



Policy Brief

Aapke Adhikar - Aapki Sarkar, Aapke Dwar

Government at your doorstep

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CONTEXT

According to the 2011 Census, 76 percent of the total population in Jharkhand resided in rural areas which is higher than the national average of 68 percent. According to 2018-19 estimates, it has a lower per-capita GDP of ₹82,430 (1,100 USD) which is about 50% less than the country's per-capita GDP for the same period. According to NFHS-5 (National Family Health Survey, Round 5, 2019-20) Jharkhand still lags behind other states in the country across key indicators of child and woman nutrition, vaccination and institutional births. All these issues are aptly summed-up in the low HDI score of 0.599 (2019), which makes Jharkhand the 34th ranked state - only higher than Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, and comparable to Kenya.

While a multitude of social security schemes and programmes have been implemented by the Union and state governments to improve health, nutrition and socio-economic status, rarely have they been able to meet its intended goals. This problem has been compounded by the inhospitable terrain with dense forest cover and remoteness from administrative headquarters, which have always hindered the last-mile service delivery in the state, including even registering for these social security programmes.

These service delivery issues were further exacerbated by the disruption caused due to the pan-

demical and there was an urgent need for the government to innovate to reach these marginalised and vulnerable populations. It is in this context that PDAG in its advisory role to the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) Jharkhand, set out to design an initiative that could bring the state government to each doorstep.

APPROACH

This initiative focused on populations for whom it was difficult to access government services - women, the specially abled, the aged and the tribals hailing from some of the most remote areas in the state. This initiative was thus oriented towards meeting multiple SDGs (Sustainable Development Goals) including - Goal 1 (No poverty), Goal 2 (Zero hunger), Goal 3 (Good health and well-being), Goal 5 (Gender equality), Goal 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and Goal 10 (Reduced inequalities).

To achieve this, camps were held at the panchayats (the lowest administrative unit in India's federal structure) for 45 days from 16th November, 2021 till 28th December, 2021. At these camps the citizens could either file complaints regarding service delivery or implementation, or get registered to access different social security schemes being run by the government. Benefits accrued under other social security schemes were

also distributed amongst the beneficiaries. 6,867 panchayat level camps were held, where 3.25 million applicants (10 percent of the state's population) registered 3.59 million applications.

Overall, 71 such schemes under 15 work areas were part of the initiative. These work areas included Housing, Public Distribution System (PDS), Pension, Drinking Water, Livelihood, Certificates under RTGSA (Right to Guarantee of Service Act), Forest Rights, Health and Nutrition, Agriculture, Scholarship, Land Records etc. The government working under mission-mode guaranteed to dispose of all applications within the shortest possible window, in most cases immediately. In cases where it was impossible to dispose of the issue immediately, the time span within which the issue would be resolved along with a ticket number in print were issued to the applicant.

As of 20th February, 2022 - 96.3 percent of all applications have been disposed of. 11 Percent of all applications were disposed of at the camps while another 45 percent were disposed of within a week.

OUR INVOLVEMENT

The Data Analytics team at PDAG worked closely with the IT department of the state to help design and develop a ticketing system as well as a comprehensive dashboard for concurrent monitoring and data driven decision making. This helped in enabling accountability and transparency in this massive public service delivery campaign. The Policy Advisory team at PDAG also worked closely with the Chief Minister's Office and the Office of the Chief Secretary, Government of Jharkhand to identify the schemes and work areas which could be part of the campaign as well as the calendar for the 45-day panchayat wise camps. The Strategic Communications team also advised the Information and Public Relations Department (IPRD) in

conceptualisation of an Information, Education and Communications (IEC) campaign and helped design outreach collaterals including hoardings, posters, TV, radio and newspaper advertorials, and social media posts. All these efforts ensured that information about the initiative was available with the rural population including the dates when the camps would be organised at their nearest panchayats. This was essential so as to prevent wage loss of the applicants.

During the initiative the Data Analytics team keenly monitored the daily progress to ensure the promise of last mile service delivery was being met, and its progress regularly reported to the Chief Minister's and Chief Secretary's Office. Upon completion of the initiative the team also supported the IT department with high frequency preliminary data analysis and its outreach to other government departments.

CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

This initiative has been an excellent exercise and a learning experience in PDAG's welfare-centric and citizen-centric approach to public policy. This initiative is not only important within the context of Jharkhand but also as a larger public service delivery programme at the national level across states that face similar challenges. It also helps to amplify the welfare state approach that the governments across the globe, especially in developing countries with low digital literacy and poor internet penetration could adapt according to their local challenges. It helps showcase what a *Phygital* mode of public service delivery should look like in a world suffering from the post-pandemic digital divide. We look forward to engaging consistently with prospective partners to map the efficacy and impact of this unique initiative and take it to the next level, at more unexplored geographies.

