CRISP

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DESIGNING SYSTEMS FOR RURAL ECONOMY TRANSFORMATION: A CASE STUDY OF MP SMALL IRRIGATION PROJECT

Sri. Radhey Shyam Julaniya, IAS Retd.

Founding Member, CRISP

The Chambal project stands as a testament to the power of strategic stakeholder engagement, efficient resource utilization, and cohesive teamwork. **The project underscores that trust among team members, coupled with self-belief, empowered the team to navigate challenges confidently.** Moreover, fostering a supportive environment by mitigating fears facilitated smooth project execution. By understanding the unique motivations of each stakeholder, leveraging advanced technologies, and fostering a supportive team environment, the project navigated through tough times to achieve its goals.

Lecture summarised by

Gargee Deka
Fellow CRISP, Bodoland Territorial Region

In a world where water scarcity is becoming increasingly prevalent, understanding the intricate balance between equity, efficiency, and participation in water resource management is vital. With 18% of the global population relying on just 4% of the planet's renewable water resources, this urgent issue demands our attention and action.

Water justice raises a fundamental question: Who owns water? This question is not merely rhetorical but forms the basis of policy debates and management strategies. It's about understanding that water is not just a resource but a life-sustaining element that should be accessible to all. However, the reality is that access to water is often skewed by historical usage, geographic disparities, and socio-economic status, leading to inequitable distribution among states, communities, and even between upstream and downstream users.

States, for example, may have conflicting interests based on catchment areas versus traditional use. Communities face priority issues between household, industry, and agriculture needs. Within the agricultural sector, the conflict between upstream and downstream users, as well as between tail-end and head-reach farmers, further complicates equitable distribution. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for formulating fair and effective water management policies.

In addressing these disparities, stakeholder participation is paramount. This includes everyone from local communities to engineers and politicians. Each group has a unique influence on how water is managed and allocated. For instance, engineers might focus on the technical aspects of water distribution, while politicians might look at water management through the lens of voter needs. Effective water management, therefore, requires a balance between technical solutions and the political will to implement them equitably.

Water User Associations (WUAs), contractors, and engineers play pivotal roles in water management. WUAs, when empowered as equal stakeholders, ensure that local voices are integrated into decision-making processes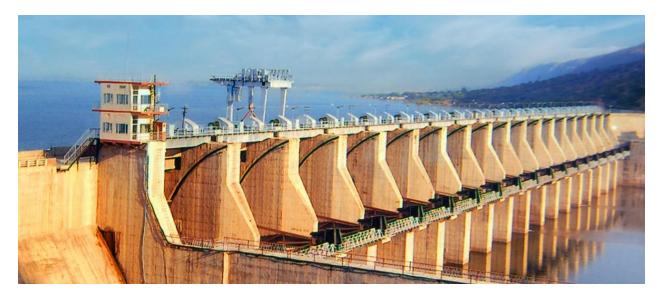. Contractors, if viewed as collaborative partners rather than merely profit-driven entities, can significantly enhance the effectiveness of water projects. Engineers, meanwhile, must carefully align infrastructure development with the actual delivery of benefits, ensuring that improvements in water access and efficiency are both measurable and sustained.

The concept of water use efficiency is equally important. It refers to maximizing the beneficial use of water and minimizing waste. This is crucial in sectors like agriculture, which consumes a significant portion of water resources. Techniques vary from traditional flood irrigation to more efficient methods like drip or micro-irrigation, each having a profound impact on how water is conserved and utilized.

Efficiency in water use extends beyond agriculture to urban and rural water supply systems and industrial use. For instance, while unlined canals may have a maximum conveyance efficiency of 55-60%, this can drop to as low as 30% in practice. Lined canals and more efficient irrigation methods such as furrow, micro, and precision irrigation can significantly improve these figures. Similarly, the urban water supply can see efficiency improvements from a current assessed level of 33% to a maximum achievable level of 90% with the right interventions.

Technology plays a transformative role in this sector. From advanced irrigation systems to water recycling technologies, the integration of modern techniques can greatly enhance both the efficiency and equity of water distribution. However, the adoption of such technologies often hinges on public policy and investment decisions, which are influenced by stakeholder engagement and political priorities.

Technological advancements in water transport, management, use, and reuse are reshaping public policy. Project design, procurement, and execution now incorporate these advancements to improve benefit velocity and reduce resistance. Effective contract management, from detailed project reports to completion, and continuous monitoring as a tool for problem-solving, are essential for successful project outcomes.

An illustrative case from the Chambal region in Madhya Pradesh sheds light on how effective management and stakeholder engagement can lead to substantial improvements. It focused on improving irrigation efficiency, which accounted for 80% of water consumption. The transition from traditional flood irrigation to more advanced methods like micro and precision irrigation not only enhanced water use efficiency but also ensured better crop yields and sustainability.

The Chambal project stands as a testament to the power of strategic stakeholder engagement, efficient resource utilization, and cohesive teamwork. The project underscores that trust among team members, coupled with self-belief, empowered the team to navigate challenges confidently. Moreover, fostering a supportive environment by mitigating fears facilitated smooth project execution. By understanding the unique motivations of each stakeholder, leveraging advanced technologies, and fostering a supportive team environment, the project navigated through tough times to achieve its goals.

The project also underscored the need for effective strategies to address delays in completion. Key components included shared responsibility, capacity building, efficient resource management, and robust contract oversight. Regular reviews focused on proactive problem-solving rather than fault-finding were essential in maintaining momentum. These practices are crucial for overcoming the inherent challenges of large-scale water management projects.

In conclusion, water resource management is not just about handling a natural resource; it's about managing a critical determinant of social and economic well-being. Ensuring water justice and enhancing efficiency requires a holistic approach that includes robust stakeholder participation, equitable policy-making, and the strategic use of technology. By addressing these components, we can move towards a future where water resources are managed sustainably and equitably, ensuring access for all and fostering social and economic development.

The challenges we face are significant, as elaborated upon above, and the entire understanding is based on the personal experiences shared by R.S. Julania sir during his lecture at our induction held in the first half of April 2024 at Dr. MCR HRD Institute, Hyderabad. He reiterated that with a clear vision, collective effort, and commitment to equitable practices, we can achieve water justice and sustainability. As the Chambal project demonstrates, the combination of stakeholder engagement, technological innovation, and efficient resource management can lead to substantial improvements, benefiting communities and ensuring the sustainability of our precious water resources.

ExpertSpeak

LOOKING BEYOND THE NUMBERS: WHY NUMBERS ALONE CAN'T TELL THE COMPLETE STORY

Sri. Adapureddy Nagesh Babu

Consultant – Higher Education, CRISP

While numbers and statistics provide valuable insights, they often lack the context and depth needed to truly understand complex issues. Data can be manipulated, interpreted subjectively, and is influenced by human biases. **To gain a comprehensive understanding, we must look beyond the numbers and embrace qualitative insights,** which offer the 'why' behind the data. By combining quantitative data with qualitative narratives, we can uncover the full scope of reality, leading to more informed, empathetic, and effective decision-making.

In today's age of information, data is both readily available and profoundly influential. It is easy to become overwhelmed with quantitative data and rely solely on numerical figures for assessing success, making decisions, and measuring progress. While economic indicators and social indices provide insights into global happenings, numbers alone do not tell the complete story. As the saying goes, "lies, damned lies, and statistics," data can be manipulated, and its interpretation is often subjective. Therefore, recognizing these biases and limitations inherent in data is very essential to understand the complete picture.

Human Influence and Subjectivity in Data Collection

Numbers, although valuable for quantifying aspects of reality, inherently lack context and depth. Data is crucial for evidence-based policy formulation and decision-making, but it can also be misleading. Numbers provide a snapshot of a situation but often miss the broader context and qualitative dimensions. Statistics can be cherry-picked or presented in ways that skew perception, hiding underlying issues or exaggerating successes.

Every piece of data is collected and interpreted by humans, each with their own perspectives and biases. Whether gathering economic indicators or conducting social surveys, the data collector's viewpoint influences the information. Friedrich Nietzsche's remark, "There are no

facts, only interpretations," highlights that data reflects the biases of those who collect it. Despite efforts to ensure accuracy, data collection is prone to errors, biases, and omissions, compromising the quality of the information and the integrity of the analysis.

For instance, consider a survey on Anganwadi Centres. If the survey questions are framed in a certain way, they might lead respondents to answer in a manner that aligns with the surveyor's expectations. Similarly, the selection of the sample population can introduce biases. If a survey about Anganwadi Centres is conducted primarily in urban areas, the results may not accurately represent the experiences of rural populations. These biases can lead to incomplete or misleading conclusions that do not truly reflect the reality on the ground.
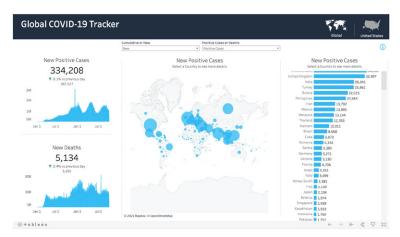
The Incomplete Nature of Data

Data is never complete. The process of data creation involves decisions about what to include and exclude, shaping the narrative that emerges. As Franz Kafka noted, "Knowledge is not absolute; it is always relative." Rankings, for example, often advertised as objective measures of performance, are subject to scrutiny and criticism. College rankings do not accurately reflect the ground realities as they fail to capture the nuances and complexities of educational institutions. Similarly, standardized test scores overlook factors like socio-economic background and individual challenges.

Take the example of college rankings. These rankings often focus on easily measurable aspects such as graduation rates, faculty publications, and financial resources. However, they may overlook critical factors like student support services, campus culture, and the inclusivity of the learning environment. A college that performs well in rankings might still have significant issues related to accessibility or student mental health that the rankings do not capture. Similarly, standardized test scores are another area where the incomplete nature of data is evident. These scores are often used to evaluate student performance and the effectiveness of educational institutions. However, they do not account for external factors such as socio-economic status, parental education, or environment, all of which can significantly impact a student's performance.

Complementing Quantitative Data with Qualitative Insights

To truly understand a situation, we must complement quantitative data with qualitative insights. Qualitative data provides the 'why' behind the numbers, offering valuable context, perspectives, and narratives that illuminate underlying dynamics. This approach allows us to delve into human experiences, emotions, and motivations, enabling a deeper understanding of complex phenomena. For example, in education, quantitative data might show test scores, but qualitative data can reveal the students' socio-economic challenges, learning environments, and personal struggles that impact their performance. This deeper understanding is very important for developing effective policies and interventions.

Qualitative data includes case studies, interviews, and personal narratives, which offer rich, detailed insights that numbers alone cannot provide. These stories bring to light the human side of data, illustrating the lived experiences of people, otherwise concealed in the statistics. For instance, while unemployment rates provide a numerical measure of economic health, personal stories of job loss and financial struggle highlight the real impact on individuals and families. Consider a policy aimed at reducing unemployment. Quantitative data might show a decrease in the unemployment rate, suggesting that the policy is successful. However, qualitative insights might reveal that many of the new jobs are low-paying, insecure, or lack benefits, leading to financial instability for the employees. Without these qualitative insights, policymakers might mistakenly believe that the issue has been resolved and overlook the need for further interventions. This qualitative information helps policymakers and stakeholders develop more empathetic and effective solutions.

Embracing the Complexity of Reality

While numbers play a crucial role in understanding the world, they are just one piece of the puzzle. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of complex phenomena, we must look beyond numbers and embrace qualitative insights and the inherent complexities of reality. By doing so, we can make more informed decisions and cultivate empathy, connection, and a deeper appreciation for the richness of human experiences. Data, like language, can only approximate reality, offering one perspective among many. Recognizing the inherent uncertainty and subjectivity of data allows us to unlock its potential for insights and understanding, using it as a means to an end rather than an end in itself.

To put this into perspective, let us consider the COVID-19 pandemic. The information on the number of cases, deaths, and vaccinations was provided by quantitative data. However, the personal stories of those affected by the virus, including the emotional and psychological impacts, the disparities in healthcare access, hardships during the lockdown, people stranded at different places, and the socio-economic challenges faced by different communities can be brought to the forefront/attention only by the qualitative data.

By combining quantitative data with qualitative insights, policymakers gained a more holistic understanding of the pandemic. Quantitative data informed immediate health responses and economic measures, while qualitative data revealed underlying issues and human experiences that needed addressing. This integration provided valuable context, enabling the development of more comprehensive and compassionate policies. By valuing both types of data, policymakers could create effective strategies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19, ultimately leading to better outcomes for all affected communities.

Conclusion

By recognizing the limitations of numbers and valuing the rich, detailed insights offered by qualitative data, we can develop more nuanced and effective strategies to address the complex challenges we face. Embracing both types of data allows us to see beyond the numbers, understand the full scope of issues, and address them in ways that are both informed and compassionate. This balanced approach ensures a more comprehensive understanding and fosters solutions that truly reflect the complexities of human experiences.

FellowSpeak

HARSHITHA J
Fellow CRISP, Karnataka

As I reflect on the past year of my journey with the Organisation, I feel it has truly been a transformative period marked by growth and invaluable learning experiences. I have had the privilege of working with two States – Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, each presenting its unique set of opportunities and challenges. My journey began in Andhra Pradesh, where I worked on projects to effectively operationalise digital initiatives in education. From learning new technical skills to assisting in large-scale implementation, the projects involved collaborating with multiple stakeholders, designing frameworks, and ensuring smooth execution, all of which have contributed significantly to my professional growth.

Transitioning to the Department of Panchayat Raj and Rural Development in Karnataka, I am currently working on managing the end-to-end process of a Fellowship Programme along with the Department. The opportunity to work along with dynamic teams on a diverse range of projects has truly been an enriching experience.

The opportunities for mentorship, networking, and professional development provided by the Organisation have been invaluable. Looking ahead, I am excited by the prospect of further expanding my knowledge and skills and working on more such interesting projects in the areas of Public Policy and Development.

CRISP in Action

Andhra Pradesh

MoUs between Life Sciences, Healthcare and BFSI SSCs and 17 Colleges were signed on 08th August 2024 in Visakhapatnam. Logistics Faculty Training for 06 Colleges was conducted on 07th, 08th & 09th August and BFSI Faculty Training for 08 Colleges on 21st, 22nd & 23rd August at Govt. College (A), Rajahmundry.

Telangana

Healthcare Faculty Training was conducted at Saanvi Degree College for Women, Hyderabad on the 06th & 07th of August 2024 by Ms. Anshu Verma and Ms. Pooja Fuloria from Healthcare SSC. Shri. VLVSS Subba Rao, National Lead, NISHE inaugurated the training. The MoU between Healthcare SSC and Saanvi Degree College for Women, Hyderabad was signed on 07th August 2024.

Maharashtra

BFSI Faculty Training for 06 Colleges was conducted virtually on 06th, 07th & 08th August 2024. Logistics Faculty Training for 07 Colleges was conducted on 28th, 29th & 30th August 2024 at Chetana College, Mumbai.

Karnataka

MoUs between Retail, Logistics and BFSI SSCs and 45 Colleges offering AEDPs were signed on 13th August 2024 at KSHEC, Bengaluru in the presence of Dr. M. C. Sudhakar, Minister for Higher Education, Government of Karnataka. The Hon'ble Minister was profuse in his praise of CRISP and was very pleased with the efforts so far. The CEOs of SSCs, Industry Partners, Higher Education Department of Karnataka and CRISP Officials participated in the event.

CRISP Karnataka Fellow, Ms. Daksha Jain shares lessons from the Koosina Mane program at the Local democracy course

In the 8th batch of the "Local Democracy and Welfare Entitlements: Theory, Policy, and Practice" course at Azim Premji University, Bangalore, Ms. Daksha Jain, CRISP fellow from Karnataka, led a session that delved into the Koosina Mane initiative - the rural crèche program of the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR), Karnataka.

The course, designed for Civil Society Organizations working or interested in local democracy issues in rural areas, provided a platform for Ms. Jain to share her insights on the role of grassroots-level government in the implementation of the Koosina Mane program, as well as the importance of interdepartmental convergence. The session provided an acute understanding into the challenges and opportunities associated with implementation of welfare programs, empowering the participants to better understand the complex dynamics at play and the crucial role of grassroots-level governance in driving positive change in rural India.

▶ RURAL DEVELOPMENT

📍 Karnataka

Launch of the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Raj Fellowship Programme 2024

The Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Raj Fellowship was officially launched in Kalburgi on 20th August 2024 by the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister of Karnataka, Shri D.K. Shivakumar, Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj and ITBT Shri Priyank Kharge, along with other elected representatives, administrative officers and dignitaries on the occasion of the Former Prime Minister of India, Rajiv Gandhi's birth anniversary.

The launch event also saw the unveiling of the Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Raj Fellowship logo, the distribution of selection certificates to the fellows and the release of the book "ಫೆಲೋಗಳು ಕಂಡಂತೆ ಗ್ರಾಮ ವೌಕವಾಸ" (Grama Vikas as Seen by Fellows). This book is a compilation of some of the best practices and successful approaches to rural development that the fellows encountered during their four-week field immersion.

The CRISP Karnataka team, with inputs by mentors, has been deeply involved in the Fellowship from concept stage to the launch, including recruitment, training and deployment of Fellows. CRISP KA members are also tasked with mentoring the Fellows over the two years their Fellowship period in their respective taluks.

The fellowship program has appointed highly educated and experienced individuals as Rajiv Gandhi Fellows, each assigned to a taluk in the seven districts across Kalyana Karnataka after a rigorous nine-week training at the Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (ANSSIRD&PR), which included both classroom sessions and field visits to various districts.

Kerala visit: Karnataka team's study tour on Palliative Care Models

The CRISP Karnataka team recently participated in a three-day exposure visit to Kerala, organized by the Karnataka Health Promotion Trust (KHPT) in collaboration with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) and the Department of Health, Government of Karnataka. Facilitated by Pallium India and Mr. S M Vijayanand, President of CRISP, the visit aimed to study Kerala's successful palliative care model, particularly its implementation at the Panchayat level.

The visit included home care observations, visits to Gram Panchayats to understand the role of Local Self-Governments in palliative care, and discussions with key stakeholders including Pallium India representatives, Panchayat officials, medical professionals, and volunteers. The study team gained crucial learnings which are expected to guide the implementation of a similar initiative in Karnataka, tailored to the state's unique context and needs. This exposure visit marks a significant step towards enhancing palliative care services in Karnataka through informed, grassroots-level implementation.

Tamil Nadu

Training Module on Renewable Energy Adoption

The CRISP Tamil Nadu team has developed an innovative training module on Renewable Energy Adoption for the State Institute of Rural Development Tamil Nadu. This module, designed to educate panchayat presidents and villagers on adopting renewable energy solutions, represents a significant step towards sustainable rural development. Led by Dr. Vijayaraghavan and spearheaded by Intern Aradhana Pandian from Kautilya School of Public Policy, with the support of fellows Heera K Anil and Prakash Palanivel. This initiative will empower local communities, fostering positive change and promoting sustainable practices across Tamil Nadu's rural landscape. CRISP remains committed to bridging knowledge gaps and facilitating the transition to cleaner, more sustainable energy sources at the grassroots level.

CRISP Tamil Nadu's Field Visits: Assessing LSDG Implementation at the Grassroots

The CRISP Tamil Nadu team recently conducted an in-depth field visit to three districts—Chengalpattu, Kallakurichi, and Ariyalur—focusing on the Local Sustainable Development Goals (LSDG) component. These visits were essential for understanding the local context, identifying specific challenges, and evaluating the current status of LSDG implementation at the grassroots level. During the visits, the team engaged with five key grassroots institutions: Schools, Anganwadi centres, Self-Help Groups (SHGs), Primary Health Centers (PHCs), and Panchayat offices. Discussions with relevant stakeholders provided valuable insights into the ongoing efforts and challenges faced in implementing LSDG.

In addition, the team attended the Gram Sabha at Vilunthudiyan Gram Panchayat in Ariyalur District on Independence Day, August 15th. This engagement was particularly meaningful as it allowed the team to observe firsthand the participatory governance processes in action.

▶ HIGHER EDUCATION

⊙ Uttar Pradesh

Promoting Apprenticeship Embedded Degree Programs (AEDPs)

Smt. Monika Garg, Agricultural Production Commissioner (APS), visited the CRISP office following an invitation from Prof. Balraj Chauhan. During her visit, she engaged in a detailed discussion on the promotion of AEDPs, particularly focusing on overcoming existing challenges. She also interacted with Vice Chancellors to explore ways to make these programs more effective in the future. Additionally, the CRISP-UP team held an online session with Shri Sitaram Kunte (Retd. IAS) and Smt. Monika Garg, where they reviewed the current admission status of AEDPs and discussed strategies to boost enrollments. The team also addressed challenges faced by colleges and identified necessary support to ensure the success of these programs.

Workshop on NAAC Accreditation at Kumari Mayawati Rajkiya Mahila Postgraduate College

The CRISP-UP team conducted a workshop at Kumari Mayawati Rajkiya Mahila Postgraduate College in Badalpur, Gautam Buddh Nagar, as the college entered its third stage of NAAC accreditation. The workshop, which focused on strategies for achieving better accreditation grades, saw participation from various stakeholders, including the chief guest, Smt. Monika Garg. She emphasized the importance of result-oriented action plans to secure excellent NAAC grades. Ms. Divya, from the CRISP-UP team, presented a detailed analysis of NAAC's new reforms and institutional data, offering insights into how the college could further strengthen its teaching and learning outcomes for NAAC, NIRF, and overall institutional development. Her presentation was well-received by both the chief guest and the institution.

Institutional Visits and Data Verification

The CRISP-UP team's efforts extended to other institutions as well. They visited the Institute of Hotel Management (IHM) Lucknow, along with Principal Shia PH College, where they met with Mr. Manoj Gupta to discuss support for running AEDPs according to Sector Skill Council norms. Additionally, the team undertook a thorough verification process of NEP implementation data by studying the websites and Self Study Reports (SSRs) of participating colleges. This involved cross-referencing the data with existing data banks, such as the SWAYAM-NPTEL portal, and directly contacting colleges to ensure accuracy in the survey data.

Telangana

Workshop on 'Preparation of Institutional Development Plans (IDPs)

The Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) conducted a workshop on 'Preparation of Institutional Development Plans (IDPs)' in collaboration with the Malaviya Mission Teacher Training Centre (MMTTC), Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) and Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), MANUU, on 13 and 14 August 2024 (Tuesday and Wednesday), at the Library Auditorium, MANUU, Hyderabad. The workshop saw the attendance of the principals and IQAC coordinators of 40+ cluster mentor general degree colleges, autonomous colleges and engineering colleges. Prof. Aloysius Sequeria, former Professor, at the School of Management NITK, Surathkal, was onboarded as the expert for this two-day workshop.

▶ HEALTH CARE

Madhya Pradesh

Workshop on "Strengthening Emergency Care Services in Madhya Pradesh.

Madhya Pradesh's Department of Public Health and Medical Education (DOPH&ME) has taken a significant step in revolutionizing emergency healthcare by hosting a workshop on "Strengthening Emergency Care Services" on August 6th, 2024.

The workshop, organized in collaboration with the Centre for Research in Schemes and Policies (CRISP) and the Forum for Health Systems Design and Transformation (HSTP), featured keynote speakers from the WHO Collaborating Centre for Emergency and Trauma Care (WHO CCET) and World Health Organization - India (WHO - India), underscoring the significance of this endeavours.

Key speakers, such as Dr. Sanjeev Kumar Bhoi of AIIMS New Delhi and Dr. B Mohammed Asheel from WHO India, highlighted the importance of triage protocols, GIS-based mapping, and integrated care strategies. Recent data, showing trauma-related injuries as 30% of emergencies in district hospitals, underscored the urgency of reforms.

The workshop proposed comprehensive gap assessments, standardized protocols, and the creation of a dedicated emergency medicine cadre. Dr. Pankaj Jain, Director of Hospital Administration, called this collaboration a "turning point," aiming to set a new standard for emergency care in India.

CRISP

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