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“STATE-LEVEL REPLICABLE PRACTICES –
AN INSIGHT INTO INDIAN STATES

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STATE-LEVEL REPLICABLE PRACTICES

- AN INSIGHT INTO INDIAN STATES

Introduction

Various studies increasingly point to the fact that some States are able to achieve better public policy outcomes manifested through increased levels of economic growth and governance while others continue to languish at substantially lower levels.

For example, a recent study conducted by the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, under its public policy programme has come out with a first ever 'PPP Infra Index' across all India States including Delhi and Puducherry. The index reveals that Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Karnataka top the list with overall scores of 76.4, 70.3 and 57.3 out of 100 while Goa, Delhi and Bihar score 16.5, 16.8 and 20.5 respectively. 19 States have a score below 40 reflecting huge deficiencies in State-level readiness in the face of aggressively allowing PPP projects.

The study is significant in the context of India's plans to invest over US\$1tn over the next five years to bridge its infrastructure deficit. The Planning Commission has projected that over 48 per cent of this investment will come from private investment out of which PPP would form the major chunk. Surely, the States at the bottom rungs of the study could examine and replicate successful policies of the States at the top.

The Approach Paper to the Twelfth Plan¹ also focusses upon 'faster, sustainable and more **inclusive growth**'. States, being an integral part of the federal structure, need to develop understanding and cooperation and break the barrier of dissemination of ideas/successful endeavours to achieve inclusive growth. However, the steps taken so far by the Central Government have focussed on Centre-State relationship, for example, the constitutional set up of an Inter-State Council set up in 1990 on the recommendations of the Sarkaria Commission.

Twelfth Five Year Plan² has also given a special impetus to several programmes aimed at building rural infrastructure, providing basic services and non –farm livelihood. Though most of these flagship programmes with the budget size of an estimated Rs. 1, 50, 000 Crores per annum are sponsored by central government but are implemented by state governments, so effective utilisation of such a huge amount of public money is its one of the priority areas. Hence, twelfth plan recommends urgent need of reforming in the implementation processes on one hand and keeping additional provisions for encouraging innovations, good practices and create *inter-state synergies* to improve quality of outcomes.

Inclusive Growth: The Need for States to Work Together

It is often said (as also mentioned in the Twelfth plan) that India is a country with many successful experiments that do not achieve scale. Each state has some successful and not-so-successful practices being followed. Many of such practices being innovative are unique to an individual state. Scaling up the impact of such innovations requires that such successful and not-so-successful practices be spread across states rapidly so that others could emulate the successful practices and learn lessons from the not-so-successful ones. And it also required that larger business organisations and venture funds become aware of them and support them. Therefore, the strengthening of the innovation ecosystem requires a platform for information sharing and dissemination and to enable easy access to these as well as to become a wider information repository on innovation and a platform for collaboration as recommended in the plan document.

At times, there is felt a need for a common platform where the States can engage and learn from each other on issues of common interest. Use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in bringing the desired result seems like the most efficient way forward.

The issue of documenting successful and not-so-successful practices across States in India has been sporadically undertaken, mainly by the Planning Commission in

association with UNDP. Other instances have been mentioned in various research reports, studies etc. including those by CUTS International (CUTS). These are available in a scattered form. Further, the National Resource Cell for Decentralised District Planning (NRCDDP), an initiative of the Planning Commission under the Government of India-UN Joint Programme on Convergence (GoI-UNJPC) has also created a portal³, which adopts a polycentric approach for accessing, developing, and disseminating knowledge inputs on decentralised district planning and decision making in order to strengthen a conducive environment for humane, inclusive and sustainable growth. The portal which is currently confined to seven States also has provision for 'best practices', but nothing on not so successful practices. The focus, however, is on decentralised planning. Recently, the Delhi Jal Board has also suggested formation of a similar e-forum for all water utilities to discuss, debate and ideate on best practices on water management and technology related issues⁴.

The Government of India has instituted "Prime Ministers Award for Excellence in Public Administration" to acknowledge, recognise and reward the extraordinary and innovative work done by the officers of Central and State Governments⁵. All officers of the Central & State Governments individually or as a group or as organisations are eligible for consideration. There is an awards scheme by the Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances for exemplary implementation of the e governance initiatives to recognise and promote such good practices every year⁶. Likewise Ministry of Rural Development also bestows annual award named as "Excellence in MGNREGS Administration" to recognise the outstanding contribution made by District MGNREGS team adopting good & best practices in the implementation process of the MGNREGS. Union Ministry of Panchayati-Raj also bestow awards to recognise the excellent work done by the states and Panchayats related to human development, devolution of powers and decentralisation, system strengthening and having effective Gram Sabhas⁷.

However, the good practices used by all above innovative officials & Panchayats are not shared widely across states in consolidated & well documented manner. Additionally,

such attempts do not take into consideration spreading the not-so-successful practices by different states for other states to take lessons.

Illustrations:

(A) Data from the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry (MoCI) suggests that more than a single individual at the top (of State polity), the collective efforts of a strong government are crucial, in say attracting investments. The top five States in terms of actual investment as per the Industrial Entrepreneurs Memorandum filed with the MoCI for land allotted for private industries shows:

| State | Investment (INR crores) | Number of projects |
|------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1998-2008 | | |
| Gujarat | 79,396 | 1,424 |
| Maharashtra | 32,975 | 1,156 |
| West Bengal | 30,065 | 595 |
| Uttar Pradesh | 24,934 | 569 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 17,855 | 731 |
| 2011 | | |
| Maharashtra | 4,671 | 120 |
| Andhra Pradesh | 2,439 | 80 |
| Gujarat | 2,148 | 50 |
| Karnataka | 890 | 22 |
| Jharkhand | 424 | 5 |

Source: *ET (states & stats)* February 03-09, 2013

Possible answers to why West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have been displaced by Karnataka and Jharkhand in the top five states in 2011 or why Gujarat, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh continue in the list is likely to be of interest to

other States along with the finding that the three top States mentioned above also lead the PPP Infra Index as described in the “*Introduction*” section above. The three States are pursuing strategies that make them leaders in at least the two categories referred to above.

(B) CUTS has in past analysed such successful and not-so-successful examples, specifically related to the MGNREGA scheme in several districts of Rajasthan and various other States. One such example is the role of the Society for Social Audit, Accountability and Transparency (SSAAT) in social audit of the various stages of MGNREGS work (from registration of workers to issue of job cards, preparation of work estimates, muster rolls and payments of wages to workers) that has all been fully computerised, freeing information from the shackles of power and privileged access. As a result of the social audits conducted by the SSAAT in the State so far Rs. 250 Crores worth of misappropriation of funds has been identified, total amount recovered so far is Rs. 25 Crores; staff dismissed based on the social audit findings is 3111; staff suspended is 561; FIRs filed is 162 and Departmental enquiries ordered are 1557. This social audit has for last 5 years been playing role of a watchdog, raising questions and reflecting concerns of the most vulnerable sections of the society.

However, on one hand Andhra Pradesh represents a successful practice in MGNREGS, Rajasthan suffers from the lack of an incentive mechanism ensuring full utilisation of the available funds under the MGNREGA. In the year 2012-2013, Rajasthan government has been able to utilise only 68.77 percent of the total budget for the scheme. Only 4.03 percent of total job seekers have been able to complete their 100 days of work and only 7.78 percent job seekers got 81 to 99 days of work. The wages paid per person days was only Rs. 93 which is much lower than the minimum wage of the State.

While the lack of such an incentive mechanism in Rajasthan is an example for the other States to avoid, Rajasthan itself may learn a lot from the social audit mechanism and usage of ICT in MGNREGS work.

It is pertinent to note that the 28 States (29 after formation of Telangana) and the 7 union territories (UTs) of India can be viewed as policy making and policy enforcing laboratories evidencing diversity of ideas that could be tried with least risks. Admittedly, diversity amongst State's political leadership might result in varying outcomes but with the locus of political accountability shifting to States and UTs, a competitive spirit to innovate and emulate successful ideas is needed.

Hence, in light of the above, there is a need to provide a dynamic and dispassionate compendium of successful and not-so-successful practices followed/adopted by States/UTs in India which can offer examples to the other States/UTs. The use of technology to create such compendium is also desirable given the wider outreach and ease of access of an online compendium.

Certain examples of successful as well not so successful practices are given below:

Surat, Gujarat: A Success story in Urban Affairs⁸

Surat referred to as a city “floating on sewage water” became the second cleanest city in India in less than two years after the notorious and infamous plague of December 1994 that led to a mass exodus of 60 per cent of city’s population and loss of Rs12bn to the industry.

Various important steps were taken by the city administration, which included dividing the city in 6 zones and further 52 sanitary wards for improving solid waste management and to ensure equitable distribution of all resources, manpower, machinery and finance. Other activities part of the clean-up drive were contracting of various sanitary activities, daily review of activities relating to solid waste management along with enforcement of strict hygiene and sanitation standards by the Surat Municipal Corporation in eating houses, sweetshops, fruit, and vegetable shops and levy of fines for littering of the public places.

The initial success of the reforms led to a widespread support among the local population and provided motivation for the municipal staff and the elected representatives to make further improvements in the city such as complete computerisation of the administrative work. This has also prompted many local governments to visit Surat and learn from its experience and implement the same in their areas also.

West Bengal: Declining Industrialisation⁹

Traditionally rich in industrialisation and in engaging investments in industrial sectors, West Bengal is now categorised as one of the states with poor investment climate. Industrialists have become apprehensive about West Bengal’s industrial policy due to the government’s stand against special economic zones and its policy of playing no role in acquiring land for private companies.

State’s consistent tirade against Tata Motors’ Nano plant at Singur, which was finally cancelled and pushed from Singur in West Bengal to Sanand in Gujarat in 2008, also had an adverse impact on investor confidence in the state.

Land acquisition and rehabilitation policies of the government have played a huge role in the viability of investment in the state with land taking centre stage in every discussion related to investment of private capital in most of the sectors. However, the state is now making an effort to regain its position as a critical hub for multifarious industries by way of statements from the Chief Minister favouring peaceful co-existence of industry and agriculture and asking industrialists to not to give credence to ‘wrong publicity’.

What is Desirable?

Although, several organisations and compendiums provide best practices to be followed by the states, no such compendium or platform provides for sharing of not-so-successful practices in different states. Hence, with this aim of sharing successful as well as not-so-successful practices by different states for other states to take intelligent lessons, it is desirable to provide a dynamic and dispassionate compendium of successful and not-so-successful practices followed/adopted by States/UTs in India which can serve as a one-stop destination for single window access to successful as well as not-so-successful practices followed in various states in India indexed under specific heads such as agriculture, education, etc. and which will offer examples to the other States/UTs.

Using ICT establishment of a coherent, user friendly, sustainable and interactive on-line portal which would depict successful and not-so-successful practices on governance in States of India using standardised metadata, controlled vocabularies and qualified sources is also desirable. The idea would be to present an *independent and dispassionate* view of policies and practices which can help other States to imbibe and improve their own policies and practices.

The compendium should be a mix of successful examples that are replicable and those not-so-successful examples which should be avoided but if necessary to implement would provide the pitfalls from previous experience(s). Since the examples would mainly be from within the country, it is hoped that these would be more relevant. Wherever possible approaches adopted by other countries in similar situations should also be captured to enable cross fertilization and provide global scalability and replicability. The good practices documented by the independent agencies like Planning Commission of India from various states should also be adopted and shared on the portal¹⁰.

These success stories and otherwise across sectors followed by States if made available in an easy and retrievable manner would add value to a wide range of stakeholders, such as, policy makers at the State and Centre, Parliamentarians,

academia, media, etc. The shortlisted practices as per checklist should further be analysed using the ‘*Gender Equity, Relevance, Effectiveness, Efficiency & Impact, Sustainability and Scalability (GREESS Model)*’.

The purpose of the compendium will be to improve access to information thus facilitating the knowledge-sharing and collaborating process. The compendium will enhance the availability of quality, verifiable and reliable information and contacts which will help in providing practical, implementable and tested solutions to the day-to-day challenges face by various States in those areas. These best practices may be selected based on their innovativeness, appropriateness, sustainability, reliability and impact. Such a common platform, will not only enable easy access to information but will also become a wider information repository on innovations, collaboration actions, synergies and leveraging on initiatives across states especially on the issue of documenting successful and not-so-successful practices across states which are sporadic and scattered in form.

For the purposes of this paper, the following words will mean as defined herein below:

- (i) **“Good/Successful Practices”** refer to those practices which are adopted by one State in relation to and to resolve any issue/problem that has arisen in the State. Such practices should be able to effectively deal with the problem to be solved, should be replicable by other States and should have a sustainable impact on the stakeholders, both in terms of environment and gender perspective.
- (ii) **“Not-so-Successful Practices”** refer to those practices which have been adopted and are in use/were in use in a particular State that have not had a positive or has had an adverse impact within the State, and those practices that should be highlighted so that other States are inspired to do better and avoid following the same path.

Conclusion: Holistic Development

As mentioned above, the compendium will document the information from various States on a dynamic basis to be utilised by the States as well as by the project beneficiaries. Such learnings will help to streamline actions so as to achieve improvements over time, and thus add to the economic growth of the States, and thus the country. The project beneficiaries will include policymakers, legislators, media persons, academicians, researchers, inter-governmental organisations, governments of other countries.

The expected outcomes from such compendium will be: (a) increased incidents of adopting the successful practices by the states, (b) enhanced public availability of successful and not-so-successful practices and its processes, (c) increased civic review of successful and not-so-successful practices, (d) increased demand of innovating successful practices for adoption and replication, (e) strengthened network of practitioners, and (f) increased interest among state governments for Performance score cards.

The process will lead to overall improvement in the policies and practices, improved service delivery within the country and improved development results leading to growth of the country *in toto*. The policy/practice changes will also make the activities more inclusive in terms of social, political and institutional dimensions.

The following are positive consequences if the above-stated results are achieved:

- (i) There will be knowledge enhancement of policy makers and the project beneficiaries and the States in India, through dissemination.
- (ii) Inclusive social, political and institutional growth in the selected areas.
- (iii) Actions will be streamlined so as to achieve improvements over time, and thus add to the economic growth of the States and the country.

(3040 words including end notes)

END NOTES:

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