

# **Studies in Population and Development**

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Review of Management Information System  
of National Flagship Programmes  
in Guna and Shivpuri Districts**

Alok Ranjan Chaurasia  
Arunand Murmu

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Madhya Pradesh**

## **Background**

The concept of decentralized development planning in India was introduced in the Seventh Five Year Plan when the Planning Commission, Government of India, instructed that the State Government would earmark specific outlay as un-tied fund of the State Plan outlay for decentralized development Planning. The Planning Commission also suggested at that time that District Planning Offices should formally be constituted to support the decentralised planning process. Following these instructions, District Planning Offices were formally established in the State in 1988-89 and an outlay as untied fund ear-marked for decentralized planning from 1988-89 onwards.

Decentralised development planning in India got a boost in 1994 when the 73rd and 74th amendments of the Indian Constitution made it compulsory to constitute the District Planning Committee in every district together with the State Finance Commission and the constitution of three-tier Panchayat system in the rural areas and Local Bodies in the urban areas. Under Article 243 (z)(h) of the Constitution, the District Planning Committees is entrusted with the mandatory function of formulation of district development plan and monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the plan at the district level. Accordingly, the District Planning Committee Act was enacted in Madhya Pradesh in 1995. Madhya Pradesh was also the first state in India to hold elections after the 73rd amendment in the Constitution and to pass its own Decentralization Act. The state has also been a pioneer state of the country in constituting District Planning Committees and gradually increasing the involvement of local governments in the planning and implementation of social sector programs.

Despite all these initiatives, decentralized development planning initiative in Madhya Pradesh still remains in a state of flux. There is a broad consensus that decentralised development planning in the state is yet to fulfill its promise. The state has successfully passed Beasley's tests of leading to fundamentally new institutions, changed political structures, and changed entitlements for the poor. However, transition from a successful initial phase to a mature, second phase, has not been as successful as planned and the state capacity to build on its initial successes in decentralization has generally been found wanting. Moreover, there has been little effort to introduce corrective policy measures after the flaws of first round of decentralization became apparent despite strong political commitment.

The efficiency and effectiveness of decentralised district development planning process in meeting the development needs of the people is hampered by many factors. The experience has been that despite all euphoria about transferring the power to the people and their democratically elected organisations, there has actually been very limited fiscal devolution. At the same time little substantial has been done to ensure sustainability, and to

build horizontal accountability and effective fiscal frameworks to support the decentralised development planning process. District Planning Committee has been constituted in all district of the state as the statutory body to oversee and prioritise bottom-up, community needs based development planning but no executive support has been provided to the District Planning Committee. In the absence of the executive support, the Committee is incapable of assessing the development situation in the district and priority development issues according to the development needs of the people of the district. The task of the District Planning Committee has virtually been restricted to providing a mechanism to coordinate development schemes launched and implemented by the central and state governments, although, it has been empowered by the statute to approve the budget and take district-specific policy decisions. The District Planning Committee has also been delegated powers to review, supervise, and monitor different national and state development programs and schemes being implemented in the district but no administrative or technical support structure has been put under the executive control of the District Planning Committee to effectively carry out these important tasks. The District Planning Committee depends entirely upon different implementation departments and agencies for the information necessary to review, supervise and monitor development activities and programmes within the district. In the existing state of affairs, the relevance of the District Planning Committee in designing and developing the district specific development plan in the context of meeting the development needs of the people of the district is virtually lost.

There are two major challenges in making the decentralised integrated district development planning process successful in the sense that development planning is oriented to the development needs of the people and not to the schemes launched by national and state governments. The first is the evolution of a development management information system at the district level that can provide information support to the District Planning Committee to have an objective assessment of the development situation and in setting up development priorities specific to the district. This development management information system is also necessary to meet the information needs of decentralised development planning and associated monitoring and evaluation functions. It may be emphasised that planning is a cyclical process and not a one time or an ad-hoc activity as is the case at present. Success of any development planning process is contingent upon regularly monitoring implementation of development plans and activities, assessing their impact and modifying them on the basis of the evidence available through the monitoring and evaluation processes. Without an efficient and effective monitoring and evaluation system, development planning is like a rudderless ship which does not know whether it is moving in the right direction or not. One of the major flaws in decentralised development planning process in

Madhya Pradesh has been the fact that despite continuous experimentation with decentralisation over, at least, last 10 years, there has been little emphasis on evolving a development management information system at the district level that can provide the indispensable information support to district development planning process.

The second challenge to the success of decentralized district development planning in Madhya Pradesh is to build the district capacity of analyzing the district development data in an integrated manner to support evidence-based development planning and people oriented monitoring and supervision of development plans and activities. There is little capacity at the district level in this regard. Different development departments and agencies of the state government routinely collect huge data related to development activities going on in the district. However, these data are rarely analysed at the district level in the context of district development needs largely because necessary capacity for transforming data into information and information into knowledge is lacking at the district level. This transformation is necessary for identifying district development priorities and planning for addressing these priorities. Lack of data management capacity at the district level virtually forces the district development planning exercise to be based on outdated and out of context norms with little regard to the actual development situation. Information gaps at the district level and near total absence of district level technical capacity to manage development data at district and below district levels virtually forces the District Planning Committee to remain confined to coordinating national and state development schemes and programmes overlooking the local context of development. At the same time, there have been little efforts to develop the technical expertise of development data management.

Needless to emphasize, evolving and institutionalising an integrated district development management information system can be an important initiative to put the decentralized district development planning process on a sound footings and in the right perspective so that the district development plan reflects the development priorities and development needs of the people of the district and chalks out solutions to meet these development needs. This integrated development management information system will also facilitate evidence-based development planning and will provide information support to the District Planning Committee for objective monitoring and evaluating of development programmes and activities in the district.

The first step in evolving and institutionalising an integrated district development management information system is to comprehensively review the development monitoring and evaluation system that exists at present at the district level. It has been observed in this context that there are a plethora of schemes and programmes operational at the district level and every development programme or scheme has its own monitoring system which is

limited to reporting the quantitative progress of programmes and schemes to authorities in the administrative hierarchy. There is no horizontal integration of these reports in the sense that progress reports of different development programmes and activities are never combined to prepare the district level report of the progress of development programmes and activities. At the same time, there is no district specific evaluation mechanism which can measure the impact of the development activities and programmes in terms of the improvement in the quality of life of the people of the district. It has also been found that the current information and knowledge about the basic characteristics of the people of the district that can be the basis for district level development planning is very scanty and in most of the cases, the only source of information is the population census which is carried out at an interval of 10 years only.

In the absence of a unified monitoring and evaluation system at the district level, any review of monitoring and evaluation system is bound to be development programme or development scheme specific only. It is in this context that this report presents a comprehensive review of the management information system of the five national flagship programmes in Guna and Shivpuri districts of Madhya Pradesh. These programmes are related to key areas of social development that direct impact upon the status of children and women. The national flagship programmes that have been covered in the present review are:

- National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)
- Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
- Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)
- National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

The purpose of the present review is to analyse, at length, the strengths and weaknesses of the existing information system in the context of information necessary for development planning and monitoring of the five flagship programmes in the two districts and to suggest a framework for evolving and institutionalising an integrated district development management information system to support decentralized district development planning process in terms of reviewing, supervising, monitoring and evaluating development programmes and activities at the district level. It may be argued that the evolution of an integrated district development management information system and its institutionalisation of this system within the district development administration system may contribute significantly in decentralized development planning objectively by assessing the development situation in the district and analysing changes in the situation over time, setting up district development priorities and in ensuring evidence-based planning for meeting the development needs of the people, especially, the living conditions of the poor, deprived and most vulnerable

sections of the population such as children and women and socially excluded population sub-groups such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and minorities.

This report is divided into four sections in addition to the introduction. The next section of the report presents essential features of the development management information system including indicators of development and information systems. The third section of the report outlines the methodology adopted for reviewing the management information system of the five National Flagship Programmes. A number of approaches have been developed in recent years for strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems (Measure Evaluation 2007, 2009; World Bank 2006; WHO 2006). This report follows the methodology suggested by the World Bank.

Results of the review process are presented in section four of the report. An integrated framework has been adopted for presenting the results of the review which permits comparison across different flagship programmes also. Finally, the last section of the report presents main conclusions and puts forward a set of recommendations for further action.

## **Development Management Information System**

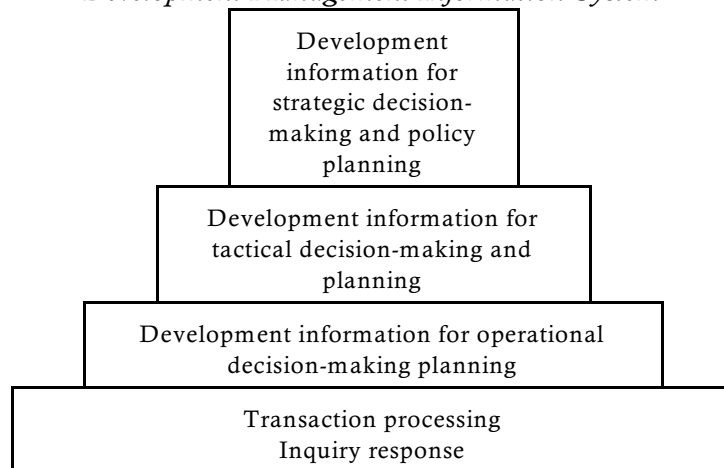
The development management information system may be defined as an integrated system of providing people-centred information to support development decision-making, implementation of development activities and monitoring and evaluation of development programmes. This definition of development management information system incorporates both 'technical' as well as 'organisational' or 'business' perspective of the management of development programmes and processes.

The development management information system is a broad concept. Some activities of this system are highly integrated with the routine development data collection and processing and dissemination system that already exists while others are designed for a particular knowledge-based activity or decision-making. It is basically a multi-tier structure as shown in *Figure 1*. Each level of information processing generally makes use of the information and data available at the lower level; but requires new data and information that are specifically relevant to that level of development management.

Development management information system typically provides the basis for integrated development information processing. It is well known that development is a multidimensional concept and different dimensions of development are closely inter-linked. Integrated development information processing is necessary for setting development priorities and for monitoring development activities. In the absence of integrated development information processing, it is difficult to visualise the impact of one development programme or activity on other development programmes and activities. In

such a situation, performance of individual development programmes and activities may be inconsistent or incompatible to the over all development goal of improving the quality of life of the people. Absence of integrated development information processing may also result in duplication of development programmes and activities leading to wastage of resources and manpower. Integrated development information processing is necessary for optimising input-output relationship of the development process.

*Figure 1*  
*Development Management Information System*



A development database is central to every development management information system. Although the term ‘data’ and the term ‘information’ are frequently used interchangeably in the development literature, yet they have essentially different meaning. Information is generally defined as data that is meaningful or useful in a given context. Data are necessary for generating information. Usually some type of processing of data is necessary to generate information from the data. For example, a set of letters ‘dilhc’ is a set of data. It carries no meaning in the present form. However, when the letters in this data set are ordered in a particular was they lead to the word ‘child’ which has a specific meaning. In this example ‘dilhc’ is data while ‘child’ is information. In the development discourse, it is the data that are collected from the people and from service providers. This data, when processed, lead to information and information leads to knowledge which is the basis for setting up development priorities and development planning.

The underlying concept of the development database is that development information must be managed in order to be available for transforming it into information and then into knowledge. Management of development data means its appropriateness, relevance, timeliness and quality. An outdated development data is of little relevance to setting up development priorities and is little aid to development planning even if the



data are of high quality. A development database management system, therefore is necessary to manage development data and is an integral part of the development management information system.

The concept or the underlying idea of the development management information system is radically different from routine data processing. Development management information system is more comprehensive than routine data processing. It encompasses routine data processing in support of a wider range of development activities and programmes. Development management information system ensures that development information is used for development decision making at different levels of the development process.

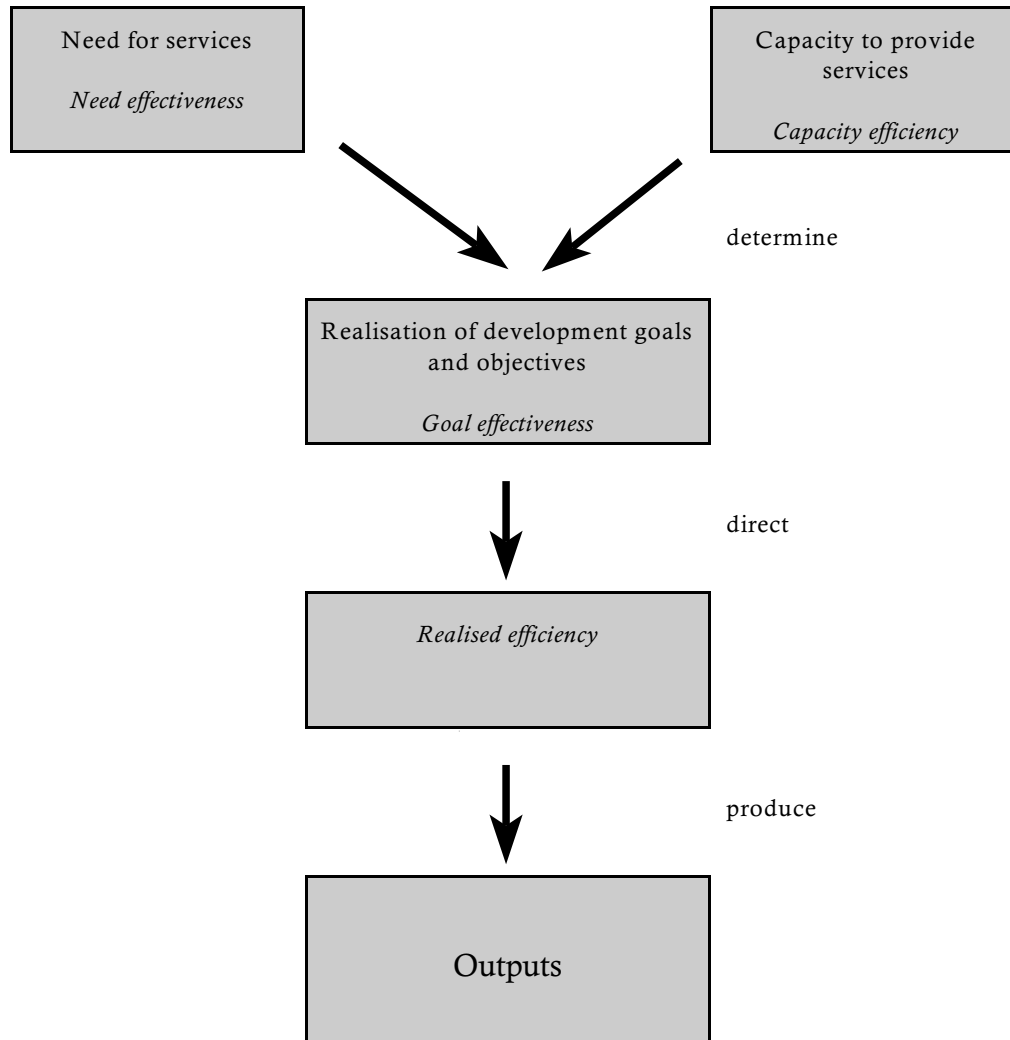
Establishing the development management information system at any level of public administration requires identification of development information needs which can be classified into two categories - information for routine transaction processing and information for decision making and planning. The first category of information is generally stable and easy to identify. The second category of information is more dynamic and more difficult to define. Routine transaction processing contributes little to setting development priorities and guiding development planning but the second category of information is difficult to collect and analyse.

The district development management information system facilitates monitoring and evaluation of development activities and programmes at the district level. Monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and activities serve at least two important functions necessary for social and economic progress: (a) planning and management of development programmes and processes; and (b) advocacy and legitimacy of development programmes and activities. The first category of functions are internal functions of the development administration system while the second category of functions may be termed as external functions. As an internal function, monitoring and evaluation activities facilitate review and appraisal of development programmes and processes which are necessary to learn from past experiences, to take mid course remedial and corrective actions and to redesign future priorities, policies and implementation plans with greater efficacy.

On the other hand, as an external function, monitoring and evaluation activities help in building a constituency for development programmes and generating monetary and non-monetary resources to support these programmes. In the absence of an appropriate development management information system, monitoring development activities and programmes within the district may be selective while evaluation exercises maybe subjective. Such monitoring and evaluation of development processes may add little to either improving the efficiency development processes and effectiveness of development activities and programmes in terms of improving

the quality of life of the people or building a constituency for development and generating resources.

*Figure 2*  
*Relationship between development efficiency and effectiveness.*



Development planning, monitoring and evaluation may also be viewed as essential management tools for improving the efficiency and effectiveness of development processes. Effectiveness of any development process has two components - 'goal' effectiveness and 'needs' effectiveness. 'Goal' effectiveness refers to a comparison of actual versus perceived goals while 'needs' effectiveness measures the extent up to which the development process is able to meet the development needs of the people. Efficiency, on the other hand, can be classified into 'realised' efficiency which establishes a

link between development inputs and development outputs in and 'capacity' efficiency which compares actual outputs against perceived outputs.

*Figure 2* shows the linkages between different components of effectiveness and different categories of the efficiency of the development process. The 'realised' efficiency determines outputs of the development process. It is, in turn, determined by 'needs' effectiveness, 'capacity' efficiency and 'goal' effectiveness. To ensure high degree of 'realised' efficiency, goals of the development process must be highly effective. To ensure that the goals are highly effective, it is necessary that they are decided after taking into account the development 'needs' of the people as well as the capacity of the development system to meet these needs. If the development goals are set on the basis of the development needs of the people, without taking into account the capacity of the development system, it will be difficult to realise these goals and hence the goal effectiveness of the development process will remain poor. The tendency is to decide the goals of the development process on the basis of the development needs of the people. The capacity of the system that is responsible for the implementation of the development process is rarely taken into consideration in this goals setting process.

Measurement and analysis of both effectiveness and efficiency of development processes are important in meeting the development needs of the people. A development process can be very effective, able to meet nearly all development goals but very inefficient in the sense that it requires a lot of disproportionate resources as inputs. Similarly, a development process may be very efficient in terms of input considerations but this efficiency may be an impediment to achieving development outputs as the inputs may not be sufficient in proportion to the development needs of the people and so the needs effectiveness remains poor.

The foregoing discussions suggest that any development management information system should therefore comprise of four subsystems. The first and perhaps the most important of the four sub-systems is the information system related to the development needs of the people. This system should provide information related to the needs effectiveness of the development process. The second sub-system, on the other hand, should measure the capacity efficiency of the system responsible for implementing the development process while the third sub-system should measure the goals effectiveness. Finally, the fourth sub-system should focus on measuring the realised efficiency of the development process in the context of prevailing levels of goals effectiveness, capacity efficiency and needs effectiveness. This sub-system should also measure outputs and analyse how they are related to the realised efficiency as well as to goals effectiveness, needs effectiveness and capacity efficiency.

**Indicators for Development.** The most commonly used framework for operationalising the development management information system is the

results framework. The results framework breaks down the development processes according to the logical components of the implementation process and for each component, objectively verifiable indicators are defined. These indicators constitute the core of the development management information system. The information base of the development management information system is designed to generate data and information related to these development indicators.

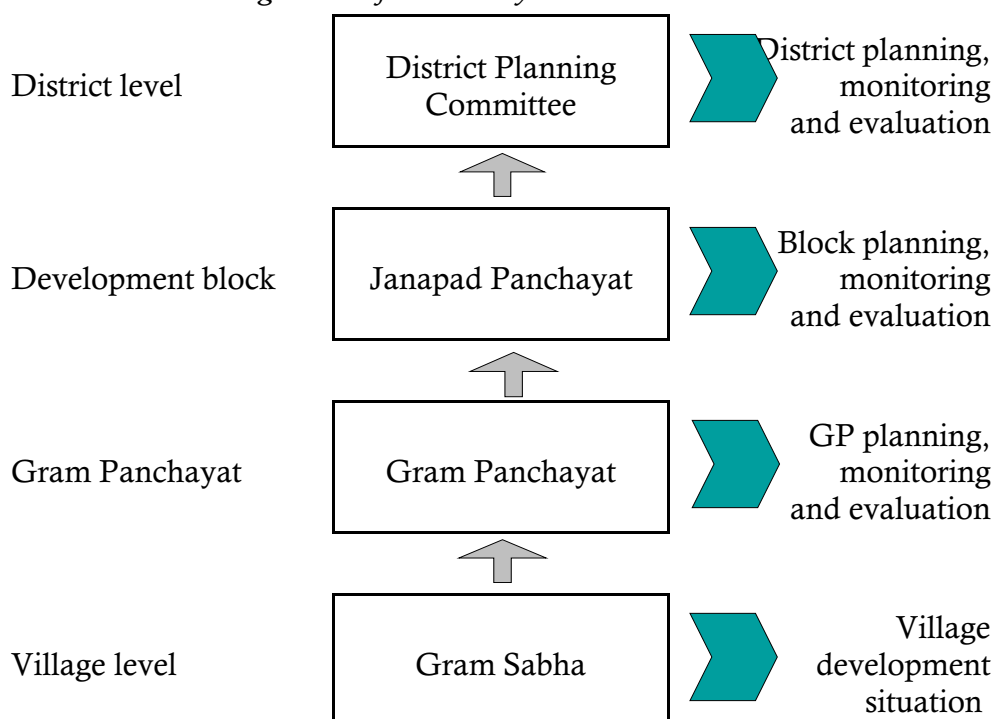
While developing or selecting indicators for monitoring and evaluating development processes, it needs to be recognised that the basic orientation of development management is different at different tiers of the development administration system. At the grass roots level, it is the needs effectiveness and the capacity efficiency of development administration system that is critical to the management of development activities and programmes. By contrast, at the intermediate level, the primary concern may be the goal effectiveness whereas at upper levels of development administration, the focus may be on realised efficiency of the development process. Different orientation of development management at different tiers of the development process suggests that development indicators designed for the upper tiers of development administration may be of little relevance at the grass roots level - the interface with the people and vice versa. However, it is important that there must be a well-defined causal linkages between development indicators identifies at different tiers of the development administration network.

There are, in general, two major approaches to develop indicators for development management and administration - the composite development index approach and the functional indicators approach. The composite development indicators approach is the most commonly used one. The main purpose of the composite development indicators is to measure general level of progress in more than one dimensions of the development process. These indicators could be desegregated by administrative areas, gender and social class, and may be produced regular intervals. They are neither input nor process or output indicators.

Functional development indicators, on the other hand, are used to monitor and evaluate implementation of development processes. In this respect, they may be classified as input, process and output indicators. The functional approach to development management does not generate outcome or impact indicators of the development programmes and processes. Since, development processes are specifically and purposely designed to achieve specific development goals and objectives, it is logical to assume that outcome and impact indicators are logically related to input, process and output indicators. This means that there should be a clear link between composite indicators of development and the functional indicators. This is necessary to ensure that development inputs, development processes and development outputs actually lead to desired development outcomes and have desired

impact on the quality of life and standards of living of the people. This relationship needs to be established at the conceptual and policy level and should be verified empirically at the operational level on the basis of the information available through the development management information system.

*Figure 3*  
*Suggested flow of information for developing a comprehensive development management information system at the district level*



**Data System.** The most critical element of the development management information system is the data system - the system of collecting, storing and retrieving data related to development activities and programmes for the purpose of generating information and translating information into knowledge. Development data is necessary to generate development information which is summarised in development indicators. This development information constitutes the basis for monitoring the progress of development programmes and processes as well as for measuring the impact of development programmes and processes on the quality of life. Results of evidence-based monitoring and evaluation of development programmes and processes constitute the basis for policy formulation and policy review. Lack of the availability of reliable, relevant and timely development data and associated information is perhaps the most serious impediment against institutionalising the development management information system to

support development planning, monitoring and evaluation. Maintaining the development database, therefore, is critical to every development management information system.

Ideally, data and information related to development programmes and activities should flow from the grass roots level to the highest level of development administration (*Figure 3*). This means that appropriate mechanisms should be in place at the grass roots level for collecting data related to development programming including bench marking, inputs, processes, outputs, outcomes and impact. Approaches for collecting data at the grass roots level include household surveys, statistics related to the services provided and surveillance of ongoing development activities and programmes. All approaches have their own merits and demerits. In general, different approaches are complimentary so that more than one approach may be required to generate the development data and for transforming it into development information. Data from two different sources are also necessary to check the quality and reliability of data and to ensure that data available from different sources reflect the prevailing development situation.

## **Methodology**

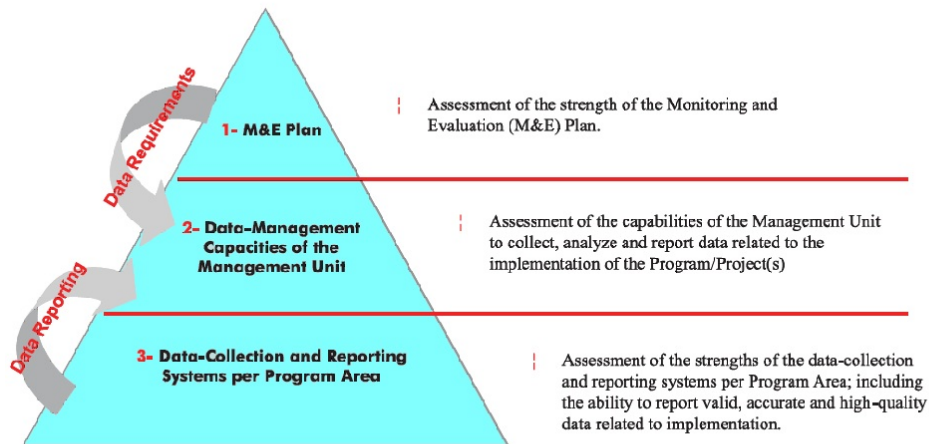
A number of tools have been developed to assess the collection, reporting and management of the development information. These include, among others:

- Monitoring and evaluation systems strengthening tool,
- Health metrics network assessment tool,
- Building nation HIV/AIDS monitoring and evaluation capacity tool,
- Performance of routine information systems management framework and tools, and
- National monitoring and evaluation road maps.

The present review is based on the monitoring and evaluation systems strengthening tool developed by the World Bank. The monitoring and evaluation systems strengthening tool is designed as a generic tool to assess data collection, reporting and management systems to measure development. Simply put, this tool addresses primarily the monitoring and evaluation plan and systems that need to be in place to collect and channel data up the system for aggregation into relevant development indicators for program management and reporting. This tool helps in assessing the strengths and weaknesses of development monitoring and evaluation system including development data collection and reporting, and highlighting areas for improvement.

The conceptual framework of the monitoring and evaluation systems strengthening tool is shown in *figure 4*. This tool has three components. The first component is related to the development of the monitoring and evaluation plan while the second component is related to the assessing the

*Figure 4*  
*The Conceptual Framework*

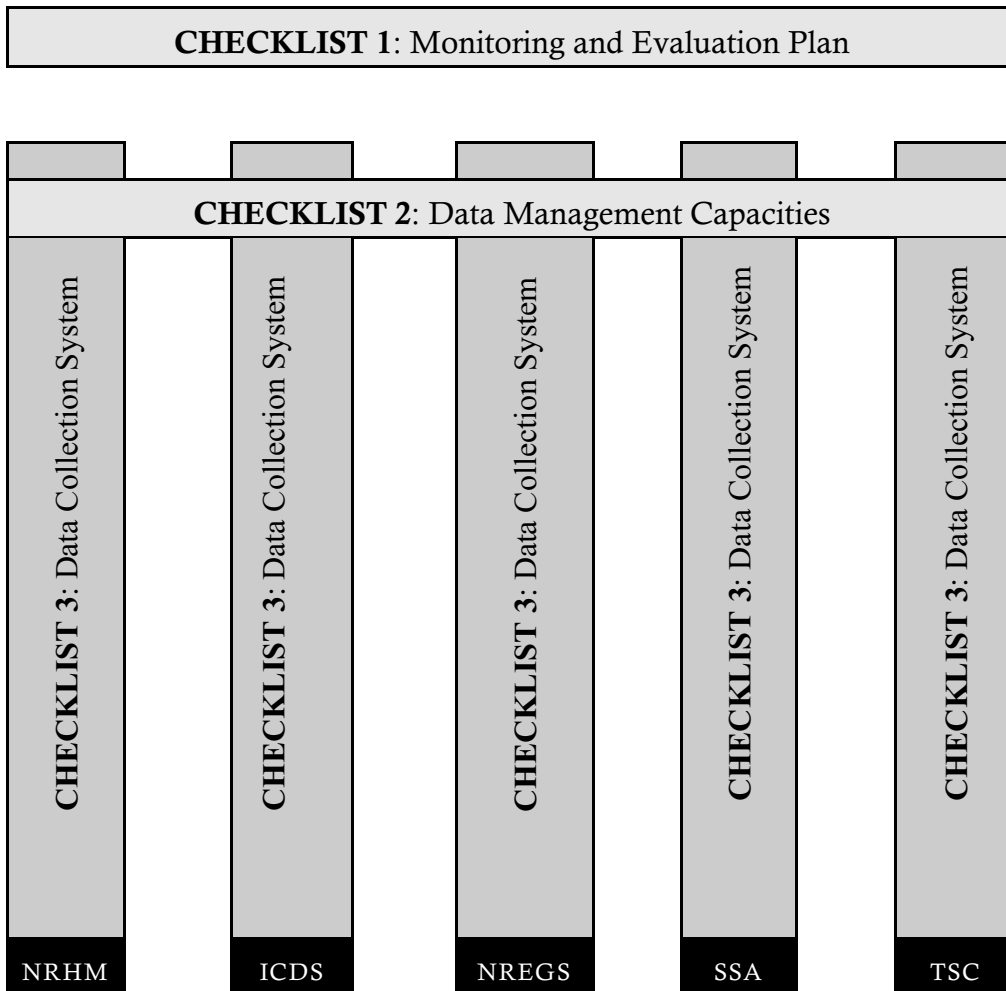


capabilities of the development data management system. Finally, the third component is related to development data collection and reporting system.

The tool comprises of three complementary checklists. The first checklist assesses the monitoring and evaluation plan of each of the five national flagship programmes at the district level. It looks at the goals and objectives of each programs at the district level and how they relate to national strategy and monitoring and evaluation plan, if they exist. This checklist assesses, the indicators selected, their data sources, target-setting, and availability of baselines. The Checklist also looks at data dissemination and transparency. Finally, the checklist also assesses the budget allocated to monitoring and evaluation activities. The second checklist assesses the strength and capacity of the data management unit. It seeks to determine if the data management unit has the resources, procedures, skills, and experience necessary for monitoring and evaluation data management and reporting. The third checklist assesses strengths of data-collection and reporting systems including the ability to report valid, accurate, and high-quality data. This checklist includes three questionnaires - one for facility-based activities, one for community-based activities, and one for systems strengthening activities - and focuses on systems that produce numbers related to:

- (1) people reached/served;
- (2) commodities distributed;
- (3) people trained; and
- (4) service points/facilities/organizations supported.

*Figure 5*  
*The Operational Framework*  
*Review and Assessment of Management Information System*  
*National Flagship Programmes*



NRHM  
 ICDS  
 NREGS  
 SSA  
 TSC

National Rural Health Mission  
 Integrated Child development Scheme  
 National Rural Employment Guarantee Act  
 Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan  
 Total Sanitation Campaign



Each checklist contains a range of questions designed to carry out a systematic review of the management information system of the five national programmes. to perform the diagnosis. The check lists so prepared for the review and assessment of each of the five National Flagship Programmes are appended. These checklists constitute the basis for the collection of information necessary for review.

The study was carried out in Guna and Shivpuri districts of Madhya Pradesh which is one of the constituent states of India. Guna and Shivpuri districts have been adopted by the United Nations Children's Funds as integrated districts for strengthening and institutionalising the decentralised development planning system for addressing issues related to children and women in the district development plan in an integrated. Both the districts are located in the north western part of Madhya Pradesh. Available information suggests that the two districts are amongst the most backward districts of the state not only in terms of status of children and women but also in terms of almost all indicators of social, economic and human development.

The process of the review and the assessment of the development management information system in the two districts comprised of the visit of the consultants to the two districts. During the visit, the consultants met with the district programme manager of the five National Flagship Programmes and the district level staff responsible for data management - collection, storage, analysis and dissemination - and had detailed discussions on different aspects of the management information system specific to the flagship programme. The checklist developed for the assessment of the management information system constituted the basis for these discussion. The consultants also collected and reviewed different reporting formats being used at the district level for reporting the progress of implementation of the flagship programme in the two districts.

In addition to meeting and discussions with the district programme manager of the five national flagship programmes as well as the district level data management staff, one of the consultants also visited selected development blocks and villages in the two districts to have an idea of the nature and the extent of monitoring and evaluation activities being organised at the grass roots level. The consultant also had detailed discussions with the grass roots level service providers of the five national flagship programmes to have an idea of the perception of the grass roots level service providers about monitoring and evaluation activities and how these activities could facilitate planning and implementation of programme related activities at the grass roots level. The response of the grass roots level service providers was combined with the response and the feedback provided by the district level officers and programmes managers to arrive at a comprehensive assessment of the status of monitoring and evaluation activities under each of the five national flagship programmes at the district level.

## Results

The findings of the review and assessment of the management information system of the five national flagship programmes are summarised in a tabular form in the following pages. The management information system of the five national flagship programmes are essentially different in terms of structure and contents. However, one common feature of all the programmes is that their management information system is primarily designed for monitoring programme implementation in the national context and not in the district context. As such, monitoring activities of all the five national flagship programmes are confined to reporting the details of services provided to upper tiers of programme management and programme administration. The management information system is not designed to evaluate the impact of the programme at the district level.

A synthesis of the prevailing management and information system of the five national flagship programmes is given below:

**Monitoring and Evaluation Plan.** There is no district-specific monitoring and evaluation plan in any of the five national flagship programmes. Although, the District Programme Managers of all the flagship programmes claimed that such a plan existed, yet all but one of them could not provide the copy of the monitoring and evaluation plan. In all the flagship programmes, the national level goals and objectives have been adopted as district level goals and objectives to be achieved without any consideration to the district-specific situation. Similarly, there is little district level benchmarking of outcome and impact indicators in any of the five flagship programmes. The District Programme Managers were having little idea about the district level base line values of outcome or impact indicators identified at the national level. Similarly, their perception about the end line values was also very limited.

District Programme Managers appeared to have little perception about input, process, output, outcome and impact indicators necessary for planning at the district level. Similarly, district programme managers generally had little orientation about how input, process, output, outcome and impact indicators can be combined at the district level for planning for the programme related activities. In fact, no District Programme Manager could provide the list of input, process, output and outcome indicators that are being monitored at the district level in the context of the situation prevailing in the district.

The district level capacity, other than reporting of the services provided also appear to be very weak. This is expected as district level monitoring activities are not oriented towards monitoring and evaluating programme in the context of the district development needs and priorities. The staff involved in the management of the data and the information at the district level did not have necessary technical skills for the analysis of even the

available information in the context of the district planning needs. Although, a few of the District Programme Managers suggested that analyses such as trend analysis, cost analysis, etc. were carried out, yet, the scientific rigour of such analyses appear to be in doubt.

As regards financial, physical and manpower resources for institutionalising the monitoring and evaluation system, District Programme Managers of all the flagship programmes informed that funds were available. However, resources appeared to be limited to routine reporting. Institutionalising a comprehensive management information system appears to be the need of the time but there appear little efforts in this direction.

**Data Management Capacity.** The data management capacity appears to be extremely limited, although, computers are available. There is little linkage of the development information available from different sources. Collection, storage and analysis of information is limited to programme service statistics. It is claimed that district level staff has been given training in data management including assessment of the data quality and analysis of the collected information, yet there is hardly any evidence of estimating district level input, process and output indicators other than calculation of percentages and ratios. District level information base did not exist in any of the five flagship programmes, although, all District Programme Managers expressed the need for such a database. There has also been little networking of the information maintained by different programmes despite the fact, that their activities often overlap.

**Data Collection and Reporting System.** In general, data collection and reporting system is confined to the reporting of services provided. Information related to infrastructure and facilities is also reported. In some of the programmes, a household survey was also carried out to gather household level information but there was little evidence of the analysis and use of this information in planning at the district level. Moreover, the survey of households is generally found to be carried out by the service providers themselves and there has been no attempt to assess the quality and reliability of data collected. There has been no attempt to engage an independent agency to collect beneficiary-based information and to match provider-based information with the information available directly from the beneficiaries. In the absence of the beneficiary based information or because of the poor quality of household level information collected by the service providers, there is no way of estimating output and outcome indicators which are necessary for measuring the impact of flagship programme. In general, the community-based information system which is so critical for need based development planning and beneficiary based impact assessment is generally found to be lacking in all the flagship programmes. As already stressed, this community or beneficiary-based information system is a critical component of the development management information system.

Table 1: Current status of monitoring and evaluation system of National Flagship Programmes in Guna and Shivpuri districts, Madhya Pradesh.

<i>SN</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</i>	<i>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)</i>	<i>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</i>	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i>	<i>Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)</i>
<b>MONITORING AND EVALUATION PLAN</b>						
1	Is the District Action Plan for implementing the program prepared?	Guna- No Shivpuri- Yes Failed to provide copy of the action plan	Yes Failed to provide copy of the action plan	Yes Failed to provide copy of the action plan	Yes  Guna failed to provide copy of the action plan.  Shivpuri has provided the action plan	Yes Failed to provide copy of the action plan
1.1	Does the District Action Plan specify the district levels goals to be achieved?	Guna- No Shivpuri-Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
1.2	What are these goals?	Reduce IMR, MMR. Better nutritional status of children 0-5 years.  National level goals are adopted. No district specific goals identified.	Increase in the number of wage earners. Improve payment system. Provide work on demand. Stop rural labour migration.  National level goals are adopted. No district specific goals identified.	Reduce IMR, MMR, TFR. Prevention and control of communicable & non-communicable diseases. Universal access of primary health services.  National level goals are adopted. No district specific goals identified.	Provide school building. Student funding. Teachers' training, PTA motivation Universal Access. Universal achievement. Universal retention. Universal enrolment.  National level goals are adopted. No district specific goals identified.	Provide toilet facilities in rural areas. Provide toilet facilities to BPL & APL families. Cent per cent coverage of schools and anganwaris.

<i>SN</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</i>	<i>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)</i>	<i>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</i>	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i>	<i>Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)</i>
2	Does the District Action Plan specify the outcome indicators	Guna- No Shivpuri- Yes	No	Guna – Yes Shivpuri – Do not know	Guna – Yes Shivpuri – No	Guna – No Shivpuri – Yes
2.1	What are the outcome indicators?	Failed to provide the list of outcome indicators	Do not know such indicators	Number of delivery centers working. Number of FRUs working. Number of BEMONC. Number of vaccine distribution centres. Number of workers trained in SBA neonatal care.  National level goals are adopted. No district specific goals identified.  Shivpuri – Failed to provide the list of indicators.	Failed to provide the list of outcome indicators.	Failed to provide the list of outcome indicators.

<i>SN</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</i>	<i>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)</i>	<i>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</i>	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i>	<i>Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)</i>
3	Does the District Action Plan specify process indicators?	Guna- No Shivpuri- Yes	No	Yes	Guna – Yes Shivpuri – No	Guna – No Shivpuri – Yes
3.1	What are the process indicators?	Failed to provide the list of process indicators.	Do not know such indicators	Number of workshops organized at different levels. Number of village and block plans prepared.	Do not know process indicators.	Failed to provide the list of process indicators.
4	Does the District Action Plan specify input indicators?	Guna- No Shivpuri- Yes	Guna – Yes Shivpuri – No	Yes	Guna – Do not know Shivpuri – No	Guna – No Shivpuri - Do not know
4.1	What are the input indicators?	Failed to provide the list of input indicators.	Increase wages volume.	ASHA selection and training. Village health and sanitation committee. Strengthen SHC, PHC and CHC through untied funds. Strengthen data collection and review.	Failed to provide the list of input indicators.	Failed to provide the list of input indicators.
5	Does the District Action Plan include monitoring and evaluation sub-plan also?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.1	Have links between input, process, output indicators been established?	No	Guna – Yes Shivpuri – No	Yes	Yes	Guna – Yes Shivpuri – No

<i>SN</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</i>	<i>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)</i>	<i>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</i>	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i>	<i>Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)</i>
5.2	Has the frequency of estimating different indicators been specified?	Guna – No Shivpuri – Yes	Guna – Yes Shivpuri – No	No	Yes	Yes
5.2.1	What is the frequency of estimation?	Monthly.	Monthly.	Monthly.	Monthly.	Monthly.
5.3	Is the level at which different indicators are to be estimated specified?	Yes	Guna – Cannot sat Shivpuri – No	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.3.1	What is the lowest level of estimation?	District	Village	District	Below district	Below district
5.4	Does the monitoring and evaluation plan specify population subgroups for which different output and outcome indicators are to be estimated?	Yes	Yes	Guna – No Shivpuri – Yes	Yes	Yes
5.4.1	What are the population subgroups?	Total population, SC, ST, male, female.	Rural, urban, SC, ST, BPL, male, Female BPL, APL	Failed to provide the information.	Rural, urban, SC, ST, BPL, APL, male, female	Rural, urban, SC, ST, BPL, and APL
5.5	Does monitoring and evaluation plan specify the data source for estimating output indicators?	Yes	Yes	Guna – No Shivpuri – Yes	Yes	Yes
5.5.1	What are the data sources for estimating the agreed indicators?	Service statistics.	Service statistics	Survey.	PTA, DISE, IPMS.	Service statistics

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5.6	Does the monitoring and evaluation plan specify the data source for estimating outcome indicators?	Guna – No Shivpuri – Yes	No	Guna – No Shivpuri – Yes	Yes	Guna – No Shivpuri - Yes
5.6.1	What are the data sources?	Do not know.	Do not know	Do not know	PTA, DISE	Do not know
5.7	Does the monitoring and evaluation plan specify the data source for estimating process indicators?	Do not know.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
5.7.1	What are the data sources?	Do not know.	Do not know.	Field survey	PTA, DISE, IPMS, Census	Do not know
5.8	Does the monitoring and evaluation plan specify the data source for estimating input indicators?	Guna – No Shivpuri - Do not know	No	Yes	Yes	Guna – No Shivpuri – Yes
5.8.1	What are the data sources?	Do not know.	Do not know.	Civil registration	Do not know.	Do not know..
6	Does the District Action Plan specify the baseline values of different indicators to measure the progress?	Yes.	Do not know.	Yes	Yes	Yes,



<i>SN</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</i>	<i>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)</i>	<i>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</i>	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i>	<i>Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)</i>
7	Does the District Action Plan specify the end line values of different indicators to measure the progress?	No.	No	Yes	Yes.	Do not know.
8	Is there provision of budget in the District Action Plan specifically for monitoring and evaluation activities?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Who is responsible for monitoring and evaluation at the district level?	DPO, ASO	DPO	CMHO	DPO	DPO
10	Who is responsible for collecting information and estimating different output, outcome, process and input indicators?	ASO	DPO	ASO	DPO	DPO
11	What is the frequency of preparing and submitting monitoring reports?	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly	Monthly
12	Has any evaluation of the program at the district level been carried out?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes

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<b>INFORMATION MANAGEMENT CAPACITY</b>						
1	Who is responsible for collecting, storing and analyzing program related information at the district level?	ASO	DPO	ASO	DPO	DPO
2	Have these persons been given specific training in aspects of monitoring and evaluation	Yes	Do not know.	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Have these persons been given specific training in aspects of quality of information for monitoring and evaluation?	Do not know.	Do not know.	Do not know.	Yes	Yrs
4	Have these persons been given specific training in estimating different monitoring and evaluation indicators specified in the District Action Plan?	No	Do not know.	No	Yes	Yes
5	Are data collection/ reporting formats available for the collection/ reporting of information?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

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6	Have these formats been developed at the district level or provided by national/state authorities?	National/state authorities.	National/state authorities.	National/state authorities.	National/state authorities.	National/state authorities.
7	Are guidelines available for filling up the data collection/reporting formats necessary for monitoring and evaluation?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Is the information received from lower level administrative units is verified for completeness and obvious mistakes?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
9	Are guidelines available to address incompleteness and inaccuracy?	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes
10	How is collected/reported information stored?	Registers and computers	Registers and computers	Registers and computers	Registers and computers	Registers and computers
11	What type of analysis is carried out at the district level?	Trend and cost analysis, seasonal, input output analysis	Trend and cost analysis, seasonal, input output analysis	Percentages, trend, analysis of differentials.	Growth analysis, analysis of percentage, trend, input-output.	Input-output and cost analysis
12	Does technical competency exist at the district level for analysis	No	Do not know	Yes	No	Yes

<i>SN</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</i>	<i>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)</i>	<i>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</i>	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i>	<i>Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)</i>
14	Is household survey necessary for effective monitoring and evaluation of the program at the district level?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>DATA REPORTING SYSTEMS - SERVICES AND FACILITIES</b>						
1	What is the system of reporting program related information?	Block level officer collects report form village and compiled report send to the district.	Do not know.	SHC to PHC to CHC to district.	CRC to BRC to DPO.	Village level report compiled at block level and send to district.
2	Type of information reported	Services provided, infrastructure, equipments, manpower, and expenditure	Service statistics, provided, infrastructure, facilities, equipments, , manpower, and expenditure	Service statistics	Service statistics	Service statistics, provided, infrastructure, facilities, equipments, , manpower, and expenditure
3	Are standard reporting formats used at all service delivery points?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4	Have clear instructions been provided to fill up these forms?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
5	Has any training been organized to fill- up the reporting formats?	Yes	Do not know.	Yes	Yes	Yes

<i>SN</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</i>	<i>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)</i>	<i>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</i>	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i>	<i>Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)</i>
6	Are formats developed at the district level or at state/national level?	State/national level	State/national level	State/national level	State/national level	State/national level
7	Is designated staff responsible for review and validation of the reported information?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
8	Has this staff received training in review and validation of reported information.	No	No	No	Yes	No
9	Is there any system to review and check the accuracy and completeness of the reported information at the district level?	Yes	Do not know	No	Yes	Yes
11	How is information related to beneficiaries collected	Through service providers	Do not know	Through service providers	Through service providers	Through service providers
12	Is there any system to ensure that the information related to beneficiaries is complete?	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
13	What is the system?	NA	NA	NA	Monitoring by DPC and DISE	Zila Panchayat

<i>SN</i>	<i>Particulars</i>	<i>Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS)</i>	<i>National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)</i>	<i>National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)</i>	<i>Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)</i>	<i>Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)</i>
14	Is there any system of checking the consistency of the information related to services provided by the provider?	Yes	Do not know	No	Yes	Yes
14.1	What is the system?	Do not know	Do not know	District level household survey	Do not know	Field visits
15	How is reported information used?	Reported to higher authorities	Reported to higher authorities	Reported to higher authorities	Reported to higher authorities	Reported to higher authorities
<b>DATA REPORTING SYSTEMS - COMMUNITY SETTINGS</b>						
1	What are the sources of information about the community?	No well defined system	Do not know	District level household survey	PTA and CAC, Village enrolment register	Villagers report
2	Do these sources provide information necessary for monitoring and evaluation of the programme?	Partly yes	Do not know	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Is there any system of filling the information gap for effective monitoring and evaluation?	No	Do not know	Do not know	Yes	No
4	What is that system?	NA	NA	NA	Through PTA	NA.
5	Is any household survey carried out regularly to get the information about the	Yes	Do not know	No	Yes	No

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	community?					
5.1	Who carried out the survey?	Service provides	No Survey	Government of India	Service providers	District level agency
5.2	Up to which level information from the survey is available?	Village level	Village level	District level	Village level	Village level
6	Has the mapping of all beneficiaries in the district been carried out?	No	No	No	Yes	No
6.1	When was the mapping carried out?	NA	NA	NA	Once in a year	NA
7	What do you think, village level mapping of beneficiaries is necessary for decentralized planning?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2: MDG Goals, Targets and Indicators

Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
1 Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger	1a Reduce by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar per day	1.1 Proportion of population below \$1(PPP) per day	Information about the number of families below the poverty line is available from which proportion of families below the poverty line can be estimated.
		1.2 Poverty gap ratio	No information available.
		1.3 Share of poorest quintiles in national consumption	No information available.
	1b Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people	1.4 Growth rate of GDP per person employed	No information available.
		1.5 Employment to population ratio	Information is available from the population census which is undertaken at an interval of 10 years.
		1.6 Proportion of employed people living below \$1(PPP) per day	No information available.
		1.7 Proportion of own account and contributing family workers in total employment	No information available.
		1c Reduce by half the proportion of people who suffer from hunger	1.8 Prevalence of under weight children under five years of age



Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
		1.9 Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	No information available.
2 Achieve universal primary education	2a Ensure that all boys and girls complete full course of primary schooling	2.1 Net enrolment ratio in primary education	Information about total enrolment is available from which net enrolment ratio can be estimated.
		2.2 Proportion of pupils starting grade I who reach last grade of primary education	No information available.
		2.3 Literacy rate of 15-24 year old, women and men	Information is available through population census which is taken up at an interval of 10 years.
3 Promote gender equality and empower women	3a Eliminate gender inequality in primary and secondary education	3.1 Ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education	Information is available and the ratio can be calculated easily.
		3.2 Share of women in wage-employment in the non-agriculture sector	No information available.
		3.3 Proportion of seats held by women in national parliament	This indicator is largely irrelevant as one third of the seats in Panchayat Raj institutions are not reserved for women.

Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
4 Reduce child mortality	4a Reduce by two third the mortality rate among children under five	4.1 Under-five mortality rate	District level estimates are available through population census only.
		4.2 Infant mortality rate	District level estimates are available through population census only.
		4.3 Proportion of 1 year old children immunised against measles	Information is available through district level household Survey.
5 Improve maternal health	5a Reduce by three quarter the maternal mortality ratio	5.1 Maternal mortality ratio	No information available. However, maternal mortality ratio can be estimated through indirect techniques.
		5.2 Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel.	Information is available at the district level from the district level household survey. Below the district level, no information is available.
	5b Achieve universal access to reproductive health	5.3 Contraceptive prevalence rate	Information is available at the district level from the district level household survey. Below the district level, no information is available.
		5.4 Adolescent birth rate	Estimates of birth rate in the age group 15-19 years can be prepared on the basis of 2001 population census.
		5.5 Antenatal care coverage rate	Information is available at the district level from the district level household survey. Below the district level, no information is available.

Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
		5.6 Unmet need for family planning	Information is available at the district level from the district level household survey. Below the district level, no information is available.
6 Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and other diseases	6a Halt and begin to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS	6.1 HIV prevalence among population aged 15-24 years.	No information available.
		6.2 Condom use at last high risk sex	No information available.
		6.3 Proportion of population aged 15-24 years with comprehensive correct knowledge of HIV/AIDS	No information available.
		6.4 Ratio of school attendance of orphans to school attendance of non-orphans aged 10-14 years.	No information available.
	6b Achieve universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it	6.5 Proportion of population with advanced HIV infection with access to antiretroviral drugs.	No information available.

Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
	6c Halt and begin to reverse incidence of malaria and other diseases	6.6 Incidence and death rate associated with malaria.	No information available.
		6.7 Proportion of children under 5 sleeping under insecticide treated bednets.	No information available.
		6.8 Proportion of children under-five with fever who are treated with appropriate antimalarial drugs	No information available.
		6.9 Incidence/ prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis	No information available.
		6.10 Proportion of TB cases detected and cured under DOT.	Information is available from the official records.
7 Enhance environmental sustainability	7a Integrate principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes; reverse loss of employment resources.		Not applicable
	7b Reduce biodiversity loss	7.1 Proportion of land area covered by forests.	Information is available from the land records.

Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
		7.2 Carbon Dioxide emission, total, per capita per \$1 of GDP (PPP)	No information available.
		7.3 Consumption of Ozone depleting substances	No information available.
		7.4 Proportion of fish stock with safe biological limits	No information available.
		7.5 Proportion of total water resources used	No information available.
		7.6 Proportion of terrestrial and marine areas protected	No information available.
		7.7 Proportion of species threatened with extinction	No information available.

Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
	7c Reduce by half the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation	7.8 Proportion of population using an improved drinking water source	Information is available through 2001 population census.
		7.9 Proportion of population using an improved sanitation facility	Information is available through 2001 population census.
	7d Achieve significant improvement in lives of slum dwellers	7.10 Proportion of urban population living in slums	Information is available.
8 Develop global partnership for development	8a Develop further an open, rule-based predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system	8.1 Net ODA, total and to the least developing countries as percentage of OECD/DAC donors gross national income	Information is available through 2001 population census.
	8b Address special needs of least developing countries	8.2 Proportion of total bilateral ODA of OECD/DAC donors to basic social services	Information is available through 2001 population census.
	8c Address special needs of landlocked countries and small islands developing states	8.3 Proportion of bilateral official development assistance of OECD/DAC that is untied.	Information is available through 2001 population census.
	8d Deal comprehensively	8.4 ODA received in landlocked	Not relevant.

Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
	debt problem of developing countries	developing countries as proportion to their gross national income.	
		8.5 ODA received in small islands states as proportion to their gross national income.	Not relevant.
		8.6 Proportion of total developed country imports from developing and least developed countries admitted free of duty.	Not relevant.
		8.7 Average tariff imposed by developed countries on agriculture products, textiles and clothing from developing and least developed countries	Not relevant
		8.8 Agriculture support estimates of OECD as a percentage of their GDP	Not relevant
		8.9 Proportion of ODA provided to help build trade capacity	Not relevant
		8.10 Total number of countries that have reached their HIPC decision	Not relevant

Goals	Targets	Indicators	Availability of information at the district level to estimate the indicator
		point and that have reached the completion point	
		8.11 Debt relief committed under HIPC and MDRI initiative	Not relevant
		8.12 Debt service as a percentage of exports of goods and services	Not relevant.
		8.13 Proportion of population with access to affordable essential drugs on a sustainable basis	No information available
		8.14 Telephone lines per 100 population	Information in available
		8.15 Cellular subscribers per 100 population	Information is available
		8.16 Internet use per 100 population	Information is available



Finally, we have also carried out an exercise to assess the extent to which indicators related to the Millennium Development Goals can be estimated at the district level on the basis of the information that current exists in the district. It may be recalled that the 8 Millennium Development Goals have been translated into 18 targets and 60 indicators for the purpose of operationalisation and for monitoring the progress towards these goals. For each of these 48 development indicators, we have explored whether necessary information is available at the district level from the existing development information system so that the indicators concerned can be estimated and monitored at the district level. This exercise gives us an idea up to what extent, the existing system is suited towards meeting the information needs of decentralised district development planning.

Results of our exercise are summarised in table 2. It is clear from the table that the existing development information system in the two districts is grossly inadequate to generate information that is necessary for monitoring the progress towards Millennium Development Goals at the district level. It is also clear that the existing development information system at the district level contributes little to evidence-based district level decentralised planning process in terms of providing the information support necessary for managing development programmes and processes to address the development and welfare needs of the people. The management information system of the flagship programmes in the two districts is at best perfunctory and extremely limited in scope and contents - confined to mechanical transmission of services delivered to higher authorities in the administrative hierarchy. This extremely limited in contents information is also used for monitoring the progress of activities under different flagship programmes. As such monitoring of the implementation processes lacks punch as well as supportive supervision and constructive guidance. Accordingly, there has been little effort to develop data systems necessary for assessing development and welfare needs of the people and planning for the delivery of services according to the assessed needs. In some of the programmes - for example, in *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* - there has been attempt to collect household level data related to children not going to school. However, there has been no attempt to check the consistency of the data collected. Moreover, there is little evidence of the use of this data in planning for services under the *Abhiyan*.

In the absence of appropriate data systems, alternative approaches have been adopted to assess the needs of the people in almost all the flagship programmes. In some cases, the national and state norms and objectives have been adopted as the goals and objectives of the district with little consideration to the situation prevailing in the district which as a rule rather than exception remains not known. This is especially the case with the National Rural Health Mission. In the absence of district level estimates of indicators like infant mortality rate, child mortality rate, etc. assessment of the

needs of the people under the programme has generally been done on the basis of state or national indicators. But assessment of needs of the people based on state averages is, in general, carries little meaning as the demographic and health situation at the district level varies widely from the demographic and health situation at the state level. For effective development planning, estimation of development indicators at the district level is a must.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The present review of the management information system of the five National Flagship Programmes - National Rural Health Mission, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Integrated Child Development Services, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, and Total Sanitation Campaign - in Guna and Shivpuri districts of Madhya Pradesh was undertaken in the context of information support for decentralised development planning and decentralised district specific management of development programmes and processes. The Government of Madhya Pradesh has taken steps towards decentralisation of the development planning process and management of development programmes and processes through the institution of District Planning Committee. Every district of the state is now preparing its own annual development plan and submitting and presenting it to the State Planning Commission for approval. The annual development plan is modified on the basis of the comments of the State Planning Commission and resources are leased to the District for the implementation of the annual development plan approved by the State Planning Commission. It is obvious that in order to ensure that the annual development plan of the district reflects the development and welfare needs of the people, it must be based on sound information base. A sound information base is also required to monitor and evaluate whether the annual development plan of the district has been able to achieve its perceived objectives and, if not, then what are the bottlenecks. It is in this context that existence of a comprehensive development management information system is necessary.

The review of the existing system of monitoring different development programmes and activities, especially those related to the national flagship programmes, however, reveals that there are significant gaps in the existing development information system in the two districts which seriously affects the decentralised development planning process at the district level but also affects the management of development processes and programmes. The review also highlights the fact that there is an urgent need of strengthening the development management information system at the district level so as to support the decentralised development planning, monitoring and evaluation of programmes and activities being organised under the National Flagship programmes at the district level.

More specifically, some of the salient findings of the review exercise are summarised below:

- There is no well defined evaluation plan that can assess the impact of the flagship programmes at the district level.
- In most of the cases, goals and objectives set at the national level have been taken as the goals and objectives for the district. There has been little effort to analyse the situation in the district and setting up the goals accordingly. Moreover, the development goals set for the district are not SMART. Phrases like reduce mortality, universalise enrolment, etc. have frequently been used.
- Definition of intermediate and immediate goals to achieve the specified development goals and objectives remain sketchy. There is little attempt to show how development goals, intermediate goals and immediate goals are linked.
- The monitoring plan of all the five national flagship programmes is at best generic in nature. Monitoring is confined to reporting of the progress of different activities on a monthly basis.
- All the five flagship programmes have standard reporting formats which have been designed and finalised either at the national level or at the state level. Local level customisation of the reporting formats is missing in all the five programmes.
- Monitoring is invariably done on the basis of the reporting done by the service providers. It is well known that programme service statistics are associated with a number of errors so that programme service statistics are not reliable source for programme monitoring. There is however no attempt to develop alternative monitoring system.
- It was reported during the review that the information available through the monitoring system is used for trend and cost analysis, seasonal input and output analysis, analysis of differentials, etc. However, there appears no documentation of the findings of the analysis.
- The need for annual household survey was recognised by Programme Managers of all the flagship programmes. However, there is little capacity of the district programme management to take up this challenging task in all the five flagship programmes.
- There is no monitoring and evaluation unity in any of the five flagship programmes at the district level. Generally, there are one or two persons under the district programme manager who are responsible for collecting and compiling the data from the lower administrative units, collating the collected data and submitting the report to higher authorities. This person is as a rule minimal trained in monitoring and evaluation activities.
- In some of the flagship programmes, beneficiary-based information is also collected. However, this information is of little use as its quality and coverage has never been tested. Moreover, the beneficiary based survey

is also undertaken by the service providers which raises doubts about the quality of the information available.

- A very positive sign is that in every flagship programme there is dedicated allocation for monitoring and evaluation activities. It is however not clear how this money is utilised at the end of the year.
- There exists significant capacity gap in the collection, analysis and interpretation of information, especially, information related to beneficiaries. This capacity gap exists in all areas of data system as well as in such areas and analysis of collected information and its dissemination to maximise its use.
- District level impact studies are virtually absent. Some of the information about the prevailing situation in the district is available through nationally organised survey like District Level Household Survey. However, there is very significant difference between the situation depicted through the programme monitoring system and the situation depicted through the independent community-based survey. This gap casts doubts about the whole monitoring system which is based on provider statistics.
- The district capacity to take up community based evaluation or impact study of the national flagship programmes is largely absent. In fact, measuring the impact of the programme at the district and below district level does not appear to be the mandate of the district programme management.
- None of the flagship programmes have established district level database for the purpose of monitoring and evaluation as well as for the purpose of planning for services delivery.
- There is very limited use of information technology in monitoring activities. Most of the records are kept in registers in the most traditional manner. Lack of the availability of the information about the programme inputs, programme processes and programme outputs in the electronic format severely limits the use of whatever data and information that is available.
- Whatever information is available, it is largely analysed at the district level only. Below the district level, there is hardly any analysis of the available data and information to support programme planning and programme implementation.

It is clear that there is ample scope for reinvigorating monitoring and evaluation activities under these programmes at the district level so as to facilitate decentralised district development planning. The current monitoring and evaluation activities under these flagship programmes do not appear to be directed towards supporting the decentralised district development planning process. Rather, the current monitoring activities under these flagship programmes are confined to reporting of development services provided to the people. Such reporting activities, unfortunately, contribute

little to district level planning, monitoring and evaluation processes. In order to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation activities at the district level do contribute to setting up district development priorities and facilitate decentralised district development planning, it is imperative that monitoring and evaluation functions of these flagship programmes are oriented to district development requirements and development needs of the people of the district. To ensure such an orientation, it is necessary that monitoring of the activities of these programmes is made relevant to district development concerns and district development priorities.

Another issue that needs to be given a considered attention is the evaluation of the impact of flagship programmes at the district level. This is a more challenging task than monitoring of activities being organised under different flagship programmes. A very serious challenge in evaluating the programme impact at the district level requires considerable district level capacity in the area of the evaluation of development programmes and services. Such capacity does not exist at present. Assessing the impact of the programme also requires bench marking of the prevailing development situation in terms of outcome and impact indicators and linking input indicators to outcome indicators through process and output indicators. At present, there is hardly any bench marking at the district level simply because the implementation of the flagship programmes at the district level has always been in the context of national goals and objectives and not district specific development needs. It is because of this orientation, implementation of the flagship programmes at the district level. There is a need to orient the monitoring and evaluation of these programme towards district development needs and priorities in addition to national goals and objectives. For this purpose, bench marking of the current development situation in the district, on the basis of an agreed set of development indicators is the need of the time.

In any case, developing the district level evaluation capacity is essential to ensure that results of development monitoring and evaluation activities at the district level are actually fed into the district development planning process so as to make it oriented towards the development needs of the people. This is possible only when an integrated district development management information system is evolved and institutionalised at the district level and monitoring and evaluation of flagship programmes is made an integral part of this integrated system.

Based on a comprehensive review of the existing monitoring and evaluation activities under different flagship programmes in districts Guna and Shivpuri, the following recommendations may be put forward to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system to support decentralised district development planning and management of development processes and programmes:

- a. The first and the foremost requirement towards evolving and institutionalising an integrated development management information system at the district level is to list out an agreed set of development indicators that constitute the basis for all monitoring and evaluation activities in the district in the context of national development goals and objectives.
- b. The agreed list of development indicators should be the basis for assessing the information needs for monitoring and evaluating national flagship programmes at the district level in the context of specific development needs of the people. It is important that the flagship programmes must be able to address the development needs of the people of the district in addition to contributing towards national goals and objectives.
- c. There is a very pressing need of developing the household survey capacity at the district level to generate beneficiary based information for decentralised district development planning. Independent information through household survey is also required to check the validity of programme service statistics. At present capacity exists at the district level.
- d. There is also a strong felt need of enhancing the analytical skills of the district staff engaged in the collection, analysis of the information that is currently available. Although the currently available information is of poor quality and is of very limited use, yet its proper analysis can make it useful for programme management. Specific capacity building programme may be designed for the purpose.
- e. One way to strengthen monitoring and evaluation activities at the district level is prepare and disseminate District performance Report of the National Flagship Programmes. This report must present information about programme inputs, programme processes and programme outputs. This performance report should also very clearly show how programme inputs, programme processes and programme outputs are related to programme outcomes and programme development goals at the district level.
- f. A comprehensive development database should be established at the district level to support monitoring and evaluation activities not only by the implementing organisations and agencies but also be independent researchers in the field.