MODEL GRAM PANCHAYATS

The Building Blocks of Rural India

Message from the Project Director

The interventions to support PRIs are not only unique to the HCL Foundation's "Samuday Program" but unique as focus area of CSR organisations itself. Very few organizations come to my mind whose CSR projects have dedicated interventions for PRI strengthening. Back in 2015 right at the beginning of the program we realized that an essential component for replicability, sustainability and scalability of any social development program is the inclusion of community and local governing bodies.

The PRI interventions form the backbone of Samuday's multipronged approach to rural development by working across the sectors of Health, Education, Livelihood, Agriculture, Infrastructure, Water and Sanitation. Efforts towards strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions(PRIs) included infrastructure development for Gram Panchayat secretariat/ office establishment, training and capacity building of elected and appointed PRI representatives, planning & execution of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP)and all other Gram Panchayat specific innovative procedures taken up in collaboration with the vibrant local leadership & community participation. All this was not a one-day task and it materialized over a symbiotic relationship based on need and availability of resources (within the gamut of PRI) as well as the demands of the Samuday Program (for smoother program implementation).

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the State Govt. and District Administration and specially Sri Pulkit Kharey, D.M. Hardoi, who bestowed us with immense trust and support in this endeavor. The replication of this model across the Hardoi Dist. by the Govt. is a testimony to the efficacy and functionality of our project design.
My words of praise to the Samuday Team, who have not only executed but carefully curated our activities and achievements in this E-Book. With hopes that we have many more such success stories to share with the world, wishing you all a happy reading.

Mr. Alok Varma
Director
HCL Samuday | Clean Noida,
HCL Foundation

Message from the DM

Pulkit Khare I.A.S.
District Magistrate

Team Samuday,

PRI forms the building block of democratic administration and rural development. Empowered by 73rd amendment of the constitution, it combines the merit of participatory development (through elected representatives) with powers of constitutional authority. Unique in its position, it forms the cornerstone for implementation of all rural development schemes and policies across India. Having said so, it's rare for large CSR Organisations like HCL Foundation to take up this untrodden path and pave the way for others to follow. The dynamic and civil nature of Panchayati Raj Institutions along with its magnitude poses several challenges for the district administration.

Training and Capacity building of PRI functionaries, monitoring and maintenance of infrastructure, conducting proper GPDP exercises are critical components and collective action from Government functionaries, CSR projects and civil society can be a big game changer. The approach of Samuday Project towards PRI is exemplary. Instead of a cosmetic approach the program implementation team ensured proper GPDP Planning and community mobilization to develop the need for proper infrastructure consequently leading to functional GP Bhawans. Building upon this model, district administration Hardoi launched its own initiative of transforming GP Bhawans into refurbished mini secretariats through **"Mission Kayakalp"** now covering 400 plus GPs across the district.

I would like to congratulate team Samuday for the launch of this handbook showcasing the different facets of success achieved in strengthening Panchayats of district Hardoi and inspiring others to follow suit.

Best Wishes.

(Pulkit Khare)
District Magistrate, Hardoi

Content Page

List of Abbreviation

BCC: Behavior Change Communication

DoPR: Directorate of Panchayati Raj

FGD: Focused Group Discussion

GOI: Government of India

IEC: Information Exchange Communication

PB: Panchayat Bhawan

PRA: Participatory Rural Appraisal

PRI: Panchayati Raj Institution

GP: Gram Panchayat

RGPSA: Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Shashaktikaran Abhiyan

UP: Uttar Pradesh

SDG: Sustainable Development Goals

SJSK: Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra

We are "SAMUDAY"

A rural development initiative, HCL Samuday, was launched in 2015 with an aim to develop a sustainable, scalable, and replicable model – source code for economic and social development of rural areas. Currently implemented in three blocks of Hardoi district in Uttar Pradesh, the program covers 164 Gram Panchayats, comprising of 765 villages and 90,000 households totalling a population of six lakh people.

Sustainability:

The Project is designed to help the local people identify their problems, co-create solutions, and then implement the same on their own with professional support from "Team Samuday", thereby, lending the dimension of sustainability and ownership to the vision of development.

Scalability:

HCL Samuday and its intervention are highly scalable in nature. A clear proof of this is the fact that having started work in just 50 villages to begin with, the project today is operational in 164 Gram Panchayats comprising of 90,000 households from three blocks – Kachhauna, Behender and Kothawan impacting around 600,000 people of Hardoi district – in Uttar Pradesh.

Replicability:

Replicability is the ultimate aim of HCL Samuday. To commit to this, Samuday in fact, has a Project Director from the government side as well. Such a synergy with the government and, as described earlier, with several NGOs and CSOs goes a long way in ensuring that our intervention shall be implemented by these stakeholders in other geographies, expediting rural development work in the country.

SDGs and HCL Samuday

HCL Samuday is linked to 6 of the 17 SDGs. Goals of the project are listed below, in linkage to these SDGs.

SDG 1 (NO POVERTY): LIVELIHOOD

- All marginal households have an alternate source of income
- At least 50% women of marginalized households participating in income generating activities
- All youth from marginal households are gainfully employed through self-employment or wage employment

SDG 2 (ZERO HUNGER): AGRICULTURE & NUTRITION

- Each farmer of the village is aware of modern practices in agriculture
- All participating farmers in the program have enhanced their income from agriculture by 25%
- All participating farmers are institutionalised in the form of farmers groups

SDG 3 (HEALTH & WELLBEING): HEALTH

- 100% women have safe motherhood
- 100% new born have access to complete neo-natal and post-natal healthcare services
- 100% children in age-group 0-5 years have access to healthy nutrition and preventive services

SDG 4 (QUALITY EDUCATION): EDUCATION

- 100% children in age group 6-14 are in school
- Each child has access to quality education in an effective learning environment
- 100% villagers have functional literacy

SDG 6 (CLEAN WATER & SANITATION): WATER, SANITATION & HYGIENE

- 100% Open Defecation Free Village
- Effective Solid and Liquid waste management infrastructure at village level
- 100% households have access to safe drinking water owned and maintained by village institutions

SDG 7 (RENEWABLE ENERGY): INFRASTRUCTURE

- 100% solar electrification of unconnected habitations with community led operation and management
- 100% solar electrification of completely or partially un-electrified public institutions/facilities

Numbers Speak

Samuday, through its interventions across six verticals for holistic rural development – agriculture, education, health, infrastructure, livelihood, and WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), has so far been able to make the following changes on the ground:

- Benefitted **42,000+** farms through various agriculture-related interventions; increased access to Nutritional Food Security by establishing Nutrition Gardens at **2,714** households with around **13,000** members; and supported establishment of a Farmer Producer Company with **2,129** shareholders and it has so far crossed business turnover of ₹**6,85,00,000.**

- About 55,000+ children receiving education in **326** Happy Schools with effective school environment, assertive community participation, and improved teaching learning processes through happy school intervention; and **63,000+** adults enrolled in adult literacy batches.

- Over **25,000** pregnant women and **21,000** children provided with improved care; **1,500+**SAM and SUW children treated in nutrition camps; **95,000+** patients treated through Mobile Health Clinics and telemedicine facilities; Institutional delivery rate increased from 69% to 87%; Early registration rate increased from 22% to 50%; and Full immunization rate increased from 29% to 69%.

- Brought renewable energy in the form of electricity to **41** villages through **32** solar mini-grids; **113** schools supported with necessary energy infrastructure through installation of rooftop solar PV systems; **12** public health facilities strengthened to run 24*7 on electricity; **74** km streets illuminated ensuring safety and security in villages; and **1** MWp of renewable energy infrastructure created.

- About **14,000+** dairy farmers with increased income, **11,800** liters (avg.) of milk procured daily; more than **2,300** households supported for backyard poultry unit development, and another **2,300** households' assets enhanced through goat rearing intervention; **1,000+** Self-Help Groups comprising of around 11,000+ women strengthened, with **5,000+** women connected to economic activities; and facilitated skill development of **1000+** youth on various trades.

- Almost **80,000+** households practicing safe sanitation; **7000+** households provided with piped drinking water supply; and **10,000+** households covered for waste management.

2. Transforming Governance at the Grassroots through CSR

2.1 Envisioning the dynamic role of CSR in strengthening PRIs

On one hand while rural development has always been a key area of focus for governments, it has also gained importance with the corporate sector. The advent of mandatory Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) as stipulated by Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013 provides a holistic guideline which covers wide range of topics with aim of sustainable development. It further aligns itself with the Sustainable development goals of UNDP and thus emerges out to be a crucial tool in facilitating the schemes of government in reaching out to Rural India.

On the other hand, Panchayat Raj Institutions in each village are most effective mechanism for efficacious delivery of all developmental interventions. Generally, companies display a reluctance to work with local governments, some with justifiable concerns and fears around an inadequate understanding of how to collaborate, red-tapism and vested interests. One way to circumnavigate such conflicts is to work with the government through indirect methods such as PRIs. By working with the government, companies can ensure the participation of one of the most powerful actors in the rural ecosystem and benefit from smooth delivery of services, the simplification of administrative and technical procedures and leverage different governmental schemes.

CSR can aid the much required credit flow in rural areas. CSR investment in capacitating the panchayats will have positive impact and will definitely have a revitalized result in long Run. Community Led development is the need of hour and CSR emerges out to be one of the best option in strengthening PRI. Currently translating knowledge to action is one the most important component of PRI and thus CSR are bodies that may help in easing out the process. They can act in bridging the gap by addressing the most vital aspect of rural governance – Empowering and creating awareness of the citizens.

To Build
Infrastructure, Public Services & Communication

To Improve
Education, Health & Living Condition

To Generate
Employment and Economic Activities

Fig.1 Aim of Rural Development

Government schemes have been launched time to time to address the issues faced by rural population. The only flaw is that they still are not able to touch the critical masses of rural India and the gaps in implementation are clearly visible. The hard work of government thus seems to get blurred due these gaps. CSR have the comprehensive set of strategies to step in and connect the rural population with all the beneficiary schemes that have been lined up by Government. CSR thus plays major role in capacitating the PRI by facilitating the incentives required by villagers of which they have been deprived of; due to multiple reasons.

PRI have been treated as mere implementers rather than the planners and this is one of the basic reasons of them not being able to dwell the powers as bestowed on them by constitution of India. CSR will definitely help in strengthening PRI by helping local elected leaders to come forward and demand the rights which is needed in establishing a Modal-Village.

CSR have the community Reach and thus they are able to enlighthen the rural masses about various policies

CSR through their holistic approach are able to constantly guide the villagers at each level thus bridging the communication Gap

The methodology of implementation by CSR helps in reaching of information at right time thus benefitting rural masses at times of need.

2.2 Scope and Need Analysis for developing PRI Intervention

Capacity Building and Training of PRI members

Capacity of the elected representatives and members plays a key role in efficient functioning of the institution and critical to empowerment of Panchayats. With new developments, the assigned responsibilities on PRIs are also increasing which is growing concern about their capacity. For example- Using the online portal and updating the information has become essential for PRI staff but still there are some areas where getting digitally skilled staff is a challenge. Also elected representatives need to upgrade their knowledge and skills time to time to better perform their responsibilities.

Magnitude of issue of capacity building for PRI officials and members can be understood as: Every year around 30 lakh elected representatives and 10 lakh officials need to be trained. Hence, reaching to such large set of people across the country and educating them about ever-changing knowledge and skills is thought-provoking.

Awareness among local community

As mentioned above, elected representatives and officials have to be updated with latest developments in order to make PRIs actually empowered and help rural people in real sense. But this shall not be limited to PRI members only. We have seen above that people's participation in decentralized power is equally important hence village people also need to aware about their rights, related categories of tasks that can be done at local level only etc. It was found that community people most of the times don't know, what and where their issues will be resolved. Therefore, delivering important laws, rights and necessary information to the community people need to be catered.

Infrastructure refurbishment and modernization

India being the most diverse not culturally only but climatically face extreme conditions in different parts of country. There are multiple GPs which deal with multiple disasters every year such as floods, land slide and extreme rainfall etc., and hence maintaining the well-developed infrastructure is a challenge for PRI members also which not only harm the building externally but also spoil assets kept inside such as table, chair, benches, computer system etc.
Keeping the infrastructure on top-priority, developments of Gram Panchayat Bhawan should looked into based on local geographical conditions and avail all necessary items for regular functioning.

This gap in existing provisions, plans and actual scenario creates scope for 'Samuday' to support PRIs with infrastructural facilities and required capacity building initiatives for elected and appointed officials of Gram Panchayats and make e-panchayats a reality in its intervention areas. Samuday thus choose to work on strengthening PRI so that goal of a Model Village is step closer.

'Samuday' started working with Gram Panchayats with an aim to strengthen the local governance system to create a platform to discuss, plan and prepare an integrated village development plan, allocate available resources and execute it through people's participation. Panchayati-Raj institutions have capacity to take forward Samuday initiatives at Gram Panchayat level and thus effectively contributing to project sustainability. Thus the intervention was developed with the strategy of ensuring infrastructural readiness of the Panchayat Bhawan so that it becomes the secretariat of local governance, with the provision of different government schemes and facilities available through the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra and Panchayat Learning Centre consequently making it the focal point of governance at the grassroots. This would also lead to the aim of e-governance.

However, it was realized right from the beginning that only infrastructural readiness of the Panchayat Bhawan was not essential in ensuring efficient governance at the grassroots.

For this reason, the component of Capacity Building and Training was emphasized.
This component would act as a method of developing the capacities of PRI functionaries, resulting in efficient and effective governance, and people centric planning. In true sense of it, all this would result in enhanced community engagement in the process of governance.

As its rightly quoted that Local Problems requires local Solution. Thus Samuday approach was to involve the villagers in the implementation of solutions and thus make them believe that the solution is right one for them. For any intervention to be successful, it is imperative to involve the community in the process since they are at the receiving end of development. Thus, including their voice in development process and planning is essential. However, many a times, it is seen that there is a lack of awareness amongst the community on most issues pertaining to their development and wellbeing. For this reason, it is important to mobilize the community and generate awareness amongst them regarding their development. In the initial stages of the Panchayati Raj intervention, there was a lack in understanding amongst both the PRI functionaries as well as the community members regarding the roles and responsibilities of PRI functionaries. They were also not aware about many of the existing government schemes. Hence different methods of community mobilization and awareness generation was devised.

3. Model Gram Panchayats: The building blocks of rural India
Model Gram Panchayats – The idea

3.1 Panchayati Raj Institutions and its Significance

> "Panchayat Raj represents true democracy realized. We would regard the humblest and the lowest Indian as being equally the ruler of India with the tallest in the land."
> -Mahatma Gandhi

The idea of Gram Swaraj, i.e. developing the villages of India as self-reliant unit of governance. According to his idea, it should be an autonomous body with all the systems and facilities present within it for the healthy, and hearty lives of the individuals in the villages of India. He believed that villages should be the starting point of development. He was of the opinion that India can't reach the pinnacle of development unless the villages of India is developed. Thus, Gram Swaraj was at the heart of Gandhian idea of Swaraj. Walking on the path of Mahatma Gandhi, Acharya Vinoba Bhave also propagated the idea of decentralized democracy through his work "Gram- dan". The Gandhian philosophy of Gram Swaraj was later enshrined in the constitution of India. The 73rd Constitutional Amendment that came into being on 24th April, 1993, devolved political and economic powers to the grassroots democracies in forms of local governance system known as panchayats. It was designed to be a three tier system, District Panchayats, Zilla Panchayats, and Gram Panchayats. This led to a paradigm shift in the way governance was address in the country. Development could become more holistic and people-centric due to the decentralization of power. It transformed the structure of governance. This paradigm shift was necessary so that the voices of the people at the grassroots could be heard. This would thus lead to more people-centric development planning, for example-for inclusive Gram Panchayat Development Plans formulated with as many people of the community as possible. In this way, it would lead to a system of governance that takes care of the people needs on the ground, thus increasing the efficiency of the governance system in the country.

The features of the decentralization of power to the local government are as follows:

Thus, it was envisioned that over time, it would become the focal point of governance for people in their everyday lives, taking care of their needs and resolving their day-to-day issues. Hence it becomes inevitable to develop an efficient system of governance through the Gram Panchayat. This can only be ensured when the Gram Panchayats are strengthened enough to perform their day-to-day activities.

Efficient Panchayati Raj Functionaries can lead to the effective governance at the grassroots. While there is an emphasis on the strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions across India by providing programmatic support for the Strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions across India under Schemes like the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan, Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, etc.; there is still a need to put in concerted efforts identifying the gaps in local governance from the micro perspective.

At HCL Samuday, the Panchayati Raj Institution strengthening was envisioned with this aim of that in a model village, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) will be strengthened enough to carry day to day work and will be functional as local governance center. Service delivery through Panchayats will be effective and transparency will be ensured through e-Panchayats.

Objectives

- The local governance units could act as autonomous bodies of governance

- They have been endowed with the power to take decisions on the issues pertaining to matters transferred to the local governments.

- The subjects transferred to the local governance units can be found enlisted in the Eleventh Schedule of Article 243 G of 73rd Amendment to the Indian Constitution.

- It pertains to 29 subjects regarding which the panchayats shall have the autonomy to make decisions, for example- agriculture and its extension, rural housing, sanitation, drinking water etc.

Fig: Objectives of decentralization of power

3.2 Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rural India

The Gandhian ideas of Gram Swaraj and Panchayati Raj can act as means of ensuring social and political development at the grassroots by engaging all the stakeholders in decision making. "The Uttar Pradesh (UP) Department of Panchayati Raj was created in 1948 with the responsibility of guidance, regulation and monitoring of the functioning of Gram Panchayats which were established under the UP-Panchayat Raj Act, 1947."

75 Zila Panchayats

821 Kshettra or Block Panchayats

51,914 Gram Panchayats
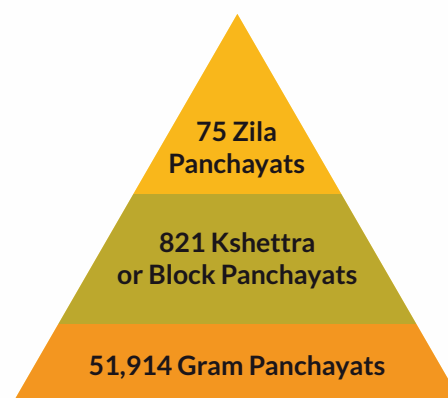
Number of different Panchayats in UP according to Govt. data

3.3 Sustainable Development Goals and Panchayati Raj Institutions

"There are 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with 169 targets. Panchayats will have a crucial role to play in achieving the SDGs. These are universal goals with local implications and intervention possibilities." (Sustainable development goals and Gram Panchayats, United Nations).

Gram Panchayats have an essential role to play in the planning and development of the villages. The planning and implementation of these functions are listed in the Eleventh Schedule of the Indian Constitution, under the 29 subjects listed. These 29 subjects are also in link within the pursuit of the 17 Sustainable development goals. Thus, there is an essential relation between the efficient functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and the implementation of the SDGs at the local gram panchayat level. The gram panchayat development plans act as a mechanism for the incorporation of the SDGs in the development process at the grassroots.

Gram Panchayats, as envisioned by the constitution of India was formulated with twin objectives. They are as follows:
1) Local development of the villages
2) Social justice at the village level

According to the United Nation's brochure on Sustainable Developmental Goals and Gram Panchayats, it says "mobilize your gram sabha, set your panchayat-specific targets, coordinate with government and non-government agencies, tap resources from centrally and state sponsored schemes, ensure services reach the community".

The objectives of our intervention on Panchayati Raj Institution is thus line with this aim of the attainment of the different SDGs at the Gram Panchayat Level.

SDG 11.A

The Sustainable development goal 11 aims at making cities and human settlements strong, resilient and sustainable. Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.

SDG 16.7

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

3.4 Panchayati Raj institution's role in building a Model Village

A village will be considered as model village when the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are capacitated and strengthened enough to carry out day to day functions of Gram Panchayat and make the Panchayat Bhawan as a centre of local governance in the Gram Panchayat. Also, effective service delivery is ensured through functional Panchayat Bhawan along with transparency through e-Panchayat. Thus, in order to consider any village as a model village, it will should be ensured that they system of governance established by and through the Gram Panchayats in their respective villages is efficient and effective. This will lead to a holistic development of the village ensuring socio-economic development and social justice.

4. Intervention Design and Plan

4.1 Defining the Target Group

The idea of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) is to devolve power and decentralize government at grass root level. The PRIs provide an opportunity to the village community to participate in decision making and planning processes at village level, engage with the various developmental schemes being implemented by the Government and directly interact with the elected representatives.

But the reality was starkly different from this. The devolutions of funds, functionaries and finances to the PRIs has not been very encouraging in context of Uttar Pradesh. There is substantial evidence that basic public services and programmes meant for the poor and the weaker sections function inefficiently. This is due to low capacity of the PRIs caused by poor accountability, lack of motivation, absence of performance appraisal of functionaries/ officials, absence of system of incentives and penalties, poor working conditions and infrastructure, and large-scale leakage due to corruption. At the receiving end, the poor are dis-empowered, and are not included in the decision-making processes. Thus, it was realized that there is a need to empower the Panchayati Raj functionaries working at the village level in order to ensure improved governance.

4.1.1 Baseline Survey for Need Analysis

In the year 2016, while analysing the status of PRIs in Kachhauna block critically, theoretically PRIs seem to be an excellent platform to ensure services at appropriate levels, but on practical grounds findings are less positive. Most of the Panchayats have been criticized for poor representation and failure to implement the participatory decisions of their wards and reported mismanagement of funds. While Panchayat Bhawans have been constructed in most of the Gram Panchayats, however necessary infrastructural facilities are missing at local level to be used as GP secretariat/ offices. Though construction/ refurbishment of panchayat bhawans and upgrading them as e-panchayats has been planned at Nyay panchayat level, but there seems to be no progress and willingness in this direction.

> This gap in existing provisions, plans and actual scenario creates scope for 'Samuday' to support PRIs with infrastructural facilities and required capacity building initiatives for elected and appointed officials of Gram Panchayats and make e- panchayats a reality in Kachhauna block.
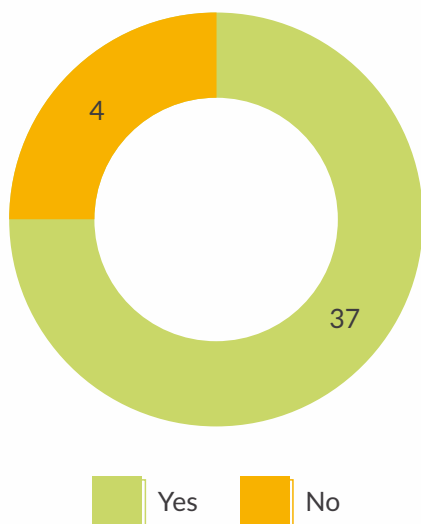
4.1.2 Methodology of Baseline Survey

In the year 2016, while analysing the status of PRIs in Kachhauna block critically, theoretically PRIs seem to be an excellent platform to ensure services at appropriate levels, but on practical grounds findings are less positive. Most of the Panchayats have been criticized for poor representation and failure to implement the participatory decisions of their wards and reported mismanagement of funds. While Panchayat Bhawans have been constructed in most of the Gram Panchayats, however necessary infrastructural facilities are missing at local level to be used as GP secretariat/ offices. Though construction/ refurbishment of panchayat bhawans and upgrading them as e-panchayats has been planned at Nyay panchayat level, but there seems to be no progress and willingness in this direction. This gap in existing provisions, plans and actual scenario creates scope for 'Samuday' to support PRIs with infrastructural facilities and required capacity building initiatives for elected and appointed officials of Gram Panchayats and make e-panchayats a reality in Kachhauna block.

4.1.3 Analysis of the Baseline survey

For the achievement of the aforementioned objectives a survey was carried out in the Kachhauna block of Hardoi district. Out of the 41 GPs in the Kachhauna block, 8 GPs were selected through stratified random sampling method for Focused Group Discussion (FGD). The block was divided in to 4 zones i.e. North, South, East, West. Two GPs were selected from each zone. For the operational convenience and easy comprehension, most of the were kept structured and close ended. The primary aim was to understand the ground reality of the Panchayati Raj System and also to know the willingness of the stakeholders to work from the functional PB.

Availability of Panchayat Bhawan

Yes   No

Figure 1 : Availability of panchayat Bhawan

Education Qualification of Pradhans

Illiterate   Below Primary

Graduate   Primary Complete

High School/ Higher Sr. School   Secondary Complete
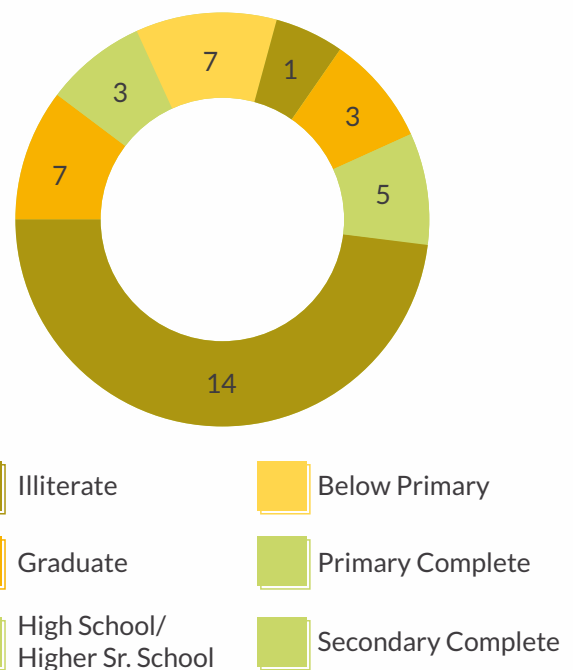
Figure 2: Educational Qualification of Pradhan

Key Profession of Pradhans in 40 GP
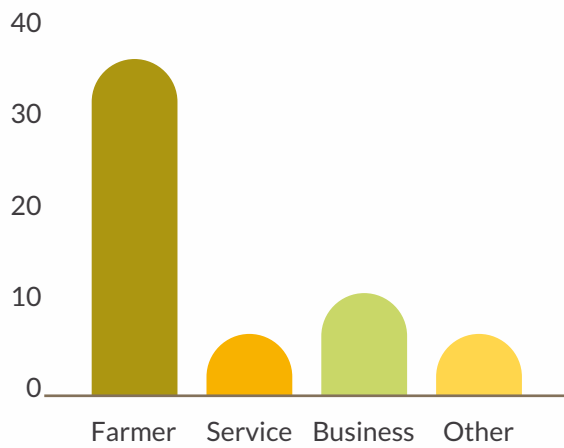
Figure 3: Key Professions of Pradhans

Availability of Panchayat Bhawan

- No Response: 4.9
- Yes: 2.4
- No: 92.7
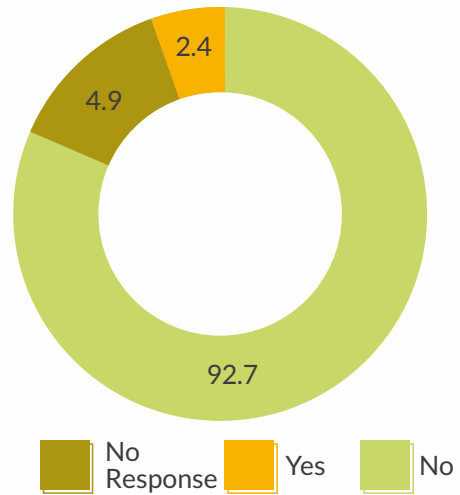
Figure 4: Ward Member's Training

Knowledge of ward members regarding standing Committee

- No Response: 31.7
- Yes: 9.8
- No: 58.5
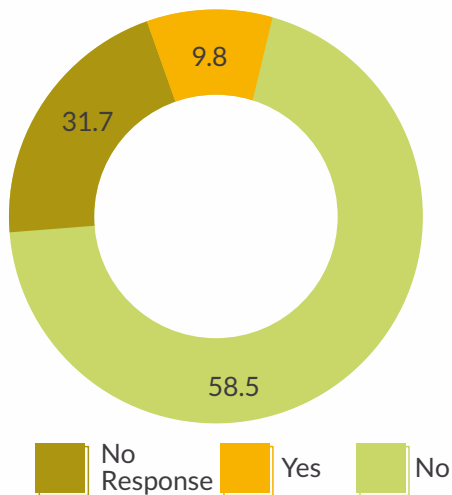
Figure 5: Knowledge of Ward Members regarding Standing Committee

Gram Pradhan working from respective Gram Panchayat

- No Response: 2
- Yes: 15
- No: 83
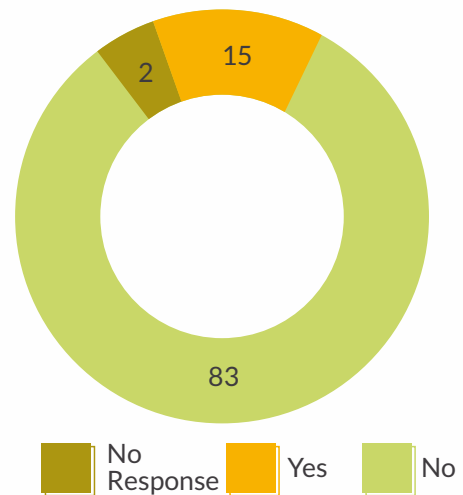
Figure 6: Gram Pradhans working from respective Gram Panchayats

14

4.1.4 Findings of the Baseline

All GPs don't have Panchayat Bhawan buildings.

There is a need to capacitate the PRI functionaries for better service delivery

Most of the Pradhans were not aware of the basic functioning of the Gram Panchayats

Ward members showed unawareness and unwillingness towards GP functioning

Community has to travel to block office to get their all kind of works done by the secretary.

The purpose behind the construction of Panchayat Bhawans is not being fulfilled.

Pbs have been left uninhibited, unusable, illegally possessed by people from community, many are also used for anganwadi and schools.

Panchayat Secretaries are working from block office whereas it is desirable that they should function at Gram Panchayat level

4.1.5 Identification of Target Groups

Based on the Baseline Survey conducted, it was identified that the target group for the Panchayati Raj Institutions intervention would be:

- The 164 Gram Panchayats across the 3 blocks of the HCL Samuday Intervention area, i.e. Kachhauna, Kothawan, Behandar. All these 164 Gram Panchayats were to be developed as Model Villages.

- The PRI functionaries consisting of the Panchayat Pradhan, Secretary, Ward Members and Community Volunteers formed the target group of the intervention.

4.2 Stakeholders of the Intervention

After the completion of baseline survey for need analysis, the different direct and indirect beneficiaries were identified as follows:
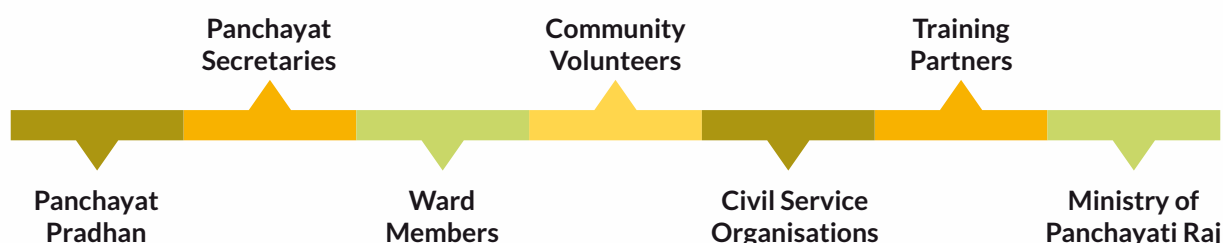
Panchayat Secretaries   Community Volunteers   Training Partners

Panchayat Pradhan   Ward Members   Civil Service Organisations   Ministry of Panchayati Raj

4.3 Strategy of the Intervention

| Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3
• Data Analysis (Collect and Analysis) • Initiate Participatory Dialogue with the community on panchayat Functioning and local governance • Gap analysis in the existing scenario	• Formation of joint Action plan (with administration and HCL Foundation • Mobilization of community based on the joint action plan. • Formation of community action platform (village action group)	• Roll out of intervention start • To ensure infrastructural readiness and efficient service delivery functional gram panchayat bhawan is developed. • Training and capacity building of PRI functionaries is conducted • Participatory planning is ensured through GPDP formation
Output	**Output**	**Output**
• Vision Document of the PRI interentions • Gaps identified	• Joint Action Plan • Community Action Platform- Village Action Group formed	• Functional Gram Panchayat Established • Training and Capacity Building of PRI functionaries completed • HCLF plays the role of facilitator in GPDP formation

Gram Panchayats are the constitutional bodies, acting as a unit of local governance which are responsible for the holistic and sustainable development of the villages. People's participation and ownership among the community plays a very crucial role in ensuring bottom up approach to local governance.

On the basis of the baseline survey for need assessment, the critical gaps existing in the local governance in Hardoi, in 3 blocks, i.e. Kachhauna, Kothawan, Behandar were identified. Based on the identification of these critical gaps, it was realized that there is a need to strengthen the local governance mechanism in the rural areas.

Thus, 'Samuday' started working with Gram Panchayats with an aim to strengthen the local governance system to create a platform to discuss, plan and prepare an integrated village development plan, allocate available resources and execute it through people's participation. Panchayati-Raj institutions have capacity to take forward Samuday initiatives at Gram Panchayat level and thus effectively contributing to project sustainability.

Hence, under the vertical of Panchayati Raj Institution strengthening, two main interventions were designed aiming at developing Functional Gram Panchayats, and Capacity Building and training. These are further divided into different components. They are:
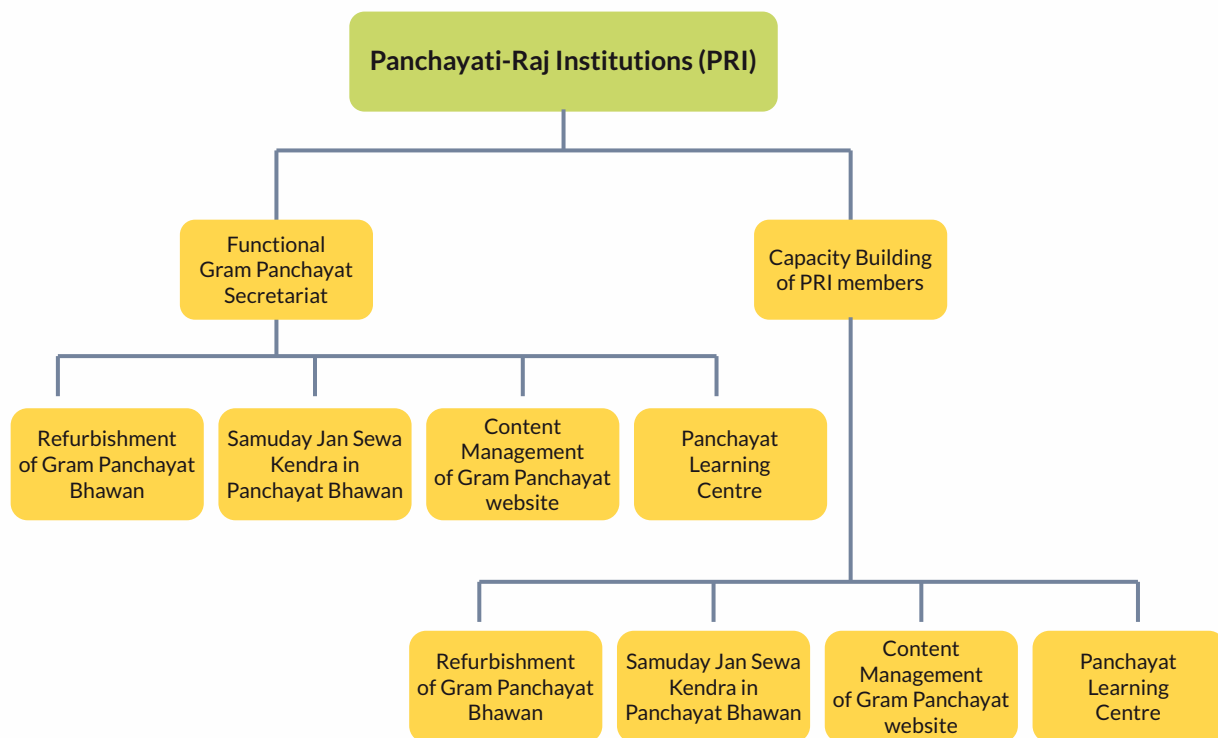
4.3.1 Community Mobilization and Awareness

For any intervention to be successful, it is imperative to involve the community in the process since they are at the receiving end of development. Thus, including their voice in development process and planning is essential. However, many a times, it is seen that there is a lack of awareness amongst the community on most issues pertaining to their development and wellbeing. For this reason, it is important to mobilize the community and generate awareness amongst them regarding their development. In the initial stages of the Panchayati Raj intervention, there was a lack in understanding amongst both the PRI functionaries as well as the community members regarding the roles and responsibilities of PRI functionaries. They were also not aware about many of the existing government schemes. Hence different methods of community mobilization and awareness generation was devised. They are:

Interpersonal Communication like meetings and Aam Sabha:
A number of Aam Sabha pertaining to different issues like water and sanitation condition in the village, poor roads and lack of Panchayat Bhawan etc. was discussed in the Aam Sabhas.

Focused Group Discussions: This is conducted with the different groups of community members pertaining to similar topics of development like Farmer's Group, Self Help Group. This helps in having an in-depth discussion with the community members in order to analysis the needs of the people of the selected topic of discussion for example- Agriculture, Women empowerment, Health etc. It consists of the different front line workers as well like the ASHA, ANM, Anganwadi etc. and the beneficiaries of the different interventions of HCL Foundation.

Announcement through Dugduggi, Posters etc.: Community volunteer go around the GPs announcing the different government schemes, as well as timeline of GPDP. The musical instrument "Dugduggi' was used to attract the attention of the community members towards the announcement of GPDP dates and timeline. Apart from this, posters are also used for generation awareness amongst the community.

Situational Analysis through PRA tools: Situation analysis is a process through which the issues and the needs of the community and the gaps where intervention is needed are identified. This is primarily done to identify the existing gaps so that they can be focused upon through the GPDP. The PRA tools include Transect Walk, Social and Resource Mapping etc.

4.3.2 Capacity Building and Trainings

Trainings for Capacity Building:

The result of baseline survey conducted by the team of HCL foundation in the FY 2016-17 portrayed that majority of the Gram Panchayat Pradhans were not well-versed with their roles and responsibilities. Some of them were the office bearers for the first time. The secretaries also lacked an in-depth understanding about the functions, and funds devolved through the 73rd Amendment. There was a lack of understanding on the 29 subjects listed in the Eleventh Schedule empowering the Gram Panchayat with the areas under their discretion. The PRI functionaries lacked clarity on Funds and Finances of the gram panchayat declared in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Finance Commission. Hence, as discussed above, capacity building and training of the PRI functionaries was realized to be an essential part of the strategy for the strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions at the village level. The trainings would be conducted on two parts. The internal training was designed for enhancing the capacities of the internal team consisting of the HCLF staffs, and External Training consisting of the community volunteers, ward members, Pradhans, and Secretaries.

- 18th August to 13th August,2017: Training of Trainers was conducted by Sahbhaghi Shikshan Kendra (SSK) on the 73rd Amendment and the functioning of Panchayati Raj for the internal team of HCL foundation.

- 16th August to 21st August, 2017: Second batch of Training of Trainers was conducted by Sahbhaghi Shikhshan Kendra on the 73rd Amendment and the functioning of Panchayati Raj for the internal team of HCL foundation.

- 10th October to 13th October, 2018: Training of Trainers was conducted on Panchayati Raj, GPDP, and Facilitation Skills.

- 21st to 22nd November, 2018: Training of Gram Panchayat Representatives was conducted by (SSK) for building their capacities on the GPDP formation.

- 27th to 28th November, 2018: Second batch of Training of Gram Panchayat Representatives was conducted by (SSK) for building their capacities on the GPDP formation.

- 10th, 11th and 12th October, 2019: Orientation on the process of GPDP formation was conducted for the HCL Foundation team in three blocks, i.e. Kachhauna, Behandar, and Kothawan

- 8th to 11th and 12th to 15th, 2019: Apart from these other trainings were also conducted from time to time like "Women Empowerment and Governance". The participants of this training consisted of the female Pradhans and ward members, as well as active female community members. It was conducted in two GPs, Kamalpur and Beniganj Dehat for 4 days. The main emphasis of the training was on gender sensitization, role of women in governance, filing RTI petition, women's health, etc. The trainers were from UNICEF.

Exposure Visit for Capacity Building:

Exposure visit is a form of capacity building. It provided the PRI functionaries and the HCL foundation team to expand their knowledge and skills by visiting different Gram Panchayats and organizations working on Panchayat strengthening. This provided an opportunity to learn about new technological advancement in governance and village management.

4.3.3. Knowledge Management and Dissemination

Knowledge Management and Dissemination is the procedure through which knowledge is transferred for the enhancement of the intervention. Under the intervention of Panchayati Raj Institution strengthening, different methods of knowledge management and dissemination was devised. These would act as methods to reach out to the community as well as other stakeholders involved in the intervention. The different types of tools used for knowledge management and dissemination are as follows:

- **Development of IEC and BCC materials like the Manual on Rashtriya Vikas Yojna** was done with the partner organization SSK. The manual was designed emphasizing on the government schemes and committee for Village Management.

- **Wall Painting:** In order to aware the community about the Annual Plan and fund allotted to the Gram Panchayats for the execution of the same through Gram Panchayat Development Plan, wall paintings were done on the wall of the Panchayat Bhawan.

- **Rate List:** Different kinds of services are provided to the community through the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra. A list of all the services provided as well as the rates incurred for the services are displayed in the rate list which is put up in all the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendras.

4.4 Timeline

Baseline Survey and Need Analysis- Through stratified random sampling, in which 8 out of 41 Gps of Kachhauna were selected to study various components affecting PRI

Community Participation- Ensured and encouraged larger community participation, through involving the community in the process of creating gram panchayat development plan and providing handholding support

Implementation Plan- Based on baseline study and its analysis, implementation strategy was developed, and first steps towards execution was refurbishment of Panchayat Bhawan

Expansion- With the upgradation of the programme, the intervention was expanded in all 3 operational blocks of HCL Foundation.

Capacity Building- After improved infra, the next step was capacity building of PRI representatives and community members for ensure functional panchayat secretariat.

Replication and Sustainability- The model being adopted by DM, and being replicated to the remaining 16 blocks of the district, and it has been added to GPDP for Sustainability.

4.5 Government Liaising and Support

The Panchayat Raj intervention at HCL Samuday has been supported from time to time by the government on different levels, the department of Panchayati Raj, State administration, and District administration.

A holistic relation has been developed between the government and HCL Samuday. This relation has been developed by liaising with the government officials as well as incorporating their views in the implementation of the intervention, for e.g.: in the initial phase of the intervention, an in-depth discussion was organized with the Department of Panchayati Raj for understanding how PRIs could be strengthened. The Department of Panchayati Raj has been in support of HCL Samuday from time to time, as well as played a critical role by incorporating the models developed by the PRI intervention of HCL Samuday, for e.g.: appreciating the functional gram Panchayat set-up developed. The Department declared it as the model for Panchayat Bhawan establishment. Some of the other notable support are as follows:

Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra

Initially when the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra was established, the problem aroused regarding the salary of the office bearer for running the SJSK, i.e. computer operator. A letter was issued by the DPRO to ensure that the provision of remuneration for the computer operators is mentioned in each of the Gram Panchayat's Gram Panchayat Development Plan so that the Panchayat received the fund for the remuneration of the computer operators.

GPDP Draft

The process flow for GPDP formation facilitated by HCL Samuday was praised by the department, and the GPDP draft of Hathoda was published as a model for planning in GPDP

Samadhan Diwas

A letter was issued by the office of DPRO for the regularization of the weekly visits- Samadhan Diwas. This ensured the presence of Secretaries and Lekhpal for issue resolution of the community.

Panchayat Bhawan Maintanaince

The department also helped in maintainence of the Panchayat Bhawan by deploying a house keeping staff for the cleaning and maintainence of the refurbished Panchayat Bhawan

5. Implementation Story

Kachhauna
41 Gram Panchayats
30,000 Households
1,76,787 Population
585 PRI Functionaries

Kothawan
55 Gram Panchayats
32,000 Households
1,75,532 Population
783 PRI Functionaries

Behandar
68 Gram Panchayats
28, 000 Households
2,18,190 Population
970 PRI Functionaries

At present, the PRI interventions are carried out in 164 Gram Panchayats across 3 blocks of Hardoi, UP

Setting Up of the secretariats of local governance through Functional Gram Panchayat Bhawan

There are 41 Gram Panchayats in Kachhauna. Not even every Panchayat had a Panchayat Bhawan to carry out the necessary and mandated functions. Even in those GPs, where Panchayat Bhawans existed, they are hardly used in the manners that they are mean for. Most of these buildings are in a dilapidated condition, with a very few exceptions.

Thus, in the year 2017, it was decided that there was a need to refurbish the Panchayat Bhawan to make them functional, and turn them into the secretariat of local governance at the village level. Based on the assessment done for all the 41 Gram Panchayats of the block Kachhauna, 5 GPs were selected for our intervention in the first phase for PRI Strengthening. The selection process of these GPs involved three components: Infrastructure assessment of Panchayat Bhawan, Capacity of Pradhans to take works forward and the willingness of elected representatives and the community. The five Gram Panchayats selected for the first phase were Kamalpur, Kehli, Gaju, Kukuhi Dehat and Purwa.

In the first phase, in the financial year 2017-18 it was decided that twenty-four GPs of Kachhauna block will be established as a centre of local governance, in the second phase, in financial year 2018-19 seventeen GPs of Kachhauna block and thirty GPs of Bahendar block will be established as a local governance centre and in the third phase in financial year 2019-20, all the remaining GPs of Bahendar and Kothawan will be established as a local governance centre. Gaju became the first Panchayat Bhawan to be refurbished in the year 2017. The aim was not to do this for the entire block. Rather, it should be done for a select few Gram Panchayats in the first phase, develop them as model Panchayat Bhawans, the utility of which will motivate the government to replicate such an intervention at other places. Thus, it began in Kachhauna and later it was done in Kothawan and Behandar.

Training and Capacity Building of PRI functionaries for decentralized, local governance

Panchayat functionaries should be aware of the functions of panchayat and their roles and responsibilities at GP. But the ground level situation analysis reveals that most of the panchayat functionaries are not aware of their roles and responsibilities and lack the capacity to perform their functions. The survey conducted by HCLF in 41 GPs of Kachhauna block on the knowledge assessment of panchayat functionaries about the functioning of GP reveals that the panchayat functionaries are not aware of their roles and responsibilities in GP. The knowledge assessment was done about the day to day activities and functioning of GP which includes topics like: knowledge about the administrative structure of GP, Schemes running at GP level, location of panchayat bhawan, use of panchayat bhawan as an office, number of panchayat meetings and gram sabhas to be organized in a financial year etc.

It was thus decided that, in the financial year 2017-18, all the panchayat functionaries of 41 GPs (Pradhans, Panchayat Secretaries, GRS, Ward Members) of Kachhauna block will be capacitated and given training on the functioning of GP. After covering the GPs of Kachhauna block, in the second phase, panchayat functionaries of Bahendar block was targeted and in the third phase panchayat functionaries of Kothawan block was targeted. The work was appraised by the Department of Panchayati Raj, and thus they issued a letter that based on the model of Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra established by HCL Foundation in Kachhauna, Kothawan, and Behandar; it will be replicated in other blocks of Hardoi.

Service delivery to the citizens through Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra

Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra was envisioned with the idea that it will ensure efficient service delivery to the citizens at the village level. As an initiative to ensure efficient utilization of Panchayat Bhawan, and ensure effective service delivery to the community members, HCL Foundation started facilitating Gram Panchayat for the establishment of Samuday Jan Seva Kendra (Common Service Centre) in Panchayat Bhawan.

The Samuday Jan Sewa Kendras were thought to be the common platform for the community members to get access to the services without having to travel too far to the block. In the first phase, it was planned that the Gram Panchayats of Kachhauna where there is proper electricity connection and, where we have already provided the office set-up to make the panchayat bhawans functional will be targeted. After that, the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra was established in Kothawan, and Behandar.

Once the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra was established, the emphasis was on generating own source revenue for the Gram Panchayats by providing services to the community. In order to provide a host of services to the community, a licenses for the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra of all the Gram Panchayats has been taken from CMS. Till date, 38 Samuday Jan Sewa Kendras have been established across the three block of Kachhauna, Kothawan, and Behandar. Thus, Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra with the CMS license can cater to a number of services to the community.

Some of the most commonly provided services include Certificates like Income, Domicile, Caste, Birth, Death etc. and documents like Khatauni, Pan Card, Photo State, Scanning, Printing and other miscellaneous activities.

Apart from these, one of the main highlights of the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra has been that through the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra, 300+ farmers' registration was done in Akhbarpur Talluh Gram Panchayat of the Behanadar block in the FY 2019-20. Along with this, it has been providing more than 256 services to the community.

Thus, the setting up of Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra has been beneficial to the community by providing a host of services in a cost effective and time saving manner.

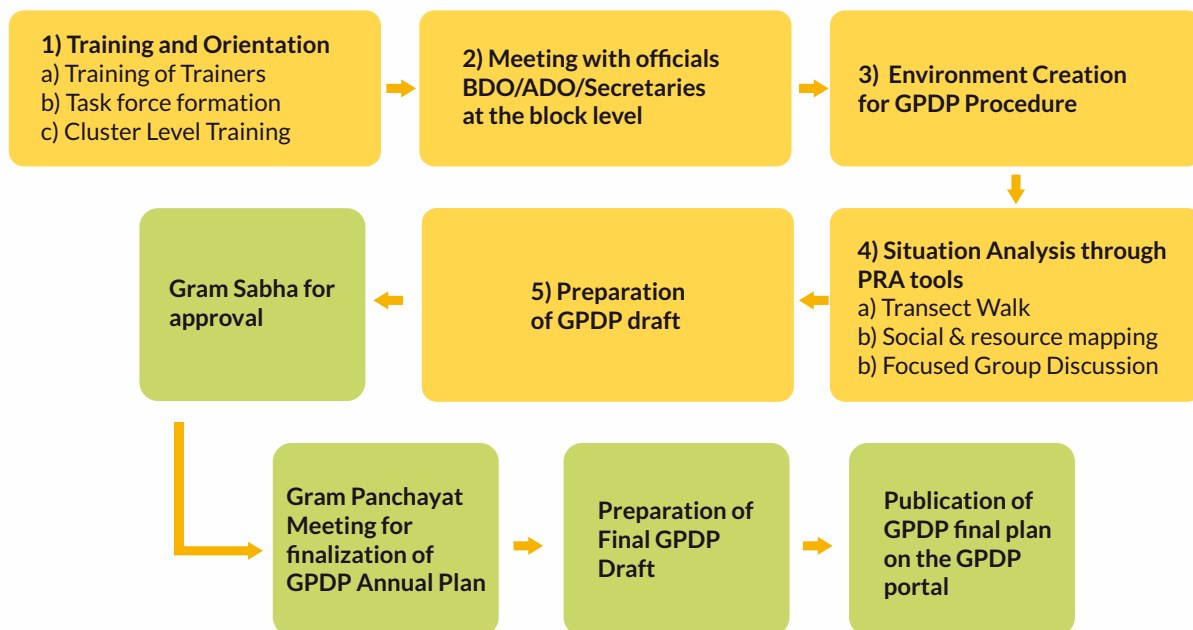## Participatory Planning through Gram Panchayat Development Plan

The GPDP is the Gram Panchayat Development plan of the GP. It is prepared through a participatory process involving all stakeholders matching people's needs and priorities with available resources. The People's Plan Campaign is an effective strategy for ensuring the preparation of GPDP in a campaign mode.

HCLF acts as a facilitator in the process of GPDP formation by the Gram Panchayats. This is done by following different steps, the first of which is Phase wise planning of GPDP. The GPDP was to be formulated for 164 Gram Panchayats across the 3 blocks of Hardoi district, i.e. Kachhauna, Kothawan, Behandar. In order to ensure effective planning, the Gram Panchayats were divided into 3 phases for the formation of GPDP. This ensured effective planning and timely completion of the tasks.

After the training and orientation of the HCLF Resource team about their role as facilitator in the GPDP formation, each of them formulate a micro plan for their respective Gram Panchayats after discussion with the Pradhan and Secretary of the Gram Panchayats. The micro plans consist of the field activities to be conducted as a part of the participatory process of planning involving the community in the process. The micro plans are of 4 days. It involves different kinds of situational analysis involving the different Participatory Rural Appraisal tools. This ensures that maximum members of the community can participate in the process thus making GPDP formulation a people's process. The micro plans include the date and the place where the activity is to be conducted tallying it with the phase wise distribution of GPs for GPDP formation. Thus, micro plans act as a method of connecting the macro perspective of planning with the micro perspective in which emphasis is given on the participation and opinions of the local community for their welfare.

Fig: Gram Panchayat Development Plan Procedure

The above picture shows the step that are followed in order to implement community ownership and participatory planning in Gram Panchayat Development Plan. The GPDP formation through participatory planning was envisioned so that the voices of the community members and their needs could be reflected in the Gram Panchayat Development Plan. In the year 2017, the Gram Panchayat Development Plan was developed for the financial year 2018-19 in Kachhauna. It covered all the 41 Gram Panchayat of Kachhauna. In 2018, the coverage was increased and all the Gram Panchayats of Kothawan and Behandar was targeted.

Thus, for the FY 2019-20, all the 164 Gram Panchayats across 3 blocks of the intervention area of Hardoi, i.e. Kachhauna, Kothawan, and Behandar was covered. After the Gram Panchayat Development Plans were formulated, the HCLF team liaised with block officials, and ensured the successful uploading of the plan on PlanPus. Regular monitoring of the work done according to the plan as well as fund utilized is done by the HCLF team. In the year 2019, the third cycle of the Gram Panchayat Development Plan was formulated for the year 2020-21. From 2018, all the Gram Panchayat across the three blocks, i.e. Kachhauna, Kothawan, Behandar was covered. The Gram Panchayat Development Plan of Hathoda (2018-19) was declared as the Model Plan for GPDP formulation by the Department of Panchayati Raj, UP.

6. Challenges

In any sphere of socio-economic or cultural development, one is always faced with a number of challenges when one is trying to plan or implement developmental changes. These challenges can be multi-faceted. There is always a need to devise solutions to deal with the different kinds of problem that one might face over the course of the project.

6.1 Geographical Challenges

As mentioned earlier, the main focus in the intervention has been on strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions. In order to do this, development of functional gram panchayat bhawan were crucial. But, many-a-times, the work of constructing the Panchayat Bhawans that was supposed to be completed from the Gram Pradhan's end had to be delayed or rescheduled due to monsoon.

This was solved by adding a buffer period to the implementation of the monthly action plan before moving on to the next work to be completed. Along with this, in case of a wide period of delay due to bad weather conditions, liaising with the Pradhan is done, so that the number of workers is increased in order to bring down the task completion period.

6.2 Community related Challenges

Existing Power Dynamics

One of the major challenge of changing the existing governance system is that is requires a lot of acceptance from the community. Power is dynamic, thus understanding how power exists in the everyday context is essential for bringing about positive development in the governance system. In the beginning, Gram Pradhans were cynical about the development of a parallel governance system.

This was dealt by consistent liaising with the Pradhan as well as having in-depth discussions and meeting with them in order to make them realize that the aim of the intervention is to enhance the existing system by strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institution through different measures.

Lack of Community Awareness

In 2016, when the baseline study was conducted to assess the existing knowledge of the Pradhan and Secretaries, the results portrayed that there was a lack in understanding about the funds, functions, and functionaries amongst the PRI members. This was true in case of the community members as well. The community members were not aware about the government schemes, as well as their roles and responsibility as an active citizen of the village.

The GPDP procedure followed was not participatory in nature before the initiation of the intervention. In order to address all these issues, intensive community mobilization was done through different tools of interpersonal communication like Aam Sabhas, Focused Group Discussions, etc. Along with this liaising with the Pradhan was also done to enhance the relation between the HCLF team and the Pradhans for the successful implementation of the intervention.

6.3 Systematic Challenges

Lack of Real-time Data Management

At times it was found that there is a mismatch between the data reported in the department's website and ground reality on the number of Panchayat Bhawans constructed. In order to deal with it, the HCLF team decided to on ground, physical verification of the Panchayat Bhawans in order to understand whether they meet the requirements for providing the office set-up or further work needs to be done before the office set-up is provided.

7. Sustainability Measures of the Intervention

7.1 Functional Gram Panchayat Bhawans

Gram Panchayat Bhawan plays a crucial role by acting as secretariat and as a Centre where all PRI Functionaries come together to discuss development issues of the villages and take decisions, thus ensuring effective service delivery to community at large thereby walking a step ahead for effective and efficient local self-governance.

- To make Gram panchayat Bhawans functional, Gram Pradhans are motivated to work on PB Infrastructure improvement on set parameters from gram panchayat funds and thereafter HCLF provides them with office setup materials.

- Further, HCLF is facilitating Gram Pradhans to establish Jan Sewa Kendra (Common Service Centre) and Panchayat Resource Centres in panchayat Bhawans in coordination with district administration, to ensure regular service delivery to community as well as a centre of information.

- Also, in coordination with District administration it has been ensured that PRI functionaries mainly Panchayat secretary, Lekhpal, ASHA, ANM along with Gram Pradhan meet once in a week on fixed day and time in Panchayat Bhawan to listen to the grievances of the community and take necessary actions.

7.2 Training and Capacity Building of PRI Functionaries

The intervention focuses on providing an in depth understanding of Panchayati Raj System and its functions across varied levels. This initiative ensures Training and Capacity Building of two types of stakeholders involved in the process of strengthening of Panchayati Raj System.

- Internal capacity building focuses on providing training to HCLF staff who in turn, provide training to the ward members and community volunteers.

- External capacity building includes training and capacity building of panchayat functionaries both elected and appointed i.e. Gram Pradhans, Ward Members, Panchayat Secretaries and Community Volunteers. This training focusses on developing an understanding on Panchayati raj system, their roles and responsibilities and tools to make this system more efficient and effective.

- As per the mandate of Panchayati raj system, HCLF is facilitating Gram Panchayats for regularizing its monthly Gram Panchayat meeting and monthly meetings of

- Standing Committees where all the Ward Members along with Gram Pradhan and Panchayat Secretary meet once in a month to discuss developmental issues.

- In the coming days, above mentioned platforms can be used by HCLF to discuss priorities of Project Samuday with the Gram Panchayat Functionaries and take development interventions ahead as well as ensuring the sustainability aspect of the initiatives.

7.3 Community Participation for Good Governance

As per the mandate of Panchayati Raj System and recommendations of 14th Central Finance Commission, Gram Panchayats are required to prepare development plans i.e. Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) for the holistic development of the villages and community at large.

HCLF is facilitating the Gram Panchayats in micro planning process for the preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) to better utilize the resources available keeping in view the needs and requirements of the local community which includes integrated development of the Gram Panchayats, which includes not only infrastructure development but also social, economic and personal development.

- A framework will be developed keeping in mind the community engagement and role of PRI Functionaries for the Management of Assets that has been created from the Gram Panchayat Funds under GPDP.
- As HCLF is facilitating 164 Gram Panchayats in 3 blocks in the preparation of GPDP through extensive micro planning exercises and multiple level analytical documents while following the guidelines of Central and State Government with respect to standard procedures to be followed for preparing GPDP; an effort will be made in the coming financial year to advocate for the replicability of GPDP exercise at District, State and National level.

7.4 Accountability and Transparency

In order to promote accountability and transparency in the functioning of the Gram panchayats, HCLF is taking following initiatives-

- For all those GPs which has been refurbished with office setup by HCLF, it is uploading and managing contents of the Gram Panchayat Websites under Panchayat Portal of Government of India, to be hosted by Ministry of Information Technology.

- Through continuous Liaising, PRI Functionaries are motivated to maintain different documents at Gram Panchayat level. Such documents include List of Beneficiaries under different government schemes, Gram panchayat grievances register, Minutes of meetings of Gram panchayat meetings etc.

- Further, as a part of the process, GPDP is being uploaded on Plan Plus Software by the Block level government officials. Also, its hard copy is being available at the Gram Panchayat Bhawans for access to the community members.

8. Stories of hope, possibility and change: A Kaleidoscope of best practices

8.1 Shambles to Shining

(Refurbishment of the Gaju Gram Panchayat Bhawan)

In the village of Gaju Chandrapal was running from pillar to post between the Pradhan's home, the Panchayat secretary and the Block office to get his land registration records. Either the Pradhan was not available or the Secretary was missing. Catching hold of them together was difficult as there was no common point of contact. Staying in a close knit community Chandrapal was not comfortable visiting the Pradhan's private property everyday but due to the nature of his requirements the visits were becoming fairly regular. Despite the sincere nature of Pradhan, his lack of IT Knowledge, non-availability of computer and printer system basically rendered him helpless. Finally, he caught hold of both of them and at a loss of a week's labour Chandrapal procured that small piece of land record. His ordeals were not over yet. Intending to get benefits from Govt. Crop Insurance Scheme the journey to Block and District offices had just begun. There are thousands of such stories across India that capture the plight of Chandrapal and the helplessness of pradhans; both wishing that the Gram Panchayat Sachivalay was functional, an office at the Gram panchayat level where villagers could contact with all the gram panchayat functionaries to raise their development needs and access basic services.

On the other side Gaju GP Bhavan was in shambles. Collapsed boundary, broken gates, doors and windows, no electricity connection, non-functional toilets and hand pump and animal encroachment painted a very sorry picture. It was at this juncture that HCLFs PRI Team made an intervention in 41 select GPs of Kachhauna. It took up the task of sensitizing Panchayati Raj Functionaries, build their capacities and take lead in the process of village development. Gram Panchayat functionaries were motivated to refurbish, functionalize and transform the Panchayat Bhawan buildings, hitherto left unused and ignored, to act as an office to execute development work in the villages. On one hand Samuday Team continuously liaised with Pradhan to utilize govt fund to initiate Civil Work for the refurbishment of PB on the other hand mobilized the community to understand the need for a Panchayat Bhavan. HCL foundation simply acted as a catalyst between the demand and supply. It promised and ensured technical, technological and participatory financial support. Once the infrastructure was ready Office Table, Executive Chairs, Plastic Chairs, Almirahs, Fans, Dari were provided. A complete office setup automatically encouraged the Pradhan and Panchayat Secretary

to sit in the PB Office. HCLF also facilitated in the regularization of monthly Gram Panchayat meetings where local development needs and issues are discussed among the ward members, gram Pradhan and gram panchayat secretary and other gram panchayat level frontline workers.

Today necessary and all possible GP records are maintained and uploaded in the GP Office, the properly fenced premises are used for office meetings and villagers are now urging the Pradhan to expand its scope. It functions as a resource centre which has facilities of library and internet for students, provision of getting details on different government schemes and ensures proper and fair selection of beneficiaries; thereby maintaining accountability of government functionaries and transparency in the local governance system.

Gaju GP Bhavan was the first in the domino of such activities soon followed by Lonhara, Purwa, Kehli and Kamal pur in Kachhauna, Raipur, Thangaon, Beniganj Dehat and Kursi in Kothawan and Rithwey, Behlolpur, Badagaon and Gogavajot in Behendar. Through persistent efforts Team succeeded in making 12 Gram Panchayat Bhawan i.e. 'Gram Sachivalyas' functional during the initial phase. The journey has been no less than a roller coaster ride as establishing trust from the community was never easy. However, all these efforts over period of 3 years have paid well off in establishing a replicable and sustainable model now reaching 60 panchayat Bhawans.

As a Step Forward towards the replication of initiative on 5th of August, 2018, Hon'ble DM of Hardoi, under 'Operation Kayakalp' of State government, organised a workshop for 10 selected GPs of each blocks of Hardoi district to motivate Gram Pradhan and government functionaries to develop their Gram Sachiwalyas on the replicable framework of HCL Foundation. Out of all 200 gram Panchayats that participated, 164 were refurbished. they were inaugurated on the occasion of Independence day, 15th August, 2018.

8.2 Prayer Rooms of Knowledge

(Establishing the Kamipur Panchayat Learning centre.)

This is the story of the village Kamipur in Kachhauna Block of Hardoi, and their journey of becoming a community that reads.Satyam studies in class 12th in a nearby Govt. Inter college. After college he wants to prepare for Government Examinations. Like all his peers once he gets back home, he has to run errands for his family, help his father in the field and then feeds the cow. By the time he sits to focus on his studies its already late in the evening. Petty family chores keep him distracted and the erratic power supply just adds to his woes. He closes his eyes and amidst the mind muddled with science, algebra and the daily chaos, his only wish- a place where he could sit and study peacefully.

At HCL Foundation, we were listening to Satyam, listening to the needs of the youth and needs of the community. The vital question was availability of place and resources. Liaising with Pradhan we developed an intervention plan. Samuday team engaged in active and participatory dialogue with the Pradhan. Over several meetings, the entire concept of PLC was explained in details to the stakeholders, answering their queries and taking in their ideas as per the specific needs of the community. In order to ensure that all community members have access to books, and other reference materials it was envisioned that a community library will be set up in the Gram Panchayat Bhawan known as the "Panchayat Learning Center". The idea was that the resource center will be one of its kind catering to the different needs of the community, emphasizing on environment creation for literacy and education amongst the youth and adults. It would have books, magazines, After the approval from the Pradhan, began the task of infrastructural work for the library set up. Essentially for this purpose, a spacious hall in the Gram Panchayat bhawan was chosen. Soon the walls were painted, the windows fitted with glasses and the library was underway.

While all this was going on, the most essential task of listing down the resource materials in form of books, magazine, and newspaper were done. The Pradhan of Kamipur, Mrs. Aiysha Khatoon volunteered to provide all the daily newspaper and different types for magazines essential for the library,In December 2019, the vision of establishing Panchayat Learning Centre turned into reality with the inauguration of first one-of-its-kind PLC in the Panchayat Bhawan. An Operator was appointed by the Pradhan to function as the library volunteer. The main role involved maintaining the book issue and return register, noting down request for different books from the community, and safe keeping of the library.

As time passed, the impact of PLC has been manifolds on the community. Initially, the library saw the footfall of around 20 to 25 readers from the community. But over time, this has gradually increased. The library is functional throughout the day from 10 am to

5pm. There are different time slots for the males and the females. The PLC consists of around 200 books, ranging from reference books based on UP SCERT syllabus, books related to the preparation of different competitive exams, magazines, newspapers, quiz booklets, and biographies of eminent personalities to story books and specific books for adult learners.

In Kamipur, Satyam, now a Library Operator is overjoyed that such an initiative has been taken in his village. He has completed his education till class 12 and thus, volunteered to be the library operator. He is now preparing for different public service exams, and said that the library will be of great use as the books of the preparation of the exam is pretty costly and after managing the other expense of the household, it would become difficult for him to buy these books. Like Satyam there are many others in the village who share the same view. They now come in groups during the late afternoons and spend their time reading post school hours. Now, the youth of Kamipur spends their time reading and learning and preparing for different competitive exams, dreaming of landing themselves a well-paid job.

The library has been a boon for the community. The women who could not dream of attaining higher level education due to societal pressures, is actively pursuing their education. In an interaction with community members it was also realized that the women and female young adults faced a lot of problem in getting access to books as the education of females were not prioritized in most of the households. They said that it was almost impossible for them to pursue education beyond class 12 due to different kind of societal pressure. They shared that their families would never spend on buying their books. The establishment of library helped in tackling this problem as it has been especially beneficial for the women and young females of the community. Since the library operating hours are separate for the women and young females, they said that it was easier for them to convince their families to let them use the library. One of the girls said that the library had the peacefulness of a "prayer room" which was necessary for learning. Thus, the Panchayat Learning has been serving as a stepping stone in form for environment creation for literacy and education amongst the youth and adults. As envisaged the PLCs have become the centre for literacy and learning.

8.3 Small Steps, Big Initiatives

(Children's Rally for need inclusion in GPDP, Shyampur, Kothawan)

Occurring in a small Gram Panchayat Shyampur in Kothawan Block of Hardoi District this is a unique story of children rallying for inclusion of their demands in GPDP (Gram Panchayat Development Plan) and encouraging villagers for attending the meeting.

The GPDP was to be formulated from 18th November, 2019. That year, members of the Bal Sansad of a primary school of Shyampur discussed among themselves and decided collectively to put indispensable demands openly in front of everyone present in Gram Sabha. Bal Sansad or child Parliament is a forum where students look after duties of concerned ministries and every other student has mutual and equal participation. Regardless of gender, it gives an excellent opportunity to all children to voice their ideas, thoughts and feelings.

HCLF team was on a regular visit to school, when Bal Sansad discussed about issues, school children were facing like poor sanitation at school, unavailability of play-ground, no teacher for instructing them on playing musical instruments provide by Panchayat etc. With a vision beyond their age these demands were essential for the overall development of children and their future.

The members found their demands justified and decided to provide support to Bal Sansad and resolving their problems. Samuday team first educated students on various aspects of local governance why the formation of GPDP is essential and how the children's needs could be addressed through GPDP. Systematic planning and execution of the rally drew everyone's attention towards Bal Sansad due to which their needs were heard and addressed through the Gram Panchayat Development Plan of Shyampur for the upcoming financial year 2020-21. School going children, with full

efforts and hard-work, started preparing for rally for which posters were designed and painted, awareness messages were written, verbal script was practiced and drums beats were exercised. PRI representatives of Shyampur actively facilitated the process. Announcement through "Dugduggi" was also done. These initiatives taken by the children mainstreamed the idea of different aspects of education into the development agenda of the Panchayat.

The day of Gram Sabha meeting arrived. Large participation of village people for GPDP was unusual but believable to HCLF team and PRI functionaries as everybody was the witness of efforts put by primary school children. Waiting for their chance to come, Bal Sansad representatives patiently listened to other voices until they were called out to share concerns.

They spoke about their demands like:

a) Creation of playgrounds
b) Creation of libraries in the schools
c) Waste Water Management in Schools
d) Music teachers in the school.
e) Clean water and sanitation facility at school

On systematically explaining each requirement, Bal Sansad functionaries could convince Gram Sabha members give these demands a space in draft and assure them to provide support with best of their capabilities.

Earlier, there was no space for children's voices in planning process. Adults would decide on behalf of children and include their decisions in the GPDP. This whole drive certainly has generated a huge impact on children or Bal Sansads of other GPs to put forward justified demands which shall be included in GPDP agenda.

The GPDP would truly be a Child Friendly plan, only when the Gram Panchayats consults with children and consider their comments. Protecting the rights of the children and ensuring their development by making all necessary entitlements and facilities accessible to them is the duty of the society.

8.4 The Neighborhood Bank

(A case of Rural Banking at Rithway Gram Panchayat)

Saving has always been a priority across all communities. People used to hide their valuables (Cash/Gold) in utensils and bury it deep. Banking system brought major change and the money started being deposited in Bank as they were considered a safer option. Mahatma Gandhi too has time and again focused on overall development of village and gave a special focus to Rural Banks.

Although literacy level is 71% still a majority of rural people have to cover miles for depositing their cash in nearest bank Branch and the money spent is equal to 1 day of labour charges. India's villages still lack bank branches or ATMs to help service these new customers, while the pace of building new financial infrastructure has actually slowed.

Nelson Mandela has clearly highlighted that our progress rate is not mapped through how much we give to those who already have more enough rather it is how much we give to those who don't have much. On this lines Gram Pradhan with help of HCLF established a rural Banking system in Rithway Gram Panchayat which was Adhaar enabled system of banking. This system of banking was in line with the national payment corporation of India (NPCI) which uses a person Adhaar card no. and finger prints/Eyeris Scan for verification and to enable him/her to process the online transaction thus powering the rural engine through Adhaar enabled pay.

For availing this system of banking person has to provide Adhaar card no. for their respective account at bank. Finger Print Reader is required for transaction which cost approximately 2000-4000 Rs. A software is needed to get through this. This is required for the biometric recognition of a person. Once the Adhaar card is linked to bank all the banking facilities like Fund Transfer, Balance Enquiry, cash Deposit and Withdrawal can be carried out. The AEPS machine works like a Point of Sale (POS) machine. Instead of a debit/credit card pin, the merchant will have to key in the customer's Adhaar number and authenticate the transaction using the customer's biometric data.

Initially community of Rithway was little skeptical in adopting the AEPS system of Rural Banking. They had their doubts about the safety of money being transacted. HCLF team with the help of Pradhan and ward members generated awareness and also organized

for training and orientation regarding the detailed use of this technology. Post the campaign few people came forward and did their transactions. Once the trust was build, more and more people began using this system of Rural Banking and thus the idea of AEPS in rural banking emerged as a game changing weapon of banking system.

Rithway Gram panchayat has established an effective mechanism of above process and has been delivering banking services to community. Services include-

- Balance Enquiry
- Cash Withdrawal
- Cash Deposit
- Buying from store at cost-effective prices through AEPS.
- Transfer of Adhaar Funds from linked Adhaar

1000 farmers have availed the facilities of Rural Banking in Rithway Gram anchayat. Successful and safe transaction of 2-3 Lakhs has been done by the community. With help of computer Operator Om Prakash and effective community engagement by HCLF Team and Pradhan facilities of Rural banking was also delivered at door step for women and elderly people of village thus ensuring wider adoption from members of community and setting an example of effective mechanism of Rural Banking.

Amidst the Covid -19 situation and stringent lockdown imposed by government, it was believed that the rural economy would be hard hit and probably have a tough time recovering and getting used to the digital economy that was going to replace the traditional cash-rich economy that existed. However, in AEPS system of rural banking, the rural sector has found its savior and the fact that the targeted consumer for the technology is adopting it well is proved by the numbers we see in Rithway Gram Panchayat.
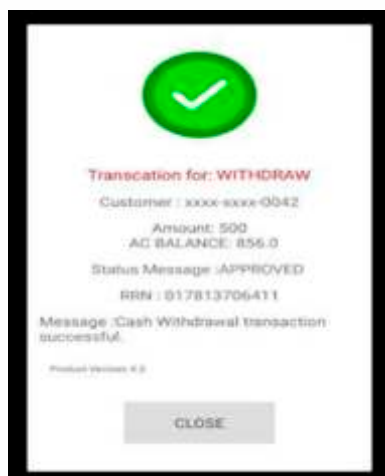
8.5 Empowering the Unheard

(Women Empowerment through Training and Capacity Building at the Grassroots)

In the era of modernization, Gender Equality is thought as an essential part of the social fabric. It is not only important to aim for gender equality but also to empower women in order to help them break free from the shackles of patriarchal atrocities.

Thus it is to say that women empowerment and gender equality go hand in hand. It dwells in our access to education, employment or even essential spheres of governance. The story is no different when the lens is turned towards rural India, at the grassroots governance in the Gram Panchayat Level. The same was true for the villages in the 3 intervention blocks, i.e. Kachhauna, Kothawan and Behandar of HCL Samuday. In 2016, when the journey began of developing capacities of PRI functionaries for good governance, it was soon realized that there was a long road ahead. This was more so in case of developing women leadership at the grassroots.

It was envisioned that a gradual and steady approach would be taken to ensure that the Women were empowered enough to undertake their roles as the office bearer at Gram Panchayat level, in form of Pradhan. What seemed like an uphill task ahead began with the belief that training and capacity building can enhance their capabilities thus helping them in realizing their own rights and duties. So women empowerment through training and capacity building was focused upon.

The under the general ambit of training and capacity building the purpose of trainings were to capacitate the PRI functionaries (Elected Representatives-Pradhans, Secretaries, Ward Members etc.) and Community Volunteers about their roles and responsibilities. In the process, many leaders have emerged out as true champions.

Along with this, as mentioned earlier, development of women leadership at the grassroots was also focused upon. With this specific aim in mind, a training was conducted on "Women Empowerment and Governance". This was a step forward towards enabling the women leaders to be more informed and able leaders. The target group for this training was- female PRI functionaries- i.e. female Gram Panchayat Pradhan, female Ward Members, and female community volunteers who played an active role in their respective villages. This was a necessary step in order to develop a level playing field and increase women's participation in the governance process at the grassroots. From time to time such training sessions were organized. In December 2019, the training program   was scheduled in two Gram Panchayats, Beniganj Dehat in Kothawan and Kamalpur in Kachhauna. The four-day training had in-depth sessions on different topics such as the gender violence, child-

marriage, reproductive health, family planning, role of women in governance, roles and responsibilities of the PRI representatives, way to draft an RTI letter, etc. The training was organized with 25 participants consisting of women leaders like female PRI functionaries- i.e. female Gram Panchayat Pradhan, female Ward Members, and female community volunteers who were active in their respective villages; from the age group of 18 to 50 years of age, playing an active role in their gram panchayats like the SHG members, ANM, ASHA, Anganwadi, Adult Literacy instructors, Youth, and Ward Members. It was a participatory form of training consisting of different session in different tools like group discussions, situational analysis, fun games. The sessions were about learning, unlearning and relearning different aspects of everyday life. The focus was on making them realize their rights and duties to be an empowered citizen participating in the public sphere of governance. Over the period of four days, there was a positive change in their demeanor and approach towards life.

Pic 2: Participants received their certificate after the training program

The outcome of the training was that the women of the Gram Panchayat agreed to take an active role in governance, and build a gender responsive governance mechanism. They also took a pledge of fighting against the existing social prejudices like child marriage etc. in their particular areas. The participants seemed extremely motivated after the four-day program.

The impact of it was later seen as the women came forward in the participatory process of annual planning of the GP and putting up their demand and needs in front of the Panchayat.

8.6 Last Mile Connectivity

(Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra- Bringing IT to Gram Panchayats)

Few months back Suresh received a whats app message from his brother in the city regarding a job opening. The application process required uploading of a photograph and a scan copy of his signature. Two years back this would have been a complete one-day exercise where he would either visit Sandilla or Hardoi in search of a cyber café to digitize and upload the documents. The vendor would conveniently charge anything between 30 to 70 rupees for this seemingly easy task.

Similar challenges were faced by other villagers of Lonhara Gram Panchayat of Kachhauna Block, Hardoi. Understanding the need of the hour, in 2016, HCL Foundation under its intervention of Strengthening PRIs, started it's "Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra" initiative, the blueprint being establishing CSCs in Panchayat Bhawans.

After the successful refurbishment of Panchayat Bhawan, soon the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra was inaugurated. As the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra became functional, and the villagers found out the benefits of having a CSC in their own village, the word spread. and turned out to be a big success. The jan sewa Kendra has been able to earn income for the gram panchayat by providing various services to the villagers at a very affordable price. 10% of the revenue generated from Jan Sewa Kendra is saved by the Gram Panchayat for different developmental works, as well as for the self-sustenance of the Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra. It has generated an income of 50,000 in FY 2018-19 and 70,000 in FY 2019-20.

The computer operator of Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra is a specially-abled local youth, Sailja Pratap Singh who is 30 years old with a graduation degree. For him, the opening of the Jan Sewa Kendra has helped in finding employment opportunity in his village itself. The Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra now is acting as a one stop channel to digitally connect the entire population of the Village.

8.7 The Flame of Sincerity

(Impact of Training and Capacity Building- A unique example.)

In the alleys of Mawai village of Hathaura, lives a lanky boy named Ravinder. Usually seen on a hand driven tri cycle, Ravinder goes around door to door mobilizing people for ward members meeting. Despite restricted motor movements due to body paralysis & polio attack, Ravinder is a ward member representative in Hathaura Gram Panchayat. He is a living example of where there is a will, there is a way.   Despite his restricted movements Ravinder has always been a fountain of energy   and enthusiasm.

During the first year of PRI intervention, Training and Capacity Building were provided to PRI functionaries in Kachhauna block by the HCLF Resource Team. It was completed in 2 phases. In the first phase, training was provided to the Gram Pradhans and Panchayat Secretaries and in the second phase, Ward members and community volunteers were covered. Gram Pradhans, Panchayat Secretaries and Community Volunteers in all 41 Gram Panchayats of Kachhauna Block were provided training and capacity building on the know-hows of Panchayati Raj System

The training and capacity building initiative didn't only enable and made him aware about the role, responsibilities and duties of a ward members but it also motivated him to enlighten others.

Inspired by the power communication and community mobilization, Ravinder started a unique initiative of organizing 'ward sabha' i.e. meeting of community members from the same ward, every week. This would help them to identify the needs, prioritize it and present it front of Gram Panchayat Members. Taking full responsibility of his respective ward he ensured that the needs his ward are not only heard but also implemented upon, by including development activities in Gram Panchayat's GPDP.

Today there are 15 ward members, forming the constitutional body of Gram Panchayat. There are total of 12 villages in Gram Panchayat Hathora. The Panchayat Bhawan today is not only functional but offers electronic services at the common service point. Ward members are now much more aware of their functionalities and it has created a vibrant ecosystem where holistic issues of village development have come into picture.

8.8 Planning the Grand Plan

Community Literacy Volunteer (CLV) while pasting poster on wall during the campaign

(The exercise for a holistic Gram Panchayat Development Plan)

In 2015, from the recommendation of 14th finance commission, the idea emanated to allocate some fund for Panchayats through state government and allow them to spend it on village development works. Community Literacy Volunteer (CLV) while pasting poster on wall during the campaignTo keep the functionaries more transparent and enhance community participation (The actual objective of Panchayat establishment), Ministry of Panchayati Raj came up with the notion of Gram Panchayat Development Plan.

Under GPDP a detailed annual plan is made where the villagers along with Panchayat functionaries will decide where the money should be spent. For example, the poorest families may not have enough livelihood opportunity, water for irrigation or fees for higher education of children. The GPDP can accordingly include plans for installing hand pumps or constructing wells, ponds in the poorest areas or allot scholarships for children from these families. If all are consulted, the GPDP process become truly inclusive.

During survey conducted by HCLF it was found that community still has a very limited awareness about GPDP and their participation in earlier GPDPs is not as much as it should be. Seeing the capability of GPDP in fulfilling villagers need, HCLF resource team opted to act as a facilitator in the process of GPDP formation by the Gram Panchayats step by step. The agenda for this whole initiative was to help Pradhan and other PRI functionaries in formulating effectual GPDP by involving community and enhancing capacity of PRI authorities.

The first question that came into the mind of resource team was "Where to Start??" as it is likely to be impossible to take up all 164 GPs at the same time. Then HCLF team, undertook phase-wise planning process, in which different GPs of each block were picked up in 4 phases. In each GP, resource team formulated a micro plan for their respective Gram Panchayats after discussion with the Pradhan and Secretary of that Gram Panchayats. The 4 days long micro plan, consisted of the field activities to be conducted as a part of the participatory process of planning involving the community in

the process through situational analysis based on Participatory Rural Appraisal tools like transect walk, social and resource mapping and focused group discussion etc.

The Gram Pradhan of Bilauni Sahdin Panchayat located in Kachhauna block of Hardoi took a lead to make aware community members about GPDP formation, how can it would help in solving the issues related to village development and what role villagers should play.

The campaign began by the awareness generation activity through environment creation wherein community volunteers of HCLF in that GP played their active part and went around the whole village announcing the information about the GPDP formation for the financial year 2020-21. Posters were also put up in the Panchayat Bhawans and other public places. This form of mobilization helped in satisfactory participation the community in the planning process which also made it a bottom-up approach of planning. The highlight of the GPDP Formation process of Bilauni Sahdin this year   was the agile cooperation from the women in the planning process. They would enthusiastically engage in the transect walk and participated in the identification of existing resources and their gaps. The women also took part in social and resource mapping.

This whole process of community participation and women engagement in resource mapping and gap identification helped not only panchayat authorities to build up a better plan but also women in terms of their boosted confidence and enhanced identity.

Women identifying gaps and doing resource mappingMoreover, women participation showcased they were slowly getting empowered and how effective their role could be in the approachable governance system at the grassroots level. Furthermore, As Focused Group Discussions were also held with the SHG members during this campaign.

Women identifying gaps and doing resource mapping

Later on, wherever women have formed SHGs and collectives, their access to governance processes is seen to increase. Such an engagement by the women would widen the local discourse into addressing the concerns of women, the poor and vulnerable sections regarding inclusion in the economy and access to resources.

This ensured that their voices were heard and the existing gaps towards women's welfare was addressed. Their understanding of poverty and of the families of the poor would helped in focusing the attention of the Panchayat on the most vulnerable within its jurisdiction and ensuring their entitlements. The SHG women participated in the Gram Sabha as well. They also helped in the mass mobilization of poor women and their families and to attend the Gram Sabha.

Providing hand-holding support to Gram Panchayats in the preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) through micro-planning exercises has helped in mobilizing Gram Panchayat Funds for issues other than regularly planned activities such as construction of drainage, inter-locking, seating benches and street lights. Now, with the intervention of HCLF, GP funds have now been mobilized mostly for Education, Health, PRI and WASH sector where activities such as infrastructure improvement in government schools and Anganwadi Centres, Refurbishment of Gram Panchayat Bhawans, provision for organising Nutrition Camp, stipend for the operator of Jan Sewa Kendra etc. are included along with the focus on low cost-no cost activities

8.9 The Emergence of Purwa

Indian villages are cultural entities than physical ones. Empowering villages comes from highlighting the innate attributes of these entities and strengthening the self-sufficiency of the community which then finds its way to sustainable and holistic development.

Situated 77 km away from the State Capital Lucknow, is Gram Panchayat Purwa, once under the rule of King of Hathoda emerged as an independent village with just 4 Households, hence getting its name Purwa which means a small village. This habitation of 4 Households has now emerged as an empowered Gram Panchayat with almost 600 Households sprawling across 6 villages having a population of 4228 (Census,2011). Empowerment, which was not handed over to them with a swish of a magic wand, but which the community of Purwa attained with synergistic efforts with HCL Samuday to uplift and uphold the pride of rural India.

Mahatma Gandhi once said "My idea of Village Swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity." A live example of this vision is now seen when we enter village Purwa, the largest in terms of population amongst all villages of this Gram Panchayat. A striking building catches the eye - Purwa Gram Panchayat's office, which a couple of years ago was just an ordinary building in the village with broken doors and seeping walls. But now standing proud is Gram Pradhan Suman Gupta, next to her transformed Gram Panchayat office which now with the support of HCL Samuday.

Along with this, Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra was also started. With the aim of establishing single point of service delivery in the village itself which will also serve as one of the source of income generation for Gram Panchayat, by providing all these services to the villagers at a very affordable price. The rate list is pinned up on the wall to ensure transparency. The operator of this Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra is a local youth, who has the knowledge of operating Computer and was seeking a job. Thus, this initiative has also helped to generate employment opportunity at local level, with a fixed remuneration which is bared by Gram Panchayat.

The refurbishment of the Panchayat Bhawan and establishment of Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra would not have served its purpose of functional Panchayat Secretariat until and unless the PRI representatives of Gram Panchayat rendered their services from it. Which led Samuday work upon capacity building of the PRI representatives i.e., Pradhan, Secretary, Ward Members and active community members through training. These training were organised at different level from Block to Gram Panchayat catering different target audience.

As a result of the training and capacity building, and continues coordination and liaising of Samuday team with support of Gram Pradhan, Purwa Gram Panchayat now witness weekly visits, commonly known as Samadhan Diwas, of Pradhan, Secretary, Lekhpal and other frontline members on every Wednesday (to be cross checked). During these visit the villagers raise their issues and problems the PRI representatives, most of which are resolved at the moment, depending upon its nature.

The impact of capacity building in Purwa was also seen during the Gram Panachayat Development Plan preparation, were the community came together and formulated the Plan. Based on multiple criteria (including Smart Working, Transparency, Public Access to Facilities, Functional Infrastructure, Regularization of Committee Meetings, Completeness of Paperwork and features like Jan Sewa Kendra) Purwa competed against 1661 GPs (qualifying out of total 58779 GPs in UP) and achieved Third rank in the Mukhymantri Panchayat Protsahan Puruskaar Yojna bearing fruits to the efforts made by the people and continued guidance of HCL Foundation.

9. Learnings and Conclusion

Over time different experiences helped in gaining a better understanding of the community as well as how the intervention can be worked out in the community. A positive shift was noticed in how the local governance at the grassroots worked. A strengthened Gram Panchayat that was envisioned was evolving. Community's access to services and government schemes were enhanced thus making sit more cost-effective and time saving for the community members with the establishment of Samuday Jan Sewa Kendra.

- As envisaged functional Gram Panchayat (GP) offices/ secretariats have become the centre for various developmental activities, including many of those being implemented by Samuday, HCL foundation.

- Over the period of time Establishment of Jan Sewa Kendra in Panchayat Bhawans has come out as a successful model for the generation of Own Source Revenue (OSR) of Gram Panchayats along with providing government service delivery to community at large in panchayat Bhawan itself.

- As a result of the capacity building initiatives for PRI Functionaries, Gram Pradhans & Ward Members are taking steps to regularize Gram Panchayat monthly meetings and weekly GP level Samadhan Diwas, which has become an important platform for villagers to get their issues resolved locally.

- HCL Foundation facilitated Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) in all 164 Gram Panchayats in 3 blocks with active engagement of local community and PRI representatives for FY 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21. GPDP finale plans has been shared with respective ADO Panchayat of 3 Blocks. This has ensured holistic plan, following all the steps of GPDP formation and as well as ensured community participation in planning

- The success of these Gram Panchayats has attracted many development practitioners for exposure visits from various development agencies and Directorate, Panchayati raj, Lucknow.

- Based on this model, district administration has taken lead to replicate it in all the blocks of Hardoi. Under mission Kayakalp, District Magistrate Hardoi took initiative to develop 10 model GPs in each block of district. Thus today there are about 200 Gram Panchayats that have functional offices/ GP secretariats.

- Based on the learnings from success of Jan Sewa Kendra in Panchayat Bhawans as Own Source Revenue (OSR) model for Gram Panchayats, 417 Jan Sewa Kendra has been established across Hardoi district by District Administration in collaboration with HCLF for technical & training support.

Output Achieved

- Reaching Ward Members and Community Volunteers-1763 Participants
- Regularising Samadhaan Diwas in 164 GPs
- Capacity building of Gram Pradhan and Panchayat Secretaries- 164 GPs
- Facilitating Gram Panchayat Development Plan and uploading on Plan Plus- 164 GPs
- Refurbishment of Gram Panchayat Bhawans-60 GPs
- Established and Regularised Samuday Jan Sewa Kendras-38 GPs
- Content Management of GP Website-8 GPs
- Established and functionalized Panchayat Learning centers-5 GPs
- Adhaar Based Rural Banking System- 4 GPs

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