

CRISP

Deliberate. Design. Deliver.

LIVING LANDSCAPES

Centre for Research in
Schemes and Policies



GIST

**Grassroots Level Institutions
Strengthening & Transformation**

————— For Climate Action —————

*Empowering Grassroots
for a Sustainable Future...*

www.crispindia.net

About CRISP

The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) is an initiative by a group of (10) civil servants, who worked at the level of Secretary to Government of India, to help the State and Central Governments in designing/redesigning/evaluating the schemes/policies in social sector. CRISP, a unique organisation set up by civil servants and those in public service, each with more than three decades of experience, give back to society, by helping in better structuring of the implementation process of the schemes and policies. All members of CRISP work on a **'pro bono'** basis on service motto. CRISP has set up a highly professional team for fulfilling the mandate of supporting State Governments.

Currently, CRISP is working with 08 state governments in various sectors prioritising the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 16. *CRISP is working on Higher Education in Telangana (HEIGHTS), Uttar Pradesh (PEHLE UP) and Madhya Pradesh (EXCEL-MP); Panchayat Raj System in Karnataka; Gram Panchayats & SHGs in Tamil Nadu; School Education in Andhra Pradesh; Rural Development and School Education in Meghalaya; and Pro-Poor Initiatives and Local Self Governance in Rajasthan.* CRISP is on a mission to work with all the state governments by helping them to implement the social sector policies in the most effective way.

Founding Members



S M Vijayanand
IAS-1981



T Vijay Kumar
IAS-1983



Sitaram J Kunte
IAS - 1985



R Subrahmanyam
IAS-1985



Brij Kumar Agarwal
IAS-1985



Pushpa Subrahmanyam
IAS-1985



Radhey Shyam Julania
IAS-1985



R Rajiv Sadanandan
IAS-1985



Sandhya Kanneganti
Indian Postal Service-1986



Dr. Sekhar Bonu
IAS-1987

Problem Statement

The challenges posed by climate change reflected through extreme weather conditions devastate the livelihoods in the rural areas. The disappearance of common areas, which acted as a mainstay for the rural livelihoods, fast depleting groundwater, deforestation, and toxification of the air/water/soil due to chemical fertilisers – are destroying livelihoods and causing impoverishment.

The main actors for rescue from this problem are the grassroots level institutions: Gram Panchayats (the Constitutional Bodies), the Self-Help Groups (the people's bodies), and the institutions for delivery of nutrition, education and health. Achieving convergence between these institutions and spurring them for joint action is the only way to rescue the situation from an imminent disaster.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure prosperity for all by 2030. They cover various social, environmental, and economic development issues. A critical goal under SDG 16 is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies. This goal focuses on reducing violence, ensuring access to justice for all, and building effective, accountable institutions. It aims to create a world where everyone can safely live and have their rights upheld. SDG 16 underscores the need for transparent, responsible, and inclusive institutions for sustainable development. It recognises that strong institutions ensure that all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable, can access critical services and participate in societal decision-making. To tackle these challenges at the grassroots level GIST initiative has been launched by CRISP.

SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT
GOALS



16 PEACE, JUSTICE AND
STRONG INSTITUTIONS



GIST Initiative Overview

The GRASSROOTS-LEVEL INSTITUTIONS STRENGTHENING AND TRANSFORMATION for Climate Action (GIST) initiative, proposed by the Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP), aims to enhance the effectiveness, accountability, and inclusivity of grassroots institutions across India. This initiative is grounded in Sustainable Development Goal 16 **Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions principles**, which focus on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, providing access to justice for all, and building effective institutions. **The Initiative will create impact to achieve Sustainable Development Goals 1 No Poverty, 2 Zero Hunger, 3 Good Health & Well-Being, 4 Quality Education, 5 Gender Equality, 13 Climate Action and 15 Life on Land.** GIST seeks to address the challenges of siloed operations and lack of coordination among local governance bodies and community institutions. The initiative is supported by Padraaka Foundation, a.k.a Living Landscape (Common Ground Initiative)



Objectives



Empowering Local Communities through Grassroots Institutions



Protecting Common Resources with Community Engagement



Advancing SDGs Indicators



Facilitating FRA Implementation Locally



Enhancing PESA Implementation

Components of GIST Initiative

a. Strengthening the Gram Panchayat – Community-Based Organisations (CBO) Partnership

Strengthening SHG-GP convergence involves fostering collaboration between Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and Gram Panchayats (GPs) to enhance local governance and community development. This partnership can empower SHGs to participate in decision-making processes, ensuring that the needs of women and marginalized groups are addressed. By aligning SHG initiatives with GP programs, such as resource management and livelihood generation, the community's socio-economic development can be more effectively supported. Additionally, this convergence can improve the implementation of government schemes, leading to more sustainable and inclusive outcomes at the grassroots level.

b. Operationalising Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA)

The second key component of GIST focuses on effective operationalisation of the Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas Act (PESA) to empower tribal communities in Odisha and Jharkhand. This recognises the importance of PESA in order to enhance tribal representation in decision-making, safeguard traditional cultures, and ensure sustainable management of natural resources. PESA is a crucial legislation that supports tribal communities by ensuring their representation in decision-making bodies like Gram Sabhas and local councils. It empowers them to safeguard their traditional cultures, and self govern their lands, and resources by facilitating forest stewardship and aligning conservation goals with economic interests.

c. Enhancing Implementation of Forest Rights Act

Another component of GIST focuses on enhancing the quality of implementing the Forest Rights Act (FRA) to empower tribal communities in Odisha and Jharkhand. This will focus on empowering communities to get individual and community rights over their inhabited forest areas and supporting the state governments in improving the process of FRA filing. FRA liberates tribal communities and augments forest conservation by ensuring food security and livelihoods. It provides individual rights for self-cultivation and habitation, community rights for grazing fishing, access to water bodies in forests, habitat rights for Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), access to biodiversity, community rights to intellectual property and traditional knowledge, recognition of conventional customary rights, and the right to protect, regenerate, or manage any community forest resource for sustainable use.

d. Planning for identifying, protecting, and regenerating Commons

To address the effective management of common resources at the Gram Panchayat (GP) level, especially in PESA areas, initiating consultations that bring together key stakeholders is crucial. These discussions aim to identify areas of coordination between the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) and the Forest Rights Act (FRA). The focus of the consultations will be on critical aspects of governance, resource management, and ecological restoration, emphasizing the importance of sustainable practices at the local level for long-term community development.

e. Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Localising Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) bring a community-based approach for the timely realisation of SDGs in the villages. This will be achieved by building capacities of the communities led by Gram Panchayat, working along with the SHGs and other CBOs. This would be supported by the Higher Educational Institutions that adopt villages for this purpose (Unnat Bharat Abhiyan), Focused Block Initiatives, and other institutions at the village level.

Path Forward

To fully realise the objectives of SDG 16, there is a need for a more integrated and collaborative approach among grassroots institutions. This can be achieved through:

Data Sharing and Communication

Establishing systems for data sharing and communication among institutions ensures that all relevant information is available for decision-making.

Collaborative Governance

Encouraging regular interactions and joint planning sessions among different institutions to align goals and coordinate efforts.

Capacity Building

Providing training and resources to enhance the capacity of grassroots institutions to deliver services effectively and inclusively.

Transparency and Accountability Mechanisms

Implementing robust monitoring and evaluation frameworks ensures institutions operate transparently and are held accountable for their performance. The proposed plan for Grassroots-Level Institution Strengthening and Transformation (GIST) for Climate Action aims to enhance the functionality and inclusivity of these institutions, thereby improving the quality of life for all citizens, particularly the most vulnerable. By strengthening these institutions, we can ensure that all citizens have access to critical services and can participate in societal decision-making, leading to a more peaceful and prosperous society.

Action plans for preserving ecological balance

These institutions will prepare action plans for preserving the ecological balance, including protection of commons, recharging groundwater, addressing climate effectively change issues.



Approach and Methodology

Key Strategies

1. Promote policy coherence and convergence across natural resource, climate, water, and rural development domains through stakeholder-informed tweaks.
2. Align grassroots organisations for effective GPDP and VPRP implementation, ensuring coordinated local development.
3. Translate policies into context-specific actions by building capacity and issuing tailored guidelines and training modules.
4. Maximise funding for community, nature, and climate by pooling government and private resources, including CAMPA, DMF, CSR, and ESG
5. Leverage technology and market incentives to foster sustainable practices through data-driven planning and resource mapping.
6. Facilitate cross-state writeshops to encourage policy innovation, collaborative learning, and strengthening of policy-practice links

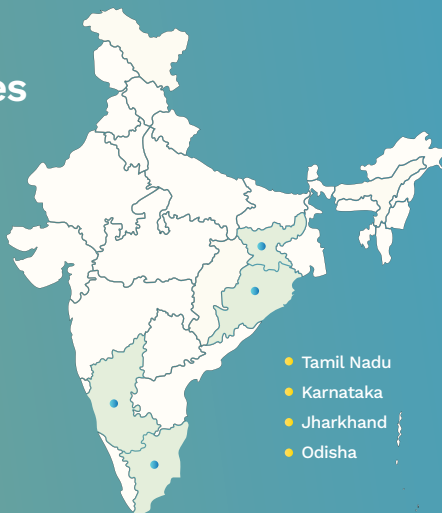
Indicative expected outcomes

- 1 **Enhanced Convergence and Collaboration:** Improved integration and collaboration among institutions, leading to a more cohesive and practical approach to community development. This enhances trust and cooperation among local governance bodies and grassroots institutions, resulting in more unified efforts towards common goals.
- 2 **Improved Service Delivery:** More targeted and efficient interventions that address the needs of all community members, especially vulnerable populations.
- 3 **Increased Transparency and Accountability:** Higher levels of public trust due to transparent and accountable practices within institutions.
- 4 **Enhanced Management of Common:** Improved management and utilisation of shared resources under community-led initiatives, fostering ecological sustainability and community ownership.
- 5 **Improved Livelihoods:** Strengthened income opportunities through community-based organisations involved in value chain activities, ultimately leading to an increased standard of living in the long term through climate action and resilience initiatives at the village level.
- 6 **Reduced Climate Vulnerability:** Decreased climate vulnerability among communities through adaptive strategies and resilience-building measures.
- 7 **Improved Climate Actions at the Village Level:** Strengthened climate actions led by communities at the village level, promoting sustainable practices and ecological security.

GIST– Implementation States

The first phase of the GIST initiative will be implemented across four states:

Jharkhand, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka. The focus will be on selected Gram Panchayats, where specific strategies will be tested and refined before scaling up.



GIST Team

Mentors



S M Vijayanand
(IAS Retd.)



R. Subrahmanyam
(IAS Retd.)



Dr. C. Chandramouli
(IAS Retd.)



NN Sinha
(IAS Retd.)



Usha Sharma
(IAS Retd.)



Dr. Vijayaraghavan



S. Govind



Abiya Jose



Gaurav Nayak



Prakash Palanivel

CRISP

Deliberate. Design. Deliver.

**Centre for Research in
Schemes and Policies**

Ground Floor, TSIIIC Zonal Office
Building, Financial District,
Nanakramguda, Gachibowli, Hyderabad,
Telangana - 500032