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Efforts in Madhya Pradesh

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Introduction

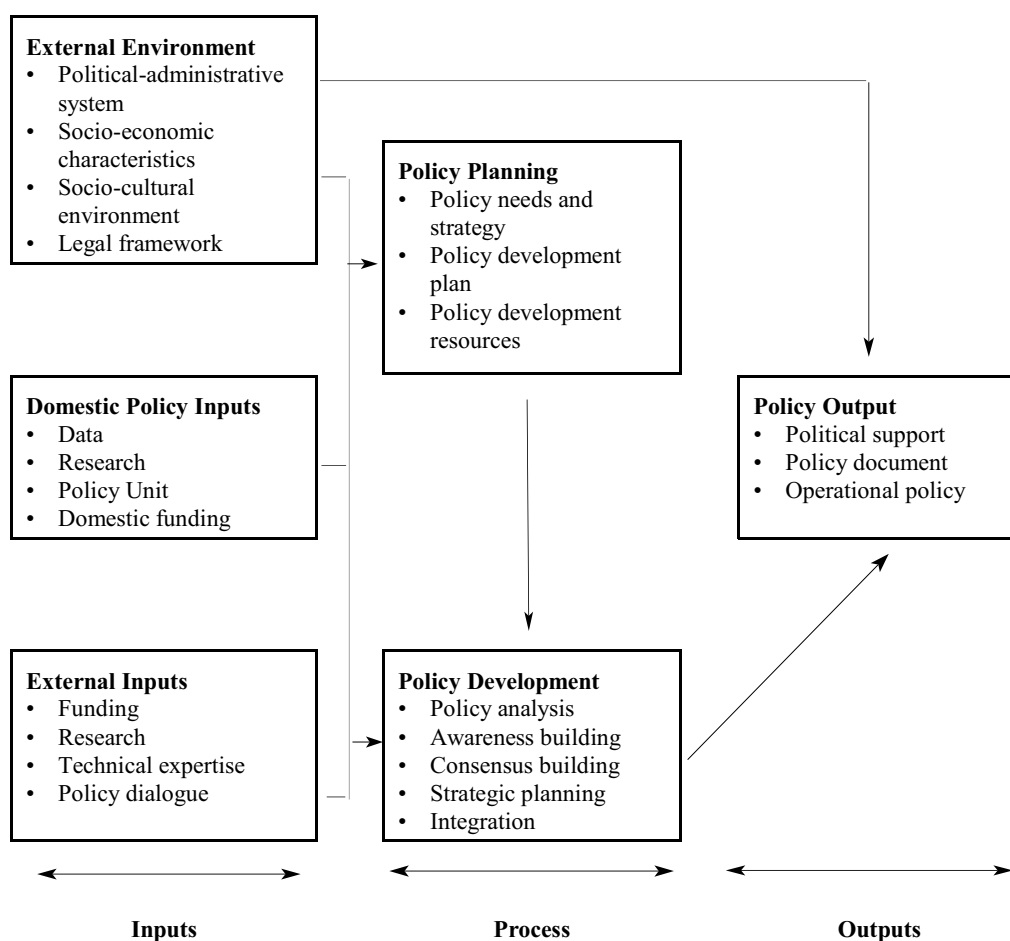
Persistent high fertility and high mortality in Madhya Pradesh is well known. According to the sample registration system, the birth rate in the State is third highest amongst the major States of the country while the death rate and infant mortality rate are second highest (Government of India, 2003). The situation is even worse in the rural areas where the State has the second highest birth rate and highest death rate. The relative position of the State vis-a-vis other major States of the country in terms of fertility and mortality has remained more or less unchanged over the last thirty years. In recent years, there are evidences of some heavy migration of the people out of the State in search of livelihood. Most of this migration is yet to be assessed and analysed in terms of its impact on population growth and social and economic development of the State.

The State response to the prevailing, unacceptable population scenario is Madhya Pradesh Population Policy 2000. Announced on 11 May 2000, the policy aims at achieving the replacement fertility by the year 2011 in order to improve the quality of life of the people by striking a balance between population, resources and environment. The Policy also recognizes that an accelerated reduction in fertility and mortality is essential to improve the quality of life of the people of the State (Government of Madhya Pradesh, 2000). Madhya Pradesh is one of the few States of the country which have evolved and announced State specific population policy. The argument behind the State specific population policy is that such policy can more effectively cater to the needs of the people of the State and can help in securing political commitment for population stabilization efforts, especially at the local level.

It is now more than four years when the Madhya Pradesh Population Policy was announced. The progress of the implementation of the Policy during this period has, at best, been tardy. Most of the processes initiated for the implementation of the population policy lack comprehensiveness and long term perspective. They have been conceived and designed in an isolated manner and implemented in a vertical fashion. The Policy advocates for a holistic, multi-sector, development oriented approach to addressing the population problem of the State.

Recently, the issue of implementing broad-based, multi-sectoral population policies, like the Madhya Pradesh Population Policy 2000, has been subject to an intensive discussion and debate at the international level (Population Council, 1997). The conclusion, based on the experiences from a number of countries, was that effective implementation of broad-based, multi-sectoral population policy is usually fraught with a number of problems. These include, among others, institutionalization of multi-sector population policy, compartmentalization of multi-sectoral activities and programmes and the capacity of implementing such policies, especially, at the local level. The consensus that has emerged during this debate is that population issues should be treated as a cross-cutting perspective in the process of social and economic development rather than a sector at its own as is the popular wisdom at present. It was stressed also during these discussions and debate that successful implementation of multi-sectoral population policy requires a broad-based constituency of support for population stabilisation which is based on compelling rationale and empirical evidence rather than on mere conjectures and convictions.

Figure 6.1: Components of policy environment.



Adapted from Bertrand, Magnani and Rutenberg (1994).

In this chapter, we argue that effective implementation of multi-sectoral population policy like the Madhya Pradesh Population Policy 2000 requires a strong and sustained policy environment. By policy environment, we mean the factors that effect the implementation process but that are beyond the control of managers responsible for implementation and providers of population stabilization services. These factors play a very crucial role in operationalizing the policy as they are related to decision making at the highest level of the government. The argument is that creation of a strong policy environment and sustaining this environment is an important pre-condition for effectively implementing Madhya Pradesh Population Policy.

It is in the above context, that the present chapter analyses, at some length, the policy environment that prevails in Madhya Pradesh in the context of population stabilization policies, programmes, efforts and interventions. The strengths and weaknesses of the prevailing policy environment have also been analysed in the context of the implementation of Madhya Pradesh Population Policy. The purpose of the analysis is to highlight the need to create and sustain a policy environment in the State

that is conducive to population stabilization programmes and efforts in the State. The analysis also explores the opportunities that can be created at the policy level so that the policy environment in Madhya Pradesh may provide a strong support to the implementation of the Madhya Pradesh Population Policy in particular and population stabilization efforts in general.

The Policy Environment

Different components of the policy environment and their inter-linkages are shown in figure 6.1. There are three main components: inputs, processes and outputs. The inputs constitute the base of the policy environment. Factors that constitute the inputs to policy environment are both exogenous and endogenous in nature. They can be divided into three broad categories. The first category includes such factors as political-administrative system, social and economic characteristics of the population, social and cultural norms and values and rules and regulations that govern the family and the society. Although, this external environment is normally beyond the control of population stabilization programmes and activities, yet this external environment plays a very dominant role in shaping the policy environment. It is important to keep in mind that even if all appropriate activities are carried out a favourable policy environment for population stabilization, the desired output may not be attained due to unfavourable situation or developments in the external policy environment.

The second category of factors that constitutes inputs to the policy environment for population stabilization are basically relate to State preparedness for conceptualizing population stabilization programmes and activities. Critical factors of this category include existence of a policy unit which can be made responsible for collecting and analysing information on population and development issues and taking up policy level research. In addition, provision of adequate funds and manpower constitutes an important input in terms of the State preparedness for population policy formulation. This category of inputs to policy environment also reflects the nature of political commitment towards population stabilization in general and population stabilization in particular. The third category of inputs to the policy environment is the support received from agencies other than the government in the form of funds, technical know how, research and policy dialogue. This type of input often serves as a catalyst to initiate the policy formulation process. The quantum of the input of this category is often small but the nature of these inputs is very innovative and imaginative. As such, these inputs often play a very crucial role in creating and maintaining the policy environment for population stabilization activities and programmes.

The second component of the policy environment is constituted by the processes that lead to conceptual and strategic plans for population stabilization programmes and activities. The processes of this component of the policy environment can be categorized as processes related to planning and processes related to the implementation of the plan. Issues which are important in the planning processes are has two sub-components - the planning sub-component and the implementation sub-component. The planning sub-component includes identification of the policy needs and an objective assessment of different strategies for population stabilization, keeping in mind the external environment and the inputs available. Perhaps, the most crucial aspect of the planning

sub-component is the evolution of a policy development plan that may guide the policy development process.

The implementation of the policy development plan constitute the implementation sub-component of the process component of the policy environment. An important feature of this sub-component is integration of population factors in the social and economic development planning process. Raising awareness about population related issues and building consensus about strategies, approaches and programmes and activities for population stabilization amongst the top echelons of the government and the society also constitute and integral component of the implementation sub-component of the policy environment for population stabilization. Another area that constitutes the implementation sub-component is strategic planning for population stabilization. This strategic planning constitutes the basis for planning and organizing population stabilization activities and programmes and their institutionalization within the existing services delivery system.

Finally, the outputs of the policy environment are the outputs at the policy level. These outputs are normally in the form of political support and commitment, formal statements of policies and programmes designed to affect fertility decisions of couples. The outputs of the policy environment also include an operational plan that outlines the approach of organizing population stabilization activities and programmes. Political support to a population stabilization policy plays a central role in shaping the policy environment. Political support can be both explicit and implicit. Explicit political support to population stabilization may be in the form of statements by political leaders and high-level government officials. On the other hand implicit political support is reflected by what the government actually does in terms of operationalizing the population policy. On the other hand, the operational plan for organizing population stabilization activities consists of four sub-dimensions - organizational structure and processes, legal/regulatory environment, provision of resources and pricing. All the four sub-dimensions are important for effectively organizing any population stabilization activity.

The importance of the policy environment in the effective implementation of population stabilization efforts in general and Madhya Pradesh Population Policy in particular is obvious. Improvements in the policy environment may lead to stronger service delivery in terms of access, quality and image, increased service utilization, increased use of family planning methods and enhanced institutionalization of population stabilization activities within the social and economic development system. Institutionalization, in turn, effects levels of domestic policy inputs in the following period through the feedback loop.

The policy environment has implications to both the demand and supply sides of population stabilization efforts and activities. On the supply side, the policy environment contributes directly both to improved service delivery and service utilization in the short run and to enhanced sustainability of population stabilization activities in the long run. On the demand side, on the other hand, the policy environment affect the demand for population stabilization efforts and activities through political support and stated policy towards population stabilization. As such improving the policy environment of population stabilization activities and programmes is crucial for effectively planning and implementing population stabilization activities and

programmes and integrating these programmes and activities in the social and economic development processes.

Analysing of Policy Environment

We have used an indicator-based approach to analyse the prevailing policy environment for population stabilization in Madhya Pradesh and to identify areas which need attention to improve this environment. A number of indicators have been suggested for measuring and analysing the policy environment of population stabilization activities and programmes (Bertrand, Magnani, Rutenberg, 1994; Lapham and Mauldin, 1985; Ross et al. 1988, 1992). We have used a set of 10 indicators for the present analysis. The indicators used in this analysis are descriptive in nature. When collected over time, they provide important information about the change in policy environment over time; whether the policy environment has become more favourable to population stabilization or it has turned unfavourable. However, these indicators do not indicate causation.

A description of the indicators used in the present analysis along with the situation that prevails in Madhya Pradesh is given below. For the sake of conceptual clarity, the indicators have been grouped as input indicators, process indicators and output indicators.

1. Degree of decentralization of the political-administrative system. The population stabilization effort have traditionally been known for a strong top down, target oriented, bureaucracy centred approach of implementation. One reason for this approach was the highly centralized political-administrative system. This highly centralized approach of implementation of population stabilization efforts has also been the reason for a bureaucratic image of population stabilization activities and programmes. However, it is now recognized that population stabilization activities and programmes can be transformed into a people's programme only when a decentralized, people's needs based approach is adopted for planning as well as for implementation of these activities. The adoption of a decentralized, people's-needs based approach of population stabilization can be realized only when the political-administration system is decentralized; when the decision making powers are delegated to people and their democratically elected organizations. It is difficult to effectively implement the decentralized, people's-needs based approach of population stabilization when the decision making powers remain confined to the bureaucracy and is not delegated to the people.

2. Existence of a policy unit. Establishment of a unit for developing the population stabilization policy and for regularly reviewing and updating it is an important domestic input into the policy environment for population stabilization. Ideally, this policy unit should be an independent organization either within the government or as an autonomous organization linked closely to the government through appropriate administrative linkages. In addition to reviewing and updating the population stabilization policy, this unit should also be entrusted with the responsibility of monitoring the progress of population stabilization efforts and in analysing the strengths and weaknesses of these efforts.

3. Existence of a policy development plan. Development of a policy for population stabilization may be viewed as a systematic process designed to achieve the population

stabilization goals. In the absence of such a plan, development of the policy for population stabilization may be random in purpose, poorly sequenced and may not be targeted to appropriate audiences.

The evolution of a policy for population stabilization is basically a dynamic process in which policy options are weighed regularly against the prevailing situation and the optimal ones are selected to constitute the policy for population stabilization. Since the population scenario keeps of changing either because of changes in external environment or because of the implementation of population stabilization policy, it is imperative that any policy for population stabilized must be reviewed and updated at regular intervals to reflect changes in the policy environment and in strategies and needs for population stabilization. Such a process can be realized and sustained only when there is a well defined plan for the development of population stabilization policy. This policy development plan should focus on the assessment of the existing policy environment for population stabilization, identification and provision of appropriate strategy for removing policy level obstacles to population stabilization efforts, assignment of responsibility for policy development activities outlined in the strategy identified, and provision of a budget adequate enough to ensure the implementation of the strategy.

4. Number of appropriately disseminated policy analyses. Policy level analyses of population related issues are designed to provide information support to policy makers to encourage them to improve one or more aspects of policy environment of population stabilization efforts. Such analyses are invaluable support to what is known as “informed decision making”. In order to ensure maximum impact of such analyses, it is imperative that findings of the analyses are disseminated through an appropriate channel and format so that the findings of the analyses are incorporated in the policy development process. There are many areas that need to be objectively evaluated in the context of the evolution of the population stabilization policy. These include analysis of the impact of current population growth patterns on the process of social and economic development, analysis of the extent and nature of demand for family welfare services, target-cost analyses, cost-benefit analyses, cost-effectiveness analyses, etc. These analyses provide the empirical support to the policy development process. In the absence of such analyses, the evolution of the population stabilization policy fails to capture the ground realities and the resulting population stabilization policy turns out to be hypothetical in nature and normative in approach.

5. Number of awareness-raising events targeted to leaders. It is now universally recognized that strong political commitment and support is critical to the success of any population stabilization effort. One way of harnessing and sustaining political support for population stabilization is organizing awareness-generating activities for the political class at different levels of the political-administrative system right from the top to bottom. These activities may include conferences, seminars, workshops, media campaigns and observation tours. The findings of policy level analyses may or may not be disseminated through these awareness-raising activities. When organized in a professional manner and when based on grass roots level empirical evidence in support of population stabilization activities, these awareness-generating activities have been found to be an important medium of securing popular support and sustaining the

commitment of the people towards effective implementation of population stabilization activities and programmes.

6. Existence of a strategic plan for expanding population stabilization activities. Strategic planning is crucial for population stabilization activities and programmes to be effective. A strategic plan for population stabilization activities should be able to: a) define the goals and objectives of population stabilization programme over a period of 5-10 years; b) clearly outline the approach to be adopted for achieving these goals and objectives; c) describe the organizational structure required for operationalizing the approach; and d) estimate the resources required (financial, material, human resources) for implementing the strategy.

Strategic planning for population stabilization should be a participatory process. Ideally, all stakeholders including government departments and agencies, non-government organizations, religious institutions and beneficiaries of population stabilization programme should be involved in the development of the strategic plan.

A strategic plan should be able to address at least the following issues: a) the basic orientation of population stabilization activities such as emphasis on demand creation or on services provision; b) the respective roles of the public, non-government and the commercial sector; c) the manner in which these activities will be financed; and d) the location of population control activities within the government. It is obvious that due considerations should be given to domestic inputs and external environment in finalizing the strategic plan. Normally, the context and contents of the strategic plan will depend, to a significant extent, on the domestic inputs into the policy environment.

7. Integration of population factors into development planning. The interrelationship between population stabilization activities and programme and the process of social and economic development has long been recognized. The integration of population factors into planning for social and economic development is an indicator of the understanding of population dynamics and their impact on the social and economic development process by development planners and development programme administrators. An incorporation of this understanding into social and economic development plans may be helpful in making the social and economic development plans oriented towards the needs of the people. At the same time, this integration helps in giving a development orientation to population stabilization activities and programmes. This development orientation to population stabilization activities and programmes is critical in securing political and popular support to population stabilization efforts.

In the decentralized public administration and development system, effective integration of population factors in the development planning process requires integration at the grass roots level, the interface with the people. Such an integration is a difficult proposition. It requires a lot of capacity building at the grass roots level in terms of analysis of population dynamics and planning for social and economic development activities at the local level and linking the two. In any case, integration of population factors into the development planning process is effective only when this integration is done at the grass roots level.

8. Formal population policy addressing fertility and family planning. The adoption of a formal population policy is one of the key outputs of the policy environment of population stabilization efforts. A formal population policy which is either a written document or a part of one, is an official statement of the government that establishes

goals and objectives for population stabilization efforts and includes conceptual and operational strategies for achieving these goals and activities.

Ideally, the formal population policy must be developed through the domestic initiative rather than through some external initiative or pressure and by some external agency. A population policy developed on the basis of the domestic initiative is more likely to be broadly disseminated and implemented than a population policy developed on the basis of some external initiative or pressure. As such, a population policy developed on the basis of the domestic initiatives is likely to be more effective in addressing the prevailing population issues and concerns than a population policy developed from some external initiative. There are however examples where the external initiative or pressure has been instrumental in initiating the domestic process of the evolution of a population stabilization policy. In such a situation, the external initiative or pressure serves as a catalyst for domestic initiative for the evolution of the policy.

9. Coordination of population stabilization activities. Successful population stabilization efforts require coordination between a number of government departments and agencies and between public and private sector organizations. The better is this coordination, the more effective is the impact of population stabilization efforts. Normally, this coordination is achieved through a council or a board. The public sector membership of such coordination bodies is typically at the level of the minister while the private sector memberships include representatives of non-government organizations and corporate sector, representatives of medical organizations, representatives of religious groups, etc. Support to the coordination board or council is ensured through a permanent secretariat and a number of inter-ministerial working groups which may be composed of experts in the field of population, administrators of population stabilization programmes and activities and representatives of the community.

Effective functioning of such coordination boards is critically dependent upon the legal status of the board and the powers accorded to it. Ideally, this coordination board should be the apex decision making body in all matters related to population stabilization. If the coordination board lacks the necessary legal status or if it has given limited decision making powers, it may not be effective in giving directions to population stabilization efforts.

It may also be pointed out here that existence of a coordination council or board is not a necessary condition for a strong policy environment. There are evidences of a very well coordinated population stabilization programmes and activities even in the absence of a formal coordinating body.

10. Level of the population stabilization programme within the public administration system. This indicator reflects the priority accorded to population stabilization efforts in the process of social and economic development at the level of the government. A reflection of a strong policy environment in favour of population stabilization is that population stabilization programmes and activities occupy the top position in the development and public administration agenda of the government. The level of population stabilization programme within the public administration system is normally measured through the number of administrative levels down from the head of the State bureaucratic system to which the Director of the population stabilization programme reports. An indicator of a low priority accorded to population stabilization programmes and activities in the public administration system is reflected from the fact

that the Director of the population stabilization programme does not report to the highest level of the government. Another indicator of the low priority accorded to population stabilization in the development and public administration agenda of the government is that population stabilization programmes and activities are appended with other government departments and agencies at different tiers of the public and development administration system. Since population is a cross-cutting perspective that influences all aspects of social and economic development processes, an indicator of the strong policy environment in support of population stabilization is that the population stabilization programme is located just below the head of the public administration system but above different government departments and agencies not only at the State level but also at all levels of the public administration system, especially at the level of implementation of population stabilization activities.

It is possible to present the prevailing policy environment of population stabilization in terms of the ten indicators described above on a scale ranging from a minimum value of 0 to a maximum value of 10. A value of 10 for any of the ten indicators described above indicates an ideal positive environment for population stabilization efforts in that dimension of the policy environment for population stabilization. On the other hand, a value of 0 for any of the ten indicators indicates the most unfavourable environment for population stabilization in that dimension of the policy. In this way the policy environment for population stabilization efforts in the State can be represented on a ten dimensional space with each dimension of the space ranging from a minimum score of 0 to a maximum score of 10. In this ten dimensional space, the ideal and most positive policy environment for population stabilization efforts is reflected through a score of 100 whereas the poorest, totally unresponsive policy environment for population stabilization efforts is reflected through a score of zero for all the ten dimensions of the policy environment used in this analysis.

The Scorecard of Madhya Pradesh

We have applied the above scoring scheme to make a first hand assessment of the policy environment in Madhya Pradesh as it relates to population stabilization efforts in general and implementation of Madhya Pradesh Population Policy in Particular. Results of the exercise are given in table 6.1. This scoring is based on the available information about the prevailing population scenario in the State and an assessment of the strength and weaknesses of different initiatives that have been undertaken in the State and different programmes currently being implemented by the government of Madhya Pradesh to address the issue of rapid population growth. The assessment is basically the observation and the judgement of the author about the prevailing situation. It has been made on the basis of the information that is available and is primarily subjective in nature. Although, the scoring presented here has not been based on any empirical evidence, yet, for each assessment, an attempt has been made to describe the rationale behind the assessment so as to introduce some semblance of objectivity in the process of assessment.

Our exercise of scoring the prevailing situation on the ten indicators of the policy environment for population stabilization in Madhya Pradesh suggests a total score of 46 out of a maximum score of 100. This means the policy environment for population

stabilization in Madhya Pradesh is, at best, average; it is neither strong nor weak. Interestingly, there exists a relatively favourable external environment in the form of a political-administrative system which is people-based. However, the processes and institutions required to translate this positive external environment into the desired policy outputs are not in place. Because of this weakness at the implementation level, the impact of the committed political-administrative system is not reflected at the level of programme operations. This is an area which requires a focussed attention at the policy level as the prevailing implementation processes and existing implementing institutions are themselves the result of the wisdom at the policy level. There is an immediate need to evolve a systems approach for maximizing the effects and benefits of population stabilization activities and programmes in the State. It is also important that this systems approach is institutionalized in the existing political-administrative system by creating necessary administrative structures so that it can be sustained irrespective of any external initiative or push for population stabilization. This is not an easy task given the prevailing political-administrative system. In fact, a lot of commitment, persistence and persuasion is needed for creating these institutions and establishing policy processes. Creating these institutions and establishing the new processes will require substantial amount of additional resources in terms of both money and manpower. There are, however, no short-cuts in the field of population, especially at the policy level. Creating and sustaining a positive policy environment for population stabilization is not only desired but is critical to the successful implementation of the Madhya Pradesh Population Policy.

Conclusions

There continues to be a lot of concern about the poor demographic situation in Madhya Pradesh and the unsatisfactory performance of population stabilization efforts. The analysis presented in this chapter argues that the prevailing policy environment in the State is, at best, indifferent to population concerns facing State and there is ample scope of improving the policy environment for population stabilization activities and programmes. The policy level initiatives that have been taken in Madhya Pradesh have important implications for population stabilization activities and programmes. In order to take maximum benefit of these initiatives for improving the quality of life of the people of the State by striking a balance between population, resources and environment, policy level processes need to be established and appropriate institutions created that may support and sustain these processes. The State is currently lacking in this aspect of the policy environment.

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Table 6.1: The Policy environment for population stabilization in Madhya Pradesh		
Indicator	The prevailing situation	Score
1 Degree of decentralization of political-administrative system	The progress has been exemplary in the past but not ideal for population stabilization efforts. Decentralization of political-administrative system right up to the village level is the official policy. It has created a favourable external environment to population stabilization activities at the grass roots level in terms of local initiative and mass support. However, local level capacity building is needed to take up the challenging task of population stabilization.	8
2 Existence of population stabilization policy unit	The population stabilization policy unit does not exist at present. However, State Population Resource Centre has been established. The Centre can, with additional resources, bear the responsibilities of population stabilization policy unit.	5
3 Existence of a population policy development plan	Although, Madhya Pradesh Population Policy 2000 has been announced by the government, there is no policy development plan which can develop a perspective vision of population stabilization activities in the State for the next 10-15 years. Moreover, there is currently no system of institutionalizing the policy development process within the existing political-administrative framework.	3
4 Number of appropriately disseminated policy analyses	There is little progress in this direction. Policy level research specific on population stabilization issues in the State is perhaps the weakest dimension of the policy environment. Even at the national level, there are very few policy level analyses that have been specifically carried out to analyse the situation that prevails in Madhya Pradesh. There is no system of disseminating the findings of research to policy makers.	1

Indicator	The prevailing situation	Score
5	Number of awareness-raising events targeted to leaders	3
6	Existence of a strategic plan for population stabilization	4
7	Integration of population factors in development planning	5
8	Formal population policy addressing fertility and family planning	7
9	Coordination of population stabilization activities	6

Indicator	The prevailing situation	Score
10 Level of population stabilization programme within the public administration system	The population stabilization programmes and activities have got a low place in the political-administrative system. The National Family Welfare Programme is the mainstay of population stabilization activities. It is linked with the primary health care delivery system. At the policy level, there is no person who is specifically responsible for the implementation of Madhya Pradesh Population Policy 2000.	4