

CRISP

February 2024 Edition

MAASAM

Monthly Account of Achievements,
Successes and Memories

Content

ExpertSpeak

The Future of CSR in India

Mr. Sitaram Kunte (IAS Retd.)

Rural Women Entrepreneurship in Meghalaya: A Study

Dr. Minnette Ireen Passah

FellowSpeak

Major Developments in CRISP

CRISP in Action



ExpertSpeak

The Future of CSR in India



Mr. Sitaram Kunte (IAS Retd.)

Founding Member- CRISP
Former Chief Secretary- Maharashtra

Introduction:

Corporate Social Responsibility (hereinafter CSR) is making a significant impact on our country's development. In the Companies' Act 2013 a groundbreaking provision was made. Companies were required to allocate a minimum of 2% of their net profits over the preceding three years to CSR, and spend the said amount on livelihood, health, education and environment for the betterment of communities. Section 135 of the Companies' Act formalised CSR as a legal requirement, while its Schedule VII and the Companies (CSR Policy) Regulations 2014 provided the operational guidelines.

It has been ten years since then; which provides a good opportunity to look back and evaluate. To do that I will look into the following questions: what is the concept of CSR; what has been achieved in these ten years; what were the shortcomings; and how can CSR become better, going forward?

Background:

The opportunity to reflect on the aforesaid questions came to me during the 18th Annual CSR conference on the theme 'CSR and Exploring Evolution of ESG in the New World Economy' organised by the Institute of Directors in Mumbai on December 2023. The conference had panel discussions on various aspects of CSR, where experts and practitioners expressed their candid views. The deliberations of the conference are covered in the January 2024 issue of the Director Today Magazine, a publication of the Institute of Directors, India.

What is the concept of CSR?

In the public policy literature, inclusive growth concept is an essential part of the development strategy. Its aim to include those sections of the society that had thus far remained excluded from the mainstream of development.

CSR was "conceived as an instrument for integrating social, environmental and human development concerns in the entire value chain of corporate business"(Voluntary Guidelines on CSR 2009, Ministry of Corporate Affairs). This policy was further modified and presented as "National Voluntary Guidelines on Social, Environmental and Economic Responsibilities of Business 2011". Finally the concept of CSR found a place in the Companies' Act 2013. Now, I will deep dive into the questions that I set out to explore.



What has been achieved in the past ten years?

There have been numerous notable achievements.

1. CSR as a statutory concept is unique, when compared to most countries in the world. Participants (at the CSR Conference in Mumbai) from many developed countries expressed the view that their laws governing companies do not have such a provision. Most of them felt that this is a progressive legislation that enables the companies to think beyond profits and encourage them to look at the commitment to their communities in a more focused manner. In that sense, Indian laws stand out globally.
2. Large sums of additional money became available for social sector activities. According to the data available on the National CSR Portal, an estimated ₹150,000 crore was earmarked nationally by the companies for CSR in the seven years since the concept became operational. Of this amount, Maharashtra got nearly ₹52,000 crores in these ten years (more about it later).
3. Many companies have experimented with different approaches to better deliver better results for the communities that they cater. These different approaches provide useful experience and learning, particularly if the government was to decide on scaling up any of these interventions to the state or national level.
4. The encouraging performance of the Public Sector Undertakings (PSUs). Central PSUs collectively spend almost ₹4000 crores every year. Even though the bulk of this amount goes into areas of their operations, almost 250 PSUs have come forward to spend thematically on the Aspirational Districts Program of 'Niti Aayog', covering almost 100 backward districts. This is bound to have a salutary effect on the development of these districts.
5. During Covid-19 pandemic, the PM CARES Fund - PM's Citizen Assistance & Relief in Emergency Situations Fund was established. Schedule VII of the Companies' Act 2013 was amended to make donations from CSR to the said fund an eligible expenditure under CSR. Due to this, over a short span of time, much needed resources were mobilised to fight Covid. In a very short period after the amendment, the central PSUs contributed ₹4000 crores. This was helpful in managing Covid-19 effectively.
6. CSR funds have helped the companies to extend a helping hand to the communities who may be displaced or adversely affected by their activities, or with whom they interact on a daily basis, being in the vicinity of their establishments.

Thus the experience of the past ten years suggests that the provision for CSR enacted in 2013 has had a far reaching and beneficial impact on socio-economic

development. Many communities have directly benefited from CSR and a huge bank of experience and learning is now available for implementing some of the success stories at scale.

What were the shortcomings?

In the ten years, some limitations and shortcomings of CSR were also noticed. Any new experiment has its share of successes and failures. The purpose of examining the shortcomings is to draw lessons and improve things for the future.

1. Firstly, CSR spending has largely been localised in the areas where the companies have their establishments. As a result, more developed states were the largest beneficiaries of CSR spending. For instance, almost one third of the total CSR amount (₹52,000 crores) was spent in Maharashtra alone. While it is a matter of satisfaction for me as an ex-bureaucrat of the state, seen from the national perspective this would be a matter of concern. Ideally, CSR spending should be more evenly distributed across the country. Some policy interventions are necessary.
2. The second limitation, which is corollary of the first point is that there is hardly any CSR funding being directed towards the North East Areas as also our island territories, like the Andamans and Lakshadweep. Their unique problems could be addressed by the companies through innovative programs.
3. Thirdly, some company representatives pointed out (during the informal discussions at the conference) that as per current regulations, it is not possible for two or more companies to undertake and joint or syndicated efforts towards CSR. Many successful CSR projects can be conceived and implemented in collaboration and syndication, which perhaps under the current regulation is difficult.
4. Fourth, some candid company representatives (at the CSR conference) said that CSR becomes another form of taxation, and why was there a need for that when the companies already pay huge sums as taxes to the government. Moreover, they were apprehensive that in the course of time the government may increase the mandatory spending on CSR.
5. Finally, an issue came up about the CSR by the PSUs. Being Government companies, they do encounter some inertia as compared to the private sector when implementing CSR projects. In addition, there are murmurs about undue political influence, which make CSR project implementation fraught with some risks for the PSUs.

It is therefore necessary to understand these issues and take timely steps to make improvements to gain maximum advantage of CSR.

How can CSR become better, going forward?

Many points came up during the formal presentations and informal deliberations at the conference.

1. Firstly, it was felt that the present stipulation regarding the quantum of CSR funding is adequate and the government must resist any call for increasing CSR share beyond two percent of profits. This is a valid point. Companies pay taxes, too. In that sense they are contributing to nation building as taxpayers. In addition to that they are contributing to nation building through CSR as well. Creating more burdens on companies may turn out to be counter-productive. Thus CSR policy should remain stable in the coming future.
2. Secondly, there is a need to incentivise CSR spending beyond the area of influence of the company. Increasing CSR spending in North-East regions and island territories is necessary. At least, those companies that operate virtually and nationally should find ways to channel their CSR to these areas.
3. Thirdly, the company representatives strongly felt that there is the need to establish rules by which companies can jointly implement CSR projects in collaboration or through syndication. At least an enabling legal provision can be considered by the Government.
4. Fourthly, for better implementation of CSR, the companies must interact with local government authorities for designing and implementing projects. If any innovation or experiment is found successful, it is only the government that can scale up to a state level or all India level scheme and policy.



5. Fifthly, Governments must avoid the temptation to pool the CSR funds into any government controlled funds, unless there is a calamitous emergency. By and large the funds must be left in the hands of the companies and they should conceive, design and implement programs under CSR. The diversity of approaches and strategies and stories of success or failures will be very valuable for crafting robust development strategies for the future.
6. Lastly, it is also necessary that various CSR initiatives are properly documented in regard to the nature of problems identified, intervention designs, implementation strategies and success or failure. This documentation could provide valuable insights to the policy makers for designing schemes in the areas of health, education, environment and livelihood.

Conclusion:

The groundbreaking concept of CSR has produced positive results for our country. Every new experiment shows certain limitations and shortcomings. These will be addressed in due course of time. It is quite clear that the CSR concept has stabilised and will continue in the years to come. We can hope to see many successful projects implemented by the companies, and also some of these success stories becoming part of schemes and policies implemented on a larger scale by state and central governments. by the companies, and also some of these success stories becoming part of schemes and policies implemented on a larger scale by state and central governments.

Rural Women Entrepreneurship in Meghalaya: A Study



Dr. Minnette Ireen Passah

State Lead- Meghalaya
CRISP - Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies

Abstract

The study is regarding factors that prevent the emergence of a favourable entrepreneurship environment for women in Meghalaya, despite being a matrilineal society. The study uses descriptive and exploratory methods. The primary data was collected from the women Self Help Groups (SHGs) who own entrepreneurial ventures through structured interviews using a schedule with close-ended questions. Further, secondary data has been collected from related books, journals, websites, published books and articles. The study attempts to fill the gaps in evidence regarding the motivating factors encouraging women to become entrepreneurs, challenges and issues women entrepreneurs face and their awareness level of various government schemes that support them. The study findings will help policymakers make the policies and programs relating to women's entrepreneurship in Meghalaya more effective.

Introduction

The State of Meghalaya has numerous high potential entrepreneurship opportunities. These are presented by the region's natural and organic agriculture-horticulture products, healthy climate that enhances natural and eco-tourism opportunities, indigenous handloom and handicrafts, that can be tapped and used to a maximum extent in order to promote sustainable development. In addition, the social capital in the village communities lends itself to a number of high potential entrepreneurship opportunities. The Meghalaya Government has been concentrating on creating an environment that will support the state's social and economic development. (Meghalaya Prime Report, 2020). In order for Meghalaya to experience sustained growth, the state must quickly find a solution

to the problem of providing meaningful employment for a large number of aspirational youth who are prepared to enter the workforce. Unlike the developed countries, Meghalaya in particular lacks the Medium and Small Micro Enterprises, which are the backbone of economic growth and job creation. Hence, Entrepreneurship plays a major factor of economic development as it not only helps in earning one's own livelihood, but also provides various avenues of employment and hence contributes to the total GDP of a country (Mozammel.S, 2018).

More women are entering the business sector today and escaping the confines of traditional, gender-specific roles. In the last few decades, North East India has seen significant advancements in the promotion and development of entrepreneurship, and Meghalaya is no exception. For instance, women handle the majority of the handloom industry in Meghalaya, and the looms they use are designed with women in mind. Rural women possess the fundamental indigenous knowledge, abilities, resources, and potential to start and run their own businesses.

Rural development and entrepreneurship are now more intertwined than before. Institutions and individuals promoting rural development now see entrepreneurship as a strategic development that could accelerate the rural development process. Furthermore, institutions and individuals seem to agree on the urgent need to promote rural enterprises; development agencies see rural entrepreneurship as a huge employment potential; politicians see it as the key strategy to prevent rural unrest; farmers see it as an instrument for improving farm earnings; and women see it as an employment possibility near their homes which provides autonomy, independence and a reduced need for social support. To all these groups, however, entrepreneurship stands as a vehicle to improve



improve the quality of life for individuals, families and communities and to sustain a healthy economy and environment.

However, consideration needs to be given to the problems and challenges that contemporary women entrepreneurs face specifically. This study aims to provide a thorough picture of the factors that inspire women to start their own enterprises, the challenges they experience, and their awareness of the many government efforts that can support them in order to narrow the aforementioned gaps. After extensive related literature on the different objectives of the study, the study also considered the Push and Pull Factor theory of entrepreneurship as a theoretical framework to guide the present study.

Objectives of the study

- To find out the factors motivating women entrepreneurs in rural areas of Meghalaya.
- To study the challenges faced by rural women entrepreneurs in Meghalaya.

- To find out the awareness of the various Governmental schemes by rural women entrepreneurs.

Approach/Methodology of the Study

- Sample:** Snowball sampling procedure has been adopted for the study. First category includes 50 women SHGs entrepreneurs attending the Saras Fair held by NRLM from 22nd May-31st May 2023. The second category of sample included 50 SHGs women entrepreneurs suggested by the first group women SHGs Entrepreneurs.
- Methodology:** The study is based on exploratory research framework as it tries to explore the challenges faced by women entrepreneurship in rural Meghalaya. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected in order to justify the objectives of the study.
- Tools: Self-made** structured interview schedule with close ended questions have been used for collecting primary data for the present study.
- Methods and procedures:** Interview method has been adopted by the investigator to collect data from the respondents.

Analysis and Interpretation of Data:

a) Factors motivating the women to become entrepreneurs

Push Factors of Women Entrepreneurship	% of Yes Response	% of No Response	Total (%)
Death of breadwinner	11	89	100
Sudden fall in family income	100	-	100
Brings higher income	100	-	100
No other alternative for income	100	-	100
Permanent inadequacy of income	100	-	100
Job dissatisfaction	22	78	100
Family tradition	66	34	100
Loss of job due to Covid 19	20	80	100
Pull Factors Women Entrepreneurship			100
Need for achievement	100	-	100
Got recognition/ Social status	30	70	100
Use of talents	100	-	100
Use of technical skill	100	-	100
Economic independence	100	-	100
Personal satisfaction	100	-	100
Utilize free time	100	-	100

The table makes it very evident that women entrepreneurs are more motivated by pull factors to become entrepreneurs in rural areas of Meghalaya.

b) Challenges faced by women entrepreneurs

Entrepreneurship/Business-related Challenges			
Challenges In relation to:	Yes	No	Total (%)
Getting Finance/ funds for start-up a business	100	-	
Limited resources in expanding one's base in a stable manner	100	-	
Costly Raw Materials	70	30	100
Lack of Funds/Finance to Hire employees	90	10	100
Lack of Marketing	100	-	
Poor knowledge of the market	100	-	
Building strong network	100	-	
Lack of advertisement or publicity	100	-	
Geographical Location is far	100	-	
Mobility/travel to sell the product	100	-	
Social/Personal Challenges			
Lack of Family Support	25	75	100
The clash between work and domestic responsibilities	20	80	100
Balancing their personal life & entrepreneurial life	80	20	100
Gender Base Discrimination /male dominance	-	100	100
Limited freedom	36	64	100
Fear of failure	90	10	100
Lack of self-confidence	65	35	100
Lack of Related Field Experience/ Market Experience	74	26	100
Community/Society support not welcoming	-	100	100
Lack of Education	90	10	100
Technical Challenges			
Non-availability of Raw Material	100	-	100
Scarcity of Raw Material	80	20	100
Lack of Related Skills	100	-	100
Lack of Training	100	-	100
Lack of Technology/ Machine/ Infrastructure	100	-	100
Un-Skilled Group Members	100	-	100
Non-availability of skilled manpower	100	-	100
Inadequate building and space	100	-	100
Limitation of Buyer	100	-	100

The analyses and interpretation of data makes it very evident that women entrepreneurs encountered challenges especially technical followed by entrepreneurial or business challenges and then by social or personal problems.

c) Awareness about government schemes:

It is evident from the data that awareness levels of the respondents is really poor. Apart from the exception of a few schemes such as the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), self-help programmes for women at DAY-NRLM, Khadi and Industries Commission (KVIC), and the Annapurna programme they have not heard of other schemes and their associated benefits. This means that despite of presence of schemes, there are issues of accessibility due to lack of awareness.

need to be strengthened and access to easy finance should be available to encourage entrepreneurship.

- c. Encouragement of entrepreneurship amongst women - Efforts need to be made at a larger scale to improve the position of rural women entrepreneurs in society. Skill development aligned with local industries should be institutionalised to encourage entrepreneurship at scale.
- d. Schemes, incentives and promotional measures need to be customised to the needs of women entrepreneurs and be publicised so as to increase awareness and issues of accessibility. Investments need to be made towards creating awareness on entrepreneurship and young women should be given opportunities.



Conclusion and Suggestions:

- a. Rural women's entrepreneurship has played a significant role in addressing the scarcity of jobs and the unemployment problem. It is also an important part of the economic policy of the country (Dr. Rajkhowa.M, 2020). It has become important to foreground the needs of women entrepreneurs and also work at the District level to identify produce that suits different districts of Meghalaya. Another issue that needs to be addressed is the lack of availability of raw materials, both these aspects are intertwined and programs need to incentivise the availability of raw materials and simultaneously encourage entrepreneurial activities.
- b. Strengthening of local institutions: Training institutions in the state need to be better equipped to address the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs. The trainings need to help women to increase their work knowledge, risk-taking abilities and capacities. They should also be able to extend monitoring support over a period of time to ensure quality products and service delivery from the entrepreneurs. In addition to these bank linkages



FellowSpeak

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The past year has been an enriching experience for me, both personally and professionally. CRISP has provided me an opportunity to understand the nuances of administration and the importance of meeting targets while promoting the objectives of the National Education Policy 2020. I work closely with the Regional Higher Education Officers from the Government side and the Vice Chancellors and Registrars of the different Universities in the field. This unique learning has helped me in devising strategies for transforming Higher Education in the state of Uttar Pradesh. Suggestions and inputs I received from the honorable members of CRISP and other colleagues have also expanded my understanding of the whole process.

I have sharpened my public speaking skills while conducting the capacity building workshops in more than 12 Districts of UP and interacted with more than 6 Vice Chancellors of the Universities. These academicians have more than 20 years of experience

in teaching and the best moment for me is to see the look on their faces full of hope. The ultimate beneficiary is the student in the education sector and we have successfully been able to introduce the concept of “Earn While You Learn” by launching Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Courses.

I am living my dream to bring data-driven policy change in the education sector that too at such a large scale by bringing my theoretical knowledge into practice. All the Action Plans presented to the Department of Higher Education are on the basis of Theory of Change which gives the systematic approach to achieve our targets.

Rahul Abrol

Fellow- CRISP Uttar Pradesh Team



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As a part of the first cohort of CRISP fellows, I was amazed by the high degree of passion, enthusiasm, and professionalism reflected by the members of CRISP over the last year. The organization offered me the opportunity to work closely with the higher education departments of UP and Telangana. This journey has been transformative as it has taught me how to be patient, course-correct, manage frustrations, and appreciate the on-ground fervor for change. Moreover, the robust mentorship structure, built upon the 400+ combined years of experience of the founding members and state leads, provides a vast pool of wisdom. This exposure has helped me hone my overall understanding of the realities of administrative structures, develop the skills to deal with various stakeholders effectively, and refine my research abilities. Alongside routine tasks, CRISP also conducts dynamic retreats where we learn from experts and foster collaborations with other fellows, even though we all work in different parts of the country. Overall, I would describe my journey at CRISP as ‘invigorating’ and ‘challenging’. I believe that emerging from this well-rounded fellowship program will surely build innate confidence and proficiency to become a leader in any role and sphere of my professional life.

Surbhi Kak

Fellow- CRISP Telangana Team



Major developments in CRISP

CRISP and Govt of Tamil Nadu Join Forces to Empower Gram Panchayats and SHGs



We are pleased to announce that CRISP has officially entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Tamil Nadu. This collaborative effort aims to fortify the foundation of Gram Panchayats and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) within the state. The scope of the projects outlined in the MoU is broad and encompasses various critical aspects such as implementation of cutting-edge technology for housing projects, localisation of SDGs, GP Revenue augmentation, and SHGs -Gram Panchayat linkage.

We are excited to share that Mr. Vijayanand, President, CRISP, will be the mentor for this transformative project. His wealth of experience and expertise in community development will undoubtedly guide the initiatives outlined in the MoU towards successful fruition. CRISP remains committed to fostering sustainable development and empowering local communities for a brighter and more inclusive future.

CRISP Fellowship 2024: Nurturing Young Leaders for Social Impact



CRISP is excited to announce the recruitment of its 2nd cohort for the CRISP Fellowship Programme. This distinctive experiential learning initiative fosters strategic collaboration between CRISP and State/Central governments, providing a unique platform for young talent to spearhead impactful large-scale projects while closely collaborating with public administration. Currently operating in 6 states, CRISP's focus areas encompass Rural Development, Panchayati Raj, Education, and Institutional Capacity Building. As CRISP welcomes the 2nd cohort, the Fellowship continues to be a beacon for emerging leaders dedicated to driving positive change in the realm of public service.

CRISP Joins Forces with Unnat Bharat Abhiyan: Igniting Collaborative Initiatives



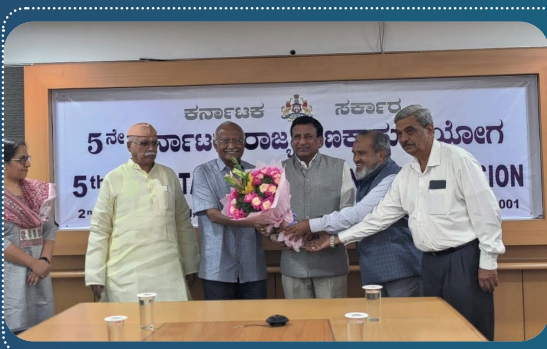
CRISP has initiated a significant partnership with the Ministry of Education's Unnat Bharat Abhiyan, marked by an orientation program held at NIRD on January 8. The event brought together 30 higher education institutions, setting the stage for collaborative efforts aimed at advancing rural development. This strategic alliance underscores CRISP's commitment to leveraging education as a catalyst for positive change in the society.

CRISP Welcomed the Chief Secretary of Telangana to its Central Office in Hyderabad

CRISP is honored to welcome Ms. Santi Kumari, Chief Secretary of Telangana, to our central office. In this meeting, CRISP expressed a firm commitment to collaborate with the Government of Telangana on key initiatives focusing on education, employment and empowerment. The discussions centered around forging a strategic partnership to drive large-scale welfare gains for the residents of Telangana.



SM Vijayanand, President CRISP was invited by Karnataka State Finance Commission

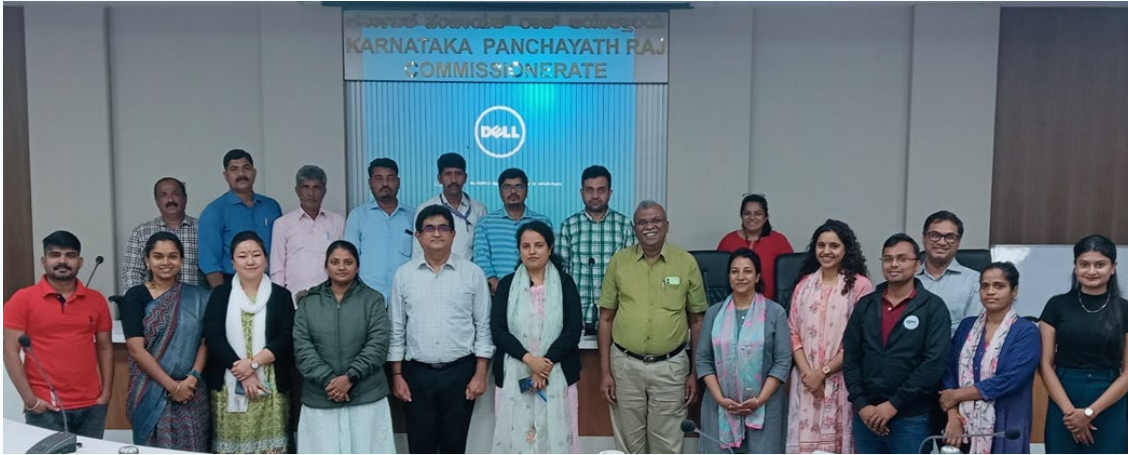


Sri. SM Vijayanand, President of CRISP, was recently invited by the Karnataka State Finance Commission to provide valuable advice and guidance. The consultation centered on enhancing grassroots-level institutions, emphasizing the importance of strengthening foundations for sustainable development.

CRISP in action

Rural Development

Transforming Solid Waste Management in Rural Karnataka: A Digital Leap Forward



Commissioner Priyanka Mary Francis, Panchayati Raj, Government of Karnataka, with eGov Foundation, CRISP and other partnering NGOs at the workshop

Karnataka Panchayati Raj Commissionerate hosted a groundbreaking workshop on the 8th and 9th of January with a focus on harnessing the power of Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) to address challenges associated with Solid Waste Management (SWM) in Gram Panchayats. CRISP, alongside partnering NGOs and department functionaries, explored the potential of digitalization in simplifying tasks for SWM frontline workers, improving access for citizens, and creating real-time monitoring tools for governing bodies.

eGov Foundation presented the myriad benefits of DPI - from addressing planning woes to refining operations and monitoring. The NGOs highlighted on-the-ground challenges due to the lack of a digital platform for SWM.

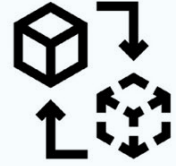
Challenges in Solid Waste Management in GPs due to lack of a Digital Platform (As presented by the working groups at the Workshop)

Planning is a challenge due to <u>lack of</u> :	Monitoring SWM operations is a challenge due to <u>lack of</u> :	Financial sustainability is a challenge due to <u>lack of</u> :
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Baseline data of waste generators - Automated calculations of resource requirements using normative standards - Automated budgeting - Automated route planning based on time and motion study - Authorised vendors/aggregators list for each waste stream - IEC Activities – planning & progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Tracking door-door collection to ensure 100% coverage and vehicle tracking - Tracking participation level - Waste collection level based on normative standards - Waste segregation level - % Recovery of dry waste - Sorting efficiency level - Compost quality level - Biometric attendance of workers - Lack of data driven decision making for supervisory committee - Progress monitoring - Tracking & Identifying violators/ non-compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - User fee collection module - Tracking of fines - Tracking of income from dry waste and compost sale - Tracking of positive impact of SWM to earn carbon credits

The workshop zeroed in on efficiency, timely decisions with data visibility, and systemic issue resolution in SWM. Culminating in a collaborative effort to map SWM processes and identification of key actors, the workshop marks a foundational step towards an open-source DPI with a ready-to-use solution suite for SWM.

Why DPI for SWM?

- ❑ Dissecting a complex problem as Solid Waste Management into smaller and more manageable components makes it easier to solve
- ❑ SWM involves many actors and several interactions between these actors
- ❑ A digital platform to enable these interactions for better planning, operations and monitoring is the need of the hour



Library Management Committees for Monitoring Library Operations

According to a circular sent by RDPR Department to libraries, Gram Panchayat (GP) libraries are mandated to form management committees. These committees, comprising members such as the GP President, Panchayat Development Officer (PDO-GP level administrative head), teachers, students, farmers, etc., are entrusted with responsibilities of monitoring the library operations and implementing measures to enhance library user experience. However, they are yet to be formed in the libraries visited by the CRISP team.

During January 1st - 5th, Library Management Committees were formed in Mudnal, Ramasamudra (Yadgir district) and Taj Sultanpur (Kalaburagi district) Gram Panchayat libraries. CRISP team visited these Gram Panchayats and provided orientation to the GPs on committee formation. Mercy Mission fellows (group of fellows from the NGO Mercy Mission, doing a field immersion to study the RDPR flagship schemes) facilitated the committee formation meetings in these GPs.

The first Committee meeting, attended by the GP President, Panchayat Development Officer, Grama Digi Vikasana (digitisation initiative led by Sikshana Foundation) coordinator, and different community



Library Management Committee members in Taj Sultanpur Gram Panchayat, Kalaburagi District

members discussed issues such as space constraints in the library, ways to optimize the usage of digital facilities in library, and strategies for expanding library outreach. The PDOs have informed that the committees will be convened monthly in their respective GPs, to discuss ways to address issues faced by the libraries and enhance user experience.

Rural Development: SHG Financial Institution



In pursuit of establishing the Financial Institution for strengthening the bank linkage of Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the State of Meghalaya, CRISP in a joint effort with Meghalaya State Rural Livelihood Society (MSLRS) initiated the mobilization of registered Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) to orient the concept of the proposed institution with the Executive Committee (EC) members.

HUB & SPOKE MODEL: Strengthening Village Level Development Plan (VLDP)

Considering the unique Village system in Meghalaya where the Matrilineal system is culturally rooted, CRISP has adopted three villages viz. Jarain, Mookyniang & Madan Bitaw under West Jaintia Hills District (WJH) & East Khasi Hills (EKH). Envisioning to strengthen the traditional system and structure, CRISP envisages closely engaging with the different Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) in collaboration with the Government of Meghalaya to strive for a holistic and inclusive development approach. The pursuit strives to enhance Livelihood opportunities for SHGs and its members while focusing on attaining Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the grassroots level.



• Education

National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF)



CRISP Telangana team at GDCW(A), Begumpet on 09.01.2024

The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) Telangana team interacted and conducted workshops with 5 colleges for NIRF Rankings 2024 from 08th to 12th January 2024. The team had an intensive dialogue with the Principals and the NIRF Coordinators of the institutions, and reviewed their Data Collecting System (DCS) forms. Based on the data and interactions with the concerned stakeholders, CRISP offered guidance on data presentation, gauged the strengths and weaknesses and took note of the best practices of the institutions. Also, the team informed and boarded the 5 colleges to work in coordination

for preparation of their Institutional Development Plans (IDPs) towards the actualization of their full potential. In conclusion, the team was successful in motivating the colleges to partake in the mission for improving overall quality of higher education in the state of Telangana.

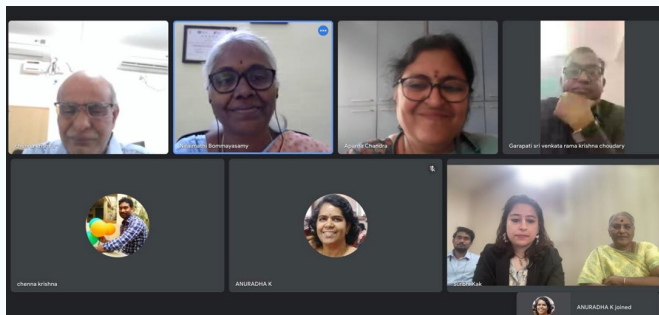


CRISP Telangana team at Kakatiya Government College, Hanamakonda on 10th January, 2024

The CRISP Telangana team virtually reviewed the data filling for NIRF 2024 rankings of the Bhavan's Vivekananda College (A), Hyderabad on 11th January 2024.



CRISP Telangana team at Pingle GDCW (A), Hanamakonda on 10th January, 2024



CRISP Telangana team virtually reviewing NIRF 2024 data of the Bhavan's Vivekananda College(A), Hyderabad on 11th January, 2024

Meeting with Principal Secretary, Education Department

A meeting was conducted by Sri. B. Venkatesham, IAS, Principal Secretary (PS), Education Dept., Govt. of Telangana to understand the work carried out by the CRISP in Telangana in the presence of Mr. Subrahmanyam Reddi, Secretary & CEO, CRISP on 12th January 2024 at the SCERT Office. The CRISP Telangana team presented their initiatives, progress, and future plan of action under the Heading for Excellence Globally in Higher Education for Telangana State (HEIGHTS) project. The PS extended his complete support towards achieving the targets envisioned within the MoU between CRISP and the Telangana state government. He also decided to convene a meeting between CRISP and the Vice Chancellors of the state universities in the last week of January to open channels of communication for the smooth on-ground implementation of the various projects. The meeting concluded on a positive note and was successful in communicating the purpose and role of CRISP in improving the overall quality of higher education in the state of Telangana.



Principal Secretary interacting with the CRISP Telangana team at SCERT Office on 12.01.2024 Vivekananda College (A), Hyderabad on 11th January, 2024

Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programs (AEDPs)

Under the guidance of Mr. VLVSS Subba Rao, the team prepared an 'Action Plan' on upscaling the AEDPs in Telangana for AY 2024-25 in terms of increasing the number of colleges and the Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). The team tentatively shortlisted 104 colleges for expanding AEDPs in Telangana. The team prepared and shared a 'Survey Questionnaire' to these 104 colleges in understanding their preferences in the expansion of AEDPs from the next year. The team also prepared an 'Action Plan' on expanding the AEDPs to 04 other states from AY 2024-25. As an ongoing effort to scale up AEDPs for the upcoming academic session, a meeting was held with the Life Sciences Sector Skill Development Council (LSSSDC) on 17th January 2024 to discuss on the credit framework and curriculum for introducing AEDPs in Pharma and Biotech sectors.

Project for Excellence in Higher Learning and Education in UP (PEHLE UP)

Project Expansion and Strategy

The CRISP Uttar Pradesh team has actively advanced the PEHLE-UP Project, engaging in productive interactions with key stakeholders over the past month. The team adopted a dual strategy, emphasizing the expansion of the project to a wider range of institutions and the capacity building of colleges.

Innovation Councils Workshop

An online workshop on Institute's Innovation Councils (IICs) showcased the achievements of IIC, with Dr. Rashmi Singh leading the session. This initiative emphasized problem identification, documentation, and submission on the YUKTI repository. The importance of capacity-building workshops by the Ministry of Education's Innovation Cell (MIC) for Innovation Ambassadors was underscored.

Institutional Capacity Building

To strengthen the foundation of government institutions, CRISP Uttar Pradesh organized individual capacity-building workshops for potential colleges in NIRF. Visits to Gorakhpur, Shri Ram College Muzaffarnagar, and Ram Chameli College, Ghaziabad, facilitated in-depth discussions on NIRF and its data capturing system. CRISP's intervention successfully engaged the entire teaching staff, ensuring a more streamlined participation process.



Recognition and Assistance in NAAC Accreditation

CRISP is now recognized, with colleges seeking assistance in NAAC Accreditation. The team visited a college in Ghaziabad undergoing NAAC accreditation, providing guidance on SSR submission and parameters conducive to quality improvement. Additionally, CRISP was invited by MC Saxena Group of Institutions to initiate their NAAC journey for the upcoming cycle.

Strategic Meetings and Planning

The CRISP Uttar Pradesh team held constructive meetings with the Registrar of Dr. Ambedkar University, Agra, and Additional Secretary of UP Higher Education Council. These discussions focused on challenges faced at the university level, skill-embedded programs, and planning action steps for future workshops in Lucknow.

State-Level Policy Decisions and Workshops

The team concluded a meeting with the Principal Secretary of Higher Education in Lucknow, discussing state-level policy decisions and workshops for college representatives. The Principal Secretary expressed interest in introducing Skill Development Programs (SDP) linked with the One District One Product (ODOP) initiative. He also acknowledged CRISP's efforts in improving NIRF registration and raising awareness about NAAC among Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The NIRF booklet named "Sanjeevni" was submitted for review and publication.



School Education: Addressing High Dropout Rate & Enhancing Community Participation



Considering the paramount need to address the high rate of dropout in the state of Meghalaya, the CRISP team carried out an extensive year-long field study in 2023 and submitted a Policy Note supported and validated by the findings from the field. The proposal meticulously pinpoints the gaps and problems of dropouts at all levels of school education viz. Lower Primary, Upper Primary, and Secondary coupled with suitable recommendations and solutions at each stage. With the right support and effort from the Department of Education, Govt. of Meghalaya, this predominant problem can be mitigated.

CRISP | Centre for Research in
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