CRISP
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MAASAM

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CRISP :| **Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies**

Deliberate. Design. Deliver.

Decentralised Planning from the Lens of 'Kerala'

S M Vijayanand IAS Retd.

President– CRISP

Post-independence, in order to achieve social and economic development in a quick manner, policies and programmes were planned as part of 5-year Plans in a centralised manner i.e., a top-down approach. However, the objectives set in the plans were unrealised, resulting in uneven development. The consequence of this has led to changing the approach by thinking from a bottom-up approach called as "decentralised planning" which was envisaged to prioritize the local needs, address local-specific problems through involving the people at the local level i.e., village level, block level, and district level, in the formulation and implementation of the plans. Under this type of planning, powers were vested in local-level organizations and institutions to formulate, adopt, execute actions and supervise the plan without interference by the central body.

The concept of decentralised planning in India is as old as planning itself and was a national ideal. Several attempts were made in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s to operationalise it across the country. Although in some states district plans were formulated, they could not be operationalised due to the non-existence of people's institutions at district or sub-district levels; never endowed with real power or financial resources to foster desired development intervention. A crucial

episode in serving the national debate on decentralisation was the submission of the Ashok Mehta Committee Report on Panchayati Raj and the Dantwala Committee Report on Block Level Planning, a culmination of provisions of 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments passed by the Parliament. The amendments to the Constitution serve as an important milestone in the history of decentralisation in India by making the Panchayati Raj Institutions a basic structure of the Constitution itself, with periodic elections of the local bodies and providing them with an active role in the planning process. Now, Panchayats were legitimized and strengthened with powers of functions, functionaries, and finances. The functions included planning for education, health, social welfare, women and child development, poverty reduction, roads and buildings, housing, water and sanitation, waste management, energy, livelihood activities, village industries etc. The functionaries imply the functional responsibilities specified in the Panchayati Raj Act which empowers panchayats to have their own staff from their income, "Ex-officio Secretaries" of Local Governments, engineering cadre for public infrastructure works etc. The finances provided Panchayats with a scope of generating their own revenue and spending it as part of development plans. In addition, the Panchayats also receive budget for development from State as well as Central Government from a convergence

of different schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Manthri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Samagra Siksha Abhiyaan, Deendayal Antyoaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY – G), Swachh Bharat Mission – Rural etc.

Despite the advantages of decentralisation of planning and repeated attempts to implement the envisaged on the ground, the planning process in India has remained a highly centralised affair. The reasons cite d were the paucity of Nagarpalika (also known as Municipality, Nagar Parishad or Nagar Palika Parishad) and Panchayati Raj institutions to shoulder the planning exercise. Most of the States have not realised to fullest potential of implementing decentralised planning, except for Kerala. The main reason contributing to this development was a political will within the State added to public consciousness of their rights, and "People's Campaign". The initiative was designed to empower the panchayats and municipalities to contribute to the 5-year plan through strategic interventions and mobilisation i.e., making elected representatives aware of their powers; organise the officials of various line departments to shoulder planning responsibilities; including the expertise of non-officials with high technical, professional qualification and experience; involvement of mass of people to develop their new democratic project to improve their lives; mobilization of mass organisations of the people.

The primary objective of the Campaign was to ensure that local-level institutions prioritize their development activities through a shelf of integrated schemes, in a scientific and participatory manner. Local bodies had to plan for themselves, therefore, identify the felt needs of the people, identify the development gaps, assess the local resources, make feasible development schemes, and prioritise and integrate them into a local development plan. This is called the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP). The Campaign to prepare GPDP is carried out from October to January by publicising the event and garnering citizens'

participation in the planning exercise. The planning process comprises the following phases:

Needs Assessment: Through Gram Sabhas, the local body with the participation of mass organisations and citizens, identifies the needs of development for the village, panchayat, municipality etc.

Situation Analysis: An assessment of current development statistics is done to identify the gaps in various indicators and address them accordingly.

Strategy Setting: Development Seminars are held by local bodies with various stakeholders consisting of 200-500 members participating to further discuss and iterate on the plan.

Priority setting and Resource allocation: Once the above are addressed, the elected local bodies discuss further, and prioritize on the development incorporated in the plan as per the most felt needs, resources available, development vision, and finances.

Projectisation: The technical details of the plan i.e., Detailed Project Report are then prepared by multi-disciplinary Working Groups, which are headed by elected representatives, convened by officials, with inputs from expert members drawn from civil society, primary stakeholders and professionals of the sector. At least 14 Working Groups are involved for each PRI. Further, the prepared plans are vetted by multi-disciplinary Technical Advisory Groups with experts from within the government and outside, and then by higher officials in the executive body.

Approval: An issue of approval for the plan is informed through proceedings by the District Planning Commission, as per the constitutional framework.

Further, a framework for ensuring Social Justice and inclusiveness was emphasised through the following approach i.e., (i) dissemination of information to all, (ii) understanding of the criticality of development needs, (iii) responding to the planning exercise, (iv) voicing out the

Further, it was emphasised that the above process is considered to be a low-cost-no-cost development activity if the convergence of people and office is efficient; collective sensitization, empowerment, and education about its benefits to the society. By following these measures, a Gram Panchayat would achieve the desired, collective and sustainable development of all. In tangible terms, the impact of decentralised planning was evident in the development at the panchayat level in terms of infrastructure, provision of basic needs to all, success of mass organisations such as Kudumbashree, identifying the poorest of poor through panchayat, power held with PRIs etc., observed during our field visit to Kerala. The learning from the whole process was how powerful the planning of citizens could be for themselves; as a government and society, and how a vision could be organized and materialized.In addition, a political will is necessary to achieve democratic decentralization. I would like to quote E.M.S. Namboothripad, the first Chief Minister of United Kerala,

"Democratic decentralization provision would be more helpful in the struggles of the working class against the oppressors and the exploiters. Hence, I cannot visualise a governance system of the country which is not considered Panchayat Raj institutions as an integral part of it. However, no distinction can be made between administrative duties and regulatory powers. We have to set apart some ideas like foreign affairs, defence, currency and communications under central control while transferring the rest to the state and from those to the districts and elected bodies"

needs of the marginalized, (v) assert their needs through a dialogue, (vi) influence the plan through stressing critical development agenda, (vii) intervene through inclusion in the plan, (ix) audit the effectiveness of development plan, (x) Design and Re-design impactful schemes and programmes in the development plan. The methodology used in the process would be through Focus Group Discussions, the conduct of Mahila Sabhas, Gram Sabhas, Elderly Gram Sabhas etc.

Taking it to the next level, Kerala is advancing towards working for a global agenda i.e., developing plans through benchmarking of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at a local level also being termed as the 'localisation of SDGs'. Due to the already existing systems in place, the implementation of planning on the lines of SDG at local levels is said to be achievable. Though there are some gaps in the history and capture of critical data points of SDG indicators, Kerala is at the forefront of developing a model for achieving SDGs at the local level.

Lastly, to achieve the development of all, localisation of SDGs, it is imperative that other states, development professionals, policymakers, civil societies, academicians etc., study the model of Kerala extensively for implementation on a large scale to foster sustainable development.

*(Lecture summarized by Akhil Ravella,
Fellow CRISP – Telangana Team.)*

Oxygen Management During Covid in Maharashtra: Lessons in Supply Chain Management

Sitaram Kunte IAS Retd.

Founding Member of CRISP, Former Chief Secretary of Maharashtra

Supply chain management is a critical aspect of modern business operations, encompassing the planning, sourcing, production, and distribution of goods and services to meet consumer demand efficiently and effectively. In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of robust supply chain management has been starkly highlighted, particularly concerning the vital medical resources supply.

Disasters such as the covid pandemic pose unprecedented challenges on supply chains. With massive infections leading to wider hospitalisation rates thereby triggering an unexpected surge for Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO), existing supply chains were stretched to their limits. The state of Maharashtra was very successful in terms of intervening in the market at the right time. The state also faced many challenges ranging from lack of production capacity through logistics bottlenecks upto regulatory hurdles at different levels among other things. While Maharashtra produced only about 1250 MT – 1300 MT oxygen every day due to Covid-19; however demand rose between 1600 -2000 MT/day depending on the number of cases. Demand shock coupled with disruption induced by the pandemic broke the delicate equilibrium between global and local supply chains thus laying bare their weaknesses.

The government had to intervene in order to restore balance in the market following the breakdown of the supply chain; this required them to come up with new ideas and be quick on their feet as they adapted to changing circumstances. The Maharashtra government intervened on the supply of LMO through measures such as commissioning new plants, directing oxygen produced for industrial use for medical use, procurement from neighbouring states etc. Effective transportation of oxygen was also ensured using the support of air, rail and road transport systems. Hence, through collaboration between governments, healthcare providers, manufacturers, and logistics companies it became imperative to ensure the uninterrupted supply of oxygen to healthcare facilities. Moreover, repurposing industrial oxygen sources, implementing rationing measures, and optimising transportation routes were among the tactics employed to meet the soaring demand.

In India, Maharashtra was the most successful state in terms of providing LMO during Covid, according to a comparative analysis. In any case, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that without effective supply chain management systems it is impossible to guarantee the availability of vital things such as oxygen in times of crisis. Lessons learned from this experience include the necessity of proactive planning, collaboration, flexibility, and innovation in managing supply chains amidst disasters. Moreover, there is a pressing need for governments, businesses, and international organisations to invest in strengthening supply chain resilience and infrastructure to better prepare for future emergencies. By applying the insights gained from the oxygen management challenges during COVID-19, we can bolster our collective capacity to address and mitigate the impacts of future disasters on supply chains and safeguard public health.

(Lecture summarized by Abiya Jose,
Fellow CRISP – Andhra Pradesh Team.)

Pathways to Progress: Assessing Uttar Pradesh's Journey Towards SDG 4 - Quality Education

Divya Malakar

Consultant, CRISP Uttar Pradesh

Introduction

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) chart a course toward societal advancement, addressing poverty, inequality, health, education, and justice for a prosperous and inclusive world. Quality education stands as a cornerstone, impacting social and economic development, health, political engagement, empowerment, and human capital. SDG 4 aims to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all," including access to technical and vocational education.

Uttar Pradesh (UP), being one of India's most populous states, plays a critical role in achieving SDG 4 targets. This article evaluates UP's progress on SDG 4, comparing it with other states and national performance. It aims to identify UP's strengths and areas for improvement, suggesting strategies to transition from performer to achiever status in SDG achievement.

The methodology involves analysing NITI Aayog SDG Index reports (2018, 2019, and 3.0) and the UP SDG Progress Report 2022 to assess the state's progress. Additionally, it refers to the SDG Vision 2023 for Uttar Pradesh, prepared by the Department of Planning and designed by UNICEF.

About SDG 4

SDG 4 encompasses 10 targets and 19 indicators at the national level, data for 14 indicators are available at the state level, including adjusted net enrolment ratio, gross enrolment ratio, average dropout rate, proficiency in language and maths, literacy rate, access to electricity and water in schools, trained teachers, and pupil-teacher ratio. The targets of SDG 4 include ensuring quality primary/secondary education, early childhood development, equal access to technical and higher education, skills for decent jobs, gender equality, literacy for youth and adults, knowledge of sustainable development, safe learning environments, and scholarships for higher.

Uttar Pradesh's Overall SDG Performance

Uttar Pradesh's progress across the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) shows a mixed picture, with commendable advancements in certain sectors like energy (SDG 7), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), infrastructure development, and sustainable cities (SDG 11), as indicated in the graph. However, significant challenges persist in areas such as poverty reduction (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), health (SDG 3), education (SDG 4), and gender equality (SDG 5), with notable setbacks particularly evident in addressing climate change (SDG 13).
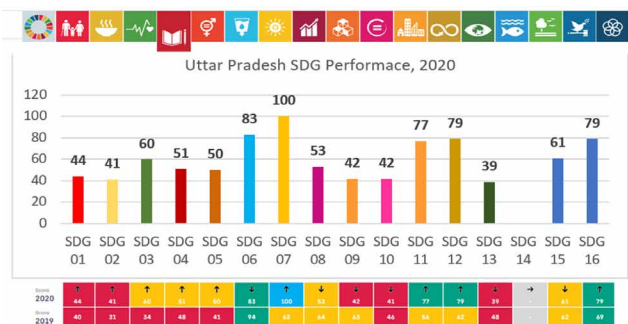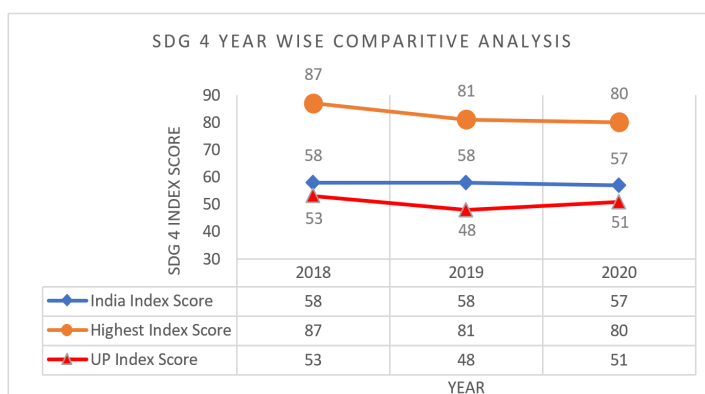

Source SEQ Source * ARABIC 1: SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21

Trend Analysis of SDG 4 Index Scores

Over recent years, Uttar Pradesh (UP) has undertaken numerous measures to enhance the quality of education, supported by various Central and State-level schemes and policies. According to the SDG Index 3.0 (2020-21), both India and UP are classified as performers, with UP scoring 51 out of 100, indicating significant room for improvement to reach the highest score of 80 achieved by Kerala. Although below the national average of 57, this progress places UP ahead of states like Andhra Pradesh (50), Jharkhand (45), Madhya Pradesh (45), Odisha (45), and Bihar (29). (Aayog, SDG India Index & Dashboard, 2020-21)

The graph illustrates UP's SDG 4 Performance (2018-2020) Compared to National Index Score and Top State Scores.

GRAPH 2: SDG 4 Index Score, Comparative Analysis

SDG 4 YEAR WISE COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS	2018	2019	2020
India Index Score	58	58	57
Highest Index Score	87	81	80
UP Index Score	53	48	51

Source 2: SDG Index Report, 2018, 2019 and 2020-21

Significantly, Uttar Pradesh has showcased a notable trajectory of improvement in its SDG score, according to NITI Aayog's SDG Index 2020-21, Beginning at 53 in 2018, it experienced a slight decline to 48 in 2019-20. However, it rebounded impressively to attain a score of 51 in 2020-21, securing the 20th rank and moving from aspirant to performer. (Aayog, SDG India Index & Dashboard, 2019-20

Target Specific Analysis

While the goal index provides an overview, scrutinizing target-specific indicators reveals gaps and progress, providing a nuanced understanding. Variations in data collection for indicators against targets over the years underscore the importance of examining quality education mandates.

Major outcome based on the above analysis

Target 4.1: Proficiency in language and mathematics declines after grade 3, with little improvement in grade 5 and a considerable drop after grade 8. The gross intake ratio decreases in primary and upper primary grades but slightly improves in secondary education, outperforming the national average. However, the gross enrolment ratio in higher secondary education is declining, falling below 50%, requiring urgent attention. The net enrolment ratio in upper primary education is just 64%, significantly lower than the national average. Despite state-level schemes, the adjusted net enrolment ratio in secondary education remains stagnant. Dropout rates, though better than the national average at 15.51%, require attention to meet the national target of 8.8%. Only 67% and 47% of students' progress to upper primary and secondary education, respectively. (Perspective Planning Division, SDG Progress Report 2022, 2022)

Target No	Target Description	National Target 2030	India Score	Highest Scoring State	State With Rank 01	Uttar Pradesh Score	UP Rank
4.1	ANER in elementary education (class 1-8)	100	87.26	100	Karnataka	84.54	22
4.1	Average annual dropout rate at secondary level (class 9-10)	8.8	17.87	9.1	Kerala	15.51	15
4.1	GER in higher secondary (class 11-12)	100	50.14	81.8	Himachal Pradesh	46.12	19
4.1	class 8 students achieved minimum proficiency in language & mathematics	100	71.9	88.1	Rajasthan	67.4	24
4.3	GER in higher education (18-23 years)	50	26.3	53.9	Sikkim	25.8	16
4.5	PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES (+15 years) completed at least secondary education	100	19.3	32.4	Goa	17.8	16
4.5	Gender Parity Index (GPI) for higher education (18-23 years)	1	1	1.4	Kerela	1.14	8
4.6	Percent-age of persons who are literate (15 years and above)	100	74.6	94.6	Kerela	68.2	24
4.a	Percentage of schools with access to basic infrastructure (electricity, drinking water)	100	84.76	100	Gujarat	81.48	20
4.c	Percent-age of trained teachers at secondary level (class 9-10)	100	82.62	94.5	Kerala	73.86	22
4.c	Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR) at secondary level (class 9-10)	30	21	9	Himachal	34	25
		100	57	80	Kerela	51	18

Table 1: Comparative Analysis: UP's Progress Against National and Top State Performances in SDG 4
Source 3:Author based on SDG INDIA Index & Dashboard 2020-21

Target 4.3: The state falls short of the national target of 50% gross enrolment in tertiary education, with only 25.8% enrolment and minimal growth.

Target 4.5: While UP performs well in gender disparities (around 1.14), the gender disparity index for tertiary education is 2.25, requiring urgent attention for equal access to education.

Target 4.6: The youth literacy rate (aged 15-24) is 68.20%, indicating potential for improvement to meet the national target of 74.6%.

Target 4.a: Infrastructure improvements, such as drinking water, sanitation, electricity, and ICT, are crucial for enhancing education quality. While UP has made significant strides in infrastructure, there is a need for disabled-friendly facilities, including ramps and toilets.

Target 4.b: Trained teachers are vital for quality education. UP's high pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 34 at secondary education requires urgent action to meet the national average of 21. Despite quantitative improvement in teacher training, qualitative assessment is imperative.

Major Focus Areas

To summarize, Uttar Pradesh faces formidable obstacles in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, as evidenced by declining learning proficiency beyond Grades 3 and 8, persistently low enrolment rates across all levels, significant dropout rates, and inadequate inclusivity for children with disabilities. These challenges, compounded by deficiencies in teacher training and high pupil-teacher ratios, demand urgent attention to ensure equitable access to quality education and improve educational outcomes across the state.

States Initiative to Improve SDG 4 Performance

To effectively address these challenges and enhance the state's educational standing, it is crucial to scrutinize the initiatives undertaken by the state government, leveraging insights from the analysis to formulate suggestions.

As per Uttar Pradesh SDG Vision document 2023-24, the **Vision** of State for SDG 4 is to ensure that all children, adolescents and youth, irrespective of gender and other social categories, access quality elementary education, including early childhood development, and have equal opportunities to continue higher education. The state will stress education that imparts knowledge, life skills and democratic values and attitudes. (Perspective Planning Division, Sustainable Development Goals, Vision 2030 Uttarpradesh, 2023-24)

Strategy: The state envisages four pillars of educational interventions –Expansion, Equity & Inclusion, Excellence and Employability

Schemes and Policies: To enhance the quality of education state is implementing various schemes and policies. For basic education Sharda Abhiyan, Direct Benefit Transfer, Basic Sumangala Yojna. For Secondary education various portals like Manav SAMPADA Portal, DIKSHA Portal, PARAKH, PRAGYAN Portal for E-Library, and "ALANKAR" Portal for Gap analysis for government schools. Along with initiatives like the New India Literacy Program. Govt is paying special attention to Skill development to promote Vocational Education and Skill Development. For Higher Education and Technical Education, ABACUS (Academic Bank of Credit) has been developed for students and teachers. And focus

on NAAC Accreditation of Higher Educational Institutions. Darpan training module and training of secondary education teachers is done by the State Educational Research and Training Council. Done by joint efforts by Central and State Governments. (Perspective Planning Division, Sustainable Development Goals, Vision 2030 Uttarpradesh, 2023-24)

Way Forward

Despite the aforementioned initiatives and efforts, Uttar Pradesh still faces challenges in improving its educational performance. Here are some suggestions to address these challenges. While not directly related to SDG targets, these suggestions can have a long-term impact and contribute to improving the state's performance.

Initiatives shall be taken at levels like Policy Level Initiatives, Program Level Initiatives, Monitoring, Governance, Engaging Stakeholders, focusing on identified SDG target gaps

Governance and State-Level Policy Initiatives

• Strengthening of Government Departments by capacity building, skill enhancement and institutional Strengthening. Along with networking between departmental agencies at the state level to nodal centres.

• Regulatory framework especially for Government schools and institutions, to push them towards excellence, quality education.

• To improve the Pupil Teacher Ratio, a study shall be conducted for revision of sanctioned faculty positions and student intake. Also, vacant positions shall be filled.

Monitoring of government schemes, grants, and funding

Though the government has numerous schemes and policies it is necessary to have an effective monitoring system for the

on-ground effectiveness and productivity of schemes and utilization of funds and grants shall be taken at the grassroots level to check whether actual actions are being taken or not. The focus shall be extended to qualitative improvement rather than quantitative numbers.

Engaging Stakeholders

Government officers who are already responsible for district-level duties should not be given additional responsibilities, such as the Nodal SDG Charge, as observed during grassroots visits.

Learning from Best practices

The state should localize, adapt, and customize best practices from other states, tailoring them to fit its current educational landscape.

Functioning of Digital Portals

As discussed earlier, the government has introduced several online platforms, including ABACUS, the Government Public Libraries System, e-Granthalaya, and the SDG UP dashboard. However, their efficiency falls short of targets. There is a pressing need to improve their user-friendliness and effectiveness. For example, steps must be taken to ensure broader student registration on the ABACUS portal and the utilization of other similar platforms.

Addressing identified SDG 4 issues

* Revamp the pupil-teacher ratio in both basic and higher education sectors to ensure optimal learning environments.

* Focus on training teachers and skill development, with an emphasis on ICT integration to enhance teaching methods.

* Strengthen state-level coaching and skill initiatives at the grassroots level to improve proficiency in nationally defined learning outcomes.

* Implement both monetary and non-monetary incentives to improve performance in NAAC Accreditation.

* Study and customize best practices from other states to enhance awareness and effectiveness of schemes and policies, thereby improving enrolment ratios and reducing dropout rates.

* Integrate universal infrastructure design in all institutions to provide facilities for differently-abled students, such as ramps and accessible toilets.

* Prioritise early education, retention strategies, and enrolment in higher education to address challenges like learning proficiency dips after grade 3, high dropout rates, and concerns about teacher-pupil ratios. Bridging gender gaps and ensuring inclusivity for students with disabilities are crucial aspects of empowering youth and advancing sustainable development in Uttar Pradesh.

While Uttar Pradesh has shown some improvement in SDG 4, there's still significant scope for growth. By addressing identified challenges and learning from top-performing states, UP can make further progress in achieving quality education for all.

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FellowSpeak

Being a CRISP Fellow – Key Learnings from the Orientation Programme Gaurav Nayak, Karnataka Team

The CRISP Fellowship 2024 Orientation Programme was a great learning experience with a good blend of academic knowledge and practical inputs relevant to our work. The sessions covered important public policy issues of the day, presented by the CRISP mentors and State Teams, other experts, and the faculty at Kerala Institute of Local Administration. As I begin my Fellowship, I am delighted to share some of my learnings from the orientation.

A common point that was reiterated in the sessions was the importance of convergence in improving public service delivery. While the importance of collaboration between government departments was highlighted in most of these sessions, it was interesting to see how the participation of and linkage between the government, industry, and civil society can have a meaningful impact on the social sector (as seen in the case of COVID-19 Management in Maharashtra).

Further, we learnt that while having broad goals in the form of a policy document is important, it is only as good as it is implemented on the ground. This was a major takeaway for all the Fellows since we will all be "learning at the cutting edge", as Mr. S.M. Vijayanand, Founder President of CRISP, succinctly put it to us on the first day of the orientation. As Fellows, we will be engaged in field visits to understand the ground-level situation of various government projects. In this context, we were advised by the mentors to keep our outsider biases in check while engaging with the citizens. Moreover, the importance of looking through the lens of intersectionality and power structures was emphasized by Ms. Neha Dhingra, Senior Manager, CRISP.

We were also encouraged to think through the framework of the 'Theory of Change', which is an important part of how CRISP undertakes its projects. The importance of measuring outcomes, and not just outputs was stressed on. However, as explained by Dr. Rama Kondapalli, State Lead – Telangana, it is important to not reduce people to just numbers. While quantitative data can aid our understanding of the problem, one should not lose focus on the quality of the process and outcome.

As CRISP Fellows, we will be engaging with government stakeholders regularly. In our professional journeys for the next two years, we might encounter issues such as rigidity in institutions and government inaction. However, as Dr. I.V. Subba Rao, IAS (Retd.) suggested, change is uncomfortable. In a similar vein, KR Subramanian from TCF mentioned that while resistance to change is difficult to deal with, it can often help us refine our actions for the better. In this context, we need to focus on what we can control.

Overall, the orientation has helped me realize the importance of understanding issues from diverse perspectives. As I begin my Fellowship, I hope to keep an open mind and soak in knowledge and experience from all directions. Finally, I look forward to two years of "doing, learning, and writing."

Major Developments in CRISP

CRISP Fellowship Programme 2024 Wraps Up, Equipping Leaders for Tomorrow's Governance Challenges

The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) Fellowship Orientation Programme 2024 was an enriching experience spanning over 8 days, held at two prestigious institutions: MCR HRD Institute of Telangana in Hyderabad and the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA). This extensive orientation aimed to equip newly selected fellows with a comprehensive understanding of CRISP's mission, which revolves around facilitating data-driven policymaking to enhance public sector activities and governmental efficiency.

The programme commenced on April 5th with Mr. R Subramnyam (IAS Retd.), former Chief Secretary to the Government of India and Secretary of CRISP, delivering an insightful discourse on CRISP's Vision and Mission. Following this, Sri. SM Vijayanand, President of CRISP and veteran bureaucrat with extensive experience in Rural Development and Local Governance, elucidated the pivotal role of young professionals in development administration. He shared practical insights on poverty alleviation programs and the dynamics of Panchayat Raj Systems and Decentralised Planning.

Sri T. Vijaya Kumar, an IAS officer and Special Secretary to the Government of Telangana in the Department of Social Welfare, discussed the use of Self-Help Group (SHG) models to tackle poverty and the importance of natural framing for sustainable growth. BK Agarwal, a retired IAS officer and founding member of CRISP, shared his insights on land administration and on implementing large-scale government programs across various sectors.

On April 7th, Shri. SJ Kunte, a founding member of CRISP and former Chief Secretary of Maharashtra, delivered a valuable lecture on how to prepare administrators for unforeseen battles, based on his extensive experience in handling the COVID-19 pandemic in Maharashtra.

On April 8th, Smt. Sandhya Kanneganti, a founding member of CRISP and former Commissioner of School Education for the Government of Andhra Pradesh, delivered a session on transforming school education in India. Sri VLVSS Subba Rao IES, Senior Advisor for CRISP and former Principal Economic Adviser for the Ministry of Rural Development in the Government of India, also conducted a session on the integration of higher education, including the scope and challenges associated with it. He also mentioned the HEIGHTS project, which he has been guiding and which has led to the expansion of other states in India.

On April 9th, Sri RS Julania, a founding member of CRISP and Chairman of the Board of Secondary Education at the Madhya Pradesh Government, along with being a former Secretary of Sports at the Ministry of Sports & Youth Affairs

in the Government of India, delivered a lecture on the topic of "Designing Systems for Rural Economy Transformation: A Case Study of Madhya Pradesh - Small Irrigation Project". During the same event, Neha Dhingra, Senior Programmes Manager, presented the evaluation of the Chiranjeevi Swasthya Bima Yojana by the Government of Rajasthan, and Dr. R Vijayaraghavan, State Lead of Tamil Nadu for CRISP, spoke about the research methodology and its applications in the project evaluating the Indira Gandhi Shahri Rojgar Guarantee Yojana, which was also conducted by CRISP.

On April 10th, I.V. Subba Rao (Retd. IAS), Former Secretary to the Government of India, gave a talk on change management and the application of change mechanisms. Rajeev Sadanandan (Retd. IAS), one of the founding members of CRISP and CEO of HSTP (Health Systems Transformation Platform), spoke about the Kerala Model of public health with a special focus on Decentralized Health.

Mr. Praveen Khanghta, Head of Strategy, Investment, and Portfolio Development, along with Subramanian KR, Operating Partner from The Convergence Foundation, introduced TCF and its vision, mission, and enthusiasm for accelerating India's development by creating momentum around ideas that have the potential for transformational change. Dr. Santhosh Mathew (IAS Retd.), Country Lead Public Policy and Finance at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, shared his valuable insights on the vision of a Disease-free World.

On the 7th day of the Orientation programme, the new fellows visited the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) to learn about the environment of Local Governments in Kerala. Dr. Rajesh, Senior Urban Fellow at KILA, discussed various projects and schemes such as Clean Kerala and the People's Plan Campaign (PPC), and shared the strategies that helped implement them. Smt. Sukanya K U, Coordinator at KILA Center for SDGs and Local Governance, gave insightful information about the Localisation of SGDs and its Local Actions. Dr. Monish Jose, Associate Professor at KILA, talked about implementing a Local Action Plan on Climate Change. Prof. Ajith Kaliyath, Urban Chair Professor at KILA, talked about Urban Interventions. Additionally, experts from KILA briefed the fellows about the Kudumbashree project in Kerala, its working methods and how this model can be implemented in other states. The KILA orientation program concluded with a field visit the following day, followed by a valedictory session.

Rural Development

NGO Interventions to Strengthen Gram Panchayat Library Functions

The CRISP Karnataka team participated in a day-long review meeting with various NGOs that conduct interventions in Gram Panchayat libraries. The meeting, held on April 15, 2024, was chaired by Ms. Uma Mahadevan, IAS (Additional Chief Secretary, Panchayat Raj, Government of Karnataka) and attended by Ms. Priyanka Mary Francis IAS (Commissioner, Karnataka Panchayat Raj Commissionerate). Twelve NGOs presented their interventions, followed by deliberations on their future action plans. Their involvement in libraries ranged from providing infrastructural support, books and digital equipment, to organizing weekly or one-time activities targeted at various user groups, with a special focus on students. The Department reiterated its commitment to resolving challenges faced by the NGOs during their interventions and commended their collective efforts in transforming libraries into vibrant spaces. The NGOs discussed ways to collaborate with each other to enhance the impact of their initiatives and achieve greater scale. Additionally, NGOs operating on a smaller scale were offered support by the Department to expand their initiatives to more libraries across the state.

The CRISP KA team interacts regularly with several of the participating NGOs in various ways. In their presentation, Sikshana Foundation highlighted CRISP's concurrent evaluation report on their Grama Digi Vikasana (Library digitization) initiative, as the sole independent study conducted on their intervention. Akanksha Charitable Trust showcased their theory of change and outcome measurement indicators for the Grantha Mithra program in their presentation – both of which were developed in consultation with CRISP. The CRISP team also regularly assists the Commissioner, Panchayat Raj, with reviewing proposals, action plans and implementation strategies of NGO initiatives. The one-day workshop highlighted the immense potential of NGO involvement in strengthening the flagship initiatives of the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj department.

Higher Education

CRISP Telangana Advances Higher Education Quality in the State

- Working towards ensuring quality within the higher education ecosystem of Telangana, the CRISP Telangana team had extensive discussions regarding HEIGHTS 2024 with the Telangana State Council of Higher Education (TSCHE) and Commissionerate of Collegiate Education (CCE) representatives on 3 April 2024. The purpose of the meeting was to identify the lingering roadblocks in project implementation and to arrive at a collaborative conducive activity plan. As a follow-up to the discussion, a meeting with the Principal Secretary, Department of Education, Government of Telangana, was held on 19 April 2024 where the HEIGHTS action plan 2024 was given a formal approval.

- The CRISP Telangana team conducted a day-long NAAC workshop with the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Degree College for Women, Vikarabad, upon the invitation of the Social Welfare Department, Government of Telangana on 15 April 2024. This is the first time the NAAC applicant institution has been allocated with the responsibility of empowering hundreds of women hailing majorly from a rural background. Keeping this in mind, CRISP conducted an aspirational workshop which was helpful in offering a meaningful direction to the Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) and motivating the assigned college faculty towards confidently engaging with the NAAC process.

- NAAC has initiated new binary accreditation processes and invited inputs of active academicians/ experts regarding the same. Based on the various experiences from the field, feedback was provided to NAAC on the new framework under development.

Driving Change in UP Higher Education: CRISP-UP Initiative Makes Strides Toward Institutional Improvement

The CRISP-UP Team is actively working in tandem to achieve the various targets outlined in the PEHLE-UP Project. Through extensive research on Government colleges, we engage stakeholders at every level, ensuring comprehensive involvement. Our overarching goal is to maximise institutional connections to upscale the project's impact. This involves conducting capacity-building workshops, providing ongoing support, and spearheading research alongside state-level initiatives, helping in the preparation of Institutional Development Plans (IDPs).

To effectively execute these objectives, we employ diverse communication channels such as field visits, video conferencing, and telephonic conversations. We stay abreast of the latest developments, ensuring our initiatives remain relevant and impactful.

Capacity Building Workshop

Our goal is to extend support to the maximum number of affiliated colleges across all State Public Universities under UPHED, in order to achieve the objectives of PEHLE-UP. Ms Divya visited Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapith University in Varanasi and met with the Registrar Dr. Sunita Pandey. Similarly, Mr. Rahul visited Bundelkhand University in Jhansi and met with Prof. Avnish. They finalised the dates for workshops in the first quarter of May at respective universities to connect with the colleges and collaborate to improve the quality of education.

Facilitating Connections with 200+ Institutions

A survey conducted by CRISP with the help of UP Higher Education Council, focusing on Government and Aided Colleges, yielded an overwhelming response. This enabled us to establish connections with more than 200 institutions across Uttar Pradesh, spanning various universities.

Field Visits: Studying Government Colleges, UPHED

The CRISP-UP team initiated prototype research on Government colleges to assess ground realities, identify challenges, and uncover potential. This information will be presented to the UP Higher Education Department for policy-level decisions aimed at enhancing these institutions and driving them towards excellence.
Ms. Divya began by visiting Government Girls Degree College, DLW, Varanasi, engaging with the Principal in charge, and both teaching and non-teaching staff. Continuing this effort, Ms Divya and Mr Rahul visited Government PG College, Noida, holding discussions with the Principal and Former RHEO Meerut. Subsequently, the team visited Maharaja Bijli Pasi Degree College, Lucknow, engaging in a detailed conversation with the entire staff. The team's efforts were appreciated, and an initiative by UP HED was acknowledged. We also visited E-Parks, Smart Classes for which grants were issued by UP Higher Education Directorate, to monitor the fund utilisation of RUSA. A roadmap has been finalised to ensure the continuation of the study for result-oriented outcomes.

Report on the Development of CBSE School Websites in Andhra Pradesh

CRISP has taken the lead in a pivotal initiative aimed at enhancing the educational landscape of Andhra Pradesh. This initiative focuses on the development of websites for the 1000 schools transitioned to the CBSE board by the state government. In addition to individual school websites, a dedicated AP Government CBSE portal has been meticulously crafted to facilitate seamless integration of CBSE systems across these educational institutions.

The successful launch of these websites and the web portal (schooledu.ap.gov.in/AP-CBSE-School/) by the honourable Minister of Education in January 2024 marks a significant milestone in the journey towards educational excellence. However, this commitment to excellence doesn't end here. The CBSE Cell is continuously refining and enhancing these platforms to ensure they meet and exceed the rigorous standards set forth by the CBSE board. Through ongoing development and refinement, AP Government CBSE schools strive to create an ecosystem that fosters academic growth, innovation, and inclusivity.

Training on Structured Lesson Plans for 204 District Resource Persons in AP

The District Resource Persons Training on Structured Lesson Plans on 15th and 16th April 2024 marked a pivotal milestone in CRISP's journey towards fostering competency-based teaching and learning in AP's government schools. The state's historic decision to affiliate 1000 government schools to CBSE signals a transformative shift in AP's educational landscape. Recognizing the importance of equipping the teachers and empowering students in this transition, the state, in collaboration with CRISP, embarked on a steadfast mission of support and guidance.

It began with a 3-day workshop on structured pedagogy in July to orient 60 selected teachers on structured lesson plans for better learning. This was followed by a 4-day workshop in October on the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2023), a document that helps teachers operationalize the aims, principles and approach of the National Education Policy 2020. The culmination of these efforts was witnessed during the intensive 12-day Camp Mode Workshop in November, where AP's bright teachers, under the guidance of experts from Azim Premji University, developed 143 lesson plans and 1097 period plans for all subjects of Grades 9 and 10. These plans were meticulously reviewed by SCERT and printed as Resource Books for dissemination to over 10,000 teachers in the 1000 CBSE Schools.

The DRP training was crucial in ensuring that the teachers recognised the value of these Resource Books and put them to regular use in their classrooms. Day 1 of the training, led by professors from APU set the theoretical foundation for the structured plans. The sessions covered various aspects of the NCF-SE 2023, including Learning Standards, Effective Pedagogy, and Principles of Assessment. The State Resource Persons then delved into the crux of lesson planning in subject-specific groups, equipping DRPs with the knowledge and practice of delivering structured lessons. In an upcoming training in May, the DRPs will train all the teachers of the 1000 CBSE schools.

CRISP

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