

## Advocacy paper for Panchayat engagement in agriculture, Jharkhand

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### Strengthening Panchayat Action for Community Empowerment (SPACE)

PRADAN in collaboration with Anode Governance Lab

November 2019

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*"I believe that working models with stakeholder groups and panchayat raj agencies need much greater attention. Land scarcity is going to be perhaps the single greatest constraint to Indian development. Local bodies are the repositories of what are call Common resources.*

*...For land development, access to water, technology and markets, three kinds of institutions are being talked about and experimented, namely, the private sector, stakeholder institutions such as Cooperatives and Producer Associations and the Panchayats"<sup>1</sup>*

### **Yogendra K Alagh, Noted Economist and Former Union Minister, Government of India**

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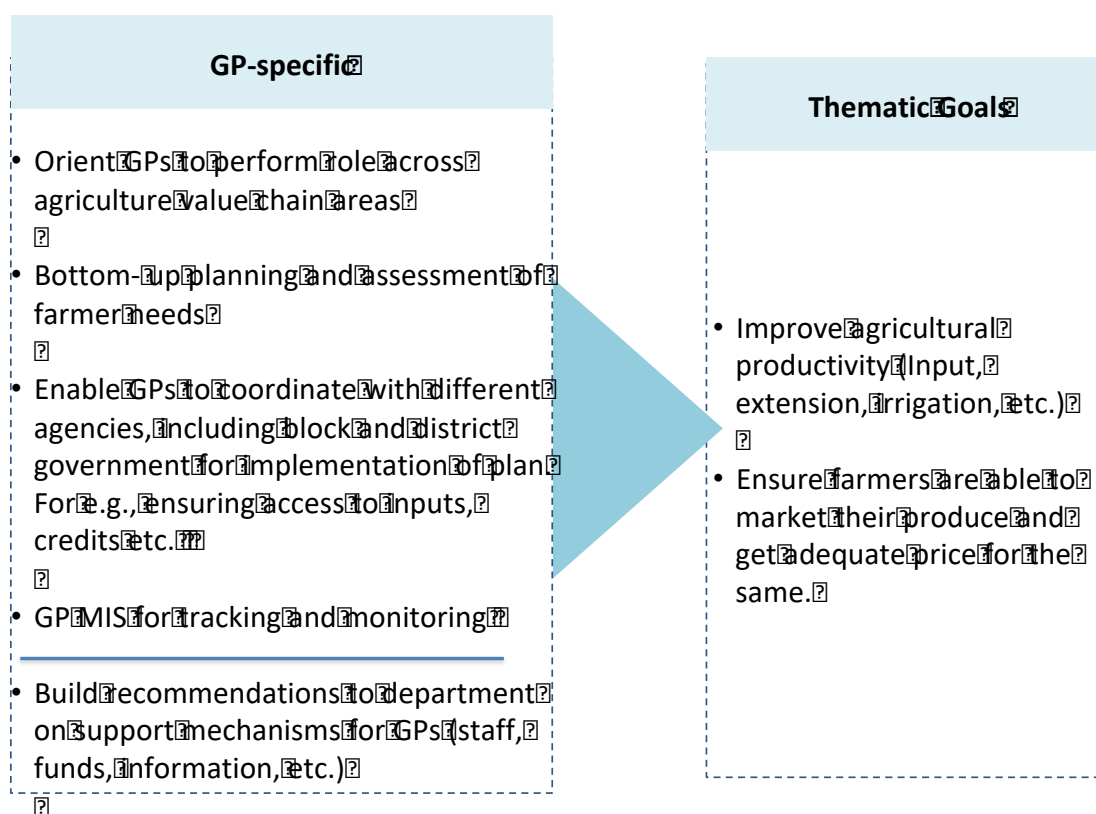
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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.pradan.net/images/news/prof\\_ykalagh.pdf](http://www.pradan.net/images/news/prof_ykalagh.pdf)

## A. Key Objectives for GPs' engagement in Agriculture

The objectives behind our efforts to strengthen GP's engagement in agriculture can be categorized into 2: Firstly, to strengthen the institutional capacity and mechanisms for GP to engage in Agriculture, which involves helping the GP understand its role in this function, develop the context in which it can intervene through developing a farmer database, build coordination mechanism and develop planning and monitoring systems through MIS. Secondly, which is an outcome of the first, to help the GP focus on core thematic goals: Enable farmers to improve productivity and incomes through better availability of inputs, extension and training, irrigation facilities as well as access to markets. (Refer Figure 1)

Figure 1: Objectives behind strengthening GP's engagement in Agriculture



## B. Introduction

Jharkhand state with 78% of the total population living in rural areas is largely dependent on agriculture and allied activities<sup>2</sup>. Agriculture is the primary income generating activity. Besides providing for the livelihood of farmers and laborer's, the agricultural sector also addresses food security<sup>3</sup>. *Agriculture productivity depends on several factors like availability and quality of agriculture inputs – seeds and fertilizers, water, land, access to agriculture credit and crop insurance, assurance of remunerative prices for agricultural produce, and storage and marketing, infrastructure etc.* We believe Gram Panchayats (GPs), as institutions of local governments, can

<sup>2</sup> Jharkhand State Agriculture Development Plan 2008-09 to 2011-12, NABARD consultancy services, Ranchi

<sup>3</sup> State of Agriculture in India, PRS, Tanvi Deshapande March 2017

play a key role in enabling reach of agriculture services to farmers. However, there are institutional gaps and lack of capacities, which hinder GPs to perform this role. To address these issues of institutional gaps and to build capacities in GPs, Pradan with its knowledge partner Anode Governance Lab piloted the SPACE (Strengthening Panchayat Actions for Community Empowerment) project in 16 GPs ('beacon panchayats') across 3 districts (Gumla, Hazaribagh and Koderma) in the state of Jharkhand. The foundational processes are based on the Gram Panchayat Organisation Development (GPOD) framework, which focus on strengthening organizational capacity of Gram Panchayats to be able to deliver their different mandates, as per the functions devolved by the State.

The rest of the document describes our approach and steps towards enabling agriculture sector through local Gram Panchayats, issues emerging during implementation and recommendations based out of the learnings from the field over 2 years of intervention.

### C. Legal analysis: JPR ACT, 2001 and Notifications

In order to operationalize the intervention, Anode Governance Lab conducted an in-depth analysis of the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj (JPR) Act, 2001, and corresponding schemes, rules and notifications relating to the devolution to panchayats<sup>4</sup> which included notifications related to Agriculture and Sugarcane Development Department (*Notification dated 25.10.2012*).

Figure 2 describes the key mandate of Gram Panchayats, as per Section 75, JPR Act, 2001, as well as the as per the notification by the Department of Agriculture

**Figure 2: Mandate of GPs in Agriculture, Jharkhand (JPR Act, 2001, Notification dt. 25.10.2012)**

<p><b>JPR Act, 2001, Section 75</b></p> <p>(2) Agriculture, including Agriculture Extension:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Execution of plan for development of agriculture and horticulture;</li> <li>(ii) Executions of plans for development of wasteland;</li> <li>(iii) Development and maintenance of grazing lands and preventing their un authorized alienation and use.</li> </ul> <p>(3) Assisting the Government and the Panchayat Samiti in land development, land reform and land conservation works</p> <p>(4) Implementation of minor irrigation, water management and water coverage development plans</p> <p>(5) Animal husbandry, dairy and poultry</p> <p>(6) Fisheries - Implementation of scheme for development of fisheries in village(s),</p> <p>(7) Social and farm forestry</p>	<p><b>Notification dt. 25.10.2012, Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperatives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Assessment of agriculture-related activities</b>, such as the requirement of seeds and their distribution, assessment of fertilizers and their distribution, procurement of food grains and their storage, distribution of other agricultural raw material/ machinery, as well as <b>monitoring/ observation of successful implementation</b> of other agricultural work.</li> <li>• <b>Selection of eligible beneficiaries</b> for successful implementation of agricultural work.</li> <li>• Ensuring <b>availability of agricultural loans</b> for farmers and distributing farmer credit cards etc.</li> <li>• Organizing successful district/ block/ Panchayat level publicity and <b>promotion/ exhibition/ workshops</b> etc.</li> <li>• Encouraging farmers to get <b>crop insurance</b> and ensure its timely payment.</li> </ul>
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While the above notifications delegate powers to the panchayats related to agriculture, these are inadequate to function effectively in the agriculture and interrelated sectors to accomplish the vast mandated functions of the JPR Act, 2001. This is because agriculture is closely intertwined with other functions such as Minor irrigation – infrastructure, animal husbandry, dairy and poultry- allied activities / non-farm activities, land development and land

<sup>4</sup> Report on Legal Framework and Devolution Status in Jharkhand, Anode Governance Lab  
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conservation-land holdings (small/marginal farmer’s identification). Figure 3 provides the status of notifications related to other linked functions.

**Figure 3: Notifications issued by the respective departments w.r.t to key functions under JPR Act 2001**

Sr. No	Key functions under JPR Act, 2001: Agriculture and related functions	Notification(s) issued
1	Agriculture	Yes
2	Minor Irrigation and watershed development	Yes
3	Animal Husbandry, dairy and poultry	Yes
4	Land development & land conservation	No
5	Markets & fairs	No
6	Khadi, village and cottage industries	No
7	Pisciculture	No

As seen in Figure 2, although the JPR Act enlists various key functions and activities, notifications have been issued only by three departments: agriculture, minor irrigation and animal husbandry, dairy and poultry. While the GPs have been given a vast mandate, in the absence of notifications from other departments, panchayats struggle for role clarity.

Additionally, while the functions have been devolved, funds and functionaries required for implementation of the functions are not devolved, leaving panchayats rather disempowered to deliver these functions.

#### **D. Intervention methodology: Sectoral engagement within Gram Panchayat Organisation Development (GPOD) Framework**

GPOD Framework intervenes at the systemic level and works on strengthening key components of the GP organization, i.e., vision, strategies, structures, processes, incentive mechanisms and planning, which provide the foundational capacities in GPs for better services and governance to citizens across different functions. (For details, refer to GPOD Process Document)

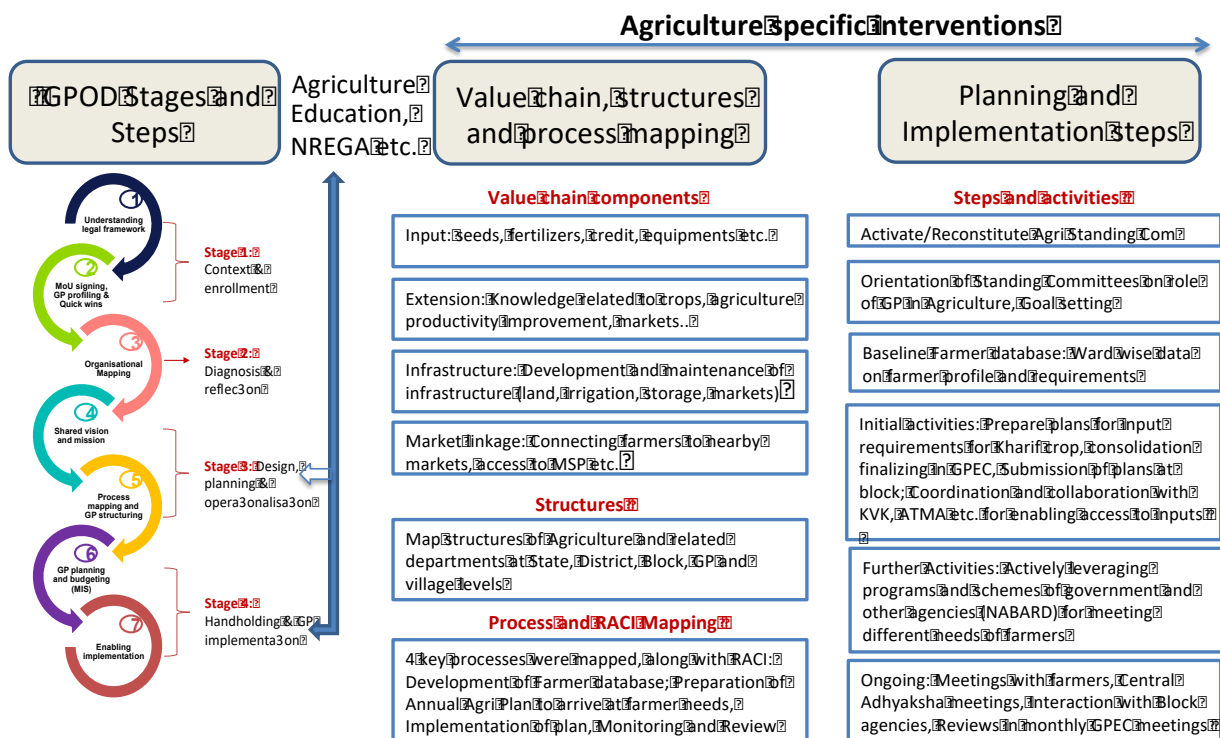
During the visioning stage, an exercise was done with ward members and citizens of the panchayat as to how their ‘*adarsh*’ panchayat should look like in the future. Out of this visioning exercise, one of the key focus areas, which the participants wanted to improve, was to improve agriculture and livelihoods of their farmers.

For each sector to be delivered by the GPs, following steps were followed (Refer Figure 4).

1. Identify value chain covering key activities required for effective performance of the function. For e.g., the key value chain components for agriculture are: Inputs, Extension, Infrastructure and Markets.
2. Process and RACI mapping, to detail key activities and roles for delivery of the value chain components.

3. Mapping structures: To map existing structures related to the function.
4. Planning and Implementation steps in the GPs: Once the processes and structures were in place, the project focused on handholding GPs towards planning and implementation

Figure 4: Intervention methodology



The rest of the section details each of the specific steps in agriculture function.

## Value chain, structures and process mapping

### D.1. Value Chain Components related to Agriculture

Value chain components are identified such that each component adds a specific value to the overall delivery of the function, in this case, the agriculture function.

**Access to quality inputs:** good quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides etc. are necessary for agriculture productivity. **Access to crop Insurance,** access to format credit (for which clear land records are required), all constitutes inputs for agriculture.

**Infrastructure and storage facilities:** Inadequate irrigation leads to farmers sowing only one crops, and inadequate storage facilities increase the risk of crop losses.

**Extension and training:** Knowledge about modern techniques of farming, water harvesting, irrigation methods, as well as that related to government programs and schemes are required for farmers to be able to leverage resources and information available.

**Market linkage:** Farmers have to arrange for their produce to be transported from the farms to the market, which adds to transport and fuel cost. Lack of access to markets and involvement of middleman is another issue which leads to farmers selling their produce at low costs.

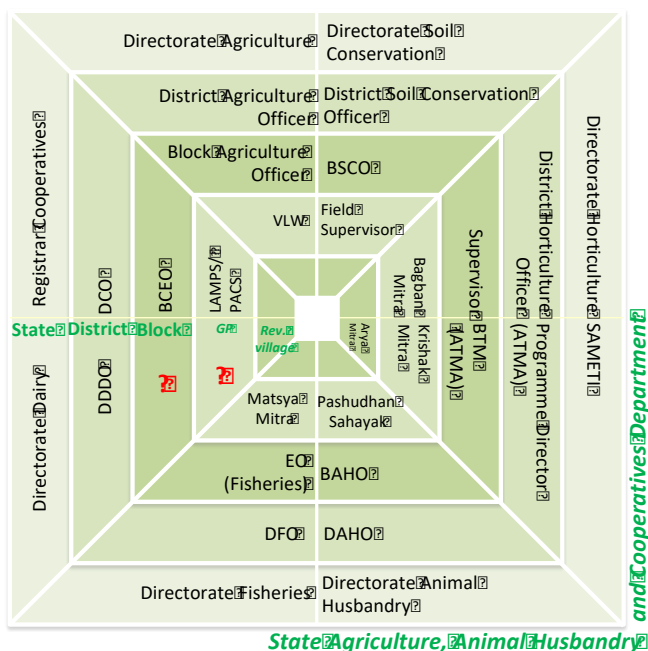
Figure 5: Value chain components for Agriculture



## D.2. Structures mapping

With the purpose of understanding roles of different stakeholders for GPs to coordinate with, the structure of the Agriculture department was mapped across all levels: State, District, Block, GP and village (Refer Figure 5).

Figure 6: Structure of State Agriculture, Animal husbandry and Cooperatives department, Government of Jharkhand



The Standing Committee structure of the GPs in Jharkhand, and particularly role of Agriculture Standing committee was also mapped. As per Government of Jharkhand’s notification dated, 6th May 2011, Agriculture is a part of Standing Committee for Agriculture, cooperatives, public estates and industry related, fisheries, sports. However, the notification does not detail any role for this committee. Therefore, we have derived GP Standing Committee’s role from the notification dt. 25.10.2012 from Department of Agriculture, AH and Cooperatives (Refer Figure 2)

### D.3. Process and RACI mapping

Four key processes were mapped, while simultaneously mapping the structures and roles for different activities. Roles of each stakeholder were understood and mapped following the RACI<sup>5</sup> methodology, which seeks to understand and distinguish between those who are accountable (A), the final approving authority, and those who play supporting roles, such as those who are responsible (R) for completion of the task, those who should be consulted (C), i.e., their advice should be sought (subject matter experts etc.) and finally, those who should be informed/kept up to date (I) on the progress. Accountabilities for many issues faced by farmers, such as delay in distribution of government-sponsored inputs, inadequate infrastructure etc. are not clearly laid down. The four key processes mapped are:

1. Development of Farmer database to understand and track current status and needs of individual farmers;
2. Preparation of Annual Agri Plan to arrive at farmer needs,
3. Implementation of plan,
4. Monitoring and Review

Each of the processes are described in the ensuing pages with the following details: Activities involved, RACI structures, opportunities and challenges.

#### **Process 1: Development of Farmer database to understand and track current status and needs of individual farmers** (Suggested process, as it does not exist at the GP level in the present context)

Processes	Village	GP	Block	District	State
Collection/Collation of Farmer database*	R:Arya Mitra	A*:GP SC/Portfolio Head R:Sachiv R:Krishi Mitra	R:BTM, BAO, Sup-Hort, SCO, Single Window, Revenue Department	C:DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	
Triangulation of data collated by various departments	R:GS SC	A*:GP SC/Portfolio Head R:Sachiv			

\* Gram Panchayat to take responsibility for consolidating a Farmer data base at the GP level, either through primary data collection or through accessing existing data at different levels, as the case maybe.

<sup>5</sup> Responsibility, Accountability, Collaboration and Information

Issues related to this process:

- GP Standing Committees and their Adyakshas exist primarily on paper. There has been no orientation/training for these bodies/individuals
- There is no farmer database in the department at the detail of village/GP level. Planning unit of Agriculture department is cluster (farmland area) and not HH or farmer specific.
- Land rights issues may come in the way of data collection for example, in Basia. However, precise landholding information may not be required till a later stage when farmer applies for a scheme

Opportunities that can be leveraged

- GDP exercise in panchayats, especially the 2014-15 Yojana Banao Abhiyan (YBA) conducted in-depth household survey. This data could be leveraged to build the farmer database.
- With government plans for moving to Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), there is ongoing effort to register farmers to enable access to schemes. This effort/data can be leveraged.

## Process 2: Preparation of Annual Agriculture Plan to consolidate farmer needs

Processes	Village	GP	Block	District	State
Preparation of annual agriculture plans of profiled farmers	R-Arya Mitra C-VOLC	A:GPSC/ Portfolio Head R:Sachiv R:Krishi Mitra	C-BTM	C-DAO	I-stage agencies to be informed
Identification of resources (financial, technical), alignment between bottom-up and state/district's top-down plans	C-Arya Mitra	R:GPSC/ Portfolio Head R:Krishi Mitra	R-BTM, BAO, Sup-Hort, BSCO, Single Window	A*-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	C-State agencies, including Tribal Dev Commission
Finalization of beneficiaries list	R:Gram Sabha C:VO/LC	A:GPEC R:GPSC/ Portfolio Head	C-BTM, BAO, Sup-Hort, BSCO, Single Window	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	
Implementation plan for areas not covered under schemes	R:GPSC C:VO/LC	A:GPSC/ Portfolio Head	C-BTM, BAO, Sup-Hort, BSCO, Single Window	C-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	

\* While the accountability of identification of resources for agriculture plan prepared by the GP lies with the District departments, other agencies, including the GP Standing Committee (GPSC) should have key responsibilities for the same

Issues related to the process:



- Presently there is no bottom- up planning; There are only targets set by State Dept. (Schemes/ Districts/ clusters/ crops)
- GPs have limited understanding and involvement in agricultural planning
- Very little interaction with agriculture and related departments
- No funds allocated to GPs for agriculture

Opportunities that can be leveraged:

- While not followed through exhaustively, intensive planning was done under YBA
- Micro level planning done by Livelihoods Committees of CBOs: skills and data may be leveraged

### Process 3: implementation of Agriculture Plan

Processes		Village	GP	Block	District	State
Inputs	Ensure availability of inputs as per Annual Agri Plan	R: Arya Mitra	R: GPSC/Portfolio Head, R: Sachiv R: Krishi Mitra R: LAMPS/PACS	A: BTM, BAO, Sup-Hort, BSCO, R R: Single Window	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	
Extension	Ensure farmers have required knowledge related to agricultural productivity improvement, markets, etc.	R: Arya Mitra	R: Krishi Mitra R: GPSC/Portfolio Head	A: BTM R: Single Window	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	
Infrastructure	Increase amount of land under cultivation (fallow land, etc)	R: Arya Mitra C: VOIC	R: Krishi Mitra R: GPSC/Portfolio Head	A: BTM, BAO, Sup-Hort, BSCO, R	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	
	Development of irrigation, storage, markets infrastructure	R: Arya Mitra C: VOIC	R: Krishi Mitra R: GPSC/Portfolio Head	A: Sup-Hort, BSCO, BAO, WRD, Minor Irrgn Dept, PPMC	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	
	Inspection and maintenance of existing infrastructure	R: Arya Mitra C: VOIC	A: GPSC/Portfolio Head R: Krishi Mitra R: LAMPS/PACS	R: Sup-Hort, BSCO, BAO, WRD, Minor Irrgn Dept, PPMC, BCEO		
Marketing	Connect farmers to nearby markets or other buyers for better price	R: Arya Mitra	R: Krishi Mitra R: GPSC/Portfolio Head	A: BTM, BAO, Sup-Hort, BSCO, BCEO R: Single Window	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DCO	
	Enabling MSP of farmers, Registration, Sales and Crediting to bank accounts	R: Arya Mitra C: VOIC	R: Krishi Mitra R: GPSC/Portfolio Head	A: CEO R: Single Window	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DCO	I: Directorate of Agri

Note: This is the first level process mapping for implementation of Agriculture plan. Each of the processes need to be mapped as per GP requirements, such as Farmer registration, Claiming insurance etc.

Issues related to the process

- Implementation related issues persist across the value chain. For e.g., Lack of staff at the local level, especially for training and day-to-day support to farmers; Delays in dissemination of benefits, esp. inputs; Lack of infrastructure related to agriculture, esp., storage and market facilities
- GPs are typically not involved in any aspects related to implementation of schemes

Opportunities that can be leveraged

Single Window System (See Figure 7) may help GPs access schemes for its farmers in selection of suitable Krishi Mitras aligned to GP, Farmer Registration Process and DBT needs to be tapped

**Figure 7: Single Window concept: An overview**

- Single window concept has been introduced by the Department of Agriculture, and presently (December 2017) covers around 70 blocks in Jharkhand. It is to be set up at the cost of Rs. 15L (Rs.7.5L one time and Balance recurring costs. The department plans to extend Single Window to remaining 200 blocks during 2018-19.
- This facility is to enable access to resources from the various departments under the State Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperatives Department in one location.
- Single windows can be instituted and run by an ICAR (Indian Council for Agriculture Research) certified organisation such as KVK and KRIBHCO as well as CSOs such as Vikas Bharti in Basia block.
- They are to offer following services to farmers: Soil testing, Soil Oil Health Cards, Kisaan Credit Card, Inputs procurement such as seeds, fertilisers etc., Submitting applications for mechanisation equipment's.
- As per State guidelines, block level officials from each department are to be present in the Single Window office on the following particular days of the week:
  1. Monday- Soil Conservation Department
  2. Tuesday- Agriculture department and ATMA
  3. Wednesday- Dept. of Animal Husbandry
  4. Thursday- Dept. of Animal husbandry and Dept. of Fisheries
  5. Friday- KVK, Dept. of Agriculture and ATMA
  6. Saturday- Dept. of Cooperatives

#### Process 4: Monitoring and Review

Processes	Village	GP	Block	District	State
Preparing MIS to track progress against plan, Address grievances, issues on a continuous basis	R: GS C: VOLC	A: GPSC/ Portfolio Head R: Krishi Mitra	R: Sup-Hort, BSCO, BAO; WRD, Minor Irrgn Dept, APMC, CEO	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	
Reviewing progress in monthly GPEC meetings	R: Ward members, GS	A: GPEC/ Portfolio Head R: Krishi Mitra R: Sachiv C: Pragya Kendra	I: Sup-Hort, BSCO, BAO; WRD, Minor Irrgn Dept, APMC, CEO	I-DAO, PD (ATMA), DHO, DSCO	I: Relevant State departments

#### Issues related to the process

- Data is scattered. No MIS presently designed for Agriculture at the Village and GP levels
- Inadequate infrastructure to house the data and who will update it on a regular basis
- Presently, Standing committees and Heads of Committees are primarily on paper

#### Opportunities that can be leveraged

- Krishi Mitras, who are to be appointed by GP, are presently appointed by ATMA. GPs can correct this, and appoint suitable candidates. There can be multiple Krishi Mitras in a GP

#### Planning and Implementation steps are covered in Section F.

## E. Summary of issues: Key factors hindering GP's engagement in Agriculture

### Overall issues

While the Department of Agriculture, AH and Cooperatives has issued a notification laying down role of panchayats dt. 25.10.2012 (Refer Figure 1), it does not devolve functionaries and funds to implement functions defined. In the absence of this, the devolved functions remain on paper and GP cannot be held accountable for their implementation. Most issues hindering GP's engagement are related to defunct structures, manifested as non-activation of Standing Committees, lack of manpower, and/or lack of involvement of GP in decision making at other tiers of the government. In the absence of these, there are none or very few platforms where GPs can actively engage in agriculture related discussions and decisions.

- Within the GP: Standing Committee for Agriculture, cooperatives, public estates and industry related, fisheries, sports is the committee responsible for agriculture. They exist largely on paper (similar situation for all Standing Committees) and no meetings are held.
- With the farmers: Panchayats are best placed to deal with farmer issues, as they are the closest government, as they are mandated to look after common properties, and also as many members of the panchayat are farmers themselves. However, they do not have resources to organize campaigns, hold farmer meetings and funds to address issues.
- Engagement with the department: There are little or no efforts by department to build awareness of the Agriculture Standing committees on schemes and programs of the government, which can be leveraged for farmers. GP is not a recipient to any department MIS.
- Interface of village level agriculture staff with GPs: As per the 25.10.10 notification by Department of agriculture and sugarcane development, while there are functions devolved to the GP, there are no functionaries or funds devolved. Therefore the administrative accountability of all village level staff such as the Krishak Mitra and Jan sewaks lie with the Panchayat Samiti or Zilla Parishad.

Given that the local structures do not really work, management of agriculture is mostly top-down, leading to many issues on ground

- Planning unit of Agriculture department is cluster (farmland area) and not HH or farmer specific. There is no farmer database in the department at the detail of village/GP level.
- There is lack of clarity on access to land and credit; and also eligibility norms for access programs and schemes of the government. Presently, most women farmers do not have land titles
- There is no bottom-up planning; There are only targets set by State Dept. (Schemes/ Districts/ clusters/ crops)
- Implementation related issues persist across the value chain. For e.g., Lack of staff at the local level, especially for training and day-to-day support to farmers; Delays in dissemination of benefits, esp. inputs; Lack of infrastructure related to agriculture, esp., storage and market facilities

- Data is scattered. No MIS presently designed for Agriculture at the Village and GP levels. Even if GPs are made responsible, there is inadequate infrastructure to house the data and who will update it on a regular basis

## F. Planning and Implementation steps in the GPs

With the clear diagnosis of structural failures, our implementation steps primarily focus on constituting/ reviving structural mechanisms, which have led to encouraging results:

1. **Activating Agriculture standing committees:** Based on the status of the Agriculture Standing Committee, it was either reconstituted (if members were not interested to engage actively in the function) or activated. Each GP identified the Adhyaksha of the Agriculture Standing committee, based on his/her interest, availability and knowledge.

2. **Orientation and goal setting (February 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2019):** The understanding of GPs in agriculture had been primarily to enable farmers to acquire inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, etc. Based on the process and RACI mapping, exercise, teams encouraged GPs to work on the key value chain components: Inputs, Infrastructure, Extension and Markets (Figure 4). To this purpose, an orientation workshop was held where Agriculture Standing Committee members from 11 GPs in Koderma and Hazaribagh participated. This workshop focused on building capacity of Agriculture SC members:

- Understanding of existing stakeholders, processes, GP's role and challenges
- Need for active coordination with government departments to access their programs and schemes for the key value chain components required for agriculture
- Identification of GP specific broad goals in agriculture to be discussed and passed in their following GPEC meeting.

While the broad goals were identified by each GP (**Refer Annexure 2: Panchayat wise Agriculture Goals, Feb 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018**), many of them were intentions such as 'Supporting poorest farmers in the GP', which needed to be further broken down into specific goals. This exercise was to be followed through in individual GPs by the respective Standing Committees and their Adhyakshas.

3. **Creation of forum for central meeting of Standing Committee Adhyakshas:** This forum was created for the purpose peer to peer exchange and learning, as well as a platform for capacity building on the agriculture thematic area. This included understanding of existing stakeholders, processes, GP's role and challenges, methods to coordinate with government departments to access their programs and schemes.

4. **Building coordination mechanisms within the GP, with the block and Department of Agriculture:** The forums which we have started to nurture: The Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee (GPCC) where all the department functionaries in the GP and the panchayat Mukhia and members meet to discuss and resolve local issues; Block level Coordination committee. However, specific coordination mechanisms with the Department of Agriculture, though desired, could not be initiated during the course of the project.

**5. Data collection for Farmer database:** The starting point for the GP is to understand the current status and needs of the farmers in different wards. This, we believe, is a key requirement for targeted planning and addressing farmer requirements. To work towards this, several mechanisms to collect data were tried during the course of the project, which are detailed in **Annexure 1**. The objective of data collection was to collect ward specific data on different categories of farmers, their plans for Kharif season, and hence the need for seeds, fertilizers and pesticides, as well as trainings required.

Data collection is to help GPs engage in targeted planning as well as exploring opportunities towards customizing agriculture plan of farmers belonging to different categories, in consultation with them. For example, farmers with high income may need the support for credit and marketing whereas the farmers with less than 4 months of food security may need a different type of support, such as interventions on productivity enhancement of paddy, insurance etc. Also, GP would be able to prioritize on whom they would work at this stage etc.

**Figure 8: Excerpt of data collected in Pindarkon GP**

GP: Pindarkon		Village: Pindarkon		
Data collected by: Dinesh Rai: Ward member				
Farmer category	Land size	Average Income (Annual)	Food security from land (no of months)	No of families
Category 1	Greater than and equal 5acre	375000	12	5
Category 2	2.5-5 acre	262500	9	7
Category 3	1.5-2.5 acre	90000	4	40
Category 4	Less than, equal to 5 acre	37500	3	45
Category 5	No land			30

## **6. Planning and MIS**

There is need for specific goals and activities, with clarity on responsibilities and timelines, for the GP to be able to track its activities on a regular basis. A slice of Agriculture MIS is displayed in Figure 8. However, most GPs have not been able to institute this and it requires a closer handholding.

Figure 9: Excerpt of Project MIS for agriculture

Goals/ Activities + Unit of measurement	Target for the GP as a whole	By when	Budget reqd. if any (In Rs.)	Sources of funds (FFC, Department, etc.)	Status	Remarks
					Month: June	
<b>Structure and Coordination mechanisms (Standing Committees, etc.)</b>						
पंचायत के कृषिसमितिको स्थापति - SC Adhyaksha, Mukhia, Up Mukhia and 1 more member	Established		NA			
Whether monthly GPSC meetings held, along with Krishak Mitra, CBO Representative (Y/N)	Monthly meeting	Monthly	NA		Y	
Sharing plan with Block/ Department	Kharif plan	First week of June, 2018	NA			
Bi-monthly meeting with dept to share progress/challenges	Once in 2 months	Bi-monthly	NA			
<b>Baseline data collection</b>						
D@GR App	1219 HHs	Sep 18	20000	FFC Contingency	25	
Ward wise farmer data	14 wards	20th June, 2018	NA			
Identification of most marginalised and poor farmers in the GP (ward wise)	List of marginalized farmers		NA			
Identification of farmers for Training	List of farmers for training		NA			

## 7. Implementation of plans

In order to fulfill the mandated listed in the Act as well as the notification by the department, the GPSC as well as the GPEC has to be supported in a structured manner. This included ensuring the above steps listed: regular Standing committee meetings, goal setting, tracking implementation of goals through MIS, and ensuring joint adhyaksha meetings take place. The joint adhyaksha meetings were also used as forums for capacity building and technical training. Specific support offered to the Standing committee adhyakshas has been in handholding meetings and enabling collaboration with government / private entities like seed companies, KVK, ATMA or agriculture department; developing data collection formats and helping track implementation versus plans.

### G. Initial achievements in GPs

**Structure related:** Constitution and activation of Standing Committees and regular conduct of Central agriculture adhyaksha committee meetings are the key achievements of the project (Refer Figure 10). This requires intensive support and handholding to the GPs.

Figure 10: Agriculture structures and its status

Structures	Desirable	Achieved
Constitution and activation of agriculture standing committee	All 16 GPs	Constituted/ Activated in 15 GPs
Nomination and appointment of agriculture adhyaksha	15 GPs	Appointment of adhyaksha in 13 GPs
Regular central agriculture adhyaksha meeting (constituted in 11 GPs of Koderma and Hazaribagh)	14 meetings 1 per month	Meetings held (Sept 2018- Oct 2019) Hazaribagh: 9/14 Koderma: 8 / 14

With the purpose of creating a forum for peer exchange and learning, a joint / central level meeting of adhyakshas of agriculture standing committees of 5 GPs in Hazaribagh and 6 GPs in Koderma was formed, and held at least once in two months. We noted that regular interaction among Adhyakshas brought confidence in each member, to operate and take decisions independently

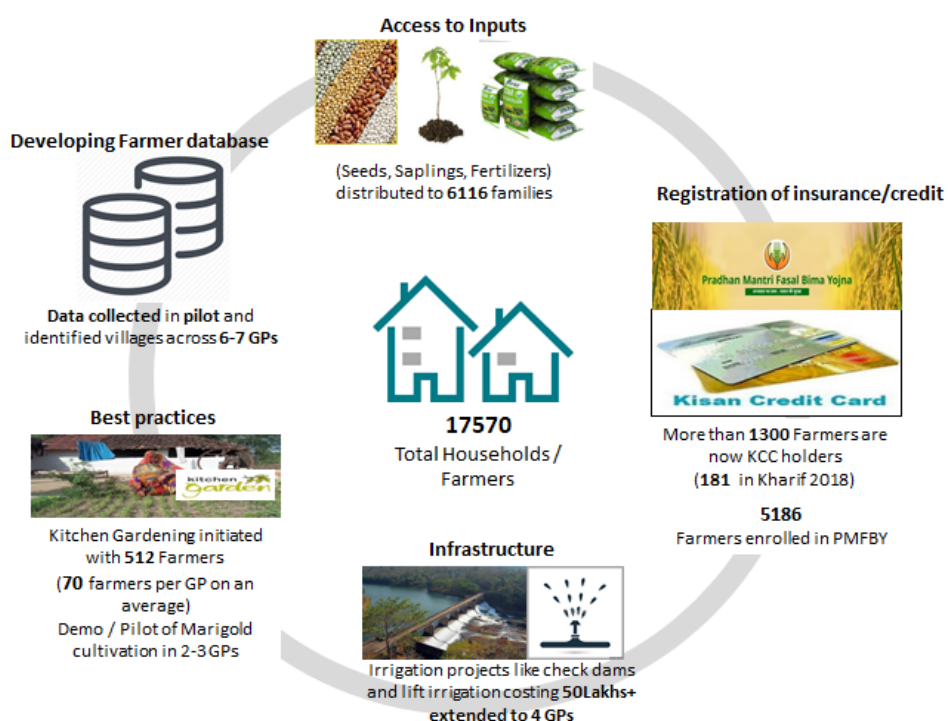
**Service delivery related:** Due to the activation and strengthening of structures, the panchayats could actively engage in agriculture and had significant achievements, which are listed here:

- **Access to inputs (seeds, fertilizers, machinery):** Bottom up Planning and estimation of agriculture related inputs for Rabi and Kharif, shared with block and agriculture department; Linkage with ATMA, seed companies for procurement and distribution for seeds and fertilizers; Ensuring timely access to seeds to most farmers in the GP from department or through collective planning and procurement.
- **Registration for insurance and credit:** Farmers registered for insurance under Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bhima Yojana (PMFBY) and availed credits under Kisan credit card (KCC).
- **Agriculture Infrastructure:** Selection of sites, supervision of construction, Operations and maintenance of Minor Irrigation schemes; Agriculture infrastructure being embedded in GPDP/MGNREGA. 4 GPs from Hazaribagh have initiated and completed few projects like Check dam, lift irrigation, construction of power sub-station to supply electricity to the irrigation projects. Each GP has managed to leverage funds ranging from 50Lakh to 1 crore.
- **Access to Extension and Training:** Promotions, Workshops, Trainings, Demos and Exposure visits organized by GPs; Extension worker (Krishak Mitra) working in coordination with GP. Trainings have been organized for farmers in collaboration with KVK, ATMA and few private organizations like Semina Agro Pvt.Ltd.
- **Developing farmer database to enable targeted planning:** Data has been collected ward wise in few panchayats and as pilot in one or two villages of some panchayats. Data to be categorized into as per size of land holding to prepare efficient plans.

- **Best practices:** Collective effort on 70 kitchen gardens per village. Marigold cultivation as a pilot in two GPs. Local farmer market (Rural Haats) at Panchayat level has been established in two GPs. GPs to introduce bye-laws soon.
- **Maintenance of common resources (land, water etc.):** Maintenance of commons: Grazing land, pastures, Ponds etc.; Bye-laws on sand mining in few GPs; Setting up local markets for farmers.

GP wise outcomes detailed out in **Annexure 3**.

**Figure 11: Achievements in Agriculture across 15 GPs, (Oct 2018 - Oct 2019)**



## H. Recommendations for the state

Panchayats as custodians of land and water resources can play a key role in supporting farmers in agriculture and allied activities. Through our engagement with GPs, they are starting to address some agriculture and farmer related issues. On basis of this experience, we are proposing our recommendations to the state, which if taken forward, will impact many GPs and enable them to positively contribute to increase incomes of farmers:

- Strengthen notification from the Department of Agriculture and AH and Cooperatives dt.25.10.12, with further clarity on functions across all value chain components, required funds and functionaries
- Other related departments to devise and issue empowering notifications for engagement of panchayats: such as land development and land conservation, markets and fairs, Khadi, village and cottage industries, Pisciculture, etc.



Key contents for supplementary notification by Department of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Cooperatives:

**Functions:**

**Current situation analysis through a Farmer Database at GP level:**

All panchayats to create an exhaustive database of all farmers in their jurisdiction, towards which certain funds and functionaries are to be ear marked for a one time data collection and annual review of data. Such as data will help the GPs identify needs of farmers in line with 25.10.12 notification.

**Bottom up planning:**

Panchayats should be the primary source of agriculture planning to ensure bottom up planning. For e.g., Consolidation of requirements of farmers across the four value chain components: inputs, infrastructure, extension and markets, needs to be done at the GP level, which can be aggregated at block, district and state levels. To enable this, panchayats need to supported on two counts: 1) To prepare cropping plans and consolidate needs of farmers, and 2) to propose linkage of government programs with the needs of farmers. For both these tasks, capacity of panchayats needs to be built through earmarked functionaries, knowledge of programs and schemes and prioritization methods.

**Agriculture MIS:**

An Agriculture MIS needs to be initiated at the GP level, which can be consolidated to enable inter-GP, inter-block and inter-district tracking as well as peer learning and coordination.

**Functionaries, including structural mechanisms to enable coordination and collaboration:**

Without functionaries and funds to implement devolved functions, they will always remain on paper and GPs will never be empowered to perform their mandated functions and powers.

It is understandable that the Agriculture department is constrained due to resources availability. It can, however, actively explore how the Mukhiyas, Adhyakshas and members of the Agriculture Standing Committee can be leveraged to drive some of their initiatives. In the beacon panchayats the Adhyakshas are playing an active role in helping farmers plan and access various programs of the government, and even procure collectively. The Education Department can co-opt the Adhyakshas into its workflow on specific identified initiatives. Specifically, we have the following recommendations related to strengthening functionaries for agriculture related activities:

- Department of Agriculture to design and implement ear marked program to strengthen Agriculture Standing Committees in GPs, especially its Adhyaksha.
- GP Standing Committee Adhyakshas to be formally a part of Department meetings at the Block and other tiers.
- All GP level staff of Agriculture and related departments to be hired in coordination with the GP. All GP level staff of Agriculture to report administratively to GP
- To enable Farmer data base formation and regular updating, one Agriculture related manpower to be ear marked for each GP.

**Funds:**

Panchayats have been leveraging funds from NREGA, Minor irrigation and other related departments, to develop agriculture related infrastructure. However, GPs do not have funds for activities such as coordination with farmers, database development and small trainings, events and experimentation. To enable panchayats to plan and implement these initiatives, we recommend GPs be allotted 'agriculture related' funds for development of farmer database, agriculture planning Kharif and Rabi, resources for inter panchayat meetings, farmer meetings and exposure visits, and travel within GP and to the block and district etc.

In addition, to allow panchayats to access the common pool of funds for this activity, the rules that govern utilization of the Finance Commission funds by panchayats, could be changed to allow panchayats to spend on agriculture related initiatives.