pregnant mothers and infants
Women and child development	DPO	Declare GPs as construction agencies for new Anganwadi Centres	CDPO	Organize campaigns, fairs, organize distribution of supplementary nutrition rations
	DWEO	Counsel women	BWEO	Registration for benefits under schemes, counsel women, prepare DIR, present in court
Public Health Engineery	EE (PHE)	Provide technical sanction, examine technical proposals to send to the superior office	SDO (PHE)	Get information about out-of-order hand pumps and material available, so that there is no problem in hand pump repair, make new proposals and send to district office
Cooperation	DMO	Procurement of seeds, fertilizers etc. from contractors provision of seed/ fertilizers to cooperative societies		

Box 6.3: Planning in Eight Sample Departments

	Planning
Revenue	There is no planning. The focus is on management of issues as they arise.
Forest	A 10 year work plan is prepared for growth and development of the forest and protection of wildlife in forest area. The plan is reviewed and revised mid-term.
Panchayat and Rural Development	Targets for schemes come separately. Scheme-based plans are prepared as required in ZP and JP. In the GPs, an annual plan is prepared but rarely followed, as directions from above keep coming.

	Planning
School Education	Annual plan is prepared at the district level for SSA. Inputs are taken from the grassroots. The DIET prepares its own plan.
Public Health and Family Welfare	Annual plan is prepared and includes scheme targets, but other campaigns and programmes are taken up as directed by the state government.
Women and Child Development	No comprehensive plan is prepared, because the AWC has been shifted to 'non-plan' expenditure. There are scheme-wise targets.
Public Health Engineering	Planning is done at the district level, and the SDO office participates. The SDO office provides information about the availability of water and problems of the sub-division. Habitation-wise information collected from field officers about water shortages, hand pumps, tap water schemes, platforms, and demands of public representatives are kept in view. Budget ceiling is obtained from state government.
Cooperation	No plan is prepared.

Activities Outside the Mandate

Centralized instructions were so important that even the basic mandate of the institution was not respected. Officials reported spending substantial time on activities which had little to do with their subject area. Some of these activities pertained to government work of other departments, but others were cultural and religious. Leaving out Revenue and P&RD departments, whose role was coordination, and therefore involvement in a wide range of activities was to be expected, the types of activities which were out of their core mandate, of 15 sample offices of the remaining six departments over the previous year are listed at Table 6.4. Officials performed government duties related to elections, sanitation etc. and, as per the priorities of the government, activities of a religious and cultural orientation. Only 4 out of 15 offices reported not being involved in any activities out of their subject area.

Table 6.4: Activities Out of Mandate of 15 Sample Supervisory Offices

	Number of Offices Involved		Number of Offices Involved
Government Activities		Activities of Religious And Cultural Orientation	
Elections	2	Ramji Baba Mela	1
Sanitation drive	1	Poornima/ Amavasya Snan	2
Fairs not pertaining to office	6	Nagardwari Mela	4
Disaster management	3	Maha Shiv Ratri Mela	4
Plantation drive	8	Narmada Sewa Yatra	3
Cabinet meeting	1	Singhastha Mela	1
Politician visits	2	Surya Namaskar	2
State Foundation Day	1	No such Activity	4

There were several reasons for offices being asked to undertake activities outside their remit. First, for many necessary and important tasks such as elections and census, there was no separate manpower, so the existing departmental personnel had to be deployed. For example, during the fieldwork, teachers had been put on duty as 'booth level officers' (BLOs) in 179 booths in the sample block for the forthcoming elections. Among the 5 sample schools, one teacher was involved in census duties and updating the voter list, and in another, one was a BLO. He had to do a door-to-door survey while staying online. He did the survey, but as his location was not traceable online due to poor network connectivity, he was asked to redo it so that his location could be tracked by the App on the mobile.

Second, new government priorities arose constantly, while the manpower remained the same. For example, an important event that had taken place in the state was a plantation drive, which was recorded in the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest number of trees ever planted at one time. Officials of all departments were involved in this drive, and several reported spending substantial time on it. One School Education Department official and a Public Health Department official had spent a whole month on the plantation drive. Some officials said that they had spent their own money too.

Interviews revealed that teachers were involved in a big way, because they were the largest in number. In the sample schools, during the plantation drive, while women teachers were only required to remain present on the day of the plantation, a Sunday, male teachers were assigned several tasks. In one school, the head teacher reported spending almost a month on the campaign. He was given a long list of names of farmers, whom he had to persuade to plant trees, monitor the preparatory and actual plantation activities, take photographs, and upload the same. He also spent time collecting the guidelines, attending several training programmes, meetings etc. Moreover, farmers were reluctant to plant trees and the teacher had to visit each farmer several times. After the plantation, he had to make records, such as farmer-wise lists of planted saplings, the variety and number of saplings, whether the saplings were growing well, and how the owners were taking care of them, etc.

Similarly, a beat guard interviewed had received a target to plant 48,000 saplings during the plantation campaign. People refused to participate, and he visited their houses to persuade them and even paid from his pocket to arrange water for the plants. Yet another beat guard commented that he had got unrealistic targets in the Jan Dhan Yojana to get people's bank accounts opened. Villagers were reluctant to provide details and the photocopies of documents. He wondered what would have happened if there was some illegal felling of trees while he was chasing these documents.

At the grassroots, the burden of work outside the mandate was especially heavy on AWWs. Various tasks were assigned to the AWWs, because among all government institutions, AWCs were the largest in number and had the widest reach. All the AWWs interviewed had been involved in work related to Aadhar cards, sanitation, various types of surveys, along with health related programmes such as the polio campaign, administering vitamin A syrup to children and de-worming campaigns. Supervisory officials said that AWWs were not allowed to focus on their job. One demand of the AWW and Sahayika federation was that extra work should not be imposed on them. The most sincere AWW among the five interviewed specially resented the extra work offloaded by other departments, which came in the way of AWC activities, and commented that the shift to private facilities was an outcome of the fact that such tasks interfered with pre-school education.

Third, at the time of this study, officials were involved not merely in government work outside their mandate, but also in various cultural and religious events that had become the priority of the government. At the time of the field work, an 'Ekta Yatra' of Shankaracharya was expected, and detailed instructions had been received from the state level. A person from the Culture Department of the state was present in the district. The School Education Department had organized a painting competition on the theme of Adi Shankaracharya across the district for three days. On Vivekanand's birthday, all officials did a Surya Namaskar, and planned for the Yatra. Iron was to be collected from every village to build the statue of Adi Shankaracharya. The Yatra was to go to each block, and the expenditure of hosting the Yatra was to be borne by the district administration.

Finally, the informal system too made its demands on office time. In three sample GPs, the secretaries reported that they had to gather a crowd when the chief minister visited. One secretary was in the process of gathering such a crowd when he was interviewed. He had booked a bus, and was on his way to collect people with offers of money, alcohol and snacks. In a recent semi-religious event, the GP secretary had arranged tents, flags, flowers, etc. He resented this work, as he saw it as outside the GP's domain. Another secretary said that collecting a crowd for programmes of political bigwigs was difficult, as the villagers often refused to attend. But senior officers kept calling him till the crowd was arranged. The secretary then offered people a day's wage for attendance, initially paying from his own pocket, but later 'managing' it from some account. One beat guard interviewed too reported being forced to arrange crowds for political events.

The engagement with work outside the mandate did not just disrupt the work of the officials towards their mandate, but re-defined their role. One Patwari interviewed said that he remained engaged for almost 20 days in a month on an average, on non-mandatory work, while the mandatory work got delayed and kept accumulating. Another Patwari commented that he did non-core work for almost 15 days per month. As a district level official commented:

'Everyone is a multi-purpose worker these days. There is no time to focus on the job. If I do my work honestly and with sincerity, I will look like a fool, and get into trouble'.

Activities on which Most Time was Spent

When officials were asked about the activities on which most time was spent, implementation related activities, such as plantation, doing court work etc. were stated most often (Table 6.5). These were followed by activities that could be called 'superior authority oriented', such as understanding orders, reporting, attending meetings etc. More district level offices spent substantial time in such activities than sub-district offices, because the monitoring from the state level was intense. The third most time-taking type of activity was monitoring and supervision of subordinate institutions and officials.

Given the shortage of manpower, officials had to pick and choose from their mandate. Quite often, they selected activities supervised closely by superiors. To quote a sub-district official:

'I prioritize work as per orders of the government and my district head.'

This could lead to the neglect of important issues with long-term consequences. To quote a district level official:

'This emphasis on sorting out complaints made to the chief minister has made our working very haphazard. We are running after individual complaints all the time, but

long-term and systematic work suffers. For example, recently, 10-12 villages were shifted. The revenue officers were told to do the resettlement instantly. So the officials also did it anyhow. There is no name to the villages in which people have been resettled in the land records. No proper residential colony has been created. People are living on various pieces of land. Some of the people have been settled on forest land. This is such an opportunity missed. We could have settled them properly.'

Table 6.5: Types of Activities that Took Most Time in 20 Sample Offices

	Number of Offices Reporting at Various Levels		
Activity	District	Sub-District	Total
Superior authority oriented	7	3	10
Implementing	8	8	16
Financial work	0	1	1
Monitoring and supervision	6	1	7
Out of mandate	1	0	1

Work in Panchayats

The work sphere of the Panchayats reflected their marginalization. An analysis of the minutes of three sample meetings in the ZP and JP (Table 6.6) showed that the most common activity of the general assembly of the ZP was to review the working of the departments. The second most common activity was for departments to present information about schemes and progress. Additionally, ZP members made resolutions and presented these to the state government, and also started enquiries or censured government officials. Unlike the ZP, the JP did not review departmental programmes significantly. As noted in chapter three, all departments were not present at the block level, and the block was not a coordinating unit. Instead, the three most common activities were censuring or taking action against officials, approval of plans and projects, and demanding information from officials. In addition, the JP, like the ZP, passed resolutions to send to the state government.

Table 6.6: Issues discussed in three Sample Meetings in 2016-17 in Zilla Parishad and Janpad Panchayat

	Number of Times Taken Up in Three Sample Meetings	
	ZP	JP
Total number of agenda Items in three meetings	29	29
Review of departmental activities	9	1
Approval of plan/ project	2	6
Information provided by department to Panchayat	7	3
Panchayat demanded information/ report from department/ official	0	5
Directions given to official	1	4
Censure/ enquiry/ resolution/ recommendation of transfer against officials	3	7
Benefits for Panchayat employees	o	2
Demand from State Government	2	2
Approval of previous meeting minutes, action taken report (ATR)	4	2
Support requested from members for departmental activity	1	o
Directions for lower tier Panchayat	o	1
Not clear	o	1

A study of minutes of three sample meetings in two sample GPs where the record was available showed that the discussions in the meetings focussed on various GP projects (Table 6.8), confirming its 'construction agency' role.

Table 6.7: Issues discussed in 3 sample meetings of 3 sample Gram Panchayats

Issue	No. of times discussed
Construction work	11
Distribution of land documents for PMAY, encroachment	3
Sanitation programme	4
Drinking water	4
New pension scheme	2
Addition of new names to BPL list	2
Plantation programme	2
26th January function	3

In 2016-17, the main activities that the sample GPs undertook included construction of roads, houses, crematorium etc. Other important activities of the GPs were distribution of old-age pensions, and preparation of BPL cards. GPs also attempted to resolve other issues that people faced, such as getting their names added to the voter list by organizing people and representing to the authorities. GPs made little effort to raise financial resources. In only one GP, an attempt was made to collect taxes, at the initiative of the GP secretary (Table 6.8).

Table 6.8: Activities and Achievements of Sample Gram Panchayats in 2016-17

Activities of GPs	No. of GPs	Achievements of GPs	No. of GPs
Construction of roads	4	Roads	8
Construction of houses	4	Road to SC colony	2
Construction of crematorium	3	Construction of PMAY houses	4
Construction of toilet	3	Masonry training in PMAY	1
Pension distribution	4	School building repair	1
Tap water scheme	3	Construction of crematorium	3
Construction of wells and ponds	1	Toilet construction	5
Construction of cattle sheds	2	Construction of cattle shed	1
Construction of Panchayat building	1	Hand pump installation	2
Construction of playground, painting of school	1	Hand pump deepening	1
Field bunding	2	Facilitate construction of playground	1
Construction of farm ponds	1	Help resettlement of displaced people	1
Hand pump up gradation	1	Revival of tap water scheme by collecting dues and removing technical problems	1
Plantation	1	Provide telephone number to citizens so they don't have to make rounds of GP	1
Making computer ID	1		

Role Definition

Role Perception

In the above context, when supervisory officials were asked what their role was, they perceived it most often in terms of implementation of programmes and projects, and monitoring and supervision of the work of junior officials (Table 6.9). Several officials described their role in very concrete terms such as distributing bicycles, planting trees etc. When talking of their supervisory role, they said that they monitored junior officials, took review meetings, or inspected institutions and works in the field. The third highest number of responses was in terms of acting as per orders from above, which included completing targets and tasks assigned by the department, understanding and following departmental directions, supporting senior officials, attending meetings, reporting and protocol duty. To quote one district level official:

'Our job is to take information from below and report upwards.'

as 'protecting the forest' and being 'guardian of land'. Responding to people's needs was mentioned by only two interviewees. Predictably, only two officials mentioned financial management, and another two coordination, as part of their role. Thus officials saw themselves as implementors of policies and programmes set from above, and supervising others who implemented these. They usually did not see themselves as planners for the area, analyzing issues and strategizing, or as serving the community.

Definition of Success

Supervisory officials were generally satisfied that they fulfilled their role, as well as about the performance of the office and their own performance (Table 6.9). When supervisory officials were asked whether they had been able to fulfil their role, and whether they were satisfied with their own performance and that of their office, nearly three-fourths of the officials interviewed said that they were satisfied. Moreover, while no officer was dissatisfied with the performance of her office, a very small number said that they were not able to fulfil their role, or were not satisfied with their own performance.

Table 6.9: Role Perception by Officials

	No. of responses by		
Role perceived in terms of	District Officials	Sub-division/ Tehsil/ Block Officials	Total
	Total number who responded=9	Total number who responded =12	Total =21
Broad goals	0	2	2
Acting as per orders	6	6	12
Planning, project , proposals	3	3	6
Implementation	8	10	18
Managing finances	0	2	2
Monitoring and supervision	8	10	18
Coordination	1	4	5
Responding to people	0	2	2

Only six of the 21 officials mentioned planning works or activities or making projects as an aspect of their role, only two mentioned a broad aspect of their role such

When asked to give reasons for satisfaction

with role performance, 7 out of 21 officials gave responses in terms of implementing schemes, meeting targets and doing work within time limit, while one official was satisfied that others had followed his orders. When assessing the performance of their office, 13 officials saw the reasons for satisfaction as implementing schemes or meeting targets, though when identifying reasons for satisfaction with their own performance, only four officials saw it in these terms.

As noted above, officials did not generally perceive their role in terms of community needs and this was not a reason given for satisfaction with the performance of the office by any official. However, when talking of fulfilling their own role and satisfaction with their own achievement, officials were more likely to perceive these in terms of the community. While discussing satisfaction with role performance, six officers saw it in terms of serving the community, such as helping poor people and women and resolving people's problems and two officials mentioned it as a reason for satisfaction with their performance.

Meeting more substantial goals, such as maintaining law and order, changing teachers' behaviour, reducing malnutrition etc. were stated as criteria of role fulfillment by two officers, satisfactory achievement of the office by three and their own satisfactory achievement by none. Thus, compared to achieving targets and implementing schemes, addressing the actual issues were criteria for success far less frequently.

An interesting response of many officials when commenting on their own performance and role fulfilment was that they had done their best in spite of constraints such as lack of manpower and infrastructure and political pressure. When officials were unable to address basic problems, their commitment was focused on managing the situation as best as they could. To quote a block level official:

'I do good work, but the whole system is in a mess. The department starts programmes without planning and without understanding the reality on the ground. To stay in the job, I also follow orders.'

Table 6.10: Perceptions of Supervisory Officials about Role Fulfillment and Performance

	Number of Officials Reporting (Out of 21)		
	Extent of Role Fulfilment	Performance of Office in 2016-17	Own Performance in 2016-17
Satisfied	15	15	14
Reasonably satisfied	2	2	2
Not satisfied	3	0	1
Cannot say	1	3	0
No comment/ unclear reply	0	1	4
Reasons for Satisfaction			
Implemented scheme, met targets	2	13	4
Met time limits	5	0	0
Served the community/ community happy	6	0	2
Met substantial goal	2	3	0
Did my best in spite of constraints	3	1	11
I am obeyed by others	1	0	0
Made field visits	0	1	0

Role Perception in Panchayats

Unlike officials, when ZP and JP PRs were asked about the mandate of their Panchayat, all 5 ZP and JP PRs interviewed perceived it contextually: in terms of fulfilling people's demands and needs and promoting the socio-economic development of the area. But when they were asked about the extent to which Panchayat had succeeded, they uniformly admitted that it had not, perceiving the success of the Panchayat in fulfilling its mandate as none or partial. They cited the limited powers, resources and capacity of the Panchayats on one hand, and centralization on the other. Two PRs thought that the Panchayat should develop a long-term vision, but no such vision had been developed.

At the GP level, many PRs saw the GP as a programme implementing agency, focussed on construction works. When talking about their role and achievements, GP PRs were most likely to talk about construction works, especially roads. To quote one Sarpanch:

'All the works in the Panchayat are done according to government orders, like PMAY, toilet construction, skill development trainings etc. The Panchayat does not go beyond the mandate.'

In another GP, the Sarpanch who had led the GP for 14 years was proud of his achievements, which he listed as setting up the tap water scheme in all the villages of Panchayat, construction of roads, toilet construction, facilitating construction works in the school, and facilitating modified Aadhar numbers for displaced families settled in his village.

The GP secretaries interviewed too saw the GP as an implementation agency for government programmes. For example, in one GP, when the new secretary joined, his focus was on spending the huge unspent funds under various schemes. He saw the GP as:

'The lowest or terminal end of the department, and the worst of all, through which government provides people with a limited number of schemes like PMAY, roads etc.'

However, the level of satisfaction was much higher among GP PRs than ZP and JP PRs because of the GP's role in construction activities. Their expectations were lower and they were able to do more.

Nonetheless, the Panchayats did play a role in highlighting the local perspective. When asked about their role, the two positive roles that ZP and JP PRs interviewed identified were that, Panchayats provided a forum for raising issues, and a few developmental works got done. Though these PRs were only partly satisfied with their own performance, the most common reason for satisfaction identified was that they had been able to raise various issues in several forums, or get officials to review their decisions. Sometimes they felt that they had achieved small victories, such as getting works done in their area, inspecting schools and improving them or in one case, getting agriculture education introduced in classes 11 and 12. PRs who had been part of activist organizations or radical movements, brought in activist type methods to their role. In the words of one ZP member, she 'acted as an elected social worker'. To quote one block level PR:

'Most of the time I use my activist methods. I am effective because I am active, and go everywhere with groups of people. People cannot talk to me rudely because I have legitimacy. The Janpad gives me a platform.'

Similarly, while most GP PRs interviewed saw the GP in a 'construction agency' frame, some viewed their role differently. The ex and de-facto Sarpanch of one GP, who had been involved in radical politics, said that the government gave targets for

construction, but not for social welfare work. Along with the usual scheme-related works, he had tried to bridge the gap. He had provided his personal telephone number to every villager so that people could talk to him and did not have to make rounds of the Panchayat. He had got the age entries in the voter list corrected so that senior citizens could get pensions, organized rallies for people to get land-related documents and revived an existing tap water scheme, which had become dysfunctional because of uncollected dues. Similarly, a woman member of this GP, also a member of the women's federation, made proposals related to the school, and accompanied women to government offices to facilitate their work. Recently, she had surveyed her ward to identify persons who were not receiving any grains under PDS, and located six persons without PDS-coupons. She has asked the member of her neighboring ward to collect such names from his ward, and planned to submit the combined list to the Panchayat and demand action. Another ST PR had helped people get ration cards, get their names added to the BPL list, and receive pensions.

Concluding Remark

The working ethos of the district was characterized by extreme centralization and hierarchical functioning on the one hand and an informal system of patronage and rent-seeking on the other. Additionally, in an iniquitous, but changing social context, field officials faced demands for short term benefits from all sections of society, but did not get cooperation in achieving long-term goals. In this context, officials defined their work mainly in terms of implementing schemes and orders, and saw themselves as implementors and as supervisors of junior officials who implemented government programmes. The local governments were marginalized. The common activities in the ZP and JP were calling officials to account and passing resolutions. GPs functioned as implementation agencies, and were engaged mainly in construction works.

The implications of this working ethos are all too apparent. It left little room for formulating context-specific strategies to achieve goals and solve problems, or respond to people's needs. Field institutions lacked the autonomy to do so, and were concerned with meeting targets and following orders, not responding to the ground. The informal system of patronage based working and wide-spread rent-seeking shrank this space further, as field agencies adopted a predatory approach.

Implicit in this style of working are two ideas. One is that field administration is no more than a mechanical 'implementation' of centralized policies, and if field officials follow orders faithfully, desired results will be achieved. The second idea is that patronage based management of the bureaucracy and rent-seeking can co-exist with public welfare, or that the government can be predatory and developmental simultaneously. Whether or not these ideas are tenable, becomes clear in the next two chapters, which describe the processes of administration, and the roll out of government initiatives on the ground. ■

7 PROCESSES OF ADMINISTRATION

Introduction

In this chapter, some of the key processes of administration, such as getting and analyzing information, supervision, coordination, making contact with the community, accountability, etc. are described. In other words, the focus of this chapter is on how government officials went about their work.

These processes depended on the extant rules and guidelines, and also on the extent to which it was possible to follow these rules and guidelines. Here, the limitations described in the previous chapters were reflected in the actual administrative processes. Moreover, as this chapter shows, as per the perceptions of the officials themselves, they saw these limitations as problems or constraints in their working.

Panchayat Meetings and Standing Committees

The role and structure of Panchayats depicted in previous chapters showed that on the one hand, Panchayats were egalitarian institutions, with representation of SCs, STs, women, and poor people, but on the other, they were marginalized. The meetings of the Panchayats reflected this situation. Panchayats varied in terms of the regularity of meetings (Table 7.1). The ZP and JP were mandated to meet 12 times in a year. In 2016-17, while the JP had met 12 times, the ZP had held only four meetings. One ZP PR remarked that there was little point in holding meetings if the Panchayat had no powers.

Of the five sample GPs, in one, there was a complete institutional collapse, and detailed data about the GP could not be obtained. The researcher passed the GP several times, and always found the office closed. People provided the information that the husband of the woman Sarpanch was de-facto Sarpanch. He was short-tempered and often misbehaved with the villagers if they asked him about the status of various projects. He refused to meet the researcher. In FGDs, people reported giving applications for drinking water, roads, hand-pumps etc., and getting no response. The GP officials collaborated with the husband of the Sarpanch to pilfer funds. Of the four remaining GPs, for one, the number of meetings held in 2016-17 could not be ascertained as no information about the meetings was maintained, and in the remaining three GPs, the number varied from five to eight. Minutes of meetings were prepared in the ZP and the JP, but only in two out of the four functional sample GPs.

Attendance of PRs in the meetings was patchy. In the ZP and JP, PRs said during interviews that several women PRs attended meetings irregularly, as did PRs who lived in remote areas, and sometimes PRs were too busy with work or family obligations to attend. The ZP employees said that husbands or other male family members of women PRs were allowed to participate in the meetings, and spoke on their behalf. At times, PRs stopped attending meetings as poor response, conflicts, and delays in implementing proposals dampened their interest. In the JP, PRs usually waited for a long time for everyone to arrive and sometimes meetings were postponed due to lack of quorum.

In the sample GPs, PRs who were daily wage labourers, mainly SC and ST PRs, attended meetings irregularly, as they stood to lose a day's wages. As in the ZP and JP, in the GPs too, women PRs usually attended with their husbands, and the latter participated in the meetings. In one GP, the secretary

had asked their husbands to leave, which had led to considerable disagreement. Discussions with PRs revealed that, usually, only 7-8 PRs out of 20 in a GP attended the meetings regularly. Sometimes, the meetings had to be postponed because of lack of quorum. Decisions in the meetings were taken by the PRs who attended, and then the meeting register was circulated to others for signature.

the concerned departments. The ZP PRs reported that the meetings did not take place regularly, and only a few committees were active. In the meetings, PRs mainly got some information. In the JP, only the General Administration Committee was active and had held four meetings in 2016-17. In these, the implementation of various schemes had been discussed and guidelines issued to officials. Resolutions had been passed against agencies that did not provide progress and corruption in

Table 7.1: Meetings in Sample Panchayats

	Number of Meetings in 2016-17	Attendance and Participation	Minutes Maintained
ZP	4	Women members are inactive and husbands attend meetings and speak, SC and ST members are less active.	Yes
JP	12	Husbands of women PRs attend meetings and speak. ST members who are members of a radical political party are extremely active.	Yes
GP 1	5	70% PRs are wage labourers and do not participate, women members are not active.	Yes
GP 2	GP is dysfunctional		
GP 3	6	SC/ ST PRs who are members of a radical party participate actively.	Yes
GP 4	Records not available	Meetings are irregular. Members of satellite villages not informed properly.	Maintained in unofficial register
GP 5	8	Not all members attend regularly. Often, quorum is often not completed and meetings cancelled.	No

However, this situation changed when PRs had experience of politics or of other people's organizations. In two sample GPs, ST PRs who belonged to a radical political party and women PRs who were members of an SHG federation attended meetings regularly and were very active. Additionally, when interviewed, women PRs said that over time, they became less hesitant and understood more.

The standing committees functioned in a very limited way. The ZP had proceedings of only one standing committee, the General Administration Committee, which had met four times in 2016-17. The meetings of the other six committees were managed by

construction and PMAY had been discussed. The standing committees were inactive in all GPs. As noted in chapter two, in one GP, they had not even been formed.

Information and Analysis

Information Base

As noted earlier, centrally designed schemes and frequent and detailed directions from the state departments meant that field officials saw themselves as followers of orders, or implementors, or supervisors of other implementers and not local planners and problem solvers. Consequently, the type of

information maintained and its use by the sample offices (Box 7.1) reflected a concern with reporting, scheme implementation and day to day working. These departments maintained three common types of information: about progress in achieving targets of schemes and activities, which was shared regularly with superior offices; information concerned with day-to-day working, such as salary and leave records, availability of medicines, court dates, etc.; information concerned with scheme implementation, especially beneficiary related information.

Information about the status and issues in the field, to feed into future activities, was limited. An exception here was the Forest Department, where in the ten year plan, a detailed analysis of the forest area, from the point of view of protecting the forest, was available, on the basis of which the needed activities were identified. In addition, there was a detailed mid-term review to re-assess the status and make changes in the plan. Assessments by the DFO and teams appointed by the state office were also done from time to time.

The PHE, School Education, Public Health and WCD departments maintained partial information about the status in the field, but the responses of these departments were fixed as per scheme parameters, irrespective of the issues. In PHE, a habitation-wise data base of the status of water availability and quality, and drinking water facilities was available, on the basis of which, new hand pumps etc. were provided. But field agencies could not change the strategy, such as using surface water, rather than ground water. In School Education, detailed information about students, the availability of teachers and infrastructure in schools, and students' grades, was available. This was used to provide infrastructure and benefits as per scheme provisions where they were needed. But, students' grades and learning levels were not analyzed and used to change teaching strategies.

Similarly, the Public Health Department maintained information about target groups and provided medicines etc. accordingly, and implemented pre-designed schemes. In WCD, information regarding the number of malnourished children and high-risk mothers was available, but they were only provided supplementary nutrition or taken to the NRC as per scheme provisions. There was no district level analysis of the causes of child malnutrition and ante-natal issues and no specific responses to address these. In the P&RD Department, lists of persons below the poverty line and SECC data were used to identify beneficiaries. But analysis such as livelihood opportunities, skill needs etc. was not undertaken. In the Cooperation Department, information was maintained largely about day to day management.

Importantly, all this information was not available in one place for the district, but remained with separate district offices. Much of it was available on the net and could be accessed by ordinary people too, but there was no attempt to pull it together for the district and analyze it. As there was no district plan and no area specific strategies, and information was used to report to higher level offices and to implement schemes, its collation and analysis at the district level was not considered necessary.

Box 7.1: Types of Information Maintained by Sample Offices

Office	Information Maintained	Information Use
Revenue	Land records, agriculture production	Office mandate
	Court case dates and records	Day to day working
	Jan Sunwai and CM helpline applications	Upward reporting
Forest	Forest Area, type and density of forest, plants, wild animals	Planning
	Physical and financial progress, committees	Plan implementation
Panchayat and Rural Development	SECC data, beneficiaries in various schemes, job card holders in MGNREGS.	Beneficiary selection for schemes
School Education	Number of children enrolled, out of school children, number of teachers	Upward reporting, beneficiary selection and planning
	Records of teachers' salary, leave etc., action taken against teachers	Day to day working
	School construction, bicycle , uniform textbook distribution, number of teachers trained, number of children admitted to private schools	Upward reporting and scheme implementation
	Student achievement	Upward reporting
Public Health	Population around CHC, number of pregnant women, high risk women, persons with TB, HIV etc.	Upward reporting and planning
	Availability of medicines and details of purchase	Day to day working
	Progress of pregnancy assistance scheme, state illness sssistance scheme, antenatal checkups, family planning operations	Upward reporting
Women and Child Devlopment	Number of children in 0-6 years age group, number of children in various malnourishment categories, number of pregnant and lactating mothers, number of adolescent girls and their health status, children's weight and upper arm circumference, attendance of children at AWC, number of children vaccinated, attendance at various events and meetings	Upward reporting, and schemei mplementation
	Number of AWCs, habitations that need new AWCs, AWCs that need repair, electricity, water etc., equipment in AWCs	Scheme implementation
	Number of applications from women affected by violence, number of women assisted, FIRs registered, cases pending in court, complaints	Upward reporting
Public Health Engineering	Water availability and quality for each habitation, demands of public representatives, habitation-wise hand pumps and tap water schemes, status of hand pumps, platforms	Planning and upward reporting

Office	Information Maintained	Information Use
	Whether approved hand pumps have been installed, hand pumps working and out of order, how many tap water schemes functional, complaints about hand pumps and whether addressed, number of pipes in hand pumps	Day to day working.
Cooperation	Targets and achievements	Upward reporting
	Number of societies, number of banks, company wise purchase data, payments status data, stock availability at go-downs	Day to day working

When officials were asked if they were satisfied with the data base that they had, they generally said that the information was adequate and more was not needed (Table 7.2). To quote a block level official:

'Our work does not require use of data. We get targets with the numbers worked out and we achieve that. Tracking beneficiaries and providing additional information about beneficiaries is our responsibility and we do that.'

As data was a tool for reporting rather than analysis, some officials resented having to collect it and said that it interfered with work. Moreover, one impact of increasing centralization was greater demand for data from authorities, on which field officials spent considerable time. The emphasis on targets meant that data was sometimes transacted dishonestly, to fit in with the expectations of the government. To quote a district level official:

'The department is not concerned with the ground reality. They want 100% achievement. We have to show 100% achievement irrespective of the situation.'

Another official said that: 'We try to complete targets, but sometimes cannot. However, we have to send figures of completed targets. We cannot tell the higher offices that we could not achieve targets.'

Similarly, in two sample GPs, people were not willing to work on MGNREGS wages as they got better wages elsewhere. But there were strict directions to implement MGNREGS, so in both the GPs, officials admitted that they showed more labourers than actually employed, on paper, and payed higher wages to fewer labourers. Thus data was created to suit centralized directions and targets, not to inform them.

Table 7.2: Views of Officials Interviewed about Data

	Number of Officials (out of 21)		Number of Officials (out of 21)
Views about data availability		**Views about need for more data**	
Satisfied	16	None	17
Adequate but difficult to access	1	Have not thought about it	1
Limited data	2	More accurate data needed	1
Don't require data	1	Not clear	2
Not clear	1		

Technical Support

When officials were asked whether they needed more technical and resource support, 9 of the 21 officials interviewed did not give a clear answer. Possibly, it was not an issue that they thought about. Of the remaining 12, seven officials said that they did not need any technical support, and 5 said that they needed more support. Among the officials who said that they needed more technical support, Revenue Department officials said that they needed technical support regarding law, WCD Department officials regarding health, and PHE Department officials for management and community contact. These officials identified areas in which their department lacked expertise needed for its activities (Table 7.3).

When officials were asked whom they consulted if they had a technical problem, 13 out of 21 officials said that they consulted senior officials, while two said that they never needed such help. Only six officials said that they consulted colleagues, other departments or read or accessed information through digital media. Similarly, the need for collaboration with resource agencies was generally not experienced. While nine out of 21 officials said that they had no association with NGOs, seven said that they attended programmes and functions of NGOs when asked, and three said that as per the departmental mandate, NGOs ran some programmes or institutions. Only two officials said that NGOs provided technical support.

The two instances of technical support provided by NGOs were an outcome of a tie-up at the national and state level with an international organization. In the Public Health Department, officials reported frequent visits by international organizations and NGOs such as United Nations Children Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and Clinton Foundation. In WCD, a consultant of the Department for International Development (DFID), UK was stationed in the district and frequently interacted with district officials regarding issues of maternal and child health care, providing them information about new strategies, and UNICEF provided some support from time to time.

Field officials did not make an effort to draw from the work of organizations working on the ground, as they had very little autonomy and saw their mandate as implementation of directions from the state. Notably, PRADAN had a big network of SHGs and an SHG federation in the district. Many women in this network had addressed domestic violence, with some success. Yet WCD officials, charged with dealing with violence against women, were unaware of this work. In fact, during interviews, they admitted that they did not know the extent to which domestic violence was prevalent. Their mandate was to establish a 'One Stop Centre' to provide counselling and legal aid to women and they focused on it. The One Stop Centre was a small outfit located at the district headquarters, which could service only a tiny fraction of women affected by domestic violence. Officials themselves admitted that few people were aware of its existence.

In fact, collaboration with NGOs was organized around implementation, rather than technical support. For example, in the School Education Department, grants had been given to two NGOs to run hostels for disabled children and to a third for a hostel for orphans. To contract the NGOs, officials advertised in the newspapers, scrutinized applications and placed the cases before a committee for decisions. Subsequently, they monitored the hostels and payments were released every three months. Similarly, in WCD, care homes for children in need were run by NGOs. In the PHE Department, from the state level, NGOs had been empanelled for IEC activities. In the Public Health Department, NGOs were involved in training ASHAs.

Table 7.3: Views of Officials Interviewed about Technical Support

Need for technical assistance	No. of Officials	Method of getting technical support	No. of Officials	Association with NGOs	No. of Officials
Don't need more technical support	7	Consult senior officials only	13	No association with NGOs	9
Need more technical support	5	Also consult colleagues/ other departments/ read/ do web search	6	Attend functions, programmes of NGOs	7
Not clear	9	Never have technical problems	2	NGOs run programmes and institutions	3
				NGOs provide technical support	2

Another way in which knowledge and analysis was marginalized was that while administrative work was considered important, knowledge-based work tended to be marginalized. The pathetic condition of the DIET was an example of this. Similarly, in the Public Health Department, where doctors did both expertise based and administrative work, one doctor who was interviewed said that she was almost totally immersed in the administrative work, which took priority.

Rigid and Cumbersome Procedures

In place of analysis and strategizing, government officials worked as per long-drawn out, rigid procedures. Grassroots employees felt burdened by tedious processes. To quote a Patwari:

'The staff has to deposit payments in the bank accounts of beneficiaries. But they also have to issue a letter and intimation to different levels for processing the payments. The beneficiary too has to produce several documents to withdraw the money. There is a lot of paper-work, and the beneficiaries have to make rounds of offices and banks.'

Processes became rigid and tedious because of extreme centralization and attempts to guard against patronage and rent-seeking. As noted above, in the context of extreme centralization, collecting information and reporting became extremely important, and led to a great deal of paper work. For example, throughout the year, teachers were required to submit various types of data. In the six months prior to the field work, teachers had been asked to provide the number of students registered in the school in the last 10 years, figures regarding attendance of students for one year, detailed data related to the mid-day meals, etc. Moreover, sometimes, the same data had to be submitted several times.

In addition, one way in which the government tried to reduce rent-seeking was to reduce the discretion available to officials. An example is the process of AWW recruitment (Box 7.2), which was rigid and long drawn out, even though it merely involved following pre-defined criteria, which could have been done by any desk worker or even a computer software. In this long process, officials did not undertake activities to locate the best possible candidate. Instead, the cumbersome process was aimed at dealing with accusations of partisanship.

Box 7.2: Anganwadi Worker Recruitment Procedure

The state government had fixed the minimum qualification for AWWs as grade 12, as well as the criteria of selection from among eligible candidates, which included marks obtained in class 12, graduation as well as BPL, caste, widow and age status. The state government had also mandated the following committees to undertake the recruitment:

	District Committee	Block Committee
Chairperson	DC	SDM
Member Secretary	DPO	CDPO
Members	Chairperson of Women and Child Development Committee of ZP, CEO ZP, Representative of ZP	Chairperson of Women and Child Development Committee of JP, CEO JP

An advertisement was issued in the newspapers by the CDPO. The Janpad Committee examined the applications and made an appointment/ merit list as per the criteria. It then invited and processed objections from the public on the list. Subsequently, the list was put up in District Committee for approval, after which the CDPO issued appointment letters.

The same dynamic was visible in the recruitment of managers of cooperative societies. As per officials of the Cooperation Department, the cooperative society chairpersons often appointed managers and other staff on non-merit-based considerations. Consequently, the government had tried to bring an element of regulation in the recruitment of managers of cooperative societies in 2018 by preparing service rules, and making graduation a mandatory qualification.

Similarly, AWCs and schools had to maintain copious records. The 15 registers maintained by AWWs and 20 by school teachers are provided in Box 7.3. During the study, one AWW continuously updated her records while talking to the researcher.

Box 7.3: Registers Maintained in Primary Schools and Anganwadi Centres

Registers Maintained by	
Primary Schools	Anganwadis
1. Six registers for student evaluation	1. Population survey register
2. Scholarship register	2. Stock register
3.Uniform distribution register	3. Nutrition supplement distribution register
4. SMC-PTA register	4. Pre-school education register
5. Four mid-day meal registers for stock, mothers' roster, evaluation by teachers, and MDM workers' attendance	5. Pregnancy and delivery register
6. School development register	6. Immunization register
7. Infrastructure related register	7. Vitamin A register

Registers Maintained by	
Primary Schools	Anganwadis
8. Library register	8. Home visit register
9. Leave register	9. Other services register
10. Milk distribution register	10. Monthly and annual progress report and summary
11. Village details register	11. Weight register
12. Information register	12. Two growth chart registers
13. Students' health register	13. Two registers for Laadli-Lakshmi scheme
14. Monitoring register	14. Baal-Sabha register
15. Curriculum register	15. Inspection register
16. Daily diary	
17. Two attendance registers for teachers and students	
18. Baal Sabha register	
19. Radio program register	
20. All students' anecdotal files	

The cluster academic coordinators (CACs) of the School Education Department, who were expected to provide academic support to schools, had been provided with a list of 52 questions that they had to investigate during school visits which required a very detailed scrutiny of school records. The coordinators interviewed said that they focused on these questions during school visits, and not academic issues.

Supervision

Departmental supervision of lower level offices by higher level offices formed the backbone of the supervision system. To this were added reviews and sporadic inspections by the DC. The Panchayats too attempted to review the functioning of the departments but given their limited powers, it was not as important.

The common methods of supervision used across the departments were frequent review meetings and provision of various types of reports to superior offices. Moreover, where construction works were taken up, such as in P&RD and PHE departments, these were inspected. Where there were grassroots institutions, such as schools and AWCs, these were inspected too. There were also more formal office inspections, where the whole working of the office was examined, but these were sporadic. Further, officials up to the district level made direct contact with the people by visiting the field and receiving complaints, which provided feedback on lower level offices.

The supervision system reflected the hierarchical functioning and centralization. The supervision was based on dealing with pressures from above rather than achieving rational goals, which often resulted in non-productive pressure on junior employees. For example, the AWWs interviewed reported constant demands to collect data and information from supervisors. Sometimes, through mobile phones, AWWs were asked to collect information in as little as half an hour. As per one AWW, her supervisor, under

pressure from above, would tell her that orders had been received from the top and information had to be collected anyhow. Another AWW complained that the supervisor asked for data even at midnight when pressurized by authorities.

The second outcome was that supervisors ignored needs and feedback from the ground. As per one AWW, supervisors did not listen to needs and problems, but just put pressure to achieve targets. Similarly, as per a block level official:

'My boss knows the problems very well, but ignores them while taking decisions. He says, I want results, you manage your problems.'

When district and sub-district level officials were asked how they supervised, they usually said that they punished errant employees suitably. There was no indication that supervisors made changes in their own working or directions. This probably could not be done, as it was difficult to go beyond laid out schemes, irrespective of the situation on the ground. For example, around six months before the field-work, a team from the state level had inspected the DIET, but had been unable to do anything about the horrific condition of its infrastructure and human resources.

A third outcome was that grassroots employees could not work systematically, as per the needs on the ground. For example, Patwaris reported that their meetings were not fixed and were often held on the basis of 'urgency', i.e., some demand from the top. Moreover, the supervision system was characterized by an increase in supervision from the state level. To quote one district level official:

'Reporting to superior officers has increased tremendously over the years. Earlier there was fortnightly and monthly reporting, now some new format or the other arrives daily. Now there is weekly, fortnightly and monthly reporting. Earlier reports were prepared on paper. Now reports have to be prepared on paper, sent on e mail, and information has to be registered on the MIS also.'

Disciplinary Action

The action taken after supervision comprised of fresh directions by superiors and sometimes, disciplinary proceedings. However, in spite of the pivotal place of 'disciplinary action' as a management tool, it suffered from many lacunae.

For regular employees, district officials had very little authority to take disciplinary action, as disciplinary powers were concentrated at the state level. At best, district heads could impose minor punishment on grassroots employees and sub-district supervisors could only recommend such action. Subsequently, it was up to the senior authority to act, and the outcome was erratic and time-consuming. One district level official, who had to take approval from the DC for minor disciplinary action against grassroots employees said,

'I can get action taken against whoever I want. But this depends on good relations.'

To quote a block level official: 'I cannot take strong action. I make a report and send to the district level, but there is no action.'

Consequently, in practice, disciplinary action against regular employees was often not taken, even when justified. When supervisory officials were asked what type of disciplinary action they had taken against errant employees, in the case of regular employees, they reported using mechanisms such as changing the work area, calling their explanation etc.

But for contractual employees, the situation was different and here, disciplinary action could be severe and unjust. For example, among the 5 AWWs interviewed, 4 expressed fears of harsh punishment. As per one AWW,

whose AWC was close to an urban centre and visited by officials often, if the AWW was not found present in her centre from 9 am to 4 pm, she was likely to be suspended straight away, without being given a chance to explain. This AWW had to measure the height and weight of children who were enrolled in the AWC but attended private schools. To ensure that she did not get caught up in disciplinary proceedings, she did so after 4 pm. She cited a recent example when she closed the AWC at 4 pm, went to the hospital as she was unwell, returned home, rested a bit, and then went out to measure the weights of children who attend private schools. Another AWW recalled that a year ago, her entire week's salary was deducted, as the monitoring team did not find her in the AWC, although at that time she was doing departmental work[45]. A third AWW feared that as children were not coming to the AWC because of the parents' misperceptions about the Sahiyka[46], her supervisors would take disciplinary action against her.

Though regular employees had many protections against such arbitrary action, for programmes and activities that were given high priority from the state level, they too feared being punished unjustly. For such programmes, junior employees could be given frequent and unjust minor punishments. For instance, the salary of an overworked junior official had been withheld several times, because he had not been able to provide reports required at the state level on time. To quote one such official:

'My job is now a dangerous one. If a centre is closed, I can be suspended. We are not heard. We are always scared, and try to somehow save our jobs.'

Many times, junior officials countered their disempowerment by requesting political leaders to intervene on their behalf and supervisory officials complained about the politicization of the ground level staff. For example, an official said that if disciplinary action was taken against teachers for dereliction of duty, teachers complained against supervisors, used political pressure and sometimes even threatened them. A senior doctor related an experience when he proposed compulsory retirement for some workers who were negligent. The workers used their political clout and bribes to get the disciplinary proceedings scuttled. Another district level official said that even if a grassroots employee did not work, he had to think a lot before taking action, as such action was followed by calls from public representatives.

Political patronage did not weaken the harshness and arbitrariness of punishment, but merely shifted the line of hierarchy along personal loyalty and eroded the work ethic. One School Education Department official related an incident when 23 teachers were suspended for negligence at work. Subsequently, many politicians threatened the official who had caused the suspension and in the end, the order was withdrawn. Similarly, a cluster academic coordinator said of a politically powerful teacher whom he was expected to supervise, that the teacher did as he pleased. When the CAC once lodged a complaint against the teacher, the CAC's supervisor asked him to withdraw it. No official dared to mark the teacher absent if on a supervision visit he was not found in the school. To quote a School Education official:

'Sometimes public representatives want teachers suspended for the wrong reasons, such as not doing Namaste to them. Many teachers who don't work properly are protected. Teachers can help during elections.'

[45] The AWW had not been able to give the money due to mothers who had attended a camp, as she had been busy with other programs in AWC. One day, the women asked her to make the payment she agreed, informed her supervisor and went to her house to get the papers. In the meanwhile the monitoring officer came and found her absent. Unfortunately the Sahayika was also not present as she had gone to a health camp at the CHC. Though the women who were paid vouched for the AWW, the monitoring team deducted her salary.

[46] Parents were not allowing an SC Sahayika to accompany children to the AWC.

Coordination

Need

Because of the large number of departmental offices and the fact that departments lacked the multiple skills they needed, coordination was required often, as many situations required action by several departments. Among the sample departments, the need for coordination was high for WCD, as it focused on a client group, rather than a subject area. As noted in chapter four, the WCD Department, charged with dealing with malnutrition, health of women and children, and early childhood education, had no nutritionists, health specialists or educators. The department also needed to coordinate with the police to register first information reports regarding cases of violence against women, stopping child marriage, etc. Further, it needed the support of departments that created social infrastructure, such as P&RD and PHE to build AWCs and provide drinking water facilities. It depended on the Farmer Welfare and Agriculture Department and the Cooperation Department to supply food grains for supplementary nutrition and on the Horticulture Department to supply seeds of nutritious plants to plant in the houses of malnourished children. Similarly, the Forest Department, an 'area' department, also required a great deal of coordination in forest villages, which were human habitats, and not forest area.

Coordination through Panchayats

As noted in chapter three, the coordination structure itself was unclear. Though as per law, the DC had authority over regulatory issues and the Panchayats over those of socio-economic development, in actual fact, the DC and SDM functioned as coordinators for regulatory as well as development and social welfare departments. Additionally, as chapter three showed, there was constant shift in powers across Revenue and P & RD departments, i.e., the two coordinating departments, which added to the ambiguity.

This ambiguity meant that instead of coordinating among departments, Panchayats were often in conflict with departmental officials. The ZP and JP PRs interviewed reported having frequent contact with officials (though in the case of some women PRs it was mediated through male family members). They met them in meetings and contacted them when they observed a problem in the field. But though the ZP and JP PRs were aware of the problems on the ground, they could only request departmental officials to attend to them, as they lacked the authority and funds to actually take up projects. To quote a ZP PR:

'PRs list the problems of the people and farmers. We request senior district level officers to take note of the issues raised regarding agriculture, access of farmers to credit and inputs, wage employment, skill development, health education and rural housing.'

However, they were not satisfied with the response, and vented their frustration on officials. For example, the ZP had formally expressed dissatisfaction about officials three times during 2016-17. It passed a censure motion against the district head of a department for not being present in the meeting, constituted an enquiry committee as a bank manager was reportedly taking bribes from beneficiaries in a scheme, and expressed dissatisfaction against another district head for inadequate work. In the JP, the dissatisfaction was even greater. A JP PR, when asked what happened in JP meetings, said:

'Most of the time we keep arguing with the officials about delays in work, allocation of funds and getting detailed information. Officials then tell us that these issues are not in our purview or we do not have funds, powers, etc.'

One source of dissatisfaction was that officials were mandated to attend the

meetings of Panchayats, but were tardy. In the ZP, some officials habitually did not attend meetings, and many district officials sent junior officers. In the JP, only a few officials attended the meetings. A second problem that PRs experienced was that officials did not provide them with adequate information. A Janpad PR commented that only when PRs shouted did officers respond to their queries. Some PRs said that officials deliberately provided them with limited information in meetings, so as to keep them from intervening. The third common problem was that officials ignored the resolutions and decisions of the Panchayats. A ZP PR said:

'There is no guarantee that our resolutions will be acted upon. None of the important resolutions have been implemented.'

To quote a JP PR: 'Departments are not bothered about PRs. They act as per their convenience. They tell us that targets come from the state.'

As noted in previous chapters, officials were controlled tightly by their departments. Some ZP and JP PRs understood this and saw this centralization as the root cause of the unsatisfactory behaviour of officials. To quote a JP PR:

'Officials listen to me and give me respect. It is another matter that they are not able to resolve my issues because of the guidelines or instructions of superior authorities.'

Another ZP PR said: 'All depends on the state government and how it wants to work with the Panchayat. If the state government changes, the attitude and behaviour of officials changes automatically.'

However, others thought that officials used this as an excuse to ignore Panchayat priorities. To quote a ZP PR:

'Officials are experts in making excuses and using the power of state level officers as a reason for not accepting the demand of elected members.'

Another ZP PR said: 'Officials are experts in diverting the issue. On any issue they will come up with a guideline of the centre or state. This stops the discussion and discourages members from taking any decisions.'

When officials were asked their opinion of Panchayats, they varied. Of the 21 officials, 11 officials made positive comments about Panchayats. Three officials said that PRs knew local realities, had contact with people, were transparent and accountable, four said that they got assistance from Panchayats and four officials said that review by Panchayats was good, or more work could be assigned to them. To quote a P & RD official:

'In Panchayats, we work through people and with elected representatives. This is very different from routine governmental activities. A lot of effort is made to convince people.'

Seven officials made negative comments, while another three said that they did not interact with PRs in the course of their work or did not know much about them. Three officials said that PRs were not interested in work, and another four said that Panchayats lacked capacity. For example, officials of PHE Department said that, ten years ago, hand pump repair was transferred to the ZP, but had to be taken back, as the ZP had no technical staff and therefore could not do the task properly. They pointed out that GPs did not clean the hand pump area. To quote a WCD official:

'Panchayats should lead in socio-economic development, but are not able to. They are not interested in repairing AWC buildings and providing facilities, even though their children attend them.'

While some officials had a low opinion of Panchayats, an important problem in the interaction between Panchayats and officials was that the latter simply did not have the autonomy to respond to the concerns of the Panchayats. Officials worked as per detailed guidelines and when PRs wanted a situation addressed, these came in the way. To quote an official:

'Our team faces lot of problem in explaining issues and technical guidelines to the PRs.'

It was also difficult for officials to respond to both their department and PRs. While most departmental officials resolved this by simply prioritizing the demands of their department, the dilemma was experienced more sharply by the officials of P&RD Department, as one expressed:

'We have double pressure. One is of senior officers and the other is of elected representatives of the Panchayat. Working in P&RD is very different from working in other departments. Working in other departments is better because there is pressure from only one direction. I have to work for achieving targets set by the department and have to reply to representatives.'

The GPs did not attempt to coordinate among officials. Instead, the GP secretary played an important role in the GP. For example, in one sample GP, the pace of work had changed when a new secretary was posted. The expenditure percentage rose from 20% in 2016-17, the year before his arrival to 80% by the end of 2017-18, after he arrived. He started many construction works, conducted a new BPL survey to include poor people who had been left out and began to impose tax. The Sarpanch was very well motivated, but knew little and could not do much without the secretary's help. Notably, the Sarpanch was poor, and had studied up to 8th grade, while the secretary was well off, and a college graduate. The Sarpanch was very sincere, but often, he did not remember how much fund was available for which project, and had to continuously consult the secretary. Both the Sarpanch and secretary sat in the same room and on same table (meant for the Sarpanch), the secretary worked and the Sarpanch signed checks, documents etc. The ST PRs said that the secretary knew how to deal with the local bigwigs, while the Sarpanch often got intimidated.

Table 7.4: Statements by Officials regarding Panchayats

	Number of Statements
Know local realities, direct contact with people, transparent and accountable	3
We get assistance from Panchayats	4
Review by PRs is good, PRs are fine	2
Panchayats should implement department schemes, teachers only teach/ Integration with panchayat will help	2
Panchayats lack capacity, manpower	4
Not interested in work, don't use their powers, not active	3
Don't know much about them/ No role in my area	3

Coordination through the District Collector

The main method of coordination was committees, usually headed by the DC, and review meetings by the DC. The large number of committees chaired by the DC have been mentioned in chapter three. Of a total of 82 committees identified at the district level, the DC was chairperson of 76 committees and member or member secretary of the other six. These committees had been formed as per central and state government schemes and orders. They were spread across 24 departments, i.e. 65% departments had formed a committee with the DC.

The committees performed a wide range of functions: planning, monitoring, decision-making, staff recruitment, etc. The largest number of committees, i.e., 30.5%, spread across all 24 departments, related to granting approvals and monitoring schemes. Another 17.9%, in 16 departments, were related to planning more broadly within the sector. The third largest number of committees, i.e., 11.1%. in 7 departments, were for approval of licenses, benefits, purchase etc. In addition, these committees addressed appointment, promotion, posting of staff (9.5% in 8 departments), sanction of projects and activities (7.1% in 6 departments), ensuring law implementation (5.9% in 5 departments), and overall coordination (2.4% in two departments). There were another 7.3% for miscellaneous subjects. As can be imagined, it was difficult for the DC to do justice to 82 committees. Officials reported that committee meetings were postponed frequently. For example, in WCD, the recruitment of AWWs was often delayed as the meeting of the committee could not take place.

Moreover, the DC could coordinate only in a day to day sense, and did not have adequate say in the working of departments to ensure sustained coordinated action. For instance, for health related issues such as immunization and antenatal care of children below the age of six years and pregnant and lactating mothers, coordination mechanisms had been created by the state government at the field level, as the ANM, ASHA and the AWW held joint camps on specific days in the village. However, for nutrition, the coordination was weaker. It was limited to admission of severely malnourished children to the NRC. Even this did not work well, partly because of coordination problems, as AWWs referred several children to the NRC, whom the NRC did not deem severely malnourished and refused to admit. For early childhood education, there was no coordination between WCD and the School Education Department.

Community Contact

While the grassroots workers were in continuous contact with people in the course of their work, officials at the district and sub-district level too came in direct contact with the community in various ways. Field visits by officials and applications and complaints by people were the dominant modes of public contact and provided feedback from the community to supervisory officers. Of the 21 officials who were interviewed, 20 officials reported that they made visits to the field where they interacted with client groups such as parents, participated in field level meetings, inspected grassroots institutions, etc. Additionally, 14 officials said that ordinary people, PRs, local political leaders as well as representatives of various interest groups approached district and sub-district offices on various issues (Table 7.5). District and sub-district officials spent at least some part of each day meeting visitors. A very large number of people visited the offices of the DC and the SDM with a very wide variety of applications and complaints.

Moreover, various types of structured events were also organized. These included numerous fairs, workshops and training

programmes. Every week there was 'Jan Sunwai', when all district and block officials sat together, received applications and tried to sort out people's problems. Another way of interaction was 'Collector Express', when the DC, along with district officials, visited various villages and attempted to solve problems. Some supervisory officials came in direct contact with people in the course of their work, such as when hearing cases, counselling women etc. A very small number of officials reported that they took meetings with people and only one reported making technology mediated contact. In general, supervisory officers remained in touch with people, though some interviewees said that they did not get as much time to tour as they would have liked.

Table 7.5: Types of Community Contact by Supervisory Officers

Method of Contact	Number of Officials Reporting at Various Levels		
	District	Sub-district	Total
Field visit	8	12	20
People approach office with applications and complaints	6	8	14
Organized events	4	4	8
Meetings	3	1	4
Technology	0	1	1
In course of work	5	2	7

Additionally, departments provided information of various types to people (Box 7.4). From among the sample departments, the best access to the people was of the WCD and P&RD departments, through the AWCs, where AWWs made door-to-door visits, and the Gram Sabhas, where people gathered for meetings, respectively. The Revenue Department could reach simple information through the Kotwar. For the other departments, grassroots institutions, workers and committees were the main methods of communication. Departments also held fairs and events, and used the media.

Departments varied in the type of information they provided. In the case of Revenue, Forest and Cooperation departments, the information provided was mainly of a transactional type. In the Revenue Department, when the government announced relief operations, or other events, information was provided. Similarly, the Forest Department provided information about availability of forest produce and rates, so that people could avail these and the Cooperation Department communicated mainly about the availability of seeds, fertilizers and other government initiatives. But these departments did not have campaigns to provide information on general issues. For example, the Revenue Department did not have a system to provide information about laws and rights to people.

In the P&RD Department, the focus of the information provided was on government schemes, people's eligibility to avail benefits, and methods of doing so. The department did not engage with people on broader issues such as livelihoods. Similarly, in the School Education Department, the focus was on enrolment, retention and attendance of students, as well as government schemes. The department did not attempt to engage with the community on ideas about education, i.e., such as what is good education etc. In fact, such issues were not discussed within the departments either.

The three departments that worked most actively to inform the people were WCD, Public Health and PHE, attempting to engage in a dialogue on issues, such as preventing malnutrition, antenatal care and conserving water and not just government schemes. Among these three departments, the WCD Department had the most outreach as the AWW was in continuous contact with mothers. The Public Health Department

had a more limited reach. On issues related to women and children, it worked in collaboration with the AWC and through ASHA, and thus provided information. But on other health issues its outreach was limited. In PHE, as noted earlier, social mobilizers had been appointed at the block level. Their responsibility was to sensitize people about rain water harvesting, water testing kit and departmental activities. But lack of vehicles limited their effectiveness.

Box 7.4: Information Provided to People by Sample Departments

Department	Main Method	Information Provided
Revenue	Through Kotwars and Patwaris who come in direct contact with people	Information is provided sporadically, such as in case of natural calamities, law and order etc. Department is more focused in collecting information from people
Forest	Through Forest Committees. Beat guards interact with them and they are provided the Nistar Patrak	Nistar Patrika provides the Nistar policy and rates and activities in the annual plan
Panchayat and Rural Development	Through Gram Sabha meetings, fairs and publicity programmes	Information about government schemes, norms for selection of beneficiaries etc. is provided
School Education	Through SMC-PTA meetings, in enrolment drives conducted at the beginning of the academic year, and also in camps, fairs as well as hoardings, and media	Information provided is about importance and status of enrolment, and benefits available in government schemes
Public Health	ANMs and ASHAs are in close touch with people and provide information. Government schemes are disseminated through news paper advertisements, hoardings, wall writings, pamphlets, street plays.	Information provided is about importance of vaccination, antenatal care, and about government programmes, preventive and curative action for widely prevalent diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis etc.
Women and Child Development	AWW provides information to mothers, information is displayed on AWC walls, There are camps, street plays, posters, pamphlets, and information is provided through the media, Special awareness programmes are held on national girl child's day.	Information is provided on nutrition, importance of looking after the girl child, the ills of dowry, gender equality, domestic violence, services and benefits provided by the government.
Public Health Engineering	In fairs and campaigns, through media and publicity programmes	Community is provided information on keeping drinking water sources safe, not dirtying places near water sources, water testing, taking tap water connections, paying water charges, collecting rain water, washing hands and using toilets.
Cooperation	Information is provided through cooperative societies and sporadically in fairs etc.	Information is provided to farmers about improved seeds, fertilizers, agriculture practices etc.

Accountability

Supervision by senior officials and reporting, already described above, were used most often to ensure accountability, i.e., the accountability of junior officials to senior officials. In addition, more independent mechanisms for accountability were in place too.

Financial Audit

Financial audit was mandatory for all government organizations. Among the offices in which there were financial transactions, in the offices of 4 departments, i.e., Revenue, Forest, WCD and PHE, the audit was undertaken by the Accountant General (AG), an organization independent of the state government. In major national programmes, i.e., SSA and NHM, along with the AG audit, additional audits were undertaken. In the School Education Department, there were three types of audits, i.e., by the AG, the state government, and a concurrent audit of SSA funds every three months by chartered accountants. In the Public Health Department, there were audits by the AG, and the department. For the ZP and JP, there were three types of audit: by the AG, by the state government and by the Local Fund Audit, which was designated to conduct audits especially in local governments.

In case of one sample department, i.e., Cooperation, there was an audit agency within the district. The Deputy Registrar, Cooperation was responsible for the audit of cooperative societies. But there were only 11 people to audit 530 cooperative societies (apart from the 413 SHGs and federations declared cooperative societies), who also did other work, so that each auditor was responsible for 48-49 societies, apart from office work. The officials admitted that the audit was casual. For a serious audit, at least a week was needed, for which the manpower was inadequate.

The process of the audit was that an external team examined documents such as accounts registers, vouchers etc., and gave a report, pointing out irregularities observed in an office, which became 'audit paras.' The office then provided explanations to the issues raised. If the explanations were satisfactory, the para was dropped. If not, the matter was presented to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the state legislature.

In all offices except one, an audit had been conducted within the last one year. Unfortunately, only four offices provided information about the findings of the audits, and the rest refused. Of the four offices, in one, no irregularities had been found. In a second office the irregularities found were that the value added tax (VAT) had not been deposited on time, store rules had not been followed and more than Rs.5,000 had been paid in cash several times. In a third office, the irregularities included inadequate deduction of tax at source, late approval on file and that some vouchers looked suspicious. The offices had replied to these objections, or were preparing replies. In a fourth office, the irregularities identified were that a tender had been approved on the basis of a single bid and that no contingency register had been maintained.

The audit process itself was inadequate for the real 'irregularity', i.e., wide-spread rent-seeking. It was confined to scrutiny of papers and if these were in order, was unable to detect much. The issues brought out by the audit of the sample offices appeared minor. Moreover, even if some wrong-doing got identified, there was no clear mechanism for taking action. If the supervisors were complicit, they could block further action. It took a long time for matters to reach the PAC, and the PAC had many issues before it. Expectedly, there was no evidence that the financial audit had made any dent in the most serious and widely prevalent financial wrongdoing, i.e., rent-seeking.

Public Service Guarantee Act

The MP Lok Sewa ke Pradan ki Guarantee Adhiniyam 2010, or the MP Public Service Guarantee Act (MPPSGA), sought to create public accountability by setting time limits for the provision of services such as certificates, compensation, benefits under schemes etc. to citizens. People could give an application for a service at the cost of Rs.30 at a common centre. If the service was not provided within the stipulated time limit, a fine could be imposed on officials.In the sample departments, many important services were covered under MPPSGA (Table 7.5).

Among the sample departments, offices of School Education had no services listed under MPPSGA. From among 4 departments for which this information could be obtained, the Act was used extensively in the offices of the Revenue Department. In the sample tehsil, in 2016-17, 4,876 applications were received and 4,404 dealt with. But in the sample offices of WCD and Cooperation, no applications were received under the Act. In PHE very few applications were received,

Box 7.5: Main Services of Sample Departments in the Public Service Guarantee Act

Department	Services Covered
Revenue	• Compensation for crop damage, life, body organs, cattle, caused by wild animals • Certificates: No objection certificate for Nazul land, solvency certificate • Resolution of undisputed land mutation, division and demarcation cases • Copies of land records
Forest	• Permits to carry wood for government offices, registered dealers and landowners • Payments for wood sold on behalf of owners
Panchayat and Rural Development	• Addition of names in BPL list • Provision of certified copy of BPL list • Provision of tap water connection • Grading of SHGs • Registration and renewal of colonizer license in rural areas • Provision of benefits under maternity assistance plan, marriage assistance plan, compassionate assistance on death, disability incurred after accident at workplace
School Education	Nil
Public Health	• Benefits under child heart treatment scheme, state illness assistance scheme, pregnancy assistance scheme, mother Vandana scheme • Disability certificate, age verification certificate, entitlement for free health care certificate • Registration of private clinics
Women and Child Development	• Benefit under Ladli Laxmi scheme • If registered beneficiaries don't get nutrition, to be made available.
Public Health Engineering	• Repair of hand pump • Report as to whether water is potable
Cooperation	• Credit limit certificate to farmers

just 153 in 2016-17, all of which were processed. As per the officials of these departments, people did not want to pay the application fees when they could make the same application without any cost to the relevant office.

Of the 21 supervisory officials interviewed, ten did not have experience of MPPSGA. Of the 11 who did, eight had a positive opinion of the Act, as it ensured that the common man got services on time and made the office more efficient. Three officials said that it wasted time, and duplicated procedures that were already in existence. Two types of problems were experienced in the implementation of the Act. First, people often provided incomplete information, because of which cases had to be rejected. Second, the problems within government came in the way. For example, the PHE officials found it difficult to respond to water testing applications because of lack of staff and because the lab had no facilities to take samples from the ground. Moreover, when the lab equipment got out of order, it was not repaired for a long time and the chemicals for testing were also not of good quality (Table 7.6).

Right to Information (RTI) Act

Under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, a citizen could apply to get information from an office and the office had to provide information in a mandated time period. There were provisions for appeal in case the applicant was not satisfied with the officer's response, and also penalty for officials for not providing information on time.

In the sample offices, the use of RTI by citizens was limited. Of the 18 offices for which information was available, 5 offices reported receiving no applications in RTI, 6 offices had received less than 10 applications and another 4 between 10 and 19 applications in 2016-17. Only three offices had received more than 20 applications (Table. 7.7). In all these offices, the applications were reported to be processed in the stipulated time period.

Table 7.6: Opinion of Officials about Public Service Guarantee Act, Right to Information Act and Chief Minister Helpline

Public Service Guarantee Act		Right to Information Act		CM Helpline	
Opinion	No. of Officials	Opinion	No. of Officials	Opinion	No. of Officials
No services covered/ No applications	10	Not much experience with RTI	8	Do not get applications / no specific comment	2
It is good, people get services on time, improves efficiency	8	It is good, enables transparency	4	It is good, has increased accountability	7
Not needed, delays work	3	Wastes time, misused for blackmail	4	There are false complaints, used to blackmail , increases workload, stress	12
		Sometimes good, but also wastes time and is misused	4		
		No problem	1		

Table 7.7: Applications Received under Right to Information Act in 18 Sample Offices in 2016-17

Number of Applications Received	Number of Offices in which received
None	5
1-9	6
10-19	4
20-29	0
30-39	2
40-49	0
50-59	1

The opinion of officials regarding RTI was mixed. Out of 21 officials, eight said that they did not have much experience with RTI. Of the remaining 13, four made positive comments, and said that the RTI Act increased transparency. Another four made negative comments, and said that people asked for detailed and unnecessary information, which wasted time, and sometimes did not even collect the information they asked for. Four officers made positive and negative comments and one said that he had no problems with it (Table 7.6).

Given the widespread rent-seeking, the hostility of officials to RTI is to be expected. Notably, many RTI applications were about expenditure made by offices. In one office, junior officials admitted that sometimes senior officials indicated that an RTI application should be ignored, and information was not provided. However, there were also indications that RTI was used by unscrupulous applicants to harass and blackmail officials. One grouse that some officials had was that it was used frivolously and wasted time. For example, in one office, out of 15 applications in 2016-17, only five people actually collected the information. In a second office, of nine applicants, only four collected the information. In a third office, in case of two applications, when the photocopying of cost Rs.4,000 and Rs.8,000 for the extensive information asked was communicated, the applicants did not collect the information. As per one interviewee, when his office did not give a weekly paper an advertisement for Republic Day, the journalist got angry, and asked for some massive information, i.e., expenditure from 2012-2017 including copies of cash books, bill vouchers and note sheets. When the office, after putting together the information, asked him to deposit Rs.2,000 for photocopying, he did not respond. Another official said that at times the local press published advertisements without asking the office and if the office refused to pay, pressurized officials by making applications under RTI. One ZP PR remarked that people used RTI to extort money from corrupt officials.

Chief Minister Helpline

A new type of accountability to the people had been attempted through the 'CM helpline', in which people could apply directly to the CM and officials were monitored stringently on the applications and complaints. A person could dial a widely advertised phone number to apply and get a call back from the CM office. The CM office registered the application in the portal of the officer concerned. If the application was not addressed within a stipulated time period, it was transferred to the portal of the superior officer. An application was considered fully resolved only when the applicant gave a feedback that she was satisfied. The process was monitored rigorously by the CM's office, and offices were given marks on the basis of the number of complaints they resolved. Marks were also allotted to districts and the districts were ranked. At the time of the fieldwork of this study, the sample district was ranked seventh out of 52 districts, and in the DC's office, officials proudly said that at one time it was ranked first.

The CM helpline was used more than MPPSGA and RTI by people. From among the eight offices for which this information could be obtained, in 2016-17, two offices had received over a thousand applications and another two had received over a hundred. Moreover, unlike the MPPSGA and RTI, all the sample offices had processed CM helpline applications. For MPPSGA and RTI, ten and eight officials respectively said that they had no experience, or that it was not applicable to their office, but for the CM helpline, only two out of 21 officials made such statements. One reason for the popularity of this mechanism was that from time to time, the CM had publicly suspended officials for not resolving an application received on the CM helpline. Consequently, officials were on their toes and complainants were likely to get a redressal. To quote an official:

'Nowadays, the first thing that an official does when he comes to office, is to check for some complaint or application that has got transferred on to his portal in the CM helpline, and starts following it.'

The DC too spent a great deal of time monitoring the progress of the CM helpline applications. There were three deputy collectors in the DC's office, of which one had serious health problems. From among the other two, one handled the CM helpline and other complaints and the other the remaining substantial work.

Officials were generally unhappy with the CM helpline. When officials were asked their opinion of the CM helpline, of the 19 who gave an opinion, 12 made negative comments, such as there were false complaints, it was used for blackmail and that it wasted office time, while seven said that it was a good mechanism to ensure that people's grievances were heard, and made officials accountable (Table 7.6).

One problem with the system was that all complaints, whether extremely serious or minor, were treated equally and sometimes, field officials had to spend considerable time on minor issues. Revenue officials reported getting complaints about family quarrels, or people asking for jobs. But the applicant had to be satisfied. One School Education Department official remarked that most of the CM helpline complaints were about people not getting benefits: bicycles, uniforms etc. and 80% were by people who were not eligible for these benefits, but the office had to follow the whole process for each. Additionally, some complaints were regarding issues that could not be resolved locally, but local officials had to spend time replying. To quote a revenue official:

'It is important that the government note that some things simply cannot be done and complaints about such issues should not be taken as seriously as others. For example, in the absence of land records, demarcation is not possible. A complaint on the CM helpline cannot address this issue. The fundamental problems in the system of governance need to be rectified before these are addressed on the CM helpline.'

In the sample GPs there were a few CM helpline cases revolving around lack of employment, adding names to the BPL list, non-availability of funds etc., which could not be addressed by the GP. PRs and officials in GPs said that they received many pointless or unresolvable complaints. Similarly, there were many complaints in the CM helpline about a PHC in the sample block, which had no doctor. As per the nurse, who somehow managed the PHC, people did not realize that a single nurse could not provide many services, and complained often, further complicating her already unmanageable task. Moreover, one ZP PR commented:

'The CM helpline has become a joke. People use it like a dustbin and demand anything. Many a times they use it to settle scores with officials who have harassed them.'

Social Audit

As mandated by the state government, the ZP conducted social audits of the GPs by recruiting chartered accountants. The social audit for 2016-2017 was conducted in the sample GPs in January 2018. As per interviews with PRs and observation (Box 7.6), during the social audit, information was read out and usually simply heard by the people. The social audit was conducted mechanically and many people did not understand the intent or process (Box 7.6). However, as was illustrated in the case of a sample GP, where fraud in the construction of toilets was detected, even a mechanically conducted social audit had the potential to unearth issues. But, as the case of the GP in question showed, even when fraud or rent-seeking were detected, the dysfunctional GP continued.

with poor seating, lack of drinking water and unhygienic toilets. All the district level offices did video conferencing. Technology was also used in several processes. For example, in the Revenue Department, revenue records were maintained on computers, maps had been digitized, dates of court cases were fixed through an on-line system and notices for cases were sent on-line. Moreover, machines to survey land area were in use. In the School Education Department, the daily attendance of teachers was taken on-line through a specially developed application.

An important change that had come about across several departments was direct benefit transfer (DBT), i.e., wages and benefits were transferred directly by the state government to individuals' accounts. Among the sample departments, in the Forest Department, labourers were paid through

Box 7.6: Social Audit in a Gram Panchayat

The audit was supposed to start from 12 noon, but the nodal officer came late and the villagers still later. Villagers who had come on time repeatedly asked that the meeting be started. A woman spoke loudly, the Sarpanch asked her to speak softly, but when she did not, asked her to leave. She then threatened to take all the women back with her, and all the women started walking towards their hamlet. One GP PR requested them to stay, as no women from any other community were present and it was almost 2 pm. After repeated requests, the women agreed to stay back. The meeting then started at 2:30 pm. The nodal officer talked about the objective of the social audit and the audience listened. Subsequently, information about demographics and the number of works undertaken was read out. The auditors just read out the list of the works with financial details. But the villagers seemed to perceive the social audit as a Gram Sabha, which officers from the block had come to attend, and complained about incomplete toilets, not having PDS coupons and etc. Some more women came to ask for copies of land documents. After an hour and a half, the nodal officer left. Then signatures of all the persons present were taken.

Use of Technology

An important push within government was to increase the use of technology, especially digital technology, in government working. Notably, among the sample supervisory offices, all used basic technology such as computers and projectors, even though, as shown in chapter five, some struggled

on-line transfer. In the P&RD Department, labour payment for MGNREGS was made through DBT. In the School Education Department, funds for uniforms and scholarships were transferred directly into students' bank accounts, and payment for midday meals into the accounts of SHGs that cooked them. In WCD Department too, funds for supplementary nutrition were deposited in the account of SHGs who cooked them.

Officials reported positive as well as negative experiences with the increasing use of technology. On the positive side, technology enabled better communication and systematic working. The PHE officials said that before the use of mobile phones became wide-spread, getting information about hand pumps that needed repair had been a challenge, and they would send people to local markets to get information. But now mobile phone numbers of the departmental officials were available in GPs, and PRs well as ordinary people called to report dysfunctional hand pumps. Revenue officials reported improved management of casework through the revenue court management software. While earlier they had been totally dependent on the reader (assistant), to keep track of cases, now they could track these on-line. Moreover, when a case was registered, a message went to the applicant through an 'sms'. In the School Education Department, digitization of the village education register, where the status of children in and out of school was noted, had reduced the paper work for teachers, as previous years' data was easily accessible. In the Cooperation Department an official said that:

'We have been using computerized software for the last three months. This makes monitoring, record keeping etc. easier. There is better flow of information.'

In one GP, digitization had helped prevent fraud. As two villagers from well-off families but registered as BPL, tried to obtain some benefit, the portal caught a discrepancy, and their BPL registrations were cancelled.

On the negative side, technology created new problems or exacerbated old ones. One impact of technology was an increase in centralization in an already over-centralized system. Officials reported that they had to provide more information than before to higher ups, and there were now frequent reviews from the state level via video-conferences. One official remarked:

'It is not possible to give a feedback in the video conferences. The minister is also present, so the principal secretary is not able to take a really professional meeting.'

Similarly, the teachers interviewed said that they had to fill many formats, and information had to be uploaded instantly. In addition, a WhatsApp group of teachers had been created, which allowed messages to be sent quickly. Senior officials now called meetings or demanded information at very short notice. The teachers had to keep their mobiles on and the supervisor would call if they missed a message or did not reply. Several teachers reported getting such messages while in class, forcing them to immediately drop teaching and rush to a meeting. The supervisors, under pressure themselves, prioritized data collection over teaching. Not surprisingly, of the teachers interviewed, the most committed teacher had the greatest problem with technology. He disliked using the mobile phone in school and was frequently berated for missing important messages. The use of technology for greater centralization had reduced the teaching time in schools. Moreover, when, as per DBT, funds were transferred directly to employees, beneficiaries and service providers from the state level, district offices ceased to have even knowledge about the financial outlays and expenditure. The financial autonomy at the field level, already low, touched a new depth.

A second set of problems that arose as technology was sought to be introduced at great speed, was that there were frequent technical faults. Often, servers didn't work, and grassroot workers had to go to the block or tehsil headquarter to upload information. An example was the 'M Shiksha Mitra' App, to record teachers' attendance. In this App, teachers logged in and out daily and the location was tracked by the software, to ensure that the teacher was present in the school. But officials and teachers reported technical faults, as wrong distances were shown, so that the teachers, even when in

school, did not appear to be there. Similarly, the salary software did not allow deducting a few days' salary as punishment, and the whole month's salary had to be cut. In DBT, the transfer process was not yet smooth, and in many instances payments took a long time. To quote a block level official:

'The digital payment system has increased our tension. Even after completing all formalities, the payment in accounts takes more than 15-20 days.'

Third, a change from one system to another can be time-consuming at the initial stage, and for many grassroots workers, the time spent on peripheral tasks had increased. For example, for elementary school students, while earlier money for uniforms and scholarships was deposited in the parents' accounts, now, special Aadhar linked student IDs had to be created. For this, the teachers had to ensure that parents went to the GP office to link the IDs to Aadhar numbers to open students' accounts. Subsequently, teachers reported spending a great deal of time correcting errors etc. As students sometimes lacked basic documents, teachers had to do additional work, such as helping students get Aadhaar and caste certificates and assisting them in opening bank accounts. One teacher interviewed said that digitization had almost doubled his work-load and another said that it had increased administrative work, and affected the quality of his teaching adversely. Similarly, Patwaris too reported spending copious time uploading information on the computer. Often, the same data had to be filled on paper, and again entered in the computers. In the same vein, in one GP, the bank had returned the file for payment of workers' wages twice in a month as a few labourers' bank account were not linked to their Aadhaar number.

Fourth, sometimes technology was used thoughtlessly, and was either pointless, or created problems instead of solving them. To quote a revenue official:

'At one time we used to have a good basic system for land records. Then land records were computerized in 2011, and it was decided that the Patwari would only have e-records. But no proper rules for maintaining e-records were framed. Now we cannot trace when a particular mutation was done after 2011. Similarly, maps have been computerized. Some lines have got changed in the digital maps because two points have been joined through a straight line rather than the actual boundary. These maps look good, but are of no use.'

In the same vein, an App had been prepared for the Patwari to send a message to the cultivator about the crop estimation on his field and the cultivator could reply. But Patwaris interviewed reported that they received no replies from cultivators and a revenue official remarked that not everyone had a mobile phone. In another case, a teacher said that she had received directions to use mobile phones to teach students and show them educational videos. She found this a waste of time as the students were more interested in the mobile phone than the video played on it. Moreover, students in last row of the class were not able to hear the sound on the mobile phone. On the other hand, some useful technologies were not available adequately, especially at lower levels. There was only one survey machine to measure the land area per RI circle, and employees expressed a need for more machines.

A fifth problem arose when workers, especially the older ones, could not use the technology, or when the support system for the use of technology was lacking. In the Public Health Department, ANMs had been provided tablets, but the older ANMs were unable to use these. A revenue official said that while older Patwaris were not trained for online system and could not work with the computer, the younger Patwaris also faced problems due to the shortage of computers. One Patwari who was not technology savvy expressed the need for opportunities to

learn new technologies. He had to maintain good terms with the data entry operators to keep his records updated. Another Patwari commented that technology was introduced without proper installation of the system and the condition of office, computers and the data-operators were not kept in mind.

The expectation from technology appeared to be that it would solve the basic problems of the system, but this was misplaced. As a School Education Department official commented about the attendance App regarding teachers, a teacher could cheat by buying a second mobile and getting someone to log in and log out at the place where the school was located. Overvaluing technology meant that it was sometimes pushed with great speed, which came in the way of work, rather than facilitating it.

Privatization

Along with technology, there was emphasis on privatization of services to reduce costs and improve service delivery. Among the sample departments, the most substantial outsourcing was in the PHE Department. Previously, the department had contracted private agencies to undertake works such as laying pipelines for tap water schemes, constructing platforms for hand pumps etc. But as per department officials, the extent of outsourcing had increased in recent years, while the staff of the department had decreased.

Since 2015, hand pump repair, a task earlier done departmentally, had been privatized. To begin with, all the tendering was done at the state level, in the expectation that big firms would bid for work. But no bids came, as big firms were not interested in hand pump repair. Consequently, tendering was shifted to the district. When the district office began tendering, there were no private agencies with experience in hand pump repair in the district and the district office too could not get any bids. District officials had to convince contractors to apply for hand pump repair. Meetings were held, and some contractors were talked into tendering. Some retired employees of the PHE Department also put in tenders.

In the first year, hand pump repair was privatized in a few blocks. The contract stipulated that the department would inform the contractor about the out of order hand pumps, and the contractor would ensure that the hand pump was repaired, providing the material, technicians, vehicles, labourers etc. The departmental officials would then monitor the work. But it was found that the material was not of good quality and the contractor was often late in repairing hand pumps. Consequently, from the second year, materials and technicians began to be provided by the department. The contractor's role was limited to providing the vehicles and workers, while the actual repair was done by field-level departmental staff.

Thus privatization of the service did not automatically result in improved service. Moreover, officials said that the process of contracting an agency was time-consuming. While officials admitted that contracting was cost-effective, they said that the actual success depended on the agency. Sometimes the contractors were not only cost-effective, but also quite good, but at other instances, the responsiveness and quality of work suffered. Thus an element of uncertainty was introduced. This led to the problem of accountability. To quote a senior official:

'People have expectations from the department, and when the agency does not do good work, the reputation of the department suffers.'

Additionally, because of inadequate manpower, officials were not able to supervise the contractor adequately and get a good output. As per officials, working through one's employees was the better than working through contractors. The officials

wanted less privatization, and strengthening of the department.

Similarly, hiring contractors for toilet construction in the GPs had led to problems too. In one GP, the contractor charged Rs.10000 per toilet and did not finish the work in many households and several villagers complained that toilets were of poor quality, the pan broke or outlets became clogged quickly. Similarly, in another village, poor people said that the contractor did a shoddy job in their hamlet.

Constraints and Suggestions

When officials were asked about constraints and problems in performing their role, they pointed out many issues that have been highlighted in this report. Out of 21 officials, 15 talked of inadequacy of human resources. Four officials, of whom two held charge of two posts, said that they could not perform well because there was too much work, one said that the number of schemes was too much for anyone to monitor, and a fourth that he was assigned activities out of his mandate. Four officials identified shortage of workers as a constraint in performing their role, and another four identified the lack of skill of workers. One official said that some grassroots workers were insincere in spite of repeated counselling, and another said that the incentive system was inadequate (Table 7.8). To quote an official:

'Because of lack of staff, I do not know what to do and what not to do.'

Expectedly, when officials were asked for suggestions to improve government working, most often, they gave suggestions about increasing manpower. For example, one WCD official suggested that at least one extra worker per AWC be appointed, and there be one doctor and one sub-engineer in every project.

A second set of problems, expressed by 10 officials, was lack of powers and autonomy, where disciplinary powers over grassroots staff were most important. The third set of issues related to working styles: that the goals set were de-contextualized, there was political pressure, lack of adequate planning and coordination. To quote one official:

'Ground realities are very different from what senior officer visualize. Senior officers are always pushing to meet targets and there are many issues here.'

Another official said: 'We need good planning and analysis so that implementation can be done properly.'

In addition, 5 officials stated problems related to finance, i.e., lack of adequate funds, difficulty in accessing funds and travel bills not being paid. Moreover, three officials saw lack of adequate infrastructure and equipment as a problem. In addition, two officials saw faulty laws and policies, such as disempowered Panchayats, bad land records, inadequate measures for livelihood generation, etc. as impediments. Officials also mentioned community related problems: the lack of education and poverty of the people on the one hand, and tendency to subvert laws on the other. Finally, one official said that he could not perform his role because the whole system was a mess.

Table 7.8: Constraints and Problems Experienced by Officials

Constraints and Problems Experienced	Number of Officials Reporting (Out of 21)	Suggestions for Future	Number of Officials Reporting (Out of 21)
No Constraints	2		
Human Resources			
Too much work	4	Reduce workload	2
Shortage of staff	4	Provide more staff	8
Lack capacity of staff	4	More skilled staff/ training	4
Staff lacks sincerity	1	Grassroots staff to be motivated	1
Ineffective staff	1	Problems of grassroots workers to be resolved.	
Lack of appropriate reward and punishment of staff	1	Better salary/ job security/ promotion	2
Financial			
Lack of funds	2	Provide more financial resources	4
Problems in accessing funds	2		
Lack of travel allowance	1		
Lack of Infrastructure and Equipment	6	Provide better buildings/ vehicles/ laptops	5
Lack of Powers and Autonomy			
Inadequate power to discipline workers	6	Provide more powers to discipline workers	2
Inadequate financial powers	2		
Lack of autonomy in activities	2		
Working Style			
Mismatch between orders and ground realities	1	Field workers should be heard when policy is made	1
No long term planning	1	There should be less privatization	1
Political pressure	3	Out of mandate work should not be given	1
Most of the work is on paper, not actual	1	Monitoring should be more intensive	1
Before one work is finished, another starts	2	There should be no campaigns	1
Too many instructions	1	There should be fewer meetings	1
		There should be more digitization	1
Community Related			
Poor, uneducated community	1	More information and publicity to be provided to people	3

Constraints and Problems Experienced	Number of Officials Reporting (Out of 21)	Suggestions for Future	Number of Officials Reporting (Out of 21)
Community Related			
People do not obey laws	1	Strengthen community participation	1
Others			
Whole system in mess	1		
Bad laws, policy	2	Policy corrections	3

Concluding Remark

The methods of working in the field institutions did not correspond to modern management practices of investigating the situation, formulating strategies, and supporting employees in achieving goals. Nor did they reflect the ethos of community service, where government officials act as per the needs and priorities of the community. Instead, in the context of a high degree of centralization and over-emphasis on hierarchy on the one hand, and patronage-based functioning and rent-seeking on the other, information and analysis were given low priority, and processes were rigid and cumbersome. The field administration was not a thinking system. To re-phrase, the processes were not conducive to productive work and problem solving. Moreover, mechanisms for ensuring accountability were inadequate. Internal accountability had limitations, as many officials participated in rent-seeking rackets, and protected each other. A big problem with all the external mechanisms of accountability was that even if they revealed wrongdoing, redressal was not guaranteed. Consequently, in spite of numerous processes for ensuring accountability, the system remained unaccountable.

There were two thrusts to improve field governance. The first, a greater use of technology, had resulted in increased efficiency in several instances. However, there were instances when an unthinking faith in technology had led to even greater centralization, and interfered with work rather than facilitating it. The gains from the other thrust, i.e., privatization, were doubtful, as in rural areas, skills in the private sector could be less than in the government sector, and privatization exacerbated the problem of accountability. Neither of these two reforms addressed the core problems of the processes followed by field agencies. ■

8 ADMINISTRATION ON THE GROUND

Introduction

This chapter describes the working of the government on the ground in the sample district, i.e., the services that the government provided, the quality of these services, how government officials interacted with citizens, the extent to which problems were solved and goals were achieved. In addition, the manner in which community forums, i.e., the Gram Sabhas, CBOs and SHGs functioned, and the activities that they undertook, are discussed. The chapter illustrates how grassroots institutions and the community-government interface are shaped by the characteristics of the field administration described in the previous chapters.

Range of Services

As shown in chapter three, the government was present in several sectors in the district, and there were more than 5,000 non-management institutions in the district including schools, colleges, hospitals, veterinary centres, forest depots, public distribution shops, employment exchange, cooperative banks, and so on. Through this large network of institutions, the government provided a very wide range of services, as can be seen from the services provided by the sample departments in Box 8.1. These services covered nearly all aspects of people's lives. Moreover, there was a clear focus on the needs of economically and socially deprived groups. Most government benefits were targeted at these groups, and client-focussed departments such as WCD and SC & ST Welfare had been set up specially to watch the interests of such groups, implement progressive legislation and provide special services such as student hostels etc. for these groups. This wide outreach framed the government-community interface, where people were entitled to, and expected, numerous services.

Box 8.1: Services Provided by Sample Departments

Department	Services Provided
Revenue	Certificates and documents such as voter ID cards, caste and birth certificates, copies of land records; financial assistance in case of disasters and accidents; dispute resolution in land-related cases.
Forest	Forest produce, such as bamboo, wood etc., at subsidized rates to people living near the forest.
Panchayat and Rural Development	Wage labour as per community demand, houses to those without houses or very poor houses; subsidy for toilet construction for BPL, SC, ST, small and marginal farmers; construction and repair of public infrastructure such as roads, burial grounds etc.; provision of civic services such as sanitation.
School Education	Free education for school children; provision of midday meals, free textbooks, uniforms, scholarship for SC and ST students for elementary school students, and bicycles to high school students.
Public Health	Free health-care, regular check-ups and advice related to antenatal care and safe delivery.
Women and Child Development	For children in the 0-6 age group as well as pregnant and lactating mothers, supplementary nutrition, vaccination and healthcare and special care and counselling in case of malnourishment; pre-school education for children in the 3-6 age group, education linked financial aid to new-born girls; counselling to adolescent girls, shelter and legal aid to women in case of domestic violence.
Public Health Engineering	Safe drinking water through hand pumps and tap water schemes.
Cooperation	Subsidized rations through the public distribution system; subsidized seeds and fertilizers to farmers; loans on low interest, support in purchase of various farm produce as decided time-to-time by the government.

Access to Services

Cost of Service

The extent to which these services were actually provided, depended, along with other factors discussed below, on the cost that they entailed. A major challenge in the provision of services was the residential pattern, as people were distributed in a large number of small villages. As noted in chapter three, 38.5% villages in the sample district had a population of less than 500 (Table 3.3), and the average population per village was less than 900. Providing services to all these villages was difficult and expensive. Consequently, while simple, low cost services could be provided within the village or near to it, more complex and higher cost services were limited. Additionally, more services were provided in larger villages, or villages important for some other reason, than in smaller ones.

Among grassroots institutions of the sample departments, AWCs and primary schools penetrated most deeply. In the sample villages there were 1-10 AWCs per village and1-8 government primary schools. Four of the five sample villages had an upper primary school, while the smallest village did not. Three larger villages had high schools up to class 10, and two villages, the largest village and the village that was the block headquarter, had higher secondary schools up to class 12 (Table 8.1). Consequently, while nearly all children accessed AWCs and elementary education, fewer children, especially girls, and children from poor families, got high school and higher secondary school education (Box 8.1).

Table 8.1: Government Agencies the Sample Villages

(Y=Yes, N=No)

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5	
Population of Village	6,003	4,678	3,365	1,048	789	
Institution	**Whether Available**					**Number of villages in which available**
Primary School	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Middle School	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	4
High School	Y	N	Y	N	N	2
Higher Secondary School	N	N	Y	N	N	3
Anganwadi	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Common Service Centre	N	Y	Y	N	Y	3
Public Distribution Shop	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	4
ITI	Y	N	N	N	N	1
PHC	Y	N	N	N	N	1
Sub Health Centre	Y	Y	Y	N	N	3
Cooperative Society	N	Y	Y	N	N	2
Police Station	N	N	Y	N	N	1
Gram Panchayat Headquarter	Y	Y	Y	N	N	3
Kotwar Headquarters	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	5
Patwari Headquarters	N	N	Y	N	N	1

Health services, which entailed high costs, were very limited. There were only 173 sub-health centres in the district manned by the ANM, who had very basic knowledge of medicine. Among the sample villages, three larger villages out of five had a SHC (Table 8.1). The Public Health Department had attempted to expand its outreach in two ways. One, by creating a 'Gram Arogya Kendra', which was housed at the AWC and provided some basic medicines. The second outreach was through the ASHA, who was not a medical person, but merely connected people to medical professionals.

There were 26 government health facilities which had posts of doctors, i.e., the district hospital, CHCs and PHCs, in the whole district, i.e. one for every 35 villages, and only 820 beds (for births and illness), less than one bed per village, and one bed for more than 1500 people (Table 2.4). In the sample villages (Box 8.1), the access to government health services was partial, and people had to supplement these with private services. The well-off villagers used private medical facilities in the village or nearby towns, while the poor often resorted to traditional healers or 'Bengali doctors', who did not have medical degrees, but 'treated' the villagers.

As PDS shops did not entail high cost, they were available in nearly every village. In four of the five sample villages, there was a PDS shop within the village. In the fifth village, people accessed a shop at another village, a couple of kilometers away.

Complexity of Service

The complexity of the service too had an impact on its availability. For example, hand pumps for drinking water were available universally, but tap water schemes were only partially available, even though GPs could get funds for these. Here, the service could not be provided, partly because some community contribution was mandatory, and partly because the institution providing it, i.e., the GP, lacked technical and management capability. From among the sample villages, in one village, the tap water scheme could not be started as the community was not willing to make the stipulated contribution. In the second village, the GP itself was dysfunctional. In the third village, tap water was available in around half the village. In the fourth village, tap water connections were available throughout the village, but water did not reach the farthest end of a colony where the poorest people lived, as the pressure was not sufficient. In the fifth village, the Panchayat had recently managed to start piped water-supply, after three consecutive failed attempts. However, tap water was not yet available to all households, as not all households paid Rs.60 per month that was needed, though it was available in public spaces. Depending upon the availability of electricity, the system ran twice a day for an hour to half to an hour each time.

In contrast, the PDS system, which simply provided food rations at subsidized rates, was found to be functioning fairly satisfactorily in the sample villages. Four PDS shops out of five opened 2-3 days a week, while the fifth shop opened for four consecutive days in a month. The shops provided wheat and rice as well as kerosene to BPL families, though sugar had not been provided for the last six months. FGDs showed that for poor families, PDS was important, though perceived as inadequate. There were no complaints about the regularity of the PDS shops, or availability of food grains.

Box 8.1: Social Services Accessed in Five Sample Villages

Village	Anganwadi Centre	Schools	Medical Facilities
V1	Well-off families' children go to private pre-schools. Children from poor families attend AWCs.	Boys study up to class twelve. But except for a few, girls generally study up to class eight, especially ST girls, who work and support their parents. General caste students and students of well-off OBC and SC families study outside the village in nearby cities after class 12. There are private tutors in the village, and some students of private schools go to them.	The village has a SHC but it is sometimes closed because the ANM has to travel to other villages. There are many pharmacies where private doctors from the city are available for a part of the day or week. The STs and SCs consult traditional healers for minor illnesses. For major illnesses they consult the SHC, the pharmacies and if these don't work, go to private clinics in the nearby city. The well-off groups directly go to the private clinics in the city.
V2	All children go to AWC.	Students usually study up to grade 10 and those who pass go to a nearby village for higher secondary. A few students (1-2 per school) of 6-14 age group from families who migrate as agriculture labourers are out of school. One guest teacher of a government primary school provides private tuition and children also go to a nearby village where there are 5-6 private tutors who charge Rs.500-600 per month.	The village has a sub-health centre. There is no traditional healer. A pharmacist acts as a doctor. There is a CHC close to the village, which the villagers access. Some people from SC and ST groups consult traditional healers from other villages.
V3	All children go to AWC.	Some poor children in 6-14 age group, from families of agricultural labourers, who take care of their siblings or earn, do not attend school. Children usually study up to class 9. Better off students study up to class 12. Some are in college in a nearby city. Students from 15-16 families study in private schools in a nearby city. Some families have shifted to the city for children's schooling. There are three private tutors in the village.	The village has a SHC, one traditional healer and private health clinics with doctors. The STs go to the traditional healer for minor illnesses, and visit private health clinics for major illnesses. The poor access the nearby CHC but the travel is expensive, and often they are not able to reach during the OPD hours. The well-off groups access the private clinics.
V4	Most children attend the AWC. Some children of better off families go to private schools in another village.	All students study up to class 8. There are no drop-outs, but some students attend school irregularly. For class 9 and 10, 70% students go outside the village to study. After class 10, girls generally do not go to school, because the school with class 11 and 12 is further off. There are no private tutors, but a few students go for tuitions at another village, where there are 2-3 private tutors.	There is no CHC in the village but there is a PHC, two kilometers away. There are no traditional healers, but a 'Bengali doctor' (with dubious medical qualifications) has a clinic. For minor ailments, people visit the Bengali doctor, who treats common ailments for Rs.30-50, and sometimes the PHC. For major ailments they access the government hospital in the city.
V5	All children attend the AWC except for one child from an OBC family who goes to private school.	Almost all children study up to class 5. One ST girl from a very poor family dropped out last year in class four. Another 2-3 children do not attend school regularly, though they are enrolled, because families migrate, or parents go out for work on a daily basis. Students go to a nearby village for grade 8. In the 6-14 age group, approximately 10 children don't attend school. Students go to nearby villages and cities for secondary education. No tuition is available in the village. One OBC family, which is well off, sends children to a private school in a neighbouring village.	There is no SHC in the village, but one is available one kilometre away. There is a CHC 12 kilometres away. There is no private allopathic doctor. There are two traditional healers and one Bengali doctor in a village, one kilometre away. People access all the facilities. Most often they visit the Bengali doctor who is accessible and inexpensive.

Access and Context

The provision of government services was not as per contextual need, because of the rigidity of schemes and guidelines. As noted in chapter two, though in all the sample villages, the road to access the village from outside was adequate, the situation inside the village was uneven. Many hamlets where poor people lived were connected to the main village by very poor roads (Box 2.2).In one village, people had repeatedly appealed in the Gram Sabha, but were told that there was no scheme to construct a road connecting two hamlets. Similarly, the road connecting a colony, where some resettled families lived, to the main village was also very poor, though a good road had been constructed within the hamlet, as it was allowed in a scheme. In another village, there was a stream between a hamlet and the main village, and the connecting un-tarred road became muddy during the rainy season. People appealed to the Panchayat to construct a road, but were told that there was no provision to construct roads between hamlets in a village.

Similarly, the AWCs were set up as per a population norm, i.e. one AWC for a population of 400-800 (300-800 for tribal areas) and a mini AWC for a population of 150-400 (150-300 for tribal areas). But in practice, the workload of the AWCs differed widely, and some AWCs were overcrowded. For example, in the 26 AWCs in the five sample villages, the number of children registered varied from 25 to 92. Nine AWCs, i.e., more than a third (34.6%), had more than 50 children. Among the total number of children, 3% were severely malnourished and 17.1% were moderately malnourished, i.e., 20% were malnourished[47]. The number of severely malnourished children in the AWCs varied from 0 to 6, and the moderately malnourished from 4 to 22. Nine AWCs (45% from among those for which information was available), had more than 20 malnourished children (Table 8.2, Table F.1, Annex F). The number of pregnant and lactating mothers registered in the sample AWCs varied from 10 to 23 (Table 8.3). Yet all AWCs had the same staff, and were expected to undertake the same activities.

Table 8.2: Children Enrolled and Malnourished in Anganwadi Centres in Sample Villages

(NA=Not Available)

Village	Number of AWCs	Number of Children								
		Enrolled			Severely Malnourished			Moderately Malnourished		
		Average	Lowest	Highest	Average	Lowest	Highest	Average	Lowest	Highest
V1	8	53.9	25	92	1.1	0	3	8.1	4	22
V2	10	50.0	36	70	1.0	0	2	8.4	5	13
V3	5	34.2	21	45	1.2	1	2	NA	NA	NA
V4	2	70.5	62	79	1	0	2	13	12	14
V5	1	54			6			20		

[47] Six Anganwadis did not keep a record of moderately malnourished children.

Table 8.3: Children and Mothers Enrolled in Sample Anganwadi Centres

(S= Severely malnourished, M= moderately malnourished, NA= Not Available)

	Number of										
AWC	Children Registered			Children in Private Schools	Mothers Registered			Adolescent Girls Registered	Malnourished Children		
	0-3 YRS	3-6 YRS	Total		Pregnant	Lactating	Total		S	M	T
AWC 1	36	46	82	29	6	11	17	60	0	4	4
AWC 2	39	31	70	Nil	16	7	23	2	6	6	12
AWC 3	37	20	57	Nil	7	5	12	NA	1	NA	NA
AWC 4	27	17	44	4	7	3	10	NA	2	12	14
AWC 5	25	30	55	1	7	8	15	2	6	20	26

Special problems of access existed in the forest villages, because human settlements were classified as 'forest'. For example, in the sample forest village, no land records were available, as revenue officials did not operate in the village. A forest official interviewed admitted that the department was not able to pay adequate attention to forest villages, and these would be better administered by the Revenue Department.

Though WCD attempted to provide services for women affected by domestic violence, the outreach remained limited, as there was only one 'One Stop Centre' in the district, and BWEOs were available only at the block level. Across India, when domestic violence had been addressed by empowering SHGs, the outreach has been much wider. But field agencies did not have the autonomy and orientation to explore such a model.

The Very Poor

Even when services were widespread and available within the village, very poor people were not able to access them. As shown in chapter six, in the AWCs, though all children were enrolled, many attended irregularly because their parents left the village for wage labour and took them along. In elementary schools, some children had dropped out. These were poor children, and were out of school because of migration, agricultural work or tending to younger siblings. Many children also attended school irregularly for the same reasons.

Poor people had trouble accessing fertilizer and seeds from cooperative societies. To begin with, share-croppers were not entitled to buy fertilizer and seed from the cooperative society, and bought it from the farmers or from the market, at higher prices, and sometimes could not get the adequate quantity. Similarly, people whose land documents had been taken away by the Forest Department, could not buy from the cooperative society. Moreover, big farmers got information about the arrival of the fertilizer quickly, but ST farmers often did not, resulting in them reaching late and getting the leftovers or having to purchase from private shops.

Similarly, in one village, poor people could sometimes not buy the subsidized ration from the PDS shop, because of lack of money. Their entitlement then lapsed. Thus extreme poverty made it difficult for people to benefit from services even when these were available.

Quality of Grassroots Institutions

The quality of the grassroots institutions reflected the above pattern, i.e., when the institutional task was simple, it was done fairly well, but as tasks got more complex, the service delivery deteriorated. A real dilemma here was that if a large number of facilities were provided close to where people lived, so as to enable easy access, quality suffered, as very small institutions with sparse resources got created. But if bigger and fewer facilities were provided, poor people found it difficult to access them. While this dilemma was a very real one, the administrative fault lines discussed in previous chapters had a strong impact on the quality of institutions too.

Anganwadi Centres

As noted in chapter four, the mandate of the AWC was substantial, but the human resources, i. e., the poorly paid AWW and Sahayika, were sparse (Box 4.4). In addition, AWWs were asked to undertake numerous surveys and activities of other departments. In the sample Anganwadi centres, AWWs dealt with these difficult demands in their own ways.

During the field work, a total of 14 visits were made to the 5 sample AWCs[48] to observe their activities. There was no evidence of deliberate gross neglect, and during the field visits, AWWs were found present, except in one AWC, where during two out of three visits, the AWW was working from home because her child was unwell. In addition, one sample AWC functioned for only five hours, as against the mandated seven hours.

Observations showed that AWWs coped with excess work by focusing on tasks that the senior officials inspected and prioritized. During the visits made by the researcher to the sample AWCs, the AWWs were observed engaged in maintaining records most often. The required registers were maintained in all AWCs, and a great deal of time was spent on filling them (Table 8.4).

Table 8.4: Activities Observed in Anganwadi Centres

Activity Observed	Number of Times Observed
Updating register	7
Teaching	2
Sorting out problem in supply of supplementary nutrition	1
Village health and nutrition day	1
Talking on the phone	1
Working from home	2

The extent to which AWWs were able to address various aspects of malnourishment varied. The supplementary nutrition was provided in all the AWCs, and FGDs showed that AWWs made home visits and counselled mothers too. But only some AWWs were diligent about other activities related to malnourishment. The most sincere AWW of the 5 interviewed had encouraged families of malnourished children to plant small kitchen-gardens. During the plantation program, she had motivated them to plant Moringa plants, eat its highly nutritious leaves often, and dry and store the leaves for the lean season. Earlier, she had sent the Sahayika to massage a handicapped child, and asked mothers to contribute Rs.150-200 for protein rich biscuits, and even contributed some money herself. She had engaged with some malnourished adolescent girls, advising them to incorporate spinach, fenugreek leaves etc. in their diet for at least three days a week. During her village visits, she sometimes peeped into the girls' houses and asked about their well-being. Three girls had shown signs of improvement.

A second AWW's work with malnourished children had been appreciated. She had got the eight severely malnourished

[48] Three visits each were made to four AWCs and two visits were made to one AWC.

children admitted to the NRC and had completed the four required follow-ups, during which she interacted regularly with the mothers and children, calling them to the AWC and visiting them, ensuring that they ate on time. As a consequence, five out of eight malnourished children recovered, and achieved normal weight and mid upper-arm circumference (MUAC) measurements, though three children merely became moderately malnourished instead of severely malnourished. A third AWW was found referring to the previous month's measurements while taking current measurements, using the MUAC tape accurately, and updating mothers about the changes in weight. She appreciated mothers whose children's weight increased, and scolded those whose children's weight declined, while repeating instructions about using supplementary nutrition.

But not all AWWs followed the guidelines for detecting malnourishment. In 6 of the 26 Anganwadis in the sample villages, records were kept regarding severely malnourished children only, and not of moderately malnourished children. Additionally, the process of identification of malnourished children was not rigorous in the sample AWCs. Except in one AWC, malnourished children were identified through measurement of the MUAC only, and the age-weight-height ratio was not considered. In one AWC, the researcher identified a child as malnourished as per weight, but not as per MUAC. Further, though there was one severely malnourished child as per records, the AWW was not aware of it. Moreover, the AWW believed that many children identified as moderately malnourished were merely thin.

The AWWs reported that all mothers and children got immunized, though records for the same were not always available. One AWW maintained vaccination records, but was unable to calculate the actual number of children vaccinated. The researcher calculated that 75% children had been vaccinated. Another AWW said that all the children were vaccinated but could not show records. In FGDs, women reported that the AWWs provided them with antenatal care and counselling. The village health and nutrition day was observed every month, attended by ANM, AWW and ASHA and sometimes the supervisors. On this day, pregnant women and lactating mothers got their check-ups, children were weighed and immunization administered. The following were the observations of a researcher on a village health and nutrition day in one AWC:

Box 8.2: A Researcher's Observations on a Village Health and Nutrition Day in an Anganwadi Centre

The vaccination process was the most unhygienic that I have seen. The ANM did not use ice packs to stabilize the vaccines, though the ambient temperature was quite high. The vaccine box had only one ice pack instead of four. The vaccines lay on the table without any cover for hours, which was dangerous and could have rendered them ineffective. The ANM held the syringe needle by hand before filling it and administering it. Spirit alcohol was not used. The ANM did not wash hands even once before administering the vaccine, not even for the infants. The conditions in which vaccination was being practiced were horrifying.

The ASHA, not the ANM, was doing the check-up of the pregnant women, and recording the data, while the ANM attended to the vaccination. The Sahayika was working in lieu of the AWW. The AWW sat at a table throughout and instructed the Sahayika to measure the weights and the mid-upper arm circumference of the children. Children of age 4-6 years were made to hang by holding the hook of the Salter scale for weight measurement and were crying. A weighing machine was available but it was being used to measure weight of the pregnant women. For children below four years, there was a portable bag for measuring weight.'

Of the 14 visits, only on two visits were AWWs observed engaged in pre-school education. Interviews revealed that two AWWs did no pre-school education at all, and in one AWC, the education kit was kept packed. Two AWWs undertook some pre-school activities such as games, identifying alphabets and numbers, reciting poems etc. One AWW made special efforts with pre-school education. Children were taught to identify Hindi and English alphabets and numbers as well as to recite poems in Hindi and English. Children whose parents could provide slates and pencils were taught to write a few alphabets. Sometimes, the AWW took story reading sessions. She focused on English, though it was not in the curriculum, as parents wanted it.

The picture that emerged of the AWC was of an institution that provided important services in the village, but because of inadequate manpower, and the extra work outside the mandate loaded onto the AWWs, it could not provide all the services envisaged. Unless the AWW was exceptionally committed, early childhood education was a casualty. Though health services were provided, staff shortage and the lack of skills of the grassroots health workers impacted their quality. Additionally, the fact that the AWWs followed uniform strategies as directed from the top, reduced their effectiveness. As noted in chapter six, many children could not attend the AWCs because their parents went out for work for the day, and they could not follow the AWC timings. Moreover, the supplementary nutrition was eaten at one go by the whole family: possibly many family members, and not just children in the 0-6 age group and pregnant and lactating mothers, were malnourished. A strategy that took into account these contextual needs could not be formulated.

Schools

The dilemma of choosing between providing several facilities close to the people, and providing fewer, better quality facilities was illustrated sharply in the primary schools. In the sample villages, there were 19 primary schools with a total enrolment of 911 students. The average number of students enrolled per school was 48. The enrolment across the schools varied between 22 and 80. The number of teachers in position in these schools was 45. Out of 19 schools, 11 had two teachers, two had only one teacher, four had three teachers and two had four teachers (Table 8.5). Consequently in most schools, teachers handled two or more classes at a time, which was challenging. In the words of one teacher:

'It is difficult to manage five classes with two teachers. Recently, new textbooks and curriculum have been introduced and these demand the full attention of the teacher for a particular class. But I have to manage three classes together. I teach one class and assign work to students of other classes.'

Notably, if there had been ten primary schools in the five sample villages, i.e. an average of two per village, the average number of teachers per school would have been 4.5, i.e., nearly all schools would have had one teacher per class, and all would have had at least four.

Table 8.5: Number of Primary Schools and Teachers in Sample Villages

	V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
Number of primary schools	3	8	5	2	1
Average enrolment per school	36.7	51	37.2	69	80
Highest enrolment in a school	61	72	40	80	
Least enrolment in a school	22	39	36	50	
Number of schools with 1 teacher	0	2	0	0	
Number of schools with 2 teachers	2	4	4	1	The school has four teachers
Number of schools with 3 teachers	1	1	1	1	
Number of schools with 4 teachers	0	1	0	0	

Note: The number of teachers refers to the teachers in position, including guest teachers.

Along with the problem of teaching more than one class at a time, teachers were busy in administrative work. Teachers said that they attended 4-5 meetings per month at the block and cluster. They conducted surveys during enrolment drives, making door-to-door visits. They managed mid-day meals, sorting out problems related to rations and fuel. In addition, teachers were called upon to do vigilance duty for examinations. With mobile phones, such demands often came without notice. During one visit of the researcher, the headmaster in-charge was told to go for vigilance duty in an examination after she had come to the school. So counter-productive was the working environment that one teacher thought that the government was reluctant to improve the educational status of rural children.

During the course of the study, three visits were made to each of the five sample schools to check presence of teachers and students, the actual school hours and to observe the classroom (Box 8.3). In the 15 visits made to the five sample schools, all teachers were found to be present on 11 visits, i.e., around 73% of the time. On two visits, one teacher was on leave, and on another two visits, engaged in administrative work or on training. Given that these schools already had fewer teachers than classes, even this modest absence of teachers was of significance. The official timings of the schools were 10.30 am to 4.15 pm, and the schools were expected to function for five hours and 45 minutes. But only two schools functioned as per the scheduled time. In the other three schools the actual school timings were shorter by 15 minutes to one hour and 15 minutes. Notably, no teacher in any school actually lived in the village, and some commuted long distances. In the forest village, teachers left early, as transport from the village to the city was available at limited times.

Box 8.3: Observations on Three Visits to the Sample Schools

('S' refers to school)

	Number of Teachers Present	Average % of Students Present During 3 Visits	Hours for Which School Was Open
S1	All 3 present during 2 visits. On one visit, all 3 present, but one left for duty as an invigilator.	45.7	5 hours 45 minutes, as mandated, on all 3 visits
S2	All 3 present on one visit, and 2 present on 2 visits, one on leave.	71.3	For 2 visits, 30 minutes less than mandated and for one visit, 20 minutes less
S3	All 3 visits, both teachers present.	95.0	15 minutes less than mandated, as teachers have to walk 2 kilometers to reach the school
S4	All 3 visits, both teachers present.	80.7	5 hours 45 minutes, as mandated on all 3 visits
S5	All 3 present on 2 visits, on one visit, two present, one on training	63.8	15, 30 and 45 minutes less than the time mandated on 3 visits

In all the sample schools, the midday meal was provided as mandated, and children ate it and said that they liked it. Free textbooks were provided too. In 2016-17, these had arrived in the school in January, when most of the school year had finished. But teachers said that this was because new textbooks had been made. In the previous years, textbooks had been delivered at the beginning of the academic year. Scholarships were deposited in the students' bank accounts in the middle of the year.

During the 15 school visits, 24 activities were observed in the classrooms. Of these, only 10, i.e., 45%, comprised the teacher engaging with students in an educational way: seven times the teacher taught, and three times did some other educational activity. Seven times (32% activities), the teacher was engaged in administrative work, and once in compiling grades in the class. Thrice, the teacher simply whiled away the time, talking on the phone, idling etc., and thrice, there was no teacher in the class. Thus the actual teaching time in the schools was very limited. The major problem here was the load of the non-teaching work on teachers, followed by casualness on part of the teachers.

Table 8.6: Classroom Activities Observed in Sample Schools

Activity	Number of Times Observed
Teacher taught	7
Function was celebrated, teacher supervised Rangoli, teacher made baskets out of paper cuttings	3
Teacher compiling grades while children copied	1
Teacher was tabulating data, filling registers, looking at training notice, supervising whitewashing	7
Teacher talking on mobile phone, idling listening to radio	3
Teacher away, children working on their own	1
Teacher away, children chatting	2

The teachers interviewed were dissatisfied with the excessive administrative work. In three schools, teachers said that they took such work home or worked on holidays. One teacher said that the government was taking away all the respect and powers away from teachers by imposing a lot of extra work-load. To quote another:

'Teachers nowadays are like labourers, the only difference being that they are educated and have a higher market-price.'

Non-teaching work interfered with teaching. To quote a teacher:

'I step out of the house planning to finish a part of the curriculum, and a sudden call comes from the block office for some information, which I have to provide immediately.'

A very sincere teacher reported that he did his work as BLO from home, and in the previous week, had worked for almost 18-20 hours per day, teaching in the daytime and doing his work as BLO at night. He commented that staying awake at night made it impossible to maintain the quality of teaching.

heads and referred to children who were not good at studies as 'kachhra' or waste. In another school, two boys were observed standing outside the class, and the teacher said that they chatted a lot in class. However, a few days later, the researcher happened to meet one boy's mother, who reported that the teacher had hit her son on the palms with a scale and made him stand outside the class for an hour because he talked back when the teacher reprimanded him. When the head teacher was asked what he did when he saw a teacher beat students, he replied that this

Box 8.4: Qualities of Ideal Teacher as per Supervisors and Teacher Trainers

- An ideal teacher should be regular in school and know his subjects. He should behave well with the children and be in constant touch with parents.
- An ideal teacher should be polite and well-behaved. He should come to school on time, not beat children. He should complete the course on time. He should talk to parents and tell them what children are learning and not learning. He should follow orders.
- An ideal teacher should be punctual, should be committed, should teach during school time and do data related work later, and not talk on the mobile in class. He should know the subject and be sensible.
- An ideal teacher should understand the skills of students' parents, behave well with poor parents and explain issues to them, should be aware about rights and responsibilities, should be committed to work and disciplined and should come to school on time and do things in time.

Teachers reported that supervisors emphasized non-teaching work, such as data collection and reports, over teaching. The concern of supervisors and even teacher trainers with issues unrelated to education can be gauged from the responses that they gave when they were asked to identify attributes of an ideal teacher. As Box 8.4 shows, how a teacher taught rarely came into the picture.

As school observation showed, some teachers were negligent. Moreover, a few teachers practiced corporal punishment. In 3 of the 5 sample schools, no corporal punishment was observed. But in one school, a teacher often slapped children on their

could happen with any teacher, including himself, as teachers also had problems and tensions. In fact, in FGDs, many parents also said that corporal punishment was needed.

But there were committed teachers too. One teacher interviewed in a sample school was totally immersed in teaching. He did not do any non-teaching work in teaching hours, but worked after school and on holidays instead. Observations of this school showed (School S4, Box 8.5) teaching in progress on all visits. The teacher excitedly showed the researcher the teaching materials, students' notebooks and workbooks, and the small changes he had made to the teaching methods and tools. The students in this school performed well

on the small reading test that the researcher conducted. Similarly, another teacher was proud that her school, though located in a small hamlet, had the highest number of students in the village. Yet another teacher said that though he was dissatisfied with the working environment, he felt happy when he saw children learning. However, no special recognition or incentives were offered to such teachers, and they were treated on par with teachers who neglected their work. There was no attempt to use their special motivation and skills on a wider scale. Moreover, extreme centralization meant that even if they wanted to, teachers could not innovate easily. One of the teachers interviewed said that it was not possible to alter or modify anything in response to how children were learning, as the government had specified which lesson was to be taught when. Sometimes, he taught in a way different to the planned one, but the scope was very limited.

In fact, at times, centralized guidelines were so out of sync with the context, that they were impossible to follow on the ground. One teacher admitted that she could not follow the academic calendar provided all the time. During the monsoon, student attendance was thin, and teachers often gathered all the classes and taught them general knowledge or craft work and painting. Similarly, in four schools out of the five sample schools, the menu of the mid-day meal prescribed by the state government could not be followed precisely.

There was high emphasis on student evaluation from the state level, and students were evaluated in multiple ways. There was a baseline evaluation in July and an end-line evaluation in September to test for learning improvement, monthly evaluations, an annual surprise test and final grading as the academic session ended. One teacher commented that though teachers were already burdened with non-teaching work, and had little time to teach, they had to do multiple evaluations as well. Another teacher thought that the evaluation had no impact on children's learning, as teachers were well aware of what students understood without any evaluation too. But the emphasis on evaluation continued, as policies were not formulated as per the needs of the ground. Moreover, the student evaluation often did not reflect the reality. When the researcher asked students of classes four and five to read in Hindi, the simplest possible exercise, in three out of the five schools, there were children who could not read. In two schools, a majority of the children asked to read could not, though in one 45% and in another 70% students were said to be in grade A and B (Box 8.5). Evaluation was simply not the solution to the learning problems, as the actual teaching time in the schools was inadequate.

The picture of the schools that emerged was that they had a challenging task, i.e., educating children from deprived communities. Yet these schools were poorly staffed, teachers were kept busy in administrative work, and had little incentive to work well. The difficult task of providing good education was beyond the capability of the schools. As an NGO representative, working to improve elementary education, who was interviewed, said:

'The government provides midday meals, free textbooks, scholarships and uniforms, but the quality of education in schools in not satisfactory.'

Box 8.5: Classroom Observation and Learning Outcomes in Sample Schools

(S=School)

School	No.	Observation	Learning Outcomes	
			Grading by School	Researcher's Test
S1	1	It was Vasant Panchami. All the students gathered in one class where Saraswati Puja was performed and teachers talked about Swami Vivekanand and Mahatma Gandhi. Subsequently, the headmaster left for work elsewhere, and the teachers tabulated various types of data. Children did multiplication with number cards with class monitors attending.	40% students were classified in grade A, 30% in grade B, and the rest in grade C and D (called trash by teacher).	Ten students from class 3,4 and 5 were asked to read Hindi. Eight could read fluently, and recite multiplication tables of 12-16 and read English with effort. Two students could not read.
	2	Teachers were teaching in the classes observed.		
	3	In the class observed, the teacher was teaching but also talking on the mobile phone in-between, and scolding children if they made noise during that period.		
S2	1	The teacher in class 1 and 2 was looking at the training notice that she was to attend the next day on the mobile phone. The students were merely sitting. The teachers of class 3 and 4 were filling registers in the class.	Head master refused to show records and said that 45% students were in A and B grades. Around 40% children were in C grade and the rest in D grade.	Seven students of classes 4 and 5 were selected by the researcher to read Hindi, of which only 2 read fluently and the rest stumbled. Two students were selected by the teacher to read English and read well. But discussions showed that they had not understood what they had read.
	2	Class 5 was studying and chatting. The class teacher was in the headmaster's room, compiling data. Sometimes the teacher of classes 3 and 4 came out of his class and scolded them. In classes 3 and 4, the teacher was listening to music on the radio (kept for the English lessons). The students were given a task to copy a paragraph from the Hindi reader book. A few students were doing it, others were sitting idly. Two students asked the teacher something, but they were scolded and told to get on with the assigned task.		
	3	Class one and two students sat chatting and playing. Sometimes the teacher reprimanded them. Students of class three and four were asking the teacher questions and he was examining their note books.		
S3	1	One teacher was supervising children making Rangoli. Another teacher was compiling data.	77.5% children were in grade 'A', 22.6% in grade 'B' and 6.67% in grade 'C.	Six students of class five were asked to read Hindi, and they could all read, though they did not follow the punctuation.
	2	In classes one and two, teacher was surrounded by the children, teaching them to make a paper boat. The students of classes 3 and 4 were copying and writing from their Hindi book. The teacher was busy computing students' grades.		

School	No.	Observation	Learning Outcomes	
			Grading by School	Researcher's Test
	3	In classes 1 and 2, the teacher was on her table, making baskets from paper cuttings. The children were playing with the paper cuttings. In the classroom of classes 3, 4 and 5, students were working in three groups: one group was copying from their books in their notebooks, the second was copying from the blackboard, and the third had surrounded the teacher, to get their notebooks checked. The teacher made corrections in a few notebooks and asked the rest to copy the correction.		
S4	1	The teacher was teaching environmental studies and making children write in their workbooks, and was also examining the workbooks.	The headmaster said that more than 90% students were in A and B grades.	The researcher asked seven students of class five to read a paragraph from their favorite story book in the library and they all read it fluently.
	2	The teacher was writing English letters and drawing pictures on the blackboard. Students of class one were rolling on the mats, but also looking at the blackboard. The class two students were sitting and looking at the blackboard and some class three students were speaking out the alphabets. The teacher for classes four and five was on leave and two students, acting as monitors, were reading from the Hindi textbook, and the other children were repeating.		
	3	The teacher was surrounded by the students and was checking their notebooks.		
S5	1	The teacher was present, but not teaching. A few children were writing, others were chatting. The teacher had a mobile and a stick in hand.	Teachers did not show the grades. As per the headmaster, 70% were in A and B grades and 30% students in C and D grades.	Eight students of class five were asked to read from their Hindi textbook. Three read fluently, though did not follow punctuation. Of the other five, four stumbled while reading and one kept quiet. When they were asked to read English, they initially kept quiet, and stumbled on the words when they tried. The teacher said that they did not feel confident reading English.
	2	The teacher was called away to a meeting. The children were sitting and chatting.		
	3	One teacher was supervising the white-washing. Another was sitting with all the classes in the veranda, teaching with stick in hand.		

Health Centres

As noted above, medical facilities were not available adequately. The sub-health centres, the easiest to access, did not have doctors, and the ANM in charge handled several villages. From among the three SHCs in the sample villages, one was not functional, as a CHC was located nearby and was preferred by people. In another, on some days, the ANM did antenatal check-ups, immunized children and pregnant women, provided medicines and maintained an OPD. On other days, the ANM came to the SHC for a few minutes, picked up the equipment and left for other villages. In the third SHC, the ASHA distributed medicines in the OPD hours.

While the scope of the study did not include the district hospital and the CHCs, an interview with a nurse at a PHC showed it to be in a pathetic state because of lack of manpower. The doctor in charge visited the PHC once or twice a month, as he was responsible for another PHC in the city as well, which he preferred. The PHC had one staff nurse, and a lab technician and a pharmacist were shared with another PHC. The staff nurse thus multi-tasked and largely managed the PHC. She faced special challenges if she had to handle a delivery at night, as she had to manage the PHC in the day time the next day. The medical staff at the PHC said that people were often disappointed as they could provide limited medical health facilities, and had to wait for long periods because of lack of staff. To quote a Public Health Department official:

'It is difficult to meet the health needs of people because there are a limited number of doctors in health centres, and they are busy in various campaigns and activities. People are not satisfied with government hospitals. If we get Ayurvedic doctors to do allopathic treatment, how will people trust us?'

Shift to Private Facilities

Across the sample villages, people shifted to private facilities. In the case of health services, people accessed private facilities because government services were scanty. As health care was expensive, poor people often accessed dubious private health facilities.

In case of schools, the better off people accessed private schools because the quality of education in government schools was perceived to be inadequate. Many poor parents rushed to enrol their children in private schools too, as they could get education free of cost at the private school as per the Right to Education Act. As one district level officials said:

'Only people who have no options send their children to government schools.'

Because of the steady shift to private schools over time, the student population in government schools was declining and the department was looking to reduce the number of schools. In the sample district, 93 schools had been closed down.

A shift to private facilities was visible in the case of AWCs too. In one sample AWC in a village near the city, 66% children attended private school, though they were nominally registered at the AWC. A few children in two other AWCs were enrolled in private schools too. The parents of these children were willing to forgo the supplementary nutrition provided in the AWC for what they perceived as better pre-school education, which, the overburdened AWWs could not provide satisfactorily. These parents purchased expensive books, pens, pencils etc. as demanded by the schools, and contributed Rs.100-150 during festivals and functions. As per one AWW, the schools actually taught little. Another AWW said that parents wanted their children to learn English at private

schools and consequently, she taught English at her AWC, which kept parents happy.

Even in the case of out-of-order handpumps, villagers often called private mechanics as the department provided the service too late.

Interaction with the Community

Centralization and Targets

As noted above, centralized schemes and guidelines reduced the capacity of AWCs and schools to respond to needs as per context. Additionally, because of centralization, government and Panchayat officials appeared rigid and unresponsive in their interactions with people. For example, as per one government scheme, wells were provided to families that had land holding of 2.5 to 3 acres. In one sample village, two families that has less than 2.5 acres each, but 3 acres of land together, applied for a well at the junction of their fields, to serve both the families. But the GP rejected their application, as there was no such provision in the scheme. Similarly, in another GP, the Sarpanch got many requests from people to shift them from an older housing scheme to PMAY, but he had to refuse. Also, families who were eligible to get houses under the PMAY, but had been missed out in the SECC list, could not be given houses. To quote a Patwari:

'These days, everything is done as per orders of the higher authorities. Now the problem is that the bottom level workers blindly follow targets without bothering about the actual situation.'

The pressure to achieve targets, rather than meet people's needs, made the relationship between grassroots workers and people antagonistic rather than cooperative. For example, one GP secretary said that many people used the money provided for housing and sanitation to purchase alcohol and motorcycles. But it was the secretary who got a show-cause if the target was not achieved. Another GP secretary said that he enjoyed his work most when he got people's participation. Citing the example of PMAY, he said that if the beneficiary took initiative, all went well. But if the beneficiary was reluctant to complete the work, then the pressure of completing the targets was on the secretary. The secretary suggested that the government impose strict penalties on people who did not cooperate.

At times, when unable to communicate the problems on the ground to senior officials, workers ended up doing things that were not appropriate. For example, a beat guard said that labourers working for the department needed payment on a weekly basis, but the e-payment system could not deliver it. Consequently, labourers were not ready to work in the Forest Department's nurseries. But because of pressure from senior officials to get the job done within a specific time, the beat guard made false promises to villagers, and sometimes paid them an advance from his own pocket, though such a practice was discouraged by the department.

Technology and the Community

The use of technology for greater centralization, and its rapid introduction without adequate preparation, impacted people directly. In particular, in many instances, DBT caused considerable hardship. In one GP, in an FGD, poor people said that payments in MGNREGS had been delayed for months, while GP PRs and officials said that money had not been deposited from the state level. There was little that local officials could do to solve the problem. Several GP PRs and officials said that earlier, they had been able to address such issues by using funds from elsewhere to pay labourers and recouping the same later. But now, when MGNREGS funds were

not deposited in the beneficiaries' accounts on time by the government, the beneficiaries pressurized the GP, but the GP was helpless. As per an MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak:

'Payment in MGNREGS operates through computers. All the steps have to be followed sequentially. But people do not understand that the GP has no power, and accuse me of not transferring the money to their accounts.'

To quote a Sarpanch:

'Cash payments can lead to scams, but this happens in a very small number of cases. In DBT, the government appears to have forgotten that the poor need to buy food every day.'

In one sample GP, many people could not get pensions for lack of bank accounts. A GP PR explained that the bank in question covered 25 GPs, and maintained accounts of SHGs and school students' accounts along with the usual accounts. Hence, it did not prioritize opening bank accounts for the most needy and poor people. Moreover, in an FGD, people said that the technical problems in Aadhar had come in the way of receiving installments for PMAY, as the bankers did not allow release of funds to people who did not have an Aadhar card, and even to people whose Aadhar card had minor mistakes.

During the course of the fieldwork, problems in payment to farmers after procurement of paddy had become a big issue, and had led to demonstrations by farmers. The root cause of the problem was that payment had been made through an on-line system. The computer operators, not used to working in English, made many mistakes while entering names and payments were rejected by the software. This became a focus of farmer discontent. Similarly, forest officials said that the online transfer of wages to labourers was not smooth, and several people refused to work in the forest.

Similarly, students and parents spent a great deal of time for the direct transfer of funds for scholarships to students' accounts. In one sample school, some children could not open bank accounts in spite of repeated visits to the bank. Finally, the teacher accompanied them to the bank, and helped complete the procedures. But four students could not open bank accounts and had to forgo their scholarships. Moreover, while earlier actual school uniforms were provided to SC and ST students, the state had recently shifted to direct cash transfers. In all the sample schools, teachers reported that parents generally got one uniform set, and if it lasted, did not get the second. A few parents had to be asked repeatedly to get the uniforms, and some parents got uniforms of poor quality, and used the remaining money for other ends. In one school, children either wore old, and sometimes torn uniforms, or some other clothes. As the money was transferred centrally, there was little that teachers could do.

Rent-seeking

Widespread rent-seeking caused considerable harassment to the people, and deprived them of their entitlements. In such cases, government officials acted as oppressive tyrants, fleecing poor people to enrich themselves. In one FGD, people said that:

'We have to pay bribes for everything. For mutation, we pay Rs.500 to Rs.1,000, for caste certificates Rs.50, for residence certificates, Rs.1,000. In the government hospital, the big doctor doesn't take money, but the staff does. For a test which is supposed to be free, they charge Rs.10. When a child is born, the nurse and midwife ask for money for the good news. Some government doctors also ask for Rs.100 or Rs.50. The police ask for Rs.100 or Rs.50. The highest amounts are paid for land related issues.'

Moreover, in three sample villages, people reported that when they went to the forest to get firewood, to which they were entitled, beat guards snatched their axes and demanded money to return them. In one village, the amount demanded for returning the tools was Rs.80-100, while in another it was Rs.50-100. Similarly, the rampant illegal sand mining which the officials did little to stop, harmed the environment and people's livelihood. As per a ZP PR, in one instance, tribal farmers found that their land had disappeared, as sand had been dug from the sides of the rivers illegally.

Complaints

One outcome of this unsatisfactory state of affairs was that people complained often to supervisory officials (Box 8.6) as well as politicians, and complaints formed an important part of the community-administration interface. The community was generally suspicious of officials, and complaints could sometimes be unreasonable. In one GP, the MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak said that when she visited construction sites, and people could not find her in the GP office, they complained to the CM helpline.

Box 8.6: Common Topics of Complaints Received in District and Sub-district Offices of Sample Departments

Department	Common Complaints
Revenue	• Patwaris not providing land records, delays in land demarcation, • Problems related to other departments such as police not acting in criminal cases, people not getting rations, Panchayats and municipalities not providing services etc. • Complaints against private parties such as cases of violence against women, women not given due share in property, encroachment and dispute among farmers
Forest	• Delay in payment of wages to labourers • Delay in fulfilling the Nistar needs, especially bamboo.
Panchayat and Rural Development	• Not getting pension • Not getting benefits under schemes • Not getting payment on time
School Education	• Teachers not coming to school on time, poor teaching, carelessness and bad behaviour of teachers • Poor quality of mid-day meal • Lack of infrastructure • SMC meetings not being held • SHGs/ cooks not getting MDM funds on time • Private schools that parents want are not giving admission as per RTE, overcharging or other malpractices
Public Health	• Doctors not attending to patients, asking for money, negligence by workers
Women and Child Development	• Lack of AWC building and services • AWC not working properly
Public Health Engineering	Hand pump not being repaired on time
Cooperation	Complaints against the working of cooperative societies

Different Priorities

Officials often struggled with what they saw as the difference in the priorities of the government and the people. In the P&RD Department, PRs and officials at all levels said that motivating people to change their sanitation habits was extremely difficult. Similarly, PHE officials said that people bathed and washed clothes near the handpumps, which reduced water purity, and also damaged the platform. The tap water schemes of the GPs ran into problems as people did not pay the dues. These problems showed the lack of a good communication and education mechanism. The importance of such goals, where there was no real conflict of interest, could not be communicated effectively.

One sample department that was frequently in antagonistic contact with people was the Forest Department. Forest officials saw their role as protecting the forest, and viewed the villagers who depended on the forest for their basic needs as trespassers and thieves. For example, one beat guard interviewed said that neither the tribals nor the non-tribals should have any land documents in forest villages, as such documents encouraged them to encroach on more land. On the other hand, people who had depended on the forest for several generations, and met their daily needs such as for firewood from the forest, saw these as their rights. One beat guard remarked astutely that unlike other types of crime, people did not see forest crime, such as tree-felling, as crime. The community actually supported people who felled trees, and there was no fear of social isolation.

The Forest Department officials lacked the skills to negotiate the exercise of people's rights with the protection of the forest. For example, a point of conflict was grazing. Beat guards said that grazing was prohibited in the forest, while people believed that it was part of 'Nistar rights.' The truth was that grazing was allowed, but from time to time, banned in some areas when new saplings were planted. However, forest officials frequently imposed fines on people who grazed cattle in the forest. Yet, as noted above, the departmental officials were not above taking bribes for the same activities.

While beat guards were far more hostile to people than other government workers, they needed to maintain a reasonable relationship with the villagers, as they had to work together in the forest management committees, and in emergency situations such as sudden forest fires. Consequently, at times they compromised. For example, in one village, as per a traditional ritual, after the death of a family member, people cut a big tree and embraced it. The beat guard in charge said that people often asked him to allow them to cut a tree. In such cases, he requested them to take the leftover thick branches, or use old logs. Some people understood, whereas some did not, and cut a tree anyway. However, in the latter case, said the beat guard, it was almost impossible to file a case, as the entire village supported those who cut the tree. The beat guard said that in such cases, he ignored the crime and moved the tree to the depot, labelling it as a tree cut illegally by thieves. The compromise reached here was not a legitimate one, but one made because the law simply could not be imposed. Once again, inadequate efforts to communicate and educate were visible, and field officials could not negotiate to strike a balance between the rights of the community and the protection of the forest.

Another space where there was a different type of struggle with the community was the school. The teachers interviewed found it difficult to ensure that students learned, and saw many problems as emanating from the community. One problem, as described in chapter six, was that several students attended school irregularly, and teachers said the performance of students who were irregular was poor. Moreover, four of the five

teachers interviewed claimed that students and parents lacked interest in studying. They also blamed the no-detention policy, as students passed automatically and did not study for fear of being detained in lower grades. One teacher, though himself an ST, said that STs were quite backward. To quote:

'Even after getting support in many livelihood-generating activities, people are not able to construct a 'pucca' house, as they prefer to consume chicken and alcohol and beat women. Children are made to tend to animals and collect mahua. Parents do not check children's notebooks at home, or inquire about what they have learned. Most family members start drinking in the evening and a few are even drunk during daytime.'

The teacher went on to say that he had tried to get children to learn in many ways, cited real-life examples to make children understand etc., but had made little headway. He added that because he was a resident of the same village, people mocked him behind his back for lecturing to them. He was angry. He wanted the government and NGOs to create strategies to inculcate responsibility among the parents.In another school too, where almost all the students were STs, the teacher observed that most households were share-croppers and wage-labourers and asked the elder children to take care of the younger siblings when they set off for work. The teacher said that compared to 'normal' children, the ST children were naturally weak and did not have the desired atmosphere in their homes. Similarly, three teachers said that students did not do the homework assigned, and parents did not bother.

However, FGDs with people revealed a more complex picture. One was that the lack of job opportunities impacted the perceived value of education. In an FGD with poor men, people said that the younger generation was quite educated, five boys had passed college, and three had got diplomas from the ITI. But they were jobless. Two boys were working in the private clinic of a dubious doctor in the village and earned Rs.3,000 per month. When probed further, respondents said that though the government was doing many things for their children's education such as providing scholarships, free uniform, free books etc., in the end, there were no jobs.

But in spite of the lack of job opportunities, people were not indifferent to their children's education. They appreciated teachers who made an effort, and resented those who were casual. For instance, in the case of S4, which had highly motivated teachers, people said that they were very happy with their primary school, and reported that some children studied at night to complete homework. They were aware that their school was much better than that of other villages and said they felt good when they saw their children learning. Whenever the headmaster met them, he greeted them and spoke to them about their children. He generally reached school before the students. Whenever parents went to the school, they found the students studying. As noted above, in this school, children came to school with enthusiasm, and learned well.

Thus, people's enthusiasm about education depended on the quality of the school. But, as noted above, some teachers were not sincere. In one FGD, people complained that a teacher came to school by 12 noon, remained busy with her mobile-phone throughout, and left early by 3:30 pm. The children said that she spoke roughly with them. They planned to lodge a complaint against her and ask for her transfer. Moreover, teachers were overworked and burdened with extraneous tasks, and the actual teaching time in the schools was very small. In one FGD, people said that their primary school had only one teacher for all the five classes. He was not found in the school very often, as he had to go to the block office frequently to attend meetings and report. Much of the time, the teacher only scolded the children and the children were

learning nothing. People had stopped visiting the school, and were now on the lookout for private tuitions. In another FGD with women, they too expressed their unhappiness with the school, as the teachers came late and left early. Two respondents remarked that their children were not good in studies and the school too did not pay attention. To improve their children's education they were ready to send them to a private tutor.

Apart from the lack of sincerity and unfavourable working conditions, most teachers also lacked the skills to facilitate learning among children who did not have educational support at home. For example, one teacher tried to facilitate peer learning for students who did not perform well. He divided the students into sub-groups according to their skill and understanding level, and provided them with tasks like inter-group discussions. He said that the peer group exercises helped, as students were less hesitant with peers than in the whole class. However, the results were not satisfactory, the reasons for which were not clear to the teacher.

Community Forums

The government sought people's participation and also promoted and supported people's institutions. Representative institutions i.e. Panchayats, municipalities and cooperative societies have been discussed in previous chapters. In addition, ordinary people could participate in Gram Sabhas, and also various types of community based organizations set up by departments. However, the effectiveness of such forums was constrained because of top-down functioning, and lack of community participation. Moreover, given the context of poverty and lack of education, people's organizations needed intensive support before they could become effective.

Gram Sabha

The P&RD Department had directed that four mandatory Gram Sabhas (GSs) on dates of national importance be held. Among the four sample GPs, all had held four Gram Sabhas during 2016-17. However, in one GP, no records were maintained and in others the records were sketchy. Where records were available, attendance was very scanty, varying between12 to 80 people (Table 8.7). In FGDs, some people said that they did not attend the Gram Sabha as they stood to lose a day's wages, while others reported that they did not participate because the GP did not respond to their requests.

Table 8.7: Attendance in Gram Sabhas in 4 Sample Gram Panchayats

	Numbers of Person who Attended			
	GP1	GP3	GP4	GP5
Meeting 1	12	No records kept	55	40
Meeting 2	Not available	No records kept	More than 60	58
Meeting 3	19	No records kept	Not available	58
Meeting 4	45-50	No records kept	Not available	82

The GSs observed in the four sample GPs were top-directed. A scrutiny of the topics discussed as noted in the minutes of three GSs in each GP showed that the GS was a vehicle to discuss various government schemes and campaigns, and to transact GP business in the context of such schemes. Of the 31 topics that were discussed in 12 sample meetings across 4 GPs (Table 8.8), in 12 instances, information was provided about a scheme or campaign, or some direction from the top was conveyed. In 24 cases, the GP undertook the business where

Gram Sabha participation was mandated in schemes or there were centralized directions, such as to prepare a plan or collect tax. Only in four cases, more context-specific issues such as teachers not being punctual, malnutrition and sanitation were discussed. Thus in the GSs, schemes and directions dominated the agenda, and there was little space for participation.

Table 8.8: Issues Discussed and Action Taken in Three Sample Gram Sabhas

Issue/ Decision	Number of Times Discussed in 3 Sample Meeting				
	GP1	GP3	GP4	GP5	Total
Top Directed	2	4	0	6	12
Information provided about scheme	1	2		3	6
Plantation drive, Gram Uday se Bharat Uday programme	1	1		1	3
CM address telecast		1			1
Adhaar linked student ID				1	1
People asked to complete toilet construction				1	1
Panchayat Business	1	10	8	5	24
Approval of project proposals		3			3
Submission of applications in schemes, beneficiary list approved	1	4	2	2	9
Flag hoisting, tribute to Dr. Ambedkar			1	1	2
Tax collection, monthly subscription for tap water scheme		1	2	1	4
Selection of road sites		1			1
Social audit			1		1
Discussion/ approval of village development plan		1	1	1	3
Tap water scheme			1		1
Wider Issues	1	1	2	0	4
Schools, teachers not coming on time		1	1		2
Malnutrition			1		1
Village hygiene day celebrated, people informed of importance of sanitation	1				1

Community Based Organizations

While many departments had formed CBOs, in the sample villages, most were found to be dysfunctional and people were not even aware of them. For example, the 'Tadarth Samiti', to supervise the activities of ANM, ASHA and AWW, was not functional in any sample village. Similarly, the 'Gram Raksha Samiti', to prevent alcoholism and other type of drug abuse was inactive in all the sample villages. 'Shaurya Dal', constituted to sensitize the community about women's rights and address violence against women had undertaken no activities in any village. The two committees that functioned were the School Management Committee and Parents-teachers Association (SMC-PTA)[49] and the Forest Management Committees (FMCs).

[49] Known as Shala-Prabandhan Evam Paalak Samiti

In the SMC-PTA, as per government orders, the members included parents of students who performed well and teachers, with the head teacher acting as secretary. Among the five sample schools, in three schools meetings of the committee were held regularly and in one it was very active, but in two schools, the committee appeared dysfunctional. In one school, the SMC-PTA existed only on paper, and no meetings took place. In the second school, parents and teachers said that meetings were held, but there were no records of minutes, and members could not describe the discussions held.

In the third school, minutes of the meetings showed that the typical topics of discussion were hygiene, regular attendance of children and parents encouraging children to do homework. A meeting of the committee that the researcher witnessed (Box 8.7), showed that the meeting comprised of the teachers lecturing a few parents.

In the fourth school, which had two very committed teachers, meetings were held regularly. But though the SMC-PTA members appreciated the school and the teachers, they did not attend the meetings regularly. The initiative came from the teachers. In meetings, teachers exhorted the parents to encourage children to do their homework. But the teachers were disappointed with the SMC-PTA. They said that in a previous meeting they had requested the SMC-PTA members to talk to the GP about constructing a boundary wall around the school, but the members had not bothered. The teachers added that they repeatedly requested parents to attend the SMC-PTA meetings, and to taste the mid-day meal, but did not get an adequate response.

In the fifth, small forest village, the committee was very active. It was led by a person who had been a member of a voluntary organization that worked on education at one time, and had motivated parents to send their children to the school. The SMC-PTA too approached parents of children who were irregular to send them to school, though not always with success. In addition, the SMC-PTA supervised teachers for regularity and punctuality and counselled them if they came late. It intervened actively if the school faced problems. For instance, a few months before this study was conducted, when the midday meal ration was not supplied for two months, the SMC-PTA had contacted the fair price shop and borrowed grains. When the researcher interacted with the members, they were discussing the delay in provision money for school uniforms, and inadequate cooking fuel.

Box 8.7: A School Management Committee and Parents-teachers Association (SMC-PTA) Meeting

Among the parents, only five women attended, as they had been asked to watch their children performing at a school event, the Pratibha Parv, or talent festival, to felicitate children who got the best grades. The parents were asked to sit on the children's mats, while teachers sat on chairs. Teachers explained the importance of children's regular attendance at school, and parents' attendance on special occasions. The parents nodded. The teachers then asked them to motivate parents whose children attended school irregularly, to ensure that children attend school every day, and study at home. The parents nodded again. The meeting ended by teachers highlighting the significance of the Pratibha Parva and the head-teacher informed the attendees their children were doing well. The parents were then given a snack and the meeting ended.

Forest Management Committees had been organized in every forest village to improve the coordination between the Forest Department and the community and to resolve problems. The FMC comprised a president from among the people, the beat guard as secretary, and 20 members. Funds for various activities were deposited in the account of the FMC. The FMC was supposed to have a monthly meeting, but the beat guards interviewed admitted that the meetings of the FMCs were not regular or meaningful. One reason was that people either could not, or did not, participate actively. The beat guards too were casual. When one beat guard was asked about the records of the FMC, he admitted that he did not maintain them regularly, as no one from the community cared. When there was need to withdraw money from the committee's account, he asked everyone to sign, and they complied. Another said that it was not possible to take meetings of the committee regularly because of the increasing workload. But if something needed to be discussed urgently, the committee met at his house.

The essentially conflictual relationship between the department and the people made such committee meetings difficult to handle. One beat guard said that discussions in the FMC meetings revolved around the agenda of the department, i.e., the protection and management of the forest, activities needed in different areas, people's willingness to work in the nursery and coupe-cutting etc. People's issues, usually regarding delayed payment of wages, were ignored. Another beat guard said that villagers often said that the forest was theirs, and they should be allowed to use it as per their needs, and outsiders had no right to impose fines. They pointed out that the actual thieves and poachers who destroyed the forest always managed to escape. Since the beat guard could not answer such questions, he encouraged only selected members, who abided by the agenda of the department, to attend the meetings.

Self-Help Groups

In the sample block, considerable work had been done by PRADAN to organize and train self-help groups of women. The focus of these groups was on credit linkages and livelihoods generation, but they also undertook a range of activities related to governance. For example, in one sample village, poor SHG women had succeeded in getting a mini-AWC started in their hamlet. Earlier, children were enrolled in an AWC situated at a distance of a kilometer, across a river, and parents were reluctant to send their children to the AWC. The SHG women demanded a separate AWC for their locality, and with persistence, got a mini AWC started. Parents reported that they were happy as the children got supplementary nutrition, and were learning alphabets and numbers. They were now campaigning for a building for the AWC.

Similarly, in one sample GP, many SHG women had started attending and actively participating in Gram Sabhas. In one Gram Sabha, they proposed a tap water scheme, which had subsequently been installed. They had formed a good relationship with the active GP secretary. The GP secretary often discussed Panchayat matters with them and sought their support from time to time. In one village, women from the SHGs had held errant teachers to account. The incident was told by the women as below:

'One teacher used to come drunk to the school. We were afraid to complain. Then we organized the 'bais' (women) and all of us approached the teacher and asked him to teach the children. The teacher kept making excuses. We saw that telephone numbers of various officials were written on the school walls. So we called the BEO and complained. One day, when the teacher was not present, we called the BEO, who came to village and found the teacher absent without any authorization. Some journalists also came. The next day the teacher came to the school

and was very angry. He said that he had been in the school all the time. The next day, all of us went to the school at opening time. There was no teacher, so we locked the school, and called the BEO. The teacher's salary was withheld. He has now left.'

SHG women also said that when they approached an official as a group, no one dared to ask them to pay bribes, though in their individual capacity they were vulnerable like other citizens. Notably, the SHG groups had acquired these strengths after intensive training and support. Without such support, it was not easy for citizens to impact government. As SHG women said in an FGD:

'Everything, from improving teachers' attendance and punctuality to implementing the tap water scheme, installing hand-pumps in hamlets, requires a lot of investment of time and energy. Nothing gets done easily.'

Solving Problems

As noted above, government institutions were capable of undertaking simple tasks, but could not achieve complex goals. This made them poor problem solvers, as problems are, by definition, complex. The discussion below shows that the structure and functioning of government was an impediment in resolving important issues.

Livelihoods

As noted in chapter two, inadequate livelihoods was experienced as the most critical problem by people and PRs in the sample villages. During interviews, several officials too identified poverty and lack of livelihood opportunities as the most important problem of the people. However, no analysis of livelihood patterns for the district was available, as identifying context-specific problems and strategies was not perceived as a mandate by district officials. The initiatives in this direction were confined to national programmes, i.e., the Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojna or National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and MGNREGS.

In NRLM, some success had been achieved in improving the credit flow to the SHGs. However, when it came to creating and strengthening livelihood opportunities, little headway was made. The initiatives of the district administration were based on state level directions rather than grassroots planning. As per NGO representatives working in the area, one big lacuna was that there was no focus on improving agriculture, which was the main source of livelihoods for many poor people who were small and marginal farmers[50]. One initiative taken was to promote poultry, focusing on a local breed. But the types of institutions needed to undertake business activities had not been created, and realistic business plans had not been prepared. Consequently, the initiative had yielded little success. A second initiative was to get SHGs to supply goods that the government needed, such as school uniforms. However, this had got mired in controversies, as there were several inquiries about who had been supplied sewing machines, and on what criteria.It was alleged that local politicians had influenced the provision of sewing machines, and local officials had sought bribes. Several enquiries had been instituted. A small unit for making Agarbatti (incense sticks), employing 8 people, was functional.

Thus making a dent in the livelihood problem eluded the field administration because the analysis and strategizing that was needed was not undertaken. The programme was top directed, and field officials lacked the skills and autonomy to promote appropriate activities. Moreover, unethical practices had led to enquiries and slowed down the initiative.

In MGNREGS too, work was not available adequately, as targets had impacted the programme adversely. As noted in chapter

[50] Towards the completion of the study, there had been a change of strategy from the state level, and a focus on agriculture had been introduced

seven, in two GPs, the MGNREGS daily wage of Rs.172 was much lower than the wages of around Rs.300 received in private construction in the city and elsewhere. The PRs and officials said that no one in these villages was willing to work at MGNREGS wages. But there were strict directions to implement MGNREGS, each GP had been allotted targets, and officials feared losing their jobs if these were not fulfilled. Therefore they fudged data, showing more labourers on paper and paying fewer. However, in another sample village, people were forced to work for wages lower than MGNREGS, and the village functioned as a cheap labour bank for neighbouring areas. If the programme had worked as per needs rather than centrally set targets, as it was designed to, the outcomes would have been much better.

The limited manpower in the GPs was a constraint too. In one sample village no work had been started in MGNREGS for the last two years. When SHG women asked for work, they were told that the GP was busy with other matters. Moreover, wage payments were delayed, and as these were centralized, no redressal was possible locally. Consequently, many people hesitated in taking on MGNREGS work.

Drinking Water

The second important problem identified by people and PRs was of drinking water. Here, the splitting of government into numerous small sections came in the way. The core problem, as PHE officials and many PRs identified, was that the underground water table in the district was falling, and hand pumps etc. were drying up. But the branch of the PHE Department that was present in the district could do little about these issues. The officials admitted that, as was visible in the sample villages, many hand pumps did not work, as the water level kept falling. They were aware that without addressing the underground water table, there was little benefit from digging and repairing hand pumps.

One solution to this problem was greater use of surface water. But a separate state level agency was responsible for this and it had not yet started working in the district. The PHE officials thought that the Integrated Watershed Management Programme was taking initiative to improve the water table, but investigations revealed that the programme operated only in one block, i.e., the sample block, and was about to be wound up. The second solution was water conservation and rain water harvesting, but this was not being done with the speed required. The PHE Department was basically a technical department, and its staff for community mobilization was inadequate. At the same time, wide-spread rent-seeking exacerbated the problem. As per PRs and journalists, illegal sand mining was rampant, because of which the water spread, became more exposed to the sun, and evaporated faster.

Land Records

In the sample forest village, there was a grave problem of title to land. The residents of this village had been re-settled twice. As per the villagers, they were given land documents when they were resettled some 40-45 years ago. Some years ago, the Forest Department officials took every one's land documents for renewal. However, land documents were re-issued only to the ST landholders as per the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act 2008 (known as Forest Rights Act or FRA 2008). The rest were asked to show 75 years' residence records. The villagers provided a 75 year old man as witness, but the officials did not accept it as proof. The villagers alleged that they were asked to pay Rs.250 as bribe but were unable to do so.

Thus, the SC and OBC families continued to occupy the land, but had no papers. This meant that they could not get loans, benefit from agriculture development schemes or even get seeds and fertilizers from the co-operative society. The DC had visited the

village and directed the Forest Department officials to issue land records to the people who had been left out, but to no avail. During the course of the study, the DC changed, and in the Forest Department, during interviews, while district level officials said that the documents should be provided, the grassroots level officials differed, and no documents were provided.

As per field officials, in the sample tehsil, there was no land record of around 90 villages, so the measurement and demarcation of land was a big problem. As noted in previous chapters, many land maps were highly inaccurate. In addition, many powerful people were cultivating the land that rightfully belonged to ST families. As per the Patwari of one sample village, many tribals owned land, as much as 50 acres, as per records. However, their land had been alienated, as other people had taken possession of this land over time, despite their rights and entitlements.

These important land-related issues should have been the focus of the Revenue Department, but officials remained busy in various drives and campaigns that were considered the priority at the state level. Without the freedom to focus on these issue and take action, local officials could not address them.

Child Malnutrition

Though the government had created a wide network of institutions and services to address child malnutrition, the success in addressing it was limited. The issue was addressed as part of a pre-set scheme, rather than developing an understanding of the causes of malnutrition in the context of the district, and evolving appropriate strategies. The activities to address child malnutrition were fixed: provision of supplementary nutrition to children, identifying malnourished children, counselling mothers, and sending severely malnourished children to the NRC.

Yet child malnutrition is an issue that goes way beyond the remit of the AWC and the schemes of the WCD Department. To quote an active JP PR:

'Malnutrition cannot be resolved in this way. People should be consulted. You can't take away livelihoods and address malnutrition. The supplementary nutrition from the AWC is very minor.'

Additionally, because the context had not been taken into account, even the services provided were not availed fully by the people. First, as the attendance of children at the AWCs was poor, many children did not get the supplementary nutrition every day. Moreover, in many families, supplementary nutrition for mothers and children of the age group of six months to three years, provided weekly in packets, was cooked at one go and eaten by the whole family, or at least all the children in the family, who asked to be fed, and mothers could not refuse. It is possible that many members of the family other than children in the 0-6 age group were malnourished, and the WCD Department's approach of confining support to its client group made little sense in the family. Here, a flexible approach based on the whole family, rather than a set of pre-set initiatives for the target group may have been more effective.

Further, malnourished children were usually from very poor families, and the AWWs were often unable to meet their mothers during home visits as the latter went out for wage labour. Third, as illustrated above, AWWs were not very skilled in identifying malnourished children. The children referred by the AWWs to the NRCs were often refused admission, because they did not meet the criteria for severe malnourishment, and many beds in the NRC lay vacant. Moreover, as per the AWWs interviewed, mothers of severely malnourished children were unwilling to admit them to the NRC, as the Rs.70 per day paid at the NRC was much less than what they could earn. Further, it was difficult for

the women to leave their families. In any case, the NRC provided only a temporary solution. In one FGD, one respondent said that his malnourished child had got admitted to the NRC for 15 days and had improved. But as both he and his wife went to work outside the village, the child had become malnourished again.

As in the case of livelihoods, field level officials were not mandated and trained to study the context and evolve strategies. Two WCD officials interviewed expressed concern about the fact that malnutrition was not declining at the expected rate. Lacking the tools to investigate the causes of the problem, they could only wonder at the 'scheme' not working.

Sanitation

Sanitation was a major priority of the state government. The focus in the Total Sanitation Campaign was on making villages open defecation free (ODF), for which funds were provided to BPL families to build toilets in their homes. The sample block had been declared ODF. But the reality in the sample villages was different (Box 8.8). In four sample villages all the toilets had not been constructed, or partially constructed, and people had not received the money due to them. In all the villages, many people, estimated at 12%-40% across the villages by villagers, continued to defecate in the open, even when toilets had been constructed. One ZP PR interviewed alleged that the data had been manipulated to get an ODF declaration, and officials admitted that there had been pressure from the state level for the same.

The main focus then, was on construction of toilets, whether or not villagers were interested in using them, to enable a speedy declaration of 'ODF'. Some toilets were used to store cow dung cakes, wood etc. But even toilet construction was not complete, and was sometimes of poor quality. The pan broke or the outlets became clogged after a couple of uses. Additionally, in many cases, toilet use was difficult because of lack of water. In one GP, a public toilet complex was constructed, but only 50% of it was in use because of shortage of water.

Other sanitation practices were neglected. In all the villages, drains had been constructed along with the roads, but they usually remained clogged, and did not help in draining water. Waste water was disposed at homesteads. In one village, in some colonies, dirty water overflowed on to the roads. Garbage was similarly disposed at homesteads or even thrown on the road.

Only one sample GP had taken special initiatives. It had employed a sanitation worker, who cleaned the market, the GP building, and dead animals off the road. The GP had constructed a drain at the spot where the sewage water accumulated. A powerful person had encroached on the land and had obstructed the construction of the drain. The GP PRs complained to the DC, who issued a notice for evacuation. The powerful person then got the labourers manhandled. After a great deal of conflict, the GP succeeded. The GP had also taken initiative to clean the Kanji house (where animals stay), and the wells.

Box 8.8: Status of Toilet Construction and Use in Sample Villages

Village	Status
V1	According to the villagers, 15-20% households have half-constructed toilets, and the families are yet to get all the entitled money. Almost half the completed toilets are not being used for the purpose. Around one fourth of the villagers practice open-defecation.
V2	According to the villagers, almost 30-35% of households have no toilets or incompletely constructed toilets, and have not got full compensation. Around 35-40% of the population is practicing open-defecation.
V3	All toilets are not constructed completely, and nor have the families have got their entire entitled money. Around12-15% of the population is practicing open-defecation.
V4	There are no households without toilets, but almost in 15% households, toilet construction is not complete. Around 20-25% villagers practice open defection.
V5	All households have toilets, but 30-40% villagers practice open defecation.

Concluding Remark

The picture that has emerged of the working of government on the ground is that the substantial administrative structure, aimed at providing a very wide range of services, was able to provide the simpler services, while the more complex ones eluded it. Additionally, the play of patronage and rent-seeking within government robbed people of their entitlements.

The fragmented structure, inadequate human resources, and unproductive working processes led to grassroots institutions that did not have the capacity to address complex goals. Constrained by centralization and the rigidity of government schemes and procedures, grassroots officials could not respond to people's needs in many instances. Rent-seeking added a tyrannical aspect to their relationship with the people. People's institutions such as the Gram Sabha and CBOs were part of the same paradigm. Only in some instances, when there was a great deal of capacity building and support, as with SHGs supported by NGOs, could people impact the working of government substantially.

The presence of government in the field was one of infinite promise and limited delivery. The numerous schemes provided benefits that addressed many social groups, a wide variety of needs and different stages of the life cycle. These schemes raised people's expectations. But institutional weaknesses allowed the needs to be met only partially. And the result was sometimes paradoxical. In schools, children were able to get midday meals, free textbooks, student scholarships, but the quality of education was very inadequate. Children got a range of benefits, but missed out on the core one, a good education, that could enable them to break out of the cycle of poverty. Field administration was structured to function in a patron-client mode, and not as an agent to release productive forces in society. ■

9 LOOKING AHEAD

Introduction

The objective of this study was to analyze the working of field administration, identify fault lines and suggest strategies to improve its responsiveness to people. The analysis of the sample district showed that though the government provided a wide range of services, only simpler services, such as midday meals, PDS rations etc. were provided well. Complex services, such as education and health, were provided inadequately, and their quality was unsatisfactory. These outcomes were in turn related to the many problems in the administrative structure, i.e., fragmentation, disempowered local governments, lack of expertise in several areas, indifferent management of human resources, and overly centralized, hierarchical and rigid processes of working. In addition, wide-spread rent-seeking robbed people of their entitlements.

Notably, it is some time since serious thought has been given to field administration in India. Though the first two five year plans, formulated in the 1950s, focused on field administration extensively, i.e., how it should be structured, what kind of personnel should be employed, the role of local governments, and so on, subsequently, the discourse about field administration diminished, and at times, disappeared. Instead, as government activities expanded and new programmes were initiated by the central and state governments, especially the former, institutions, manpower and processes were introduced to implement them. Consequently, field administration developed in an ad hoc fashion, and a series of departmental 'implementation agencies' were created. At the same time, patronage-based functioning and rent-seeking increased steadily. In other words, the current status of field administration is an outcome of expanding government activity on one hand, and the neglect of institutions and increasing predatory practices of the state, on the other.

While the need to reform field administration is apparent, the question that arises is of the content of such reforms. This chapter addresses this question, but cannot provide definitive answers. First of all, this is the case study of one district, and ideally, strategy-formulation should follow wider research to confirm the findings and elaborate them. More important, to formulate a strategy, a separate exercise of deliberation is needed, in the form of consultation with a wide range of experts, policy-makers and practitioners in the government and non-government sectors. Lessons need to be drawn from other countries too. However, a beginning can be made by exploring possibilities, and this chapter may be viewed as ideas put out for scrutiny and consideration.

A Conceptual Shift

The first change that is needed to create a more responsive field administration is a conceptual shift. A question that needs careful consideration is that, are field institutions 'outposts' of the central and state governments, or a vital interface between government and citizens? To the extent that field administration is conceptualized merely as a set of agencies to implement government programmes and directions, its fragmented structure, low-skilled and poorly paid grassroots workers, lack of analysis and strategizing about local issues, and poor accountability mechanisms, follow. In this frame, the thinking has been done at the central levels, and pre-designed activities need to be carried out. Field organizations do not need to analyze and strategize, and

do not need to be equipped for it. The role of local government becomes marginal, as no decision-making is visualized locally.

However, as this report has shown, only simple goals are achievable with such an organizational structure, and responsiveness to people is whittled. No centralized strategy or programme can foresee all the contingencies on the ground, and even less so in a highly varied Indian context. In fact, in this study, it became clear that even a fairly simple exercise such as DBT requires local intervention. If field level institutions are bound by centralized directions and cannot adapt to the situation, then 'poor implementation', that so bogs down government initiatives in India, can be expected. If officials are busy chasing targets, rather than addressing people's real needs, then useless assets can be created. If teachers cannot adapt their teaching to students' learning, then many students may never learn.

The role of field administration is, in many ways, a balancing act. It is framed by national goals, such as increasing agriculture productivity, ending child malnutrition, improving sanitation etc. But, these goals have to be given concrete shape in collaboration with the community, in specific contexts. Moreover, there are context-specific needs. There are areas where water is very scarce, others where malnutrition is high, and still others where crime against women is rampant, and so on. Thus each national goal needs a contextual re-articulation. Moreover, the role of field administration needs to be seen as serving the community, and not just following orders from above. Further, evolving strategies in the local situation is a complex task. The local situation has to be understood and analyzed, strategies formulated and changed as per the feedback from the ground.

Consequently, field administration needs to be envisaged as an organization, or a set of organizations, that are capable of comprehending and analyzing the local situation, formulating context-specific strategies, taking decisions, implementing them, and changing strategies as needed. In this conceptualization, many of the current practices, such as the marginalization of local governments, splitting work across a large number of departmental offices, the lack of a coherent unit below the district level, poorly skilled grassroots workers, gaps in expertise, excessive centralization, hierarchical functioning, are clearly handicaps. The field organizations that would fit the bill would have a high level of skills to analyze, strategize and execute. They would have mechanisms for intensive community feedback and accountability. Such organizations would need a fair degree of autonomy, to continuously adapt strategies, and to use funds as per local needs and priorities.

Consequently, reform of field administration is not a matter of introduction of a few new processes or safeguards. More fundamental changes are necessary.

Structure

Among the key structural changes needed, the first is to clarify the role of local governments, as against the present system of articulating one role on paper, and another in practice. As seen, in this scenario, the capacity to coordinate is reduced, and Panchayat Representatives remain dissatisfied, which increases conflict within the system. A key asset of Panchayats is that they have PRs of marginalized sections of society, who often fight for their area. Additionally, PRs are aware of, and sensitive to, people's needs, and many are highly motivated. With disempowered local governments, these advantages are lost. Moreover, at the field level, the local governments are the legitimate decision-

making forum. Consequently, an important structural reform would be a clearly defined role of local governments to lead socio-economic development and more autonomy to take context-specific initiatives.

However, empowerment of local governments is likely to yield limited results in the absence of other structural changes. As shown in the study, below the district, departments have created different geographical units. The lack of a single unit below the district, where all departments have a presence, would make coordinated action difficult even by local governments. Consequently, stable administrative units below the district need to be created, common to all departments, unless there are some very strong reasons for a separate unit. Such common units would be led by empowered local governments and can become forums for local strategizing and decision-making.

An issue that needs some deliberation is whether two layers of sub-district units are needed or only one[51]. This would depend on the size of the district as well as the residential pattern, i.e., whether people live in small villages scattered across a large area, or in large ones in a compact area. In case of small districts and large villages, one sub-district layer of administration may be adequate, while in case of large districts and small scattered villages, two sub-district layers may be needed.

Similarly, the categorization of the geographical area into rural, urban and forest, for different administration styles and government initiatives, too needs to be re-examined. The 'rural' area is actually extremely differentiated: villages near urban areas are very different from villages that are far from such centres, and the two may require different types of initiatives. For example, the approach to livelihoods in the two cases needs to be very different. Similarly, forest villages are not forests, but villages where people live. Farmers in such villages need land records, as in revenue villages. Thus government initiatives need to incorporate a more nuanced understanding of specific area needs.

The organizational structure of the field administration need not mirror that of the departments at the state level. As illustrated in this report, as each department sets up its 'own' implementation structure, half the departments have no outreach below the district level. Though this study did not include a detailed analysis of the working of any such department, a department which has one office or institution for more than 12 lakh people cannot be expected to be effective. Moreover, many organizations with one or two skill sets are created, while the work that they do requires a much wider range of expertise. Instead of each department setting up a separate implementation structure in the field, five or so field organizations, addressing a cluster of similar subjects, can be created. All departments can work through these organizations, and they can each be provided with suitable expertise and a capable leader.

The broad areas for which such organizations can be created are:

- Law enforcement and general administration
- Agriculture and allied livelihood activities
- Infrastructure development and maintenance
- Social services and welfare
- Revenue collection

This would improve coordination, and allow expertise and resources to be shared. For example, client-focused departments, such as SC and ST Welfare, can provide inputs to a range of subject-focused departments, such as education, health, and so on, instead of

[51]The recommendation of the Asoka Mehta Committee that examined Panchayats, was for only two layers of Panchayats, at the district, and at the 'Mandal', a unit smaller than the block.

replicating their activities in a few subjects. Instead of each department having its own engineers, accountants etc., small teams can be available in such organizations, to service several departments. These organizations can be strengthened with needed expertise, such as legal experts and social communicators and mobilizers.

From among the above organizations, the ones focused on socio-economic development and social services and welfare can be led by local governments, and those concerned with law enforcement and revenue collection can be led by officials. Coordinating mechanisms in the form of committees, rules and processes for resolving conflict among organizations can be created too. The DC can have an important role in coordination and conflict resolution, but not have a say in the day-to-day working of the organizations led by local governments.

Each organization can have an outreach at all the sub-district units of administration, up to the sub-block level, along with coordinators parallel to the DC. The result would be that solid sub-district units of governance, including a sub-block level unit, would come into existence. This would deepen the outreach of government services, and create a mechanism for decision-making and response at the local level.

Human Resources

As this study showed, human resource management is an area where reform is essential. The structure of human resources in field administration is based on the assumption that the lowest level of skills are needed at the grassroots, as field employees are seen as followers of orders. Moreover, in the last two decades, the salaries and other service conditions of grassroots employees have worsened. However, as this report shows, grassroots workers deal with complex situations, and perform difficult tasks. Teaching children from non-literate backgrounds, providing civic services in a village, running a centre to address malnutrition, health and education of small children, are tasks that require a high level of skills. Consequently, there is no logical reason to envision grassroots workers at the bottom of the hierarchy, and the status of grassroots workers within government needs to be much higher. Particularly, poorly paid grassroots workers, who agitate constantly for better working conditions cannot be expected to work optimally.

At present, to improve governance, greater 'monitoring' of grassroots workers is emphasized, and they are required to submit several reports and attend numerous meetings. But the answer may lie in strengthening the implementors themselves, and providing them with more decision making authority, rather than monitoring them. Monitoring is a secondary activity, and can rarely undo a shoddy or indifferent piece of work. Even the best monitoring is limited by the skills of grassroots workers. For instance, no amount of supervision can really remedy bad teaching. The focus instead should be on providing a highly skilled, empowered and motivated teacher. As more skilled grassroots workers are employed, the monitoring layers can be reduced. Moreover, the skilled grassroots workers need to have more autonomy to exercise their judgement in specific contexts.

However, a caveat in case of grassroots workers is that when the focus is on recruiting people with the best qualifications, people from urban areas get hired, and start wrangling for urban postings. Consequently, a careful balance has to be struck to ensure that local workers are hired. Fortunately, well qualified people are available increasingly in rural areas. Where they are not, intensive post-job training for local workers can be considered as an option.

Second, the expertise needed for many tasks is simply not available in the field. Expertise in field administration comprises mainly of engineers, doctors, other medical staff, teachers, accountants, and in recent years, information technology specialists. There is a general lack of expertise in three key areas: human resource management, law and community contact and mobilization. These gaps reduce the effectiveness of government institutions. Expertise in human resource management is needed to manage the substantial government workforce rationally and support it, to improve the approach to work. Moreover, if human resource issues are handled better, employees may not approach the courts as much for personnel related matters as they do at present.

The study showed that field employees constantly take decisions that have important legal implications, but do not have access to legal experts. In the study, some employees expressed the need for legal advice. Appropriate legal expertise at the field level may prevent many complications. Similarly, the importance of expertise in community contact and mobilization cannot be overstated. This study showed that teachers and AWWs were unable to convince parents about the importance of regular attendance of children, Gram Panchayats struggled with making people attend to sanitation, PHE officials could not convince people to keep water sources clean and conserve water, and so on. Moreover, many very poor people could not access services even when these were available. Clearly, a much stronger community outreach is required. Units of effective social mobilizers and communicators with the various field organizations, using different kinds of media, could go a long way towards providing correct information and making government interventions more effective.

While it is difficult for each department to create special human resource management, legal and community mobilization cells, in a smaller number of organizations in the field as proposed above, this expertise can become available. Moreover, as noted in the study, specialist departmental offices lacked management expertise. With more integrated organizations, this can also be addressed. At the same time, as this study showed, some departments lack even core expertise. For example, eliminating child malnutrition is an important goal of the WCD Department, but there are no nutritionists in the department. Such specific expertise gaps need to be mapped out across departments and addressed.

As in the case of grassroots employees, a word of caution is needed about the induction of expertise. Most 'experts', when visualized solely in terms of formal educational qualifications, tend to be urban, and are unwilling to work in rural areas, as in the case of doctors. Moreover, in areas such as social mobilization, expertise needs to be highly context specific, and understanding of, and empathy with, the community is essential. Consequently, 'experts' in field administration need not necessarily have advanced educational qualifications. They can also be people who have acquired context-specific knowledge about a subject matter by working on the ground. Additionally, the creation of more mechanisms for accessing expertise such as advisory committees and hiring experts on short-term contracts can be useful too.

Third, the present trend of reducing the number of government employees, in the context of increasing financial outlays, needs to be reversed and rationalized. The cost of 'saving' money on human resources needs to be calculated. The water testing laboratories without personnel and primary health centres without doctors in the sample district were hardly cost-effective. Rather, infrastructure had been created, but could not be used for lack of adequate personnel. In particular, the practice of simply not filling up posts as employees retire is dangerous,

as critical posts concerned with basic needs, such as of medical staff and water supply technicians, remain vacant. The financial outlays in infrastructure development, school education, health and other developmental and social welfare activities are now substantial, and hopefully, as the economy continues to grow, will increase. Inadequate investment in human resources can render them ineffective.

Fourth, an effective system to motivate employees needs to be developed. At present, the promotion avenues for field level employees are very limited, because separate services of grassroots employees and supervisory employees (sometimes more than one service for such employees) exist. Dead end jobs with no promotional avenues, such as that of an Anganwadi worker, need to be wound up. Employees need to be provided greater opportunity to advance in their careers. If well qualified personnel are recruited at the grassroots, better promotion channels can become feasible. Secondly, patronage based postings create a perverse incentive structure. Employees benefit by pleasing powerful patrons, not by working hard. In such a system, even capable people do not perform optimally, because the incentive to do so is lacking. A fair and transparent posting criteria needs to replace the current system of acquiring and pleasing patrons[52].

Finally, the training of employees needs to be more focused, especially for those at the grassroots. The current practice of training employees for various programmes and campaigns needs to be replaced with a training structure based on acquisition of appropriate knowledge and skills, while allowing employees some room to choose training programmes as per their perceived needs. The scope of this study did not extent to assessing the quality of training provided, which needs a separate investigation.

Infrastructure and Equipment

This study showed that some grassroots employees did not have any working space at all, though they were required to do paper work, while some worked in poorly maintained buildings. The buildings of several grassroots institutions, especially the AWCs, were in poor condition. Additionally, many government offices, especially at the sub-division and block level, did not have adequate toilet and drinking water facilities. Very few offices were clean, and no government office had made any serious attempt to provide facilities for the differently-abled. Such infrastructure de-motivates workers. In addition, it gives a negative message to the people. If government offices are not clean, and do not provide facilities for the differently-abled, they put a question mark on the government's emphasis on sanitation and its programmes for the differently-abled.

Moreover, though supervisory officials and grassroots employees were expected to do a great deal of touring, officials other than the district heads generally did not have vehicles, and some grassroots employees were not even reimbursed their travel expenses. This is tantamount to a tacit acceptance of the fact that they will either not do any touring, or will make money unethically. The impact of these behaviours on the outcome of government initiatives can only be deleterious. Once again, government on the cheap, is expensive.

Finance

As argued above, the goal of district administration needs to shift from merely implementing directions to evolving context-specific strategies and addressing people's needs. The importance of greater financial autonomy follows. For socio-

[52] This has been done in the case of teachers in some states, such as Andhra Pradesh, with positive results.

economic development and welfare, a shift away from the current regime of schemes, to providing untied funds to local governments, to be spent as per context-specific plans, is essential. This would lead to more equitable allocation of resources too. As noted in this study, one dynamic of the local governments is that representatives from socially deprived groups fight for their areas and issues. As more resources are allocated to local governments, their utilization is likely to become more equitable.

However, in the study, a trend towards greater financial centralization was visible. As it is, at the grassroots, institutions generally had no or few funds to take up needed repairs, equipment etc. Sometimes, grassroots employees spent from their pocket to meet such expenses. Additionally, in the two years prior to the study, in some departments, all spending had been concentrated at the district level, with the result that in sub-district offices, even the smallest activities required long processes and wait.

The focus on direct transfer of funds to beneficiaries and service providers too needs to be seen in this context. DBT is based on the assumption that only specified, centrally-directed activities will be undertaken. It cuts out any scope for local planning and strategizing. The study found that while at times, DBT cut out rent-seeking at the local level, it also meant that problems in payments etc., could not be sorted out locally, though people blamed local Panchayat representatives and officials. It also remains to be seen whether DBT will actually reduce rent-seeking, or, over time, as is usually the case when rent-seeking is sought to be fixed through changes in procedure, simply change the loci and methods of rent-seeking. At the very least, where DBT does appear useful, better feedback loops need to be built, along with some room for action by local officials.

Working Style

The working style of the field administration reflects the working ethos across government. Extreme centralization, hierarchical functioning, and indifference to feedback from the field, pervade all levels of government. Moreover, while at the national level, and somewhat less at the state level, there is some effort at accessing knowledge, analysis and consultation with experts, at the field level, this is non-existent. As the study showed, field agencies did not attempt to analyze the situation, or learn from strategies that have worked in their context.

To some extent, greater autonomy of local governments and local field administration can ameliorate this problem. Pressures from the people are felt much more keenly at the field level than at centralized levels, and if local governments are in charge, and are given some autonomy, more context-specific strategies will emerge. Greater autonomy would help in reducing non-productive processes and paper work too, which are the outcomes of centralization. However, processes of analysis and thinking through issues would still need to be introduced. Autonomy does not guarantee local solutions, unless matched with an attempt to understand the problem, formulate a strategy and change it as per feedback.

Notably, in spite of the numerous rules and procedures outlined in government, there are no protocols for how decisions should be made, officials supervised, coordination ensured etc. In other words, the working style of government officials is left to their personal preference. If they want, they can consult experts, take decisions after considering various options, support junior employees to work better, and be open to feedback from the community. However, they are equally free to do no analysis, take decisions mechanically, bully their subordinates, and ignore people's

problems. No signals are given to officials to nudge them towards more productive and responsive working styles.

To counter this, some broad protocols for working methods can be developed, to include situational analysis, consultation, weighing pros and cons, managing junior officials, taking feedback etc. Development of such protocols itself would be an important signal. Further, employees will need to be trained to work along these protocols and given feedback on their working styles.

Use of Technology

As noted in the study, in the current scenario, there is emphasis on greater use of technology, especially digital technology, to improve the working of government. The study showed that the use of technology can enhance efficiency. However, it cannot resolve fundamental problems such as inadequate human resources, or hierarchy-based functioning. The exclusive attention on technology, while ignoring core problems, is counterproductive. Moreover, as technology is introduced very rapidly, the processes suffer from glitches, and this actually slows down important work, and deprives people of their entitlements. Further, the study showed that digital technology had been used to centralize further, and the space for meaningful work had been reduced.

Deliberation and feedback about the activities for which technology creates real efficiencies needs to replace the blind enthusiasm about it. Each technological innovation needs to be assessed and refined before it is taken to a wider scale, and the ones that do not improve efficiency need to be dropped. A slower, but surer roll out, with all the processes worked out, would be more useful.

Accountability

At present, accountability is sought to be introduced through greater centralization, e.g., practices such as increased day-to-day monitoring. As this study showed, centralization does not lead to accountability. False data can be provided, and real issues may be missed altogether. Moreover, rent-seeking nexuses make vertical accountability meaningless. Because of the failure of centralization as an accountability mechanism, in the last decade and a half, the focus had shifted to creating new mechanisms of accountability to citizens, through RTI, social audit etc. These are crucial, but the study showed that ordinary people are not able to use them without a great deal of support, and follow up action is not ensured.

It needs to be recognized that internal as well as external accountability mechanisms are important. External actors can usually access only outcomes, and it is difficult for them to identify where and how negligence and malpractice have occurred. Consequently, accountability within the system should not be ignored. However, accountability has to be viewed as separate from centralization, and more detailed, systematic and transparent reviews have to replace commands, data and reports. External accountability mechanisms to citizens too need to be strengthened. In particular, unless action on irregularities discovered through processes such as social audit is ensured, these can become meaningless, and people can lose interest.

A very important issue for accountability is rent-seeking. It is difficult to tackle, as it is not practiced by a few grassroots employees, but is a whole sub-system in which large networks of government functionaries at various levels are involved. It is doubtful if rent-seeking can be tackled at the field-level if it is not addressed at higher levels of

government. However, two major changes can be made. One, as suggested above, is to systematize the transfer and posting system, which facilitates rent-seeking networks. The second is the establishment of institutions such as the Lok Pal in the field. But, both these initiatives assume a commitment to end rent-seeking, especially from the state government, which has so far not been visible in the field.

Necessary and Sufficient Reforms

In this report, the exploration of the working of field administration has followed a sequence logical for investigation, i.e., beginning with the role and structure of district administration, followed by human, infrastructure and financial resources, after which the working ethos and processes have been explored, and finally, the manner in which government initiatives play out on the ground has been scrutinized. It needs to be stressed however, that the importance of reforms in these areas is different from the sequence of investigation. Moreover, without some key changes, other reforms would be pointless.

The two areas in which reforms are essential for any other change to be meaningful are human resources, and the informal system of patronage based functioning and rent-seeking. No amount of structural change, streamlining processes, and even decentralization, is likely to have an impact unless these two issues are addressed. If government officials do not have adequate expertise and motivation, then they will not be able to deliver in any type of structure. And, if there is rampant rent-seeking, as today, the subversion of government goals, diversion of funds, and harassment of ordinary people will follow. In such a context, any change in working procedures will simply be adapted for rent-seeking. If more autonomy translates into more autonomy for rent-seeking too, no real gains will ensue.

For this author, it is all too easy to imagine a scenario wherein structural changes may be made without appropriate changes in human resources, working styles and stemming rent-seeking. India has a long history of creating new structures, called missions, societies, projects, etc., at various points in time. Such structures deliver for a while, because they are usually created to fulfil some urgent national goal, and are therefore manned with capable personnel with integrity and allowed a degree of autonomy, or at least, their leaders have the support of the authorities. However, over time, as government priorities change, the usual practices of patronage-based appointments and unproductive processes take over.

Thus without the necessary reforms to strengthen human resources and eliminate rent-seeking, other reforms can become meaningless. These necessary reforms will not be sufficient, but they are the backbone of the key changes needed in field administration for more effective and responsive governance. ■

ANNEXURES

Annex A: Detailed Topics Studied

- Socio-economic profile including caste, community, gender composition, power relations, major occupations and sources of livelihoods, status of agriculture, industry, service sector, poverty, social infrastructure available, key socio-economic problems.
- Structure of field administration and local governments including types and number of government institutions, penetration of institutions.
- Role of various institutions including role of local governments and departments, perceived role, activities undertaken.
- Human resources, including structure of bureaucracy, numbers, expertise, service conditions of officials, social background and educational qualifications of PRs, role perception and motivation of PRs and officials.
- Infrastructure and equipment in institutions and offices such as office building, seating space, meeting room facilities etc., mobility, computer, telephone, stationery etc., digitization and automation availability.
- Finances available and financial process such as sanctions, disbursements etc.
- Working style including the working ethos, goal and priority setting, planning and strategizing, data and information use, processes of technical consultation, digitization and automation used, supervision, challenges faced and problem solving, politics and its role in Panchayats and bureaucracy, rent seeking, accountability.
- Interaction between government and community, including access to services and the quality of services provided, type of contact and interaction between government officials and local government representatives with the community, accountability to the community.

[53] https://secc.gov.in//statewiseTehsilEmploymentAndIncomeReport

Annex B

Table B.1: Employment, Income and Asset Ownership as per SECC 2011 Data[53]

	Sample District	Sample Tehsil
Ownership of Land and Agriculture Equipment		
Households with land	43.58%	28.36%
Households owning mechanized 3 or 4 wheelers equipment	7.97%	10.68%
Households owning diesel equipment	16.67%	17.05%
Main Source of Household Income		
Cultivation	31.70%	18.74%
Manual casual labour	58.38%	62.23%
Part-time or full time domestic service	1.48%	2.57%
Foraging and rag picking	0.08%	0.03%
Non-agricultural, own account enterprise	0.33%	0.20%
Begging, charity, alms collection	0.52%	0.33%
Others	7.51%	15.88%
Households with Jobs and Registered Enterprises		
Households with salaried jobs	6.53%	12.75%
Households with government sector jobs	4.46%	9.07%
Households with public sector jobs	0.26%	0.60%
Households with private sector jobs	0.56%	3.09%
Households that own an enterprise registered with government	1000	227
Monthly Income		
Monthly income of higest earning member is less than 5,000	75.26%	79.32%
Monthly income of higest earning member is Rs.5,000-Rs.10,000	14.71%	11.45%
Monthly income of higest earning member is more than Rs.10,000	10.04%	9.23%
Asset Ownership		
Households having motorized two/three/four wheelers and fishing boats	24.05%	23.01%
Households having 2-wheelers	20.53%	20.10%
Households having 3-wheelers	0.23%	0.53%
Households having 4-wheelers	3.13%	2.18%
Households having motorized fishing boat	0.17%	0.20%
Households own a refrigerator	7.08%	13.14%
Households own a landline phone	0.14%	0.11%
Households own mobile phone only	54.32%	52.11%
Households own both landline and mobile phone	1.02%	2.44%
Household without any phone	44.52%	45.34%

Source: https://secc.gov.in//statewiseTehsil EmploymentAndIncomeReport

Table B.2: Land Holding Size as per Agricuture Census 2010-11

	Sample District	Sample Tehsil
Average size of individual and joint land-holdings	2.26 hectare	1.94 hectare
Total number of farmers	1.36 lakh	0.17 lakh
% Marginal farmers (less than 1 hectare)	32.45%	35.52%
% Small farmers (less than 2 hectare)	29.92%	32.13%
% Semi-medium farmers (2-4 hectares)	22.95%	21.51%
% Medium farmers (4-10 hectare)	13.18%	10.06%
% Large farmers (more than 10 hectares)	1.51%	0.78%

Source: District Statistical Handbook 2016, District Agriculture Census Handbook 2016

Table B.3: Irrigation, Soil, Crops and Fertilizers in Sample Villages

	Irrigated of cultivated area	Soil	Crops Grown	Fertilizers Used and Availability
V1	71.4%	Mixture of black and sandy soil, with good productivity.	Kharif: Maize, Black Gram, Paddy, Moong, Sesame, Pigeon Pea Rabi: Bengal Gram, Wheat, Lentils, Small Sweet Peas In homesteads, Cherry Tomatoes, Flat Beans, Brinjal, Chili, Cucurbits, Gourds Leafy Vegetables like Spinach, Amaranthus etc.	DAP, urea, herbicides, pesticides Available at nearby cooperative society to land owners. Share croppers and leasers buy from farmersw
V2	36.5%	Soil in sandy and coarse and productivity is low.	Kharif: Maize, Black Gram, Paddy, Sesame, Pigeon Pea Rabi: Bengal Gram, Wheat, Moong, Lentils, Small Sweet Peas in homesteads, Cherry Tomatoes, Flat Beans, Brinjal, Chili, Cow Peas, Cucurbits, Gourds and Leafy Vegetables like Spinach, Red and Green Amaranthus, Fenugreek, Garlic Leaves etc.	DAP, urea, ashes from burning crop residue. Available at cooperative society to land owners. STs often buy from market, as they do not get information on time.Share-croppers buy from land owners and market, and are not able to get adequate amounts.
V3	37%	There are three types of soil, black soil, reddish-yellow soil with sandy texture, and sandy soil, with varying productivity.	Monsoon: Soybean, Maize, Black Gram, Paddy, Sesame, Pigeon Pea Winter: Bengal Gram, Wheat, Moong, Small Sweet Peas in homestead Across seasons: Cherry Tomatoes, Flat Beans, Brinjal, Chili etc.	DAP, urea, and ashes from burning crop residue. Available at cooperative society to land owners.Share-croppers buy at higher prices from the market.
V4	60.5%	There is a mixture of black soil and sandy soil, with high productivity.	Kharif: Soybean, Maize, Black Gram, Paddy, Pigeon Pea Winter: Bengal Gram, Wheat In homestead, Cherry Tomatoes, Flat Beans, Brinjal, Chilli, different types of Gourds and different Leafy Vegetables like Spinach, Red and Green Amaranthus etc.	Urea, DAP Available at cooperative society to land owners. Share-croppers buy at higher prices from the market.

	Irrigated of cultivated area	Soil	Crops Grown	Fertilizers Used and Availability
V5	50%	There are three types of soil, sandy, black and gravelly soil, with varying productivity.	Monsoon: Maize, Paddy, Pigeon Pea, Black Gram Winter: Wheat, Bengal Gram, Small Peas, Rai Mustard, Summer: Moong, Watermelons, Musk Melons, Cucumbers, English Skinny Cucumbers.	Urea, DAP Available at cooperative society to land owners. But farmers also buy from the market. As many people do not have land documents, they do not get fertilizers from the cooperative society.

Table B.4: Non-Agricutural Economic Activity and Employment in the District

Type of Industry/ Enterprise	Number of Industry/ Outlets	Employees (Daily Average employment)	Jobs	Employees
Food	65	2,200	Gazetted Officer Class-I	204
Wood	57	754	Gazetted Officer Class-II	722
Non-Metallic	05	440	Non- Gazetted Officer Class–III	7,002
Shops	9,854	NA	Non- Gazetted Officer Class–IV	1,430
Commercial Institutions	2,562	NA	Contractual	670
Hotel	1,029	NA	Casual	554
Cinema Hall	6	NA		

Source: District Statistical Handbook 2016

Table B.5: Main, Marginal and Non-Workers of Sample District, Block and Villages as per 2011 Census

	Sample District	Sample Block	Sample Villages				
			V1	V2	V3	V4	V5
Total Population	12.41 lakh	1.30 lakh	6003	4678	3365	1048	789
%Total Workers of Total Population	38.51	41.01	34.53	44.40	38.28	41.70	56.27
% Male Total Workers	72.25	67.67	79.69	63.99	69.33	62.70	52.03
%Female Total Workers	27.75	32.33	20.31	36.01	30.67	37.30	47.97
% Main Workers of Total Workers	75.65	62.95	83.84	23.98	54.35	34.32	51.58
% Main Male Workers of Main Workers	80.14	78.25	82.39	75.50	78.43	69.33	69.87
% Main Female Workers of Main Workers	19.86	21.75	17.61	24.50	21.57	30.67	30.13
%Marginal Workers of Total Workers	24.35	37.05	16.16	76.02	45.65	65.68	48.42
%Male of Marginal Workers	47.77	49.70	65.67	60.35	58.50	59.23	33.02
%Female of Marginal Workers	52.23	50.30	34.32	39.71	41.50	61.67	66.98
%Non-Workers of Total Population	61.49	58.99	65.47	55.60	61.72	58.30	43.76
%Male of Non-Workers	39.74	40.91	37.76	42.06	39.43	42.06	47.83
%Female of Non-Workers	60.26	59.09	62.24	57.94	60.57	57.94	52.17

Table B.6: Types of Main and Marginal Workers as per 2011 Census

	Total Workers	% Cultivators	% Agricultural Labourers	% Household Industry Workers	% Other Workers
Sample District	4.78 lakh	24.36	38.05	2.09	35.49
Sample Block	0.53 lakh	18.82	49.08	1.53	30.57
V1	2,073	13.89	28.65	2.19	55.16
V2	2,077	13.14	68.46	0.72	17.67
V3	1,288	10.56	45.81	1.55	42.08
V4	437	13.04	66.59	1.14	19.22
V5	444	35.36	58.56	0.45	5.63

Annex C

Table C.1: Main Laws, Rules, Codes, Schemes, Plans, Institutions and Assets of Sample Departments

Laws and Rules	Central/ State	Scheme	Central/ State	Plan	Grassroots Institutions and Assets
Revenue					
Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code 1959: Has detailed principles and procedures regarding management of rural land	State	None		None	Land
MP Public Trust Act 1961: Provides principles and procedures regarding management of public trusts	State				
Prevention of Food Adulteration Act 1954	Central				
Land Acquisition Act: Provides for process of acquiring private land for public purpose	State				
Revenue Book Circular: Guidelines related to land and other issues	State				
Forest					
Indian Forest Act 1927: Defines various types of forests, regulate movement of forest produce, levy duties, defines forest offence and fines	Centre	None			Forest Area and Resources
Wildlife Protection Act 1972: Provides for protection of wild animals, birds and plants	Centre				Nistar Depots
Biological Diversity Act 2002: Provides for preservation of biological diversity and mechanisms for equitable sharing of benefits arising from use of traditional biological sources and knowledge	Centre				
Timber Transportation Act 2001: Regulates movement of identified forest produce, especially timber through permits	State				
The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers Act 2008: Provides rights of people traditionally living in forests over land and other resources	Centre				
Panchayat and Rural Development					
Panchayat Act: Has provisions for elections, powers and functioning of Panchayats	State	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme Supports labour intensive works on the basis of public demand	Centre	Plans as per schemes in ZP and JP, plans by GPs.	Not clear

Laws and Rules	Central/ State	Scheme	Central/ State	Plan	Grassroots Institutions and Assets
Panchayat and Rural Development					
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Act: Guarantees the right to work	Centre	Total Sanitation Campaign: Supports construction of toilets in private and public places and other sanitation measures	Centre		
		Prime Minister Awas Yojna: Supports provision of housing for persons without houses or with kuchcha and tiny houses	Centre		
		Deen Dayal Antodaya Yojna-National Rural Livelihoods Mission: Supports organizations of the poor such as SHGs to enable them to enhance their livelihoods and access social services.	Centre		
		Panch Parmeshwar: Funds are provided to Panchayats to develop rural infrastructure	State, using 14th FC funds		
		Integrated Watershed Management Programme: Provide for protection of high-quality natural resources to enable sustainable development	Centre		
		CM Arthik Kalyan Swarozgar Yojna: provides small loans for setting up businesses etc.	State		
		Pension schemes: Several schemes provide pensions to the vulnerable, such as the elderly, widows, differently abled etc.	Centre and State		
School Education					
Right to Education Act: Ensures right of every child to access school from grades 1-8, minimum teachers and facilities in school, and makes it mandatory for private schools to reserve 25% seats for children of deprived groups	Centre	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan[54] : Aims to provide equitable and quality education to children of 6-14 age groups. Provides funds for teachers' salaries, training, school infrastructure, free textbooks school uniforms etc. and education of differently abled children and encourages community participation	Centre	Plan is prepared under SSA and RMSA	Schools
		Midday Meals: Supports provision of mid-day meals in schools	Centre		
		Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan: Restructuring and Reorganization of Supports interventions to provide new schools, teachers, school infrastructure etc. for secondary education	Centre		

[54] Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan have recently been integrated into the 'Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan'.

Laws and Rules	Central/ State	Scheme	Central/ State	Plan	Grassroots Institutions and Assets
School Education					
		Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher Education Supports one DIET in each district, to conduct a pre-service D. Ed. course for elementary education, in-service training, research etc.	Centre		
		'Niji Dandata Yojna': people can make donations to the schools.	State		
Public Health and Family Welfare					
Pre-conception and Pre-natal Diagnostic Techniques Act 1994: Aimed to stop female feticides and arrest the declining sex ratio	Centre	National Health Mission: Funds are provided for a range of activities for maternal and child health care, to control and eradicate various diseases such as vector borne diseases, leprosy, TB, blindness, iodine deficiency, communicable diseases, non- communicable diseases, etc., immunization, care for the elderly, mental health, AIDs control etc.	Centre		Health Centres
Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act 1971: Aims to provide comprehensive abortion care and make safe abortion available	Centre				
Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act 2010: Aims to regulate all clinical establishments and provides for registration and standard treatment guidelines for common diseases and conditions.	Centre				
Mental Health Care Act 2017: Aims to provide health care to mentally ill and ensure their rights	Centre				
Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940: Ensures that drugs and cosmetics sold are safe and healthy	Centre				
Women and Child Development					
Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015: Provides for care, protection and rehabilitation of children in conflict with the law and children in need of care and protection	Centre	Integrated Child Development Scheme: Targeted at children in 0-6 year age group and pregnant and lactating mothers. Provides nutrition, health and educational interventions through supplementary nutrition, vaccination, health check-ups, advice and reference, early childhood education (3-6 years)	Centre	No plan is prepared	Anganwadis
Domestic Violence Act 2005: Provides for enabling justice for women affected by domestic violence and relief measures.	Centre	Atal Bihari Vajpayee Child Health and Nutrition Mission: Funds district-specific plans to reduce child mortality	Centre		

Laws and Rules	Central/ State	Scheme	Central/ State	Plan	Grassroots Institutions and Assets
		Sneh Sarokar Yojna: Public representatives, community, traders, industrialists are motivated to adopt severely malnourished children	State		
		Integrated Child Protection Scheme: Targeted at children in need of care, victims of exploitation, in legal trouble. Provides for child care centres, information dissemination, counseling etc.	Centre		
		Beti Bachao Abhiyan: To protect and empower girls, preventing feticide, protecting girls and ensuring their education, provides for communication and publicity	Centre		
		Sabala: Aimed at adolescent girls of 11-18 years, provides for supplementary nutrition, health education, supplements, check-ups, referral and, guidance for life skills, vocational education under Skill Development Programme and access to social services	Centre		
		Ladli Laxmi: For girls in families with less than two children, provides funds after the girl completes various levels of study	State		
		Swaagat Laxmi: Promotes acceptance of girls as equals in society, counters gender discrimination, promotes respect for women etc.	State		
		Usha Kiran: Provides for establishment of 'One Stop Centres' for victims of domestic violence. Centres provide temporary stay, legal and police aid, health benefits, 24-hour helpline, economic help, training	State		
		CM Women Empowerment Scheme: Women in difficult circumstances i.e. victims of violence, released from jail, divorcees, without economic support are provided training to earn livelihoods	State		

Laws and Rules	Central/ State	Scheme	Central/ State	Plan	Grassroots Institutions and Assets
Public Health Engineering					
Nil		National Rural Drinking Water Programme: Provides safe drinking water and water for domestic use to villages that do not have adequate water supply and to schools, Anganwadi centres and other government offices in rural areas	Centre	Plan is prepared as per scheme provi-sions	Hand pumps
		Piped water supply in bigger villages: In villages with population over 2000, piped water supply is provided where GPs propose	Centre		
Cooperation					
Madhya Pradesh/ Chhattisgarh Cooperative Societies Act and Rules: Regulates the formation and functioning of cooperative societies	State	Integrated Cooperative Devel-opment Programme: projects are prepared and approved for strengthening the cooperative sector.	Centre	No plan is prepared	Public distribution shops

Table C.2: Committees of Sample Departments

Department	Committees
Revenue	Nil
Forest	There are no district and block Committees. At the Gram Panchayat level, there are Forest Protection Committees to protect forests, prevent illicit tree felling, hunting and encroachment, put out forest fires[55]. Members include the beat guard of the area and 12-13 members from among villagers
Panchayat and Rural Development	Panchayats committees are provided for in the Panchayat Act. There are no separate departmental committees.
School Education	District Level • District Unit: Approves annual plan, meets once a year; DC is the chair and DPO is the member secretary; Departmental officials, MLAs, ZP and Municipality chairpersons are members • District Grants Committee: Approves grants for NGOs; Chaired by DC, DPO is member secretary • District Purchase Committee: Makes purchase for SSA; Chairperson is ZP chairperson and members are district officials and two state level representatives • District Appointment Committee: Appoints Jan Shikshaks Chairperson is DC and member secretary is DEO • DIET Development Committee: Oversees the working of DIETs; DC is the chair and DIET Principal is the member secretary; Members are CEO ZP, EE PHE, DEO, three principals of government colleges and higher secondary schools, one social worker and two D. Ed. student representatives School Level • Shala Prabandhan-Paalak Samiti (School Management and Parent-Teacher Committee): To monitor all activities of school, regularity of teachers and students, learning levels, etc.; Comprises teachers, guardians, Sarpanch and ward members
Public Health and Family Welfare	District level Health Committee: Formulates strategy; DC is chairperson and DMO is member secretary. Officials of various departments are members.
WCD	District Level • District Monitoring Committee: Reviews the working of ICDS. Meets every three months; DC is the chair and DPO is the Member Secretary; ZP CEO, DEO, CMHO are members • District Level Child Protection Committee: Attempts to locate parents of children without guardians and facilitates adoption • Meets every three months; DC is the Chair and DWEO is the Member Secretary; Members are SP, Labour Commissioner, DEO and social worker • District Women Health Committee: Oversees women's health issues; DC is the Chair and DWEO is the Member Secretary; Members include WCD, PHE and Health officials

[55] These include the Eco-Development Committee constituted within five kilometres from the outer boundary of National Parks and Sanctuaries; Van Suraksha Samitee or Forest Protection Committee constituted within the range of five kilometers of degraded dense forest and Gram Van Samitee or Village Forest Committee within the range of five kilometers of forest.

	Block Level • Block Monitoring Committee: Reviews the working of ICDS; Meets every three months; SDM is the chair and CDPO is the member secretary; Janpad CEO, BMO, and BEO are members • Block Level Child Protection Committee: Attempts to locate parents of children without guardians and facilitates adoption; meets every three months; SDM is the chair and BWEO is the member secretary; Members are BRC, Janpad chairperson, social worker; Representatives of police and labour department are also present • Block Women Health Committee: Oversees women's health issues; SDM is the chair and BWEO is the member secretary; Members include WCD, PHE and Health officials Village Level • Village Health and Sanitation Committee Role is to improve the AWC and health and sanitation in village; Responsible for spending Rs.100 per quarter, and Rs.600 for Mangal Diwas and Rs.200 for Bal Choupal; Sarpanch is chair, AWW is member secretary, Panches, ANM and ASHA are members • Village Child Protection Committee: Committee informs about orphans, children who have run away, children in bonded labour; Sarpanch is chair, AWW is member secretary, ANM and ASHA are members • Gram Raksha Samiti: Role is to prevent alcoholism and all types of abuse within the village; No particular criteria for selection, anyone can join
Cooperation	District level Gaban aur Dhokha Dhadi Committee: To deal with cases of embezzlement and other types of irregularities; DC is the chairperson; Registrar Cooperative Societies is member secretary and the SP and Cooperative Bank chairperson are members.

Annex D

Table D.1: Reasons for becoming Panchayat Representatives

	Number of Times Stated by Panchayat Representatives Interviewed			
	GP	JP	ZP	Total
To do good work	4		1	5
Asked by contesting Sarpanch to stand	1			1
To work for the poor, raise voice of people in forums	1	1	1	3
Fed up of misdeeds of previous GP, and wanting to do good work	2			2
As per husband's directions, seat reserved for women	3	2		5
Wife Sarpanch, to manage GP through her	1			1
Not available	1			1
Total	13	3	2	18

Table D.2: Qualifications and Experience of Grassroots Staff Interviewed

	Patwari	Forest Guards	GP Secretary	MGNREGS Rozgar Sahayak	Teachers	ANM	AWW	Sub engineer PHE	Technician PHE	Manager LAMP	Total
Qualifications											
Postgraduate	2	1			4		1				8
Graduate		3	3	2	1		1			2	12
Nursing Diploma						1					1
Civil Diploma								1			1
ITI Diploma									1		1
Class11/12			1			3	1				5
Class 10						1					1
Grade 8							2				2
NA	2										2
Total	4	4	4	2	5	5	5	1	1	2	33
Experience											
Less than 5 years				1			1				2
5-10 years	1	1	2			1	1				6
10-15 years	2	3	1		1	1	1				9
15-20 years	1					1	1			1	4
More than 20 years			1		4	2	1			1	9
NA				1				1	1		3
Total	4	4	4	2	5	5	5	1	1	2	33

Annex E

Table E.1: Infrastructure and Equipment in Sample Offices

Name of Office	Sitting Space	Equipment	Facilities	Facilities for disabled
Revenue				
Collector Office	The building is new and in good condition; there is adequate seating and other space.	There is a fire alarm system; there are thirty ACs, an intercom system, two sound systems	Separate facilities for men and women; Drinking water is available; Office and toilets are clean	Ramp is available
SDM	There is no meeting hall or space to organize meetings of field cadres; the SDM court is cramped and there is no fence in the campus; condition of building is good	Furniture is available and in good condition; SDM has a vehicle; There is a telephone and a computer; Stationery is supplied by tehsil office	Separate toilet facilities for men and women are available; Drinking water is available; The office is clean	Ramp is available
Tehsildar	There is no meeting hall to take meetings of field cadres; condition of building is good	Adequate furniture is available; There is no for a vehicle; it is hired when needed; Computer, telephone facilities and photostat are available	Separate toilets for men and women; Drinking water facility is available; Office is clean	Ramp is available
Forest				
DFO	The building is new; there is sufficient space for workers and visitors	There is adequate furniture in good condition; Vehicle is available; Computer, telephone, stationery are adequate	There are separate toilets for men and women; Drinking water is available The office is clean	Nil
SDO	The building is in good condition; there is sufficient space for workers	There is adequate furniture in good condition; A vehicle is available Computer, telephone, stationery are adequate.	Toilet and drinking water facilities are available; The office is clean	Nil
Panchayat and RD				
Zilla Parishad	The building is of good quality and maintained properly; it houses several offices; there are separate rooms for each RD programme;	Furniture is sufficient for existing staff; Vehicle is hired on contract; Computer, telephone and stationery are available,	Separate toilets are available for men and women; the facility for women is not good; Facility for drinking water is good; Building is clean;	Except for a ramp there is no other facility
JP	There is a double storied building with sufficient space for employees and visitors; building is in good condition	There is adequate furniture in reasonable condition; Vehicle is hired on contract; Computer, telephone and stationery are available	Separate toilets are available for men and women but are not in good condition; Facility for drinking water is good; Building is clean	Except for ramp there is no other facility.

Name of Office	Sitting Space	Equipment	Facilities	Facilities for disabled
School Education				
District Education Centre	The office runs in an old building, but it is well maintained; some 4-5 employees sit in one room and when there are visitors, employees are disturbed	There is adequate furniture in good condition; The office has two vehicles, one owned and one hired There are three computers in good condition; There is adequate stationery	There are separate toilets for men and women, but these are not clean; There is a water cooler. Building is clean but toilets are dirty and water from the water cooler spills on to the floor of the verandah	No facilities
DIET	The building, with a campus of ten acres, has three training halls, a principal's room, staff room, library, classrooms, hostel, teachers' quarters etc. But many rooms are kept locked as there is very little staff. The building is dilapidated: the roof leaks, windows and doors are broken, and there is no electricity; the residential quarters are not in good condition. There is no hostel for male trainees and they stay in the teachers' quarters	Furniture is old, and not repairable; Vehicle, telephone, computer facilities and stationery are available In the library no journals have been received for one year, and no books bought since 2012	There are separate toilets for men and women but the women's toilet is in very bad condition. Out of the six toilets in the women's hostel, one is usable There is a tank for drinking water, but no person to clean it. Except for the principal's room and a lecture room, there is no cleanliness; in the grounds, there is vegetation up to the waist level; sometimes snakes are seen in these; the lab is filled with rain water Water tanks in the hostel do not have enough capacity; there are no arrangements for trainees to eat	There are no facilities for the disabled, the stair steps are steep
BEO	The building is newly constructed and there is adequate space for employees; building condition is very good	There is adequate furniture There is no vehicle, officials use their own vehicle; There is a computer and stationery, no telephone	There is a clean toilet Drinking water is kept in a pot; The office is clean	No facilities for disabled
BRC	The building has one hall and four rooms, which provide adequate seating; there are cracks in the wall and in the ceiling; there is an open area within the building for a garden, but it has just 2-3 plants, it is not tended to	Furniture is inadequate, there are not enough chairs; There is no vehicle, employees use their own vehicles; There is no telephone; There are two computers and adequate stationery	There are separate toilets for men and women, but no signboards on these; the toilets are dirty; There is no water supply in the building, water has to be fetched from outside and stored; The office rooms are clean, but the garden is not	There are no facilities for the disabled

Name of Office	Sitting Space	Equipment	Facilities	Facilities for disabled
Public Health				
CHMO	The building is in good condition; there is adequate space for all to sit	There is adequate furniture to sit; There are five vehicles, ten computers, two telephones and adequate stationery	There are separate toilets for men and women; Water cans are brought in for drinking water; Office is clean	No facilities
CHC	The building is new and modern, but the doors of the toilet are broken; some of the staff sits in the old building which is in a bad shape; there is adequate seating space	Furniture is adequate and in reasonable condition; Computers and telephone are available. There is stationery, but it is inadequate	There is a water cooler but it is out of order; water from the hand pump is used; There are separate toilets for men and women; there is no water in the toilets. As the doors are broken people, especially women, cannot use them. The building is not clean.	There is a ramp at the main door of the new building.
WCD				
DPO	There is adequate space to sit, but the floor is broken, there is no meeting hall; The furniture is inadequate	There is one vehicle; There are computers, telephone, and adequate stationery	There is one toilet for men and women; There is no drinking water facility; a can is procured from outside, and the whole staff drinks from this can; The office is not clean.	The office is on the ground floor, so disabled people don't have a problem. There are no special facilities for the disabled
CDPO	There is adequate space to sit, but there is no meeting hall. The condition of the building is not good.	The furniture available is sparse and in poor condition; There is a vehicle; There are computers a telephone and adequate stationery.	There is one toilet, which is not in good condition; floor is broken, there is the problem of water, lack of cleanliness; There is no cooler; drinking water is stored; The office is not clean	No specific facilities for the disabled, but the office are on the ground floor, so the disabled don't have too much problem.
DWEO	The office is in a rented building; there is adequate space for all employees and the building is in good condition	There is adequate furniture in good condition; There is a vehicle on contract, computer, telephone, and adequate stationery	There is one toilet; There is drinking water facility, water cooler, RO; The office is not very clean	There are no facilities for the disabled

Name of Office	Sitting Space	Equipment	Facilities	Facilities for disabled
WCD				
BWEO	One room has been provided by the department. It is in poor condition; there is water seepage from the walls; the floor is broken	There is adequate furniture in good condition; There is no vehicle There is a computer but no telephone, there is adequate stationery	There is a toilet but it is not clean There is no water facility; water is fetched from outside and stored; There is lack of cleanliness	There is no facility for the disabled.
PHE				
Executive Engineer	There is not enough space for all employees to sit; the building leaks in many places; because of this the whole building is dirty, the office needs repair	The furniture in bad shape. Even the chairs for the visitors in the rooms of senior officers are in bad condition; There is a vehicle There are computers, though these are old, and have poor speed; there is a telephone, adequate stationery and a photocopier	There is one toilet; the toilet is dirty and needs repair; the taps leak. There is no good drinking water facility in the office; employees get water bottles from home	There are no special facilities for the differently abled, though the office is at the ground floor
SDO	There is a small building in which the SE's office is housed; in a small room in that building, the SDO's office functions; the space is inadequate; earlier, there was space, but now all except one room has been taken by the SE's office; the building needs repair.	The office has no vehicle, all employees use their own vehicle; There are no computers and no telephone; There is no stationery, or budget for the same	There are no toilet and drinking water facilities	There are no facilities for disabled
Cooperation				
DMO	The office is in a rented building; the condition is good, but seating is cramped	There is adequate furniture in a reasonable condition; Vehicle, computer, telephone, stationery are available	There is one toilet, it is clean; Drinking water is available through taps	There are no facilities for disabled

Table E.2: Revenue and Expenditure of Sample Gram Panchayats in 2016-17

(Rs. in lakh)

Revenue					Expenditure				
	GP1	GP3	GP4	GP5		GP1	GP3	GP4	GP5
Own Revenue	0.25	0	0.03	0	Roads	6.73			12.81
Own revenue by renting GP building		0.43			Tap water				0.11
ZP/ JP member funds	4.5	0	0.50	5.86	Solar Light			0.74	
MLA fund	0	0	1.50	0	Various construction works			11.5	
Tap Water Scheme	223.0			0.11	Labour payment in MGNREGS			1.5	
Panch Parmeshwar	33.08	21.80	12.0	13.85	Schemes			0.50	
Construction for WCD	1.5			-	Events and Incidentals				2.80
Total	262.33	22.23	14.03	19.82		6.73	Not Available	14.24	15.72
Percentage expenditure						2.6		64.1	79.8

Annex F

Table F.1: Number of Children and Malnourished Children in Anganwadi Centres in Sample Villages

Total number of children in Anganwadi Centres		% Malnourished children in Anganwadi Centres	
No. of children	No. of Anganwadi Centres	% Children Malnourished	No. of Anganwadi Centres
20-29	2	0-5	0
30-39	5	6-10	3
40-49	10	11-15	5
50-59	2	16-20	3
60-69	2	21-25	2
70-79	3	26-30	3
80-89	1	30-35	1
90-99	1	35-40	2
		40-45	0
		45-50	1
		NA	6

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AG:	Accountant General
ANM:	Auxilliary Nurse Midwife
APO:	Assistant Project Officer
ASHA:	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWC:	Anganwadi Centre
AWW:	Anganwadi Worker
BJP:	Bhartiya Janta Party
BDO:	Block Development Officer
BEO:	Block Education Office
BLO:	Booth Level Officer
BMO:	Block Medical Officer
BPL:	Below Poverty Line
BRC:	Block Resource Centres
BSNL:	Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited
BWEO:	Block Women Empowerment Office
CAC:	Cluster Academic Coordinator
CBO:	Community Based Organization
CDPO:	Child Development Project Office
CEO:	Chief Executive Officer
CFC:	Central Finance Commissions
CHC:	Community Health Centre
CHMO:	Chief Health and Medical Officer
CM:	Chief minister
DBT:	Direct Benefit Transfer

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DC:	District Collector
DEO:	District Education Officer
DFO:	District Forest Office/ Officer
DIET:	District Institute of Education and Training
DMO:	District Marketing Officer
DPC:	District Programme Coordinator
DPO:	District Programme Office
DWEO:	District Women Empowerment Office
EE:	Executive Engineer
FGD:	Focus Group Discussion
GP:	Gram Panchayat
GS:	Gram Sabha
HQ:	Head Quarters
IAS:	Indian Administrative Service
IAY:	Indira Awas Yojna
IEC:	Information, Education and Communication
ITI:	Industrial Training Institute
JP:	Janpad Panchayat
JSK:	Jan Shiksha Kendra
Km	Kilometre
LAMPS:	Large Area Multipurpose Society
MDM:	Mid-day Meals
MFP:	Minor Forest Produce
MGNREGA:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

MGNREGS:	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Scheme
MIS:	Management Information System
MLA:	Member of Legislative Assembly
MP:	Member of Parliament
MPPSGA:	Madhya Pradesh Public Service Guarantee Act
MPW:	Multi-Purpose Worker
MUAC:	Mid Upper-Arm Circumference
NGO:	Non-Government Organization
NHM:	National Health Mission
NRC:	Nutrition Resource Centre
NRHM:	National Rural Health Mission
OBC:	Other Backward Caste
OPD:	Out Patient Department
P& RD:	Panchayat and Rural Development
PAC:	Public Accounts Committee
PACS:	Primary Agriculture Cooperative Society
PDS:	Public Distribution Sysytem
PHC:	Primary Health Centre
PHE:	Public Health Engineering
PMAY:	Prime Minister Awas Yojna
PR:	Panchayat Representative
PRO:	Public Relations Officer
RI:	Revenue Inspector
RTE:	Right To Education

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

RTI:	Right To Information
SC:	Scheduled Caste
SDM:	Sub Divisional Magistrate
SDO:	Sub-Divisional Officer
SECC:	Socio-economic Caste Census
SHC:	Sub-Health Centre
SHG:	Self Help Group
SLR:	Superintendent Land Records
SMC:	School Management Committee
SMC-PTA:	School Management Committee cum Parent Teacher Association
SSA:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
ST:	Scheduled Tribe
VLSS:	Village Large Service Societies
VSS:	Village Service Societies
WCD:	Women and Child Development
ZP:	Zilla Parishad

Why are many citizens dissatisfied with government services in India?

Why do government programmes for the poor deliver sub-optimally?

If we want to change these outcomes, is it enough to blame politicians and bureaucrats, or do we need to look deeper?

This case study of administration in a district examines systemic issues that come in the way of optimal government functioning. It does not give definite solutions, but it highlights issues that we, government officials and citizens, need to think and talk about. It also provides pointers to how we can change this state of affairs, by exploring and debating the problems honestly, and taking action to address the core problems of the working of government at the grassroots.

The Author: Rashmi Sharma is a former Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer and currently a senior visiting fellow at the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER). At present, she is engaged in researching and writing about the structure and working of government, with a focus on the grassroots.

प्रदान Pradan PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE FOR DEVELOPMENT ACTION

European Union