Shri Oommen Chandy, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala with the participants

Field visit to Manickal Grama Panchayat

Dr. M.K. Muneer addressing the closing session - 30 August 2014
Introduction

The World Bank facilitated the learning, sharing and transfer of good practices on local governance and decentralization across states in India at a knowledge exchange event from 28 - 30 August in the capital city of Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala. The overarching objective of this knowledge exchange was to improve implementation and delivery of government programs and projects, through sharing knowledge, good practices, implementing "know how" and learning in a systematic and efficient manner. The idea was that future programs would also evolve with the participation of other states who would be keen to share their experiences on decentralization and local governance in India.

The program provided a platform for the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha and Rajasthan to come together to discuss and debate innovative elements and the challenges they faced in implementing development programs. The objective thereby being to be able to design future projects quickly and efficiently to meet the needs of the states. The gathering comprising elected representatives, development officials and practitioners clearly articulated the immediate needs of their respective states focusing mainly in the area of strengthening and institutionalization of both rural and urban governments.

A needs assessment report covering the states of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan was prepared prior to the Knowledge Exchange Programme focusing on local governments and it was distributed to the participants before the event in Thiruvananthapuram.

Day One - Inaugural Session

The Knowledge Exchange Programme was inaugurated by Mr. K.M. Chandrasekhar, Vice-Chairman, State Planning Board, Government of Kerala. Dr. George Mathew, Chairman, Institute of Social Sciences presided. In his presidential address he laid down the basic idea of creation of a knowledge base and moving towards the exchange of knowledge that was crucial for development. Mr. Abdu Muwonge, Senior Economist, World Bank welcomed the participants and stated that the knowledge exchange program was a part of a series of peer to peer learning of good practices that the Bank was facilitating.
through the Department for International Development (DFID). He also said that these kind of
exchange programs were at the core of DEA's requests to the Bank to enable and to facilitate
cross-state learnings on the way state government programs are being implemented, delivered,
and monitored and how they are being evaluated. The overriding
objective of such an initiative was that it would be a platform
through which one can have different perspectives.

Mr. K.M. Chandrasekhar, who was former Cabinet Secretary,
Government of India in his inaugural address highlighted the
achievements and challenges of Kerala's decentralization and
institutionalization of the local government reforms. He noted that
decentralized planning in Kerala was an area in which successive
governments of Kerala, irrespective of political affiliation, have
been focusing continuously and trying to build up and strengthen
the panchayati raj system the way in which it was envisaged in
the Constitution. Mr. Chandrashekar provided a brief history of
the panchayati raj system in the country and stressed the fact
that there was a lot that other states could learn from Kerala and
vice-versa.

Ms. Farah Zahir, Senior Economist, World Bank in her address
mentioned that it would be interesting to see where the various
states had reached in terms of milestones in their decentralization
agenda since the landmark 73rd and 74th Constitutional
Amendments. Ms. Zahir reiterated that the knowledge exchange
was a platform where the challenges, innovations and achievements
could be shared and here the Bank was in the role of a knowledge
provider and in future one could have a larger number of states
joining such events.

The first working session was on the sharing of experience of the West Bengal Bank project. Dr.
M.N. Roy, Former Principal Secretary, Department of Panchayat & Rural Development,
Government of West Bengal in his opening remarks as the Chair mentioned that for any state in
the country to do well in the decentralization agenda, there has to a 'culture' of decentralizing in
the state. Mr. Roy stated that before the Bank project there was a DFID intervention called the
“Strengthening Rural Decentralization Program” that was the precursor and laid down
the framework for the Bank project to operate.

Mr. Soumya Purkait, Joint Secretary, Department of Panchayat and
Rural Development,
Government of West Bengal and also the project director gave a detailed presentation on the project. Mr. Purkait specifically detailed out the four components of the project namely, grants to gram panchayats, capacity building of gram panchayats, state oversight and program management and implementation. He also mentioned how a unique model of the performance based grant allocation system for the gram panchayats was built into the project wherein the gram panchayats must qualify for the annual performance assessment benchmark to access the discretionary grants. Two positives are noteworthy: (i) the significant improvement in the institutional capacity and (ii) performance of the gram panchayats and the onsite mentoring support system that proved to be a catalyst for the gram panchayats to increase their absorptive capacity. Mr. Purkait also highlighted the improvement in the fiscal management of the gram panchayats through the gram panchayat management system (GPMS). The Institutional Strengthening Gram Panchayat Project (ISGP) also introduced a web-based grievance redress mechanism for the panchayats, which was an online tool for enhancing accountability that bridged the gap between the citizens and the panchayats. Mr. Dilip K. Pal, Special Secretary, Department of Panchayat and Rural Development, Government of West Bengal gave some key insights into the project functioning and the role of the department of Panchayat and Rural Development in providing handholding and support to the project.

The second session was on the experience of Karnataka in the state’s panchayats strengthening project. Introducing the session, Mr. Ramesh Kumar Former Speaker, Karnataka Legislative Assembly, presently Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA), and Chairman, Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act Amendment Committee mentioned that it was Dr. Abdu Nazeer Saab, the minister for panchayati raj in Karnataka who had heralded the strong decentralization movement in the state in 1984.

Mr. Vijay Bhaskar, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka gave a detailed presentation of the panchayati raj system in the state. Mr. Yalakki Gowda, Director, Panchayat Raj & Rural Development, Government of Karnataka provided a presentation on the ‘Gram Swaraj’, the Karnataka Panchayats Strengthening Project (KPSP). The KPSP-I was implemented by the rural development and panchayati raj department,
GoK, with the assistance of The World Bank in 1341 gram panchayats and 39 of the most backward taluks in 15 districts of the state from 2006-2014. The objectives of the KPSP-I was to build the capacity of the panchayats, provide formula based block grants to the gram panchayats, and revamp the financial management and procurement system in the local bodies and also to improve the effectiveness of service delivery across a range of services devolved to the panchayats under the Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act of 1993. Ms. Farah Zahir, in her concluding remarks stated that the big take away from the project in Karnataka was that the block grants was used as a tool to facilitate participatory/perspective/annual planning while at the same time building the capacity of the elected representatives. Simultaneously the financial, procurement and environmental screenings systems were strengthened and the project focused not only on asset creation but also helped in creating a mindset where resource management and prioritization was primarily the motive through the element of participatory planning.

Panel Discussion - I Perspectives from Jharkhand

Chairing the session on perspectives from Jharkhand, Mr. S.D. Sharma, former State Election Commissioner of the state stated that it was a challenging experience to work in a state with such a varied cultural, geographical and traditional backdrop. He mentioned that for effective decentralization to take place in the state, a very committed and nuanced effort needs to be made by the state officials and the political representatives. Mr. Vidyasagar, principal secretary, panchayati raj department gave a presentation on the status of panchayati raj in the state as well as highlighting the essential gaps that the state was facing in terms of effective and true decentralization. Describing the status of the panchayati raj institutions in the state as in a nascent stage, Mr. Vidyasagar stressed on the fact that the present knowledge exchange had come at a very right moment for him in the context of the situation in Jharkhand. He said the department was working on a roadmap for the future to enhance and strengthen the panchayati raj system in the state. For this they will be looking at well-designed innovative approaches as well as studying examples from other states as well. Mr. Vidyasagar also mentioned that supplementary funding was required for the state to institutionalize the local bodies and to make them effective in their implementation of various services and programmes. There was also the need to strengthen the local bodies’ procurement systems as well as important capacity building interventions to strengthen the central training institute in terms of training facilities and content. Mr. N.N. Sinha, IT secretary in his intervention mentioned that in the state about...
two-thirds of the panchayats have panchayat secretariats or Bhavans that are functioning well. The main concern for all is that political instability has been creating problems in the state. The key issue is to see how the future would turn out for the panchayati raj institutions.

Panel Discussion - II Perspectives from Rajasthan

The session on Rajasthan was chaired by Dr. P.P. Balan, Director of the Kerala Institute for Local Administration (KILA) where he highlighted the fact that the state of Rajasthan was a pioneer in the field of Social Audit and many other states in the country were in the process of adapting that mechanism to their local context. Prof. Anita Brandon, senior faculty member, Indira Gandhi Panchayati Raj & Gramin Vikas Sansthan, Jaipur gave a detailed presentation on the status of panchayati raj system in Rajasthan. Ms. Brandon focused on the important strides that the state had taken towards effectively deepening the ethos of local governments in the state both by the state through devolution of powers and also by the SIRD in updating and reworking capacity building and training challenges to meet these needs. It was also highlighted that the state had continuously held regular elections to the local bodies since 1995 with the next elections to be held in January 2015. Ms. Brandon also mentioned that it has become evident over the years that there was also a positive shift in the mindset of the local constituents from spending on roads and assets to investing more on the social sectors like health and education. Ms. Brandon and Mr. A.P. Bhatt, Joint Secretary, Plan, Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Rajasthan also pointed out some of the challenges faced by the state in terms of augmenting staffing pattern of the local bodies in proportion to the number of functions that have been transferred to them and a strong e-governance initiative to be introduced that will complement existing programs being implemented by the panchayats.

Special Session with the Hon’ble Chief Minister of Kerala

The highlight of the knowledge exchange event was Shri Oommen Chandy, Honourable Chief Minister of Kerala taking time to grace the event on the opening day. In his introductory statement, Dr. George Mathew said that Shri Oommen Chandy was the only Chief Minister to have attended a ward sabha in his own village, where he participated for more than two hours
while a woman panchayat president was conducting the ward sabha meeting. The audience applauded when it was mentioned that the Chief Minister was also awarded the United Nations award for better public service in 2013 for improving effectiveness, efficiency and quality of public service in the state. The Chief Minister provided a brief summary on the steps taken by his government towards strengthening of local governments in the state, highlighting the initiatives of the *kudumbashree* and *ashraya* programmes which are empowering women and the destitute sections of the society. During the interactive session which followed, the chief minister replied to various questions from the delegates and happily posed for a group photograph with all the participants.
The first session on the second day was on the experience of Kerala with reference to the local government project being implemented in the state. The session began with a detailed overview of the key learnings from Kerala’s decentralization experience by Mr. S.M. Vijayanand, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. The presentation provided important yardsticks that various state governments had to be aware of if it were to actually implement decentralization. As an important officer during the People’s Plan campaign in the latter part of the nineties, Mr. Vijayanand took the audience through the various phases of decentralization that the state went through providing key insights into the nuances of devolution that were vital for real decentralization to succeed. A strong emphasis was made during the presentation on the need for a strong legal framework through the panchayati raj and municipality acts of states that would make the case for decentralization stronger and more effective. Covering a wide gamut of issues, the presentation provided the delegates with important lessons they had to bear in mind while working towards effectively implementing decentralization in their respective states. Mr. Vijayanand concluded his presentation by requesting the World Bank to provide some kind of technical support to the states present to implement a minimal decentralization plan. Mr. James Verghese, Principal Secretary, Local Self Government Department, Kerala, in his address mentioned some of the challenges that the state was facing with respect to decentralization. Ms. T. Mitra, Executive Director, Kerala Local Government Service Delivery Project (KLGSDP) gave a presentation on the project highlighting some of the major innovations that the project had brought about. She stated that through this project the various systems that were being introduced would become an integral part of the local government’s fiscal framework which would be supported by the state budget. In his concluding remarks, Mr. Abdu Muwonge, Task Team leader of the project stated that various studies and research analysis was also being done through the project, one on analyzing local spending of the local bodies which was being done by the Decentralization Analysis Cell. Mr. Muwonge said that with the decentralization project frameworks from the three states of Kerala, Karnataka and West Bengal the other states could begin some incremental initiatives in the field of local government and decentralization. Concluding
his comments, he said that it was imperative that the states keen to implement decentralization should take stock of the local knowledge available in their respective states along with the key stakeholders there and adapt them to make decentralization happen effectively.

Panel Discussion - III Perspectives from Chhattisgarh

The session on Chhattisgarh began with a presentation on the panchayat raj scenario in the state by Ms. Shikha Rajput, Deputy Secretary, Department of Panchayats and Rural Development, Government of Chhattisgarh. Giving a brief overview of local governments in the new state, Ms. Rajput said that there was a very concerted effort by the state government to improve people's participation in the gram sabhas. Various initiatives like frequent visits of nodal officers in the block and district to the panchayats had increasingly helped to remove certain barriers between the officials and the local citizens. It has also improved the participation of women in these important meetings. Local traditional methods of creating awareness and implementing information and educational campaigning through cultural references slowly helped build the confidence of the local elected representatives and citizens to come forward to articulate their preferences. The second presentation was by Ms. Ranu Sahu, Municipal Commissioner of Bilaspur. Ms. Sahu provided a detailed overview of the functioning of the Bilaspur Municipal Corporation. The presentation included initiatives that the municipal corporation had implemented like the online birth and death certificate system and the GIS based collection of property taxes. In the latter regard, it was mentioned that the tax recovery increased from Rs. 22.24 crores in 2008/09 to Rs. 81.10 crores in 2011/12 for the municipal corporation. There were also initiatives for ecologically sensitive garbage collection, integrated urban transport systems and housing schemes that the corporation had mooted and that were functioning effectively.

Panel Discussion - IV Perspectives from Odisha

In his opening remarks the Chair, Mr. B.D. Ghosh, Senior Fellow, Institute of Social Sciences, Kolkata noted that Odisha was one of the first states in the country in the early 1990s to reserve one-third of seats for women in the panchayats. There were also many radical steps that the state took under the chief ministership of the late Mr. Biju Patnaik that many other states later followed.
In his presentation on the panchayati raj system in Odisha, Mr. Saroj Kumar Dash gave a picture of the local governments in the state as well as highlighting some of the key challenges the state was facing as of now. Some of the issues that the state was grappling with was the lack of adequate human resources at the local government level, absence of asset registers at the gram panchayat level and broadly the state was still struggling to effectively devolve fully funds, functions and functionaries to the local governments. Most importantly, Mr. Dash mentioned that there was non-availability of segregated data for planning at the local and district level. Nevertheless, he concluded that Odisha was still working to make breakthroughs to see that gram panchayats become the platform for providing the citizens with basic services and also to introduce monitoring and evaluation systems to assess program implementation by the local bodies.

Panel Discussion - V Perspectives from Madhya Pradesh

Introducing the session, the Chair, Dr. George Mathew, mentioned that Madhya Pradesh was the first state to hold local body elections after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment was passed in the country. The state had also since 2007 reserved fifty percent of the seats in panchayats for women. In the presentation on Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Ovais Ahmed, SA & State Nodel Officer, P&R&D described the steps the state government had taken in the field of decentralization. There were many initiatives that were being carried out in the field of e-governance and information, communication and technology that provided the local citizens quick and easy access to information that they needed. Some of the major highlights of the state was the devolution of Functions, Functionaries, Finance to the Gram Panchayats, transparency in accounting through online accounting module Panchayat Darpan linked with PRIA soft based on MAS (Model Accounting System), the generation of MIS in the standard usable formats, decentralized planning using the Plan Plus...
application, capturing of the demographic, geographic, Infrastructure, Elected members, details of all PRI through area Profiler and individual websites with easy content management for each PRI through National Panchayat Portal.

There was an open session in which Prof. M.A. Oommen, Chairman, Fourth State Finance Commission, Government of Kerala and Emeritus Professor, ISS laid down a few concrete guiding principles related to fiscal and financial management that the states had to keep in mind for successful devolution of powers. Prof. Oommen in his observations said that the transfer system needs to be understood when discussing about local governance. In India there is a multiple transfer system and a multi-tiered governance system and this calls for a robust and rational transfer system between the different levels of government - centre, state and the local governments. He noted that in the back ground of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendments, the central finance commission also had amended certain provisions that asked the union to supplement the finances of the panchayats and local governments. Prof. Oommen stressed that one needs to build in a robust financial reporting system and a fiscal data base for local governments without which there can be no relevant monitoring and evaluation. He said that even in Kerala, the disaggregated financial data base at the local governments can be improved. With the Information Kerala Mission, the state has gone ahead to create a platform where local financial data can be generated. Prof. Oommen also noted that Kerala was the only state in the country to effectively decentralize institutions related to health, education etc. Mr. Jose Jacob, Director, GIFT, also spoke in the session.

In the final session Mr. Dinesh Sharma, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Government of India and Ms. Sarada Muraleedharan, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India laid down a brief road map that the participating states could follow up on. Mr. Sharma said that any follow up that would be done after the knowledge exchange program would be taken seriously by his department and assured the audience about this. The session was chaired by Mr. S.M. Vijayanand who said that if the ministries of water, rural development and panchayati raj at the centre would come together and be unified then the local government system would be stronger in the country. He also reiterated the fact that it was not possible for the states to do what states like Karnataka, Kerala and West Bengal had achieved but any incremental step that they could take in terms of seriously devolving powers to the local governments itself would be a big first step. He
also cautioned that there may not be a conducive environment to push decentralization in some of the states due to varying political and ideological pressures but stated that decentralization was inevitable and that it was better if the states prepared themselves for that reality. Ms. Sarada Muraleedharan began her address by mentioning about her various capacities in the government where she was working to implement programs through the panchayati raj institutions and later as executive director of the Kudumbashree. Ms. Muraleedharan said that it was necessary to acknowledge the unending possibilities of what local governments could achieve. It was the need of the hour to provide an enabling environment for them to work effectively and in this task it was essential that all stakeholders including the state government structures and the central government work in tandem with the local governments. She was also of the view that the experiences and local knowledge base of the elected representatives of the local governments was an invaluable asset and that these need to be taken into account by various capacity building institutions to complement their training and learning activities.

Mr. S.M. Vijayanand in his final remarks said that there were some impressions and fallacies about many states including Kerala and that it was not right to put the blame on panchayats only. One needs to make a clear distinction as to which official or department is responsible for a delay rather than conveniently pushing the panchayats into the background. It is also important, he said to bring in facts and evidence before accusing local governments of any kind of impropriety. For this evidence based policy research needs to be carried out by independent organizations and think tanks that could be partnered by the World Bank. Mr. Vijayanand quoted the example of the Chief Secretary of Odisha who said that the Public Distribution System (PDS) under the panchayats were working much better in the tribal areas of the state than the coastal areas which were under the state government department. He said that the states should use planning as the entry point for the panchayats to work and it was necessary to back them with strong technical and capacity building. Mr. Vijayanand stated that the NIRD has now been renamed as the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj.

Day Three

On the final day of the exchange program, the Honourable Minister for Panchayats, Dr. M.K. Muneer had an hour-long interactive discussion with the participants. Many issues relating to women’s empowerment and the initiatives that the government had taken to strengthen and institutionalize the local government system further were touched upon. The minister said that the present government was focusing on the issue of safety of women, children and the elderly and as a result many gram panchayats had formed networks across the state in this regard. The minister said that it was the objective of the government to make the panchayats in the state child and women friendly. Describing the increasing new areas in which the Kudumbashree was being active, the minister said that there were over forty one lakh women members in the cooperative group now in the state.
The program concluded with a field visit to Manickal Grama Panchayat in Vamanapuram Block in Trivandrum. The gram panchayat president and other elected representatives and officials
welcomed the delegates and a presentation was made on the functioning of the panchayat. Some of the milestones that the Manickal gram panchayat had achieved were that all the accounting activities were being done through the Saankhya software; plan formulation, implementation and monitoring were through the Sulekha web application; while the birth and death and marriage registrations were issued using Sevana application which also processed the social security pensions of the citizens. The panchayat was also implementing innovative ways to solve the solid and liquid waste disposal problem that was very common to the local governments in the state. The panchayat has also developed a policy for solid and liquid waste management with the objective to achieve zero-waste management in the immediate future.

Officials from the visiting states were greatly impressed by the latest facilities and infrastructure of the gram panchayat which they said was akin to any corporate office. They were also astounded by the fact that the panchayat took great pride in proactively collecting taxes from its constituents, which had bolstered its own source revenue over the years.

The knowledge exchange event was implemented by the Institute of Social Sciences (ISS) based in New Delhi.

*Dr. George Mathew, Ms. Harriette Peters, Ms. Pronita Chakrabarti, Mr. Anand Mathew and Mr. Abdu Muwonge*
FEEDBACK

It was indeed a great workshop which I attended from 28-30 August, 2014 at Trivandrum, Kerala.

It was a knowledge exchange in true sense and spirit.

This learning event was a reflection of "Putting Principles into Practices". The lessons learnt of Kerala, West Bengal and Karnataka will no doubt add on value to our local governance practices in Odisha.

A well managed and mentored knowledge sharing platform.

Thank you very much for your hospitality.

Saroj Kumar Dash, Deputy Director, SIRD, Odisha

Thanks a ton for all the support and appreciation, Dr.Mathew. Hope to see you very soon. You were wonderful host and organiser.

Soumya Purkait, Joint Secretary, P & RD Department, West Bengal

Our take away from this knowledge exchange program is at two levels. One, is at the personal level where I got the opportunity to learn the diverse and innovative approaches being adopted across the country whilst sitting in this room. For me to gather the quantum of information exchanged during this program would have required extensive travel and intensive research. But here I got it all just under one roof. Second, as a government functionary representing the State at this program, my take home is the opening up of my mind to the various dimensions of development which I can apply and replicate in my State - Chhattisgarh.

At official level, this program has given us the learning opportunity to understand the functioning of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Kerala to Karnataka to West Bengal to Odisha. These insights will be greatly helpful for our State. We are also hoping that some of the insights that we have shared about our State would be helpful to other States just as their’s would be to our State.

We believe that knowledge exchange is a two way process where we can continue learning and sharing our knowledge further and ultimately influence the change in our respective States.

Shikha Rajput Tiwari, Deputy Secretary, Department of P&RD, Chhattisgarh
I thank each one of you for organizing an excellent knowledge exchange programme in Kerala. It was the best and most useful knowledge sharing programme I had attended in the recent past. Structure and content of the programme are well designed and every session had more than one thing to offer for others to learn. Having joined Panchayati Raj Dept very recently, the programme was an excellent exposure for me to start my innings in the department with some good ideas to take forward. I would be glad if one such programme could be organised in Jharkhand with participation some PRI and political leaders.

Thank you very much wonderful arrangement for stay and hospitality.

Good Wishes.

K. Vidyasagar, Principal Secretary, PRD, Jharkhand

Let me at the outset thank you all for organizing the Knowledge Exchange Programme in Kerala. The programme has very successfully inspired and activated the low income States for strengthening their Panchayats/Local self governments. The hard work put in by you has been the main instrument for remarkable success of the programme.

More programmes of this nature would be helpful.

Regards,

S D Sharma IAS (Retd.), [Former State Election Commissioner, Jharkhand], New Delhi

Thank you so much for sharing my photo-as a memory of good times that we had at Trivandrum- thanks to the Knowledge Exchange Forum (28 to 30 Aug.,14)- wonderful learning opportunity provided by The World Bank.

I would also like to convey my gratitude and appreciation to the entire World Bank Team- including the Team Leaders-Mr. Abdu Muwonge, Ms. Farah Zahir, Pronita Chakrabarti, yourself and other Team Members from the Bank, as well as, Dr. George Mathew and his team from ISS, New Delhi-for organizing a very meaningful cross-learning event with Knowledge Exchange on Decentralization and Panchayati Raj Scenario across 8 Participant States.

I would also like to request The World Bank to multiply and spread the beacon light of such knowledge exchange platforms, to be organized in different States by rotation, so as to expose the participants to Panchayati Raj Functioning in different States of the Country. Also, participants may include besides SIRD & Panchayati Raj Officials, Elected Representatives of PRIs as well, especially Panchayat Presidents. Rajasthan would be keen to host a Knowledge Exchange Platform with the support of The World Bank and ISS, New Delhi-some time next financial year, in mutually agreed upon dates, after the next round of PRI Elections is completed by Feb., 2015.
It is also requested that The World Bank may please share all the Power Point Presentations shared at Trivandrum with all participants for ready reference. Looking forward to be kept in the partnership loop of future Knowledge Exchange initiatives planned by The World Bank.

Please share with me the e-mails of Mr. Abdu Muwonge and Ms. Farah Zahir- so that I can convey my thanks to them as well. In the meantime, you may like to forward my message to them.

Dr. Anita, Professor & OIC (RGPSA), Rajasthan

We, from Jharkhand, are really grateful to you for organizing the said Exchange, as it gave a lot of ideas how to take our nascent Panchayati Raj Movement forward and there is nothing better than to learn from the experiences of those who have trodden the path. The lessons from Kerala, West Bengal and Karnataka will no doubt add on value to our efforts for upgrading the quality of local governance practices in Jharkhand.

Not only it was well structured, the resources were excellent and the spirit of learning permeated the entire exchange even though sometimes it taxed us.

Thank you very much on behalf of the entire Jharkhand Team for everything including your hospitality and hoping that it would spur further exchanges on this and other themes as well as projects to carry these ideas forward.

Regards,

N N Sinha, Principal Secretary, IT, GOJ, & CEO, JAPIT, Jharkhand