

# Weaving adolescent empowerment into Gram Panchayat Development Planning (GPDP)



Photo Credit: © UNICEF/Raman Shamma/2019

**end  
child  
marriage**  
A voice. A chance. A future.

**unicef**   
for every child



## The CONTEXT

*Aapni Yojana, Aapno Vikas [Gram Panchayat Development Planning (GPDP)]* is a Government of India (GoI) initiative being implemented by Government of Rajasthan (GoR) in partnership with UNICEF towards the realisation of Article 243 G of the Indian Constitution. Crucial to strengthening Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) in their local self-governance role, Article 243 G mandates the preparation of plans for economic development and social justice/social development by panchayats.



## GPs are financially supported and backed by

Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC)

State Finance Commission (SFC)

Schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

National and state flagship programmes

Organisational social responsibility (OSR) projects

Corporate social responsibility (CSR) projects

Envisaged as a healthy self-sustaining institutional entity, gram panchayats (GPs) are financially supported and backed by several mechanisms. Majority funding comes to them from the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) and State Finance Commission (SFC). Schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), along with other national and state flagship programmes also route funds to GPs against specific project plans. Together they raise about INR 6 to 10 million (60 lakhs to 1 crore) worth of funds. Lately, this corpus has received another source of funding, namely under organisational social responsibility (OSR) and corporate social responsibility (CSR) where projects related to health, education, infrastructure, sanitation and community development, livelihoods, among others are taken. Community contribution is another important source of funding.

At present, the maximum share of resources is from FFC and SFC which are tied with specific guidelines for improvement of basic services and facilities. The focus is on infrastructural development, provision of basic amenities and services of electricity, septic and sewerage management, sanitation and waste management, streetlight, development of footpaths, parks, maintenance of graveyards and funeral grounds, drinking water supply, support for IT and data management, and additional support to implementation of national and state flagship schemes, if required.

The GoI has awarded a substantive grant of INR 200,292.20 crores exclusively for GPs for a period of five years (2015-2020). Rajasthan, which is also a pioneer state to accept and initiate the three tier Panchayati Raj system, will get INR 13,633.64 crores, for transfer into its GP accounts, to strengthen participation and planning in decentralised local governance. Within the strengthening of the GPDP process, adolescent empowerment has been taken up as a significant theme.

## Major initiatives in other states

Examples of major initiatives to strengthen the GPDP process in states other than Rajasthan are risk-informed (disaster risk reduction (DRR) resilient planning and development of Model Panchayats; DRR management and own source revenue (OSR) generation in Assam, a similar Beacon Panchayat initiative and benchmarking in 25 GPs in Jharkhand; creation of Support Groups at Mandal level in Telangana; development of mobile-based application to support cascade-mode trainings in Uttar Pradesh; and developing an integrated GP level database in Maharashtra.

# UNICEF's support to GPDP

In 2016, Ministry of Panchayati Raj requested UN agencies to extend support in areas of capacity building for planning, strengthening guidelines and advisories on GPDP, development of training modules and manuals, engagement of high-quality expertise, and development of Model Panchayats that are demand-based. UNICEF extended support in eight states – Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh.

Through the collaborative initiative in Rajasthan, UNICEF aims to build a successful, decentralised and planned social sector/social justice GPDP model that coheres functionaries and funds towards an informed, integrated, participatory, holistic, bottom-up, doable development plan for the GP that also prioritises investment in Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the dovetailing of child friendly planning and adolescent empowerment with the goals of infrastructure development. This integrative GPDP approach is in line with (a) localising SDGs at the grassroot level in a manner that GPs spend 40% of their funds on SDGs, and PRIs and other governing institutions are equipped to monitor progress and expenditure, (b) the Guidelines for the Fourteenth Finance Commission (FFC) Year 2015- 2020, and (c) the new “Guidelines for Preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)”, 2018 issued by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj which addresses child development.

---

## Systemic benefits/ advantages of UNICEF's Model GP/GPDP

Enables a conducive environment for full participation of the rural community, the Gram Sabha, and excluded sections of society in planning, preparation, finalisation and approval of GPDP.

---

Ensures that GPDPs are prepared with a sharp focus on equity and social sector performance with dedicated resources for social sector improvements such as the SDGs and adolescent empowerment. For instance, within the annual component, it ensures child/adolescent friendly planning such as barrier-free access to schools, low cost transport, infrastructure and facilities that help realise adolescent rights, rights of the girl child, and those of the differently abled.

---

Ensures that Gram Sabhas are strengthened as a forum for identification of the felt needs of the community and are able to approve doable GPDPs that cover all needs of the community in a prioritised manner, particularly issues concerning the well-being of women and the girl child.

---

Builds the skills and capacities of officers, frontline workers and elected representatives of GPs and other committees and stakeholders, such as the Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC), District Resource and Coordination Unit (DRCU)/District Panchayat Resource Centre (DPRC), block level officers and local institutions involved in decentralised planning and supervision, through training and technical support structures.

---

Ensures that GPDPs of all GPs are aligned with state guidelines and circulars and uploaded on Plan Plus Ver. 2.0 to ensure transparency and accountability.

---



# GPDP PILOT IN TONK DISTRICT

## Process followed, learnings and advantages

(September 2017 – March 2018)

Acting on the advice of ACS Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, UNICEF supported a joint pilot initiative in Tonk district in collaboration with the district administration and DRCU for Model GPs. The project covered 230 GPs across six Panchayat Samitis.

The key activities undertaken through the pilot project were:

- (1) Environment building for a Model GPDP
- (2) Cascade mentorship strategy to support GPDP process
- (3) Strengthening governance structures



### 1 Environment building for a Model GPDP

Environment building was one of the crucial steps towards success of the Tonk pilot. This involved preparing stakeholders at district and block levels, through focused and widespread awareness building and data generation necessary to develop and implement GPDPs. It succeeded in generating informed, standardised and holistic development parameters for all GPs with integrated social sector components on the SDGs and adolescent empowerment; a participatory assessment of their existing status; an accurate need identification; and an intervention plan.



Photo Credit: © UNICEF/2019

## Five activities were planned and carried out as part of environment building

(a) Public launch of GPDP; (b) Orientation programmes for district and block level functionaries; (c) Advocacy for government orders to link sector planning and GPDP processes; (d) Special Gram Sabhas to build inclusion and community-level awareness about GPDP; and (e) Situational analysis.

### **a) Public launch of GPDP**

To create wider district level awareness about the GPDP initiative amongst communities, beneficiaries and other stakeholders, the GPDP was officially launched during a district level one-day orientation for pradhans and Sarpanchs from GPs in Tonk. Around 500 participants (elected representatives, PRI functionaries, support group of GPDP and Gram Sabha members) gathered.

### **b) Orientation programmes for district and block level functionaries**

One-day orientations were provided to a group of 30 participants i.e. Zila Pramukh and Collector, Pradhans, Standing Committee (SC) chairpersons and district level officers of Tonk at the District Headquarters and to Pradhans, Block Development Officers (BDOs) and other block level officers in each of the six blocks. These orientations helped to develop consciousness, community participation and commitment towards the importance of GPDP, role clarity in preparation of participatory decentralised GPDPs, ensure convergence between GPDP and other national and state schemes and flagship programmes executed at the GP level, and demonstrate doable GPDP plans.

### **c) Advocacy for government orders**

Advocacy in two crucial areas was done with district administrations on the importance of (i) issuing guidance for organising special Gram Sabhas in each GP area, and (ii) issuing necessary instructions for organising coordination meetings with sectoral heads to ensure that all sectoral planning processes get integrated with the GPDP process for the 2018–19 planning cycle.

### **d) Special Gram Sabhas**

Special Gram Sabhas were held to build community awareness about GPDP, the inclusion of marginalised sections into the planning process and integrating their inputs into social sector plans on issues concerning empowerment of women, protection of children and other vulnerable groups.

### **e) Situation analysis of each GP**

Using transect walks, resource mapping, focus group discussions (FGDs) data analysis (11 data tables as per state GPDP guidelines) and data use, situation analysis was done with an aim to generate an integrated database for each GP. The integrated data covered baseline relevant data on 11 core areas involving existing situation of infrastructure, social sector, GP finances, etc. This had the advantage of standardising measures/ indicators for GP development and preparing the GP Development Report.





Photo Credit: © UNICEF/Raman Sharma/2019

## 2 Cascade mentorship strategy to support GPDP process

To strengthen the GPDP process, the pilot project aimed to develop a resource pool of effective, energetic and devoted District Master Trainers (DMTs) as a group who would transform the mechanical training process into one of commitment by giving time for a 'cascade' strategy of mentorship of frontline functionaries at block/cluster and GP levels and handhold them to prepare GPDPs while supervising their implementation. An existing state-level three-day capacity building plan on GPDP was upgraded to a five-day training with mock exercises and case analysis. Three days were dedicated to the need, importance, objectives and process of GPDP and other technical inputs and two days for sharpening the skills required to be an effective trainer.

**(a) Level 1:** A five-day training module for DMTs was prepared and aligned with one-day to five-day orientations to support the GPDP process. DMTs comprised of PRI representatives like Sarpanchs, Panchayat Sewaks/Sachivs, and Ward Panchs, social mobilisers, Technical Support Groups (TSGs), GPCCs, community based organisations (CBOs) and others, for preparation of holistic and doable GPDPs with emphasis on adolescent empowerment among other themes. The five-day training module is built around reference materials developed by the district administration, Tonk and State Department of Panchayati Raj, District Planning Cell, Jaipur, with focus on PRIs, GPDP basics and guidelines of the FFC. Additionally, the state module for training of DMTs was revised to incorporate the increased emphasis on social sector allocations within GPDP proposals.

**(b) Level 2:** Cluster Resource Teams (CRTs) comprising of 5-6 block-level members including the Village Development Officer (VDO) were mobilised into Block Resource Groups (BRGs). Following the cascade strategy, DMTs imparted training to BRGs through a one-day refresher training campaign programme. The

training utilised modules like GPDP Basics, SDGs & Gender Sensitisation GPDP and Panchayati Raj GPDP. A total of 30 such potential trainers, 5-6 from each block and five from district level, were identified for a one-day training during this period. They were drawn from current and ex-elected representatives, retired government officers, representatives of NGOs/CBOs/VOs and unemployed-literate-energetic and highly motivated youths.

**(c) Level 3:** The rejuvenated BRGs and GPCCs, in turn, assisted and handheld the Gram Sabhas to draft the GPDP.

### 3 Strengthening governance structures

The joint pilot initiative saw the GPCC and DRCU as vital agencies for planning, implementation and coordination of the GPDP and emphasised on their capacity building.

The GPCC, headed by the Sarpanch, is the grassroot committee actually involved in preparation and implementation of GPDP. Similarly, the DRCU established at the Chief Planning Office (CPO) is the coordination unit between the district administration and other stakeholders involved in GPDP planning. Though the GPCC committees were constituted in most panchayats, they were not highly functional or aware about their roles and responsibilities.

UNICEF support was provided to enable GPCCs by creating a TSG of frontline workers from the departments responsible for providing services at GP level, and other stakeholders. The pilot focused on capacity building of GPCCs and TSGs in the second quarter to make them catalytic and profound in situational analysis and giving handholding support to GPs for preparation and technical vetting of the 2018-2019 GPDP, seeking approval from the Gram Sabha, and ensuring effective implementation. At the district level, the DRCU and CPO were strengthened with the project coordinator, project assistant and operator, and an office assistant and vehicle support for mobility and monitoring.

*“We were trained at the gram panchayat level on village planning, adolescent issues and sending them to school. A planning committee was formed headed by the Sarpanch with membership from the ANM, ASHA and AWW to resolve the issues in the village. A proposal to set up a sewing centre for adolescent girls was discussed in our meetings and we plan to take it up. We also want to set up a computer centre and an ITI college in our village since the ITI college is currently very far from our village.”*

**Vishnu Devi Sharma**  
AWW, Bharni GP, Tonk district







# ACHIEVEMENTS of the pilot

## Overall achievements

- Transformed the GPDP from a de-centralised one-year plan to a one-year holistic, indicator-based planning process with a five-year vision of each GP for integrated and convergent bottom-up planning. The annual GPDP is made by April of the year. Once approved by the respective Gram Sabha and modified and finalised at block level, it is valid for the whole year.
- Created an enabling and conducive environment in the district and panchayats for preparation of participatory, decentralised, integrated and holistic plans at GP level. Facilitated rapid assessment of GPDP process in the state and shared findings/recommendations with state administration.
- Bolstered governance structures like GPCC and TSG, and at district level, DRCU and CPO in Tonk, helping capacity building for a Model GPDP plan.
- Increased participation of local communities and reflection of 'local demands' in GPDP with emphasis on visible role of GPCC in planning process.
- Provided institutional space for adolescents and children to be part of planning process.
- Strengthened state guidelines and advisories through advocacy and technical support; developed monitoring framework to measure progress of GPs towards a Model GPDP.
- Developed PRI Index to rank PRIs and their progress on holistic GPDPs and implemented it in GPs of two blocks under the Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan. The ranking system created scores against five key measures like Panchayat Functioning (40), Accountability and Transparency (05), Social Sector Performance (40), Innovations and Use of ICT (10), and Capacity Building and Training (05).
- Readied a Training Manual for developing GPDP in the context of the Guidelines for the FFC Year 2015- 2020. Supported compilation of schemes of five devolved departments for ease of reference and use by PRIs.
- Transformed mechanical training events to creation of a dedicated pool of 30 Master Trainers at district-level DRCU. Created a well oriented, effective and quality Master Trainer resource pool in the district for quality assurance of GPDP to support preparation and effective implementation of GPDP.
- Developed TSGs to assist 230 GPCCs in all six blocks in their GPDP preparation.
- Mentored members of all 230 GPCCs.

- Trained a total of 30 DMTs, six BRGs and 45 CRTs, and strengthened 230 Gram Sabhas.
- Trained 230 Sarpanchs and approximately 2,500 GP members on the GPDP process.
- Ensured development of 230 GPDP plans in Tonk district, all of which were approved and implemented.
- Helped localise SDGs through GPDPs as the planning process was SDG informed and could be monitored through indicators to track progress and expenditure.
- Handheld 230 GPs to ensure their GPDP fund allotment and training plans have social sector components. The infrastructure improvement plan in GPDPs which normally included roads, drainage, electrification, boundary walls, embankments, etc., now focuses on prioritising infrastructure in public facilities used by children.
- Community engagement activities in GPDP now include child marriage prevention along with entitlement schemes for vulnerable populations such as Palanhaar and widow pension.
- In collaboration with Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj and Gramin Vikas Sansthan (IGPR & GVS), a training module on child rights has been developed and integrated into the GPDP plan process. Gender and adolescent empowerment based caselets were used in the cascade training and mentorship campaign to sensitise the district, panchayat, block and gram sabha representatives.





## Model GPDP and adolescent empowerment success stories

### Achievements across all 230 GPs spread across six Samitis in Tonk

- In line with the Rajasthan government order on developing volunteers to build local capacities, an extended mentorship process for adolescents was put into place through the trainers.
- Inputs related to adolescent issues have been integrated into GPDP plans and made available online into PlanPlus which is the guiding system for all plans.
- Every GP meeting has at least one agenda point related to adolescent issues and child labour.
- Regular monitoring of school and AWC registers is conducted to track adolescent dropouts and efforts are made to relink them with schools.
- Constant advocacy by GP members is carried out against child marriage.

*Earlier, wastage from the mustard crop would be burnt. Now, it is collected in one place and sold (nilami). The money collected from that sale is used to build embankments in fields to keep animals out. This furthers the cause of adolescent empowerment since earlier girls would have to spend time in the fields to keep the animals away. This was a one crore rupee exercise spread over 33 kilometres of the GP.*

*Also, government teachers would hold a celebration when they retired. Recently, when a teacher retired, the GP members asked her to use the money she would have spent on the celebration to build a toilet in the school instead as this would be very useful for adolescents. The teacher agreed and got four toilets constructed in a co-education school.*

**Ganesh Baret**  
Sarpanch, Darda Hind GP, Tonk district

*Issues like adolescent empowerment, women's empowerment and ending child marriage are now included in the GPDP. Child marriage and other social evils are discussed in Gram Panchayat meetings. Before the wedding season, the Collector directs the Patwari, Gram Sewak and other government workers to ensure that child marriages are not done. Issues of adolescent girls are taken care of, for example if a school does not have a toilet which is a crucial aspect for attendance of adolescent girls, then this issue is included in the plan. Monitoring is taken up by block level and panchayat level officials.*

**Amnilal Dileendra,**  
Chief Planning Officer, Tonk district

The Tonk pilot founded on UNICEF's Model GP/GPDP framework has significant potential for scaling up. The GPDP process has been strengthened through capacity building of its duty-bearers, their sensitisation on issues related to adolescents and inclusion in planning, and strengthening interdepartmental convergence and community engagement. Consistent efforts are being made to make the planning process more lively, self-sustaining and collaborative with an adolescent empowerment focus.



for every child

**UNICEF Rajasthan**

B-9 Bhawani Singh Lane, C-Scheme

Opp. Nehru Sahkar Bhawan, Jaipur 302 001

Rajasthan, India

Tel: +91 0141 222-2694, 222-2636, 409-0500

Email: [jaipur@unicef.org](mailto:jaipur@unicef.org)