CMGGA
Chief Minister's
Good Governance Associates
for a progressive Haryana

An Outlook For
CHANGE

Collective Research from the Field: CMGGA 2016-18

A collaboration between Ashoka University and Government of Haryana

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Contents

PREFACE

In 2016, a unique initiative in the form of Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMGGA) Programme was launched as a collaboration between Ashoka University and the Government of Haryana. The Programme engages young professionals to work across 22 districts in the state towards promoting transparency, efficiency and citizen-centric service delivery. The programme aims to create thought leaders of tomorrow with critical thinking and analytical skills through the experience gained in one year of the fellowship. The CMGGAs have ideated and facilitated reforms which have the potential of making the lives of lakhs of citizens better. The programme is proving to bring sustainable impact on ground and driving a social change.

> *"When I look back at two years of the CMGGA Programme, I believe the results of my original vision have been surpassed. I hear that the CMGGAs have been continuously putting efforts for some wonderful initiatives. They have supported some of the brightest and most talented officers in Haryana's administration, right from Deputy Commissioners to Administrative Secretaries in diverse departments."* – Chief Minister, Haryana

The strength of the CMGGA Programme is in its structure. This one year Programme follows a field and forum approach. Associates spend six to eight weeks in the field in their respective districts, following which they gather together at a forum at the Ashoka University campus to collate their findings, brainstorm solutions and prepare their recommendations for the Chief Minister's Office.

As part of CMGGA programme, the associates worked on a wide range of programs and achieved impressive success over the years. Antodaya Saral made more than 400 services accessible by any citizen through a single portal. Saksham Haryana has been focusing on improving the quality of education by inducing participatory learning approach to make students of elementary schools 80 percent grade level competent. The sex ratio has been increasing each year under Beti Bachao Beti Padhao initiative. Various innovative initiatives under Swachh Bharat campaign have been implemented across districts.

"CMGGA was envisioned as a programme that would leverage the energy, creativity and skill of the youth to work on state priorities and push good governance. The impact of the CMGGA Programme is palpable. The Associates create on-ground momentum for new ideas, and serve as a channel for genuine feedback between the district administration and the Chief Minister's Office. They've identified best practices in their districts and tracked the progress of various schemes on the ground." – Dr. Rakesh Gupta, Programme Director, CMGGA

Being an academic partner, Ashoka enables students to become fully equipped with the skills such as critical thinking, effective communication and understanding of multiple-perspectives. It also provides a multi-faceted platform for an important component of education – Research. While the CMGGAs have being working continuously on the ground in a fast-paced environment, research allowed them to pursue big ideas and make discoveries that will enrich the outside world with promising innovations and deeper insights into creating social impact. The associates were supported by members of the CMGGA research team on submitting dissertations. The dissertation work allowed them to analyze a problem area and generate evidence based recommendations. The dissertation topics cover a myriad of sectors from rural development, women empowerment, enhanced citizen delivery and many more.

"The synergies built between research, learning and in-depth discussions through the CMGGA platform will surely evolve students to excel in future. We are looking forward to create research models through various avenues in the coming time, which will place our students at par with global standards." – Vineet Gupta, Founder and Trustee of Ashoka University

This document compiles the work done by CMGGAs in 2018-18 that would allow readers to recognize existing societal issues and how solutions were curated to inspire change.

EDITOR'S NOTE

Between 2017-18, I was one of the Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMGGA) in Haryana. As I edited the research papers in this book, I recollected the collective experiences of the associates and how over the course of the year each of us embarked on a thought process which continues toinfluence our interactions with people. The CMGGA experience enabled us to perceive the reality of the district often with a deep sense of understanding of constraints that impede good governance. We were able to develop and hone our sense of empathy by virtue of our close interactions with people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. A CMGGA could travel in the Haryana Roadways in the morning and by the evening she could be discussing the future of Haryana with the chief minister. You can't help but grow with such an experience.

This research compendium deals with a wide array of themes. It wonderfully projects the ever-widening possibilities to think about change and development in society. The strength of the research lies in the use of rich primary data. The credibility the CMGGAs enjoyed in the district helped them take assistance for their research from the field staff, the youth in the district interning with the district administration, who also acquired new skills in the process. Often it was their position in important social networks in the district that made some interviews possible and ensured the success of any survey they conducted for their research work. The CMGGAs benefitted greatly from a role that connected them to every government department of the district.

In chapter one, Bhaskar Rochak presents an analysis of the effectiveness of various modifications in the social security pension schemes introduced by the state government in Haryana. Through rich empirical data from Sonipat district, he demonstrates that there are multiple factors that can contribute to poor policy performance.

Redressal of grievances has been a priority for the state government. In chapter two, Robin Keshaw studies CM Window—a technology based intervention—effectiveness by recording the citizen experience of using this facility.

Some of the associates consciously chose to work on issues related to gender disparity in their districts. In chapter three, Shailaza Mayal provides a fascinating new study on women's participation in local governance and why reservations alone will not improve their involvement in local governance.

A focus on innovative thinking is the cornerstone of the CMGGA experience. Khush Vachhrajani and Abhinav Vats have illustrated this through two innovative pilots they initiated in Faridabad and Palwal respectively. In chapter four, Abhinav provides

the case study of SUPER Village Challenge in Palwal district and, in chapter five, Khush presents the working of the Faridabad Education Council and how the unique model can help improve learning outcomes.

As CMGGAs, we had the unique opportunity to be part of various district level meetings. In chapter six, Kritika documents the current procedure of POCSO Act implementation by conducting workshops in all the 22 districts of Haryana.

Some CMGGAs were specifically concerned with structural reforms leading to improve efficiency of the staff. In chapter seven, Nilanjana Sen presents a study of the constrained implementation of separation of law and order from investigation duties at the police station level in Kurukshetra. She provides a working model to effectively separate these duties and introduce a shift system for those engaged in the law and order wing of the police station.

Chapter eight and nine presents two case studies by the first CMGGA batch of 2016. The first case study details processre engineering in the state transport department and in the concluding chapter a detailed analysis of the working of the CM window is provided.

Each Associate is indebted to Ashoka University for the support it provided to pursue research as part of this programme.

– Nilanjana Sen

The Evolution of the Social Security Pension Scheme Models in Haryana

Bhaskar Rochak

ABSTRACT

This paper is a study of a government to citizen service delivery model in Sonipat district, Haryana. In this study, I analyse the effectiveness of the multiple modifications in the citizen service delivery model of the social security pension schemes introduced by the Government of Haryana over a period of 11 months, between July 2017 and May 2018. The modifications in the policy design have been introduced by the government to strengthen the implementation of the standard operating procedures (SOP) of the schemes and to optimise the citizen experience while availing benefits of this schemes. The study aims to capture the implementation status of the schemes by using the experiences of 359 citizens – currently availing one of the four social security pension schemes: Old Age Pension, Widow Pension, Handicap Pension, and Financial Assistance to Destitute Children, spread over 336 villages and 4 municipal zones of the district. Also, all the beneficiaries interviewed were enrolled under their respective pension schemes during the time period of the study, i.e. July 2017 to May 2018. The experiences of the citizens were adjudged based on an extensive questionnaire designed to capture the steps followed by them during the application and disbursal phase of the social security pension schemes, the compliance with the established SOP at the government to citizen touch-points, and the level of awareness among the citizen about the SOP. The study analyses this separately for rural and urban areas of Sonipat and undertakes a comparative analysis of both. Lastly, the study identifies the weak spots in the revised model and suggests structural changes in it. It was found that a wide degree of diversion exists in the implementation of the citizen service delivery model from the SOP. Multiple factors contribute to poor policy performance, such as a lack of coordination among stakeholders, political pressure, lack of coordinated planning, absence of standardisation of procedures based on multiple possibilities, intra-agency antipathies, complexity of joint actions, multiplicity of decisions, to name a few. For the purpose of this paper, these factors have been categorised under five broad categories: Irrational design of policy, poor management of the policy, lack of organisation process framework within the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment, challenges faced by the front line bureaucratic machinery, and the impact of political factors in the overall model.

I   INTRODUCTION

As the Chief Minister's Good Governance Associate (CMGGA) in Sonipat district, Haryana, I had the opportunity to understand the challenges involved in public policy implementation by working closely with the district administration. By June 2017, I was given a problem statement to re-engineer the application and disbursal process of the social security pension schemes in the state of Haryana. Social security pension schemes target the most vulnerable sections of the society such as low-income senior citizens, widows, destitute children, physically handicapped, etc. Therefore, it is crucial to ensure that the processes to avail the services are citizen friendly. As part of the project, I held multiple discussions with over 25 stakeholders, ranging from administrative secretaries to ground-level staff of the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DSJE), which is the nodal department responsible for the implementation of the social security pension scheme in Haryana. I also interviewed over 300 pension scheme beneficiaries and applicants during the course of the project.

The application process for social security pension schemes has a few unique features. Take for example the multiple government touch-points a citizen has to encounter during the course of pension application and disbursal process. Each of these touch-points maybe at a different government department and hence they need not be in the same location. The DSJE has clearly articulated standard operating procedures (SOP) to be followed by the government officers at each of these touch-points. The other unique feature is the requirement of physical verification which means that an applicant has to be present before the staff of the department with the required original documents for the purpose of document verification. This is a mandatory condition in three out of the four pension schemes, namely old age, handicapped, and destitute pension, included in the scope of this study.

Ensuring hassle-free government to citizen services is one of the key objectives of the Right to Services legislation enacted by the Government of Haryana. Many states in the country have prioritised simplifying institutional delivery mechanism(s) to citizen through optimal and innovative ways. Recently the central government also introduced the digital locker feature using which a citizen can store all his official documents online by seeding them with *Aadhar* (*Aadhaar* is a 12-digit unique identity number that can be obtained by residents of India, based on their biometric and demographic data). The data is collected by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), a statutory authority established in January 2009 by the Government of India, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology, following the provisions of the *Aadhar* (Targeted delivery of financial and other subsidies, benefits and services) Act, 2016. Many government departments also use digital signature

features to eliminate the need of signing paper documents and to simplify the process of file movement in government departments.

Recently, the Haryana government has come up with an ambitious project known as SARAL which is in alignment with Digital India's vision of faceless, paperless and cashless service delivery model. The aim of the project is to make a unified platform to deliver and track over 380 citizen services across the state. Aligning with the vision of Digital India program of establishing a faceless, paperless, and cashless service delivery model, Antyodaya-SARAL project aims to transform citizen service delivery in Haryana through complete digitisation of over 350 services. The project envisions a unified platform to deliver and track government-to-citizen (G2C) services/schemes across the state. For example, the scheme has radically transformed the process of obtaining driving license for commercial and non-commercial vehicles from the manual process to a one touch, technology enabled, seamless process that requires the citizen to visit the citizen service centre only once. Social security pension schemes, which are the concern of this study, are also part of this project. Therefore, the DSJE is currently exploring ways to make the pension application and disbursement process faceless in the state.

The findings from this study will provide a baseline data of the compliance status at different touch points and help in strengthening the implementation of the SARAL project. It will also help gauge the awareness levels of the general public regarding the provisions and safeguards granted to them under the Right to Services Act.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The questionnaire attempts to capture aspects ranging from socio-economic condition of the citizen to the scheme of events undergone by them during the application phase to avail social security pension scheme. The questionnaire also attempts to capture some qualitative aspects such as behavior of staff at DSJE and banks. The questionnaire went through three levels of iterations, each followed by an extensive field survey conducted by me in collaboration with a team of twenty youngsters enrolled under the *Saksham Yuva* employment scheme of the Haryana government. I gathered learnings from every field visit and utilised my learnings to make the questionnaire more focused and concise. In addition to the purpose served by the questionnaire, there are two more broad concerns of the study:

a.   **Calculating the number of beneficiaries from each village of the district**: The number of applicants to be interviewed from every village, block, or sub-division was mathematically calculated using the method of random sampling.

First a database of the pension beneficiaries enrolled with different pension schemes across the district was collected from the DSJE. A sample size of 400 was fixed for the survey and out of this a total of 359 responses were recorded. Based on the sample size, villages and blocks were assigned a mathematical weight depending on the number of pension beneficiaries in that village/block. The mathematical weight was the ratio of

the number of pension beneficiaries in that village to the total number of pension beneficiaries in the district. Based on this weight, the selection of the total number of pension beneficiaries from a village who would be interviewed was made. This was calculated by multiplying the weight with the total number of beneficiaries in the village. An illustration of this has been tabulated below:

Village/MC	Beneficiary	Villages	Weight	Sample Size
Rai	16717	56	0.112538	45.01531522
Sonipat	23844	75	0.160517	64.20680602
Ganaur	20272	71	0.13647	54.58817193
Mundalana	15695	32	0.105658	42.26328722
Kharkhoda	16075	46	0.108216	43.28654616
Kathura	9819	20	0.066101	26.44047258
Gohana	15066	36	0.101424	40.56952439
MC Sonipat	19838		0.133549	53.41950251
MC Ganaur	3660		0.024639	9.855599313
MC Gohana	5472		0.036837	14.73492881
MC Kharkhoda	2087		0.01405	5.619845838
TOTAL	**148545**			**400**
SAMPLE SIZE				**400**

Against the sample size of 400 which was set mathematically, a total of 359 responses were recorded. The details are summarised below:

| Block/MC	Sample Size	Total Recorded	OAA	WP	HP	FADC
MC Sonipat	53.41950251	51	39	9	0	3
MC Ganaur	9.855599313	10	4	4	0	2
MC Gohana	14.73492881	10	7	2	0	1
MC Kharkhoda	5.619845838	6	1	4	1	0
Murthal	*	31	8	14	4	5
Sonipat	*64.2068060183783	35	24	7	3	1
Kathura	26.44047258	31	2	16	8	5
Mundalana	42.26328722	37	16	12	4	5
Gohana	40.56952439	36	30	2	2	2
Kharkhoda	43.28654616	40	12	16	7	5
Ganaur	54.58817193	43	12	18	6	7
Rai	*45.0153152243428	29	19	9	1	0
		359	**174**	**113**	**36**	**33**

b. **Preparing the interview plan and its execution:** After finalising the questionnaire, I prepared a three month roster plan to conduct the interviews from March to May 2018. I started the interviews from the rural part of the district and moved block-wise. With the help from the local engineering department, I designed an optimal travel plan in each block of the district and conducted the interviews. Most of the villages carried a sample size of one to two beneficiaries. I used to send messages to the village *sarpanch* about my arrival at least five days in advance. In addition to that, I used to send each *sarpanch* a list of beneficiaries that was three times the sample size of his/her village. This was done to ensure that the number of pension beneficiaries that turn up for the interview were at least equal to the stipulated sample size. However, who gets called for the interview by the *sarpanch* was left to his discretion.

In urban areas, the exercise was simpler. I booked two days per municipal zone and visited the entire district. Since I had the exact address and mobile numbers of the beneficiaries it was comparatively easier to locate them. However, in order to stick to the stipulated time and date, I always made sure that I have a conversation with the beneficiaries prior to the interview.

The baseline survey outlines the touch-points where there has been greater degree of non-compliance from the set procedures. It also highlights the various challenges involved in ensuring compliance to the SOP. The survey helped to gauge the level of awareness among the citizens regarding the provisions of the Right to Services (RTS) rules. It also shows the extent to which citizen have sought institutional redressal in the past against any form of non-compliance with the procedures laid down by the department regarding pension schemes application. With a focus on quantitative data, the baseline study provided the requisite information to devise better strategies to promote awareness among citizens. It will also helped to improvise the existing process flow designed for the pension scheme application and disbursement. But more crucially the findings helped to customise the SARAL project in order to make it more relevant for the common citizens living in rural areas. Lastly, the exercise of social audit was also help generate awareness about the rights and safeguards available for the citizens under the RTS.

II THE EVOLUTION OF THE SOCIAL SECURITY PENSION SCHEME MODELS

I had begun to analyse the evolution of the citizen service delivery model in the social security pension schemes in the year 2015. This study has greatly benefited from the multiple discussions with the stakeholders held over the years and analysis of specific exchange of communication received by the District Social Welfare Office (DSWO) from the DSJE in the form of guidelines and letters. Within the department, the Dispatch Register has served as the most critical piece of literature that has helped me understand the reasoning behind every change introduced in the social security pension scheme model. In addition to this, the inputs received from citizens, Common Services Centre (CSC) owners, and other ground staff, during my public dealing hours as CMGGA greatly helped me discern the intricacies of the model. I discerned that the social security pension scheme model has evolved quite rigorously over past three to four years. I have depicted the evolution in the form of block diagrams given below:
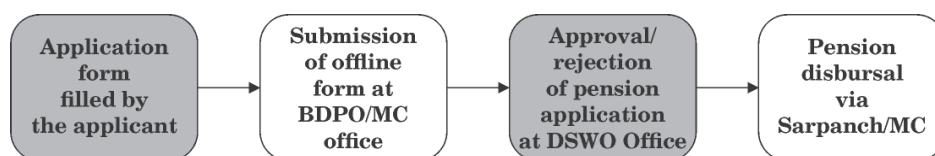
Model 1: *This model was prevalent in Haryana till December 2015 as per the directives issued by the DSJE.*

Step 1: The applicant collects the offline form from the elected village head also known as the *sarpanch* or a nearby book depot and fills it. He/she attaches all the relevant documents (Ration card, voter ID card, domicile certificate, etc). He/she gets the application form attested by the concerned *sarpanch* in rural areas or by the concerned officer at the Municipal office (MC).

Step 2: The applicant either submits the form at the local block or municipal office as is applicable. The official staff member (s) from DSJE comes to collect the application forms from the concerned block or MC office on a fixed date. The Block/MC office staff prepares a list of all the applications received and hands it over to the DSJE.

Step 3: The applications are analysed at the DSJE office. The complete and satisfactory applications are approved. A list of eligible pension beneficiaries is prepared and sent to the head office of the DSJE in Chandigarh.

Step 4: The money corresponding to the pension beneficiaries would be credited to the account of the disbursement agency via the head office. A list of all eligible beneficiaries would also be provided by the DSJE to the District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO).

Based on this list, the disbursal agency would distribute pension to the existing beneficiaries in cash. In rural areas, the disbursal agency was the village *sarpanch* and in urban areas it was the concerned MC Office depending on which part of the city the beneficiary was located in.

Demerits of this model:

a.   There was no official mechanism in place to educate the applicant about the documents required, the procedure to be followed to avail social security pension, and the provisions of the Right to Service Act.

b.   There was no way for an applicant to check the status of the application after applying at step 1. He/she would have to wait till Step 5 to know whether the application is approved or not.

c.   The offline mode increased the chances of malfeasance and corruption. The *sarpanch* of the village could easily resort to favouritism in pension disbursal.

d.   Often people who are ineligible could easily get their pension application approved through unfair means and fake documents. There was no way to physically verify whether the applicant was genuinely needy.

e.   There was no official mode of communication between the citizen and the department head office. Citizens would have to depend on the department staff to get any information regarding their application.

f.   Often people with good relations with the DSJE staff could easily bypass all the steps in the process and get the pension approved directly through the department as there was no mechanism in place to record the applications received.

| Filling application form by applicant at C.S.C. or offline | → | Application submission at BDPO or MC office | → | Approval of pension application at DSJE | → | Collection of pension ID from DSJE by applicant | → | Pension disbursal by bank/ post office |

Model 2: *This model was an evolved version of the previous model. It was in practice till May 2016 as per the directives issued by the DSJE.*

Step 1: The applicant collects the offline form from the *sarpanch* or some nearby book depot and fills it. He/she attaches all the relevant documents (ration card, voter ID card, domicile certificate, others). He/she gets the application form attested by the concerned *sarpanch* in rural areas or by the concerned officer at the MC in urban areas. The applicant can also apply directly online at the nearest common service centre. After submission of the application, the applicant is also provided an acknowledgement receipt. In the online application, the applicant could provide details of his bank account and *Aadhar* for pension accrual. Also, he/she could provide his mobile number for the purpose of communication with the department. However, none of these details were mandatory.

Step 2: The applicant submits the form at the local block or municipal office, as applicable. The applicant had to carry a printout of the application form in case of an online application as well. The staff member(s) from DSJE come to collect the application forms from the concerned block or MC office on a fixed date. The block/MC office staff prepares a list of all the applications received and hands it over to the DSJE staff. Prior to the collection of the application forms, the department staff would physically verify each original document and the applicant. In case of any discrepancy, the applicant would be asked to furnish additional proof otherwise his/her application would be rejected.

Step 3: The applications received are analysed at the DSJE office. The applications adjudged as satisfactory by the department are approved. A list of all the approved pension beneficiaries is then generated and uploaded on a portal of the DSJE. From this portal, the pension ID is generated. However, the portal has no linkage with the portal where the applicant had submitted his/her application at the CSC. So, the details provided by the applicant were not used in the pension approval process.
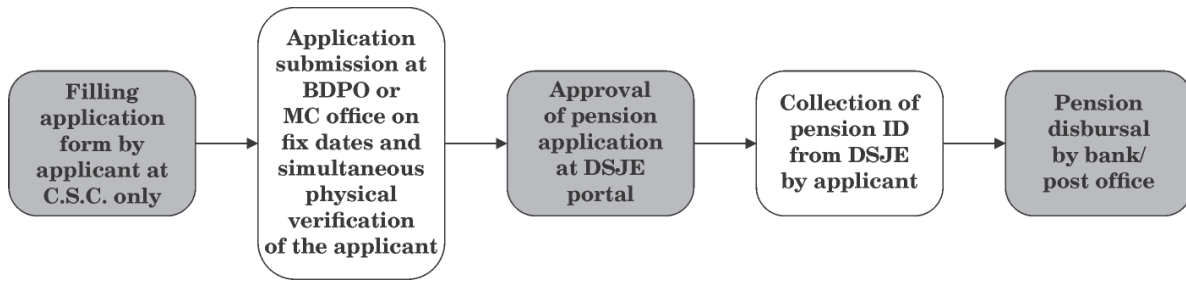
Step 4: The concerned pension applicant would come to the DSJE office to check the status of his application. The successful applicant would be provided a pension ID.

Step 5: The applicant had to give his pension ID at the concerned bank or post office. The bank would integrate the pension ID with the bank account and initiate the accrual of the pension amount. In case the applicant had provided bank details earlier and the DSJE staff had fed the bank details on the portal, the pension ID would reflect the same. In such cases, the integration of bank account and pension ID would be faster. However, in practice, it was almost never the case that the details mentioned in the pension application form were copied in the ID.

Demerits of the model:

a.   Since online application wasn't made mandatory, the process was suboptimal. During the pension ID generation, all details of the applicant had to be fed in a separate portal manually by the DSJE staff. This information could be easily fetched from the CSC portal if the two portals were linked and the online application mode was made mandatory.

b.   Often people who are ineligible could easily get their pension application approved through unfair means and fake documents. There was no way to physically verify whether the applicant was genuinely needy.

c.   Any person with a known contact in the DSJE staff could easily bypass all the steps required to avail pension and get the pension approved directly through the DSJE portal. The final and most crucial step in the entire process was step 5. A person could easily bribe the DSJE staff and ask them to directly generate the pension ID.

d.   After the generation of the pension ID, there was no way to ensure direct benefit transfer. Applicants had to rely on the co-operation of the bank or post office staff

to get the pension amount. Once the pension ID was generated, the DSJE played no role in the process. The beneficiary would have to go to the bank/post office (PO) to get his ID linked with the bank/PO account. In many cases, the banks/PO were found to be highly uncooperative. In many cases it was found that an applicant had to open a new account to get the pension as the old account was found to be inactive. The banks/PO often followed complicated procedures to open a new account.

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┌──────────┐   ┌──────────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐   ┌──────────┐
│ Filling  │   │ Application  │   │ Approval │   │Collection│   │ Pension  │
│application│  │submission at │   │of pension│   │of pension│   │disbursal │
│ form by  │→  │ BDPO or      │ → │application│ → │ ID from  │ → │ by bank/ │
│applicant │   │ MC office on │   │ at DSJE  │   │DSJE      │   │post office│
│ at C.S.C.│   │ fix dates and│   │ portal   │   │by applicant│ │          │
│ only     │   │ simultaneous │   │          │   │          │   │          │
│          │   │ physical     │   │          │   │          │   │          │
│          │   │verification  │   │          │   │          │   │          │
│          │   │of the applicant│ │          │   │          │   │          │
└──────────┘   └──────────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘   └──────────┘
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Model 3: *This model came into the picture since May 2016 as per the guidelines of the DSJE.*

Step 1: The applicant applies for social security pension scheme online at the CSC. After submission of the application, the applicant is also provided an acknowledgement receipt. In the application online, the applicant could provide details of his bank account and *Aadhar* for pension accrual. The applicant can provide his/her mobile number for the purpose of communication with the department. Although the applicant need not necessarily provide these details in order to successfully submit his/her application.

Step 2: The applicant submits the form at the local block or MC, as applicable. The staff from DSJE comes to collect the application forms from the concerned block or MC office on a fixed date. The block/MC office staff prepares a list of all the applications received and hands it over to the department staff.

Step 3: The applications are analysed at the DSJE office. The applications adjudged as satisfactory by the department are approved. The list of the approved applicants is generated and uploaded in a portal of the DSJE. From this portal, the pension ID is generated. However, this portal has no linkage with the portal where the applicant had submitted his/her application at the CSC. So, the details provided by the applicant were not used in the pension approval process.

Step 4: The concerned pension applicant would come to the DSJE office to check the status of his application. The successful applicant would be given a pension ID.

Step 5: The applicant had to give his pension ID at the concerned bank or post office. The bank would integrate the pension ID with the bank account and initiate the accrual of pension amount. In case the applicant had provided bank details earlier at the stage of online application (mentioned in step 1) and the DSJE staff had fed it on the online portal of DSJE made for this purpose, the pension ID would reflect it. In such cases the integration of bank account and pension ID would be faster. However, in practice, it

was almost never found to be the case that the details mentioned in the pension application form were copied in the ID.

Certain demerits of this model:

a.   Even though the online application was made mandatory, the process was still suboptimal. During the pension ID generation, all details of the applicant had to be fed in a separate portal manually by the DSJE staff making the process both cumbersome and time consuming. This information could be obtained from the CSC portal if the two portals were linked and the online application mode was made mandatory.

b.   The communication regarding date and time of physical verification at block or MC level was not communicated properly to the applicants. Often the applicants had to make multiple visits to the office to complete the verification process. With physical verification being made mandatory for all, people who were handicapped had an added disadvantage.

c.   Any person having good relations with the DSJE staff could easily bypass all the steps in the process and get the pension approved directly through the DSJE portal. Despite all the preceding steps, the final and most crucial step was step 5. This can be clearly seen from several cases of pension beneficiaries observed during the course of this study and also from the several instances quoted by the CSC owners, the DSJE staff, and the DSWO as well. Take for example the case of a person desirous of availing old age pension. Consider that the person does not have any valid document (s) to prove that he is above 60 years of age. Nevertheless, the person somehow manages to convince the DSJE staffs at the district headquarter to approve and sanction his pension by offering a bribe or some other favour. There was practically nothing to stop this from happening in this model and all the preceding models. In fact, the person could simply get his pension sanctioned without having applied through any of the formal channels mentioned in step 1, 2, 3, 4 of the model.

d.   After the pension ID generation, there was no way to ensure direct benefit transfer. Applicants had to rely on the co-operation of the bank or post office staff to receive their pension amount. Once the pension ID was generated, the department played no role in the process of transfer of pension amount in the beneficiary's bank account. The beneficiary had to go to the bank/PO to get his ID linked with the account. In many cases, the banks/PO are found to be highly uncooperative. Often the applicant had to open a new account to get his/her pension as the old account was found to be inactive. Sometimes the banks/PO followed complicated procedures to open a new account.
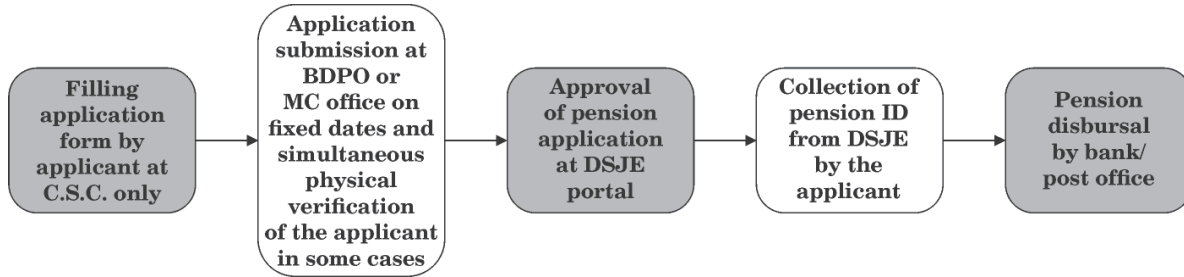
Model 4: *This model was initiated around June 2017 as per the department guidelines.*

Step 1: The applicant applies online at the CSC. After submission of the application, the applicant is provided an acknowledgement receipt. In the online application system, the applicant could provide bank account and *Aadhar* details for pension accrual. The applicant has to provide a mobile number for the purpose of communication with the department. Bank account number and mobile number were made mandatory in this model.

Step 2: The applicant submits the form at the local block or Municipal office as applicable. The DSJE Staff comes to collect the application forms from the concerned block or MC office on a fixed date. The Block/MC office staffs prepare a list of all the applications received and hands it over to the DSJE staff. Physical verification was made mandatory only for selected cases related to old age, handicap, and destitute children pension. For other categories such as widow pension, the pension applicant could come on any date to the block/MC office and submit the printout of the form.

Step 3: The applications are analysed at the DSJE office. The complete and satisfactory applications are approved by the DSWO. At this stage, the two portals of DSJE and CSC were linked. So, in order to generate the pension ID, the DSJE staff could now easily get all the details of the applicant from the CSC portal that he/she had provided during the application submission process. However, the DSJE staff could still ignore all the previous application details and manually fill the details in the DSJE portal to generate a new pension ID.

Step 4: The concerned pension applicant would come to the DSJE office to check the status of the application. The successful applicant would be provided a pension ID.

Step 5: The applicant had to give his pension ID at the concerned bank or post office. The bank would integrate the pension ID with the bank account and initiate the accrual of the pension amount. In case the applicant had provided bank details earlier and the DSJE staff had fed the details on the portal, the pension ID would reflect it. In such cases, the integration of bank account and pension ID would be faster. However, in practice, it was almost never the case that the details mentioned in the pension application form were copied in the ID.

Demerits of the model:

a. The communication regarding date and time of physical verification at block or MC level wasn't done properly. Often people had to make multiple visits to the offices to complete the verification process.

b.   Any person, having personal ties with the DSJE staff, could easily bypass all the steps in the process and get his pension approved directly through the DSJE portal. Notwithstanding the importance of the preceding steps, the final and most crucial step was step 5. A person could easily bribe the DSJE staff member and ask him/her to directly generate the pension ID. This is possible because there was no feature in the portal to stop those working in the DSJE from creating a new pension ID despite there being no application history in the CSC portal.

c.   After the pension ID generation, there was no way to ensure direct benefit transfer. Applicants had to rely on the co-operation of the bank or post office staff to get the pension amount. Once the pension ID was generated, the department played no role in the process of pension amount credited. The beneficiary had to go to the bank/PO to get the ID linked with the bank/PO account. In many cases, the banks/PO are found to be highly uncooperative. Often the applicant had to open a new account to get his/her pension as the old account was found to be inactive. The banks/PO often followed a complicated procedure to open a new account.

Since at the time of pension ID generation manual entry was possible, an applicant could give random bank account details during the application submission stage at the CSC and change the bank account details at the time of pension application stage.
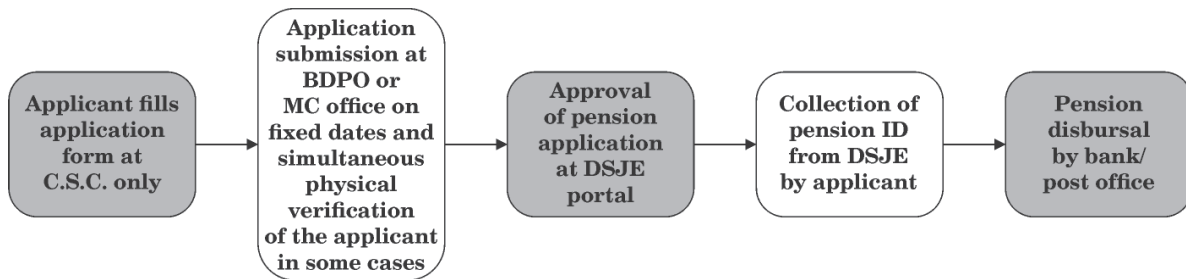
Model 5: *This model was initiated since January 2018 as per the department guidelines.*

In this model, the demerits of the previous models were addressed. Improvements were made in terms of:

a.   Elimination of the possibility of a person getting his pension ID generated directly from the DSJE portal. He/she could no longer bypass the CSC application process.

b.   Making it impossible for a person to change his/her bank account details after submitting it at the CSC.

The government has always prioritised simplifying the process of citizen service delivery. With the advent of technology based interventions, such as digital signatures, digital-locker, biometric database, the scope of optimising the process flow for citizen services delivery has expanded. The government launched the Digital India programme with the intention to create a paperless, faceless, and cashless model for all types of services rendered by government to citizen. Apart from introducing technology features during the citizen service delivery processes, the government has also strengthened institutional safeguards available for citizens under the Right to Services Act. The act clearly outlines

several punitive provisions for any government official found violating the right to service of a citizen.

Awareness generation regarding the schemes and services related to social justice and empowerment among the masses has also been a high priority area for the government. The advent of technology has enabled innovative methods to improve citizen service delivery. Features such as SMS based application tracking, IVRS based feedback collection, and internet connectivity have all created a revolution in the field of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC). Most departments have interactive IEC features such as flexes, banners, videos, etc.

In this study, I present a baseline study of the effectiveness of the several measures adopted by the Government of Haryana in recent past (2-3 years). I will critically analyse the steps taken by DSJE to optimise the service application and delivery model and to promote awareness among the citizens about their rights and safeguards using innovative IEC techniques. The effectiveness of the steps taken by the department would be gauged using a structured questionnaire designed to capture the citizen experience at the department, citizen awareness of the provisions of the Right to Services Act, and the degree of non-compliance by the government departments from the laid-out standard operating procedures by the DSJE.

To begin with, the study will capture the degree of compliance with the standard operating procedure (SOP). The model of pension service delivery is characterised by multiple government to citizen touch-points, which are geographically apart. This study will investigate the degree of compliance with the SOP at each touch point and also identify the touch points/ steps in the pension application process where there are aberrations. Having identified this, the study will attempt to understand the reasons for the non-compliance by correlating the responses recorded from citizens through the questionnaire. In addition to that, the study also analyses the differences seen in urban and rural areas with regard to the degree of compliance with the SOP of the scheme. The study focuses on four broad types of social security pension schemes:

a. Old Age Pension

b. Widow Pension

c. Financial Assistance to Destitute Children

d. Handicapped Pension

Within this focus area, the study also attempts to assess the impact of innovative information, education, and communication initiatives taken by the state government by analysing the level of awareness among the citizen about the different means, such as SMS, internet, mobile application, available to seek information regarding the pension application and their awareness about their rights as per the Right to Services Act. The findings of the study involving over 359 citizens in Sonipat district will provide a blueprint of the effectiveness of the model in the state of Haryana.

III RESULTS OF THE BASELINE ASSESSMENT

The results section has been divided into three sub-sections: Rural Sonipat, urban Sonipat, and comparative analysis of the results obtained in the urban and rural Sonipat. The first two sections have been further sub divided in two parts. The first part provides a brief account of the socio-economic and demographic details of the beneficiaries interviewed and the second part sheds light on the areas where the compliance level with the SOP was found to be low.
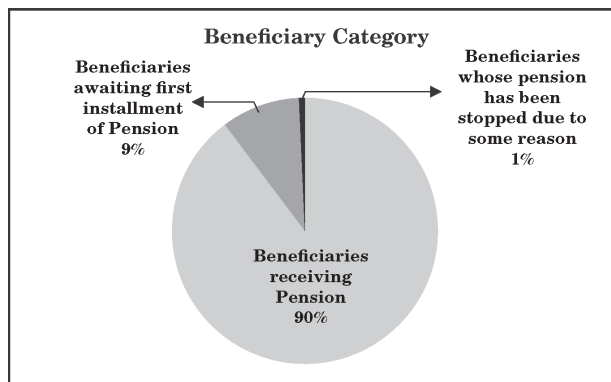
1. Rural Sonipat

Demographic details:

a. Pension scheme under which the beneficiary is enrolled
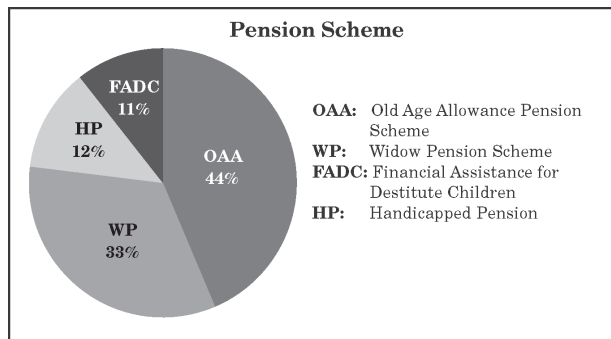
b. Categorisation of pension beneficiaries into three broad categories based on the receipt of their pension installment

c.   Highest education qualification of pension beneficiaries

Highest Education Qualification

- Illiterate
- Below 5th grade
- 5-10th grade
- 10th grade Pass
- 12th grade Pass
- Graduate
- Post graduate

4% 1% 1%
1%
14%
40%
30%
10%
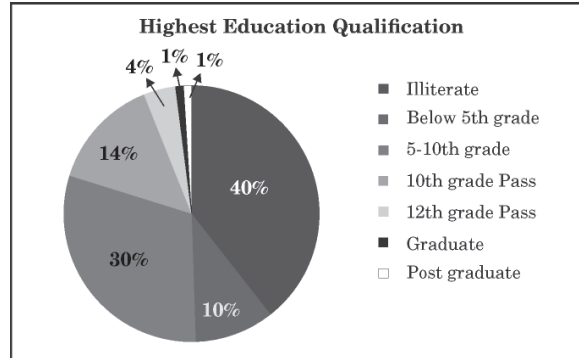
d.   Marital status of pension beneficiaries

Marital Status

Divorced
0%

Unmarried
7%

Widowed
39%

Married
54%
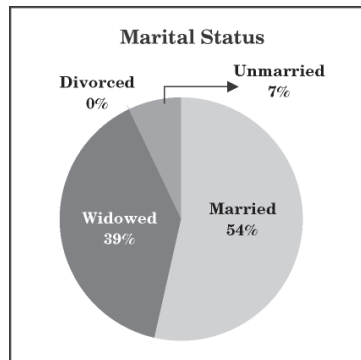
e.   Caste composition of pension beneficiaries
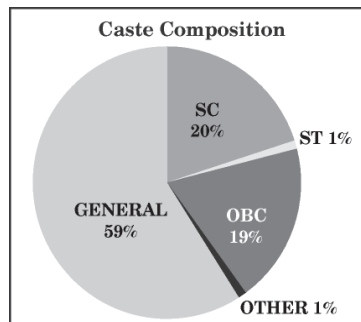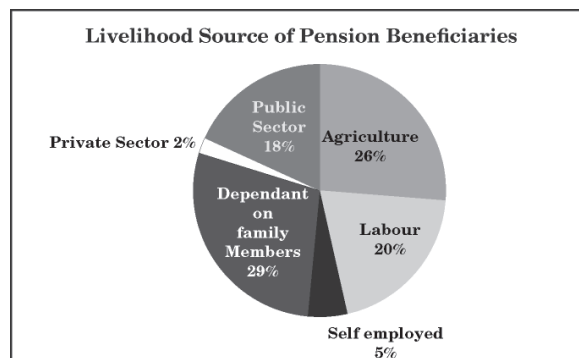
Caste Composition

SC
20%

ST 1%

GENERAL
59%

OBC
19%

OTHER 1%

f.   Livelihood source of the pension beneficiaries

Livelihood Source of Pension Beneficiaries

Public
Sector
18%

Private Sector 2%

Agriculture
26%

Dependant
on
family
Members
29%

Labour
20%

Self employed
5%

g. Mode of collection of pension amount

Mode of Pension Collection

- Bank
- Vodafone M Pesa
- NA (Pension not yet received)
- Post Office
- Business Correspondent Agent

2%
3%
15%
80%
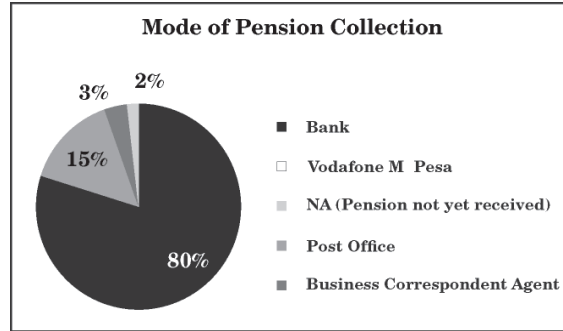
Compliance with standard operating procedures

a. **Bank or post office passbook upgrade**: Thirty per cent of the pension beneficiaries interviewed said that the bank or post office staff do not update their passbooks on the day the pension amount is withdrawn.

b. **Staff behavior at banks and post offices**: The pension beneficiaries were asked to rate the behavior of the bank or post office staff at the centre where the pension was withdrawn. Interestingly, it was further observed that among the beneficiaries who rated the staff behavior as "non-helpful" or "extremely non-helpful", 62 per cent beneficiaries were referring to the staff at post office banks.

Rating of Staff Behavior

Not Applicable 3%
Extremely Non Helpful 35%
Very Helpful 38%
Moderately Helpful 21%
Non Helpful 1%
Neutral 2%
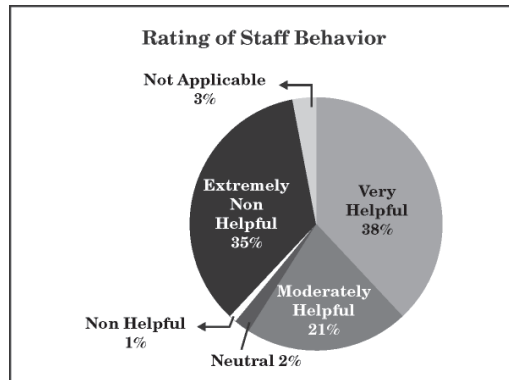
c. **Mode of pension application submission:** Nearly 65 per cent of the respondents has applied for social security pension schemes by directly visiting

Mode of Pension Application Submission

Other 3%
Sarpanch 16%
Private Agent 16%
CSC 65%
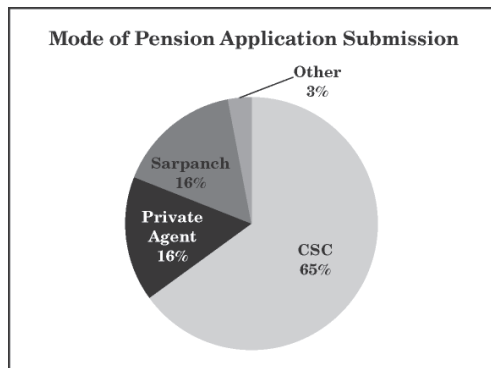
the nearest Common Services Centre themselves. Nearly 16 per cent of the respondents did not do this themselves and relied on the village *sarpanch* to do the same for them. This is quite contrary to the guidelines prescribed by the DSJE. Another 16 per cent of the respondents applied via some non-official channels of private agents.

d. **Awareness about common services centre (CSC):** It was observed that awareness about the availability of an active CSC was necessary for a beneficiary in the rural areas to visit the CSC for his/her pension application. Most people who were aware of the availability of nearest CSC centre went there to apply for the pension scheme. All the pension beneficiaries who applied for the pension scheme either themselves or with the help of a family member or a friend were aware of the location of the active CSC owner. It was observed that nearly 65 per cent of the beneficiaries applied for the pension schemes by directly paying a visit to the CSC.

e. **Role of CSC in ensuring proper submission of pension application:** It was observed that in nearly 85 per cent of the cases where a person had applied via a CSC, all the necessary requirements such as document verification, uploading of bank account details, etc., were fulfilled. Thus, it can be concluded that CSCs serve as an important centre to ensure proper submission of pension applications and the government should strive to activate CSCs in every village.

f. **Role of SMS in sensitising the public about pension application progress:** Out of all the pension beneficiaries only 35 per cent registered their mobile number during the submission of the pension application at the CSC. Only one-third of the beneficiaries could confidently say that they were intimated about the status of their pension application by the DSJE through SMS. I concluded that in rural areas the degree of attentiveness to SMS received is very low. Therefore, despite its potential benefits, it is not surprising that SMS is not yet the key source of information for pension application in rural regions.

g. **Pension application receipt:** Nearly 61 per cent of the pension beneficiaries were provided a receipt after successful submission of the pension application. However, it was observed that nearly 33 per cent of the applicants who had applied for the pension scheme from the CSC were not provided any receipt. This observation indicates a lack of awareness among the applicants and possible laxity on the part of the CSC owners who are supposed to follow the SOP.

h. **Incorrectly charging for pension application:** Seven per cent of the pension beneficiaries were charged a fee for pension application that was beyond the prescribed fee range mentioned in the SOP. Almost 65 per cent of such beneficiaries had gone to private non-licensed agents to make their pension application submission. Interestingly, nearly 39 per cent of the pension beneficiaries were not

charged any fee for submission of their pension application. The details regarding the break-up of the mode of pension application submission is given below:

Modes of Free Pension Application Submission
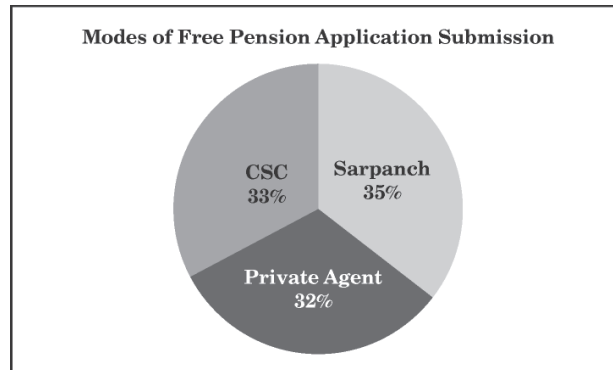
i.   **Physical verification:** Physical verification of the pension applicant and his/her original documents is considered as an important step to eliminate fraudulent and bogus complaints. The DSJE has stressed on this aspect of the pension disbursal process. However, the study shows that physical verification did not take place for 93 per cent of the pension beneficiaries. It was only in 7 per cent cases that original documents were verified. In these cases, no formal method of communication with the applicant was made. Rather, the applicant had arrived at the office of the DSWO to enquire about the status of the application.

j.   **Rejection of pension application:** For a significant number of pension beneficiaries their application was not being submitted for the first time. Nearly 63 per cent of such beneficiaries reported that they were neither provided any valid reason for the rejection of their application nor were they intimated about the rejection of their pension application. Most of them said that they were given arbitrary reasons for the rejection of their pension application. Some were as bizarre as "the application form got lost or was not received online."

k.   **Receipt of pension ID after sanction of pension:** Despite there being clear guidelines issued by the department regarding issuance of pension ID to the concerned bona-fide beneficiary only, it was observed that only 28 per cent of the beneficiaries had collected their pension ID document from the DSWO office.

l.   **Bank account integration with pension ID:** After the issuance of pension ID, the bank account needs to be linked to the pension ID document. To ensure this, a guideline has been issued by the DSJE. It was observed that the SOP had not been followed in the case of 45 per cent of the beneficiaries who were interviewed. This data was cross referenced with respect to the different modes of pension disbursal. It was found that nearly 70 per cent of the banks followed the SOP but in the case of post offices the figure was as low as 10 per cent.

m.   **Non-Receipt of pension in a month**: Nearly 37 per cent beneficiaries said that there have been one or more month(s) when they have not received their pension amount. This data was cross referenced with respect to the different modes of pension disbursal. It was found that nearly 35 per cent banks have, at least for a month, defaulted in disbursing the pension amount to the beneficiary. In case of post offices and business correspondence agents, this figure was observed to be 70 per cent in each case.

n.   **Clearance of pending arrear amount:** It was observed that nearly 30 per cent of the beneficiaries mentioned in point 13, who hadn't received their due for at least one month, got their arrear amount in subsequent months.

For the remaining 70 per cent beneficiaries (73 in number) the pension due amount was pending. The duration of their pension arrear has been tabulated as below:
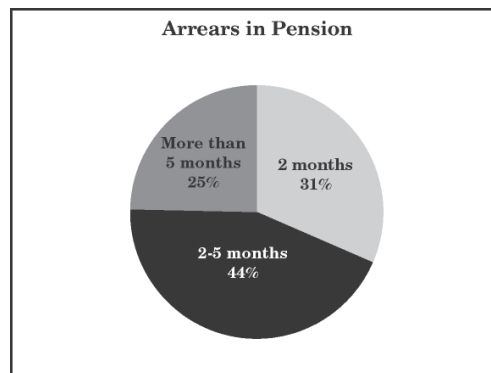
o.   **Beneficiaries changing their bank/post office account after sanction of pension amount:**

It was observed that nearly 25 per cent of the pension beneficiaries (70 in number) had changed their bank or post office account after the official approval (or sanction as it is called by the DSJE) of their pension application. This data was cross referenced with the different modes of pension disbursal. It was found that in nearly 22 per cent of the banks and 66 per cent of the post offices, the beneficiaries had been getting their pension amount despite the fact that they had given details of some other bank or post office account at the time of pension application submission.

Interestingly, it was observed that in 30 per cent cases (21 in number) the pension beneficiary had not provided any bank or post office details during the application submission stage. He/she added the details after the sanction of pension.

p.   **Time elapsed between pension ID generation and accrual of the first installment of pension:** Nearly 20 per cent of the pension beneficiaries said

that they had to wait for more than one month for the accrual of their 1st pension installment after the receipt of their pension id document.

Waiting Time for 1st pension

- ■ <1 month
- ■ 1-2 months
- □ 2-3 months
- ■ 3-4 months
- ■ 4-5 months
- ■ >5 months
- ■ still awaiting
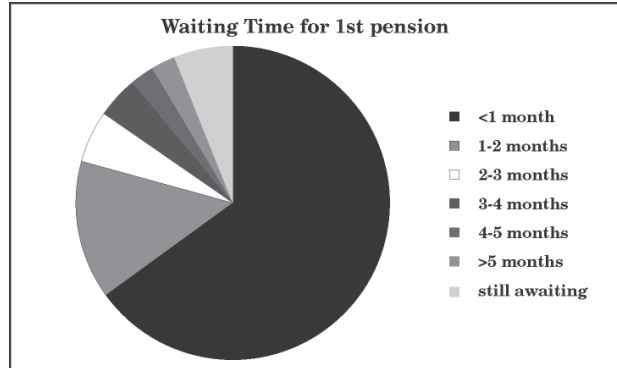
2. **Urban Sonipat**

Demographic details:

a. **Pension scheme under which the beneficiary is enrolled**

Pension Scheme

HP
1%
FADC
8%
WP
25%
OAA
66%
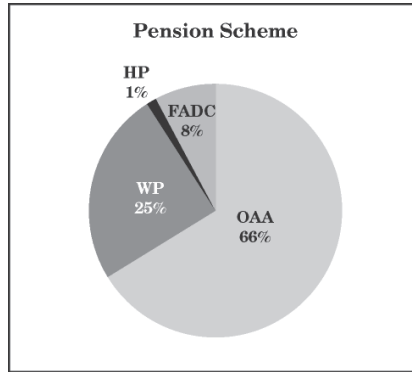
b. **Pension beneficiaries have been categorised into three broad categories based upon their receipt of pension installment**
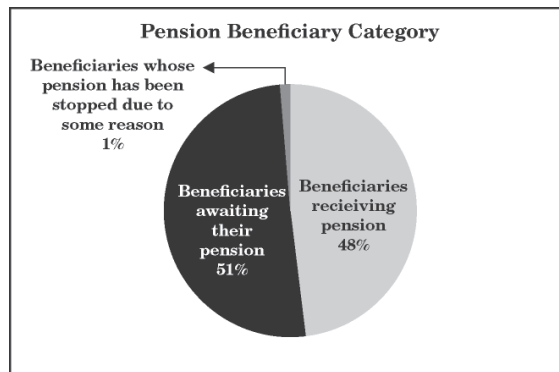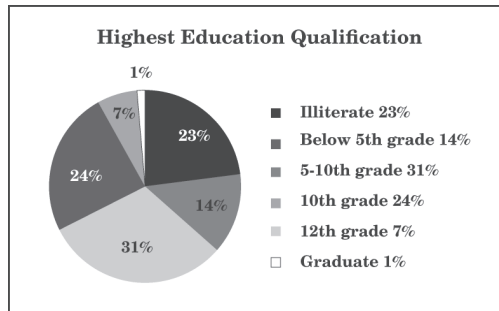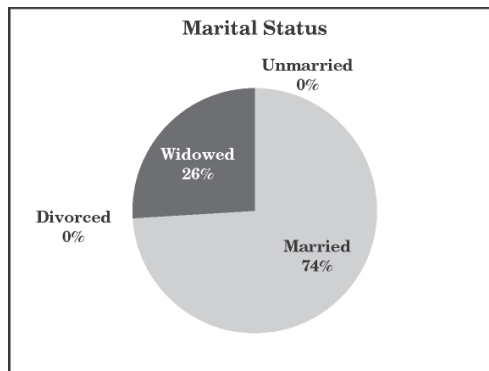
Pension Beneficiary Category

Beneficiaries whose pension has been stopped due to some reason
1%

Beneficiaries awaiting their pension
51%

Beneficiaries recieiving pension
48%

c.   Highest education qualification

Highest Education Qualification

1%

7%

23%

24%

14%

31%

- Illiterate 23%
- Below 5th grade 14%
- 5-10th grade 31%
- 10th grade 24%
- 12th grade 7%
- Graduate 1%

d. Marital status

Marital Status

Unmarried
0%

Widowed
26%

Divorced
0%

Married
74%

e. Caste composition

Caste Composition

Other
2%

General
98%

f.   Livelihood source of the pension beneficiaries

Livelihood Source of the Pension Beneficiaries

Private
Sector
19%

Dependant
on family
81%
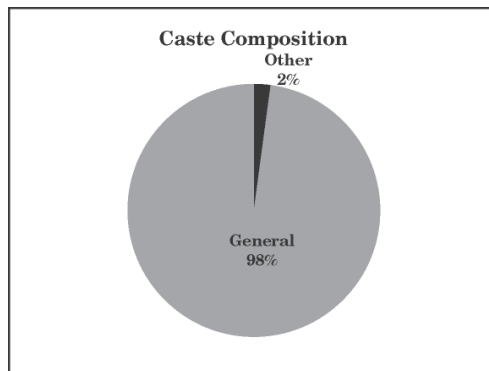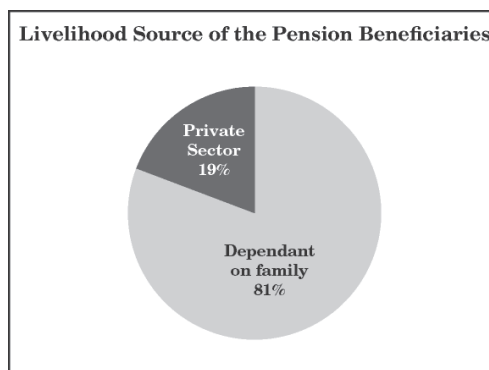
g. **Mode of collection of pension amount**

All the pension beneficiaries invariably collect their pension amount via banks.

Compliance with standard operating procedures:

a.   **Bank or post office passbook upgrade**: Nearly all the pension beneficiaries interviewed said that the bank staff update their passbooks on the day their pension amount was withdrawn.

b.   **Staff behavior at banks and post offices**: The pension beneficiaries were asked to rate the behavior of the bank or post office staff at the centre from where the pension was withdrawn.

Perception of Staff Behaviour

■ Very Helpful   ■ Moderately Helpful   □ Neutral
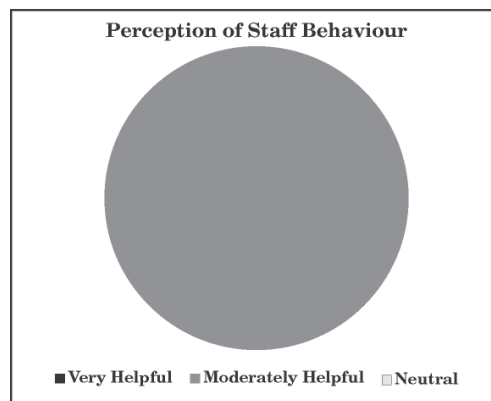
All the pension beneficiaries rated the behavior of their bank staff as moderately helpful during the survey.

c.   **Mode of pension application submission:** Nearly 97 per cent of the pension beneficiaries went to the nearest CSC centre for submission of the pension application.

Mode of Pension application submission

Private Agent
3%

CSC
97%
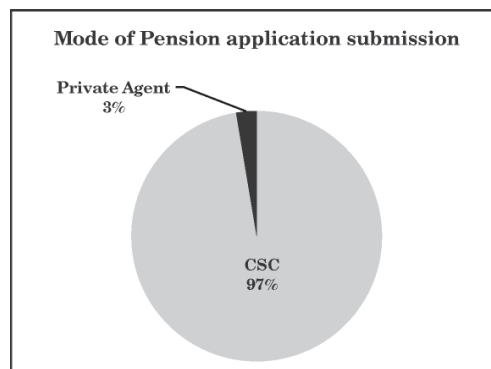
d.   **Awareness about Common Services Centre (CSC):** It was observed that the awareness about the availability of an active CSC was both necessary as well as sufficient criteria to ensure ease of pension application submission and subsequent follow ups regarding the application status in urban areas. Also, it was noticed that nearly all the beneficiaries were well aware of the location of the nearest CSC centre in their locality.

e. **Role of CSC in ensuring proper submission of pension application:** It was observed that in nearly all the cases where a person had applied via a CSC, all the necessary requirements such as document verification, uploading of bank account details, etc., were fulfilled properly.

f. **Role of SMS in sensitising the public about pension application progress:** Out of all the pension beneficiaries, almost 75 per cent registered their mobile number at the point of pension application submission (i.e. at the CSC). Among these beneficiaries, all informed that they were intimated about the status of their pension application by the DSJE through SMS. This observation suggests that the degree of attentiveness in urban areas towards SMS is very high. Therefore, SMS is a key source of information for pension application in urban areas.

g. **Pension application receipt:** Nearly 85 per cent of the pension beneficiaries were provided an application receipt after successful submission of the pension application.

h. **Over-charging and under-charging for pension application:** Eighty six per cent pension beneficiaries were charged a fee for pension application that was within the prescribed fee range mentioned in the SOP. Interestingly, nearly 14 per cent of the pension beneficiaries were not charged any fee for submission of their pension application. Almost all such beneficiaries claimed that they had a friendly relation with the CSC owner of their area.

i. **Physical Verification:** Physical verification of pension applicant and his/her original documents has been declared as a very important step towards eliminating fraudulent and bogus complaints. Repeated guidelines have been issued by the DSJE to ensure this.

    However, it was noticed that physical verification took place as per the prescribed guidelines in the case of 50 per cent of the pension beneficiaries. It was only in 5 per cent cases that some form of original document verification was done when the applicant had arrived at the office of the DSWO for enquiring about the status of the application. In the remaining 45 per cent cases no formal physical verification was done.

j. **Rejection of Pension Application:** Nearly 20 per cent of current pension beneficiaries had applied for the same pension scheme in their previous attempts also. All such beneficiaries reported that they were neither provided any valid reason for the rejection of their application nor were they intimated about the rejection of their pension application. Most of them said that they were provided very arbitrary reasons behind the rejection of their pension application. Consider for example the excuse that the application form got lost or was not received online.

k. **Receipt of Pension ID upon sanction of pension:** Despite there being clear guidelines issued by the DSJE regarding issuance of pension ID to the concerned

bona-fide beneficiary only, it was observed that only 33.3 per cent of the beneficiaries had collected their pension ID document from the DSWO office. The remaining beneficiaries collected it either from the CSC owner or someone from their family or acquaintance brought it for them.

l. **Bank account integration with Pension ID:** After the issuance of pension ID, the bank account needs to be linked to the pension ID document. Clear guidelines have been issued by the DSJE regarding this. It was observed that the SOP had not been followed in the case of 32 per cent of the beneficiaries who were interviewed.

m. **Non-Receipt of Pension in a month**: Only 6 per cent beneficiaries said that there have been one or more month(s) when they have not received their pension amount at all from their mode of pension disbursal.

n. **Clearance of pending arrear amount:** It was observed that none of the arrears has been cleared yet by the banks. In fact, it was observed that all of these beneficiaries were the ones who were awaiting the first installments of their pension amount. Their waiting period was within the time span of two months.

o. **Beneficiaries changing their bank/post office account after sanction of pension amount:** It was observed that only 2 per cent of the applicants had changed their bank accounts from what was mentioned by them when they applied at the CSC centre.

p. **Time elapsed between pension ID generation and accrual of the first installment of pension:** Nearly 52 per cent pension beneficiaries had to wait for less than two months' time from the date of their pension ID generation to receive their 1st installment of pension.
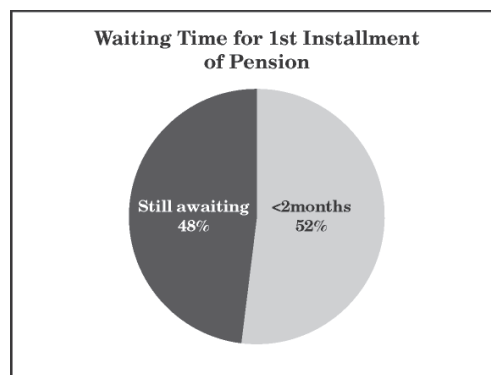
3. **Comparative analysis between rural and urban pension beneficiaries of Sonipat:**

a. In urban Sonipat, a high level of awareness was observed among the people with regard to CSC, pension application process and awareness regarding SMS received from the department. Nearly all the CSC owners also provided application receipts to the applicants upon submission of the online application. None of the

beneficiaries ever resorted to any private agent for the purpose of pension application submission. This was in contrast to the situation in rural Sonipat.

b.   In urban areas, nearly 50 per cent people went through a formal verification process as per the SOP in urban areas.

c.   This was unlike in rural areas where only 20 per cent cases were found where pension applications were rejected for arbitrary reasons without even informing the applicant.

d.   In terms of collection of pension ID from the DSWO office, rural as well as urban Sonipat have seen almost equal degree of non-compliance. People continue to get the pension ID document through the CSC or other sources.

e.   Performance of banks in terms of timely disbursal of pension amounts and linking of bank account with pension ID is better in urban areas compared to rural areas.

IV DISCUSSION

The SOP designed by the department often gets customised as per the whims and fancies of the ground level bureaucrats at the district and block level. The stark difference observed in compliance levels in rural and urban areas also points to the fact that the degree of alteration done to the SOP by the department is proportional to the level of awareness of the beneficiaries. The level of awareness about procedures among the rural population is low. The problem of non-compliance to SOP in rural areas is also affected by the presence of financial institutions such as banks, post offices, business correspondent agents, etc., in the rural economy. It has been empirically proven through this study that the post offices and business correspondent agents have shown higher degree of non-compliance with the SOP. The post offices still follow a redundant offline system of maintaining financial records and passbook upgrade. This makes a beneficiary more vulnerable to exploitation and less likely to get the grievances redressed. It has been observed in many cases that a pension beneficiary has not been provided his due amount by the post office staff on account of various random excuses. Despite that, the post office staff has managed to exploit the poor and often unaware beneficiary by tricking him to sign or put his thumb impression on a document that states otherwise. Similarly, several allegations of the post office staff and the CSC owners asking for a standard 10 per cent share in the pension amount have been obtained during the course of this study. All these instances point to the loopholes in the system, which are being exploited by the ground level staff. Often CSC owners are found running their centres in urban areas despite their centre being in a village. It was noticed that they pay a visit to the village sometimes once in a week and collect a hefty amount that is well beyond what has been prescribed in the government guidelines. Many times, the village *sarpanchs* pay extra money to the CSC owners and the DSWO staff to get the pension application of their village streamlined on priority basis. Traditionally, a village *sarpanch* has been seen as the key resource person to get pension applications approved. It was observed by me during my interviews with several pension beneficiaries and village *Sarpanch* that the political capital and the effectiveness of a *Sarpanch* is often calculated on the basis of how smoothly he/she can get the pension approval done for all the residents of his village.

The issues identified during the course of this study can be categorised as follows:

a. **Faulty policy design**: There is complete lack of clarity on policy goals and objectives regarding ensuring citizen convenience and to minimize the scope of subjectivity during pension application and disbursal process. The pension scheme is not designed in a way to minimise the procedural hassles for the citizens. The citizen is required to visit the Common Service Centre at the village level, block

development office and district social welfare office. It was observed that inter-departmental co-ordination was missing in the district. Also, the effectiveness of CSC as a citizen service delivery channel has not proven to be a successful initiative in Haryana. Keeping this in mind, the decision to integrate multiple departments and the CSC in the pension model seems irrational and counter intuitive.

Also, there is complete lack of monitoring mechanism for the implementation of the SOP within the department. At most, the department has interactive dashboards to track quantitative data related to the number of applications received and approved. But there is no survey mechanism in place to analyse the effectiveness of the model in terms of its implementation.

b.   **Poor management practices within the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment (DSJE)**: There is complete lack of quick, clear and two-way communication between the department heads and the district level functionaries. Also, there is little involvement of the district level officers, such as DSWO, who are the actual implementers of the government policy, in the policy design process. As a result, most of the DSWOs interviewed during the process admitted that they feel a sense of alienation from the Department's topmost management structure. The communication mostly takes place in a one-sided manner wherein the Department issues guidelines to the District Social Welfare Officer, who rarely expresses his/her opinion on the rationale behind the guidelines. This is based on the observations I made as the CMGGA in Sonipat. It was observed that the DSWO was not sufficiently aware of some crucial aspects of the SOP. It was only when the implementation related irregularities were highlighted from the survey that he expressed his rational objections regarding the department guidelines. He further added that the department rarely offers a chance to the district level officers to express their concerns. Lastly, the department has an acute shortage of officers from the district to the headquarter level. There is nearly 50 per cent vacancy in terms of human resources and nearly 70 per cent shortage in terms of physical infrastructure resources, such as computers and other electronic equipment. The reasoning behind the poor implementation of the physical verification process in the scheme has been attributed to lack of human resources on the ground level by most DSWOs interviewed during the course of this study.

c.   **Lack of any organisational development goals within the department**: The performance of policy implementation depends on organisational leadership capacity, team-building, the engagement of the various parties involved, their participation, motivation, coordination between them and their commitment. However, no formal attempt to ensure this has been made by the department in the past five years.

d.   **Bureaucratic hurdles**: Successful policy implementation relies heavily on the role of ground level bureaucrats who directly come into contact with citizens. The correct discretionary power of front-line implementers positively influences the implementation of policy. In reality, a very poor sense of judgement has been

observed among the frontline workers. This can be further substantiated from the fact that nearly 30 per cent of rural pension beneficiaries said that they had applied before as well for pension scheme and their application was rejected without any valid reason. Despite multiple enquiries, they were given random and arbitrary reasons behind the rejection of the application forms by the DSJE staff. Such behavior sheds light on the misuse of discretionary power by the members of the frontline staff. Also, there have been several cases when the department staff is asked by the senior bureaucrats of the district administration to favorably consider the pension application of a particular applicant despite the demerits in the application. This deviance from the SOP because of pressures from higher officials in the district often affects the status of public policy implementation.

e. **Political factors**: Often political factors lead to favoritism towards a particular community or village within the district and this affects the status of policy implementation. Consider an example of a village that is dominated by the people of a particular caste and has been a traditional stronghold for a politician presently serving in the state government as a cabinet minister. In such circumstances, the politician is frequently found to persuade the bureaucratic machinery to approve the pension applications of a selected group of people without following the necessary procedures prescribed in the SOP. Several other instances of similar nature have been cited by the department during the course of this study wherein nepotism has led to favouring of a particular community or group.

f. **Determination of success of the scheme:** The performance of policy implementation depends on the outcome of interactions between the organisational capacity of stakeholders and their bargaining power, conflict resolution, and often unplanned factors such as monitoring of the scheme by political players and administrative officers during visits to the district or at the state level. In pension schemes, the overall success can be determined by analysing certain key parameters which reflect the nature of interactions between the different stakeholders' present in the model. For example, the role and availability of CSC is found to be of crucial importance for any applicant to register himself/herself. It is often through this CSC owner that the applicant can track the status of the application. Second, the interaction between database and staff at CSC and DSWO office at the district headquarters determines the speed and efficacy of the pension application process. If the DSWO office does not process the applications received, the application will remain in the pipeline for a longer duration. Lastly, the institutional grievance redressal mechanisms at the DSWO office and at the office of other senior district level officers such as the deputy commissioner play a crucial role in resolving public grievances related to the issue.

The government needs to understand the futility of the one size fits all approach for rural and urban set ups. The model adopted for pension application and disbursal in urban and rural areas are largely on similar lines despite the fact that a wide degree of variation has been observed in the socio-economic status and the digital and financial literacy of the citizens belonging to the two segments.

Some of the key recommendations from this study are:

a.   A separate SOP needs to be designed for the pension scheme in rural areas which will ensure minimum travel time and government touch-points.

b.   The government needs to set up a committee to study the cases of pending pension amounts in the post office accounts of the beneficiaries. Solutions have to be devised to ensure that each and every arrear gets cleared.

c.   Wherever possible, the banks should replace the traditional post office banks.

d.   A complete overhaul of the post office bank accounts is needed. In fact, the post office banks should be asked to incorporate all the latest features adopted by their bank counterparts such as online banking, core banking software, daily clearances, RTGS, etc. With the advent of several regional rural banks (RRBs) in the country, post offices could overhaul their structure based on them. Transparency and uniformity in operations should be made the core feature of operations in the post office banks.

e.   Digital payments could help ensure financial inclusion in rural areas. The government needs to evaluate a strategy to provide handholding support to the rural beneficiaries who might be new to adopting digital modes of money management.

f.   Physical verification is an integral part of the pension application. It needs to be reinforced on ground, especially in rural areas. It has often been said by the DSWO staff that they lack human resources and therefore can't do the physical verification work properly. The government needs to sit with the stakeholders and figure out a working model to ensure proper physical verification takes place in rural areas. Also, the same needs to be done in urban areas to increase the degree of compliance with the SOP for pension schemes. In addition to the conduct of physical verification, it is crucial to ensure that it happens on a fixed date and time and for a fix set of people. Often it has been found that the staff doesn't reach on the date given on the application receipt.

g.   The pension schemes cater to the most vulnerable population and that the pension applicants anyway have to come to the district headquarter for enquiry related to the application. Keeping this in mind, the government may consider setting up one-stop centres at decentralised level for the rural population. The one stop centres should serve as a touch point where the entire process of pension application submission, verification and sanction should take place on the same day.

Assessment of the Effectiveness of CM Window Grievance Redressal System

Robin Keshaw

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the effectiveness of grievance redressal using the example of CM window functioning in district Kaithal, Haryana. It is a technology-based innovation aimed at improving the grievance redressal system. As opposed to assessing the effectiveness of the technology-based solution by analysing existing quantitative data such as number of grievances received and redressed, this study delves into the citizen experience of using CM window and assesses its effectiveness along certain key parameters. For the purpose of this study, the parameters range from behavioural aspects such as the behaviour of the staff responsible for filing the complaint to questions that gauged the citizen experience more directly such as the number of times they visited the office to file their grievance. The study concludes that there is a need to create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the operation of CM Window. The ground staff needs to be oriented as per the SOP and their capacity building has to be done. If the government is serious about the effectiveness of CM Window, there should be a separate cadre of grievance redressal staff at the district level whose sole responsibility should be to work on the grievances.

I   INTRODUCTION

Governments across the world are constantly working to develop effective service delivery systems for citizens and the case of India is no different. In urban setups, increased awareness often improves the likelihood of better access to public services. Whereas in rural areas of India, constraints such as poor administrative infrastructure and weak dissemination of information leads to difficulties in accessing services meant for the well-being of citizens.

But there are certain key factors that hinder effective service delivery across rural and urban India. Consider for example the high volume of citizen transactions in services such as Public Distribution Services (PDS) and pensions. Another factor that cuts across the rural-urban divide is ineffective dissemination of information which leads to lack of clarity regarding procedures to avail services. In a set-up which is plagued with high volume of applications and low level of awareness among citizens, red-tapism and corruption often finds a fertile ground to grow. Keeping these challenges in mind, governments have explored innovative solutions through new technology options to improve redressal of grievances.

Many states already have a system of citizens' *Darbar* where the citizens come with their complaints to either the chief minister, the elected representatives of the state, or administrative heads. A major drawback of this grievance redressal system is the need for the physical presence of the citizen. It has also been seen during fieldwork in Kaithal district that the monitoring and tracking of redressal of grievances received through such means is weak.

In Haryana, the Chief Minister's Window (CM window) which was launched by present *Bharatiya Janata Party* (BJP) government on 25 December 2014, is a technology based innovation aimed at improving the grievance redressal system. CM Window is envisaged as a one stop solution for grievance redressal. Due to the complex administrative set-up, citizens sometimes remain clueless about the right office to file their complaints. Even if a citizen knows the right place to file the complaint, bureaucratic apathy often becomes a hurdle in the resolution of the grievance. CM Window, by bringing in more transparency in the process of grievance redressal and leaving little to the whims and fancies of the officers, has helped improve the citizen's experience of governance.

Functioning of CM Window

When a citizen encounters an issue either in public service delivery or any administrative hurdle, s/he is required to write an application detailing the grievance in the most elaborate manner. This application along with a valid government ID proof is submitted at a counter at either at the sub-divisional headquarter or the district

headquarter. The operator at the CM Window uploads the application along with ID proof on the CM Window portal. The complaint is received by the CM cell stationed at the CM Office in Chandigarh.

The supervisors at the CM cell go through the complaint in detail and assess its authenticity. If the complaint is found to be authentic, the complaint is either marked to the deputy commissioner of the concerned district or the administrative head of the concerned department, depending on the nature of the complaint. At the district level, the complaint is undertaken and then marked to the concerned district officer for its assessment. If it falls within the purview of the district officer, the complaint is undertaken by his/her office. The concerned district officer then contacts the citizen and understands the nature of the complaint. Based on the requirement for grievance redressal, district officers take necessary action(s). The district officer(s) prepare an Action Taken Report (ATR) which details the necessary details and resolution of the grievance. The ATR is uploaded on the CM Window portal and assessed by the deputy commissioner's office. If the ATR is found to be authentic, it is marked to the CM cell.

Based on the nature of the redressal, CM cell either asks for a clarification from the concerned district officer or the complaint is disposed. Random phone calls are also made to the citizens by the CM cell to do a spot check of the resolution. In case the citizen is not satisfied, the complaint is sent for clarification to the district officer.

A review system has been instituted to ensure that the grievance redressal is properly done at the district level. As part of the review system a weekly meeting under the chairmanship of the city magistrate is held. The meeting sees the participation of various officers from the district who present the status of their CM Window complaints. A similar meeting is chaired by the deputy commissioner every month. Such meetings help to keep a check on the status of grievance redressal in the district. Many a times, a grievance requires more than one department to work in coordination with each other. These review meetings also act as platform to remove any bottlenecks that hinder the effectiveness of the coordination.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

CM Window has fairly stabilised due to the efforts by the civil administration in past three years. The incoming rate of complaints is witnessing a gradual increase which indicates the growing awareness among the public regarding this new grievance redressal mechanism. Over time, the review meetings in the district to check progress of grievance redressal have become frequent and consistent. This can potentially mean that the district administration is showing more faith in CM Window mechanism and that monitoring of the work done at the district level is more stringent.

However, despite sincere efforts by many officers, these review meetings don't necessarily capture the effectiveness of the grievance redressal. High volume of complaints and low administrative capabilities due to increased burden of work might be key contributors to ineffective grievance redressal. The state and district

administration haven't made a serious effort to gauge the quality of grievance redressal. Hence, there is a need to measure the effectiveness of CM Window apparatus by directly interacting with beneficiaries, in this case by using the method of citizen surveys. One way to assess the effectiveness of CM Window is to analyse the data provided by the CM Window portal. This data might include the number of complaints filed, number of grievances resolved and the average time taken to resolve the grievances. This data might not reflect the reality on the ground, as all the inputs are provided by the government departments with little feedback from the citizens. Hence, in order to get a feedback on the effectiveness of CM Window, it is important to reach out to the citizens. For this purpose, citizen interview was chosen as the method for this case study. Since I was working with the district administration of Kaithal, the sample for citizen interviews was chosen from Kaithal district. District administration in Kaithal gave me access to the data related to CM Window of district.

The year 2017 was chosen to get the sample data. Out of the total 7532 grievances received for Kaithal district, 6978 grievances have been disposed, leading to a disposal rate of 92.6 per cent. The complaints filed in 2015 and 2016 would have been too old and it would be difficult for the complainants to remember the key details of the grievance.

Sample selection

In Kaithal, 2386 complaints were filed using CM Window in the year 2017. Kaithal is divided into three sub-divisions, seven blocks, seven tehsils and sub-tehsils, and five municipal councils and committees. Most of the grievances were pertaining to one of these offices. Other than these, grievances related to banks, forest department, food and supplies department, etc, were also present. Grievances pertaining to different departments were downloaded in different excel sheets. A sample of 20 per cent grievances was selected at random from the individual departments. This was done to maintain a fair representation from every department without any operational bias. A total of 480 complaints were sorted thus maintaining the sample size of at 20 per cent of the total number of grievances filed in 2017. As per the reports on CM Window portal of the district, all of these grievances had been disposed.

Citizen interview

A detailed questionnaire was prepared to measure the effectiveness of the CM Window. Couple of questions in the beginning of the questionnaire were meant to be conversation starters and have played no role in the analysis. The latter questions gauge the quality of grievance redressal. For the citizen interviews four interns with deputy commissioner office of Kaithal were assigned the work of calling the complainants and asking them the questions.

Every conversation took 15 minutes on an average, as the interns had to brief the citizens about the background of the work before asking them the questions. The citizens were informed about the purpose of the survey and their consent was taken. Citizens were also informed that their identities will not be revealed in any part of the study. In order to ensure the authenticity of the data, 10 per cent random calls were also made by

me to verify the recorded data. In all the cases, the recorded responses were found to match exactly with the citizen's response.

Limitations of the study

This study was taken up to measure the effectiveness of CM Window grievance redressal mechanism in satisfying the aggrieved citizens. The citizen survey however suffers from certain limitations. Authenticity of the citizens' claims is always a concern with citizen surveys. The bias of the respondents could come into play, especially because it concerned their own grievances. There might be traces of sponsorship bias as well because the interns conducting these citizen interviews might have been seen as part of the government apparatus.

The first key limitation of this study is regarding its geographic scoping. The citizen survey was conducted only in Kaithal district, while CM Window is operational throughout the state. Different districts have different approaches towards handling CM Window complaints, due to which citizens' responses would also vary. The study doesn't capture the variability of responses arising out of geographic differences.

The response of citizens was recorded prima facie and little effort was made to establish the authenticity of the claim. For example, when citizens said that their hearing took more than an hour, the survey doesn't capture the reason behind this. Also, when citizens informed that they were not satisfied with the redressal of their grievance, a follow-up question to gauge the reasons for their dissatisfaction would have improved the analysis.

II   ASSESSMENT OF CITIZEN EXPERIENCE OF CM WINDOW

The first question in the questionnaire was about the source of information about CM Window. An overwhelmingly 94 per cent of the respondents (Figure 1) mentioned that they heard about CM Window from other citizens – either their neighbours, acquaintance or relatives. Efforts by the state and district administration also contributed to the information dissemination about CM Window. However, no citizen mentioned that they saw any government advertisement about the CM Window. This shows that a lot of the publicity about CM Window was through word of mouth.

HOW DID YOU HEAR ABOUT CM WINDOW?

Saw a government advertisment

Through Sarpanch or other elected representatives 1%

Through a government officer 5%

Through other citizens 94%
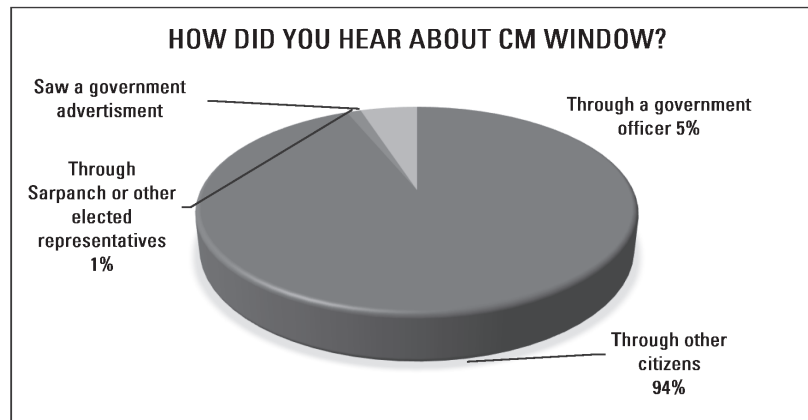
Figure 1: *Source of information about CM Window*

When citizens were asked about the number of visits they had to make to file their complaint, 47 per cent responded that they had to go just once (Figure 2), 41 per cent of the respondents went twice, while 9 per cent had to go thrice to file their grievance at the CM Window. Only 3 per cent of the respondents said that they had to visit more than three times to file their complaint. Citizens who had to visit more than once maintained that they didn't have either the ID proof with them or they didn't have a legible written application with them at the time of filing the complaint. Some of the citizens couldn't cite any reason for multiple visits.

All the respondents had visited the CM Window to file their grievance. This highlights the fact that the positioning of CM Window at SDM offices has led to easier access for the citizens, and hence they are physically present to file their grievance. All the respondents also maintained that the behaviour of the staff at the CM Window was cordial and they didn't face any difficulty in filing the complaint.

HOW MANY TIMES DID YOU VISIT THE OFFICE TO FILE THE COMPLAINT?

Thrice 9%

More than thrice 3%

Once 47%

Twice 41%
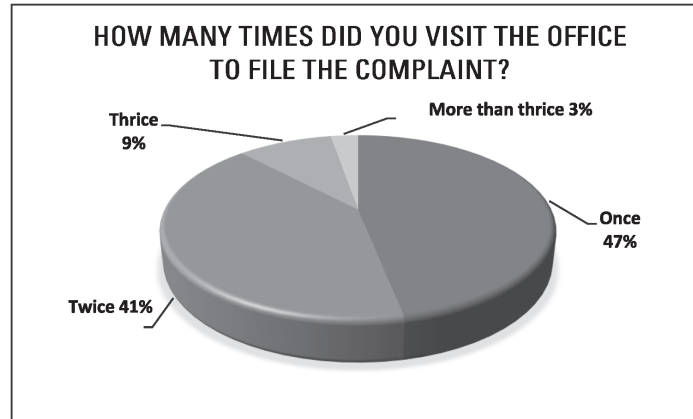
Figure 2: *Number of visits to file the complaint*

The question regarding the number of days officials took to contact the citizen about their grievance led to some alarming revelations. Only one per cent of the respondents said that they were contacted by the concerned officer or staff within 15 days of filing the complaint. Out of the 480 respondents, 164 said that they were contacted 15-30 days after filing the grievance. Sixty per cent of the respondents maintained that they were never contacted by the concerned department's staff or officer for their grievances. Since the official figures on the CM window portal count these grievances as disposed complaints, it is clear that many of the grievances are disposed without ever having contacted the complainant.

When the grievance is first filed, it directly goes to the CM grievance cell operating out of CM office in Chandigarh. CM cell checks the nature of the complaint and marks the complaint to the concerned deputy commissioner's office. Grievance cell at the deputy commissioner office then marks the complaint to the relevant department in the district. This process takes some time and hence it is not surprising that only one per cent of the citizens who were part of the survey were contacted within 15 days of filing the grievance filing.

AFTER HOW MANY DAYS OF GRIEVANCE REGISTRATION WERE YOU CONTACTED BY THE CONCERNED OFFICER?

Within a fortnight 1%

Between 15-30 days 34%

After a month 5%

Never contacted 60%
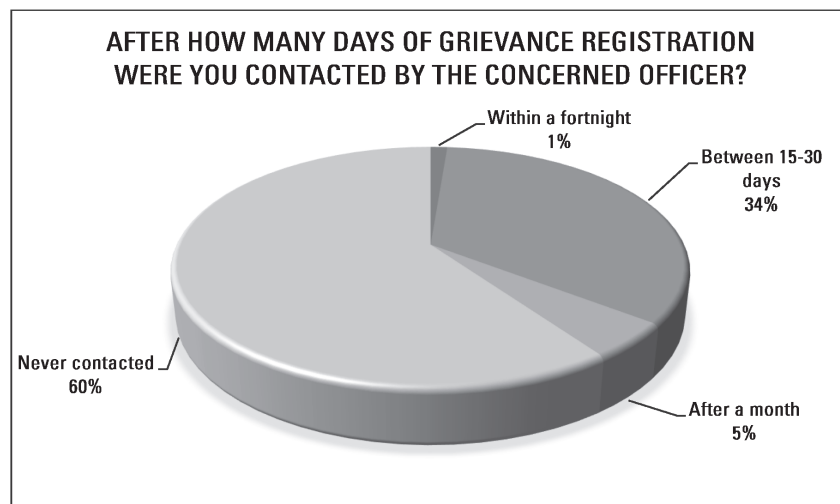
Figure 3: *First contact after filing the grievance*

Next three questions are relevant for only those respondents who said that they were contacted after filing their complaints. Out of the 193 people who were contacted, 169 citizens were called for the hearing by the concerned department officials. For the next three questions, the denominator for percentage calculation will be adjusted to 193.

Ideally, the hearing should not take much time, as it is burden on both the citizen and the concerned department's staff. Around 87 per cent of the interviewees (Figure 4) responded that their hearing was over within an hour. The hearing took more than an hour for 13 per cent of the respondents.
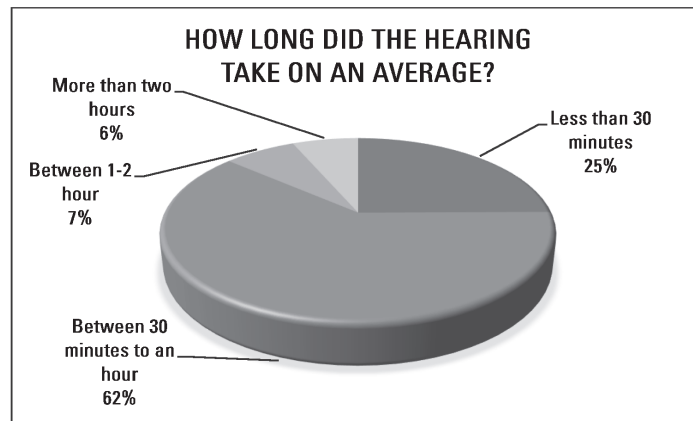
Figure 4: *Duration of grievance hearing*

96 per cent of the respondents (Figure 5) maintained that during the hearing the concerned officer paid attention to their grievance. Only three per cent of the interviewees said that that they weren't properly heard by the officials.
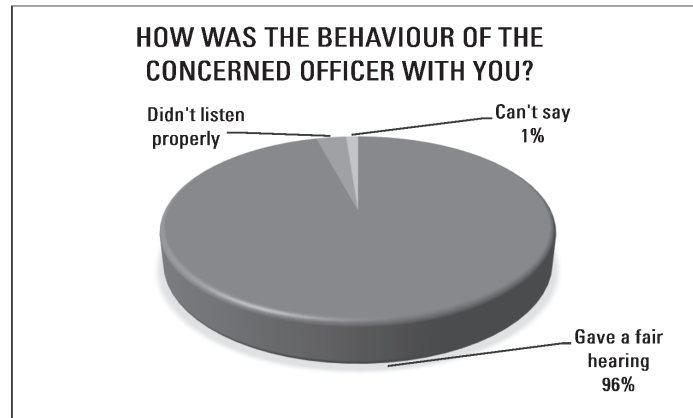
Figure 5: *Behaviour of the concerned officer*

An important metric of genuine grievance redressal is the approach of the concerned staff/officer after the hearing of the complaint. If the citizen is approached again, it reveals willingness and effort to resolve the complaint. Out of the 169 respondents who were heard, 88 per cent told (Figure 6) that they were approached again to either

get more information about the grievance or to inform about the redressal. Ten per cent of the respondents also said that they were intimidated or threatened to either drop their complaint or to comply with the false redressal of their complaints. Only two per cent of the interviewees were not approached after the hearing.
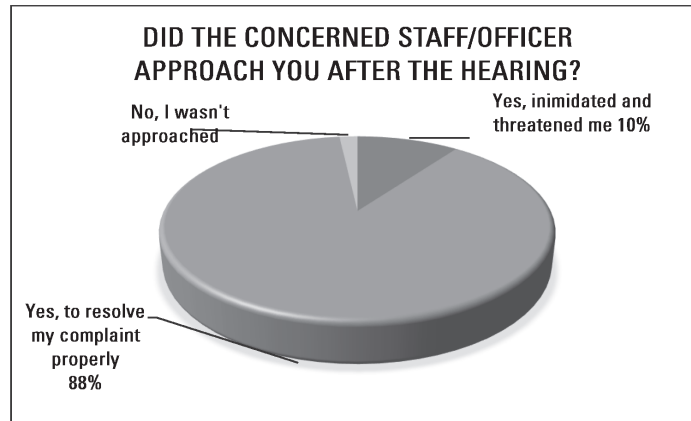
Figure 6: *Contact after the hearing*

An important step after the grievance resolution is information dissemination to the citizen. Whether a citizen's grievance is resolved or not, due intimation to the citizen about the final status of the grievance is a must. Only 33 per cent of the complainants responded (Figure 7) that they got a copy of the final status of their complaints. While 66 per cent didn't get either an official copy or any form of information about the status of their complaint. Many citizens were found to be unsure about the status even after three months of filing their grievances.

Figure 7: *Information about the final status*

A common observation based on field work is that despite the order by the officers or higher authorities to redress the grievances, it is not complied with by the ground staff. Citizens are left in the lurch as official records show their grievances as redressed, while it doesn't fructify in reality. A staggering 64 per cent of the respondents (Figure

8) said that the necessary orders were not complied with by the concerned department staff or officer, hence resulting in non-resolution of their actual grievance. Only 35 per cent compliance was observed resulting in genuine resolution of the disposed complaints.

WAS THE ORDER COMPLIED BY THE CONCERNED DEPARTMENT STAFF/OFFICER?

Not sure 1%

Yes 35%

No 64%
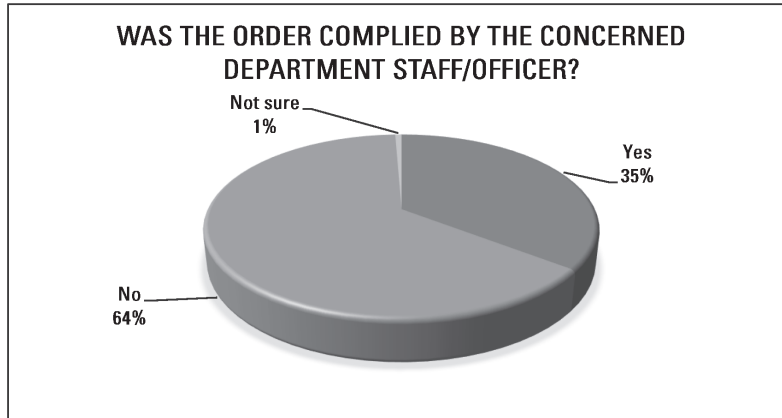
Figure 8: *Compliance of the order*

A crucial question asked from the citizen is whether he/she is satisfied with the final redressal of the grievance. Thirty-four per cent of the respondents (Figure 9) said that they are completely satisfied with the redressal and that CM Window has helped them resolve their grievance. Satisfaction from CM Window is dependent on the speed of the redressal, efforts required by the citizen to navigate the system and the time taken for the redressal. If the citizen doesn't feel satisfied in one or more of these metrics of satisfaction, it would be a partial satisfaction for the citizen. None of the respondents talked about partial satisfaction.

Sixty-six per cent of the citizens who were interviewed informed that they were not satisfied. They quoted different reasons for their dissatisfaction which ranged from unwanted delay in the grievance redressal process, indifferent attitude of concerned staff, to name a few. It was difficult to collate these varied reasons under different categories and this was not the concern of the present study.

ARE YOU SATISFIED WITH THE FINAL REDRESSAL OF YOUR GRIEVANCE?

Fully satisfied 34%

Not sure 0%

Partially satisfied 0%

Not satisfied 66%

Figure 9: *Satisfaction from the final redressal*

Next two questions in the questionnaire further probe citizens' satisfaction. Here, the assumption is made that the satisfied citizens will advocate about CM Window to others and will use it again when the need arises.

As demonstrated in Figure 10, only 35 per cent of the respondents advocated further use of CM Window among their acquaintances and neighbours. This figure is commensurate with the percentage of respondents (34 per cent) who were fully satisfied with CM Window grievance redressal (Figure 9). Sixty-five per cent of the respondents didn't tell anyone else about CM Window and 51 per cent of the interviewed citizens (Figure 11) chose to use CM Window again, either for the same unresolved complaint or a new complaint. Forty-nine per cent of the respondents haven't used CM Window again, till the time of interview for this study.

DID YOU TELL ANYONE ELSE ABOUT CM WINDOW AND HOW TO USE IT?

Yes 35%

No 65%
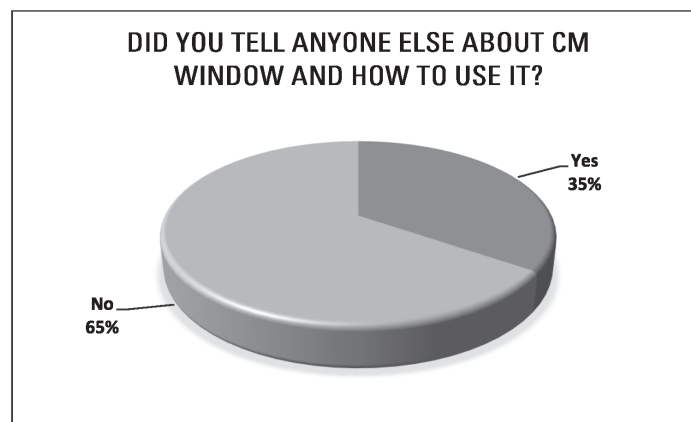
Figure 10: *Advocating the use of CM Window*

DID YOU USE CM WINDOW AGAIN?

No 49%

Yes 51%
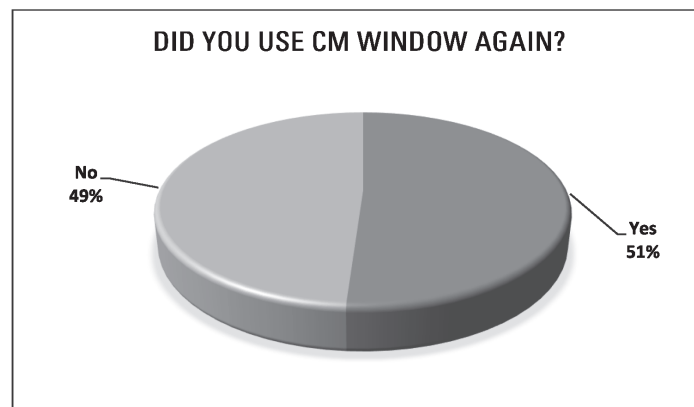
Figure 11: *Subsequent use of CM Window*

The last question posed to the citizens helped gauge the existing problems they are facing in their locality. The answer to this question can help the administration prioritise their interventions and work proactively on the key issues identified. It was found that 34 per cent of the respondents think that sanitation is a major issue. Most of these grievances fall within the purview of the Development and Panchayat Department and the Urban Local Bodies Department. 11 per cent of the respondents felt that

education is major concern, while nine per cent interviewees considered poor roads as the most important problem. For eight per cent of the interviewees, electricity was the major problem. 38 per cent of the respondents' responses went into the others category, which might comprise of issues with land records and registration, issues with public service delivery, wrong allotments of benefits, etc.
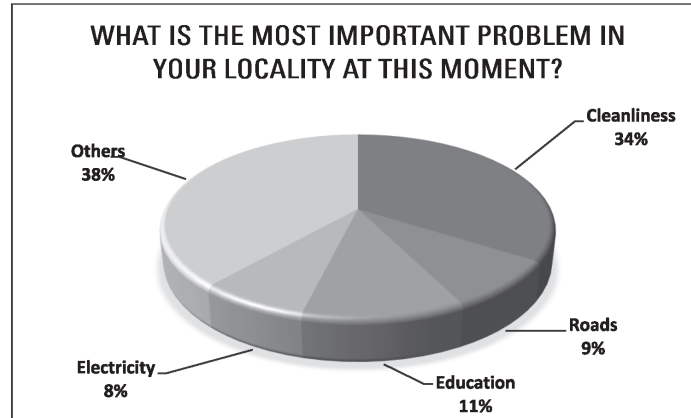
Figure 12: *Most important problem in the locality*

III DISCUSSION

This study provides insight into the current gaps and loopholes in the existing CM Window system in Kaithal district. CM Window can turn into a tool for proactive governance, where government can use the grievance related data to pin point the problematic issues and take appropriate policy decisions. Accurate data analysis of CM Window complaints will also help in identifying the low performing departments and take relevant administrative decisions to improve their functioning.

From an administrative viewpoint, CM Window is a good mechanism for grievance redressal where a streamlined workflow and accountability checks have ensured that established procedures are followed. However, the citizen survey demonstrates that citizen satisfaction is still low. There can be different reasons attributed to this dissatisfaction which are discussed below.

Citizens know about CM Window's functions, yet there seems to be a lack of proper information dissemination regarding the documents needed at the time of filing the complaint. According to the survey data, many citizens had to visit CM Window more than once, as they didn't have the right information regarding the written application and ID proof. Administration needs to undertake effective Information, Education and Communication (IEC), especially in the rural areas.

After the citizen has filed the complaint, it reaches the CM cell which marks it to the concerned district officer. Ideally, the district officer or the office staff should contact the citizen and give a fair and detailed hearing to the aggrieved citizen. However, the survey results show that a majority of citizens were never contacted regarding their complaints. This might mean that the concerned district officer doesn't have a citizen's perspective about the complaint and he/she works on complain resolution based on his/her own interpretation of the issue.

A common retort by the district officers during the review meetings is that citizens were contacted but they didn't respond positively. There is no simple way to test the veracity of such verbal claims. However, a technical solution can be provided to ensure that maximum number of citizens are contacted after they file their grievance. A mechanism should be provided in the CM Window portal which captures the attempts to contact the citizen. If it's through a phone call, the option to call the citizen should be there on the portal. The call should be further recorded to have evidence. If the citizen is contacted through a letter, the copy should be uploaded on the portal too. Further, a random check of these contact attempts should become a part of the review meetings to ensure compliance by the district officers.

An interesting observation from the survey is that in the cases where citizens were contacted they were treated well and were given a fair hearing by the concerned officer or staff. These citizens were contacted subsequently to delve deeper into their complaints. This reveals that contacting the citizens can potentially lead to better redressal of grievances. Two-third of the interviewed citizens maintained that they were not given any intimation regarding their grievance disposal. As part of proactive disclosure, administration should intimate the citizens about the final status of their grievance.

Another interesting observation from the citizen survey was regarding the final compliance of the order given by a district officer as a part of grievance redressal mechanism. Ideally, the concerned department should comply with the order mentioned in the Action Taken Report. But 64 per cent of the respondents said that the orders weren't complied with. For example, there was a case where the citizen was not included in the list of Prime Minister *Awas Yojana* (PMAY, housing scheme for the underprivileged) beneficiaries despite fulfilling the eligibility criteria. The citizen filed his complaint through the CM Window and, after an enquiry by the block development officer it was found that his name was supposed to be on the list. The complaint was disposed as the necessary orders were given from the concerned office to include the name of citizen in PMAY list. However, even after three months of the grievance having been disposed, the orders were not complied with. The citizen had to file another CM Window complaint to get his work done.

In order to ensure better compliance, there should be a separate category of such complaints which can be tagged as "temporarily resolved". Based on the nature of administrative order, there should be a differential timeline after which such grievances should be reopened. This will help keep a track of such complaints and will ensure that they are not ignored due to administrative oversight.

Keeping the findings and recommendations in mind, there is a need to create a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the CM Window. The ground staff needs to be oriented as per the SOP and their capacity building has to be done. If the government is serious about the effectiveness of CM Window, there should be a separate cadre of grievance redressal staff at the district level whose sole responsibility should be to work on the grievances.

Acknowledgment

Are Reservations Enough
to Empower Women in Local Governance?
An Analysis of the Performance of Women Village Heads
in Karnal District of Haryana

Shailiza Mayal

ABSTRACT

The 73rd amendment in the Indian Constitution mandates reservation for women candidates in local governance. The amendment directed the state governments to reserve a minimum of 33 per cent seats at all levels, village, block, and district, in the Panchayati Raj Institutions. This was done to improve women's involvement and provide them with an opportunity to be decision makers in a traditionally patriarchal society. The objective of this research study is to understand the involvement of women sarpanches in the working of panchayat and compare it to the involvement of sarpanch patis (husbands)/pratinidhis (representatives), i.e., the husband or other male relatives of the women sarpanches, who often work as proxy members in the reserved gram panchayats. The research is conducted in the Karnal district of Haryana using a sample of 30 gram panchayats. The sarpanch, sarpanch pati/pratinidhi, and the gram sachiv (village secretary) of the selected gram panchayats were interviewed to understand their involvement in different job roles according to the State Panchayati Raj Act. Low involvement of the women sarpanches was observed in job roles related to monitoring of physical development works, implementation of Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), handling of panchayat's funds, and other responsibilities. The gram sachivs were interviewed to understand their perception on performance of women sarpanches. It was found that in majority of cases the gram sachivs were interacting with the sarpanch patis/pratinidhis for their work related to the panchayat and their interaction with the women sarpanches was limited and only through the sarpanch's male relatives. The study discusses the challenges faced by the women sarpanches and possible interventions which can be undertaken by the government to improve their involvement in the panchayat works.

I   INTRODUCTION

The 73rd amendment in the India constitution in 1992 granted constitutional status to the traditional *Panchayati Raj* institutions (PRIs) in India.This helped decentralise system of governance and gave legal power to local authorities to manage village-level affairs and improve public service delivery. Today, the *gram panchayat* is the primary unit of administration at the village-level. In order to protect the interests of weaker sections of society, the 73rd amendment made provisions for reserving seats for Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and women at all levels in the PRIs. The amendment is a first of its kind in India to ensure the participation of women in political positions by reserving seats for them. This has paved the way for women to take up leadership roles in the historically male-dominated field of politics.

Article 243D of the Indian constitution mandates the state governments to include a provision in the respective state acts for reserving a minimum of one third of seats for women at all levels in PRIs. Post the 73rd amendment, states passed their respective acts to establish the three-tier system. Some states ensured one-third reservations for women, which is the minimum percentage defined in the constitution, whereas, some like Bihar, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh, and Himachal Pradesh follow 50 per cent reservation for women in PRIs.

In Haryana, the Panchayati Raj Act was enacted in 1994 which reserved one third seats for women at all levels—*zila parishad*, *block samiti*, and *gram panchayat*. Every election year, 33 per cent of the *gram panchayats* at the district-level are reserved for women, which means that only women candidates can contest elections from those *gram panchayats*. Each election year, this list changes so that every *gram panchayat* is represented by a woman at some point in time. Currently, Haryana has 41 per cent elected women representatives as *sarpanch* (Sangwan 2016), which is much greater than the required mandate of 33 per cent. At 41 per cent, the gender balance looks impressive, but available research suggests that increased participation of women representatives does not necessarily translate into higher involvement of women in decision-making in the *panchayat's* affairs and performance (Dabas 2016). Considering this the question that arises then is who is holding the reins of authority and coordinating the work on behalf of the elected women candidates?

The issue of proxy women *sarpanches* is still a big challenge in Haryana, which is not being addressed by the government as a priority issue. It has been alleged that in most cases women act as proxies for male members of their family. It is the male members who campaign for the elections and work in the village post the elections. In some cases, men and other male family members are the real candidates, but since their

gram panchayat is reserved for a woman candidate, they put forth a female candidate from their family or community on their behalf to contest elections. In such cases the elected woman *sarpanch* serves as a proxy for a male member who is the real *sarpanch*. So much so that they even have a name for men serving in place of elected women. They are referred to as the *sarpanch pratinidhi* (*sarpanch's* representative) or *sarpanch pati* (*sarpanch's* Husband)*,* in case they are the husband of the female *sarpanch.*

Karnal has 382 *gram panchayats* with 175 (45 per cent)[1] women *sarpanches*. A baseline assessment of their knowledge about the *Panchayati Raj* Act and their participation in the working of the panchayat was conducted in Karnal by the District Administration in collaboration with the Haryana Institute of Rural Development (HIRD). It was observed that out of the 95 women *sarpanches* who responded, 16 never called a *gram sabha* (village meeting), which has to be conducted every quarter, and it was the male members of her families who had called the meetings. Twenty women *sarpanches* informed that meetings were called both by them and their husbands from time to time[2].

The research conducted in the past has focused on analysing the performance of elected women representatives by creating a performance index based on the roles and responsibilities of *sarpanches* mentioned in the state panchayati raj acts.

The purpose of this research is to assess the extent of involvement of the women *sarpanches* in the functioning of the *panchayat's* work and to conduct a comparative analysis of their involvement with the *sarpanch* representatives/husband. Additionally, the research will focus on:

1. Analysis of the various aspects that affect the performance of women *sarpanches*, such as political affiliations, training, family support, motivation behind standing for elections, etc.

2. Perception of government officials working with women *sarpanches* regarding their involvement in the *panchayat* work.

3. Documenting the challenges faced by the women *sarpanches* while performing their roles and responsibilities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Karnal district was chosen to conduct the study because of geographical convenience for the researcher. The district is divided into eight development blocks, out of which two have been created recently. At the time of formulation of the methodology and selection of the sample, Karnal had only 6 blocks, namely, Nissing, Indri, Nilokheri, Assandh, Gharaunda, and Karnal. Therefore, for the purpose of the study, six blocks were considered.

Karnal has a total of 382 *gram panchayats*, out of which 175 are headed by a woman *sarpanch*.

Table1 summarises the number of women *sarpanches* at a block-level:

Block name	Total number of *gram panchayats*	Number of women *sarpanch* (per cent)
Gharaunda	52	20 (38.46)
Nissing	50	26 (52)
Assandh	56	25 (44.64)
Indri	85	36 (42.35)
Karnal	66	29 (43.94)
Nilokheri	73	39 (53.42)
Total	**382**	**175 (45.81)**

Table 1

1.   Sampling Technique

The technique of random sampling was adopted to select a sample of 36 *gram panchayats* out of 175 *gram panchayats*. In each of these *gram panchayats*, the *sarpanch*, the *sarpanch* representative/husband and the *gram sachiv* were selected for in-depth personal interviews.

1.1.   Selection of Woman *Sarpanch* and the *Sarpanch* Representative

Six *gram panchayats* from each block were selected randomly. The women *sarpanches* and the *sarpanch* representatives, if applicable[3], of the selected *gram panchayats* were interviewed to assess their involvement in the working of the *panchayat* and analyse the factors affecting their performance. Thus, a total of 36 women *sarpanches* and 36 *sarpanch* representatives were selected for the interview via a random sampling method.

1.2.   Selection of Government Officials

Gram sachivs of the selected *gram panchayats* were interviewed to understand their perception of the woman *sarpanch's* involvement in the working of the *panchayat*. One *gram sachiv* typically has a charge of four to five *gram panchayats*, therefore, a total of 23 *gram sachivs* were interviewed from the selected *gram panchayats*.

1.3.   Data collection Instrument

In-depth personal interviews were conducted with the *sarpanch*, the *sarpanch* representatives/husbands, and the *gram sachivs* to collect the data. The questionnaires were designed in consultation with the officers from the Development and Panchayat Department and officials from the various line departments such as education, health, Women and Child Development Department, etc. Discussions with a few high performing male *sarpanches* in Karnal were held to understand their work and extent

of involvement of the *sarpanch* in implementation of various schemes and policies. A questionnaire was prepared and was tested in a *gram panchaya*t selected for the pilot study. The feedback from the pilot study was incorporated and changes were made to the questionnaire to finalise it.

2.   Limitations

Due to time constraint, interviews were conducted only in five blocks of Karnal, which include, Nilokheri, Indri, Karnal, Gharaunda, and Nissing. Assandh block wasn't covered as it is geographically the farthest and time for data collection was limited. Therefore, the *sarpanch*, *sarpanch* representative, and the *gram sachivs* from 30 *gram panchayats* were interviewed.

II   RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The results and findings section is divided into the following sub-sections:

1.   Profile characteristics of the *sarpanch*

2.   Factors potentially affecting the performance of the *sarpanch*

3.   Comparative analysis of involvement of *sarpanch* and *sarpanch* representatives/ husbands in the working of the *panchayat*

4.   Perception of government officials about involvement of *sarpanch* in the working of the *panchayat*

1.   Profile characteristics of the *sarpanch*:

1.1.   Age

Out of the 30 *sarpanches* who were interviewed, the minimum age was 24 years and maximum age was 52 years. The average age of the sample was 33.64 years and the 90th percentile is 42.3 years. Table 2 summarises the age groups of the sample.

Age range	Number of *sarpanches*
20-25	3
26-30	8
31-35	11
36-40	3
41-45	3
46-50	1
51-55	1

Table 2

1.2.   Category

16.67 per cent women *sarpanches* belonged to the SC category, whereas 6.67 and 13.34 per cent of women belonged to the OBC and BC (Backward Class) categories, respectively. The remaining 63.34 per cent women who were interviewed were from the general category.

Graph 2 explains the category distribution:
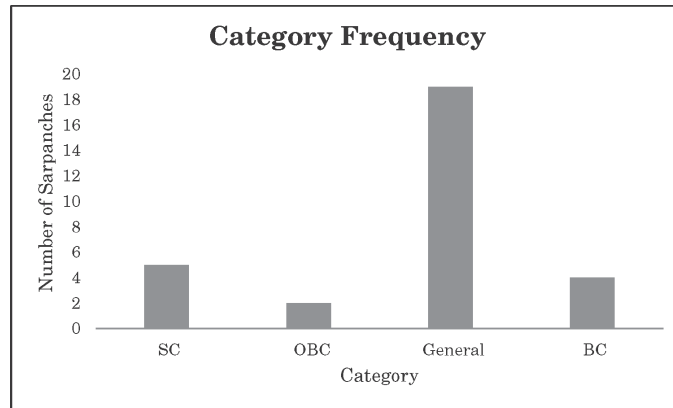
Graph 2

1.3.   Educational Qualification

33.33 per cent of the respondents claimed that they had completed high school, 16.67 per cent were graduates and 13.33 per cent respondents were post graduates, respectively. Graph 3 explains the education qualification of the respondents:
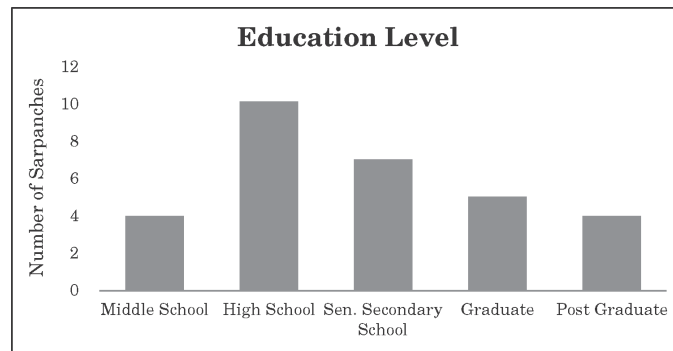
Graph 3

1.4.   Occupation

Two (6.67 per cent) respondents were working other than holding the post of the *sarpanch* of the village. One of them worked as a social worker and taught children in her village, while the other did sewing work. Three (10 per cent) respondents mentioned that they worked before, but were not working at the time when the interviews were taken. Two of them worked as teachers and one of them was a lecturer in a university.

83.34 per cent of the respondents said that they were never engaged in any occupation other than being the *sarpanch*.

1.5.   Family Size

All the respondents were married and on an average the family size of the respondents was eight members with a minimum of four members and maximum of 14 members. For the purpose of this research three categories of family size were developed: small,

medium, and large. Table 3 summarises the frequency distribution of the category of the interviewed women *sarpanches*:

Family size	No. of respondents
Small (4-7)	13
Medium (8-11)	12
Large (12-15)	5

Table 3

1.6.   Children

96.67 per cent respondents had children and only one *sarpanch* out of the 30, who were interviewed, did not have a child. 17.24 per cent of the *sarpanches* had one child, 72.41 per cent had two children, and 10.34 per cent had three children (out of the 29 respondents who had children). One of the respondents who had three children had one child living with her aunt in another village.

The age of the youngest child was recorded if it was less than five years. This was done to understand the support the *sarpanch* got from her family in case she had a young child. Out of the 29 respondents who had children, 37.93 per cent had a child below five years of age. Out of the 37.93 per cent *sarpanches*, 45.45 per cent had a child aged one or less than one year. The *panchayat* came into power in January 2016, which meant 45.45 per cent of the respondents who had a child aged one or under one year were pregnant during the first year of their tenure (the interviews were conducted between March 2018 to May 2018). This can potentially be a parameter impacting their performance.

2.   Factors Potentially Affecting the Performance of the *Sarpanch*:

2.1.   Political Awareness and Affiliations

Local governance in Haryana is influenced by political affiliations of the *sarpanch* and the *panch*. The members of legislative assembly (MLA) and the members of parliament (MP) have the power to grant funds to *gram panchayats* for development projects. Hence, building a relationship with them and their affiliates becomes important. These funds are sometimes granted based on party inclination of the *sarpanch* and not the needs of the village. If the *sarpanch* is well connected he/she can get the funds. For the MLAs and the MPs, the *sarpanch* acts as an agent of mobilisation in the *gram panchayat*. Hence, their relationship becomes important for the potential political benefits it can reap.

To understand the awareness about politics of the *sarpanches*, questions related to voting, voting eligibility, and knowledge about the ruling party in the state and the center were asked. Ten per cent of the respondents wrongly answered the question on minimum voting age in India. A *sarpanch* highlighted that she did not know the correct answer, which is 18, because her voter ID was made only after she got married and she

had not start voting until she started residing in her husband's village. During discussions with the *sarpanches*, many described this situation and explained that the "daughters of the village" generally did not cast vote in their own village. Usually their voter ID is made once they are married and the address used is of their husband's village. When asked whether a woman can vote in our country, 100 per cent respondents answered affirmatively. One of the respondents mentioned that a woman can only vote after she is married. This view was not surprising considering a woman's voter ID is often made after she gets married.

When the *sarpanches* were asked whether they voted in the 2014 general elections, 93.34 per cent answered affirmatively, while the remaining 6.67 per cent did not remember clearly. Ninety per cent of the respondents said that they voted in the last state elections. 6.67 per cent did not vote and 3.34 per cent were not sure whether they voted. 100 per cent respondents voted in the *gram panchayat* elections held in late 2015.

To understand their awareness about the various political parties in power they were asked to name the party that is in majority in the State and the Center. 73.34 per cent of the respondents correctly named the party at the Center and 26.64 per cent *sarpanches* either did not know the answer or answered after giving a few hints during the conversation. Eighty per cent *sarpanches* could correctly name the ruling party in Haryana, whereas 20 per cent of the respondents did not know. One of the *sarpanches* mentioned that they were familiar with Narendra Modi, but did not know the name of the party he belonged to.

To understand the political affiliations of the *sarpanch* they were asked questions related to their involvement with political parties. Twenty per cent of the respondents answered affirmatively on being asked whether they were affiliated to any political party. On being probed further about their affiliations and how they were involved with the political party, two respondents mentioned that they interacted with the MLA's wife during party meetings in the village or during any special meeting where the MLA's wife was present. One of the *sarpanches* mentioned that she was personally motivated by the prime minister's initiatives on sanitation and that explains her affiliation with the party. All the six respondents said that they were affiliated with BJP. Eighty per cent of the women *sarpanches* said that they were not affiliated to any party. A few also mentioned that they appreciated "Modi ji" and his schemes, but it was the other members of the family who were involved with the party and not them.

The *sarpanches* were also questioned about the involvement of family members with any political party. The rationale behind this was to understand the family's political background and identify the family member who is politically connected. 53.34 per cent of the respondents replied affirmatively when asked if anyone from their family had political affiliations. Two respondents mentioned that they did not know whether anyone from their family was affiliated to any political party. Out of two, one *sarpanch* expressed "*Mere jeth ko hi pata hoga*" (My brother-in-law would only know). Among those who responded affirmatively about the political affiliation of their family members, more than 50 per cent mentioned that their husbands had political affiliations.

Family member	Number of respondents
Husband	8
All the members of the family	1
Father-in-law	1
Brother-in-law	1
Husband and Father-in-law	2
Husband and Brother-in-law	1
Uncle	2

Table 4: *Family members with political affiliations*

2.2.   Previous Experience of Public Office

56.67 per cent of the *sarpanches* responded affirmatively when asked about family members having held political posts in the past. One of the respondents was prodded by her husband – who, in this case, insisted to sit through the interview–to say that his father was a *panch* in the past. The *sarpanch* was not aware and therefore, it was not included in the affirmative responses section. Another *sarpanch* mentioned that her uncle from her maternal village was the *sarpanch*. Since her uncle was not the *sarpanch* in the same village as her, the response was not included.

Relationship	Elected position
Uncle	*Sarpanch*
Husband	*Sarpanch*
Father-in-law	*Panch*
Mother-in-law	*Panch*
Various family members	*Sarpanches* have been from the family since the last 55 years
Grandfather (in law)	*Sarpanch*
Aunt	*Panch*
Husband	*Panch*
Father-in-law and Brother-in-law	*Sarpanch*
Husband	*Sarpanch*
Great Grandfather (in law)	*Sarpanch*
Father-in-law and Husband	Chairman of Haryana Federation and ZP Member respectively
Father-in-law	*Panch*
Uncle	*Panch*
Father-in-law	*Panch*
Aunt	*Sarpanch*
Uncle	*Panch*

Table 5: *Relation to the* sarpanch *and the elected position of the family member*

Out of the 17 responses, only three responses reveal female family members holding political posts in the past.

When the respondents were asked whether they had held any political position in the past, only 6.67 per cent responded affirmatively as they were either the *sarpanch* or *panch* in the past. Therefore, a vast majority of the *sarpanches* were first time political office holders and they never stood for elections in the past.

2.3.   Involvement of *Sarpanch* in the Campaigning for her own Election

Ninety per cent of the *sarpanches* responded affirmatively on being asked whether they campaigned for their candidature at the time of the elections. Out of the remaining 10 per cent, two respondents said that they did not campaign for their candidature and that the other members of their family did the campaigning on their behalf. One *sarpanch* mentioned that she did not feel the need to campaign because she got the *sarpanchi* (the position of village head) on consensus of the villagers. She also added that the villagers wanted her husband to become the *sarpanch*.

When the women were asked who all supported them in their campaign, the most common response was their family. A few women mentioned that they also campaigned with a group of women from their village, community, or *Mohalla* (locality). As far as the strategies they adopted for their campaigns was concerned, a vast majority of them explained that they went door-to-door and interacted with each household in their village, shared their manifesto, and appealed for votes. Some of them also mentioned that they conducted meetings with the people in public places like the *chaupal*[4], *panchayat ghar* (*panchayat's* office), and the *anganwadi* centers.

A few *sarpanches* also shared that they were usually accompanied by the women of the village and they went in groups. One of the respondents mentioned that men and women of the village made separate groups and went for rallies or door-to-door campaigning. Another respondent shared that she only went for campaigning towards the end of the campaign and initially only "*sarpanch sahib*", by which she meant her husband, went.

2.4.   Motivation for Standing for Elections

A pertinent question was why women stood for elections in the first place. 46.67 per cent said that their family members asked them to stand for elections. Some mentioned that either their husband or father-in-law had wanted to do something for the village and hence they asked the women to contest in the elections because it was a reserved seat. Only two respondents mentioned that they were self-motivated to participate and therefore they stood for elections. During the interview with one of the two respondents, the *sarpanch's* mother-in-law and husband insisted to join. So, there is a fair chance that their presence affected the *sarpanch's* response.

Forty per cent women mentioned that they participated in the elections because their family asked them to and they were self-motivated. Two respondents also shared reasons

that were not mentioned in the answer key. Take for example the view that the villagers asked her to stand for the elections.

The respondents who mentioned that their family asked them to participate or gave other responses were further probed regarding their family members insistence on their participation. 40.74 per cent *sarpanches* said that the seat was reserved for a woman candidate and therefore their families wanted them to stand for elections. 18.51 per cent women pointed out that the minimum education criterion was the main reason and 33.34 per cent said that both, seat reserved for a woman and education criteria, were the reasons behind the family's insistence. Remaining two respondents did not give any specific reason for their participation in the elections.

A few *sarpanches* shared that if the seat was not reserved, their husband, brother-in-law, or father-in-law would have stood for the elections. Some also expressed that their husband or brother-in-law did not qualify to stand for elections. A respondent mentioned that her mother-in-law could not stand because she did not possess the required education qualifications. The family members had wanted the mother-in-law as the candidate because the seat was reserved for women.

2.5.   Family Support

To analyse the kind of support the women *sarpanches* had from their families to perform household chores, take care of children, and look after the cattle of the house, the *sarpanches* were asked questions regarding availability of domestic help, support in performing household chores from other family members and taking care of the children.

On asking the *sarpanches* whether they had any domestic help at home, 53.34 per cent said they did not have any domestic help, while 30 per cent had domestic help at home. The remaining 16.67 per cent said that they had partial help for taking care of the cattle, working in the farm or just doing a little bit of household work like making tea for the people who come to visit. When the respondents were asked whether they performed household chores, all of them responded affirmatively, even the ones who had domestic help at home.

When asked how they managed their *panchayat* meetings and monitoring work alongside the household duties, there were four common responses. First, for *sarpanches* who had joint families there was an advantage since their relatives did work on their behalf whenever they had to attend meetings. Second, in some cases the domestic help did some part of the work and supported them. Third, women *sarpanches* prioritised their household work. They would wake up early and complete their household duties before leaving for meetings. Fourth, in cases where the *sarpanch* lived close to her relatives they would support her when need be.

Out of the sample selected for the study, 12 women *sarpanches* had a child aged five or less than five years old. Since their children were young, they would need support to take care of the children when they were at work. Therefore, the *sarpanches* were asked who took care of the child in case they had to work. Fifty per cent of the respondents said that their mother-in-law takes care of the child. 33.34 per cent

answered that other family members along with the mother-in-law took care of the child. One of them mentioned that her elder child took care of the younger child and another said that she hardly went outside her house and in case she left for more than an hour she took her children with her.

2.6.   Communication with Government Officials

Since the *panchayat* is an elected body, their role is to serve the people of the *gram panchayat*. There is a need for a communication channel with the villagers as well as the government officials. For the villagers it is sometimes easier to contact the *sarpanch* since they can directly go to their house, but for a government official at the block-level, district-level or for the assigned *gram sachiv*, who is the secretary of the *panchayat*, it is necessary to have the contact number of the *sarpanches*. In order to understand whether the women *sarpanches* communicated directly with the government officials, the respondents were asked questions about owning a phone and receiving official calls on it.

83.34 per cent respondents had a phone and the remaining 16.67 per cent did not. The *sarpanches* who did not have a phone were further asked whose number had they given for official communication. All the respondents except one, who had shared her brother-in-law's number, had given their husband's number for official communication. One of them mentioned that the husband attended the calls and then informed her, while another respondent said that the husband only spoke to the government officials.

The respondents who had a phone with them were asked whether they had shared their number with the officials in case they had to be contacted for any work. 52 per cent respondents had shared their number with the officials, whereas the rest preferred giving their husband's or any other male relative's number. According to some *sarpanches*, the husband or other male relatives knew better about the work or would inform them about the conversation. Out of the 13 respondents who claimed that they had shared their number, 84.61 per cent said that the phone number of the husband, father-in-law, or brother-in-law was also given to the officials.

One of the *sarpanches* who did not share her number with the officials said that all the officials were male and therefore her husband shared his number instead of her number. She also mentioned that she had shared her number with a female block coordinator. A few respondents mentioned that they shared their male relative's (*sarpanch* husband/ representatives) number because they did the work. Two women *sarpanches* also mentioned that they were pregnant, so they shared their relatives—father-in-law, husband or brother-in-law—number only.

2.7.   Training and Capacity Building

In January 2016, after the *panchayat* elections, Haryana Institute of Rural Development (HIRD)[5], conducted a statewide five-day residential training for all the *sarpanches* on the *Panchayati Raj* Act, their roles, responsibilities and their rights. Apart from this, multiple ad hoc block-level training programs and meetings are held to create awareness about new schemes and policies and how the *panchayat* can assist in implementation.

The *sarpanch* has to attend the training program and attendance is recorded. To understand the perception of women *sarpanches* about the training programs, they were asked questions regarding the number of training sessions they had attended, the key learnings from them and their views on how they could be improved.

Out of the sample of 30 respondents, only three said that they did not attend any training or could not remember clearly if they did. The remaining 90 per cent attended a minimum of one training session in the two years since they had become the *sarpanch*. They were further asked whether they were satisfied with the training. 88.89 per cent respondents claimed that they were satisfied while the remaining were either not convinced with what was said during the training or did not like the fact that they had to wait for a long time for it to start.

The women who were satisfied with the training highlighted that they learnt new things about their work. The *sarpanches* were also asked whether they were interested in attending an all women training session. Only two women said that they would prefer all women sessions and the rest did not mind attending trainings in mixed groups.

3. **Comparative Analysis of Involvement of *Sarpanch* and *Sarpanch* Representatives/Husband in the Working of the *Panchayat:***

The extent of the involvement in the working of the *panchayat* of *sarpanch pratinidhi/pati* was not known. It was imperative to analyse what kind of work and how much of that work the women *sarpanches* were doing and how much work was being handled by the *sarpanch pratinidhi/pati*.

The first step to understand the extent of involvement was to get information about the *gram panchayats* that had a *sarpanch pratinidhi/pati*. This was done by interacting with the block officials and the village secretaries. It was found that the *sarpanch pratinidhi/pati* culture existed in all the *gram panchayats* in the sample. The *sarpanch pratinidhi/pati* of the selected *gram panchayats* were interviewed for the purpose of the research. Since it is not an official position, their contact details were not easily available. The block officers helped me get in touch with them. Both the *sarpanch* and their *pratinidhi/pati* were interviewed separately using a similar questionnaire to make a comparative analysis.

3.1. **Knowledge About the Departments**

The *panchayat* has to coordinate with multiple departments to ensure that the services and schemes of all the relevant departments reach the people of their *gram panchayat*. Some of the government departments with which the *panchayat* works are:

- Education
- Health
- Electricity
- Forest
- Women and Child Development
- Police
- Engineering
- Revenue

- Rural Development
- Social Welfare
- Agriculture
- Public Works Department

- Sports
- Irrigation
- Public Health
- Soil Research and Conservation (Research Institution)

- Food and Supplies
- Animal Husbandry Department

- Fire Rescue Department

The list has been prepared after interaction with a few sarpanches and the block level government officials. Departments were further added to the list as and when required.

The respondents were asked to list the departments the panchayat has to work with. The average number of departments named by the women sarpanches were two and a maximum of six departments. 37.93 per cent women sarpanches could not name even one department the panchayat works with. However, when the same question was asked to the sarpanch representatives/husbands, the average number of departments they could name were five with a maximum of 10 departments and all the respondents could list a minimum of one department. Only 10.34 per cent of women sarpanches could name more number of departments than their respective representatives/ husbands and 13.79 per cent sarpanches named equal number of departments when compared with their husbands/representatives.

3.2.   Interaction with Government Officials

To understand the involvement of women *sarpanches*, it was crucial to analyse how often they interacted with the field staff deployed by different departments at the village-level to ensure delivery of services. The list of field staff was shortlisted after understanding the frequency of the field staff's interaction with the *sarpanch*. Both, the *sarpanch* and the *sarpanch* representatives, were asked how many times they contacted (telephonically or in-person) a particular member of the field staff in a given period of time. The responses were analysed and a comparison was drawn between the two.

3.2.1.   *Patwari* (Revenue Department):

The *patwari* from the revenue department is responsible for looking after the land records, demarcation and mutation of land and verification of certificates like the caste certificate, etc. Since *panchayats* undertake multiple infrastructural development projects on the *panchayat's* land, their dependence on the *patwari* is unavoidable. The respondents were asked how many times they contacted the *patwari* in a month on an average.

58.62 per cent women *sarpanches* did not interact with the *patwari* of the village, while only 24.13 per cent *sarpanches* interacted less than four times in a month with the *patwari* and 6.89 per cent interacted greater than three but less than five times in a month. One respondent said that she could not remember how many times she met

or contacted the *patwari* and another respondent answered "very less" because she was pregnant and could not recall the exact number. One of them said that she met the *patwari* only one to two times when he came to her home and at other times her husband met the *patwari*. Two respondents shared that they did not meet the *patwari* because he was a man. One of them also said that she did not know who the *patwari* was. Twelve out of 29 respondents mentioned that either their male relatives (*sarpanch* husband/representatives) did the talking and they only handled the work with the *patwari* or the *sarpanch* contributed partially in the meetings.

The same question was asked to the *sarpanch* representatives/husbands and 89.65 per cent respondents had met the *patwari* more than once in a month. 44.82 per cent met the *patwari* less than or equal to five times in a month. An equal number of respondents, i.e., 44.82 per cent, met the *patwari* greater than five times in a month. Out of the 44.82 per cent, 46.15 per cent met the *patwari* more than ten times in a month. One respondent said that there were some months when he did not meet the *patwari* at all, whereas there were seasons when he met the *patwari* daily for work. Two *sarpanch* representatives said that they do not have much work with the *patwari*.

3.2.2.   School Head

The school head is a government appointed teacher with administrative powers who looks after the government school in the village. The respondents were asked the number of times they met the school head in their village school in a month on an average.

Out of the selected *gram panchayats*, two did not have a school in their *gram panchayat*. Therefore, the question was not valid for the *sarpanches* located there. Out of the remaining, 25.92 per cent *sarpanches* did not meet the school head on a monthly basis. 40.74 per cent respondents met the school head less than three times in a month and only 33.34 per cent *sarpanches* met the school head three or greater than three times in a month. The minimum number of visits on average in a month were zero and the maximum were eight in a month.

The minimum number of times the *sarpanch* representatives contacted the school head in a month was three and maximum was thirty. All the *sarpanch* representatives who had a functional school in the village contacted the school head three or more than three times in a month on an average. Out of which 25.92 per cent contacted the school head ten or more than ten times in a month.

3.2.3.   *Anganwadi* Worker

Anganwadi centers are another important government entity in every *gram panchayat*. It comes under the purview of the Women and Child Development Department and is supervised by a supervisor from the department who is required to make monthly visits to the center. The *anganwadi* worker is an importance field functionary for many government schemes and hence their interaction with the *sarpanch* is inevitable. The *panchayat* monitors whether the *anganwadi* workers are ensuring delivery of services or not.

The women *sarpanches* were asked how many times they contacted (telephonically or in-person) the *anganwadi* worker in a month. 13.79 per cent did not meet the worker. 62.06 per cent met the *anganwadi* worker less than five times in a month and 50 per cent of them met the worker only once or twice. 24.13 per cent met the worker more than five times in a month.

Out of the 29 *sarpanch* representatives who were asked this question, only 13.79 per cent reported that they did not contact the *anganwadi* worker(s) of their *gram panchayat* and one respondent said that he did not remember if he ever met the worker. The representatives highlighted that since it was a women's department, they did not go there and the *sarpanch* only goes in case of work and meetings. One of the respondents said that in case the *anganwadi* worker has any problem, the worker shares it with their husband or father-in-law who contacts the *sarpanch representative* and tells him about the issue faced by the worker. The *sarpanch representative* never spoke to the workers directly. 44.82 per cent respondents contacted the *anganwadi* worker less than five times in a month and 37.93 per cent contacted them five or more than five times with one of the respondents sharing that he goes to the center almost daily.

3.2.4.   ANM (Auxiliary Nurse Midwife)

The ANM is from the health department and is in charge of immunisation and other health initiatives at the village-level. They have a schedule, according to which, they make weekly visits to the village for immunisation or conducting check-ups for pregnant women.

Close to half of the respondents, which is around 48.27 per cent, did not meet the ANM; were not aware who the ANM was; met the ANM for some personal work (for e.g., immunisation of their children); or said that their husbands spoke to the ANM. Only 17.24 per cent met the ANM more than twice in a month.

37.93 per cent of the *sarpanch* representatives said that they either did not meet the ANM or it was a "ladies department" so the woman *sarpanch* only spoke to her or that they did not have monthly interactions with the ANM for *panchayat* work. 41.37 per cent of the representatives met the ANM more than twice in a month.

3.2.5.   ASHA Worker (Accredited Social Health Activist)

ASHA workers are women from the village who create awareness about various health programs and provide support to pregnant and lactating women in the village. They do house visits and conduct door to door surveys and awareness camps for health programs. They require assistance of the *panchayat* to get announcements made in the village, organise village-level meetings, and to conduct their work.

20.68 per cent women *sarpanches* did not contact the ASHA worker at all for *panchayat* work or had met her only when she came home. 72.41 per cent respondents contacted the ASHA worker more than once in a month, out of which only 19.04 per cent contacted the worker more than five times in a month. Two of the respondents met the ASHA worker daily because she lived close by. This shows that geographical distance is a key factor influencing meeting between women sarpanches and the ASHA workers.

41.37 per cent *sarpanch* representatives did not meet the ASHA worker on a monthly basis and only met them in case of any important work. Out of this, 41.67 per cent respondents explained that they did not interact with them because either they are not very comfortable talking to women or the ASHA worker is not comfortable talking to them. 55.17 per cent representatives contacted the ASHA worker more than once in a month, out of which 62.5 per cent contacted the worker more than five times in a month.

3.2.6. Junior Engineer (JE), Panchayat Department

The engineering wing of the Panchayat Department is responsible for assisting the *panchayat* in construction projects like roads, sewers, cremation grounds, etc. Every *gram panchayat* has been assigned a junior engineer whose work is to support the *sarpanch* and the *panch* to implement infrastructural projects passed in the *gram sabha*. The respondents were asked how many times they contacted the JE in a month for the *panchayat* work. The JE is mostly a man and this explains the hesitation of the women to talk to him.

86.20 per cent women *sarpanches* said that they either never spoke to the JE or did not meet the JE regularly on a monthly basis for *panchayat* work. Only three respondents contacted the JE more than once in a month for *panchayat* work.

When the same question was asked to the *sarpanch* representatives, the average number of times the JE was contacted in a month was 14. 75.86 per cent of the representatives contacted the JE more than five times in a month.

3.2.7. Visit to the Block Development and Panchayat Office (BDPO)

The block-level Development and Panchayat Office is the place where all the rural development functionaries reside. The *sarpanch* and the *panch* often have to make visits to the office for the *panchayat* work and other important meetings. To understand how involved were the women *sarpanches* when it came to visiting the block office for *panchayat* works, the *sarpanches* were asked about the number of times they visited the office in the last three months from the time the interview was conducted.

34.48 per cent *sarpanches* did not visit the block office even once in the last three months and only 17.24 per cent visited the office more than three times in the last three months. Three respondents explicitly mentioned in the interaction that their husband went to the block office and they did not go.

Among the *sarpanch* representatives, 72.41 per cent said that they visited the block office more than 15 times in the last three months and out of this 33.34 per cent responded that they visit the office daily.

3.3. Performance of Defined Roles in Specific Areas

Questions around specific roles and responsibilities under different departments were formulated and the *sarpanch* and the *sarpanch* representatives/husbands were asked similar questions to understand the extent of their involvement in work related to

various departments. The results have been analysed in the section below.

3.3.1.   Food and Supplies Department

Almost every village has a ration depot that is responsible for the distribution of subsidised ration to the beneficiaries in the village. The *panchayat* is responsible for looking at the overall functioning of the depot and attending to people's grievances in case of any malpractices.

Out of the 30 women *sarpanches*, 56.67 per cent did not visit the ration depot in the last one month from when the interview was conducted. Only 13.33 per cent visited the depot in the last one month. The frequency of the visit for the latter was either once or twice. On the other hand, 62.06 per cent of the *sarpanch* representatives visited the ration depot in the last one month with sometimes a frequency of more than two *Sarpanch*

Women *sarpanch* (N=30)	Never	Once	twice	> 2 times	Other responses
How many times have you visited the ration depot in the last one month?	56.67%	10.00%	3.33%	0.00%	30.00%

The number of women *sarpanches* who visited the ration depot in the last one month was very small. Therefore, the analysis of performance of further roles and responsibilities with respect to the depot could not be conducted on such a small sample size.

Sarpanch representatives N=29	Never	Once	Twice	> 2 times	Other responses
How many times have you visited the ration depot in the last one month?	13.79%	31.03%	10.34%	20.69%	24.14%

The number of *sarpanch* representatives who visited the ration depot atleast once in the last one month from when the interview was conducted were 18. A further analysis of performance of other roles and responsibilities in the ration depot for the selected respondents was also conducted. All the respondents claimed to check the quality of the ration received and 71.43 per cent said that they also checked the quantity of the ration.

N=21 (*Sarpanch* representatives who had a depot in their *gram panchayat* visited the depot at least once in the last month from when the interview was conducted)	Yes	No	Other responses
Do you check the quantity of ration received across the requirement?	71.43%	14.29%	14.29%
Do you check the quality of the ration received?	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Do you fill the stock register of your ration depot based on your inspection report?	0.00%	90.48%	9.52%
Have you done any survey in the past two years to identify if there is a need to open a new ration depot? N=24	20.83%	29.17%	50.00%

3.3.2.   Health Department

The field workers (ANMs and the ASHAs) of the health department conduct monthly immunisations camps (the frequency depends on the population) and antenatal checkups in the village. They also collect and maintain data of the checkups conducted. The field workers require support from the panchayat in order to effectively implement the health drives and conduct surveys in the village. The *panchayat* is also responsible for resolution of grievances, ensuring accountability of the field staff and making regular visits to the health center, if applicable, and attending meetings of the village-level health committees.

56.67 per cent women *sarpanches* and 48.28 per cent *sarpanch* representatives claimed that they visit the center in their villages on the scheduled day for immunisation. Further comparative analysis of the job roles was conducted and it was seen that involvement of the women *sarpanches* when it comes to looking at the report and registers of the ANMs and ASHA workers was slightly higher than that of the *sarpanch* representatives. This could possibly be because the *sarpanch's* signatures is required on a few selected reports. Also, since the field workers, both ANMs and ASHAs, are women, it is easier for the women *sarpanches* to interact with them.

A depiction of their job role is given below:

Sarpanch

N=30	Yes	No	Other responses
Do you visit the centre on the immunisation day?	56.67%	20.00%	23.33%
N=21 (Removed certain responses: "They do not call me" and "Never Visited the Centre")	**Yes**	**No**	**Other Responses**
Do you check the attendance of the ANMs on the immunisation day?	61.90%	38.10%	0.00%
Do you check the registers of the ANMs?	57.14%	42.86%	0.00%
Do you check the reports prepared by ASHA workers?	47.62%	52.38%	0.00%

Sarpanch **representatives**

N=29	Yes	No	Other responses
Do you visit the centre on the immunisation day?	48.28%	34.48%	17.24%
N=19	**Yes**	**No**	**Other responses**
Do you check the attendance of the ANMs on the immunisation day?	26.32%	68.42%	5.26%
Do you check the registers of the ANMs?	36.84%	63.16%	0.00%
Do you check the reports prepared by ASHA workers?	31.58%	68.42%	0.00%

3.3.3. Electricity Department

The electricity department conducts periodic camps in the villages to spread awareness about the new schemes offered by the department and to ensure every household pays the electricity bill. The panchayat assists them to conduct the camps and surveys.

When the women *sarpanches* were asked if they had supported the electricity department to conduct the camps, 30 per cent responded affirmatively, whereas 86.21 per cent *sarpanch* representatives claimed to assist the department in these camps.

Sarpanch

N=30	Yes	No	Other responses
Do you assist the electricity department to conduct camps to collect the bills from the villagers?	30.00%	53.33%	16.67%

Sarpanch Representatives

N=29	Yes	No	Other responses
Do you assist the electricity department to conduct camps to collect the bills from the villagers?	86.21%	3.45%	10.34%

3.3.4.   Social Welfare Department

One of the predominant responsibilities of the Social Welfare Department is delivery of the pension schemes. The department has to ensure that all the beneficiaries covered under the schemes get the services. The signature of the *sarpanch* is required in the application to certify the identity of the person, which leads the villagers to approach the *sarpanch*. In some cases, the panchayat also conducts surveys to identify the beneficiaries who are not registered with the department. The *sarpanch* on most occasions helps the villagers to complete the documentation and provides guidance for completing the application work.

Only 26.67 per cent of the women *sarpanches* responded affirmatively when asked whether they conducted awareness drives to identify beneficiaries in their village and 44.83 per cent *sarpanch* representatives claimed to have conducted drives in their village. The *sarpanch* representatives were also asked whether they helped the woman *sarpanch* in certifying and verifying the pension applications of the villages and 85.71 per cent claimed that they helped the *sarpanch*.

Sarpanch

N=30	Yes	No	Other responses
Have you ever conducted drives in your village to identify beneficiaries of the various pension schemes? (window/old-age/disability)	26.67%	13.33%	60.00%
Do you sign on the pension application of the beneficiaries?	93.33%	0.00%	7.14%

Sarpanch **Representatives**

N=29	Yes	No	Other responses
Have you ever conducted drives in your village to identify beneficiaries of the various pension schemes? (window/old-age/disability)	44.83%	13.79%	41.38%
Are you aware that application of the beneficiaries for pension is signed by the *sarpanch*?	96.55%	0.00%	3.45%
If yes, then do you help the *sarpanch* in certifying and verifying? N=28	85.71%	14.29%	0.00%

3.3.5. Animal Husbandry Department

The Animal Husbandry Department is responsible for delivery of schemes and subsidies related to livestock. The *panchayat* helps the department to conduct awareness camps and identify beneficiaries in the village. The women *sarpanches* who claimed that their *gram panchayats* had a Veterinary Livestock Development Assistant were asked whether they had accompanied them to conduct camps in the village. Around 22.22 per cent women sarpanches responded affirmatively.

The *sarpanch's* signature is required for verification of the beneficiary details for the various schemes of the department. To understand the dependence of the *sarpanch* on the *sarpanch* husbands/representatives, the *sarpanch* husbands/representative were asked whether they helped the *sarpanch* verify any application. 52.17 per cent *sarpanch* representatives responded affirmatively.

Sarpanch

N=30	Yes	No	Other responses
Does your *gram panchayat* have a Veterinary Livestock Development Assistant?	60.00%	23.33%	16.67%
N=18	**Yes**	**No**	**Other responses**
Have you assisted them in conducting any camps to inform the villagers about the department's schemes?	22.22%	66.67%	11.11%

Sarpanch representatives

N=29	Yes	No	Other responses
Does your GP have a Veterinary Livestock Development Assistant?	79.31%	20.69%	0.00%

N=23	Yes	No	Other responses
Have you helped the *sarpanch* verify any application regarding availing the schemes of the Animal Husbandry department?	52.17%	47.83%	0.00%

3.3.6. Implementation of MNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act)

The *panchayat* plays a crucial role in the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act. The *sarpanch* signs on the daily attendance (also called the muster roll) and based on this the beneficiaries receive their payment. They have other responsibilities like conducting awareness campaigns, getting job cards made and appointing a mate[6].

23.33 per cent women *sarpanches* said that they have conducted awareness campaigns in the villages to generate a list of projects that can be undertaken by the *panchayat* under MNREGA. By contrast, 75.86 per cent, a much greater percentage in comparison to the women *sarpanches*, *sarpanch* representatives responded affirmatively when asked if they conducted such campaigns. 37.93 per cent women *sarpanches* from *panchayats* where MNREGA work is ongoing knew what a muster roll is. At 96.15 per cent a much greater percentage of *sarpanch* representatives knew about the muster roll.

Sarpanch

N=30	Yes	No	Other Responses
Have you even conducted awareness campaigns/drives to generate a list of projects under NREGA according to demand?	23.33%	60.00%	16.67%

N=29	Yes	No	Other responses
How you created any job cards since you got elected	51.72%	37.93%	10.34%
Do you know what a muster roll is?	37.93%	58.62%	3.45%

N=29	Yes	No	Don't Know	Other Responses
Does Your GP have a mate?	48.28%	10.34%	37.93%	3.45%

N=14	Yes	No
Do you know what a mate does?	92.86%	7.14%

Sarpanch Representatives

N=29	Yes	No	Other Responses
Have you even conducted awareness campaigns/drives to generate a list of projects under NREGA according to demand?	75.86%	13.79%	10.34%

N=26	Yes	No	Other Responses
How you created any job cards since you got elected	73.08%	3.85%	23.08%
Do you know what a muster roll is?	96.15%	0.00%	3.85%

N=19 (Excluding the GPs that did not have a mate in their village, according to them)	Yes	No	Other Responses
Do you know what a mate does?	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%

3.3.7.   Projects Initiated using *Panchayat* Funds

Apart from the funds granted to the *panchayat* under various schemes by the central and state government, the *panchayat* also has its own sources of revenue. Mostly, the revenue is through assets like land, ponds, etc. The *panchayat* gives these assets on contract and earns revenue. For a *sarpanch*, it is imperative to know the sources of the *panchayat's* own funds. These funds are invested in various development works in the village. 63.33 per cent women *sarpanches* were aware of the sources of income for the *panchayat*, whereas all the *sarpanch* representatives knew about the different sources of revenue. 56.67 per cent women *sarpanches* said that they monitored the progress of the infrastructural development works undertaken by the *panchayat*. And all the *sarpanch* representatives claimed that they monitored the development works.

To execute infrastructural works the *sarpanch* arranges labourers for the work. Ten per cent women *sarpanches* answered affirmatively when asked if they find the

labourers for the panchayat work. By contrast, 96.55 per cent *sarpanch* representatives responded affirmatively to the same question. When asked whether they directly spoke to the labourers regarding work, 36.67 per cent women *sarpanches* and all *sarpanch* representatives answered affirmatively.

Sarpanch

N=30	Yes	No	Other Responses
Are you aware of all the sources of income for the Panchayat?	63.33%	33.33%	3.33%
Do you monitor the progress of these works?	56.67%	43.33%	0.00%
Do you find the contractors/labour for these projects?	10.00%	90.00%	0.00%
Do you directly talk to the contractors/labour regarding work?	36.67%	63.33%	0.00%

Sarpanch **Representative**

N=29	Yes	No	Other Responses
Are you aware of all the sources of income for the Panchayat?	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Do you monitor the progress of these works?	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%
Do you find the contractors/labour for these projects?	96.55%	0.00%	3.45%
Do you directly talk to the contractors/labour regarding work?	100.00%	0.00%	0.00%

3.3.8.   **Dispute Resolution**

The villagers approach the panchayat for resolution of personal disputes and therefore, unofficially, dispute resolution is handled by the male relatives (*sarpanch* husband/representatives) of the *sarpanch*. Fifty per cent of the women *sarpanches* said that they were involved in resolution of disputes related to women and family only. 96.55 per cent of the *sarpanch* representatives said that they were involved in resolution of all kind of disputes in their village.

Sarpanch

N=30	Yes	No	Related to ladies and family	Together with male members of the family
Do you involve yourself in resolving disputes in your village?	13.33%	26.67%	50.00%	10.00%

Sarpanch **Relative**

N=29	Yes	No	Other responses
Do you involve yourself in resolving disputes in your village?	96.55%	0.00%	3.45%

3.4.   Perception of Government Officials About Involvement of Women *Sarpanches* in the Panchayat Work

Gram sachiv or village secretary is a government official whose responsibility is to support the *panchayat*—the *sarpanch* and the *panches*—in their work and complete the administrative requirements. They closely work with the *sarpanch* and therefore, the *gram sachivs* of the selected *gram panchayats* were interviewed to understand their perception about the involvement of women *sarpanches* in the *panchayat* works. *Gram sachivs* require support from the *sarpanch* to complete their daily reporting work and hence it was important to understand the extent to which women *sarpanches* are able to assist them.

Every *gram sachiv* has been allocated more than one *gram panchayat* so there were cases where a single *gram sachiv* was interviewed for more than one *panchayat*. For the purpose of this study, 23 *gram sachivs* were interviewed for 30 *gram panchayats*.

3.4.1.   Tenure duration

The average amount of time the respondents spent in the *gram panchayat* was 15 months with a minimum of 0.5 month (15 days) and a maximum of 84 months.

In one of the *gram panchayats* we interviewed two *gram sachivs*, both had served with the same *sarpanch* at different time periods. One of them worked with the *sarpanch* only for three months and the other worked for a year, but that was seven months ago from when the interview was conducted. In order to get accurate information about the working of the *sarpanch*, we chose to interview the *gram sachivs* who were with the *panchayat* for a longer duration. In cases where the *gram sachiv* served more than one tenure with the same *sarpanch*, the total duration was calculated by adding all the tenures of the *gram sachiv*.

3.4.2.   Assistance in work by family members

According to the *gram sachivs* all the women *sarpanches* of the selected *gram panchayat* were assisted by someone in the family to do the *panchayat* works. When they were enquired about the relation of the person who supported the *sarpanch*, 76.67 per cent respondents said that the *sarpanches* were supported by their husbands, 13.34 per cent were supported by their brother-in-law and 6.67 per cent were supported by their father-in-law.

One of *gram sachivs* mentioned that if the husband was not present the father-in-law assisted the *sarpanch*. A respondent also shared that the *sarpanch* he worked with was supported by her uncle. It is important to note that the people supporting the *sarpanch* in the *panchayat* work, according to the *gram sachivs*, are male members from the family of the *sarpanch*.

3.4.3.   Communication for meetings

The *gram panchayat* meetings are held twice in a month and the *gram sachiv* has to be present in the meeting to prepare the proceedings and other administrative reports. Usually the *sarpanch* or any of the *panch* members informs the *gram sachiv* regarding the meeting.

The *sachivs* were asked who contacts them to schedule the *gram panchayat* meetings and 70 per cent of them answered that the male relative (*sarpanch* husband/ representative) of the *sarpanch* called them for the meeting instead of the *sarpanch*. In 6.67 per cent cases, the *sarpanch* and the male relative, both called them and in only 10 per cent of the cases, the *sarpanch* called the *sachivs* to schedule the meeting. In one of the cases, the respondents answered that the male relative of the sarpanch or the male *panch* members called the *gram sachiv* for the meeting.

One of the respondents shared that the meeting had not happened in the *gram panchayat* as he was recently appointed. In a specific case, the *gram sachiv* said that he only initiates the conversation during the meeting and does not receive any specific call for scheduling it. Whereas another *sachiv* mentioned that the dates of the meeting are fixed and nobody had to call him to schedule the meeting. He also added that in case of any other work the husband of the *sarpanch* or *male panch* members called him and the woman *sarpanch* or women *panches* never called him.

A *gram sachiv* highlighted that the *sarpanch* usually informed her brother-in-law who called the *sachiv* for the meeting despite the *sarpanch* owning a phone. According to him, she could not call him directly because of societal issues. Another *gram sachiv* mentioned how the husband of the *sarpanch* also called him in case of any urgent work. This clearly indicates the interference by male relatives (*sarpanch* husbands/ representative) in a role which should ideally be performed by the women *sarpanches*.

3.4.4.   Attendance in *gram panchayat* meetings:

According to the Haryana *Panchayati Raj* Act, *gram panchayat* meetings should be held at least twice a month where all the members of the *panchayat* (*sarpanch* and

panch) convene to discuss any issue or new projects that can be initiated in the village. Information about new schemes/policies is also provided by the *sachiv* during such meetings. It is the responsibility of the *sarpanch* to schedule the meeting in consultation with a majority of the *panches* in her *panchayat*.

When asked whether it was the *sarpanch* or their male relative (*sarpanch* husbands/representative) who were more frequent attendees in the *gram panchayat* meetings, 36.67 per cent said that the male relative(s) attended more number of meetings than the *sarpanch*, whereas 46.67 per cent said that both the male relative(s) and the *sarpanch* attended equal number of *gram panchayat* meetings. Only in 13.34 per cent *gram panchayats* the *sarpanch* attended more number of meetings than the male relative, according to the *gram sachiv*. At the time when the study was conducted for one of the respondents the *gram panchayat* meeting had not happened yet. In yet another case, the *gram panchayat* meeting happened only once and both the male relative and the *sarpanch* attended the meeting.

One of the *gram sachivs* also highlighted that the *sarpanch* accompanied the male relative but sat in the *gram panchayat* meeting only for a short duration because she had to complete the household chores. According to him, female *panch* members were also not very active in the *gram panchayat* meetings because of the presence of respected elderly members of the village in front of whom they could not speak, a practice widely prevalent across Haryana. Another *gram sachiv* mentioned that both, the *sarpanch* and the male relative, usually attended the meeting, but in case the *sarpanch* is not in the village then only the husband would attend. The respondents also shared instances where the *sarpanch* attended the meeting but would not interact with those who were present. A *gram sachiv* mentioned that *pardah pratha* was followed in the village.

3.4.5.   Involvement in the *gram panchayat* meetings

During the *gram panchayat* meeting the development plan for the village is created and discussed. To understand the involvement of the women *sarpanches* in the *gram panchayat* meetings, knowledge of their mere attendance was not enough. Instead, *gram sachivs* were asked to choose who spoke the most in the *gram panchayat* meetings.

68.96 per cent responded that the male relative (*sarpanch* husband/representatives) spoke more than the *sarpanch* in the meeting, while only 20.68 per cent *gram sachivs* said that the *sarpanch* spoke more in the meetings. Two respondents answered that both the *sarpanch* and the male relative were equally interactive and one respondent said that it was the male relatives and the male *panch* members who spoke the most. In one of the *gram panchayats* no meeting had been conducted during the tenure of the *gram sachiv* who was interviewed and he preferred to not comment. One of the *gram sachivs* also informed that the *sarpanch* and the male relative discussed the issues to be raised during the meeting beforehand.

3.4.6.   Nature of projects discussed by the *sarpanch*

When the *gram sachivs* were asked about the kind of projects the *sarpanches* discuss in the meetings, 24.13 per cent shared that either the *sarpanches* did not talk at all or

did not have any interest in discussing specific projects. One of the *gram sachivs* also highlighted that he had not heard the *sarpanch's* voice even once in the one year of him having attended the meetings. Another respondent shared that because of the practice of *purdah pratha* the women could not talk during the meetings.

34.48 per cent of the respondents mentioned that the *sarpanch* of the assigned *gram panchayat* spoke about projects related to the *anganwadi*, *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* Scheme, employment for women, issues highlighted by the female *panch* or other welfare schemes for women launched by the government. Women *sarpanches* could probably associate with these issues and therefore must have found it easy to initiate conversations around them.

The remaining *sarpanches*, according to the *sachivs*, mostly spoke about projects related to development of roads, sewers, cremation ground, and other infrastructural development in the villages, similar to what the male relatives spoke about in the meetings.

3.4.7.   Availability for work

The *gram sachiv* is also responsible for assisting the *panchayat* in various administrative tasks. This requires the *sachiv* to meet the *sarpanch* multiple times in a month. To understand how often the *gram sachiv* met the women *sarpanch*, they were asked whether they met the *sarpanch* or the male relatives whenever they went to the village.

Eighty per cent of the respondents answered that they met the male relative more than the *sarpanch* for any *panchayat* related work. Only 13.34 per cent respondents claimed that they met the *sarpanch* more than the male relative. One of the *gram sachivs* shared how he and the *sarpanch* were from the same village because of which it was easy for him to talk to the *sarpanch* as she treated him like her brother. The in-laws of the *sarpanch* also did not object to the interactions between the two regarding panchayat work. Only two respondents answered that they met the *sarpanch* and the male relative equal number of times for any *panchayat* work

3.4.8.   *Pardah Pratha* in official meetings

Fifty per cent of the *gram sachivs* said that the *sarpanch* wore a veil in the *gram panchayat* meetings. They further specified that they either wore a veil throughout the meeting or slightly covered their heads during the meeting. In case the village elders were present they would always wear the veil. But the other 50 per cent responded that the women *sarpanches* did not wear a veil in the meetings.

3.4.9.   Attendance in the *gram sabha* meetings

The *gram sabha* meetings are conducted every quarter of a year and all the villagers and government officials from various line departments are present. The officials and the *panchayat* members talk about various schemes and listen to the issues faced by the people of the village. The *panchayat* takes many decisions based on a public vote

and therefore it is a crucial meeting. Since the meeting happens every quarter, three respondents did not get a chance to conduct the meeting with the woman *sarpanch* as they had recently joined as *gram sachivs*.

The *gram sachivs* were asked whether the *sarpanch* or the male relative attended more *gram sabha* meetings. Out of the respondents who attended a minimum of one meeting, 77.78 per cent answered that both the *sarpanch* and the male relative attended the meeting. They also shared that it was mandatory for the *sarpanch* to attend this meeting because a video recording of the meeting and photographic evidence is made to validate whether the *sarpanch* was present or not. The fear of suspension by senior officials pushes the women *sarpanches* to attend all the meetings on most occasions. 14.81 per cent respondents said that the *sarpanch* attended more *gram sabha* meetings than the male relatives and only one respondent mentioned that the male relative attended more meetings than the *sarpanch*.

3.4.10.   Involvement in *gram sabha* meetings

The *sarpanch* is responsible for addressing the concerns of the villagers during the *gram sabha* meetings. It is during these meetings that talks on projects is initiated with people from the village.

The *gram sachivs* were once again asked a question to gauge the participation of the *sarpanch* during meetings. 66.67 per cent respondents said that the male relative (*sarpanch* representative/husbands) of the *sarpanch* spoke more than the *sarpanch*. Only 11.12 per cent answered that the *sarpanch* spoke more than the male relative and another 11.12 per cent said that both the male relative and the *sarpanch* spoke equally during the meeting. In one of the *gram panchayats*, the *gram sachiv* expressed that he only took the lead during the *gram sabha* meeting as neither the *sarpanch* nor her husband was interested in the *panchayat* projects. One of them mentioned that the male *panch* spoke the most in the meeting and another said that the women and the men of the village sat separately and the *sarpanch* spoke to the women of the village and the male relative spoke to the men.

The *gram sabha* meetings also sees the participation of village elders. The *gram sachivs* shared that because of their presence the *sarpanches* are often uncomfortable sharing their views. This has happened in cases where the *sarpanch* is well educated and independent as well (the *sachiv* shared that the *sarpanch* drives a car). This hampers their involvement as a *sarpanch* in the meeting. One of the *sachivs* also shared that women generally don't know what to talk about in the meetings, so their male relative takes the lead. This shows lack of knowledge about *panchayat* works which results in low confidence among the women *sarpanches*.

3.4.11.   Involvement in various *panchayat* works

Certain work-related parameters were defined based on the roles and responsibilities laid down for a *sarpanch* in the state guidelines and detailed discussions with the officials. The *gram sachivs* were asked questions to gauge the involvement of the

sarpanch and the male relative in the defined roles shortlisted for the purpose of this study. The table below summarises the results:

S. No.	Work parameter	Involvement of the sarpanch is more	Involvement of the male relative is more	Both are equally involved	Other responses responses
1	Monitoring the physical progress of the developmental works initiated in the *gram panchayat*	13.34%	86.67%	0%	0%
2	Speaking to the labourers involved in the construction work	0%	90%	3.34%	6.67%
3	Overseeing the functioning of the *anganwadi*	60%	26.67%	3.34%	10%
4	Overseeing the functioning of the school	16.67%	53.34%	10%	20%
5	Implementation of MNREGA	10%	60%	3.34%	26.67%
6	Involvement in Open Defecation Free Campaign	30%	16.67%	3.34%	50%

The results reveal that the perception of government officials like the *gram sachivs* about the involvement of women *sarpanches* in *panchayat* work is high in the working of the *anganwadi,* but low when it comes to monitoring infrastructure development projects initiated by the *panchayat*, talking to the laborers involved in the construction projects, implementation of MNREGA, and overseeing the functioning of the village school.

3.4.12.   **Visit to district and block level offices for work/meetings**

The *gram sachivs* are often required to visit the district and the block offices to meet officers who usually brief them about projects which can be implemented in the villages. The *gram sachivs* were asked who out of the *sarpanch* and the male relative accompanies them more frequently during such visits.

Since the block office of the panchayat and development officer is where all the approvals and other administrative processes take place, the *sarpanch* has to come here often for meetings, trainings, and paperwork that requires her signatures. 63.34 per cent

respondents said that the male relative was seen more often than the *sarpanch* in the block office and he accompanied them for work and meetings. Only 10 per cent said that the *sarpanch* accompanies them more often than the male relative and 13.34 per cent *gram sachivs* said that both, the *sarpanch* and the male relative, came to the block office. The remaining respondents highlighted that in case of meetings, where the *sarpanch* is specifically called and senior officials are chairing it, the women *sarpanch* attends it, but in the case of meetings with the block office staff, for example, the junior engineer to get estimates for projects prepared or related administrative work it is the male relative who came along. They also mentioned that the *sarpanch* is always present in cases where her signature is needed.

The *sachivs* were also asked who accompanies them more often to the deputy commissioner's and additional deputy commissioner's office for meetings and work. 36.67 per cent said that the male relatives come more often than the *sarpanch* and only 13.34 per cent respondents mentioned that the *sarpanch* came more often for such meetings. 10 per cent said that both the *sarpanch* and the male relative came together and 20 per cent said that in case of any *panchayat* related work, it was the male relatives who accompany the *sachiv*. When it comes to attending meetings, where her presence is absolutely necessary, the *sarpanch* does come to the office. Twenty per cent respondents were not aware of such meetings and could not comment.

The *gram sachivs* also mentioned that since the *sarpanches* cannot drive, their husbands usually accompanied them for the meetings.

3.4.13.   Opinion and thoughts of the *gram sachivs* on reservation of seat for women *sarpanches*

The *gram sachivs* were asked an open-ended question to gather their opinion on how the policy of reserved seats for women in the *panchayat* was helpful and how it could be made more effective. Some relevant points which emerged from the discussion are mentioned below:

- There are some specific kinds of work which are by default considered to be the domain of men. For example, opening of tenders. There was a need to create awareness among women *sarpanches* regarding such work.

- The policy has helped create a participatory atmosphere among the women of the village who now communicate through the woman *sarpanch*.

- They can approach the woman *sarpanch* easily and share their problems. It has also motivated other women in the village to participate in meetings and raise issues that concern them.

- For the woman *sarpanch* to succeed in her work she requires the support of the villagers and the family.

- The district administration needs to take strict action to counter the practice of proxy *sarpanches* and involvement of male family members in the *panchayat's* functioning.

- Daughter-in-laws of the village are not completely aware of the various issues concerning the village because they do not belong to that particular *gram panchayat*.

- There is also a need of women *gram sachivs* and officials so that the women *sarpanches* feel comfortable interacting with them.

- The women *sarpanches* have to be self-motivated to do the work.

- Women from lower castes are the most oppressed and it is difficult to break this structure.

- This issue of reservations for women is political and requires a mass movement in support for women if any change has to be brought about.

- *Purdah pratha* followed in the village hinders participation of women.

III DISCUSSION

The research conducted in Karnal highlights the limited involvement of women *sarpanches* in the working of the *panchayat*. Increase in number of women *sarpanches* and *panches* does not necessarily mean increase in involvement and greater level of participation in the *panchayat* works. The existence of an unofficial, self-proclaimed position known as the "*sarpanch pati*" or the "*sarpanch pratinidhi*", indicates the involvement of the male members of the family of the women *sarpanch* in the *panchayat*.

For a *sarpanch* to be completely involved in the work of the *panchayat* it is unavoidable for her to restrict interactions with certain key government officials. The study conducted in Karnal reveals a disturbing scenario with regard to the awareness levels of the women *sarpanches* about government departments. 37.93 per cent *sarpanches* could not name one department the *panchayat* worked with. And on an average the women *sarpanches* could name only two government departments. The *sarpanch* representatives/husbands, on the other hand, could list an average number of five departments. It was observed that 58.62 per cent women *sarpanches* did not interact with the *patwari*, however all the representatives/husbands met the *patwari* at least once in a month. Only 33.34 per cent women *sarpanches* interacted with school heads three or more than three times in a month, whereas all the representatives/husbands interacted with the school heads three or more than three times in a month. 86.20 per cent women *sarpanches* who were interviewed said that they either never spoke to the JE or did not meet the JE regularly on a monthly basis for *panchayat* work. A greater level of involvement of the *sarpanch* representatives/husbands was also seen in the comparative analysis of involvement in the *panchayat* works between the *sarpanch* and the *sarpanch* representative/husbands. Only 30 per cent women *sarpanches* assisted the officials from the electricity department to conduct camps in their village, whereas at 86.21 per cent, the numbers were much higher for *sarpanch* representatives.

I concluded from this research that the involvement of the *sarpanch* husbands/representatives in issues involving sources of revenue for the *panchayat*, monitoring the progress of infrastructural development works in the village, and overseeing the labourers involved was high. Low involvement of women *sarpanches* in important job roles and increased involvement of *sarpanches'* husbands/representatives will not bring about any significant changes in making local governance truly representative in character.

All the *gram sachivs* who were interviewed felt that the *sarpanch* of the *gram panchayat* assigned to them was supported by male member of their family. Eighty per cent of the respondents said that they met the male relative (*sarpanch* representative/husband) more often than the *sarpanch* for *panchayat* related work. This shows that the

interaction between the women *sarpanches* and the *gram sachivs* was limited. The *gram sachivs* also mentioned that they mostly met the *sarpanch* during official meetings which required their mandatory presence. 86.67 per cent of them expressed that the involvement of the *sarpanch* representative/husband is more in monitoring the physical progress of *panchayat* works when compared with that of the *sarpanch*. This was also highlighted during the in-depth individual interviews with the *sarpanch* and the *sarpanch* representatives. The perception of the *gram sachiv* about involvement of women *sarpanches* in *panchayat* works is extremely important because they are the link between the *panchayat* and the administration.

Women *sarpanches* often struggle to manage work and family duties and their perceived limited knowledge of their job profile as a *sarpanch* complicates their functioning. Some women *sarpanches* highlighted that experience matters in this field and that they did not have prior experience and received inadequate training to perform their job role as a *sarpanch*. Out of the 30 respondents, only two respondents said that the decision to stand for the election was their own. Because there is reservation for women in local governance, often the families, predominantly the male members, ask the female members of the family, who qualify, to participate.

In this study the verbal communication of the women *sarpanches* with government officials is also taken as a key factor which helps understand their participation in local governance. Out of the 83.34 per cent respondents who had phone, only 52 per cent respondents shared their number with the officials and the remaining preferred giving the phone numbers of their male relatives. Out of this 52 per cent, 84.61 per cent had also shared the contact details of their husband, father-in-law or brother-in-law with the officials. Since mostly the government officials are men, the women are often uncomfortable interacting with them.

This study has demonstrated through rich empirical data that the introduction of reservation policy is not sufficient to empower women and strengthen their role as key stakeholders in local governance. Effective participation of women in local governance will rely on creating an environment conducive for their participation, building their capacity through training, and strengthened administrative will and conscious effort on their part to communicate with women *sarpanches* and support them.

Acknowledgement

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Footnotes

1   Data received from the district-level records of the Development and Panchayat Department.

2   An independent study conducted in November 2017 to understand the participation of the women *sarpanches*.

3   The study began with an assumption that not every woman *sarpanch* will be acting as a proxy and be supported by a male member (*sarpanch* representatives/ husband). The *gram sachivs* of the selected *gram panchayats* were approached and asked whether the *sarpanch* was actually leading the *panchayat* or not. Based on this information the *sarpanch* representatives/husband were chosen.

4   A public area in the village where anyone from a particular community sit and socialise. There are multiple *chaupals* based on caste in the village.

5   It is the State Institute of Rural Development of Haryana responsible for training and capacity building of elected representatives and government officials working in or related to the rural development department.

6   A person who is responsible for monitoring the day-to-day activities under MNREGA and looking after the labourers

Applying Competitive Federalism to Facilitate Policy Implementation for Rural Development at District and Sub-District Levels

The Case of Super Village Challenge in Palwal District, Haryana

Abhinav Vats

ABSTRACT

Rural development has evolved a lot from its conceptualisation in the early 1950's up to the present times. Yet, there is a growing need to identify the most appropriate mechanism(s) to stimulate economic activity across a broad range of economic sectors in rural areas. Ellis and Biggs argue[8] that a new paradigm of rural development should emerge by looking at the farm and non-farm activities of rural communities through a multi-occupational or cross sectoral (i.e., public-private-non-profit partnerships/ synergies) approach.

Since the end of 1980s, governments of several developing countries have become more "public-oriented" bodies (i.e., decentralised and less bureaucratic). Thus, traditional approaches such as "large-scale farm development and agricultural modernisation" are changing to people-centered approaches to rural development with a focus on establishing a system to facilitate community participation.[10]

As top-down methods have largely been inadequate to address rural change, various academic work(s) reveal that decentralisation offers "sub-national governments and local organisations an increased role in rural development processes[11]." Decentralisation has been increasingly seen as an option to unlock the development potential of territories, principally by intensifying the pressure on local governments to work more effectively and respond to the needs and demands of local communities.[12]

But beyond the conventional hierarchical and cooperative models (For example, decentralisation) of governance, states, cities and institutions have also been confronted by competitive federalism models, a concept under which governments compete with their national, regional or local counterparts (i.e., other governments) on various development related parameters. This model (competitive federalism) is markedly different from cooperative models' due to the element of competition. Some examples of such competitive models are the Smart City Challenge in India, Ease of Doing Business rankings, both global and national, NIRF rankings of educational institutions in India, Race to the Top in USA and Saemaul Undong (new village movement) in South Korea.

The Economic survey[13] of India (2016-17) focused on urbanisation and competitive sub-federalism with respect to cities and districts of the country. The survey recognised that competition between states is becoming a powerful tool of change and progress and that competition should be extended between states and cities, and between cities.

Based on an analytical competitive framework, this paper provides empirical evidence for a successful model of competitive federalism using the example of 'The SUPER (i.e., S-smart, U-unique, P-perfect, E-enterprising, R-role model) Village Challenge' (SVC) in Palwal district, Haryana. SVC, an inter-village competition initiated by the district administration, combined elements of decentralisation and competition to accelerate rural development in 260 gram panchayats (politically elected village administration of the district).

I   INTRODUCTION

The primary motivation for project conceptualisation was to push last-mile delivery of several central and state government schemes/initiatives/programs focused on rural development at the village level in a district where several departments were marked by severe staff shortage. For example, during the entire implementation phase of the project, there was no dedicated (i.e., exclusively for Palwal district) district development and panchayat officer (DDPO) and only one Block development and panchayat officer (BDPO) against the requirement of five. Since the issue of staff crunch could not be handled at the district level on an immediate basis, as this typically requires a long procedure of application submissions followed by approvals at multiple levels (i.e., state government, other divisional offices etc.), a mechanism was needed to leverage the existing constraints in a unique way. Thus, on 27 November 2017, the first phase of SVC was launched for all 260 *Gram Panchayats* (*GPs*) of the district.
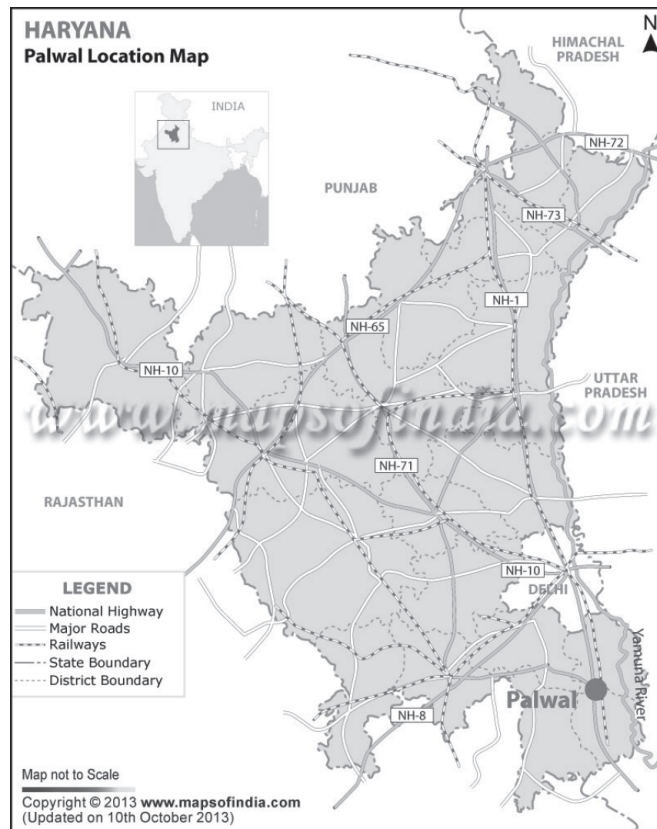
Figure 1*: Map of Haryana and Palwal district*

Case for Palwal Super Village Challenge (SVC)

The case study of Palwal SVC allows us to explain practical benefits, problems and constraints of implementing competitive models of governance, with a special focus on development in rural areas.

Under SVC, a unique competitive framework was developed to encourage village *sarpanches* to focus on a diverse range of development parameters considered critical for the all-round development of the villages. A scientific scoring mechanism was designed to facilitate the competition. For every parameter achieved, the village *sarpanch* needed to make a self-declaration which was followed by an internal verification by the concerned district department. In case, the verification was found fit for the parameter, the village was awarded the corresponding points. Given that self-declaration and verification for other parameters was a continuous process, a dynamic portal had been conceptualised by the district administration to facilitate this. The portal generated leadership rankings which were based on cumulative points scored by the villages at a given point of time.

The competition's overall theory of change rested on a trinity of interests' framework to synchronise efforts of three critical agents for rural development. This included a) village *sarpanches* (politically elected village council heads), b) district nodal officers of departments (administrative heads for government schemes/initiatives) and c) front-line workers in villages of departments (first POCs in villages for last-mile delivery of government schemes).

A real-time gamification model that runs on a dedicated technology platform (**www.supervillagepalwal.in**) was used to facilitate the entire competition for approximately three months. The first phase of the competition ended on 15 February 2018. To recognise and reward top performing villages, district administration earmarked Rs 1.5 crore from the District-Plan (or D-plan) funds and thus created a mechanism to link a village's funding to its development results.

SVC prioritised specific development areas and for each area a set of clearly defined parameters and tasks were defined. Successful completion of these parameters could help a *GP* earn points and overall performance of participating villages was reflected on a leadership index (under the Performance section on the SVC online platform www.supervillagepalwal.in) that tracked performance of *GPs* across parameters on a real-time basis. This leadership index had no restrictions on access. It is an open digital platform for all.

The competition defined over 20 development parameters for eight development themes that were critical for driving improvements in several flagship central and state initiatives at the village level. These themes were environment, women empowerment, education, digitisation, health, skill development, community engagement and innovation. As the competition had a diverse range of parameters that cut across different departments, each parameter had been mapped to a particular "department champion". For every self-declaration submitted on a parameter by a sarpanch the corresponding department champion was notified via SMS and a verification was

scheduled within the next 15 days. Once the verification was completed, the final verdict on the parameter was submitted. For every successful verification recorded, the portal generated points for villages and performances (on village, block and district level) were captured on the leadership dashboard, and since these declarations and verifications were occurring on multiple fronts (i.e. different combination of parameters and villages), the leadership ranking fluctuated throughout the competition and rankings were dynamically reflected on the portal on a real-time basis.

At the time of the competition's first-phase conclusion (by February 2018), 33 villages were recognised and awarded special grants for their performance and post the project's district-success, the CM's Office recommended a state-wide scale-up, by integrating SVC's operating framework into the inaugural "7Star Village Ratings" program, a new rural development program applicable to over 6,500 villages. SVC was also shortlisted for Prime Minister's Excellence Awards for Public administration under the "innovations category" and was also considered as a case study by UC Berkeley, USA.

Figure 2: *Snapshot of major themes of parameters in SVC*

Figure 3: *Example of a parameter theme (model schools, women SHGs), task and points*

Figure 4: *Snapshot enlisting the competition's fundamental working model*

In order to operationalise the entire participation and monitoring process in a simple and concurrent (i.e. over 300 users for a given point of time) manner, the portal needed features to facilitate digital data record uploading/maintenance. To ensure this, a log-in facility was created in the portal where *sarpanches* and monitors could use their log-in credentials (dedicated IDs and passwords provided by the district administration) to record data and check performance status on a real-time basis.

Upon entering their log-in credentials, a *sarpanch* could view parameter forms – a statement of condition of the village with respect to the parameters under eight themes. To initiate the process, a *sarpanch* was supposed to make an online self-declaration, whenever he/she felt confident about the village's performance on a particular parameter. Following this, a SMS was sent to the *sarpanch* and concerned parameter nodal officer (district official) to intimate him/her about the process initiation. Within 15 days of a self-declaration, an on-ground inspection was supposed to be conducted by the parameter nodal officer (each parameter had a nodal officer assigned). Post any physical verification, the officers were required to submit observations on the portal (officers also had separate log-in IDs) and if found successful on a parameter, the concerned *GP* (for which the verification occurred) was awarded points digitally through the portal. This process of online declaration and physical verification was a simultaneous process, thus reflecting changes in positioning of *GPs* on the leadership index throughout the course of the competition. The administration conducted special training workshops for *sarpanches* before the launch of the competition and a dedicated room was earmarked in the Mini Secretariat, Palwal to provide timely assistance throughout the competition. All major project team members (including CMGGA, district collector) were available on phone to provide any immediate assistance as well.

The portal could be customised in English or Hindi. The pictures from the Hindi version are shared in this paper, but description for the step is provided in English.
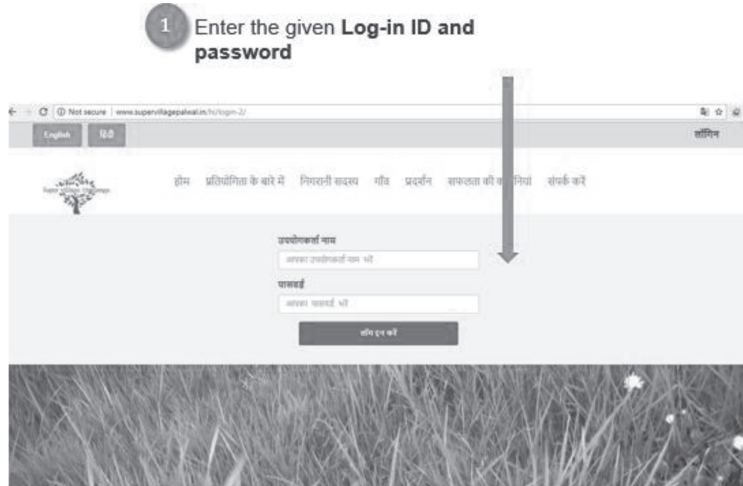
Figure 5: *Dedicated window on the portal to enter log-in credentials*
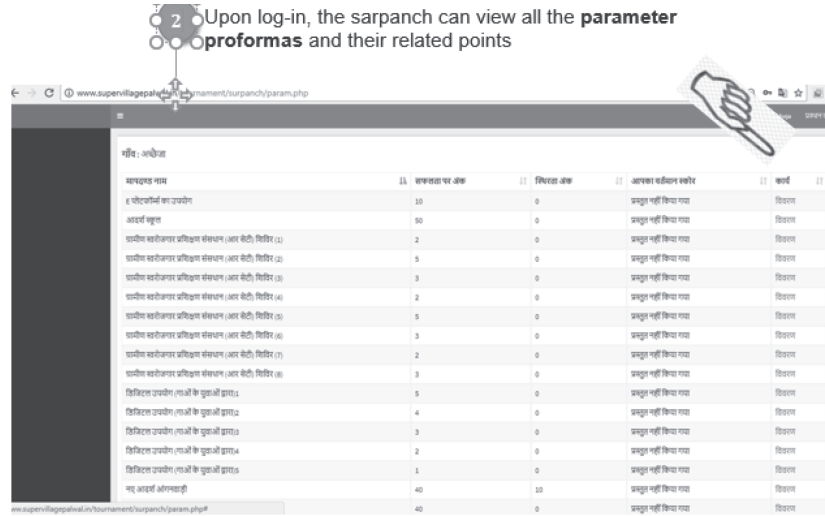
Figure 6: *Screen showing list of all parameters*

Figure 7: *Screen showing tasks associated with a parameter and declaration button*

Figure 8: *Screen also had a 'log-out' button*

5 The moment, a sarpanch makes a 'self-declaration', **SMSes are sent to sarpanches and department officer (**mapped to the concerned parameter)
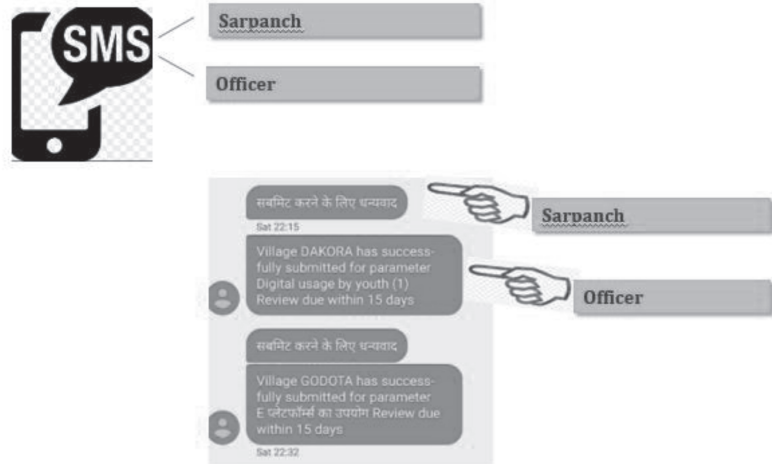
Figure 9: *SMS sent after receiving a village's request for parameter verification*

6 Even the parameter monitor could **Log-in** and **enter username and password,** just as a village sarpanch
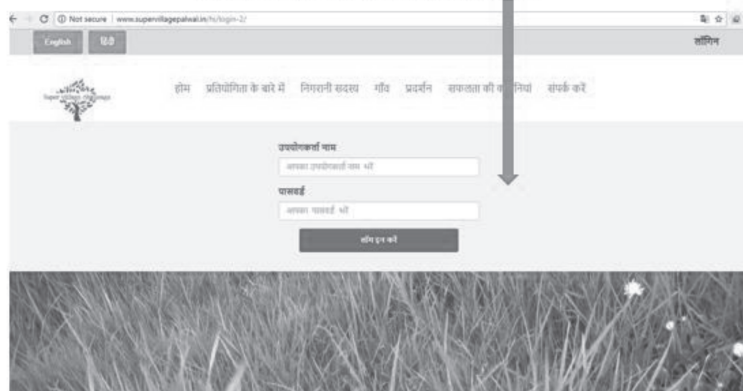
Figure 10: *Similar screen pattern (with distinct log-in credentials) for officers*

Figure 11: *Officer screen with declaration details and 'Pass/Fail' options*

To ensure transparency in operations, digital channels such as Whatsapp groups and social media platforms (dedicated facebook page- https: //www.facebook.com/ supervillagepalwal/) were used to increase information sharing among participants and ensure timely monitoring of progress of works, grievance redressal and timely directions by senior officials to subordinates (picture shared below).
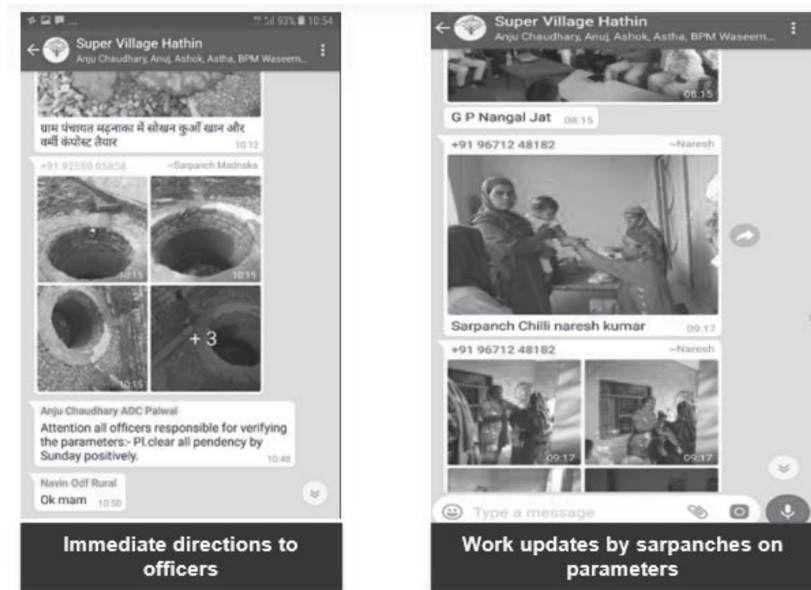
Figure 12: *Example of activities on a Whatsapp group for villages of Hathin block*

Dedicated 'Whatsapp groups' for each block (i.e. Hodal, Hathin, Palwal, Hassanpur) were created. The members of the group included village *sarpanches*, parameter nodal officers, senior district administration officials (i.e. deputy commissioner/collector, Additional deputy commissioner/collector and Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates of the district). These groups became active channels of dialogue exchange

where work updates, appreciation of efforts, grievance redressal, progress check and other general information related to the competition were shared actively.

To recognise the top-performing *GPs*, the district plan fund or the D-PLAN fund was used to reward top performing *GPs* at block levels (sub-district center) and Rs 1.5 Crore (approx. $500,000) were earmarked to allocate work orders to facilitate rural development projects in such villages. As per the initial announcement, villages securing the first, second and third spots at the district level were to be awarded work orders worth Rs 15 lakh, Rs 12.5 lakh and Rs 10 lakh, respectively. Whereas the block-level winners were supposed to get work orders worth Rs 10 lakh, Rs 7.5 lakh and Rs 5.5 lakh, respectively. However, due to a large number of tied-spots (i.e. villages ending up at the same score) at the 1st, 2nd, 3rd spots and miniscule difference between some villages ending up at consolation positions, the administration decided to accommodate more *GPs* and decided to reward the 1st, 2nd and 3rd and some consolation positions (i.e. those who missed the 3rd spot in their block by a narrow margin).

This case allows us to explain practical benefits, problems and constraints of competitive models of governance, with a special focus on driving development in rural areas.

Literature Review

Some notable examples of competitive models are The Smart City Challenge in India, Ease of Doing Business Rankings, NIRF rankings of educational institutions in India, Race to the Top in U.S.A, Saemaul Undong (new village movement) in South Korea, etc. Although these are some notable examples where competitive models have been used, there is hardly any conclusive evidence that evaluates the utility of competitive federalism models in the rural development space. The findings from the 2016-17 economic survey[13] recognise that competition between states is becoming a powerful dynamic of change and progress. The survey argues that cities that are entrusted with responsibilities, empowered with resources, and encumbered by accountability can become effective vehicles for unleashing dynamism so that competitive federalism in India can add, and rely on, competitive sub-federalism.

It argues that dynamism must extend to competition between states and cities and between cities and, hence extending the dynamism-laden competition between states to encompass the cities is what is called competitive sub-federalism. This argument can be applied to the case of Super Village Challenge in Palwal district.

Moreover, the application of competitive federalism models for effective policy implementation and governance has become increasingly popular. Recently, the NITI AAYOG had called for enhancing models of competitive cooperative federalism. Apart from this, in March 2018 a baseline ranking of 115 aspirational districts under the Aspirational Districts Program was released by NITI AAYOG. The idea is to measure progress of districts directly and recognise efforts of district collectors.

These trends show how the need for competitive federalism models has trickled down to various levels of governance. This perhaps is a healthy trend as this embraces the larger idea of decentralisation and takes into consideration varying challenges among the diverse regions, states and districts within India.

However, this extension is currently non-existent in lower levels of governance (i.e. districts, blocks and villages) for rural development. Carl Dahlman in his academic work A New Paradigm for Rural Development (2016) suggests that addressing the challenge of rural development is going to require innovative approaches at the local, national and international level and this includes developing multi-sectoral and multi-level and multi-agent strategies that further economic and social development. [14]

Given how rural development cuts across different levels of governance in terms of priority, relevance and importance, the case of SVC Palwal, an innovation at the district and sub-district (i.e. blocks and villages) level can be a useful case to explore models focused on sub-federalism.

Research Methodology

Conceptualisation and Theory of Change (TOC):

A severe staff crunch was noticed in the departments focused on rural development in the district. Vacancies in top administrative positions that are critical for driving overall monitoring and coordination in areas of rural development in the district was particularly high. High level of staff crunch was also visible in several departments that run critical government (national or state) initiatives in rural areas. Some of these include the Women and Child Development—supporting early girl child education, immunisation and nutrition), Department of Development and Panchayat—supporting all rural development schemes related to education—supporting elementary education and enrollment initiatives.

Vacancies in important departments that focus on rural development is tabulated below (at the time of project conceptualisation, Sep 2017)

Officer position	Department	Required	Vacancy range* (%)
DDPO (1) and BDPOs (5)	Development and Panchayat	6	80-100
Supervisors	Women and Child Development	44	70-75
District education(DEO) and Block education officers(BEOs)	Education Department	5	80-100

Source: *District administration, Palwal*

*Vacancy is reflected on the basis of presence of dedicated officer (i.e. exclusively for Palwal) for the position. This does not include officers who have additional charge (i.e. officiating capacity for one or more districts). Thus, if an officer is placed under additional charge, it is assumed that the position is not filled completely.

Keeping in mind the last mile delivery of several government schemes (both national and state) aimed at rural development, a need was felt to innovate methods to leverage the existing constraints in a unique way at the district level since the issue of staff shortage could not be fixed immediately (as that involved several state-level administrative approvals, procedures etc.).

Further research and ground-visits to villages presented a useful insight into the dynamics of rural development which helped the core project team (led by CMGGA and deputy commissioner) to conceptualise a Theory of Change (TOC) for the Palwal Super Village Challenge.

It was identified that to push the last mile delivery of any rural development scheme/ initiative the efficacy of three agents was critical: a) the village *sarpanch*, b) the district level scheme nodal officer and c) the front-line workers for the department at the village level. For example, the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) for immunisation, *anganwadi* workers for Women and Child Development (WCD) schemes etc. Hence, a mechanism was needed that could align the interests of the three agents and regulate impact remotely and thus, the overall TOC of the project was rested in this newly developed "trinity of interests" framework.

This framework aimed at synchronising the interests of the agents in such a way that all could strive towards common goals in a concerted manner.

The *sarpanch* in the decentralised system of governance is typically given the legal power to manage the affairs at the village administration. The Haryana *Panchayati Raj* Act, 1994 states that a sarpanch has the general responsibility for the executive and financial administration of the *GP*

Traditionally, his/her involvement by the administration has not been leveraged due to insecurities arising from their political inclinations and influence of the *sarpanches*.

The officers of district administration have their work overstretched due to multiplicity of mandates and responsibilities from time to time. It is difficult for the officers to

fulfill their supervision and monitoring responsibilities. The grassroots worker is constrained by weak infrastructure and lack of financial resources to deliver his duties. High performance is hardly rewarded and dismal performance in not penalised.

Against this backdrop, the foundation of a competitive framework that stands on a trinity where the convergence of interests of the *sarpanches*, monitoring officers of different line departments and representative of the line department doing the grass-roots work takes place.

II   OPERATING DETAILS OF SUPER VILLAGE CHALLENGE

a. Parameters identification and description:

Through inter-departmental brainstorming sessions certain flagship PM and CM initiatives aimed at strengthening rural development were prioritized. They were focused on cleanliness, solid liquid waste management, environmental protection *Swachh Bharat* mission (clean India campaign), women empowerment (*Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* program—save the girl child initiative), digital literacy (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan-PMGDISHA scheme), skill development (Rural Self Employment Training Institutes-RSETI scheme) and innovation (in areas of community welfare, technology etc.) at the village level, thus resulting in genesis of the 'SUPER' Village Challenge.

A multi-pronged check was maintained while identifying and designing a parameter, thus each parameter had to be: a) easily interpretable (i.e., objectively defined and not open to interpretation) to the *sarpanch* (participant in this case), b) verifiable by the monitor (i.e., data to be checked should be easily available) and c) achievable within a short span of two to three months.

In the competitive framework, eight critical development themes were identified. These were:

1. Education

2. Women empowerment

3. Skill development

4. Community engagement

5. Environmental protection

6. Health

7. Digital literacy amongst the rural youth

8.   Innovative projects by village *sarpanches*

For each of the identified category, relevant parameter(s) were developed:

Digital literacy amongst the rural youth:

1.   Digital usage by youth (1)- If there is a PMGDISHA center in the village, then the village gets five points.

2.   Digital usage by youth (2)- If a PMGDISHA has more than 250 student registrations, then the village gets four points.

3.   Digital usage by youth (3)- If a PMGDISHA has up to 200 student registrations, then the village gets three points.

4.   Digital usage by youth (4)- If a PMGDISHA has up to 150 student registrations, then the village gets two points.

5.   Digital usage by youth (5)- If a PMGDISHA has up to 100 student registrations, then the village gets one point.

e-District Managers (eDMs) are given the target of creating 250 digitally literate individuals in each *GP* of the district by the central government. A student registration sets the foundation for using other digital services in future too thus making the role of eDM important in a village. The village level entrepreneur (VLE) gets a monetary incentive of Rs. 300 paid by each student during registration. With each student registration, the customer base increases for the VLE to avail digital services in the villages itself. *Sarpanch* gets to promote digital literacy and usage amongst the rural population, especially the youth which helps him/her to gain political capital.

Women Empowerment

1.   Women SHG (1)- If the number of women SHGs in the village is between one to six, then a village gets two points.

2.   Women SHG (2)- If the village has organised more than three OBC RSETI camps, then the village gets five points.

3.   Women SHG (3)- If the village has organised up to three OBC RSETI camps, then the village gets three points.

4.   Women SHG (4)- If the village has organised up to two OBC RSETI camps, then the village gets two points.

5.   Women SHG (5)- If the *GP* has sent more than 20 unemployed youth to the camp, then the village gets five points.

6.   Women SHG (6)- If the *GP* has sent up to 15 unemployed youth to the camp, then the village gets three points.

7.   Women SHG (7)- If the *GP* has sent up to 10 unemployed youth to the camp, then

the village gets two points.

8. Women SHG (8)- If more than 20 women have participated in the camps, then the village gets three points.

The above parameters act as an incentive for District Project Manager, National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DPM, NRLM) to reflect their performance and achieve targets given to them by higher NLRM authorities. They also help generate awareness about role and importance of women self-help groups (SHG) among the *sarpanches*. *Sarpanch's* sponsorship helps the DPM, NLRM gain trust and credibility among the community members to form SHGs. *Samuh Sevika* also known as, active women, get financial incentives for creating groups and facilitating activities within such groups. Also, it sets the foundation for internalisation of better performing *sevikas* to become community resource persons (CRPs) who can then become professional resource persons (PRPs) helping them move closer towards internalisation in government administration. *Sarpanch* gets an ideal platform to promote financial literacy amongst women to make them self-reliant. This platform also enables the *sarpanch* to gain more social capital among the community members.

Skill development

1. RSETI camps (1) - If all members of the *GP* are aware about the existence of OBC RSETI, then the village gets two points.

2. RSETI camps (2) - If the village has organised more than three OBC RSETI camps, then the village gets five points.

3. RSETI camps (3) - If the village has organised up to three OBC RSETI camps, then the village gets three points.

4. RSETI camps (4) - If the village has organised up to two OBC RSETI camps, then the village gets two points.

5. RSETI camps (5) - If the *GP* has sent more than 20 unemployed youth to the camp, then the village gets five points.

6. RSETI camps (6) - If the *GP* has sent up to 15 unemployed youth to the camp, then the village gets three points.

7. RSETI camps (7) - If the *GP* has sent up to 10 unemployed youth to the camp, then the village gets two points.

8. RSETI camps (8) - If more than 20 women have participated in the camps, then the village gets three points.

The above parameters act as incentive to the OBC RSETI Director as it gives him/her direct access to the youth to spread awareness about RSETI Palwal and its skill development programmes. The faculty member at OBC RSETI is no longer required to bear the burden of mobilising and gathering masses to increase the uptake of skill

development programmes as it is now driven by *sarpanches*. *Sarpanch's* support towards mobilisation of youth helps the faculty member gain respect in the village. *Sarpanch* provides awareness about avenues for entrepreneurship and employment to unemployed youth. This helps to increase his/her popularity.

Community engagement

1. *Vachanalayas* (a community reading room) for men- If a village is able to create a *Vachanalya* for men, then the village gets 30 points.

2. *Vachanalayas* for women- If a village is able to create a Vachanalya for men, then the village gets 15 points.

ADC and *Sarpanch* argue that *Vachanalayas* enhances atmosphere of community engagement in the village. It also provides a platform to promote fraternity and civic habits through reading, which helps in the administration of the district.

Environmental protection

1. Polythene free (1)- If the polythene is not available in shops of a village, then the village gets 20 points.

2. Polythene free (2)- If the village is able to demonstrate proper management of polythene at household level, then the village gets 10 points.

3. Polythene free (3)- If all members of the *GP* are aware about the existence of OBC RSETI, then the village gets two points.

4. Soakage pit coverage (1)- If safe disposal of sanitary waste is happening in the village, for example at household or community level, then a village gets 60 points.

5. Soakage pit coverage (2)- If grey water is not visible in the village, then 60 points are awarded.

6. Vermi compost facility- If the village has a vermi-compost, then 20 points are awarded.

APO SBM contends that the above parameters are linked with the expectations of ODF+, which is critical for the success of the SBM. These parameters help the administration to gain the support of *sarpanches* in order to progress on critical parameters of ODF+ such as polythene free villages, soakage pits, etc. *Sarpanches* argue that it creates proper channels for liquid waste management and helps improve ground water levels. Compost, being a manure, is also a source of potential revenue for *sarpanches*. For *Swachta grehi* (motivators), the above parameters are in line with the objectives of SBM. Improvements in these parameters increase his/her chances to get internalised in the govt machinery.

Health

Immunisation for new born children:

If a village is able to achieve 90 per cent or more immunisation coverage for all children aged 0-2 years, then 40 points are awarded. This was measured by the respective medical officers and ground staff of the area responsible for collecting regular updates on immunisation.

New model *anganwadis*:

1. Is there a well-functioning toilet?

2. Does vaccination happen regularly as per the suggested schedule?

3. Is the weighing machine record maintained?

4. Is ration facility operational?

5. Is weight recorded every month?

6. Does the *anganwadi* worker conducts activities with children with everyday?

7. Children with improper health are sent to the concerned CHC/PHC?

8. Regular information sharing regarding health and well-being between ASHA and *anganwadi* workers?

9. Is there a *Gudda Guddi* chart (sex ratio charts) in the *anganwadi*?

10. Is the pregnancy record for the area complete?

11. Is the interior and exterior space clean?

13. Is there a 'Beto Bachao Beti Padhao' logo on the walls?

14. Is the gas connection operational?

15. Is there a signboard?

16. Is the NPC (nutrition program certified) grain kept well in containers?

17. Are the swings used appropriately?

18. Are the 'Purvashala kits' (pre-school education kit) used?

19. Is there a dustbin facility?

20. Is there safe drinking water facility?

21. Do all walls have attractive paintings?

22. Is there proper cemented flooring in the center?

The village *sarpanches* don't always treat the PO/CDPO as important government functionaries. Such parameters help the administration to increase engagement and partnership of *sarpanches* with departments often considered the domain of women. *Sarpanchs'* contention revolve around the argument that the development on such parameters help to improve the image of the *anganwadi* workers in the village. Parents become interested in sending children to the centres. *Anganwadi* worker gets the support of *sarpanches* and it helps to establish their credibility among the villagers. Aesthetic improvement of *anganwadis* attract children. It also helps the *anganwadi* worker to work effieciently and upkeep the centre.

Education

Model School - If a government school achieves a 'yes' on all the questions (listed below), then the village gets 50 points.

1. Is library functional?

2. Is blackboard properly maintained?

3. Is dish TV connection functional in the school?

4. Is the park properly maintained?

5. Is the existing plantation properly maintained?

6. Are the walls of all classrooms and school properly painted?

7. Is running water available in toilets?

8. Is quality drinking water facility available for students?

9. Schools have proper cemented flooring?

10. Are sanitary napkins available for girls? (if applicable)

DEO/BEO maintain that poor infrastructure is a major constraint in government schools. The department is often unable to provide solutions. With the parameters defined above, the department gets extended support from the *sarpanch*. Moreover, improvement of aesthetics and infrastructure in schools helps to retain students. It also increases efficiency of the staff in the school. *Sarpanches* increase their social and political capital by getting a model school certified by the district administration.

Innovative projects by village *sarpanches*

If the village *sarpanch* is able to implement an innovative idea at the village level in the field of education, health, environment, community service or anything else, then the village gets 40 points. The idea submitted by the *sarpanch* will be evaluated on its: a) uniqueness, b) relevance to rural development, c) scalability across all villages.

b. Operating mechanism- declaration and verification:

In order to facilitate the SUPER Village tournament in a transparent manner, district administration conceptualised a Smart Portal *(www.supervillagepalwal.in).* Online accounts for all 260 *GPs* in Palwal were created. The portal was officially launched on 27 November 2017.
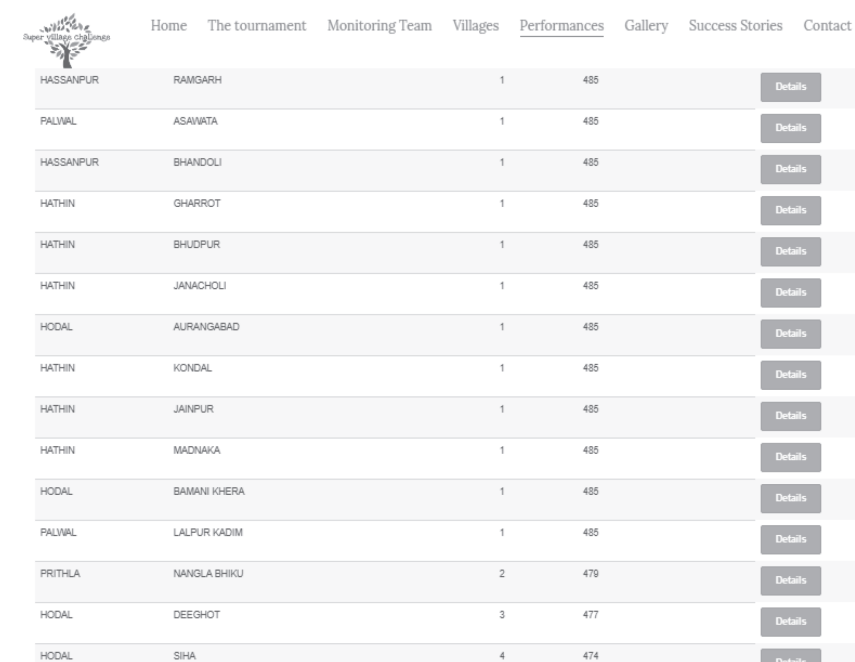
Each village *sarpanch* had a distinct username and password through which he/she could access the online forms that highlighted the targets and the points that can be achieved upon success in each parameter. These online forms (pictures shared in the paper) provided options to *sarpanches* to make self-declarations on each parameter. Once an online declaration was made, an SMS was generated to ensure proper monitoring and transparency. The recipients of these SMSes are the *sarpanches*, monitoring officers in line departments (district level/block level officers appointed for each parameter) and the core team (CMGGA, ADC).

A 15-day time-period was provided to the nodal officer in the department to complete the verification. During the verification, the *sarpanch* used to be present at the site as well. In case the verification was found successful, the department officer had to allot the points for success online on the portal through their respective login IDs and passwords. Department monitors had to enter details of an online form which validates the inspection. Upon clicking Pass, points are awarded to the village according to the parameter.

As soon as the loop for online declaration (by *sarpanch*), on-site inspection (by monitor) and then an online submission of results—either pass or fail (by monitor again) is completed successfully, points were awarded to the concerned *GP*. However, in case the village failed (i.e. not found successful) on its parameter declaration during inspection, then the village *sarpanch* could apply again and make a fresh declaration, followed by the same process (inspection-result upload by monitor-reflection on performance page). An image is shared below to describe the entire process briefly:
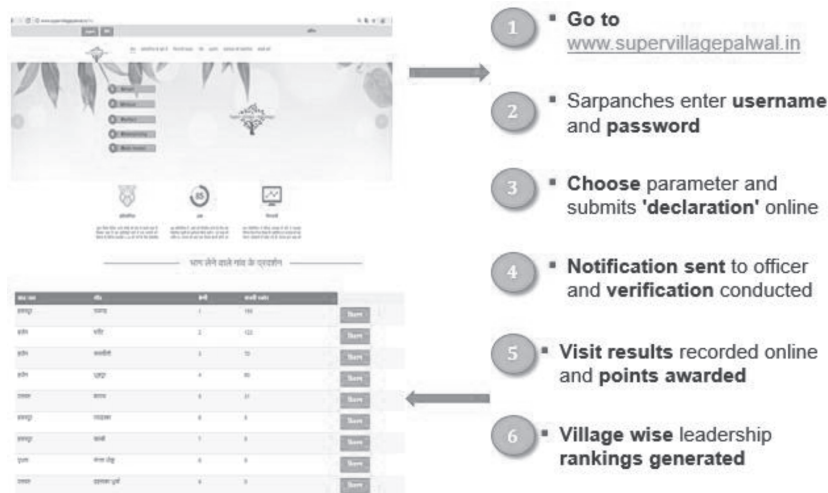
These results were reflected on a performance dashboard that used to fluctuate on a real-time basis. A picture from the final dashboard (achieved after first stage of the competition ended) is shared below:

	Home The tournament Monitoring Team Villages Performances Gallery Success Stories Contact			
HASSANPUR	RAMGARH	1	485	Details
PALWAL	ASAWATA	1	485	Details
HASSANPUR	BHANDOLI	1	485	Details
HATHIN	GHARROT	1	485	Details
HATHIN	BHUDPUR	1	485	Details
HATHIN	JANACHOLI	1	485	Details
HODAL	AURANGABAD	1	485	Details
HATHIN	KONDAL	1	485	Details
HATHIN	JAINPUR	1	485	Details
HATHIN	MADNAKA	1	485	Details
HODAL	BAMANI KHERA	1	485	Details
PALWAL	LALPUR KADIM	1	485	Details
PRITHLA	NANGLA BHIKU	2	479	Details
HODAL	DEEGHOT	3	477	Details
HODAL	SIHA	4	474	Details

While the log-in access to the portal for making self-declarations is restricted (i.e., each *sarpanch* has their own respective log-in ID and password), this leadership dashboard was accessible to the public. This was done to instill a sense of competition among the *sarpanches* and encourage "real-time gamification".

c. Follow up practices- meetings and special events:

During the first phase of SVC (27 November 2017 to 15 February 2018), numerous meetings were organised at the district and block level by the administration with *sarpanches*. The primary aim of these meetings was to disseminate information about SVC among *sarpanches*, clear doubts (if any) and motivate them to participate enthusiastically. These meetings were led by the CMGGA and several district officials (DC, ADC, BDPO, APO-SBM).

Numerous special events and press conference(s) were organised by the district administration as part of the SVC. These were attended by most of the senior bureaucrats such as the DC, ADC, CMGGA and also by *sarpanches*. Invitation to the *sarpanches* was linked to performance which automatically created an incentive for them. For example, a special dinner was hosted on 5 Jan 2018 at the DC residence to recognise and appreciate efforts of top 100 *sarpanches*. The event was called "TOP 100-100" which was attended by 100 *sarpanches* who were the first to reach 100 points up until 4 January 2018 (1 day before event day). This helped boost participation rapidly as *sarpanches* found a rare opportunity to interact with a delegation of foreign students, professors from foreign universities (i.e. Case Western University and University of Berkeley, USA) and share their experiences.

A table (shared below) mentions some of critical dates, events and the number of participating villages in the events. This table also helps to show how the administration used certain dates/events to strategically increase the participation of the villages in the competition.

Event name	Date	Number of participating villages on the date
Meeting of DC, CMGGA with 60 *sarpanches* In Mini Secretariat, Palwal	22/12/2017	61
Press conference of DC, ADC, CMGGA withMedia personnel. Also attended by incumbent top 15 *sarpanches*	2/1/2018	137
Dinner of top 100 *sarpanches* at DC residence and Interaction with foreign delegation from USA	5/1/2018	145
Call of state department to district administration to nominate polythene free villages	14/1/2018	170
Video conference with all Deputy Commissioners of Haryana chaired by Addl. PS to CM	16/1/2018	180
Nomination of Hodal block as 100% Polythene free by District rural development authority	19/1/2018	200+

Until 22 December 2017, which is approximately one month after the official launch of SVC on 27 November 2017, the participation rate of villages was below 30 per cent. However, after the meeting chaired by DC and announcement (made during the meeting) of foreign delegation's visit to Palwal, the participation rate increased. It must also be noted how the administration used the momentum created by SVC to fast track delivery on other rural development initiatives that were going on at the state level. For example, the polythene free requirement (which also happened to be a parameter in SVC) was a critical component of the ODF+ mission too.

Hence, the SVC helped the administration make huge improvements in its district level targets on some critical ongoing state programs on rural development.

III   RESULTS

a. Parameter performance:

To measure the impact of the intervention, the administration prepared a baseline and an end-line data sheet that captured the data for all 260 *GPs* on two occasions across all the parameters: a) at the start of competition and b) at the end of the first phase (i.e., 15th February 2018).

The external study on SVC provided a detailed analysis of the competition and the changes induced by it (Chhibber and Gupta 2018). Overall, the competition had 100 per cent participation, i.e., all 260 *GPs* had made declaration on at least one parameter. The polythene free parameter was amongst the most popular, evident from the fact that all villages declared themselves polythene free. A key point to note here is that polythene free meant absence of plastic/polythene (at the inner and outer street of the village) and overall visible cleanliness during the time of inspection.

The second most popular parameter was immunisation as approximately 145 villages declared that at least 90 per cent of children in the village had been immunised. The number of children due for immunisation in the district reduced from 5,944 to 1,139.

Encouraging improvements were made in *anganwdi* centres and schools as well. During SVC approximately 70 villages converted at least one *anganwadi* into a model *anganwadi* and similarly, government schools in 82 villages were declared as model schools. Improvements were also visible in the community engagement category. Before SVC had started, there was only one village level *vaachanalya* (community reading room) in the district. However, after the competition of the competition, more than 70 villages started separate *vaachanalyas* for men and women.

On other fronts such as digital literacy, considerable improvements were made. More than 5,500 new registrations were made at PMGDISHA centres during SVC. On women empowerment parameters such as self-help groups (SHGs), substantial improvements were made as an increase of more than 50 per cent and more than 160 new women SHGs were started during the competition.

Some of capital-intensive parameters such as building community soak pits and vermi-compost were completed by relatively fewer villages (32 in number). Almost 50 employment awareness camps that had a cumulative participation of 2,769 were organised to boost the RSETI scheme in 20 villages. Other parameters such as uploading of data on the PRIYASOFT platform saw very low participation from villages.

b. Recognition beyond district at the state and national level:

The inaugural 7Star Village scheme, a state-wide scheme, provides star ratings to villages on 7 development parameters—education and dropouts, peace and harmony, sex ratio, hygiene and sanitation, good governance and social participation. The scheme was launched on 26 January 2018 by Mr Manohar Lal Khattar, Chief Minister of Haryana and Mr OP Dhankar, Minister of Development and Panchayat, Haryana. Although, SVC Palwal and 7star are distinct schemes/initiatives, both have some similar dimensions in parameters of sanitation and hygiene (e.g. emphasis on plastic free/polythene free), good governance (e.g. requirement of digital CSCs etc.) and introduction of a "performance linked" aspect to rural development grants. However, the real-time gamification aspect is unique to Palwal's SVC and the work done by *GPs* under SVC has had clear gains for the district in the 7star scheme.

This is evident from the fact that the highest rating received by any *GP* under 7star is '6star' and only 3 *GPs* have received such star rating. Interestingly, all the *GPs* namely Janachauli, Nangla Bhiku and Jainpur are from Palwal. Even in the 5star category, Palwal has the highest number of *GPs* (2), while only Rohtak and Charki Dadri have a *GP* each in this category. Similarly, in the 4star category, only 3 districts namely Palwal, Ambala, Fatehabad have two *GPs* each. Although Palwal lacks behind other districts in the number of *GPs* with lower star ratings (i.e. 1star, 2star, 3star), the district dominates when it comes to higher star ratings, which perhaps means that villages gained from the SVC experience. The competition exposed village *sarpanches* to the idea of a multi-dimensional (20+ development parameters across 8 themes) competitive model, and the advanced model of real-time gamification helped them understand the dynamics of a mass-scale competition before the 7star round assessment began in April-May 2018.

Star wise Districts - Level 2

Sr.No	District	0-Star	1-Star	2-Star	3-Star	4-Star	5-Star	6-Star	7-Star
1	AMBALA	1	95	269	41	2	0	0	0
2	BHIWANI	10	13	5	0	0	0	0	0
3	CHARKI DADRI	0	1	0	4	0	1	0	0
4	FARIDABAD	2	6	11	2	1	0	0	0
5	FATEHABAD	0	0	4	8	2	0	0	0
6	GURUGRAM	5	69	103	25	1	0	0	0
7	HISAR	4	13	12	9	1	0	0	0
8	JHAJJAR	18	16	0	0	0	0	0	0
9	JIND	2	7	17	1	0	0	0	0
10	KAITHAL	0	3	11	6	0	0	0	0
11	KARNAL	1	6	50	3	0	0	0	0
12	KURUKSHETRA	6	65	9	1	0	0	0	0
13	MAHENDRAGARH	2	12	2	0	0	0	0	0
14	MEWAT	0	31	2	0	0	0	0	0
15	PALWAL	0	16	1	2	2	2	3	0
16	PANCHKULA	3	7	0	0	0	0	0	0
17	PANIPAT	2	19	9	0	0	0	0	0
18	REWARI	10	1	3	0	0	0	0	0
19	ROHTAK	0	0	18	1	0	1	0	0
20	SIRSA	1	49	8	1	0	0	0	0
21	SONIPAT	0	3	5	2	0	0	0	0
22	YAMUNANAGAR	1	2	25	2	0	0	0	0

While 16 *GPs* fall in the top 7star categories (i.e., 6star, 5star and 4star inclusive), seven *GPs* are from Palwal, which constitutes almost 44 per cent, reflecting the dominant position of the district in the top star category position. Moreover, it is also seen that the top performing villages in 7star also had a top (i.e. 1st, 2nd, 3rd or 4th) rank in the first phase of SVC also. A table below shows the rank of such *GPs* in SVC and their corresponding star rating in 7star.

VILLAGE	SVC rank	7Star rating
RAMGARGH	1	4
BHANDOLI	1	5
GHARROT	1	5
JANACHOLI	1	6
JAINPUR	1	6
NANGLA BHIKU	1	6
KARNA	4	4

The efforts of the district administration, Palwal were also recognised by the department of redressal and public grievances (DARPG), as SVC was shortlisted in the 'Innovations' category for the Prime Minister's Excellence Awards for public administration (2018).

IV DISCUSSION

In terms of generating momentum and ensuring active participation of *GPs* SVC worked well. Despite participation being voluntary, the competition witnessed participation by all villages in the district and there was substantial improvement in the overall district's performance on multiple parameters. As there was no other major initiative during this period (i.e., between November17 to February18), the progress may be largely attributed to various elements of the SVC. Inducing active participation from all *panchayats* was a great achievement of the program as all 260 *GPs* made a declaration on at least one parameter. This was way beyond the expectations of several officers in the district administration, who pegged an at-best target of 100 *GPs*.

While participation was extremely encouraging, a closer assessment reveals that actual participation may be higher had requirements for sustainability been enforced by the administration. For example, although all 260 *GPs* declared themselves as polythene free but only 68 had participated on this parameter. If we remove these, active participation rate may come down to 192 instead of 260. Hence, the need to ensure high participation and high sustainability at the same time might prove to be a challenging task.

Moreover, a closer look at the data of outcomes on some parameters **by Chhibber and Gupta (2018)** also reveals interesting insights. For example, the new 160 SHGs that were formed were mainly based out of the villages that had them earlier too and thus effectively only 20 new villages had SHGs post SVC.

Participation on straight forward parameters, which administration had anticipated would become popular, such as data upload of village accounts on digital platforms such as PRIYASOFT (Since the *GPs* are supposed to do this regularly) and organisation of RSETI camps (entirely administration sponsored) did not pick popularity at all. Even the conversion of the participation recorded at these RSETI camps to actual new enrolments in training courses was very low (approximately 100 for over 2,700 cumulative participants). Apart from this, capital intensive parameters such as construction of soakage pits and vermi compost pits failed to generate mass support and was performed largely by few (approximately 30) *panchayats* and it represents a meagre 12 per cent of total *GPs* in Palwal.

Further the report submitted by the UC Berkeley team provides several lessons for scaling up an initiative like SVC. First, parameters need to be cost intensive and must have a balance or a fair play footing for all villages. Moreover, while adapting parameters, there is a need to be cognizant of the "head start" advantage—parameters that don't have any such element are likely to be perceived and internalised in an equal and fair

manner by participants. Although, in SVC careful attention was paid to this, some parameters such as PMGDISHA (as a village might already have a center) and immunisation rate (as a village might anyways have a higher immunisation rate due to multiplicity of factors) clearly put some villages in an advantageous situation against others in a competitive set-up. Apart from this, a mechanism to award points for sub-tasks within a parameter must be explored. For example, in the Model School parameter, a *GP* would only get the points if a school complied with all the requirements, this might put an unfair burden on the participant.

Despite this, SVC is an interesting case to argue for exploring more competitive sub-federalism models for rural development. First, SVC through its multi-dimensional nature of parameters comes out as a holistic programme. Second, results were achieved by the district administration with minimal incremental expenditure used from government sources (exchequer). For example, prize money was allocated from the District Plan funds already available with the district administration and the expenditure on other fronts like building of the portal, public events related to SVC was very low. Third, no additional funds were given by the administration to any village for SVC related activities. However, this can make participation difficult for *GPs* that lack adequate funds as they may not be able to stay abreast in the competition against those that have sufficient funds and this can possibly increase the inequalities among *GPs*. However, in future versions of the competition, the feasibility of allowing expedited release of government funds (e.g. *panchayat* funds) for SVC related works may be explored. Fourth, SVC did not require any mega transformative changes or any other administrative reforms. The same set of district and block level officers and frontline staff were mobilised for this initiative.

Thus, the Palwal Super Village challenge experiment helps show why synchronizing the interests of various stakeholders is integral for the implementation of rural development programs, especially in the Indian context where the implementation largely depends on three key stakeholders at the local level—the *sarpanch* and the *panchayat*, senior bureaucracy (DC, ADC, DDO, BDOs etc.) and their sub-ordinate frontline staff. Unless their interests and motivation are aligned, there is likely to be a shortfall in public service delivery.

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Rethinking Collaboration: How can Collective Impact Improve Public Education?

A Case Study of Faridabad Education Council

Khush Vacchrajani

ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the research outcomes and findings from a policy project undertaken in Faridabad, a district in the northern state of Haryana in India. The project used a collective impact approach to enhance the learning environment in public schools, leading to improved learning outcomes. The methodological framework used constitutes a mixed-methods design that involved surveys at the school-level, focus group discussions with donors, implementing actors and beneficiaries, stakeholder consultations in the form of semi-structured interviews with philanthropists, CSR organisations, local government officials, and secondary data analysis from India's national CSR portal, the state's Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan program budget data, National Achievement Survey 2017, ASER Report, and Haryana U-DISE data. This paper outlines the process of evaluating the various types of backbone support models of collective impact and selecting the appropriate type as per a needs assessment, designing the 'Theory of Change' and putting together a common agenda for the collective impact process. Most importantly, the project resulted in the construction of a comprehensive rubric to measure the school's progress against the School Maturity Map, establishing streamlined communication channels, and put together an organisational set-up conducive to the beneficiaries' engagement in mutually reinforcing activities. The paper also highlights the features, objectives, and operations of the Faridabad Education Council, and advocates for the adoption of collective impact as a collaboration strategy to drive quality enhancement outcomes in education.

I   INTRODUCTION

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Right to Education (RTE) Act have been the two monumental policies implemented by the Government of India in last two decades. The two policies have contributed to ensuring that close to 96 per cent children between the age of 6 to 14 are enrolled in a formal schooling system. Right to Education Act (2009) has identified three key pillars of education namely fair access, equity, and quality. While considerable progress has been made to make education accessible to all and develop schools as spaces that espouse principles of justice, little focus has been paid to the actual quality of education being imparted in schools. Currently, close to 2.5 crore children between the age of 6 to 18 are enrolled in the formal schooling system in India (MHRD, 2016). However, large portion of these students are below the "grade level", which means that a student can not deal with what is expected of her in that grade. *Pratham*, a prominent nonprofit, since 2005 has been carrying out the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), an annual, nationwide survey of children's ability to read simple text and do basic arithmetic that would engage ordinary citizens in finding out whether their children were learning. In 2018, ASER's report "Beyond Basics" shared that only 47.1 per cent boys in the 14-18 age group could do simple division (dividing a 3-digit number by a single digit), where the percentage for girls was at a shocking 39.5 per cent. Moreover, half of the youth surveyed (close to 15,000) could not apply basic literacy and numeracy skills to everyday tasks like "adding weights". While the learning gaps exist both in private as well as public schools, public schools have degraded rapidly in the last decade and a marginal improvement has been observed in their performance against private schools from the ASER report of 2014 to the most recent one in 2018. Faridabad is an industrial town in the National Capital Region, in the state of Haryana, with close to 1.5 lakh children studying in the 374 government schools present in the district. Sixty per cent of the students studying in the eighth grade in these schools are below grade level according to the state's portal of Monthly Assessment Tests. These numbers fall even more for the primary grades where some schools have more than 80 per cent students below grade level in class 1 to 5.

Various non-profit organisations like Pratham have created and implemented innovative programs to address such a dismal quality of education in public schools. Funders have invested billions into educational programs, measured their success, and have also scaled effective interventions. Government has played a pivotal role in both execution of such programs and their funding through strategic collaborations with non-profits and donor organisations. While partial success has been achieved in terms of improvement in the quality of infrastructure, introduction of interactive learning through technology, and creation of child-friendly learning spaces through Building as

a Learning Aid (BaLA), few have achieved large-scale, lasting impact on the target beneficiaries. What explains this anomaly? Although collaborations and education transformation programs have increased in the past 20 years, they are often characterised by a single organisation trying to make the most impact with the fewest resources. This type of system—a single strong program, a single funding stream, or a single organisation—is common in the non-profit world and is called Isolated Impact (Collective Impact, 2011). This traditional system often produces programs with little to no measurable outcome, limited scalability potential, unsustainable interventions, and short-term gains that lead to almost negligible impact on the beneficiary.

Faridabad, despite landing private investments (CSR and philanthropy) of close to 8 - 10 crores (figure 1) and *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* funds (Source: SSA Budget Sheet 2016 – 2017) of close to 50 crores annually, has been one of the worst performing districts in the state of Haryana. Moreover, there are close to 15 non-profit organisations who are working in Faridabad. They run various programs like remedial classes, provision of science and math kits, special coaching for IIT aspirants, setting up language labs, school adoption for physical infrastructure development, to name a few. This is happening in select schools – around 40 out of 374. Since these organisations and donor agencies are working in isolation under with the Department of Education, the impact of each of these players has been limited, unsustainable, and non-measurable. The problem as multi-faceted and as complex as quality of education demands stable resources, sustainable solutions, and outcome-driven collaborations than input-driven (based on funding, tasks, or activities) partnerships unlike traditional models of collaborations such as strategic alliances, public-private partnerships, strategic co-funding, coalitions, networks to name a few.
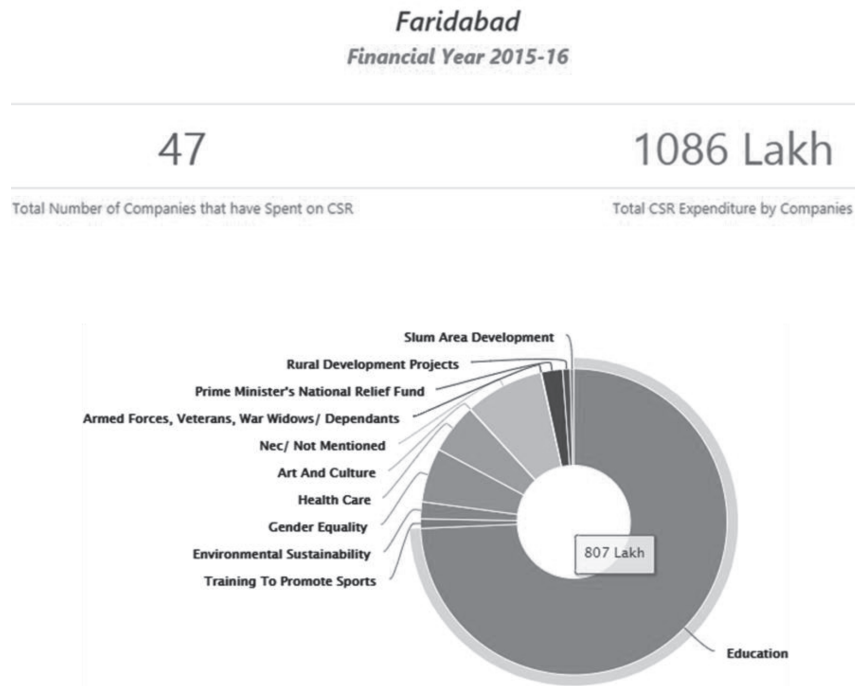
Figure 1: *CSR investments in Faridabad based on National CSR Portal (csr.gov.in)*

This paper explores the following key questions to reconsider traditional collaborations and isolated impact.

1. How can we align stakeholders like government, non-profits, and business leaders, with diverse interests, over common set of measurable outcomes, while ensuring accountability, equal ownership, and participation?

2. How can a culture of continual improvement be established among all stakeholders to achieve shared set of outcomes?

3. How can the available expertise of community working in the local education eco-system be leveraged and deployed effectively to achieve common goals?

Collective impact is a newly developed concept and approach to solving complex social problems that rectifies many of the issues associated with isolated impact and traditional collaborations that is defined by Kania and Kramer in the Stanford Social Innovation Review as "The commitment of a group of important actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving a specific social problem".

The purpose of this paper is to understand collective impact in detail through the case study of Faridabad Education Council, an initiative by government representatives, eminent business leaders, and civil society organisations working in the education sector. The initiative is aimed at developing and implementing a coordinated plan to sustain evidence-based programs and practices to enhance the learning environment in public schools, leading to improved educational outcomes. Faridabad Education Council is an independent organisation backed by philanthropists and donors in order to create processes for collective impact in the education eco-system in Faridabad. The council has partnered with the district administration in order to draft a cohesive, inclusive, and outcome-driven strategy for 374 public schools, with a potential impact to 1.5 lakh children. Faridabad Education Council implemented the following principles in order to create a collective impact model:

1. **Backbone Support:** The council acts as an independent non-profit organisation with dedicated staff and a specific set of skills to create and manage collective impact.

2. **Common Agenda:** All the participants of the council have drafted a shared vision to be achieved in the coming three years.

3. **Shared Measurement:** A comprehensive rubric is created to constantly measure the outcomes by all partners and eventually achieve the larger vision of enhancing learning environment in public schools, leading to improved educational outcomes.

4. **Mutually Reinforcing Activities:** The organisational structure is such that it is condusive to different participants' engagement in mutually reinforcing activities.

5. **Continuous Communication:** Consistent and open communication among all stakeholders were ensured through various means like focused group discussions,

workshops, whatsApp groups, conference calls to name a few, which built trust among the stakeholders and motivated them.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to understand the micro-factors affecting quality of public-school education in Faridabad as well as Haryana at large, the mix-method approach was adopted. Preliminary assessment of the problem was carried out through the following methods:

1. **Field visits to schools and local communities**: 2 to 3 schools and communities were visited every week for about 8 weeks.

2. **Stakeholder consultations:** Interviews of school principals, non-profit leadership, business leaders and philanthropists, and various government officials were conducted over a period of five weeks. Focused group discussions were carried out between schools and non-profits, non-profits and donors, schools and donors, and schools, non-profits and donors over two weeks.

3. **Secondary research and data analysis:** Various reports published by government as well as private organisations were studied to understand different micro parameters of quality education. Additionally, data-sets from U-DISE Haryana, National Achievement Survey 2017, Haryana State Monthly Assessment Test portal, and National CSR Portal were also analysed to identify major funding gaps as well as larger needs of the public schools. Moreover, best case practices and literature on systemic public education transformation programs were also referred to to build a holistic perspective on the problem at hand as well as the solutions available.

Key findings from the preliminary assessment:

- While there were some islands of excellence in selected schools created by a set of non-profits and funded by a set of donors, there was neither a common strategy nor coordination among these stakeholders—non-profits, donors, and the local government, to achieve a common goal.

- There was a dearth of credible and common data about the outcomes of different activities and overall impact on the beneficiaries. However, there were individual impact reports of various non-profits as well as donors, which lacked an outlook for outcome achievements.

- The role of local government was almost negligible in all the initiatives being run by non-profits and donors. Despite being the approval and monitoring agency for all the interventions in public schools, department of primary education lacked ownership of the projects which were run and managed by private organisations, due to which most of the initiatives were forced to shut down once the private organisation left.

- While most players in the education eco-system showed intent of working together, the eco-system lacked both a framework and facilitator.

- One of the bright spots was *Faridabad Navchetna Trust*, a local non-profit, which resulted out of an outcome driven collaboration and common set of goals. Initiatives by them were widely accepted by the local government due to limited but visible impact and regular communication. However, this organisation also lacked impact measurement framework, larger vision, and a specialised team to manage the initiative.

- Very strong advocacy for a single platform for government, non-profits, and donor organisations to work together was done by local government schools, multiple types of non-profits, different donor organisations, as well as by all levels of government, during the stakeholder consultation carried out in the form of interviews and focused group discussions.

- Due to the scale and complexity of public education systems, organisations around the world have begun to see collective impact as a new and more effective process for social change based on the success of Strive, a non-profit subsidiary of KnowledgeWorks, that brought together local leaders to tackle the student achievement crisis and improve education throughout greater Cincinnati and northern Kentucky through a collective impact initiative called Cradle to Career. While the discourse on privatisation of public education in India is developing, collective impact approach to this problem should be looked at as a potential alternative.

Dr. Prashant Bhalla an educationist, eminent civil society leader and President of Dr. O.P. Bhalla Foundation, a philanthropic arm of Manav Rachna Education Institutes, came on board as a thought partner and key driver of the initiative. Dr. Bhalla led several focused group discussions with other industry leaders, non-profits, and educationists to deep dive into the findings of the preliminary assessment carried out by the CMGGA. A core team comprising of six business leaders and philanthropists, three educationists, two retired public servants from Indian Administrative Services, two representatives from non-profit organisations, and the CMGGA was formed. After a series of deliberations, it was concluded that a detailed needs assessment along with a comprehensive landscape study was required in order to build a 'Theory of Change' for improving quality in public schools through a collective impact approach. While, the need for a detailed diagnostic was evident, the core team in the meanwhile agreed to set up a backbone organisation, which will manage the overall collective impact initiative. Moreover, an initial corpus fund of 12 lakhs was also put in place to finance the comprehensive study and designing of the overall collective impact initiative.

Setting up of the Backbone Support – Faridabad Education Council

Kania and Kramer highlighted in their report entitled Collective Impact in Stanford Social Innovation Review (Collective Impact, 2011) that **"Expectation that collaboration can occur without a supporting infrastructure is one of the most frequent reasons why it fails. The backbone organisation requires a dedicated staff separate from the

participating organi-sations who can plan, manage, and support the initiative through ongoing facilitation, technology and communications support, data collection and reporting, and handling the myriad logistical and administrative details needed for the initiative to function smoothly". Backbone support is a crucial element of the infrastructure that enables multi-sectoral collaborations, drives coordinated efforts, and ensures achievement of shared goals and outcomes.

Before conceptualising a new non-profit organisation namely Faridabad Education Council, six organisations were studied by the core team in order to explore a possibility of making one of those organisations a backbone support. These organisations were identified on the following basis:

- Type of organisation[1]

- Capacity of the organisation (social influence, infrastructure and staff)

- Nature and size of funding of the organisation

The table below elaborates the analysis drawn from each of the organisations in terms of its pros and cons to become a backbone for collective impact initiatives in Faridabad.

Name	Type	Capacity	Funding	Pros	Cons
Faridabad Navchetna Trust	Backbone of backbones	Medium	Medium	▪Strong cross-sector representation led by an elected representative ▪Strong ownership of the trustees ▪Demonstrated success in resource mobilization for various initiatives ▪Widely recognised by district administration ▪MoU with Department of Education for 27 adopted schools in Faridabad	▪ Inadequate staff ▪ Highly politicized projects and activities ▪ Limited to just one constituency in Faridabad ▪ Lack of clear accountability ▪ Not aligned on the collective impact approach
Dr. O. P. Bhalla Foundation (Manav Rachana Education Institutes)	Funder based	High	Medium	▪Very well-established infrastructure and strong in-house resources ▪Strong leadership and social influence ▪High credibility among civil society as well as district administration ▪Strong domain expertise in education ▪Strong association with the place (Faridabad) due to Family history	▪ Not adequate funding to champion CI alone ▪ Inadequate staff ▪ Potential to be perceived as an individual initiative than a CI initiative

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[1] Fay Hanleybrown, John Kania, and Mark Kramer, "Channelling Change: Making Collective Impact Work," *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, winter 2012.

Name	Type	Capacity	Funding	Pros	Cons
Escorts Pvt. Ltd.	Funder based	Inadequate	High	▪Strong association with the place just like the Bhalla family ▪Adequate fund to fund the backbone as well as the initiatives ▪High credibility in the corporate sector / industrial association of Faridabad	▪ No strategy or any dedicated infrastructure and staff ▪ Inadequate social influence to on-board more partners and funders to support the initiatives ▪ Potential to be perceived as an ESCORTS' initiative than a CI initiative ▪ Poor relationship with district administration
Education Alliance	Shared across multiple organizations	Inadequate	Medium	▪Already a functional eco-system operating in Delhi ▪Strong advisory and support group ▪Proven model: Government-Partnership schools (G-PS)	▪ More of a collaborative approach than a CI approach ▪ Does not fulfil all necessary conditions of collective impact ▪ Inadequate funding and capacity to lead a backbone ▪ No social influence in Faridabad
Kaivalya Education Foundation	Existing non-profit	High	Medium	▪One of the leading organizations in the domain of Education working pan India ▪Systemic transformation as a core theory of change ▪High quality resource pool within the organisation ▪Already a partner with state education department	▪ Does not operate on a collective impact philosophy ▪ Inadequate funding and capacity to lead a backbone ▪ No social influence in Faridabad ▪ CI does not fit into their current focus and organization strategy

Table 1: *Assessment of possible backbone support organisations*

Following were the key insights drawn from the study of the above-mentioned organisations.

1. It is not viable, feasible and desirable to work with an existing organisation to set up a backbone support from the collective impact initiative since there is absolutely no discourse around collective impact among them. Moreover, it is extremely difficult to mobilise partners, funders and supporters for a backbone support that is driven by one independent organization.

2. Backbone support must be apolitical, independent and sustainable in terms of its resource requirements to build a collective impact model.

3. Role of university in setting up and running a collective impact initiative is critical due to the resources at their disposal, domain understanding and capacity for social mobilisation.

4. Steering team of the backbone support must have people who are passionate about the place as well as collective impact. Their association with the place would determine their participation and investment in the initiative.

5. Role of the government is crucial in fostering collective impact initiatives and hence it is essential for the backbone to work with the government from very beginning.

6. Backbone organisation will require expertise in the education sector in order to be more effective.

7. Leadership in the backbone organisation will be of utmost importance and hence choosing the right people must be a priority.

It was evident after the assessment of these six organisations that the backbone support needs to be a new, independent, autonomous, and apolitical organisation. The core team then evaluated various possibilities of setting up the backbone as mentioned below:

1. Completely independent trust / society / non-profit business

   Pros:

   • No baggage

   • Absolute freedom and autonomy to structure the backbone

   • Consensus building and governance mechanism will be more streamlined

   Cons:

   • Process will be slow

   • Heavy dependence on motivation and participation of the steering team only

2. Independent authority / committee /society within the local government (bureaucracy)

   Pros:

   • Buy-in of district administration from the very beginning leading to a convergence between private and public funding

   • More credibility

   • Easy to manage permissions and logistics for interventions

Cons:

   • Power dynamics might make create unequal equations and scenarios

   • Heavy dependency on incumbent officer which may make governance more person centric than a system centric

   • Possibility of misuse of funds like any other government scheme / funding (similar to District IT society 'DITS')

3. Independent organization (trust / society) with ex-officio membership to the local government (bureaucracy)

   <u>**Pros**</u>:

   - More freedom and autonomy in decision making as well as governance in comparison to the second model

   - Credibility and ease in permissions as well as logistics will be similar to the second model

   - Convergence of government funding with private funding is possible

   <u>**Cons**</u>:

   - Ownership by the ex-officio members from the bureaucracy might be a challenge throughout

   - Power dynamics here might also fail the ex-officio structure and lead to sustainability issues

   - Difficult to strike a balance between decision making power and accountability between private players and public sector representative

After looking at all three possibilities and evaluating them in the given context, the core team decided to go ahead with the third model where Faridabad Education Council was registered as an independent trust with ex-officio members in form of the Divisional Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Sub-Divisional Magistrates, and District Education Officers. The biggest perceived advantage of the selected model was the possibility of convergence between public and private funding without any conflict of interest. Moreover, the model would allow enough flexibility to core team members and potential partners while engaging the local government effectively in drafting a shared vision and a collective impact strategy. This type of a backbone support can also be looked as a *Special Purpose Vehicle*, which is implemented in mission-driven government programs like the Smart Cities Mission by Government of India.

The structure of the Council was the next critical aspect which required some secondary research, thus, two similar models were studied by the core team to chalk out an initial structure of Faridabad Education Council:

1. **Pune City Connect (PCC):** Social enterprise set up by the eminent citizens of Pune city in collaboration with the key stakeholders from government as well as the social sector to enable city transformation and inclusive growth in the areas of quality education, sustainable livelihoods and digital literacy.

2. **Government to Citizen Changemakers Foundation (Go2C):** Social enterprise created by the joint efforts of the Kerala government and key stakeholders from both corporate & social space.

The following insights were drawn by looking at their models as well as speaking to the staff from the organisation.

- Steering team needs a very strong support from another core leadership team, who are defined as backbone leadership in the collective impact reports and case studies by Kania and colleagues.

- Core leadership team needs to be supported by domain experts who can help the leadership take more informed decisions as well as work with the core leadership to strategise and plan better.

- Core leadership team as well as the team of domain experts in a backbone support should not be extensively large.

- Field staff needs to be separate and must be accompanied by working groups which would comprise of some of the partners, funders and domain experts along with a dedicated volunteer base and community network of social organisations. Volunteer base and community network may be activated for specific projects based on the need.

Based on these insights, the core team finalised the following basic elements of the Council:

- A steering committee was set up at the highest level. The committee comprised of business leaders, philanthropists, and decision-makers who provide strategic direction along with championing the overall initiative.

- A Project Management Unit (PMU) was formed to manage the backbone support as well as to delve into functional areas like coordinating the diagnostic, government relations, partnerships, etc. The PMU comprises of three educationists with strong organisational skills, managerial aptitude, and an entrepreneurial outlook.

II   DIAGNOSIS OF FARIDABAD EDUCATION ECOSYSTEM & KEY POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Sattva Media & Consulting, a social sector consulting organisation, was brought on-board after a diligent selection process led by the steering committee and facilitated by the PMU. They would lead the efforts of carrying out a comprehensive data-driven diagnosis on the ground, landscape analysis of the education eco-system of Faridabad, key education policy and budget analysis, co-develop 'Theory of Change', and provide recommendations for starting a collective impact initiative to improve quality of public school education in Faridabad. Over a course of 12 weeks, Sattva diagnosed some of the major gaps in school eco-system along with identifying best case practices. The assignment was carried out by using extensive primary and secondary research, a comprehensive survey tool, and interviews with experts.

The scope of the assignment intended to achieve the following outcomes:

1. Comprehensive understanding of the current landscape of education in Faridabad

2. Identifying how FEC can best drive transformation in the short & long term using an outcome-based collective impact approach

3. Creating a road map for public school transformation

The approach adopted by the project team from Sattva in consultation with the steering committee and PMU of FEC is depicted below:

Approach

Map	Evaluate	Identify	Align	Design
Faridabad education landscape	Benchmark schools	Current needs, interventions and best practises from case studies	Vision to national and international priorities	An optimum council

Figure 2: *Approach adopted by Sattva to co-develop collective impact strategy*

Insights and results from the mapping of Faridabad education landscape

The study of landscape through primary and secondary sources showed significant problems in the education ecosystem of Faridabad:

Enrolment in Government Schools Fall Significantly at Every Level[1]

Number of Students

45,052

30,411

17,303

10,661

I - V   VI - VIII   IX - X   XI - XII

1 http://www.schooleducationharyana.gov.in/Nveqf_web/pdf/notifications/Survey_18.pdf

Other metrics indicate that education lags across the board in Faridabad [2,3]

Gender disparity in education accessibility prominent, with women having lower literacy rates, enrolment rates and retention rates relative to Gurgaon and Delhi.

Gross enrolment ratio is high in the primary levels, but drops in higher levels.
Upper Primary: **107.00%**, Secondary: **87.34%**, Higher Secondary: **60.03%**

Learning levels across Haryana show that Class 1 students in Faridabad perform among the **worst across the state** in language and math.

Weak infrastructure compounds the problem, with only 75% of classrooms in good condition, compared to Gurgaon with 85%. Over 90% of government schools require repair in classrooms.

Figure 3: *Key gaps identified in the overall education ecosystem of Faridabad*

During interviews with key stakeholders from the local government officials and schools, a pervasive feeling appeared to be that while recent programs and policies in the state (over the last 3 to 4 years) have tried to address the learning gaps in public schools, the programs and policies haven't been contextualised to the area and interventions have also been ad-hoc and poorly coordinated. There were three key concerns identified, as highlighted below, upon deep diving into various channels of implementation of government schemes and programs namely District Education Office (DEO), District Elementary Education Office (DEEO), Block Education Offices (BEOs), District Project Coordinator Office (DPC), and District Institute of Education and Training (DIET).

3 Key Concerns in Translating State Level Policy to the District

The Accountability Dilemma

- With **little to no control at the district level, there is no built-in accountability** at the implementation level.

- Effective accountability with good data would also need to be combined with a reduction of the culture of blame.

- **Widespread ownership and accountability based on data** should lead to a system of adaptability and improvement, but **decision making is too far removed**

Policy Framing

- A **lack of communication** and an unclear local level policy with **too many priorities** has left local authorities feeling disconnected

- A **lack of focus on simple, clear and actionable goals** has led to several **ad-hoc initiatives** and interventions

- Need for **widespread transparency of results and clear identification** of policies that are successful and those that have failed

Inadequate Capacity Building

- Capacity building has to cover everything from **leadership, skills, resources & motivation**

- Educator training is ad-hoc, **regular transfers lead to a inconsistent vision**

- Core strategy needs to address **thorough capacity building, at the individual level** and in the collective and contextualized sense

Figure 4: *Key challenges in translating state level programs and policies to the district*

Along with the interviews with local government officials, non-profits working in Faridabad like Art of Play Foundation, Indian School Leadership Institute, *Navchetna* Trust were also interviewed. The policies and programs being implemented in the district like School Nurture Policy, Learning Enhancement programs, scholarship schemes, teacher training by DIET etc. were also studied. While most of the observations during the study resonated with the preliminary assessment, three key challenges were identified:

- Infrastructure improvement and development projects are compromised by lack of maintenance.

- Most interventions operate independently and are driven by private organisations with no centralised monitoring or evaluation of success.

- Many of the organisations reported issues with buy-in and trust from educators (government officials) and schools.

School Survey and Interviews: Design, Methodology, and Results

One of the main components of the diagnosis phase was a school survey, conducted in over 315 schools by Sattva and *Manav Rachna* University. This survey was designed to be a comprehensive assessment of schools; with five broad themes, 21 sub-indicators within those themes, with the sub-indicators breaking down into a 155 different metrics. The survey was carried out in two phases over a span of four months.
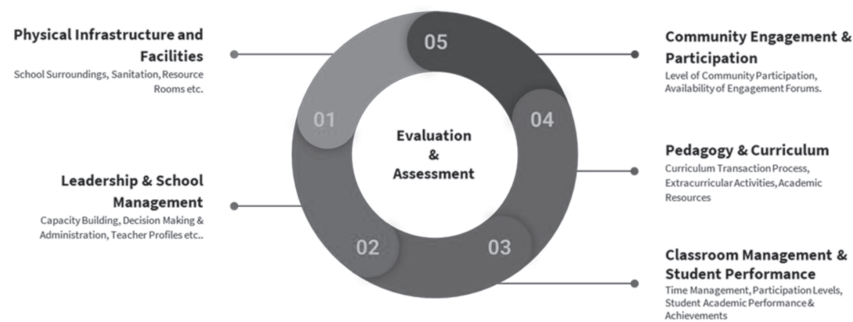
Figure 5*: Broad themes for school survey*

Type of school	#Students	#Teachers (Permanent)	#Teachers (Guest)	# Schools
High School	**8716**	**263**	**55**	**32**
Boys	670	40	1	2
Co-Educational	6496	186	46	25
Girls	1550	37	8	5
Middle School	**4868**	**196**	**53**	**38**
Co-Educational	4071	169	37	33
Girls	797	27	16	5
Primary School	**40325**	**1169**	**366**	**194**
Boys	1965	73	12	13
Co-Educational	35558	1013	330	169
Girls	2802	83	24	12
Sr Secondary School	**31703**	**1057**	**147**	**51**
Boys	5152	197	26	9
Co-Educational	15602	494	75	29
Girls	10949	366	46	13
Grand Total	**85612**	**2685**	**621**	**315**

Table 2: *Sample details of 315 surveyed school*

Schools were ranked on a rating of 1-5 on each metric (1 being lowest, 5 being highest). Surveyors went to schools, conducted interviews with principals or key teaching staff,

and then did an observational round of the school to develop a comprehensive understanding of the school before ranking them. Surveys were executed using *socialcop* mobile data collection app, and generated a database containing information on all these schools across all metrics, to be used for future data analysis. There were also some qualitative observations made during the survey, that were used to generate overall insight.

Extra-curricular Achievements

35. Sports: _____
    a. 1- School has not participated or won any sports championship at the inter-school level/ No representation in National Level Sports Championship in the last academic year
    b. 3- School has participated in 3-4/won 1-2 inter-school sports championship/been represented in some National Level Sports Championship in the last academic year
    c. 5- School has won at least 3 inter-school sports championships and/ or at least one National Level sports championship in the last academic year

36. Science Fairs & Exhibitions: _____
    a. 1- School has not organized/ participated in even one Science Fair/ Exhibition in the last academic year
    b. 3- School has participated in at least one Science Fair/ Exhibition in the last academic year
    c. 5- School has organized at least one science fair/exhibition or participated in a minimum of two Science Fairs/ exhibitions

37. Arts & Craft Fairs: _____
    a. 1- School has not organized/ participated in even one Science Fair/ Exhibition in the last academic year
    b. 3- School has participated in at least one art & craft exhibition in the last academic year
    c. 5- School has organized at least one art & craft exhibition or participated in a minimum of two art & craft exhibition in the last academic year

38. Music and Dance Competition: _____
    a. 1- School has participated in no music/ dance competitions at the inter-school level in the last academic year
    b. 3- School has participated in two inter-school music/ dance competitions in the last academic year
    c. 5- School has participated in three or more inter school music/dance competitions in the last academic year

Figure 6: *Snippets of the school survey tool*

After data collection, there was a level of analysis in order to identify the obvious gaps across the schools. A look at the data revealed some common patterns across schools:

- **Physical Infrastructure and Facilities**: Weak infrastructure, lack of facilities for extra-curricular or activity based learning and unsanitary conditions are common. 80 per cent of schools reported never having had any maintenance work done on buildings. Resource Rooms are almost completely non-existent in schools. Up to 30 per cent of schools had no internet access. Most schools have no infrastructure provisions for the differently abled. Almost 60 per cent schools lack accessibility and 56 per cent rated location safety as three or below three on the survey tool.

- **Classroom Management and Student Participation:** While overall classroom management is relatively strong, student participation levels are universally low, and attendance and drop-out figures vary widely across schools. Results in some subjects are universally low, such as English, with 86 per cent schools reporting mediocre to low results (scoring under a 3 on our survey), or EVS/Social Studies with 78 per cent and computer with 91 per cent. Almost 90 per cent find it difficult to comprehend English and computer.

- **Leadership and School Management**: Principal and teacher profiles reflect an appropriate level of experience, but their experience within schools is limited by the transfer policy of staff. 55 per cent of teachers had not had a school-specific induction, and up to 30 per cent reported irregular/inadequate teacher training. Students have little to no say in the decision making in their schools, and teachers reported irregular and haphazard capacity building sessions. 90 per cent rated the recognition and accolades process in school to be below average. However, Teacher profile and resources are well rated and are above average in most schools.

- **Pedagogy and Curriculum**: Most schools have no provision for non-traditional teaching, music/dance/art teaching is extremely rare, and curriculum and timelines are set at the state level, with schools having little to no control over the timeline of their curriculum transaction. 89 per cent of all schools had no provision for any sport or physical education, and 57 per cent did not have any materials for teaching reinforcement (Building as a learning environment, boards, display of educational materials etc.).

- **Community Engagement and Participation**: Little to no information dissemination to parents, extremely low attendance at most parent teacher meetings. Parents aren't given inductions and reflect little to no awareness of student performance and learning opportunities. Over 80 per cent of schools, rate average attendance at both PTMs and SMCs of under 40 per cent.

The overall picture painted showed that through the sample, extra curriculars were effectively non-existent, unhygienic conditions were common, and traditional teaching dominating the curriculum transaction methodology. Some metrics raise concern, such as the lack of safety services for students, for e.g. 61per cent of schools reported the lack of any protocol for emergency medical assistance, 85per cent reported no guidance or counselling services. Near two thirds of all schools reported unsanitary conditions, 70 per cent not having appropriate adequate waste disposal mechanisms.

Summary of the scores per theme is shown below:

	Metric Score equal to or less than 3	Metric Score more than 3
Physical Infrastructure and Facilities	76%	24%
Leadership & School Management	54%	46%
Classroom Management & Student Performance	52%	48%
Pedagogy & Curriculum	84%	16%
Community Engagement & Participation	74%	26%

Table 3: *Final metric scores of surveyed school maturity model per theme*

In order to facilitate mapping individual school maturity levels across key themes, Sattva developed a School Maturity Model based on the school survey and research. By looking at school performance on the survey and other insights, it will enable us to understand school maturity levels across the themes and indicators, while also indicating the next level of improvement and the requirements to achieve the targeted improvements.

		Maturity Level			
		Non-Existent	Formative	Acceptable	Optimal
Physical Infrastructure & Facilities	School Surroundings	School accessibility is severely limited, school surroundings are unsafe and unhygenic.	School accesibility is mediocre (a kuccha road), conditions are safe but unhygienic, area is not ideal for a school (noise pollution etc.)	School is accesible by a proper road, surroundings are semi-regularly cleaned, school location is not ideal but disturbances are at a minimum.	School is easily accesibly by a proper road, surroundings are maintaing regularly, school location is free of any external disturbances.
	School Building & Premises	Boundary wall non existent or compromised, no maintenance work on school buildings, unsafe building due to disrepair, no clear signage or infrastructure for the differently abled.	Boundary wall is present, but inadequate (disrepair, not tall enough etc), some signage exists for key facilities, basic infrastructure for the differently abled (ramps for wheelchairs etc.)	Boundary wall is adequate, but in mild disrepair, signage exists for all key facilities and is readable, there is infrastrucutre for the differently abled throughout the school premises.	Boundary wall is tall and in good condition, there is clear signage in english and hindi for all facilities in the school, extensive infrastructure for the differently abled throughout the school premises.
	Physical Facilities & Utilities	Erratic/non-existent electricity and water supplies, no first aid kit or materials, no provision for meals or drinking water, no outside green spaces or play areas.	Electricity, running water, drinking water present by not maintained and erratically available. Some first aid materials avaiable, midday meal provision present (but is erratic or inadequate.), inadequate play space available.	Electricty, running and drinking water available a majority of the time, a rudimentary first aid kit is available and accessible, there is outside green/play space available on school premises.	Electricity, drinking and running water are always available and maintained with backup facilities, multiple well stocked first aid kits accessible to all, well maintained garden and play spaces through the school premises.
	Sanitation	Severely inadequate toilet facilities (ratio greater than 150:1), unhygienic toilets, lack of any hand wash facilities, lack of solid and waste disposal mechanisms.	Toilet facilities present but somewhat inadequate, not separated by gender, cleaned erratically. Semi-regular collection of solid waste, liquid waste disposal available but in disrepair.	Toilet facilities present, regularly cleaned, separated by gender, and in a ratio between 50:1 to 150:1. Solid waste regularly collected, closed drainage for liquid waste.	Toilets present, cleaned and maintained daily, separated by gender, and in a ratio to students of less than or equal to 50:1. Solid and liquid waste disposal services are regular, serviced and well maintained.

Figure 7: *Snippet of the school maturity model*

		Maturity Level			
		Non-Existent	Formative	Acceptable	Optimal
Physical Infrastructure & Facilities	School Surroundings	Sub-metrics for indicator average <2	Sub-metrics for indicator average 2-3	Sub-metrics for indicator average 3-4	Sub-metrics for indicator average 4 and above
	School Building & Premises	Sub-metrics for indicator average <2	Sub-metrics for indicator average 2-3	Sub-metrics for indicator average 3-4	Sub-metrics for indicator average 4 and above
	Physical Facilities & Utilities	Sub-metrics for indicator average <2	Sub-metrics for indicator average 2-3	Sub-metrics for indicator average 3-4	Sub-metrics for indicator average 4 and above
	Sanitation	Sub-metrics for indicator average <2	Sub-metrics for indicator average 2-3	Sub-metrics for indicator average 3-4	Sub-metrics for indicator average 4 and above

Figure 8: *Snippet of the rating system of a school on the maturity model*

Schools were rated on a scale of 1-5 across the different metrics. Metrics under each theme were then averaged to arrive at an overall score in each theme. In the graph below, we see the average school performance in each category with 5 being optimal performance, and 1 being the lowest possible.
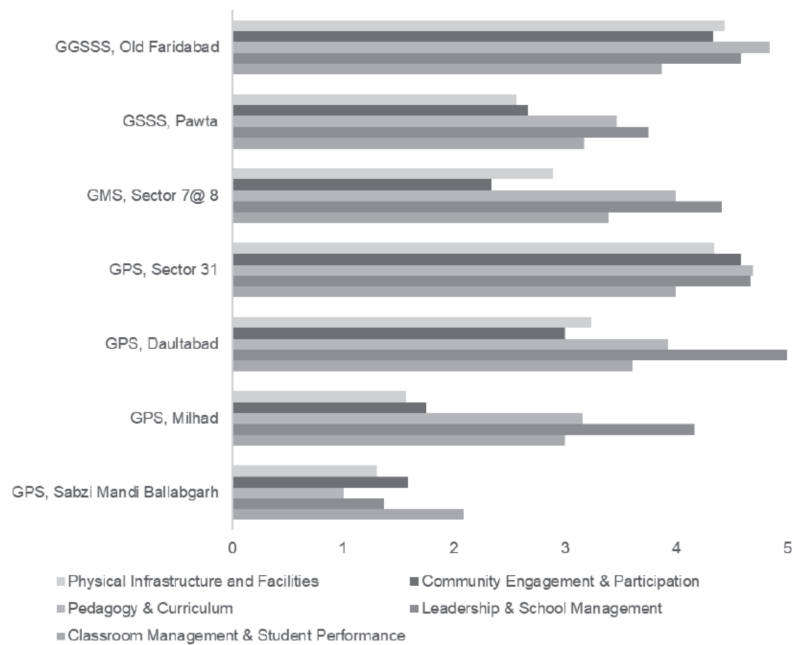
Figure 9: *Sample performance graph of select schools*

Aside from the data generated, interviews and conversations revealed common issues such students not being taught according to their learning levels, complete lack of funding for maintenance of infrastructure, inability to requisition funds, and disconnect with non-governmental organisations working in the district. Many principals also raised concerns about lack of engagement from communities, possibly resulting from the socio-economic background of parents (daily wage laborers did not have time to attend PTMs etc). These concerns were mostly reflected in the data, with their concerns directly playing into low student engagement, abysmal infrastructure, lack of facilities, lack of community engagement, etc. However, Surveyors found that schools with relatively better access to resources and sound physical condition, credited philanthropy and reported increased student engagement due to the improvement in school surroundings and environment.

Key Takeaways from interviews:

- Student Learning Outcomes suffer from the residual impact of the no detention policy and year-round admission cycle, as curriculum transaction doesn't make way for individual learning levels and all students are taught and evaluated according to their age instead of their previous understanding of the subject.

- Government budget provisions for maintenance are effectively non-existent for most schools, with most of them finding that even infrastructure improvements driven by non-governmental sources are soon compromised by lack of maintenance funding.

- Student engagement varies hugely—with some principals reporting that most students did not reflect investment in their classes, something that is equally reflected in low attendance numbers.

- Student-teacher ratio and teaching space for classes is inadequate across the board. Schools are often forced to conduct group classes and conduct them outdoors, there are overworked permanent teachers and reliance on part-time teachers provided by third party organisations.

- Community engagement is a major concern. Most parents are uninvolved in their children's education. Often their occupation as daily wage labourers contribute to this.

- Principals complained about delayed disbursal of funds to students for uniforms and books, lack of teachers, so these problems were found at every level.

- Educators feel a severe disconnect from decision making roles and find the process of raising concerns with the government obscure and difficult.

- Many of the best performing schools have had support and infrastructure needs addressed by non-governmental sources.

III DISCUSSION

With the diverse range of stakeholders in the ecosystem, FEC is an organisation driving coordination and collective action through five fundamental concepts (Collective Impact, 2011):
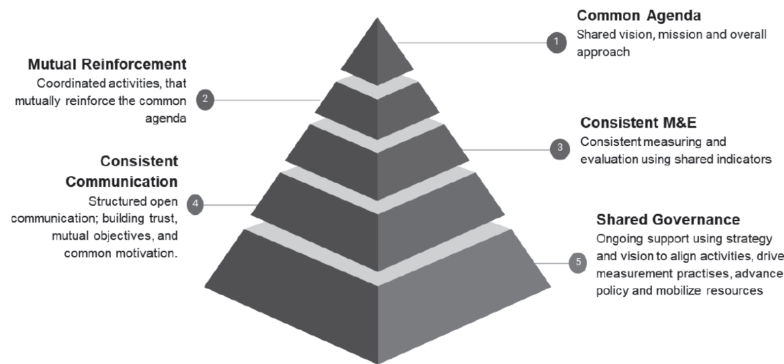
Figure 10: *Faridabad Education Council & Collective Impact Principles*

The FEC shall act as the organisation that uses a data driven approach to understanding the districts education system, drives collective action and facilitates delivery of programs and improvement.

FEC positions itself as:

- A platform to bring together participants (adopters, organisations running interventions, funders etc) under a common agenda

- An organization driving governance, communication and coordination between the District Education Department and partners in Faridabad

- The driver of transparent M&E across programs under the common agenda to track efficiency, effectiveness and generate best practices for the district

In order to be effective as a driver of the collective impact initiative, FEC has already partnered with the district administration of Faridabad under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) of 3 years. Moreover, the council has also received a recommendation from the office of the honourable Chief Minister Sh. Manoharlal Khattar.

Judging from the data and the qualitative insights generated over the course of the engagement, the urgent issues in schools and the ecosystem in Faridabad can be put in three major categories as depicted in figure 11 :

Infrastructure & Maintenance

74% of schools are in **unsanitary conditions.**
45% have had **no maintenance** work done, an **additional 30%** **report inadequate** **maintenance.**
63% reported **inadequate** **classroom space allocation.**
31% schools did not have a functioning drinking water supply onsite.

Teacher-Student Ratios & Teaching Materials

75% of High and Sr. Secondary Schools report inadequate student teacher ratios.
27% of primary and middle **schools report the same** **despite policy mandating** **otherwise.**
48% of schools did not have blackboards in every classroom, **50%** did not have adequate reference materials, **75%** had no activity-based learning materials.

Community Engagement & Participation

Community Engagement is effectively non-existent.
88% report minimal to no attendance at parent teacher meetings, **82%** report inadequate turnout at SMC meetings, **80%** report little to no community engagement in school functioning.

Figure 11: *Most urgent issues diagnosed in Faridabad education ecosystem*

Any strategy for transformation will have to begin by addressing concerns related to infrastructure, teacher availability and teaching material availability. Infrastructure and teaching material scarcity can be addressed directly by external contributions and funding, while the lack of teachers requires work at the advocacy level and alternative solutions such as ed-tech in order to supplement existing teaching. Community engagement and participation is crucial to create a conducive learning environment for children and drive student engagement. However, before addressing that, school leadership and teachers will require capacity building on how to best engage with parents who might not have time for conventional PTMs and report card systems. Community level workshops might also be needed in order to drive initial interest of the community and adoption of engagement with schools.

While most current organisations in the Faridabad education eco-system focus on infrastructure improvement, there is little attention given to the maintenance of it. This is emblematic of the gap between action and sustainability that exists in the ecosystem overall as well. Any holistic transformation will require programs that address all key gaps in a manner and timeline that reinforces previous activities and interventions.

Ways to Address Identified Gaps:

Apart from any action from the FEC and other outside organisations, it will always be important to maintain continued advocacy at the state level to address keys gaps. Government policy will be the most far reaching in terms of impact and they can mobilise a greater scale of resources than any individual organisation. Key policies to address student engagement, capacity building, accessibility and other gaps are listed below.

S. No.	Policies
	Pre-existing Policies to Scale and Invest Further In
1	Setting up Career Counseling and Conflict Management Cells in a district and block level.
2	Increase scope and investment in reading guarantee program for English and Hindi to ensure that all students are covered.
3	Increase accessibility programs, such as bag free classes.
4	Driving student engagement by investing in Joyful Saturday Programs (ensuring any additional supplies needed for extra-curriculars are available), investing Science and Math kits for schools, setting up learning labs for Math and Languages in central locations that can house students from multiple schools. Similarly, work with Niti Aayog to expand and establish more Atal Tinkering Labs and make them accessible to students from nearby schools.
5	Ensure the LEP is rolled out across schools through Faridabad after it's validation, with adequate numbers of specifically trained teachers to ensure no shortfall in quality.

Table 4: *Pre-existing policies for scale-up and further investment*

	Key Recommendations
1	Teacher hiring needs to be accelerated to match the numbers of students in schools.
2	Any programs aimed at increasing accessibility at the primary level should be extended to the senior levels, which experience a massive drop-off in enrollment rates. For e.g. mid-day meals provided for senior students as well.
3	Significantly improving maintenance budgets for schools, with current allocations being inadequate at best.
4	Ensure continued, regular teacher capacity building, such as Madhya Pradesh collaborating with the British Council to have teachers participate in Communication Skills and Continuing Professional Development courses.
5	Teaching at the Right Level programs should be initiated to deal with the gap between expected learning levels and actual learning levels. Karnataka serves as an example for this, partnering with the NGO Pratham to segregate students based on their learning levels and provide specific attention to them as required. Teachers are trained by master trainers to enable them to provide specific guidance to students based on their learning level.
6	Upgraded IT infrastructure and information systems across schools to allow educators to track learning levels of individuals.
7	Invest in IT/ed tech based remedial programs, in both infrastructure and innovative means of content delivery, to supplement traditional teaching methods and overworked teachers.
8	Pilot public awareness campaigns in communities to increase community engagement in schools.
9.	Pilot a district wide program for extra-curriculars, mainly sports, in order to boost student engagement and diversity in exposure.

Table 5: *Solutions for the gaps in the existing policies and programs*

Alongside the policy inputs, there are three key improvements that should be driven from the government level:

- Ensure wide-spread transparency of data and results, alongside clearly identifying failing policies for review and course correction.

- Ensuring that all schools have consistent vision and development plans to override the effects of regular transfers.

- Centralise responsibilities and accountability at the district level to counteract the currently fractured priorities of the multiple different officials and offices leading to parallel, ad-hoc interventions.

In order to achieve lasting, and relevant change, it is important that the FEC co-create a collective action plan for the district with the government and other stakeholders that addresses all the major gaps in the education system identified in the research and survey phases.

This strategy will need to incorporate the five key drivers of change:
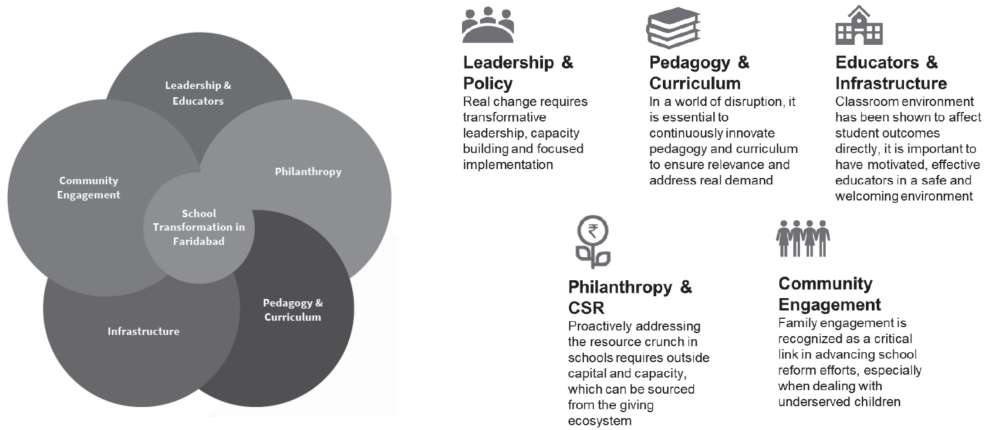
Figure 12: *Drivers of Change for collective impact strategy*

Change needs to incorporate both bottom-up and top-down approaches, with leadership driving structural reform and ground level stakeholders ensuring relevancy and agility in responding to needs of the schools. It is important to leverage all the different institutions and organisations that operate in the eco-system, especially with the resource crunch faced by schools. There needs to be a common vision across all the stakeholders, with coordination of interventions in pursuit of achieving a larger goal. It is also important to ensure that priorities are clearly defined and build on collective action and reinforcement. Additionally, it is vital to start with the fundamental, achievable goals and then move towards more holistic learning. The recommended approach to achieve this would be a three-step strategy covering a period of 3-5-years:
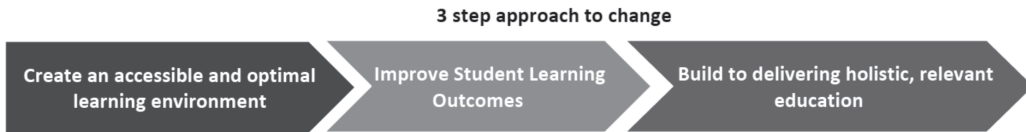
Figure 13: *Approach to achieve a shared vision*

Stage 1: Focusing on Accessibility & Creating an Optimal Learning Environment

The first stage of transformation should focus on ensuring that infrastructure and environment are brought up to scratch. Hertzberg's two factor theory of change (The Motivation to Work, 1959) provides the theoretical basis for this, with Infrastructure being the hygiene factor, absence of which leads to demotivation of students, teachers and other staff.

Three key areas of improvement:

- Ensuring all schools have basic infrastructure, maintenance and cleaning facilities.

- Improving access to libraries, technology, mid-day meals, whether through quality or quantity of supplies.

- Improving parent attendance at Parent Teacher Meetings and at School Management Committee meetings.

Alongside infrastructure and maintenance concerns, it will also be important to lay the groundwork for the next stage by ensuring facilities for additional classes, ed-tech solutions, build teacher capacity for addressing individual learning levels. This is also when individual schools should develop 3-5-year plans, stating clear Key Performance Indicators and individual vision, allowing the overall Theory of Change to be transferred irrespective of changes in leadership or staff.

Responsibilities in Creating an Optimal Learning Environment:

Leadership & Policy
Focus on teacher motivation, recognition and capacity building, creating strategy designed at improving accessibility of education to all, strategized remedial teaching policy

Philanthropy & CSR
Helping school maintenance and improvement, making up the gap between government support and school needs for leaning materials, mid-day meals etc

Pedagogy & Curriculum
Activity Based Learning, incorporating ed-tech into learning to allow for individualized learning speeds and preferences

Educators & Infrastructure
Creating a school that is accessible to students at almost all times, ensuring that educators actively impart knowledge while acting to facilitate individual learning

Community Engagement
Improved PTMs and onboarding to allow them to enable learning environments in the house and encourage active participation, creating two way communication channels between parents and educators

Figure 14: *Key drivers & Optimal Learning Environment*

Stage 2: Moving on to Improving Student Learning Outcomes

After addressing the fundamentals problems of learning environment and infrastructure, the next stage in the strategy would be to move towards directly addressing Student Learning Outcomes.

Three key areas of improvement:

- Contextualise the design of curriculum and testing to the district specificities and its problems, which will require collaboration between the SCERT and district education officials.

- Expand teaching at the Right Level programs (from the Department of Education), along with capacity building for teachers (to be driven by DIET) in order to ensure

that students are taught and evaluated according to their actual learning levels, and not their age.

- Ensure adequate numbers of teachers at the secondary levels (to be driven by the DoE).

Schools will need to precede these activities with an assessment of student learning and mapping students to appropriate learning levels. Additionally, ed-tech solutions can be implemented here in order to reduce the load on teachers and schools with a lack of facilities, allowing students to learn outside of the traditional classroom environment. Infrastructure can be leveraged to create constant learning reinforcement for students, be it through bulletin boards, art displays, information stations, BaLA, etc.

Responsibilities in Improving Student Learning Outcomes:

Leadership & Policy
Focus on assessing learning levels appropriately, direct policy towards student focused learning and bringing in adequate staff with relevant capacity building

Philanthropy & CSR
Bringing solutions to facilitate learning such as remedial class programs and bridging courses, along with making up gap between government support and need in active teaching

Pedagogy & Curriculum
Teaching At the Right Level (TARL) & addressing gaps in learning caused by lack of conceptual understanding

Educators & Infrastructure
Improvement in Student Teacher ratios, Classroom Student ratios important to ensure that all students are given appropriate levels of attention.

Community Engagement
Driving parent engagement with their children's education, building parent understanding of child's learning levels and needs, creating understandable report cards

Define & Refine Outcome Metrics

Design Standards & Benchmark

Cycle of Design for Improving Student Learning Outcomes

Review and Course-Corrections

Implement Standards & Assess

Identify Gaps & Causation

Analyze Outcomes
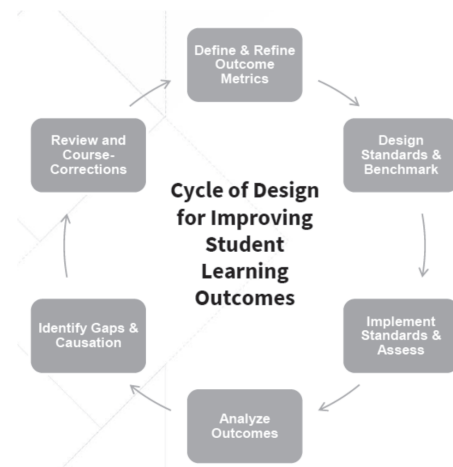
Figure 15: *Key drivers & Student Learning Outcomes*

Stage 3: Building toward Holistic Education: Learning, Exposure and Relevance

Having ensured that students have an optimal learning environment, and a responsive and adaptive structure to teach and evaluate them, the final stage of transformation will be to move student education to become holistic and include physical education, extra-curriculars, relevant knowledge (vocational training, field visits, exposure to internship opportunities etc.)

Additionally, the various facilities introduced over the last two stages, such as IT services, ed-tech, better infrastructure for resource rooms, etc., can be utilised to create blended teaching methodology that incorporates the traditional classroom setting with modernised teaching methodology that uses innovative methods to provide students with the wide gamut of learning opportunities that is available to a private school student.

Three key areas of improvement:

- Give students exposure to diversity outside of traditional learning, including activity-based learning, field visits, opportunities to learn and participate in varied competitions and activities.

- Senior students should be exposed to career and college guidance, vocational training and opportunities to and understand their options.

- Incorporate extra-curricular activities and sports in the main curriculum using blended learning, so that all students receive the benefits of the facilities available.

Responsibilities in Building Holistic Learning:

Leadership & Policy
Build resources & capacity in schools for vocational training, community centered curriculum design, ensure availability of comprehensive learning opportunities across streams

Philanthropy & CSR
Resources for extra-curricular activities, opportunities for students to experience a variety of learning situations, from field visits to internships

Pedagogy & Curriculum
Blended Learning, including integration of modern technology and traditional teacher based methods in order to provide children with holistic education

Educators & Infrastructure
Ensure availability of resource rooms, play spaces etc, educators to communicate internally and with students regularly to maintain a holistic picture of their students

Community Engagement
Partnerships with local institutions, universities, libraries, businesses to leverage all possible learning opportunities for students

Relevant & Hands-on Learning

Soft Skills & Social Development

Diversity in Exposure

Figure 16: *Key drivers & Building Holistic Learning*

Faridabad Education Council – Long Term Role & Positioning:

In order to achieve overall transformation of the education system, the Council will need to start by building up organisational capabilities, establish a common agenda with the government and building relationships with key partners from private corporations to non-profit organizations. The long-term vision for the Council will be three-fold as depicted in figure 17 and the organisational structure that will be required for the council to achieve the goal of becoming a true collection impact platform is detailed below in figure 18.

	Facilitating Buy-In and Delivery
1	Translating government-driven plans to district level actors and helping contextualize programs to improve schools to the Faridabad ecosystem
2	Support in monitoring and evaluation and information management systems for partners to track and assess progress according to common KPIs.
3	Facilitating workshops with partners and school officials for capacity building and alignment to the common agenda.
	Creating a Knowledge Bank and Generating Awareness
1	Creating a knowledge bank to help anyone entering the education landscape identify priority issues, gaps to be addressed, and entry points to maximize impact
2	Generate evidence and analysis on ground realities and best practices (including the creation of case studies of schools or successful programs)
3	Collating/generating data on schools, students, existing programs, resources, actors, opportunities and challenges.
4	Using the above documentation to produce reports to create awareness across diverse stakeholders and platforms to ease fundraising and attract more actors.

Figure 17: *FEC Long Term Goals & Approach*
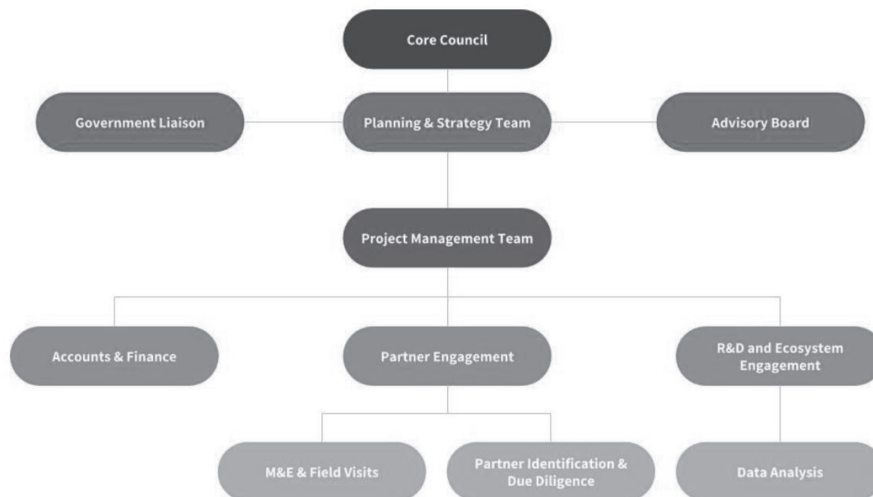
Figure 18: *Recommended Backbone Structure for Faridabad Education Council*

Key details about the roles and responsibility within the backbone structure:

• Government Liaison: Responsible for maintaining constant communication with district and state level administration and ensuring buy-in and ownership from the government stakeholders.

• Advisory Board: This should include stakeholders from the district administration, NGOs, academic experts in education, business leaders, etc.

• Planning & Strategy team: This team will work with the government liaison and other stakeholders to set a common agenda based on inputs from the core council, advisory board, and field teams.

• Project Management: Not an implementation team, this unit will be responsible for the three key functions of the FEC platform:

- Identifying, on-boarding, and setting up governance and M&E with partners and programs according to the needs of the overall agenda.

- Generating research and insights based on data collected during various interventions, developing knowledge, and driving ecosystem engagement to attract funders and partners to the FEC.

- Managing accounts, funds and overall finances for the council.

Short-Term Strategy of the Council:
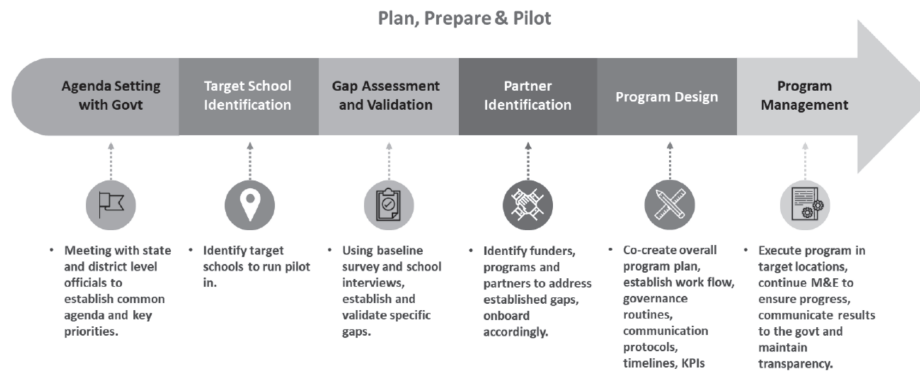
Figure 19: *Short-term strategy for the council*

In the short-term, the council needs to validate any overall strategy by piloting agenda setting, partner identification and overall program management. This will achieve four major goals:

1. Help develop an understanding of key challenges in execution before scaling activities to schools across the district.

2. Generate evidence of school transformation to drive buy-in from funders, partners and any other stakeholders in the ecosystem to work collectively towards a common agenda.

3. Help validate management strategies, government routines and KPIs that are most useful while working at scale.

4. Identify best practices for the district.

Sattva has created a logical framework approach outlining the key action items, inputs required, activities, metrics for evaluation, outputs and short, medium and long-term outcomes for this pilot. This will help the Council keep track of the long-term vision while working on short-term plans.

Acknowledgement

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Implementation of POSCO Act in Haryana

Kritika Choudhary

ABSTRACT

The conviction rate in POCSO cases across the state of Haryana is abysmally low. Despite the sound legal provisions, pendency of cases and implementation failures have been impediments to delivery justice to the victims. This research documents the current procedure of POCSO Act implementation in all the 22 districts by conducting meetings with representatives of the Women and Child Development, police and prosecution department. These meetings were done through the pilot titled Neev[1] *which focused on documentation of the procedure followed across the three departments in POCSO Act implementation and how this can be improved upon. The findings indicate that inter-departmental coordination plays a pivotal role in smooth implementation of the POCSO Act. Initiation of standard documentation, sensitization of officers and inter-departmental meetings have contributed to the increase in the conviction rate from 12 per cent (June 2017) to 35 per cent (March 2018). This has turned out to be a huge milestone for the Government of Haryana, especially under the umbrella of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Campaign (B3P).*

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[1] It means foundation.

I INTRODUCTION

Children make up one of the most vulnerable groups in India and the percentage of crimes against them is rising every year. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), crime against children has increased fourfold from 2014 to 2016. The number went up from 89,423 in 2014 to 1, 05,785 in 2016. As many as 290 children are victims of a crime in India every day (Nigam, 2017). The figures are equally saddening, if not worse for the state of Haryana. The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has received more than 200 complaints pertaining to child rights violations in Haryana from 2013 to 2015. (Mahajan, 2015) (Nigam, 2017)

The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) Act was formulated in 2012 to address the issue of child sexual abuse and bring justice to the victims. The number of crimes recorded under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) has shot up from 8,904 to 35,980, which is a fourfold jump. A report by NCPCR states that crime against children has increased by a whopping 300 per cent in a period of six years since 2009. A 2007 study by the Ministry of Women and Child Development revealed that 53 per cent of the children surveyed had been victims of some form of sexual abuse. These statistics reveal that a child is sexually abused every 15 minutes in the sub-continent (BBC News, 2017). Such astounding figures reveal the adverse conditions in which the children are living in India (BBC News, 2017) (Times Now, 2017).

The POCSO Act 2012 aims to protect children from offences of assault, sexual harassment and pornography and provide for the establishment of special courts for the trial of such offences and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. Being considered a heinous offence, such acts of crime against children are cognizable and non- bailable (POCSO Act, 2012). However, the reality is awfully different and depressing in nature. Reports suggest that the conviction rate in the national capital for the year 2016 was less than 20 per cent (Press Trust of India, 2016). One can cite numerous reasons for such a high rate of acquittal with victims turning hostile being the most common one. The way the victim is treated, the manner in which the statement of the victim is recorded and his/her counselling is done, and the manner in which the case is presented in the court, in all of this the role of the police and the District Child Protection Officers (DCPO) is crucial to ensure the smooth and unobtrusive delivery of justice (Angad, 2018).

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[2] An officer in charge of the police station with rank above a Sub-Inspector (SI) and below a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP).

The performance of the state of Haryana has been largely unsatisfactory when it comes to the judicial outcomes in POCSO cases. Of the 328 cases registered in the first four months of 2017, only two of the accused were convicted. The justification often presented by the authorities is that the victims turn hostile and the case is completely dissolved with a change in the victim's statement. In the majority of the POCSO cases, the accused is known to the victim and due to the long-winded investigations, the victims are pressurized by the accused to not pursue the case. A classic and cruel example of the power of financial bullying is observed often (Verma, 2017).

Furthermore, many families prefer taking the settlement money offered by the accused rather than facing societal criticism. The social stigma attached to such incidents often opens doors to external settlements much more conveniently for the accused. Another major loophole in the delivery of justice observed during field study, which paves way for these acquittals, is the lack of coordination across concerned institutional departments. The DCPOs falls under the Department of Women and Child Development (WCD), the investigation is done by the police and the District Attorney (DA) along with the Public Prosecutor (PP) looks into the legalities of the cases. The POCSO Act was envisaged in a manner where the coordinated efforts by these departments would guarantee easy and smooth delivery of justice to the victim.

Thus, the probability of conviction in these cases is heavily dependent on the flow of information between these departments and the coordination mechanisms between them. The coordination between the departments thus becomes paramount. The result of poor level of coordination is reflected in the data collated by the state. As of July 2017, the conviction rate in POCSO cases in Haryana stood at a mere 12 per cent whereas appeal rate was only 2 per cent. It is important to note that even if the efforts by the departments do not fetch the desired result, an appeal against the judgement can be filed in a higher court. However, it is the duty of the DCPO to take the opinion of the DA and eventually file an appeal. The hostile victim or the disapproval of the parents to fight the case does not matter in such circumstances. If the case is found fit for appeal, the judgement can be challenged.

Therefore, in order to achieve a higher rate of conviction, it is extremely important to ensure that the channels of communication between the various departments remain smooth. If the police inspectors do not communicate with the DCPO, they will not be able to counsel the victim. If the DCPO does not stay in touch with the DA, then they do not receive advice on how to make the case legally strong. All those involved must work in unison for each case to be adequately addressed.

In addition to this, what further weakens the smooth coordination between the departments is the poor administrative training given to the officers in order to fulfill the mandate of the act. This in turn leads to lack of information dissemination to the public and low public awareness. The POCSO Act has covered this aspect well with provisions on awareness and media coverage. Chapter IX, Section 43 of the POCSO Act clearly specifies-

Public awareness about Act: The Central Government and every State Government,

shall take all measures to ensure that

(a)   the provisions of this Act are given wide publicity through media including the television, radio and the print media at regular intervals to make the general public, children as well as their parents and guardians aware of the provisions of this Act;

(b)   the officers of the Central Government and the State Governments and other concerned personnel (including the police officers) are imparted periodic training on the matters relating to the implementation of the provisions of the Act.

It is precisely the aforementioned two sub-sections which are being discussed through this research. The information gap within and across the departments and the lack of substantial training to the concerned departments are the major issues in implementation of the POCSO Act.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is primarily a qualitative research aimed at improving the understanding of the POCSO Act, particularly focusing on proper documentation of the procedures from registration of the case, investigation, trial and judgement based on insights from the field visits. The research design is exploratory in nature where I as a researcher attempt to understand the current methods of operation with regard to the work done on POCSO implementation across the state of Haryana.

The sample was purposive and selective where I chose the required number of samples in accordance with the objectives of the research. The area of study was the entire state of Haryana in order to arrive at a better and more holistic understanding of the ground realities. The first step was to test a pilot in the district of Panchkula with the three departments, i.e., WCD, police and prosecution. Based on the feedback from this pilot, it was then scaled up to all the districts of Haryana. Meetings were held in all 22 districts with representatives from the three departments. In addition to this, unstructured interviews were held with the DCPOs, DAs and the investigating officers from police to gauge their perspective about the on-ground challenges. The objective was to absorb ground realities with specific reference to work done by officers on the field, an analysis of their perception of the law, and the hardships faced by them. This was done with the aim of identifying ways to improve the implementation of the law on ground.

With this purpose in mind, a pilot called *Neev* was initiated in Panchkula. As part of this pilot, focus group discussions were used to enable enhanced interaction between the concerned departments. Based on the POCSO reports submitted by the DCPOs at the state level, the pilot was eventually introduced in all districts. The objective was to eventually cover the entire state, providing a platform to the officers to have a dialogue and initiate a channel of communication for smooth implementation of the POCSO Act.

This study on the implementation of the POCSO Act suffers from a few limitations owing to the fixed time frame within which the study had to be completed and limited availability of resources. On certain occasions, there was also lack of expertise to expand the scope of this research. For example, many on-field issues might not be addressed through the project as the officers understand them better than the researcher given their years of familiarity with the subject. Moreover, the extent of support and coordination from the departments and institutions involved also proved to be a key limitation.

Laced around these concerns this research deals with a central question:

How do the different government departments responsible for the implementation of the POSCO Act perceive impediments in their effective functioning and their respective roles in Haryana?

The three key research objectives are:

1.   Comprehend the issues being faced by the government departments in implementation of POCSO Act.

2.   Improve inter-departmental coordination across various departments for better implementation of POCSO Act.

3.   Document the current procedure followed by the three departments in POCSO implementation and explore how it can be improved upon.

II   OBSERVATIONS FROM POCSO WORKSHOPS IN THE DISTRICTS

As the pilot was launched in Panchkula, a few meetings were conducted with the District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) and her team to comprehend the various implementation issues they faced in greater depth. With the resource material prepared and complete onboarding of the department, the first workshop was conducted in Panchkula. It was an attempt to witness the interaction between the

Figure 1. *Meeting SHOs, Panchkula*

three departments namely police, prosecution and Women and Child Development (WCD). The cases registered under POCSO Act were discussed and phone numbers were exchanged between the officers. The workshop then steered towards the Act, a discussion on the roles and responsibilities of each department and their awareness of it. During the first workshop the DCPO without much apprehension blamed the Station House Officers[2] (SHO) for not being supportive and cited examples to substantiate it. For instance, she narrated how once she had to wait for four hours in the middle of the night for one of the inspectors to register a case due to sheer negligence. Such incidents illustrate how lack of coordination between the departments can affect the manner in which each case is handled. Moreover, only if the concerned officers are aware of their responsibilities under the POCSO Act can such delays be avoided. The workshop ended with a greater sense of responsibility and promise of improved cooperation in the near future.

Post the first workshop, a meeting was held with the DCPOs of the neighbouring districts for feedback and more clarity on the issues being faced by the WCD department. Hence, DCPOs of Yamunanagar, Karnal and Kurukshetra were contacted along with the Legal cum Probation Officers (LPOs). The latter is responsible for maintaining the files and managing the legal aspect of POCSO cases and they act as a point of contact with

Figure 2. *Meeting with DCPOs, Panchkula*

courts and DA office. The performas and file covers prepared by the B3P Cell Coordinator for standard documentation were shared with the respective department officials in these three districts. The idea of the pilot *Neev* was warmly welcomed by the DCPOs and they were eagerly looking forward to individual district visits. The meetings also saw an exchange of good practices between the officers and became a knowledge sharing session as well.

Title of case	Date of offence	FIR no. & date	Under Sections	Police station	Name/ contact no of Investigating Officer	Detail of victim (age/DOB, gender)	Date/time when informed CWC/ DCPO (by police)	Date of statement under 164 a	Date of 1st Counselling Session

Date of challan filed in Court	Reason for cancellation of FIR (if challan not filed)	Court detail	Date of hearing	Current status of case	Final Status of Case discharged/ acquittal/ conviction with date of order	Conviction details	Judgment obtained from court (Date of receipt)	Appeal filed in acquittal case (if not filed reasons thereof)	Any other issue/ remarks

Figure 3. Standard Performa

TITLE OF CASE...

FILE NUMBER...

COURT OF: ....

FIR NO . :................................   DATED:...........................

UNDER SECTIONS:...

POLICE STATION: ....

INVESTIGATING OFFICER:...

CONTACT NO..

CHALLAN FILED ON:..

DATE OF HEARING   STATUS

....
                                                    ....
....
                                                    ....
....
                                                    ....
....
                                                    ....
....
                                                    ....

Figure 4. *Standard File Cover*

Before proceeding further, a pattern had to be determined for the flow of these meetings.

It was decided that first there would be an interaction with the WCD department where they would be asked to bring the existing case files and the new format of documentation would be shared with them. The reports submitted by the 22 districts did not adhere to one format which made monitoring and analysis extremely cumbersome. Introducing a standard format would enable uniformity across the state. Second, a conducive setting would be crucial to discuss issues related to police or prosecution where everyone is receptive to the feedback shared. A concern was raised by the DCPOs during the first meeting in Panchkula that given the hierarchical structure in the government, staff officers might not be comfortable sharing such issues in the presence of their superiors. Once this internal meeting was over, a separate workshop with the three departments namely WCD, police and prosecution would take place.

Meanwhile, project *Neev* was also discussed with Dr. G.L. Singal, the State B3P Cell Coordinator. He offered to help and expressed how this subject had not been addressed properly and that the need of the hour was to form a uniform strategy to tackle POCSO related cases. In order to make the workshops more effective and interactive, power point presentations were shared with the DCPOs prior to the meeting. The first presentation focused on the documentation procedure to be followed by DCPOs while the second one discussed the POCSO Act at length and the roles to be played by all concerned departments.

The next workshop was held in Yamunanagar and the response from the officers was unforeseen. The DCPO had maintained files of each and every case while the Legal cum Probation Officer (LPO) was working earnestly to ensure the accused are convicted through continuous follow up in the court and guiding the DCPO on the legal front. Since they were a part of the joint meeting held in Panchkula to test the pilot, work on documentation had already been completed and they were geared to discuss the various issues faced by them while handling POCSO cases with the police and prosecution. Unlike the workshops held in Panchkula, the dialogue between the three departments was extremely cordial and the only issue raised by the DCPO was ensuring responsiveness of the police. However, the DCPO pointed out that the police had been highly supportive and they help them out despite the erratic schedule of the police.

The next district for the workshop was Kurukshetra where Dr. Singal had been facing documentation issues in the monthly meeting held with all districts. The DCPO was clearly unaware of the format of reports desired by the B3P Cell. She had been submitting wrong reports because she did not pay attention to the timelines mentioned in the report template. In addition to this, she was facing difficulty while coordinating with the police on the cases and did not receive the needed support. On the other hand, the DA was doing a great job and was well equipped with all the POCSO cases in the district and the various stages they were at such as investigation, evidence, etc. The major disappointment in the meeting was the almost negligent representation of the police as only one constable attended the meeting.

The experience in Karnal was very different. The representatives of these departments

were exceedingly dedicated and had been producing great results with one of the highest conviction rates in the state. The only issue raised was the lack of responsiveness of the police and their initial reluctance to provide documents to the DCPO. The reason cited by the police inspectors was broken lines of communication and staff crunch which they believe became impediments in their work. The police inspectors present assured that the DCPO would no longer face such a problem in the future.

The districts covered after Karnal were Bhiwani and Rohtak. The DCPO in Bhiwani was maintaining case files well and the internal meeting was used to emphasise their role and the importance of team work. The workshop was perhaps the most interactive so far with questions being asked by all the attendees, officers putting forth their problems and at the same time offering plausible solutions. The workshop also saw representation from the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) and they engaged in the discussion as well. Post the meeting, the team also met the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and the Superintendent of Police (SP). It was an engaging discussion with questions being raised by the DC on how to improve the conviction rate in POCSO cases in the district and make it more sustainable.

The situation in Rohtak was quite grim with the DCPO having taken no charge of the situation with regard to implementation of POCSO Act and ensuring that such cases are not pending in the court. During the internal meeting in Rohtak, Dr. Singal and I realized how capacity building of the DCPOs could also be an area of concern to ensure proper implementation of POCSO Act. The documentation procedure was explained in detail, and during the workshop it was disclosed how the data regarding all the POCSO cases (conviction, acquittal, pendency, etc.) with the DCPO did not match with the data the DA had. In the absence of a check by the district administration, the reports being sent to the state every month were not authentic. Another officer who appeared to be very helpful in Rohtak was the District Programme Officer, Integrated Child Development Services (DPO ICDS). She proved to be more efficient in communicating the issues to the DCPO given the fact they are from the same department. Moreover, there are certain stakeholders at various levels who can contribute to improved implementation of the POCSO Act. The highlight of the meeting was the commitment of the police inspectors. Unlike the previously covered districts, the police had been performing exceptionally well and even going that extra mile to fulfil their responsibilities. They were well informed and aware of the number of POCSO cases, they were in touch with the DCPO and DA team and even shared concerns about doctors not attending to victims during odd hours of the night. Overall, the departments in Rohtak had not been in touch with each other and were facing coordination issues which resulted in poor conviction rate in POCSO cases.

With more than thirty participants**,** Sirsa saw the maximum attendance in any workshop so far. The internal meeting had DPO ICDS, DCPO, LPO, outreach worker, and social worker. DPO ICDS took charge saying that the files for each case would be completed in a month. The presence of doctors and gynaecologists in the meeting was not the case in any other district. Chief Medical Officer (CMO) even shared his field experience and requested the police for better cooperation. The Additional Superintendent of Police

(ASP) also joined the meeting and spoke to his team of inspectors and gave a motivating speech on how their role is crucial to ensure speedy trial and justice to the victim. It is essential to have such senior officers attend the workshops. It serves as an example for the team and helps convey the severity of the issue.

The workshop in Fatehabad had an inattentive audience, particularly the police, and Dr. Singal and I both struggled to turn it into an interactive session. In addition to the police, the DCPO and his team and the DA attended the meeting. On a positive note, the DCPO put forth a few questions and also sought more support from the police which was taken well by the inspectors. The workshop turned out to be an opportunity for the police to interact with the DCPO and comprehend how their role is critical to ensure that the POCSO cases do not result in acquittal.

Unlike other districts, the workshop in Hisar saw participation from various officers such as the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) and City Town Magistrate (CTM). A separate meeting was held with the CTM since she was inclined to work on POCSO cases and took special interest in ensuring that the victims are not harassed by the existing institutional system. A key take-away from the experience in Hisar was that an in-depth involvement by district officers contributes to better implementation of the POCSO Act and speedy trial of cases. However, the workshop did not have a great turn out with only three inspectors attending it.

The aforementioned nine districts were covered internally and I communicated the purpose and structure of the workshops to the respective DCPOs and Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMGGAs) in the various districts. Post the meetings, official letters were sent out to the remaining districts with a schedule attached. In addition to this, directions were given to all DCs and SPs to attend the meeting as well. This would prove critical to ensure higher participation and increase the credibility of the POCSO pilot with the senior most officials taking keen interest in the workshops.

The remaining workshops were completely covered by Dr. Singal as the handover to department representatives is a critical part of the pilots initiated by CMGGAs. In order to ensure sustainability, it is necessary to gradually transfer the reins to individuals in the administration as many projects are unsuccessful due to lack of ownership by the administration. My responsibility as a researcher was to handle coordination between the state and district administration and ensure that the structure of the meetings is conveyed to the CMGGAs located in the various districts.

Ambala was not facing a lot of issues on the field and the DCPO was well equipped with her responsibilities. Files were being maintained and the three departments did not find it difficult to communicate with each other. Through one of the questions raised, it was revealed that few POCSO cases were not registered under the act citing requirement of consent of the minor.

The police inspectors believed that the act was not applicable in such cases, however consent is irrelevant in the case of a minor. Such doubts were clarified during the

meeting and Dr. Singal reinstated that in POCSO cases consent does not factor in.

In Jind, the DCPO was not present during the meeting and interaction was limited in comparison to other districts. It was evident that due to a lack of communication, the concerned officials were not present in the meeting and pursued other commitments. The performas and file cover formats were shared with the WCD team. However, the individual case files were at a nascent stage and there was no clarity on the number of cases under POCSO Act as well. The major concern raised was with regard to the CWC as the required support was not being provided by them to the DCPO team.

The workshop in Kaithal saw few issues of coordination between the departments and they ensured to work together. A few concerns were raised by the SP which could not be addressed by Dr. Singal during the meeting such as who is the point of contact for the inspectors when the doctors do not cooperate during the medical examination of the victim. A general feedback on the workshop was to have a more interactive one instead of simply using power point presentations for the audience. Discussion of more case studies which would initiate in-depth discussions on the kind of issues faced by officials in the field should be a preferred medium.

In Mahendragarh, discussion on case files did not happen and the standard formats were simply shared with the team. There were certain concerns raised by the police inspectors during the meeting such as timely medical tests of the victim and taking the child to CWC (The law states that children have to be produced in front of the CWC within 24 hours by the police). The three departments seemed to be interacting quite well and the coordination between them was satisfactory.

In Rewari, all the departments were quite vocal about the problems being faced by them and used the workshop as an opportunity to clarify their doubts. For instance, it is often assumed that POCSO cases are only related to girls and hence the female inspectors in the mahila thana[3] are responsible for such cases. However, the fact is that the act is gender neutral. The district had concerns in the past regarding case files such as certain cases were not recorded in the reports shared for the monthly meetings. Such discrepancies could be taken up during the workshop and it was more convenient for all the stakeholders involved to sit together and arrive at a plausible solution.

Dr. Singal was quite satisfied with the maintenance of case files in Mewat. The concerned officials were in touch with their colleagues from other districts. This showed the proactive nature of the officials since they did not wait till the workshop to receive the standard performa for documentation. The workshop saw smooth and easy interaction between the departments and the DA was appreciated for his efforts to ensure POCSO cases are legally sound and stand strong in the court.

The workshop in Palwal began with uneasiness as officers were a little hesitant to interact with each other. It clearly indicated that there had been a lack of interaction between the three departments in the past. Nonetheless, they eventually began to

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[3] Dedicated police station for women where all the police personnel are female as well.

forth questions such as in case of medical emergencies should the child be taken to the hospital first or the statement of the victim needs to be recorded without fail in the first instance. A low coordination level between the three departments was observed and documentation needed work as well since the individual case files did not have the required paperwork such as statement of the victim, judgement, etc.

The files maintained in Faridabad were in a good state; however, the DCPO had not been receiving information regarding POCSO cases from DA office. In addition to the low level of coordination, victims were often called to the police station as opposed to the mandate of the Act that the police should visit the victims at their residence or a place they are comfortable. The victim must not be traumatised by being brought into the police station. The Additional Commissioner of Police (ACP) directed inspectors to ensure that such practices are no longer continued in their respective police stations. Lastly, the CWC was also told to be more cooperative with other departments otherwise the case becomes weak in the court thus increasing the chances of acquittal. Since the children are produced in front of the CWC, they play a vital role in steering the case in the right direction. The POCSO Act clearly states that the decision must be made in best interest of the child. For instance, if the child needs care and protection, they are sent to child care institutions or children's homes.

The DCPO in Gurugram was not fully aware of her rights and responsibilities as the nodal officer for POCSO (they are in charge of each case under the POCSO Act and liaison with other departments to get the required information.). Dr. Singal explained her role during the internal meeting and asked her to take charge without hesitation. It was surprising to know that there is only one special court in the entire district whereas the number of POCSO cases is one of the highest in the state (due to the geographical proximity of the district to the national capital and the large number of cases reported). It was decided that the existing eight session and additional session courts will be given the status of special courts to ensure cases are not stuck in courts and pendency can be reduced. The DCPO also mentioned how getting information from the police inspectors and CWC has been a huge concern. This again reiterates how clear and strong channels of communication between the departments can be an area of concern for the proper implementation of POCSO Act. A subsequent meeting regarding poor coordination was held post the workshop by the district officers. This reflects that ownership was taken by the respective departments and administration and this was not the case in all districts.

The meeting in Charkhi Dadri had the involvement of all three departments and the DCPO clarified doubts regarding a few cases with the police inspectors and Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP). They were unsure of who to reach out to when such cases are registered in the police stations; a clear indication of lack of clarity on job roles. To ensure the timely attention of the cases, it was decided during the workshop that monthly meetings will be scheduled with the departments on POCSO Act. Another point of discussion was the importance of counselling as it is a crucial factor in shaping the final judgement. Often due to the lack of counselling, the victims turn hostile in court and change their statement due to the trauma they faced. Given the difficult

circumstances, it is absolutely necessary to make the victims feel protected otherwise they are unable to trust the officers and stand by their statements in court. This was a unique insight which was not brought out in the previous workshops; not all districts are at the same level when it comes to implementation of the POCSO Act. Lastly, the associate in the district also stressed that the DCPO is the nodal officer for POCSO and she required support from both the police and prosecution to avoid acquittal in any POCSO related cases. It is necessary for the other two departments to realise that the DCPO is responsible for all POCSO cases and will be held accountable for any shortcomings. This request by the associate also denotes how fellow colleagues also had varying degree of interest in the issue and this eventually affected the sincerity with which the meetings are held.

In Jhajjar discussion over legal issues such as how First Information Reports (FIRs) are cancelled in a few cases was prioritised. The police inspectors were immediately informed that it shouldn't be done. The police have no discretion to take a call on whether FIRs can be quashed or not. Legal sensitisation is extremely important for the departments and it helps to make the case stronger. The DCPO must be updated about all POCSO cases and coordinate with other departments to acquire photocopies of important documents such as FIR, judgement, etc. More importantly, the district administration has decided to follow up on the workshop and have periodic meetings to increase the accountability of officers about POCSO implementation.

Panipat workshop was highly productive and participative in nature. Officers asked questions about how they could change their way of working in the field to ensure that POCSO cases result in conviction and are disposed off within one year (as stated in the POCSO Act). There were no concerns with regard to documentation and maintenance of case files which shows that certain districts and departments have been cognizant of the importance of paperwork in POCSO cases. However, there were some issues between the police inspectors and CWC members and they were advised to resolve the issue at the earliest. For instance, the police are expected to refer all cases to the CWC within 24 hours after they have been reported. This link is very crucial because the child is counselled accordingly. This was a critical point of discussion in the workshop with officials utilising the space to clarify all doubts and state their role vis-a-viz the Act.

The workshops ended with Sonipat, which has been one of the best performing districts in the state. The officers there had been maintaining case files in the new format. Sonipat has the highest conviction rate in the entire state and has a dedicated team of officers across all departments who handle each case. However, this level of commitment is also a direct outcome of the interest shown by the district administration and officers such as the district collector who was very particular about the performance of the district.

III   DISCUSSION

When the pilot *Neev* was launched in Panchkula, the conviction rate of the entire state in POCSO cases was only 12 per cent in June 2017 while the appeal in acquittal cases was a mere 2 per cent. By the month of March 2018, the figures had improved drastically with conviction rate at an all-time high of 31.5 per cent and appeal rate at 25 per cent. The tables below denote the statistics of the two months, i.e., June 2017 and March 2018 with details of individual district's performance.

SN	Districts	FIRs (April 17 – June 17	PC filed (April 17 –June 17)	Cases under trial	Conviction s	Acqui ttals	Appe al filed	Cases Referred to CWC
1	Faridabad	35	35	114	1	12	nil	35
2	Gurgaon	28	7		Report still awaited			7
3	Rohtak	24	4	4	nil	nil	nil	16
4	Panipat	25	21	74	2	4	nil	25
5	Y.Nagar	18	18	28	nil	nil	nil	17
6	Karnal	19	15	69	7	12	4	19
7	Sonipat	20	20	66	2	1	nil	8
8	Kaithal	16	7/3	32	1/0	4/0	No report	No report
9	Jind	18	16	61	3	2	nil	18
10	Palwal	10	1	20	nil	nil	nil	10
11	Kurukshetra	10	6	57	2	3	nil	10
12	Hisar	13	4	46	nil	1	nil	13

Table 1.1 *Implementation of POCSO Act (01.04.2017 to 30.06.2017)*

SN	Districts	FIR regd. (April 17- June 17)	PC filed (April 17-June 17)	Cases under trial	Convic tions	Acqui ttals	Appe al filed	Cases Referred to CWC
13	Mewat	18	10	41	1	7/4	nil	18
14	Bhiwani	7	4	70	nil	1	nil	7
15	Ambala	10	2	2	nil	nil	nil	10
16	Sirsa	10	10	50	4	32	9	nil
17	Jhajjar	5	7	63	nil	3	1	5
18	Fatehabad	9	9	46	8	53/57	1	10
19	Narnaul	7	1	2	nil	nil	nil	7
20	Panchkula	7	1	18	nil	2	nil	7
21	Rewari	7	2	2	nil	nil	nil	5
22	Ch. Dadri	0	2	15	0	0	0	0
	Total	316	202	880	31	137	15	247

Table 1.2 *Implementation of POCSO Act (01.04.2017 to 30.06.2017)*

S.N	Districts	FIRs (April –Mar 18)	Cases Referred to CWC	Cases referred to CWC(%)	PC filed (April - March 18)	Cases under trial	Convi ctions (A)	Acqui ttals (B)	% Convi ction (A/A+B)	Appeal filed (C)	Appeal Filed in acquittals (%) (C/B)
1	Faridaba	190	190	100%	190	179	16	39	29%	28	72%
2	Gurgaon	140	140	100%	85	189	18	29	38%	15	52%
3	Panipat	101	82	82%	115	132	14	26	35%	3	12%
4	Rohtak	93	93	100%	42	52	36	34	51%	9	26%
5	Sonipat	80	78	96%	68	75	27	11	71%	1	09%
6	Karnal	78	71	91%	65	62	27	47	36%	14	30%
7	Mewat	76	49	64%	56	46	4	38	11%	6	16%
8	Bhiwani	68	68	100%	54	67	15	37	29%	7	19%
9	Jind	65	65	100	43	60	7	17	29%	0	00%
10	Fatehaba	65	61	94%	66	71	3	32	09%	10	31%
11	Y. Nagar	64	64	100%	64	68	16	25	39%	10	40%
12	Ambala	63	48	76%	39	60	5	3	63%	0	00%

Table 2.1 *Implementation of POCSO Act (01.04.2017 to 31.03.2018)*

SN	Districts	FIR regd. (April-Mar 18)	Cases Referred to CWC	cases referred to CWC (%)	PC filed (April – Mar 18)	Cases under trial	Convi ctions	Acqui ttals	% Convi ction	Appea l filed	Appeal Filed in acquittals (%)
13	Hisar	62	61	98%	62	117	21	27	44%	5	19%
14	Palwal	61	59	97%	27	45	7	61	11%	3	05%
15	Jhajjar	58	56	97%	49	71	8	25	24%	1	04%
16	Kaithal	55	55	100%	36	37	10	21	32%	5	24%
17	Rewari	41	40	98%	10	41	4	7	36%	0	00%
18	Sirsa	36	30	83%	39	36	4	27	13%	11	29%
19	KRK	35	13	37%	35	43	14	38	33%	15	39%
20	Panchkul	28	21	75%	22	38	1	2	33%	0	00%
21	Narnaul	26	20	77%	12	12	3	13	23%	2	15%
22	C.Dadri	21	21	100%	13	21	1	7	13%	2	29%
23	Hansi	19	19	100%	15	21	6	15	29%	0	00%
	Total	1525	1404	92%	1207	1543	267	581	31.5%	147	25%

Table 2.2 *Implementation of POCSO Act (01.04.2017 to 31.03.2018)*

As evident from the four tables above, many districts did not maintain case files and monthly reports were not sent by the district administration to the state. In addition to this, the conviction rate figures were very low in June and it was extremely difficult to have a fair assessment of how the districts were performing in the absence of proper and timely documentation and reporting. On the other hand, a tremendous improvement can be seen by March 2018 with complete reports being sent to the B3P cell. It clearly shows that documentation has come a long way and the districts are putting in efforts to follow the standard format. This pilot has made me understand the importance of reporting and how it becomes a key requirement in ensuring better performance of the districts when it comes to implementation of POCSO Act. It is only when procedures are noted down that they are adhered to in all sincerity. It also makes the individuals and departments accountable and they are answerable if the required deliverables are not achieved; this is particularly true in government settings where things move only when the orders are on paper.
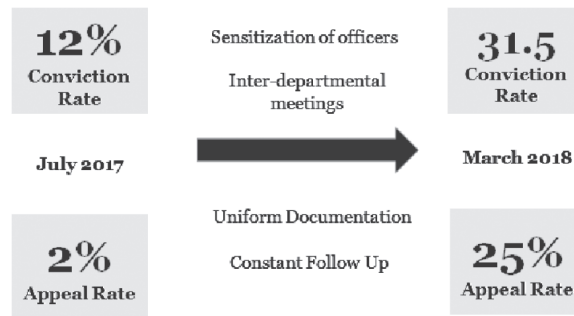
12% Conviction Rate	Sensitization of officers Inter-departmental meetings	31·5 Conviction Rate
July 2017	→	March 2018
2% Appeal Rate	Uniform Documentation Constant Follow Up	25% Appeal Rate

Figure 7. *Impact of the Project*

When the pilot was designed, nobody could envisage the impact it would make on the field. Most stakeholders were glad that the issue of child sexual abuse had been taken up after continued ignorance for many years. Dr. Singal was pivotal in producing the results that the pilot achieved as he personally knew most of the officers, had worked with them throughout his career and he had dedicated his life to this cause. The involvement of such an individual who has established linkages with not only the state machinery but officers at the district level considerably reduces the time taken to pitch the pilot, disseminate the information and initiate the needed action from concerned officials.

Since the district administration was told to monitor the progress made in implementation of POCSO Act, the departments officials were firstly answerable to their superiors and then to the Chief Minister's Office (during the monthly state meetings). In addition to this, the workshops provided an unprecedented opportunity for the department officials to interact with each other, discuss problems and suggest solutions. The pilot aimed at improving inter-departmental coordination through establishment of proper communication channels, institutionalising the monthly report sharing with the State B3P Cell and regularising the meetings in al districts. In many districts, these workshops turned out to be the initiator of internal meetings which followed. The district administration came together and took an update on the various components of the workshop such as documentation of cases, registration of cases under POCSO Act, number of appeals being filed in acquittal, etc.

Programmes such as CMGGA are an excellent opportunity for young professionals to interact with the administration, initiate a dialogue on issues sometimes neglected by the district authorities and initiate engagement with them in the long run. I ensured from the very beginning that *Neev* is not CMGGA dependent and that the administration takes ownership of the pilot. It was an achievement to have institutionalised the district reviews and solidified the network between Dr. Singal and the DCPOs. This network of stakeholders across the state gave the pilot a larger shelf life with a robust system of checks and balances.

There were many instances when I realised that the workshop needed improvement in terms of increased participation. Feedback was taken from all CMGGAs, a crucial aspect of the pilot, and it helped direct the workshops towards being less theoretical

and focus instead on the practical difficulties faced by officials to implement the POCSO act. The use of a power point presentation became the focal point of discussion during the workshops. Going forward, it would be beneficial to include a few activities or prepare a questionnaire regarding the act and dividing the officers into teams. There was consensus that there is a need to make the sessions more interactive.

During the workshops, it was highlighted that the DCPOs were not fully aware of their responsibilities as Nodal Officers of POCSO Act in the district. It had to be reiterated by Dr. Singal that they had the authority and power to request any information on such cases from the police as well as prosecution. Some DCPOs had shared that acquiring documents such as FIR, charge sheet, judgement, etc. was quite a herculean task. In addition to this, the other two departments often did not see DCPOs as designated officers. The workshop served as a platform to convey the role of DCPOs with regard to the POCSO Act and how support from the other departments is essential to ensure the cases are handled properly and lead to conviction. Due to the lack of clarity on roles of various officials, POCSO reports were often sent by multiple departments to Dr. Singal for the monthly meetings and it was worrisome that the data in the reports would never match. Despite official orders from WCD, it had to be emphasised time and again that the POCSO reports are only to be prepared and sent by the DCPO and no one else in the district. These clarifications given during the workshop were critical to ensure the ownership of the POCSO Act by the DCPOs thus making it a lot more convenient for Dr. Singal to coordinate with each district.

Another notable outcome of the workshops was that calling out certain officers or highlighting the poor performance of a particular department would not always prove to be productive. While the police department is often blamed for their lack of commitment, it is necessary to realise that the police force is often extremely burdened. Hence, it was a strategic measure to ensure that they felt valued, their hard work be appreciated and they were requested to cooperate with the DCPOs and understand their role in the accountability framework the workshop had established. Many police inspectors were identified by Dr. Singal for their exemplary work and were quoted in meetings to encourage the others and create a space for healthy competition.

The third crucial department apart from WCD and police is the prosecution or the DA Office. Being lawyers and representing the district administration, they play a vital role in ensuring that POCSO cases are disposed in a timely manner (the judgement should be out within a year of case registration) and lead to conviction of the accused. In addition to this, the Public Prosecutor (PP) for POCSO cases is present in court during all the proceedings. They can advise the DCPOs better on how to counsel the victims and where the case is lacking legally. More importantly, if the judgement leads to an acquittal it is the DA who determines whether the case is fit for appeal or not and the judgement is later challenged in court.

During the course of this pilot, I was following up on a case where the DCPO feared acquittal could not be avoided. The accused and their lawyer got in touch with the victim and offered basic amenities in addition to money. The victim turned hostile and her parents refused to recognise the accused, with complete denial of any form of assault.

Through a collective intervention of the PP, DCPO and CMGGA, they were able to meet the judge before the judgment was announced. After the problems were shared with the judge she simply stated that she does not deny the child is a victim but in court she needs facts to substantiate this. She even spoke to the child separately but the child refused to say anything. The judge finally gave the next date of hearing but pointed out that counselling of the child should have been done properly and the police was required to be in touch with the DCPO to avoid any contact by the accused, which influenced the victim's statement. Throughout this entire incident, calls were made to the police inspectors and even their superiors but nobody was available. There was an evident lack of communication between the DCPO and DA office too. I concluded that such coordination issues needed to be rectified because they simply nullify the efforts of sincere officers and result in denial of justice.

An area of concern emerging from the workshops was the level of awareness regarding POCSO Act across the three departments. Take for instance, the fact that the police inspectors considered consent of the minor as a crucial prerequisite to register the cases. This indicates the lack of awareness about the provisions of the Act. The DCPOs, on the other hand, despite being notified as the nodal officers for implementation of POCSO Act in the districts, were not able to comprehend their role and responsibility due to irregular and lack of information sharing between the various stakeholders. One cannot expect the conviction rate to rise when the intricacies of the legislation are not fully understood by the concerned officials. This further links to another issue of lack of adequate training. How are the officers supposed to deliver without being coached by respective state teams of their departments? There is a mechanism at present but it clearly does not seem sufficient as the trainings are not held at regular intervals. The workshops helped understand the need for officers to be educated about the POCSO Act before educating the citizens.

Throughout this pilot, one of the defining roles was played by the CMGGAs in their respective districts. Since the information and directions were only given through letters and phone calls, the CMGGAs proved to be a great resource to bring the departments together and improve coordination. True to the nature of the CMGGA programme, the associates worked as catalysts in the districts. Once the workshops were concluded, they took it upon themselves to follow up with the departments and involve the senior most officers in the district administration to ensure that the system is running smoothly. I as a researcher would not have been able to have the same degree of connection with officers in all districts had it not been for the support given by the CMGGAs.

Despite the momentum created by *Neev*, it is imperative to highlight that the current statistics of POCSO cases comprise only the reported cases. One needs to take into account a substantial number of cases that are not even reported in the police stations. It indeed is a greater battle than just improving numbers; the need of the hour is a behavioural change in the society. It also needs to be conveyed more assertively in the training sessions that boys are also sexually abused and are included within the purview of this Act.

The key observations from the pilot have primarily been the lack of inter-departmental coordination across the three departments namely WCD, police and prosecution. The channels of communication were fragmented, and the pilot proved to be helpful in establishing a clear line of communication not only within the districts but with the state machinery. Furthermore, the importance of documentation was validated with the implementation of the pilot. It is essential to have procedures in place and at the same time document everything, this ensures uniformity as well as serves as a strong testament to the quality of work executed. The POCSO Act is a very powerful and strong piece of legislation, however, the POCSO cases statistics (conviction rate, pendency of cases, acquittal rate, etc.) across various states reveal a grim reality. Through the course of this one year, I comprehended that we simply need to find the right people to initiate the process of change. It was the purpose of the pilot to set in place a robust accountability framework between the WCD, police and prosecution departments. Being the key stakeholders it is essential that they work in tandem with each other to improve the implementation of the POCSO Act. Since the process has been institutionalised with the successful implementation of the pilot *Neev*, the state has to work to ensure that Haryana emerges as a model state for orderly implementation of the POCSO Act.

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Functional Separation of Duties and Introduction of Shift System in Sadar Police Station, Pipli, Kurukshetra

Nilanjana Sen

ABSTRACT

This study assesses the functional separation of duties at the Sadar police station in Kurukshetra, Haryana. It presents the practical challenges faced at the police station level for the implementation of separation of law and order and crime investigation. The challenges identified are wide-ranging such as lack of adequate manpower at the police station, ineffective implementation of shift system, lack of planning in allocation of human resources to the police station, ineffective utilisation of the talent of the constabulary force present in the district, poor time management skills of police station staff and absence of a well-defined task list for police officials across different ranks in the station, to name a few. Keeping in mind the constrained implementation of separation of law and order from investigation duties, the study has created a model to ensure effective separation of duties and the introduction of the shift system in the police station. The study is premised on the assumption that an effective separation of duties through human resource management will improve the efficiency of the police officials by improving their perception about their ability to perform their job roles well.

I   INTRODUCTION

The police station forms the basic unit of police working in the district. The Haryana Police Act 2007 has identified the separation of law and order and crime investigation as a priority initiative. While the Haryana government recognises this as a high priority, little has been thought about the practical challenges faced for its implementation at the police station level by officials of police department. The challenges, as identified during the field work in *Sadar* police station located in Pipli, Kurukshetra, are wide-ranging such as lack of adequate manpower at the police station, ineffective implementation of shift system, lack of planning in allocation of human resources to the police station, ineffective utilisation of the talent of the constabulary force present in the district, poor time management skills of police station staff and absence of a well-defined task list for police officials across different ranks in the station, to name a few.

The existing literature on separation of law and order from police investigation duties has focused on analysing its viability and studying the available models in states where such a separation has taken place. This study will assess whether the implementation of the orders to ensure separation of the functions of the police based on specialisation is constrained in the police stations located in Kurukshetra and, if so, how does it impact the efficiency of the police officials. For the purpose of this paper, I extrapolated the understanding of efficiency from the perceptions of the police officials on their ability to perform their duties based on the job role defined for them. Based on semi-structured interviews and participant observation I located perceptions about efficiency on significant experiences of employees at the police station located at various levels.

In order to study the constrained implementation of separation of law and order from investigation duties, this research looks at the police station as the ethnographic site where need based restructuring will be proposed based on the demand for efficiency in police functioning. The use of ethnography as a methodology will also help in understanding the "culture" in the police station which can influence the receptiveness of the police officials to the working model for separation of police functions proposed by this study. The occasional description of the culture in the police station in the paper is based on semi-structured interviews and participant observation in addition to the use of the time sheets. The study has used time sheets, questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, formal reports, participant observation to analyse the current work structure in the police station and critically evaluate job specific functional separation.

Research Methodology:

The selection of *Sadar* police station located in Pipli block in district Kurukshetra was done on the basis of its geographical location close to the GT Karnal Road, frequent involvement of the police station staff in law and order duties, its proximity to the Chief Minister's rest house in Kurukshetra, and the feasibility of closely monitoring compliance considering its distance from the SP headquarters.

The work study was divided into three phases:

1. In phase one, the police station was studied as an ethnographic site. Based on extensive visits and participant observation an understanding of the existing institutional structure at the police station and the prevalent police culture of the station was formed. A description of existing police culture in the police station was made. The research is anchored on the view that existing police culture in the station can influence the acceptance of proposed reforms. Consider for example the reluctance of the police station staff to make the beat system more robust by introducing an accountability framework in it. In the absence of required infrastructure such as vehicles, the police station staff preferred focusing on emergency duties by following the senior duty officer/junior duty officer (SDO/JDO) model. They explained that focusing on emergency duties was more "relaxing" than being compelled to visit the beat on a fixed number of days per week without any assured arrangement for vehicle to travel.

2. In phase two, time sheets were given to every police official in the station to be filled for a period of one month. The time sheet was given alongside a sheet with a list of all possible duties performed by police officials. Three separate lists of duty sheets were made for station house officer and investigating officers, the *moharrar* head constable and his staff, and those who are engaged in law and order duties. The time sheets helped gauge that the police station staff were unable and on most occasions reluctant to specify the number of hours of work against each duty. The time sheets could be used at best to identify the resting pattern of the police station staff.

3. In phase three, questionnaires were given to the investigating officers and all those engaged in beat policing to understand the implementation of the beat system. During this phase, an analysis of the human resource management through a study of manpower distribution in the various beats was done. A major finding at this phase was the practical viability of solutions for human resource management designed at the police station level in consultation with the station house officer and superintendent of police for final approval. In this phase an analysis of the *naukri chittha*, which is translated in English to mean daily duty register, was also done for a period of two month. This exercise was undertaken with the aim to assess under what categories duty allocation of the various officials happens, identify the pattern of weekly offs in the police station, and the observation of pattern in the allocation of senior duty officer and junior duty officer roles at the police station level.

II   DESCRIPTION OF INTERVENTION

Current Situation of Separation of Law and Order and Police Investigation in *Sadar* police station

1. Effective law and order and crime investigation separation does not exist in *Sadar* police station. Clear identification of job roles did not exist at the police station level.

2. Beat wise distribution of investigating officers is done and they are of sub-inspector (SI), assistant sub-inspector (ASI) and head constable (HC) rank. The allocation of beat responsibility to the officials is done based on nature of crime incidents in the beat, the frequency of crime incidents, the caliber of the investigating officer. Based on the interviews with investigating officers (IOs) and the questionnaire to assess the performance of duties in the beats, it was concluded that there was no fixed pattern of beat visits in terms of the number of visits per month. The investigating officers expressed that they were not given facilities like vehicles or extra allowance to make regular rounds in their beats, but they acknowledged the importance of preventive policing through effective beat policing as opposed to focusing only on emergency duties.

3. The same people who are engaged in beats carry out investigation on petty crimes, heinous crimes and carry out law and order duties. The beat system is not effectively implemented and an accountability framework has not been created to ensure proper monitoring of those engaged in the beats. The station house officer (SHO), however, recognises effective village system policing as the cornerstone of effective policing.

4. Most police station staff are not availing weekly off and are called for law and order duty on emergency basis. This conclusion was drawn based on the analysis of the *naukri chitha* for a period of two months. The police officials end up doing a 24-hour shift sometimes consecutively. Currently they also sometimes prefer a 24-hour shift to a 12-hour shift so they can avail an off for 24-hours the next day. In the proposed scenario based on the work study report, they will work on a 12-hour shift every day except in every eight days they will have one 24-hour duty. The investigating officers may prefer a 24-hour duty but on paper this is not the arrangement which is prescribed. Under such circumstances the officials have to come back from their resting time, which they take at their own level, to meet the requirements of police *bandobast* (arrangement). This is done as a response to the requirements put forth by senior police officials. A clear understanding of the resting patterns of the police station staff does not exist but the prevalent view is that the

staff is overworked. The idea of being overworked is an outcome of poorly defined job roles and poor human resource management at the police station level.

5. Currently a well-defined task list does not exist to monitor and evaluate the work done by police officials in their respective beats.

6. It was observed that emergency duties are treated as more important in the everyday police culture prevalent in the police station as opposed to the preventive role the police should play. Hence the SDO/JDO positions are treated as important but beat policing is not effectively monitored.

Pattern of Weekly-Offs for the Month of May as Shown in *Naukri Chitha*

Date	Rank	Total number of officials
3/4-5-2018	ASI, EASI,CT	3
8/9-5-2018	ASI, EHC, CT	3
9/10-5-2018	SI, EHC, L/CT, EHC	4
11/12-5-2018	ASI, HC, SPO, EHC	4
20/21-5-2018	2 ASI, EHC, L/CT	4

Pattern of Weekly Off for the Month of June as Shown in *Naukri Chitha*

Date	Rank	Total number of officials
15/16-6-2018	Inspector, ASI	2

Other observations from an analysis of the daily duty register are:

1. The heads under which duty allocation is taking place is not uniformly mentioned on each date. For example, the heading *weekly rest* is not mentioned on each date. Incase weekly rest wasn't availed on particular dates the headings should still be mentioned and it should be done uniformly on all dates.

**SDO/JDO Duty Pattern Analysed from *Naukri Chitha*
for the Month of May (24-hour duty from 8AM to 8AM)**

Date	Rank and Official Name	Total number of officials
31/1-5-18	SI Bhupinder, ASI Dharampal	2
30/31-5-18	SI Rajkumar, ASI Pradeep Kumar, W/SI Ramandeep Kaur	3
29/30-5-18	SI Balwinder, ASI Rajender Kumar, EHC Vijay Kumar	3
28/29-5-18	SI Prem Singh, ASI Ram Snehi	2
27/28-5-18	SI Bhupinder, EHC Narender Kumar	2
26/27-5-18	ASI Dharampal, ASI Balbir	2
25/26-5-18	SI Suresh, ASI Pankaj	2
24/25-5-18	ASI Rajender Kumar, ASI Krishan Kumar	2
23/24-5-18	SI Prem Singh, ASI Naresh Kumar	2
22/23-5-18	SI Raj Kumar, ASI Dharampal	2
21/22-5-18	ASI Rajender Kumar, ASI Balbir Singh, EHC Narender Kumar	3
20/21-5-18	SI Prem Singh, ASI Pankaj, EHC Vijay Kumar	3
19/20-5-18	ASI Naresh Kumar, ASI Krishan Kumar	2
18/19-5-18	ASI Dharampal, ASI Naresh	2
17/18-5-18	SI Raj Kumar, ASI Rampal	2
16/17-5-18	SI Prem Singh, ASI Rajender Kumar, HC Surender	3
15/16-5-18	ASI Dharampal, ASI Krishan Kumar, ASI Ramesh Kumar	3
14/15-5-18	ASI Naresh Kumar, ASI Pradeep Kumar, HC Devender	3
13/14-5-18	ASI Rajender Kumar, ASI Balbir Singh, HC Narender	3
12/13-5-18	SI Prem Singh, ASI Ramesh Chand, ASI Dharampal	3
11/12-5-18	ASI Rampal, ASI Pankaj, ASI Krishnan	3
10/11-5-18	ASI Naresh, ASI Pradeep, HC Surender	3
9/10-5-18	SI Balwinder, ASI Rajender Kumar, HC Naresh Kumar	3
8/9-5-18	ASI Balbir Singh, ASI Krishan Kumar, ASI Pankaj Kumar	3
7/8-5-18	ASI Ramesh, ASI Dharampal	2
6/7-5-18	SI Rajkumar, ASI Rajender Kumar, HC Narender Kumar	3
5/6-5-18	SI Balwinder Singh, ASI Pradeep, HC Devender Singh	3
4/5-5-18	ASI Rampal, ASI Krishan, ASI Pankaj	3
3/4-5-18	ASI Naresh Kumar, ASI Balbir, HC Surender Kumar	3
2/3-5-18	SI Prem Singh, ASI Dharampal, ASI Ramesh	3
1/2-5-18	SI Balwinder Singh, ASI Rajender Kumar, HC Devender Singh	3

**Pattern in Allocation of SDO/JDO Duty per Person
Based on Analysis of *Naukri Chitha* for the Month of May**

Name and rank	Number of times duty as SDO/JDO in May
SI Bhupinder	2
SI Balwinder Singh	4
ASI Rajender Kumar	7
HC Devender Singh	3
SI Prem Singh	6
ASI Dharampal	7
ASI Ramesh	4
ASI Naresh Kumar	6
ASI Balbir	5
HC Surender Kumar	3
ASI Rampal	2
ASI Krishan	6
ASI Pankaj	5
ASI Pradeep	4
SI Rajkumar	3
EHC Narender Kumar	3
SI Suresh	1
ASI Ram Snehi	1
EHC Vijay Kumar	2
W/SI Ramandeep Kaur	1

1. Based on the analysis of the pattern of weekly offs it was seen that the police station staff was not availing it. In the proposed model based on the research, weekly off will be taken by those in the Law and Order Wing and Crime Investigation Wing every 8th day.

2. An analysis of the allocation of SDO/JDO duty per person suggests that no uniform pattern or equal distribution of duties is taking place. In the proposed model, everyone from the Law and Order wing and Crime Investigation wing will perform SDO/JDO duty once in every 8 days. In this way, the study considered the view of the police station staff to not tamper with the SDO/JDO system since this was an intrinsic part of the police culture in the *Sadar* police station. The work study has opted against dividing the IOs based on their crime investigation specialisation because this did not exist.

3. A key recommendation based on the analysis of the current situation at the police station is better utilisation of the constabulary force.

4. The study also points to the need of *additional force* of constable rank to streamline the police station work, to ensure effective law and order and crime investigation separation, and effective beat policing. The study proposes the additional requirement of 8 new constables who will be distributed across the four beats.

5. The Station House Officer (SHO) proposed the starting of a Helper System for each beat. In this system, we will have two Law and Order (L/O) teams per beat and each team with have one help in the form a constable. Therefore, in this new Helper System two new constables will be added to each beat.

In the sections below a description of the implementation of the separation of the Law and Order and Crime Investigation wing is given and the introduction of the shift system for those engaged in the Law and Order Wing is explained.

Introducing the Shift System for those Engaged in the Law and Order Wing

1. The centralised crime investigation team made at the police station level will work on investigation tasks and look after cases of heinous crime in only those beats allocated to them.

2. The law and order team will look after petty crimes, manage the overall work in their beats and will perform law and order (L/O) and VIP visit duties.

Crime Investigation (CI) Wing:

1. One of the investigation officers (IOs) from the CI wing will be on a 24-hour shift along with their respective beat counterparts from the L/O wing once in every eight days.

2. Once in every eight days one of the IOs will have a weekly-off right after his 24-hour duty.

Law and Order (L/O) Wing:

The table below shows how the separation of the work force into law and order and crime investigation would take place across the four beats which fall within the *Sadar* police station's jurisdiction:

Beat	Law and Order (workforce in numbers)	Crime Investigation (workforce in numbers)
Mathana	4	2
Adhoun	4	2
Masana	4	2
Mathana	4	2
Total	**16**	**8**

As discussed with Station House Officer (SHO), those in the Law and Order (L/O) Wing will work on a 12-hour shift to ensure balance in their routine and shifts over a particular week. In the proposed model based on the research conducted at *Sadar* police station, the existing human resources of the police station are allocated to the L/O wing and are distributed across four beats:

Beat	Name	Rank	Number of resources
Mathana	Pardeep	ASI	2
	Surender	HC	
Adhoun	Narender	HC	2
	Krishan	ASI	
Masana	Dharampal	ASI	2
	Pankaj	ASI	
Umri	Balwinder	SI	2
	Vijay	HC	

Requirement of Additional Staff to Implement the Shift System and Effective Beat Policing

We need two additional support staff of constable rank in each beat (i.e., 8 Constables in total) to ensure effective L/O separation and to have a shift system in place. In the current scenario in L/O wing we have eight people, i.e., two in each beat. It is difficult to introduce a 12-hour shift in this scenario because there was no support staff for L/O and crime investigation. With the addition of eight new constables—two in each beat—we can ensure one support staff per 12-hour shift per beat.

1. The L/O teams in each beat will now consist of four members who will perform their duties over a day.

2. The 12-hour shift will include at least one existing resource from the L/O wing and one additional constable for each beat.

With an increase in the number of members of L/O team in each beat to four because of inclusion of two additional constables in it, we will now have two L/O teams per beat. For example, *Umri* will have two L/O teams with two members each. Let's call it U1 and U2. Similarly, for *Mathana* the teams will be called Mt1 and Mt2, for *Masana* Ms1 and Ms2, and A1 and A2 for *Adhoun*. Each team in the beat will have a 12-hour shift:

Beat	Mathana		Adhoun		Masana		Umri	
Shifts	Mor.	Eve.	Mor.	Eve.	Mor.	Eve.	Mor.	Eve.
Monday	Mt 1		A1	A2	Ms 1	Ms 2	U1	U2
Tuesday	Mt2	Mt 1	A1		Ms 1	Ms 2	U1	U2
Wednesday	Mt2	Mt 1	A2	A1	Ms 1		U1	U2
Thursday	Mt2	Mt 1	A2	A1	Ms 2	Ms 1	U1	
Friday	Mt 2		A2	A1	Ms 2	Ms 1	U2	U1
Saturday	Mt 1	Mt 2	A2		Ms 2	Ms 1	U2	U1
Sunday	Mt 1	Mt 2	A1	A2	Ms 2		U2	U1

In every shift, per team there is at least either one ASI or one HC and one constable for each beat

☐ The ASI/ HC will be on JDO duty as well during their respective 24-hour shift

☐ This will ensure a day off every 8th day and as well as 12-hour off for six days

Scenario:

1. For example, according to the SHO, during VIP visits at least 20 to 22 resources go for L/O duties which includes PCR, highway patrol, and IOs.

2. In the current model proposed by this study, in case of a VIP visit, we will have 15 resources in total: four resources from PCR, three from highway patrol, eight from the Law and Order Wing.

III CONCLUSION

The study helps establish that poor efficiency of police officials at the police station level is not always because they are overworked. For the purpose of this study the understanding of efficiency is from the perceptions of the police officials on their ability to perform their duties based on the job role defined for them. Hence, poor efficiency is more often than not an outcome of faulty job role allocation to officials of various ranks at the police station and the consequent inability of the staff to clearly identify their own job roles. With the introduction of the separation of duties and the shift system at the *Sadar* police station, human resource management and re-establishment of the importance of preventive policing as opposed to the focus on emergency duties have become two most important concerns at the police station. The model has been prepared on the assumption that separation of duties will improve efficiency because it will improve the ability of the police officials to identify and perform their job roles well.

Case Study – Process Reengineering in the Transport Department

Namrata Mehta

PROCESS REENGINEERING IN THE TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

In the month of September, the Chief Minister's office and the Department of Transport decided that the CMGGAs would study the mechanism of service delivery for services provided by the Registration and Licencing Authority (RLA). It was observed that Registration and Licencing Authorities have one of the highest footfalls compared to other offices providing G2C services. Considering the huge amount of work involved, efficiency of processes is imperative. Since the Haryana Govt. initiated an e-Governance model (e-Disha) to act as a customer interface for the Government service providers, services provided by Registration and Licensing Authorities have been routed through e-Disha centres in all districts. It was felt that if the exact process could be mapped and exact causes for inefficiencies be identified, the process could reengineered accordingly for better service delivery.

Studying the Existing System:

CMGGAs visited over 30 e-Dishas (service delivery centres) and shadowed over 200 citizens to understand the entire process which a citizen goes through in order to get these services. During the study, several discrepancies were identified. Of these the major ones are as follows:

1)   The number of steps taken to complete the same process was found to be different in different districts. For instance, to get a driving licence, it was seen that a citizen needed to complete 4 steps in Gurugram district whereas they would take 11 steps in Ambala district.

2)   Fee collected, for services across different districts, was found to be different. Different districts were collecting fees under multiple heads such as Bal Bhawan donation, Red Cross Society fee, District Child Welfare Council Fees as seen in the table below

Type of fees	Amount(in Rs)
DITS	150
Municipal Tax	100
Bal Bhavan donation	90-150
Red Cross Society	50
Govt Fees	200-300
Form fees	60
Medical test	110
Driving License test	100
District Child Welfare Council Fees	100
Speed post	20
PVC fee	30

3) Driving tests were not being conducted appropriately. For instance, it was seen in Bhiwani district that on days when the associate visited the test centre only 20-40 tests were conducted. Whereas on days when the associate didn't visit, close to 300 tests were conducted on one single day.

Bhiwani Driving License Test Register	
Day and Date	**Total DLT Passed**
Tuesday, 30-08-2016	126
Thursday, 01-09-2016	148
Tuesday, 06-09-2016	181
Friday, 09-09-2016	238
Thursday, 15-09-2016	82
Friday, 16-09-2016	133
Thursday, 22-09-2016	16
Tuesday, 27-09-2016	38
Thursday, 29-09-2016	20
Tuesday, 04-10-2016	278
Thursday, 06-10-2016	10

Days visited by CMGGA

4) It was noticed that touts are involved in all process. Right from form filling to document delivery. The following image shows codes of agents being marked by on documents :
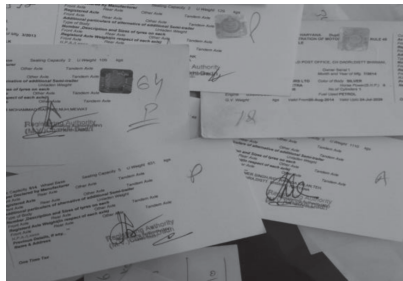
Decision on Way Forward:

When these issues were presented to the Hon'ble Chief Minister, he decided that going forward, the Department of Transport will

• Implement standard operating procedures (SOPs) for service delivery across the state.

• Implement a single window standardized fee payment mechanism in all districts.

The transport department took up these decisions and decided that they would not just carry these out for RLA services but would replicate the same for RTA services as well. In order to do so, several consultation meetings were held by the Department of Transport with senior bureaucrats in the state alongside inputs from CMGGAs. The main focus of the department was to
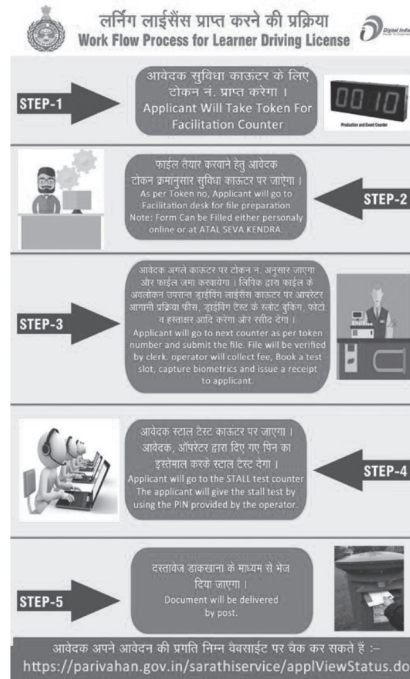
1   Develop a simple citizen friendly process

2)   Develop a mechanism that could fit the existing resources available at the district level

3)   Improve transparency by implementing a web based online system for service delivery

4)   Improving the overall efficiency of the process

All backend tasks such as study of legislation, rules and notifications were done and new orders were passed wherever necessary to ensure smooth implementation of SOPs. The SOPs thus designed were notified with letters were sent out to all Deputy Commissioners, Sub Divisional Magistrates and RTA authorities to get them implemented at the earliest.

Focus Areas of SOPs:

In order to maximize the effect of the SOPs the following key areas were focussed on:

1)   **Improving citizen awareness by increasing focus on Information, Education and Communication (IEC)** - The objective of this was to ensure that citizens visiting the e-Disha have complete knowledge of the procedures and the fees involved before they begin the process of applying. This would build a bottom up accountability on the officials involved as the citizens availing the services are aware of its contours. The following is a sample of the information put up at e-Dishas.

लर्निंग लाईसेंस प्राप्त करने की प्रक्रिया
Work Flow Process for Learner Driving License

STEP-1 — आवेदक सुविधा काऊंटर के लिए टोकन नं. प्राप्त करेगा ।
Applicant Will Take Token For Facilitation Counter

STEP-2 — फाईल तैयार करवाने हेतु आवेदक टोकन क्रमानुसार सुविधा काऊंटर पर जाएगा ।
As per Token no, Applicant will go to Facilitation desk for file preparation
Note: Form Can be Filled either personaly online or at ATAL SEVA KENDRA.

STEP-3 — आवेदक अगले काऊंटर पर टोकन नं. अनुसार जाएगा और फाईल जमा करवायेगा । लिपिक द्वारा फाईल की अवलोकन उपरान्त ड्राइविंग लाईसेंस काऊंटर पर आपरेटर आगामी प्रक्रिया फीस, ड्राइविंग टेस्ट के स्लॉट बुकिंग, फोटो व हस्ताक्षर आदि करेगा और रसीद देगा ।
Applicant will go to next counter as per token number and submit the file. File will be verified by clerk. operator will collect fee, Book a test slot, capture biometrics and issue a receipt to applicant.

STEP-4 — आवेदक स्टाल टेस्ट काऊंटर पर जाएगा । आवेदक, ऑपरेटर द्वारा दिए गए पिन का इस्तेमाल करके स्टाल टेस्ट देगा ।
Applicant will go to the STALL test counter The applicant will give the stall test by using the PIN provided by the operator.

STEP-5 — दस्तावेज डाकखाना के माध्यम से भेज दिया जाएगा ।
Document will be delivered by post.

आवेदक अपने आवेदन की प्रगति निम्न वेबसाईट पर चेक कर सकते हैं :–
https://parivahan.gov.in/sarathiservice/applViewStatus.do

2)   **Setting up a Facilitation Desk at all e-Dishas to assist citizens in filling up the form** - One of the most fundamental reasons for citizens to seek the help of touts and agents was to make their work easier. In order to address this root cause, the facilitation desks act as an intermediary between the citizens and the complex procedures. The desks cater to all kinds of support that a citizen requires, right from filling the form to taking photocopies to resolving queries. Below is a photo of an e-Disha where the citizen's form is being filled online while the citizen can see the data entry work with the help of dual screens.
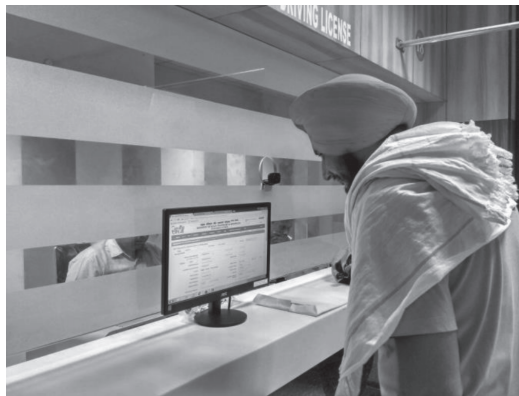
3)   **Creating a single window for payment of all fees related to the service being taken** – To reduce the number of steps a citizen has to take to avail a service and also to reduce multiple touchpoints of money exchange (and thus curbing possibility of corruption) a single window where all the fees are collected and the citizen is provided a single fee receipt with all of them mentioned on it.

4)   **Streamlining and improving monitoring for tests conducted for providing learner and driving licences –** The most critical and least monitored area of a licensing process, the tests, was streamlined procedurally to ensure transparency and ease of use for the citizens. Simple tweaks in the procedure such as citizens not having to carry the file back for approval created a citizen centric approach to the process. This is in turn ensures that the officials are more accountable as the citizen touchpoints are lesser.

5)   **Delivering documents to the citizen's doorstep via speed-post** – Keeping the overall objective of reducing the steps taken by a citizen, the delivery of the final documents were made by Postal department through speed post. The citizens get a tracking ID as soon as their document is dispatched to ensure visibility on the process.

On 4th April 2017, these SOPs were released by the Hon'ble Chief Minister for implementation by districts. In just over three months from the time of notification of the SOPs by the Department of Transport, all sub divisions have nearly completed due to regular follow up.

Key Enabler - Monitoring of Implementation:

At the district level, the Department of Transport along with the Chief Minister's office decided that CMGGAs would assist and track progress in implementation of SOPs. Regular review meetings were held at four different levels to manage the work on all fronts effectively:

1)   **Between the Chief Minister's office and Department of Transport**

Monthly review meetings were held with the department focussed on actions that were to be taken at the state level, such as, sending out notifications, creating enabling frameworks, tweaking relevant software etc.

2)   **Between the Chief Minister's office and district administration**

Monthly VCs were held with the district administration, in the presence of the department, focussed monitoring the outcomes of the steps being taken. These VCs were also used to update the district administration about outcome of the

state level review meeting of the department. This helped in keeping everybody on the same page which in turn translated into clear and focussed implementation at all levels

3) **Between the Transport Department and district administration**

Monthly VCs were held by the department with the relevant implementing authorities focussed handholding the minor steps involved in the implementation. These VCs were also a platform for the implementing authorities to highlight the obstacles they were facing and arrive at a solution together with the department.

4) **Between Deputy Commissioners and Sub Divisional Magistrates**

Weekly review meetings were held by the Deputy Commissioners, facilitated by the CMGGAs, to monitor the ground work being done by all the parties. These meetings were focussed on the steps to be taken at the district level and also to build consensus about the issues that would require an intervention from either the department or the CM Office.

Bringing Good Governance to Grievance Redressal

A Case Study of the CM Window

Namrata Mehta

I   Introduction

The CM Window is an online citizen grievance redressal portal initiated and launched by the Chief Minister of Haryana on the 25th of December 2014. CM Window enables citizens to voice their complaints directly with the CM. Since 2014, over 9.5 lakh grievances have been registered on the portal, of which over 5.6 lakh grievances have been addressed[1]. Officers at every level of the bureaucracy have their own accounts on the CM Window, through which they too can access the grievances and take meaningful action.

The CM Window has a robust technical as well as operational design. It is supported by CM Window counters established across the state, where citizens can register their complaints. Written complaints are scanned and uploaded. Once uploaded a team at the CM's office, sends the grievance to the concerned officer, who will them take it upon himself / herself to address. A stipulated period of 30 days is provided to redress any complaint registered on the CM Window.

The Chief Minister's Good Governance Associates (CMGGA), is a program initiated by initiated by Ashoka University in collaboration with the Government of Haryana, as a means providing feedback on the implementation of key programs, such as the CM Window, and policies as well as bringing good governance, efficiency and transparency, to service delivery in the state of Haryana. Initiated in 2016 as a one year fellowship, 21 associates were posted across 21 districts of Haryana. Their responsibilities included monitoring the state's flagship programs, working closely with the district administration to implement policies, and supporting the various state departments through diagnostics into specific challenge areas. A program management team worked closely between the CM's office and the Associates through each of the the three areas of work.

Being one of the flagship programs of the Chief Minister's, the CM Window was closely monitored by the CMGGAs. In close collaboration with the CM's office and National Informatics Center (NIC), the CMGGAs were able to make many contributions to the effective functioning of the grievance redressal portal. This case study describes these contributions. It provides a brief outline of the working of the CM Window, the specific mechanisms for review set in place through the CMGGA program, the challenges identified and recommendations made by the Associates, and finally a proposal for its effective evaluation going forward.

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1   As on 16th August 2017

II   The People Behind the Window

A dedicated team led by an Officer on Special Duty (OSD) to the CM, assisted by a Law Officer, a Scientist from the National Informatics Center (NIC), and a team of retired Haryana Civil Service (HCS) officers, operate the CM's CM Window account. This team ensures that complaints registered on the CM Window are forwarded to the appropriate authorities, and tracked over time to ensure timely resolution. Subtending from the CM's CM Window account are his subordinates[2], approximately 79 CM Window[3] accounts including those of the Chief Secretary, the Administrative Secretaries, Director General of Police, various Commissions, Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners. Each of these accounts have their own subordinates, which further branch out to cover all roles within the bureaucracy. New accounts for subordinates can be created by CM Window users at any time. In total, there are approximately 6,935 CM Window users[4]. In addition to the CM Window accounts of officers, there are separate accounts for the registration of complaints, one for each of the 71 CM Window Counters (23 prior to 25th December 2016) in the state. As for the citizens who register their complaints, except for government employees, the CM Window accepts complaints from anyone.

III   Five Steps to Grievance Redressal

There are several steps between the registration of a complaint on the CM Window and it's redressal. Many of these steps are online and can therefore be tracked. In addition there are many steps involved in the redressal of a grievance that may be taken offline as well, and this is symbolic of the heavy reliance of paper trails within the government. There is little visibility of the exchanges, even though they are taken towards the redressal of complaints registered on the CM Window. Below is a detailing out of the online steps involved in the process of redressing a grievance.

3.1.1.   Step 1: Registering

In order to register a complaint, citizens must visit one of the CM Window counters located across the state. There they are required to submit a written complaint along with a valid ID proof. At the counter, a data operator, scans the complaint as well as the ID proof and registers the grievance. An acknowledgment slip that records the registration number of the grievance is printed out and handed over to the complainant. The complainant also receives an SMS acknowledging the registration of their grievance.

There are few restrictions on what kind of complaints can be registered on the CM Window. These are complaints registered as requests for information under the Rights to Information (RTI), complaints from existing government employees and complaints regarding the transfer of government employees.

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2   Known as suborganisations on the CM Window portal

3   As verified through the OSD CM Window account on 7th August 2017

4   As verified through the OSD CM Window account on 7th August 2017

3.1.2. Step 2: Marking

Once a grievance is registered it is directly viewable by the CM Window Cell. The complaint is scrutinized in order to determine who it should be marked down to. At this point, it is also determined whether the complaint registered is a grievance, a suggestion or a demand (for the purposes of this case study grievances, demands and suggestions shall all be referred to as grievances, unless explicitly stated otherwise), as well as which grievance category it falls within. The CM Window has over 100 grievance categories[5]. The grievance is marked downwards, through the bureaucratic hierarchy, from officer's account to officer's account until it is marked to the appropriate officer.

One of the features available to the 79 CM's subordinate accounts is Additional Marking. Through Additional Marking, these officers can additionally mark a grievance to another officer. This is typically done in the case where the redressal of a grievance requires the coordination of two departments.

3.1.3. Step 3: Undertaking

Once a grievance has been marked, the user to whom it was marked has the option of marking it forward to their subordinates, or undertaking the grievance. In undertaking the grievance, the user agrees to conduct the necessary enquiry and actions to redress it. There are four stages of a grievance related to the action of undertaken

A. **New:** Until a grievance has been undertaken it will appear as New

B. **Pending:** Once a grievance has been undertaken and is within the 30 days allotted for disposal[6]

C. **Overdue:** Over 30 days have passed since the grievance was undertaken and no ATR has been filed

D. **In-Action:** Pending and Overdue Grievances together are referred to as in-action

If a user believes a grievance marked to him / her does not pertain to them, they can return it back to the sender, without underaking it. Within seven days of undertaking a grievance, a user can request for an extension beyond the 30 days period within which the grievance is expected to be redressed.

3.1.4. Step 4: Action Taken Report

Once a grievance has been undertaken by a CM Window user, and all enquiries and actions necessary to redress the grievance has been conducted, they have to write an Action Taken Report (ATR). This ATR is then scanned and uploaded onto the CM Window portal. The ATR is then forwarded back up the chain of users through which it was originally marked down, till it is received at the CM Window Cell. Related to the ATR, are two other transactions possible on CM Window.

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5 A proposal to reduce redundancies and overlaps in the grievance categories has been submitted by CMGGAs

6 Special allowance has been given to the Department of Development & Panchayat Department for a 90 day window within which grievance received by the department can be disposed.

A. **Interim Report:** A user who has undertaken a grievance can also write and upload an interim report, in case the redressal process is taking longer than usual, or if there is a need to inform their subordinates that steps towards necessary action is being taken.

B. **Clarification:** At any point in the chain, should a user feel that the ATR is inadequate or incomplete, they can request for a clarification. This clarification is then marked back down to the user who uploaded the ATR.

3.1.5. Step 5: Disposal

Once an ATR has been deemed as satisfactory by the CM Window Cell, it is disposed. In the process of disposal, the CM Office has also instituted a satisfaction call process. Employees at a call center, reach out to the complaints to understand whether they have been contacted by the concerned department or officer, and whether they are satisfied with the actions taken by them. Satisfaction of the complainant is not the sole factor upon which disposal is based. Members of the CM Window Cell take discrete call given their knowledge and scrutiny of all aspects of the complaint.

At any point, a citizen can track the status of their grievance using the registration number provided to them. A mobile application has also been created for the same.

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4.   Methodology

4.1. Work Module: Reviewing the CM Window Weekly

As part of their work modules[7], in order to ensure that citizens receive speedy and quality resolution of their grievances, CMGGA's were tasked with two essential activities

I.   Weekly analysis of the status of grievances at the district level

II.   Facilitating CM Window review meetings, once every week under the chairmanship of the City Magistrate - the Nodal Officer at the district level, and once every month under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner

A detailed guideline was created to support the associates along with an analysis template. The template designed was meant to assist the associate with their weekly analysis, and associates were given the opportunity to tweak the template as per the requirements of the district. A Google spreadsheet was created, to track whether meetings were held in all districts. Associates would fill in the tracker with the date, a colour code to denote whether the meeting was chaired by the CTM or the DC, and link it to the analysis they had prepared for the week.

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7   A work module is an assignment undertaken simultaneously by Associates in all districts across the state. This allows for a district level as well as a state level monitoring and analysis of the implementation of the CM Window. Work modules are created by the CMGGA program management team in close collaboration with the associated department.

In the first quarter of the program, several best practices were documented with respect to how CM Window weekly reviews were being conducted. In Yamunanagar, the DC would chair the CM Window review every week, instead of once a month potentially leading to Yamunanagar's high performance on CM Window throughout the entire year. In Faridabad, the CM Window review meetings would begin with an acknowledgement and applause of those officers who had performed well in the previous week. They also focused especially on the quality of the ATRs being uploaded by officers. In Karnal, clear targets were set at every meeting, for officers to adhere to by the following week. The weekly meetings were receiving media attention in district such as Rewari. Other districts were experiencing an improvement in the CM Window performance. In Karnal the total overdue grievances dropped by 32.1% and in Faridabad grievances overdue since 2015 decreased by 46.8%.

In the second quarter in addition to the weekly review meetings, Associates were asked to identify critical grievances pertaining to their districts. Critical grievances were those that were either pertaining to cases of corruption or would significantly impact a large number of people. These would be brought to the notice of the CM Window Cell, through a Google spreadsheet, which Associates would fill in every month. Since September 2016, 397 critical grievances were identified by the Associates in 2018, of which the CM Window Cell identified 159 as serious. 135 of all the critical grievances identified were disposed off by the end of 2018.

In the third quarter, to work towards the sustainability of the CM Window weekly review meetings, Associates were asked to assist the nodal officer in facilitating the meeting only every fortnight, with the assumption that the nodal officer would continue the review meetings every week. During this time, the program team and CMGGA Sonipat, also began using data analysis at the state level to gain more insight into the working of the CM Window.

The CM Window work module spanned the entire year of the program. A state level review meeting is held every month, and has been attended by a CMGGA program management team member. A program management team member was in constant coordination with the CM Window Cell for updates and inputs on the CM Window work module. In addition, an Associate was also assigned the role of the CM Window Impact Champion to coordinate more closely with the CM Window Cell.

4.2.   The Diagnostic: Redesigning the CM Window

Alongside the work module, the Associates from Kaithal and Panchkula were also tasked with redesigning the CM Window portal and developing a range of help and training tools. In order to identify the challenges that users of CM Window face, all CMGGAs were reached out to in order to provide input based on their CM Window weekly reviews and interactions officers in the district. These inputs were categorized into questions, challenges and recommendations. The collated list was then analyzed, categorized and discussed in detail with the CM Window Cell in Chandigarh, both from a technical and operational point of view.

4.3.   Presentations and Workshops

Regular meetings with the CM were held through the course of the year[8]. During each of these meetings, Associates presented their key findings based on data analysis, challenges identified from field, solutions recommended, solutions implemented and their impact. Based on the presentation and following discussion, the CM would take decisions for future implementation. In order to ensure that coordination between the CMGGA program and the CM Window Cell was smooth, the Additional Principal Secretary (APS) to the CM held a collaborative workshop to review the progress made. In preparation for the presentations and workshops, the CMGGAs worked collaboratively to put build consensus on the recommendations being put forth. On December 2016, CMGGA Kaithal and a member of the program team had the opportunity of attending the Regional Conference on Innovations in Citizen Service Delivery, along with the CM Window Cell team who were presenting the CM Window. Together they learned about Rajasthan's grievance redressal portal Sampark, and brought back their learnings to feed into suggestions for improvements to the CM Window.

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5.   Challenges Identified

As Associates facilitated weekly CM Window review meetings each district, they continued to take note of the challenges being faced by CM Window users, departments, the nodal officer as well as the DC. Many of these challenges were collected and submitted as part of the diagnostic report prepared by CMGGAs Kaithal and Panchkula and included

A.   **Lack of Training:** Associates observed a general lack of awareness around the many features and functionalities of the CM Window by its users, because of which many challenges are identified that have previously been addressed. During the very first quarter CM Window training was conducted by the CM Window Cell along with Haryana Institute of Public Administration (HIPA), in Ambala, Kaithal and Yamunanagar, and was planned for other districts in the Ambala division[9], due to its geographical proximity to Panchkula and Chandigarh, where HIPA and the CM Window Cell offices are. However, for HIPA to conduct training for all the other divisions, funds were required.

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8   Meetings were held on 3rd September 2016, 22nd October 2016, 24th December 2016, 25th February 2017, 1st May 2017 and finally 1st July 2017.

9   Till the 2nd of February 2017, Haryana had four divisions. Ambala, Rohtak, Hisar and Gurgaon. Ambala division comprised of Panchkula, Ambala, Yamunanagar, Kurukshetra and Kaithal. Rohtak Division comprised of Karnal, Panipat, Sonipat, Rohtak and Jhajjar. Hisar Division comprised of Jind, Hisar, Bhiwani, Fatehabad and Sirsa. Gurgaon Division comprised of Gurgaon, Faridabad, Rewari, Palwal, Nuh, and Mahendargarh. On the 2nd of February 2017, two new divisions were formed Karnal and Faridabad. Karnal Division comprised of Karnal, Panipat and Kaithal. Faridabad Division comprised of Nuh, Palwal and Faridabad. The Ambala division will have districts of Ambala, Yamunanagar, Panchkula and Kurukshetra. Gurgaon division will include districts of Gurugram, Mahendragarh and Rewari. The Hisar division will have the districts of Hisar, Fatehabad, Sirsa and Jind, while the Rohtak division will include districts of Rohtak, Jhajjar, Sonepat, Dadri and Bhiwani.

B.   **Duplicate User Accounts:** As the CM Window allows users to create account for their subordinates, there were several instances where, accounts for an officer working at the district level, were created by both his / her department as well as by the DC.

C.   **Data Discrepancy:** CMGGAs observed a great deal of data discrepency on the CM Window portal, especially through the DCs account from where cumulative data on the CM Window performance of each post at the district level can be reviewed. This was due to two main causes. The first is that the cumulative data in a tab referred to as the Earlier Monitoring Status, was not live, and often reflected the status from a day ago. This often meant that an officer and the DC were referring to different numbers during weekly reviews. The second cause, was found out to be related to the marking of grievances. Officers received grievances marked to them by the DC, as well as through their department. Although the DC is responsible for the CM Window performance of the district, he or she doesn't have a clear overview of the grievances marked directly from the departments to officers at the district level. This makes it difficult for them to review and enforce action pertaining to those grievances.

D.   **Prolonged Deadlines:** It is public knowledge that grievances registered on the CM Window should be disposed within a 30 day period. However, due to the several layers of administrative structure that the grievance has to pass through before reaching the officer who will undertake it for dressal there are several delays observed. Often the CM Window Cell itself takes 15-20 days (before being forwarded to officers/districts). Following which it might take a few days in the marking down process. CMGGA's also noticed that officers might take several days to undertake a grievance that has been marked to them. Data analysis revealed departments that hadn't undertaken grievances for over several months.

E.   **Ineffective Communication:** Language of the interface as well as input by the user is a challenge. Typing in Hindi is only available at the time of registering a complaint, and not while dealing with the grievance on the portal. Due to this many users of the portal do not type in details, and leave certain information out, reducing the quality and effectiveness of grievance redressal and communication.

F.   **Complicated User Interface:** The nomenclature, graphs, symbols and colours used on the platform to indicate a variety of details are currently overcrowding the interface, and complicating the user interactions. Several of these features are unnecessary and not being used in the way it was intended.

G.   **No Analytic Insight:** Grievances currently received through the CM Window are not analyzed in ways that can enable systemic changes or policy decisions. Much of the content of the grievances can be used to re-engineer existing processes and identify critical bottlenecks. The focus as observed by CMGGAs was typically on the disposal of individual grievances.

H.   **Competitive Portals:** While it should be the case that there are several channels for citizens to lodge complaints, and have them heard, multiple conflicting portals representing the State. Government of Haryana reduces the effectiveness of the CM Window portal. The previous government had set up the Harsamadhan portal, for grievance redressal. CMGGAs found that many online websites still linked to the Harsamadhan portal, confusing citizens about where to register their complaints. In additional to the Harsamadhan portal, many citizens choose to lodge complaints about the same issue through multiple channels, often burdening the officers who have to deal with it. Officers often times have to deal with serial complainers, for whom the CM Window Cell has a blacklisting mechanism.

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6.   Changes Incorporated

Through their efforts in reviewing the performance of the CM Window and identifying critical grievances, there are perhaps four key contributions that the CMGGAs made to the improving the functioning of the CM Window.

A.   **Training & Support for CM Window Users:** CMGGAs' interactions with district level officials handling the CM Window revealed that the level of awareness about the portals various features was relatively low. Often, this was a result of contractual data operators, with no decision making abilities or responsibilities, operating the CM Window on behalf of the officers. One of the suggestions made within the first quarter of the program, was for training to be conducted across all districts. As the first step, Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), a User Manual, and Video Tutorials were put together and published to a portal in a Help Section. Following this, a push for district level training to be conducted resulted in HIPA scheduling a training. The onus for attending was put on to the officers, as the training involved a fee and travel to Panchkula. As CMGGAs became more acquainted with the portal themselves, they became channels of raising awareness on using the platform, and often acted an intermediary between the CM Window Cell and the officers in the district.

B.   **Portal Redesign for Improved User Experience:** CMGGAs, worked closely with the NIC team spearheading the CM Window to incorporate changes that would ease the use of the portal. One of the first changes made to the portal, was the inclusion of typing in Hindi, using Google keyboard inputs, to encourage more officers and their data operators to write detailed remarks while down or up marking a grievance on the portal. The information architecture of the tables on the portal were streamlined, and described for ease of use. Rows were coloured green, yellow and red based on the status of the grievance is pending, overdue in 10 days, and overdue respectively. The excel files that were downloadable were reformatted for improved filtering and sorting. An Inbox features was added where all the grievances marked, whether as new, or additionally marked, or returned, or clarification sought, to a CM Window user would be easily accessible. A visual representation of the weekly performance of a user, as well as their subordinates

was made available on the website. Most importantly the data available on the portal was made live, so that whenever an officer signs in he or she can view a real time status of their subordinates performance. Through feedback from the CMGGAs, the NIC team, is sensitive to the visual design of the portal and are now continuously finding ways to improve it.

C.   **Improved Quality of Action Taken:** During the CM Window Weekly reviews in Faridabad district, the need to improve the quality of ATRs filed on the portal was identified. The City Magistrate and the CMGGA together designed an ATR format which they asked all the officers in the district to use while creating ATRs. This spread through the CMGGAs to other districts, and with anecdotal evidence from the CM Window Cell, suggesting that the form had reduced the time taken for them to read through an ATR had significantly reduced, it was chosen to be scaled up across the entire state. Today a standardized ATR form can be downloaded in Hindi and English on the CM Window portal, and officers can use it to file their reports.

D.   Improved Process for CM Window Portal: CMGGAs also worked to improve the process of the CM Window. The first step towards this, was delinking and deleting duplicate accounts of officers. On direction from the Chief Minister, new accounts were created for Demands and Suggestions filed on the CM Window, so that they were not marked down to the districts, where little could be done of them. To ensure that time taken by the CM Window Cell to mark down grievances was reduced, more resources were hired into the team. Similarly, to ensure officers do not take more than seven days to undertake a grievance, an instruction was issued to the same effect. The Harsamadhan portal was de-linked from the Government of Haryana website, so as to reduce confusion on which portal to file complaints on. Before the conclusion of the first year, CMGGAs submitted a proposal to streamline the grievance categories listed on the website, streamline the departments and linking of various accounts to the appropriate departments, and finally institute a robust CM Window performance evaluation metric.

In addition to the changes recommended in made by, with and through the CMGGAs, two important decisions regarding the CM Window were taken through the course of the last year. The first was the expansion of the CM Window counters, from district headquarters to sub-division headquarters. These were inaugurated on the 25th of December 2016, and was followed up on by the CMGGAs. In February 2017, an extension of the CM Window was provided to Non-Resident Indians (NRIs). In May 2017, a list of eminent citizens was released by the CM Window Cell. The eminent citizens would be responsible for intermediating between complainants and officers in the case of any dispute regarding the grievance redressal. Moreover their signatures would be required on the ATR.

7.   Opening up the Window to More

Much effort has been put in by the CMGGAs on contributing to the effectiveness of the CM Window. At the bare minimum, in the last year, a total of 963 CM Window review meetings have been held, of which 216 have been chaired by the DC. 397 grievances have been identified as critical on the Critical Grievances Tracker, of which 159 were regarded as serious by the CM Window Cell, and 135 have been disposed[10]. Apart from this, many CMGGAs have experienced citizens requesting them to look into their CM Window grievances. As district administrations and CMGGAs together increase their focus on responding to grievances registered on the portal, there is room to incorporate two essential activities in their scope of work - using grievances as inputs for innovation or policy reform, and establishing a mechanism for assessing the impact of the CM Window.

7.1.   Impact Assessment

On the 1st of July 2017, for a presentation to the CM, CMGGAs found six parameters that had improved over a year. The rate of disposal of grievances had increased from 73% to 81% and the average number of days taken to undertake a grievance had reduced from 26 days to 12 days. Clarifications received on every grievance were reduced from 2.4 to 0.6. It was also observed that the time taken for grievances to be redressed had improved. The percentage of grievances closed within the stipulated 30 days had increased from 8% to 21%, and those closed within 60 days, had increased from 36% to 65%.

The establishment of the weekly review meeting, if well attended and facilitated, is meant to improve the time taken and quality of grievance redressal. This in turn it can be ascertained would lead to more satisfied citizens, which will eventually result in an improved experience of service delivery. Given the nature of the CM Window, data is readily available and can be used to measure these improvements quite successfully.

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10 Data as presented to the CM on the 1st of July 2017