CONVERGENCE: UNLOCKING SYNERGIES WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES

August 2022

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NITI Aayog

THEMATIC REPORT

CONVERGENCE: UNLOCKING SYNERGIES WITH OTHER GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES

August 2022

PREFACE

The Government of India (GoI) spends close to Rs. 14 lakh crores annually on development activities, through nearly 750 schemes implemented by Union Ministries. In 2019, the Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog was assigned the task of evaluating 28 Umbrella Centrally Sponsored Schemes, which are schemes/programmes funded jointly by the Centre and the States and implemented by the States. This exercise, undertaken between April 2019 and February 2021, evaluated 125 Centrally Sponsored Schemes, under 10 Sectors, together covering close to 30% of the GoI's development expenditure, amounting to approximately Rs. 3 lakh crores per annum.

As a part of the evaluation studies, the Centrally Sponsored Schemes were also assessed based on various cross-sectional themes such as accountability and transparency mechanisms, use of technology, convergence, gender, social inclusion, regulatory framework, climate change, behaviour change, Research and Development and private sector participation. These evaluation studies adopted a mixed method approach and underwent a review process involving consultations with NITI Aayog subject matter divisions, concerned Ministries and Departments, and external sector experts. For the cross-sectional analysis across sectors, additional secondary research was undertaken by DMEO, and the findings were reviewed by experts in the respective domain in order to optimize the robustness of the evidence generated across the sectors.

The present report is an outcome of the thematic assessment of Convergence: Unlocking Synergies with other Government Programmes across all the Centrally Sponsored Schemes. In this report, we reviewed examples of some of the initiatives undertaken by Central and State government to break silos as well as to enable intergovernmental data sharing resulting in better convergence. The report highlights the need for actions that will ensure convergence at all stages of a scheme/project and help in achieving the stated objectives of the scheme/project and improve overall quality of life of citizens.

We hope that this report will help in strengthening elements of convergence, both vertically and horizontally, in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of central and state government programs. Breaking silos will greatly contribute to the achievement of national priorities and to the well-being of all sovereign citizens of India.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANM	Auxiliary Nurse Midwife
ASHA	Accredited Social Health Activist
AWC	Angan Wadi Centre
AWW	Angan Wadi Worker
CBSE	Central Board of Secondary Education
CNRE	Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems
CSSTE	Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Teacher's education
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DASD	Directorate of Arecanut and Spices Development
DAY-NRLM	Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission
DCCD	Directorate of Cashewnut & Cocoa Development
DISHA	District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committee
EFC	Expenditure Finance Committee
FPO	Farmers Producer Organization
GIS	Geographic Information System
GNFC	Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals
GPDP	Gram Panchayat Development Plan
IDWH	Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats
IndiaWRIS	Generation of Database and Implementation of Web Enabled Water Resources Information System
JSY	Janani Suraksha Yojana
KPI	Key Personal Information
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
M/Ds	Ministries/Departments
MGNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MIDH	Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture
MIS	Management Information System
MoHFW	Ministry of Health & Family Welfare
MOHUA	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
MoRD	Ministry of Rural Development
MoSDE	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship
MPV	Mahila Police Volunteers
MSC	Multi-Sectoral Collaboration
MWCD	Ministry of Women & Child Development

NBB	National Bee Board
NCCD	National Centre for Cold-chain Development
NCS	National Career Service
NEM	National Education Mission
NHM	National Health Mission
NHRDF	National Horticultural Research and Development Foundation
NRLM	National Rural Livelihoods Mission
NULM	National Urban Livelihoods Mission
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
OPRM	Orissa Poverty Reduction Mission
OSC	One-Stop Centre
PDS	Public Distribution System
PIB	Press Information Bureau
PMAY - G	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Gramin
PMAY(U)	Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban
PMGSY	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana
PRIs	Panchayati Raj Institutions
PWD	Public Works Department
QoL	Quality of life
RKVY	Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana
RMSA	Rashtriya Madhyamaik Shiksha Abhiyaan
RUSA	Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan
SCM	Smart City Mission
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SFAC	Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium
SFC	Standing Finance Committee
SPEMM	Scheme for Providing Quality Education to Madrasas/Minorities
SPMRM	Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission
SPV	Special Purpose Vehicle
SMAM	Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanism
SSA	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
TRIPTI	Targeted Rural Initiatives for Poverty Termination and Infrastructure
UCSS	Umbrella Central Sponsored Scheme
VHSND	Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Day
WCD	Women & Child Development
WHL	Women Help Lines

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As supplementary evidence for continuation of schemes from 2021-22 to 2025-26 (coterminous with 15th Finance Commission cycle), DMEO, NITI Aayog commissioned third party evaluations of 125 Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) under 28 umbrella CSS across 10 packages or sectors. Apart from evaluation of fulfillment of scheme's objectives, these studies also undertook overarching review on 13 cross-sectional themes covering pertinent and emerging areas such as climate change, gender, private sector participation, accountability & transparency etc. 'Convergence: Unlocking synergies with government programs' is one such theme which was reviewed for all the schemes under the purview of this evaluation exercise.

This report is an attempt at understanding the need and role of convergence and collaboration in developmental programs, especially government program planning and administrative arrangements as well as opportunities to achieve this convergence. It also looks at the current approaches, achievements and challenges at sector and institutional level and explores future pathways to unlock synergies.

Through a program lifecycle approach to convergence, it can be understood that the same may be achieved at planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation stage. It could broadly be a convergence of resources and/or stakeholders. As part of the evaluation studies, it has been observed that 84% of schemes undertook convergence at planning stage, 64% at implementation stage, and only 16% showcased convergence at monitoring and evaluation level. The emergent approaches such as establishment of convergence as a core activity at planning stage at Ministry level, collaboration with non-government bodies for implementation at district level, using common technology platforms for monitoring have also been encountered.

To overcome current challenges and promote better adoption of convergent approaches in government functioning, we recommend an integrated approach. We recommend that triangulated systemic reinforcements through a clearer guidance on exploring convergence at the scheme proposal stage, a dynamic institutional framework through committees and coordinating bodies to ensure adherence to convergence in implementation and incentives and capacities for convergence together may be incorporated. This may not only emphasize the convergence of resources and stakeholders, but might also infuse convergence of program design as well as collective learnings of government programs.

2. BACKGROUND

The end goal of any government program or scheme is to improve the quality of life of its citizens. Quality of life (QoL), even though it is very subjective, includes many domains of an individual's life like education, physical health, mental health, opportunities to work, housing, school, level of resources, among others[1]. Hence, to improve overall QoL, it is important to devise strategies to target these various domains[2]. Government schemes (or programs) aiming to improve QoL or a particular aspect of it, tend to overlap in terms of their objectives and impact they expect to create; however, these may be spread across various departments or ministries in the government requiring coordination and collaboration among all of them at different levels. The ideal approach may be such that agencies work across portfolio boundaries, formally and informally, to achieve a shared goal and an integrated government response to particular issues to improve effectiveness and efficiency.

One such approach which is also recognized by SDG 17 - Partnerships for the goals - is **Multi-Sectoral collaboration**. Multi-Sectoral Collaboration (MSC) means multiple stakeholders and sectors intentionally coming together and collaborating in a managed process to achieve shared outcomes and common goals[3]. The relevance of convergence and MSC can also be understood from the recent addition of a criterion - **Coherence** - to the OECD's DAC list of evaluation criteria[4]. Internal coherence addresses the synergies and inter-linkages between the intervention and other interventions carried out by the same institution/government, as well as the consistency of the intervention with the relevant international norms and standards to which that institution/government adheres. External coherence considers the consistency of the intervention with other actors' interventions in the same context. This includes complementarity, harmonization and coordination with others, and the extent to which the intervention is adding value while avoiding duplication of effort.

Figure 1 shows the network analysis of SDG goals to different themes that contribute to these goals and shows the complexity of these relationships. For example, progress on Goal 14, involving sustainable use of the oceans, seas, and marine resources, will require integrated effort on a various fronts, from reducing phosphates and agricultural runoff, to improving sewerage and wastewater treatment, to curtailing plastic waste in the maritime environment, to the better management of fish stocks and increased investment in oceanographic research. Or to cite another example, the achievement of SDG target 3.6 to halve the number of fatalities from road accidents will involve coordination between the traffic police, road transport engineers, ambulance services and emergency care providers, as well as educators, automobile manufacturers, and drivers themselves. This figure provides a compelling case for a mechanism to ensure effective collaboration and coordination. Many social problems that require government attention and action are not easily structured and

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1   Jenkinson, Crispin. "Quality of life". Encyclopedia Britannica, 6 May. 2020

2   https://www.cdc.gov/hrqol/concept.htm, accessed on 16th June, 2021

3   Hinton, R., Armstrong, C., Asri, E., Baesel, K., Barnett, S., Blauvelt, C., ... & Kuruvilla, S. (2021). Specific considerations for research on the effectiveness of multisectoral collaboration: methods and lessons from 12 country case studies. Globalization and health, 17(1), 1-11.

4   OECD library, accessed on 16th June, 2021

contained, requiring that agencies with different mandates and missions work together to coordinate their activities for the common good.[5]

Existing literature highlights how various governments have found it challenging to break the silos and unlock the synergies between various ministries and departments. An OECD survey found that inter-agency coordination is viewed as the most pressing challenge to implement SDGs. One of the factors limiting collaboration in government is that accountability in government is organized vertically and decision-makers are accountable for their department-specific responsibilities, which makes aligning departmental priorities with horizontal collaboration difficult[6]. Additional factors which make coordination difficult include difficulty in establishing communication across silos, absence of defined roles and responsibilities including leadership and overlapping functions of the ministries and departments.
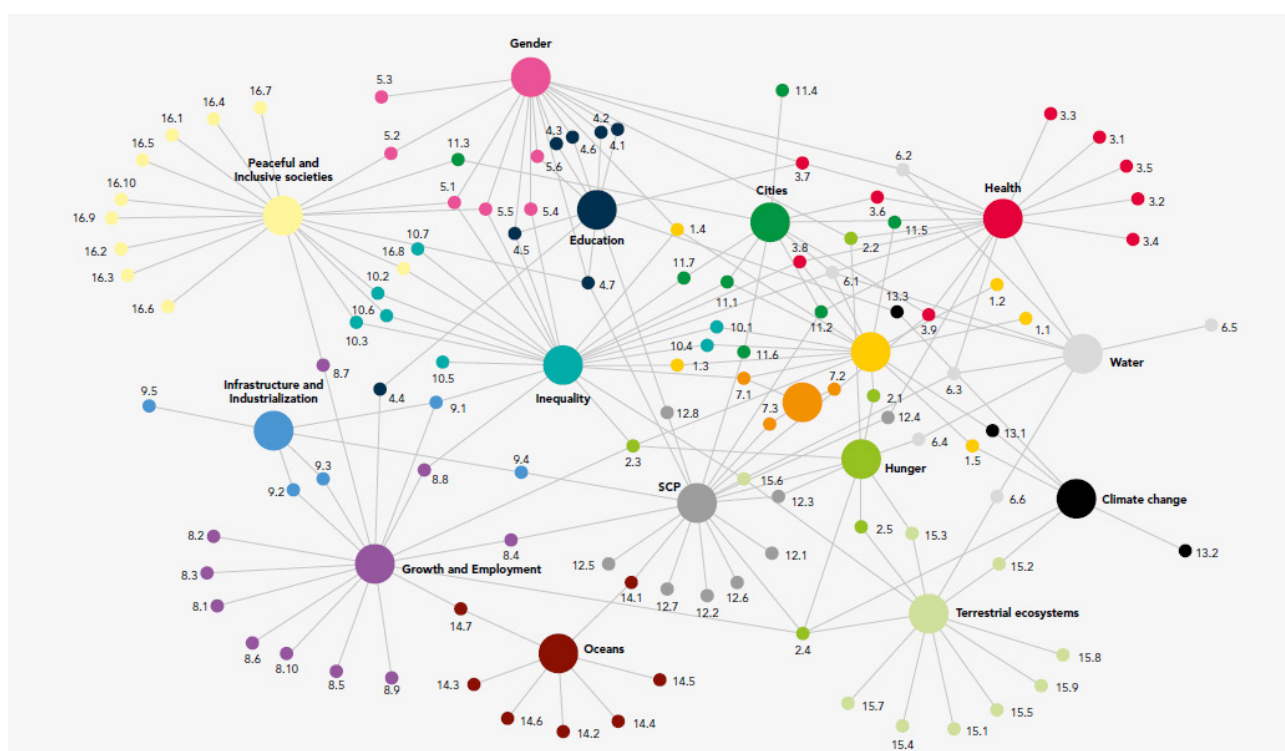
Figure 1: *Network Analysis of SDG Goals*

Source: *World Bank Report, 2018*

However, it is essential to find ways to work around these issues and challenges. One of the critical factors which can make inter-agency coordination successful is political leadership. Additionally, building trust among departments and ministries is another key factor[7]. The existing literature suggests conducting sectoral analysis before undertaking MSC to understand characteristics of each sector which can then feed into devising a method for collaboration and coordination among these sectors. Forming committees at different levels (like state, district, block) and ensuring regular meetings amongst the committee members improves coordination, optimizes resources, and reduces overlap[8]. These committees also help in facilitating knowledge sharing, planning, training and technical support.

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5   World Bank Report, 2018
6   Urban, M. C. (2018). Abandoning Silos
7   Taking a whole of government approach
8   World Bank Case study on Malaysia

State governments which initiated convergence initiatives in their respective states, stress on laying out a detailed plan of activities to be undertaken. They also highlight the importance of chalking down specific roles and responsibilities[9] of each line ministry and department.

Absence of effective coordination mechanisms can lead to decisions being made on the basis of inaccurate, biased or incomplete information. It may generate needless waste and duplication of effort among agencies. Poor coordination can create additional compliance burdens on citizens by forcing them to invest time, effort, and energy fulfilling similar requirements with different government agencies because of lack of inter-agency information sharing[10]. Duplication of data, conflicting behavior, inconsistency and replication of work are some of the other issues[11]. Additionally, it may lead to delays in the decision-making process, poor and ineffective service delivery and sometimes results in failure of the program too. Huge costs are also borne by the government because of duplication, inefficiencies and inconsistencies[12].

2.1 INTERGOVERNMENTAL DATA-SHARING

Physical silos might be harder to break, however breaking virtual silos is much more achievable. Considering the amount of data generated by Government both at Central and State level, sharing this data efficiently among Ministries and Departments is one of the low-hanging fruits and can significantly improve governance. India has already started taking initiatives in this direction through various platforms like DISHA and IndiaWRIS. However, there is a huge scope of improvement which can be harnessed by leveraging new and disruptive technologies like blockchain which can help in making intergovernmental data sharing quick, accurate and transparent and help in addressing silos. As reported by NITI Aayog in its paper on *Blockchain: The India Strategy Part I,* from an Indian use case perspective, blockchain solutions are appropriately suited for addressing several challenges we face today. We have listed down two such use cases in Box 1.

Box 1: Use cases of Blockchain in government to help break silos and unlock synergies

Features of blockchain technology which let multiple stakeholders collaborate simultaneously, can help in achieving efficient intergovernmental data sharing by making it transparent, fast, reliant, efficient, automatic, secure and immutable.

Academic {Blockchain} Documents by CBSE: This has been established using blockchain technology to record academic documents by CBSE. These documents are tamper proof, immutable, transparent and secured as they are available in a distributed manner in multiple locations. Data is recorded in the blockchain on the basis of the consensus thus, eliminating the need for third-party verification. This has helped in addressing 2 challenges faced by CBSE post-declaration of results, (i) instant availability of digital documents (ii) verification of these documents by various organizations for admission process. These documents can also be used by financial institutions for sanctioning of educational loans.

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9   Report on Convergence initiative in India: An overview
10   World Bank Report
11   de Brí, F., Commissioners, I. R., & Bannister, F. (2010, June). Whole-of-government: Beyond Silos and Toward 'Wicked Problems'
12   Serrat, O. (2017)

Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals (GNFC) Fertilizer Subsidy pilot by NITI Aayog: GNFC being the one of the largest fertilizer manufacturing companies in India, operates a long and complex supply chain and claims subsidy from Department of Fertilizers (DoF) faces multiple challenges in receiving subsidies which takes 3-4 months. This includes redundant and inefficient processes, involvement of multiple agencies and hence multiple data entry points, lack of well-defined audit trail among others. NITI Aayog in partnership with PwC and Intel, piloted blockchain based solution to address these challenges. This led to benefits such as increase in productivity, end-to-end visibility across the supply chain, paperless transactions, and enabled pre-filled forms which reduced inputs from users.

Intergovernmental data sharing has its own share of challenges too, as highlighted in a 2020 report by IBM Centre for The Business of Government on *Silo Busting: The Challenges and Success Factors for sharing Intergovernmental Data*. This comprehensive report sheds light on the challenges faced in connecting datasets across Ministries/Departments such as missing or incomplete data which makes it difficult to merge datasets to gain insights. This is further exacerbated by the absence of digitized data. Low levels of digital maturity make it difficult for various systems to talk to each other. In 2021, data preparedness of 630+ Central Sector, Centrally Sponsored Schemes and Non-schematic interventions under 74 Indian Ministries/Departments was assessed, using a self-assessment questionnaire, in Data Governance Quality Index (DGQI) 2.0 exercise conducted by Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO), NITI Aayog. DGQI exercise measured data maturity levels across 3 pillars: Data Strategy, Data Systems and Data-driven outcomes and across 12 themes: Data & Strategy Unit, Action Plan, Data Generation, Data Quality, Use of Technology, Data Analysis, Use and Dissemination, Data Security and HR Capacity, Data Management, Synergistic data use within Ministries/Departments, Inter-Agency data collaboration, Prescriptive Analytics, and Good Practices. Weightages were assigned to the themes to arrive at a final DGQI score ranging between 0 to 5 for every Ministry/Department. Majority of the Ministries and Departments were found to be performing average on the Index highlighting huge scope of improvement required in digital maturity and preparedness levels of Indian Ministries and Departments, which will then lead to strengthened intergovernmental data sharing.

Box 2: The "Once only" principle in Estonia

The government started digitizing all of its services in 2003 via their state portal which helped Estonia introduce "Once-only" principle, mandating that the states are not allowed to ask citizens for the same information twice. For example, if an information such as address is given to one department like Health, Estonians would not be required to update it in any other organization like Census Bureau.

As described in 2021 ILO report on E-formalization case study, the foundation for this was laid by two major programmes (Tiger Leap programme and Look@World initiative) by Estonia to enhance its citizens' digital knowledge and bridge any digital divide. This was complemented by its efforts to address issues of corruption and informality by increasing the number of government services offered online. Estonian Government also ensures protection and privacy of its citizens' data through its Personal Data Protection Act which gives Estonians right to inviolability of

private life. This is further supplemented by Public Information Act which makes the institution that collects citizen's data responsible for keeping it secure and disincentivize institutions to collect unnecessary data. All of this could not have been achieved without appropriate digital infrastructure in place. For this, Estonia implemented its digital infrastructure through X-road which made intergovernmental data sharing, with stringent security measures, possible.

High levels of data maturity and digitization are the key enablers of this principle which has helped in reducing the duplication of efforts, administrative burden for both the government and its citizen, enhancing convenience, efficiency, accountability and transparency.

3. CONVERGENCE INITIATIVES UNDERTAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

Importance of multi-sectoral collaboration is well understood by Ministries and Departments in India, which has resulted into several initiatives undertaken to break down the silos using data and technology.

One such example is creation of a web-based database -IndiaWRIS[13] – that hosts data on country's surface and groundwater resources as well as on water quality. This 'Single Window' updates data in real time based on the information received by various stakeholders like States/Union Territories, without any human intervention, and can be accessed by anyone in a standardized national GIS framework. The system aims to make comprehensive, timely and integrated water resources information available to decision makers for effective planning, decision taking and operations[14]. It allows users to search, access, visualize, understand and analyze comprehensive water data for assessment, monitoring, planning and development of water resources. This is a join initiative by Central Water Commission, Ministry of Jal Shakti (MoJS), Indian Space Research Organization, Department of Space, and National Remote Sensing Centre and has helped in breaking silos of information across Ministries/Departments and other stakeholders. To constantly monitor and update the portal, MoJS has also established a dedicated organization, National Water Informatics Centre (NWIC) to maintain and update Water Resource Information System (WRIS)[15]. As mentioned by the World Bank in 2019[16], IndiaWRIS will help reservoir operators to use decision support systems which will allow maximum water storage while preventing flooding downstream. Additionally, such a database will help in accurately predicting flood scenarios, mitigate the risks associated with flooding and can help India fight water crisis.

Another case in point which aims to achieve efficient collaboration of multiple Ministries and Departments is PM Gati Shakti – National Master Plan for Multi-Modal Connectivity, a digital platform which uses geo-spatial data to bring 16 Ministries together for integrated planning and coordinated infrastructure connectivity projects[17]. The project aims to address the challenges related to lack of coordination between Ministries and Departments which resulted into inconvenience, duplication of efforts and wasteful expenditure. Through the Gati Shakti platform, efforts are being made to institutionalize holistic planning for stakeholders for major infrastructure projects so that silos can be broken down and various infrastructure projects can be designed and executed with a common

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13 https://indiawris.gov.in/wris/#/about
14 http://nhp.mowr.gov.in/Homenew/ComponentB.aspx
15 https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1643776
16 How real-time data can help India's water crisis
17 PM Gati Shakti - National Master Plan for Multi-modal Connectivity

vision. It is based on 6 pillars as shown in Figure 4[18]. Comprehensiveness will be achieved by including all the existing and planned initiatives of various Ministries and Departments with one centralized portal which will be visible to every other Ministry/Department to provide critical data while planning and execution of projects in comprehensive manner. This will help Departments to prioritize projects through cross sectoral interactions. The plan will assist in planning after identification of critical gaps such as selection of optimal route in terms of time and cost, which forms the third pillar, Optimization. The fourth pillar is synchronization, which aims to break silos of individual ministries and departments in a holistic manner by ensuring coordination between them. Analytical pillar will help in harnessing analytical capabilities of the master plan data by bringing it in one place with GIS based spatial planning, thus enabling better visibility to the executing agency. Lastly, Dynamic pillar will help the stakeholders to visualize, review and monitor the progress of cross-sectoral projects, through GIS platform on real time basis. It will help in identifying the vital interventions and mid-course correction steps for enhancing and updating the master plan. Successful implementation of this plan will translate into enormous economic gains to everyone stakeholder.

| 01 COMPREHENSIVENESS Visibility of each other's projects and activities | 02 PRIORITIZATION Prioritization through cross sectoral interactions | 03 OPTIMIZATION Planning of projects after identification of critical gaps | 04 SYNCHRONIZATION Synchronize activities of each Department as well as different layers of governance | 05 ANALYTICAL Entire data at one place with GIS based spatial planning and analytical tools | 06 DYNAMIC Data to be updated on regular basis for enhancing and updating the master plan |

Figure 2: *Six Pillars of Gati Shakti*

IndiaWRIS and GatiShakti projects are more focused on their respective sectors i.e. water and infrastructure. But there are certain dashboards like DISHA[19] which enables monitoring of project's progress and performance regularly and at granular level, across sectors for multi-sectoral collaboration. It connects directly to the scheme databases and captures Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for more than 42 flagship schemes across more than 20 Ministries[20] which makes it easier to monitor and compare data in one place. These Ministries include, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Women, Child and Development, Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology among others. Dashboards like DISHA are helpful in quick decision making and coordination at the highest level in State/UT and thereby promotes synergy and convergence of different programme for time bound implementation and greater impact of the schemes.

In addition to the central government, some of the state governments have also taken initiatives to unlock synergies at a higher granularity level. One such exemplar initiative was taken to converge Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREGA) Scheme with other schemes and programmes. The mandate of the scheme is to provide at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Some of the objectives of the scheme is to provide social protection,

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18   Same as 17
19   DISHA dashboard
20   Schemes_Included_for_Monitoring_under_DISHA

enhance livelihood security as well as empowerment of the disadvantaged groups[21]. A report on the convergence initiatives undertaken by the state governments at all the stages of project cycle highlights the importance of breaking silos to achieve the objectives of NREGA[22]. Perceived expected outcomes from such initiatives, as highlighted in the report includes increase in physical and social capital, enhanced economic opportunities, facilitation of sustainable development among others. Examples of two such states, Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh are given in Box 3.

Box 3: Convergence initiatives undertaken by Andhra Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh

Andhra Pradesh:

- NREGS converges with Ministries/Departments of Andhra Pradesh such as Panchayati Raj Department, Forest Department, State Horticulture Mission, Coffee Board and Rubber Board. Scope of convergence is identified and designed as well as the activities to be covered are discussed at the district level. NREGS is the principal contributor and line departments help with technical knowhow and funds.

- Case in point is the convergence of NREGS with the Irrigation Department wherein the works with manual labour and material components are met by NREGS and technical support is extended by irrigation, Panchayati Raj and rural water supply departments.

Himachal Pradesh:

- NREGS converges with Ministries/Departments of Andhra Pradesh such as Sericulture Department, Watershed Development Programme and Forest Department. A district resource group and block resource group is constituted to facilitate knowledge sharing, planning, communication, training, technical support, and resource pooling.

- In one of the gram panchayats, rain harvesting, construction of big tanks, tree plantation and water conservation are some of the works undertaken by NREGS in convergence with Agriculture Department.

Implementing agencies can formulate guidelines on convergent planning which define the methodology, resource envelope, and timelines of related Schemes. One state level initiative which is doing the same is Targeted Rural Initiatives for Poverty Termination and Infrastructure (TRIPTI) project which was implemented by the Orissa Poverty Reduction Mission (OPRM) with assistance from the World Bank during 2009-2014[23]. The project aimed at enhancing social and economic empowerment of the rural poor through the development of self-sustained and community-managed institutions for 1020 Gram Panchayats in 38 blocks of ten districts of Orissa. Convergence Guidelines were prepared exclusively for the project TRIPTI, keeping the objective of the project in mind, to facilitate the convergence of the project with different other schemes that were under implementation in the project districts. The guidelines steered in assessing the components of different schemes and their potentiality for convergence with the project at different levels. It was also prepared to keep in mind that it can be used both at the strategic level and implementation level to facilitate convergence. The guidelines also provided scope to understand a particular scheme [having linkage potential with

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21 NREGA guidelines

22 Report on Convergence Initiatives in India

23 Orissa Poverty Reduction Mission Project TRIPTI: Guidelines for Convergence

TRIPTI], its convergence dimensions, who can get benefit out of convergence, and over and above the overall strategy for convergence with different schemes.

One of the visions of the Government of India is to make all Government services digitally accessible in an integrated manner and provide better governance to citizens. As highlighted by UN e-Governance Survey, key blocks to achieve this are Whole-of-Government approach and policy integration which will require breaking down any sectoral barriers and silos. In this context, a working group on National Enterprise Architecture by ministry of Electronics and IT developed an India Enterprise Architecture (IndEA)[24] framework. The frameworks envision to treat Government as One Government, wherein everything is functionally inter-related and can facilitate a boundary-less information flow for delivery of services efficiently. Adoption of this framework can lead to Whole-of-Government Architecture for India, Ministries and States.

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24 India Enterprise Architecture Index
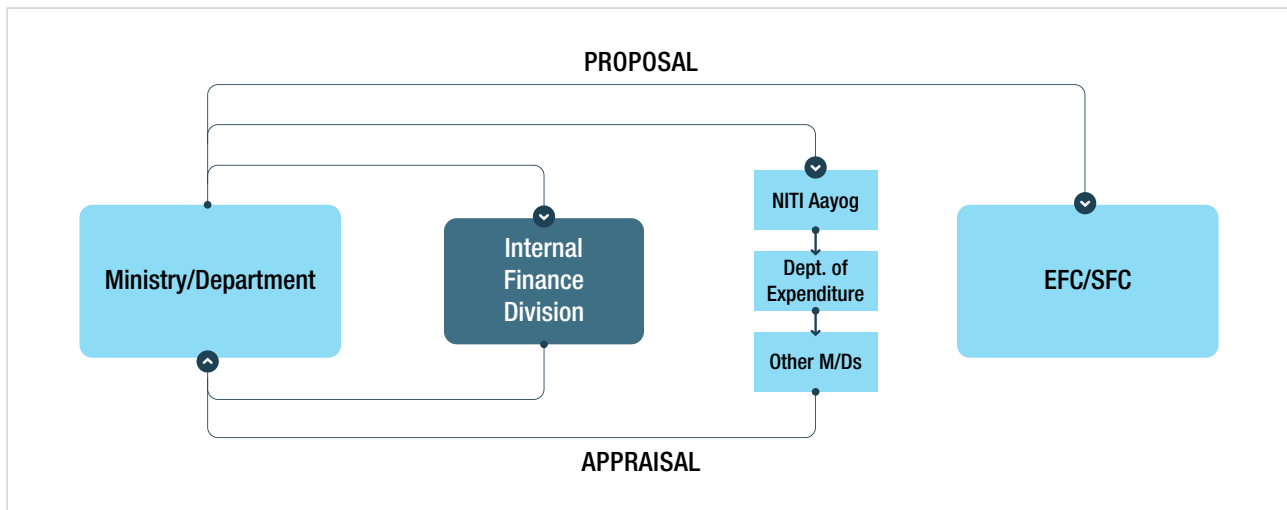
4. CONVERGENCE IN ADMINSTRATIVE PROCESS

The administrative process followed by Government of India for appraisal and approval of public funded schemes and projects can be summarized as depicted in Fig 2 below. At the centre of this process is a standardized template encompassing various aspects of a proposal, ranging from need of the scheme or project, financials, outputs, outcomes, implementation mechanism to initiatives around convergence, expected clearances, etc. The administrative Ministry/Department interested in launching a new scheme formulates a proposal in this template. The apex approval body is a dynamic committee called Expenditure Finance Committee or Standing Finance Committee, in short EFC or SFC, depending upon the budget of the proposed scheme. These committees consist of representatives from the Ministry of Finance, the administrative Ministry/Department, NITI Aayog, and other concerned Ministries/Departments. However, before meeting for a formal decision-making process, a consultation process is carried out. As part of the consultation, each of these constituent organizations are circulated a copy of the proposal, their feedback is sought, and their comments incorporated or responded to as deemed appropriate by the administrative Ministry/Department.

1.1. **Template:** The template specifically asks for following questions which may nudge the administrative Ministry/Department to think of converging with existing or emerging initiatives.

    1.1.1. Which existing schemes/sub-schemes are being **dropped, merged or rationalized?**

    1.1.2. Is there an overlap with an existing scheme/sub-scheme? **If so, how duplication of effort and wastage of resources are being avoided?**

    1.1.3. Indicate other schemes/sub-schemes being undertaken by Ministries/Departments which have significant outcome overlap with the proposed scheme. **What convergence framework has been evolved to consolidate outcomes and save public resources?**

    1.1.4. Indicate the component of costs that will be **shared by the State Governments, local bodies**, user beneficiaries or private parties.

    1.1.5. Indicate the administrative structure for implementing the scheme. **Usually creation** of new structures, entities etc. should be avoided.

While questions 1.1.1 – 1.1.3 focus primarily on horizontal convergence within the divisions of same department or ministry as well as inter-ministerial and inter-departmental collaboration, the question 1.1.4 focuses on vertical convergence across levels of governance and question 1.1.5 focuses on institutional convergence.

1.2. **Process:** The consultation process undertaken at the proposal stage is another determining factor when it comes to convergence. The Tier-1 consultation undertaken with the Internal Finance Division by the Ministries/Departments, has the potential to drive convergence across schemes of any given Ministry/Department. The Tier-2 consultation undertaken with NITI Aayog, Department of Expenditure and all other concerned Ministries/Departments, has the potential to drive convergence beyond the institutional silos and in many cases, beyond sectors.

Figure 3: *The current administrative process focuses on convergence through two ways, viz,*

In August 2021, Ministry of Finance issued new guidelines and template applicable for the formulation, appraisal and approval of public funded schemes and projects. The new template lays out additional points which can help break silos and address convergence at all stages of scheme or project cycle. First addition is of a table wherein Ministry/Department has to highlight the convergence at each stage of the scheme cycle (Planning, Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation) as well as mechanism on how the scheme will use convergence. Second addition is of a question on possibility of involving Panchayati Raj institutions and Urban Local Bodies in the mode of delivery as well examination of the preparedness and ability of local bodies in execution of the scheme. We looked at 14 EFCs that were received between 1st September, 2021, when these new guidelines came into effect, and 22nd December, 2021 to study two questions: First, whether these EFCs were following the new template or not and second, to examine the details provided by the Ministries/Departments on convergence. Findings are discussed in later sections.

5. TYPES OF CONVERGENCE

Multi-sectoral collaborations and convergence initiatives undertaken across the globe, including India, can be studied across various stages of a programme or scheme lifecycle that is, planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
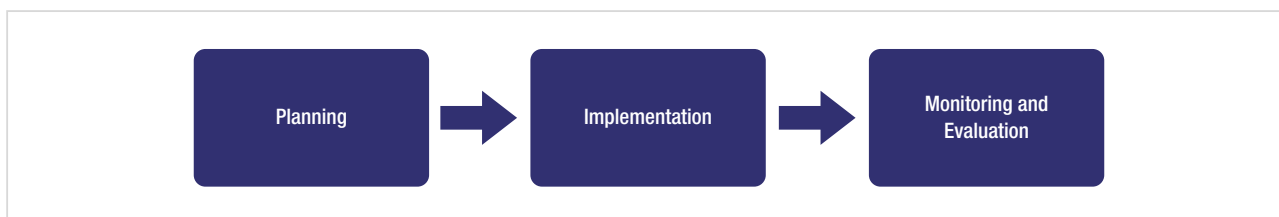
Figure 4: *Lifecycle of a programme*

Convergence is also undertaken vertically and horizontally across ministries and departments through interdisciplinary approach as well as through various levels within a ministry or department. This section of the report defines the different types of convergences into two broad categories at various stages of a project:

5.1 CONVERGENCE OF RESOURCES

Under resource-based convergence, available resources are blended in the form of financial resources, human resources, data base and technical knowledge. This is done with the help of various stakeholders across ministries and departments; both at the centre and state level. For example, the Mid-day meal scheme in India utilizes resource-based convergence with the help of the identified stakeholders to set-up kitchen gardens across schools - The Ministry of Education provides the seed fund; the Department of horticulture provides technical assistance, while MGNREGA covers the payment of workers for setting-up of the kitchen gardens in the school.

5.2 CONVERGENCE AT STAKEHOLDERS' LEVEL

This type of convergence focuses on the services that the identified stakeholders like the Ministries, Departments, States, and Districts, can provide for the implementation of the scheme. One such example is the Integrated Child Development Services scheme; it is a multi-sectoral initiative led by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the National Rural Health Mission of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The scheme through community-level Anganwadi centers and frontline worker staff like ASHA, provides a package of services essential to children and women healthcare. This type of convergence is driven by the changing needs of scheme beneficiaries in a geographical location where the scheme is implemented and these requirements are provided by other programmes and departments in the given region. The services may include technological services, infrastructural services, etc.

6. METHODOLOGY

A gap analysis was conducted for ten Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) Evaluation reports on 125 schemes[25] based on below mentioned 5 guiding questions to assess sector and scheme wise performance on Convergence: Unlocking Synergies with other Government Programmes theme. Relevant data was sourced from the ten evaluation package reports pertaining to the section on *Unlocking Synergies with other Government Programmes*, after which the presence or absence of information was coded into an excel as well as a word document for further analysis to identify current status of convergence at all three stages of the scheme lifecycle. Further, this data was also used to identify best practices undertaken by Ministries/Departments as well as key areas requiring improvement.

We analyzed, 125 Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) using the following guiding questions:

6.1. What are the factors involved in achieving convergence at national, state and city level? Any specific mechanism that helped in promoting convergence?

6.2. What are the existing mechanisms to ensure convergence across Schemes, Departments at different levels (i.e., National/State/District/Block)?

6.3. What activities are undertaken to ensure convergence at community level? Are there any Action Plans prepared at State/District/Block level to ensure the same?

6.4. What are the best practices/case studies with regard to convergence with each of the other schemes?

6.5. What are the challenges hindering convergence of schemes?

Overall, we were able to study 92 schemes, which had some information available on whether convergence was undertaken or not. Remaining schemes were excluded as no information was available or wherein undertaking convergence of resources or stakeholders, was not viable, as reported in the UCSS report. These 92 schemes were spread across 9 packages. Also, it is pertinent to mention that the above-mentioned guiding questions were not addressed uniformly across all the schemes and packages which limited the analysis conducted to study convergence.

Additionally, we explored how questions from the EFC/SFC template mentioned in the previous section are being responded to by the Ministries/Departments and how consultation processes are helping in achieving more convergence in public sector schemes. For this purpose, we studied 15 schemes and analyzed the questions present in their respective EFC/SFC template. We will discuss the findings in the later sections.

Throughout our analysis, we categorize the degree of convergence in three levels: No convergence, some convergence and high convergence. No convergence means that convergence is possible but has not been explored under the schemes/sector. Some convergence means that few initiatives have been undertaken but there is a lot of scope of improvement and more initiatives can be undertaken. High convergence means that many initiatives have been undertaken, which are also backed by the global studies, and their execution led to positive outcomes.

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25 See Annexure 1

7. CONVERGENCE IN CENTRALLY SPONSORED SCHEME EVALUATIONS

We study the level of convergence initiatives undertaken across 9 sectors and 92 schemes at all the three stages of the programme lifecycle as shown in Figure 4. More than 80% of all the schemes take convergence initiatives at planning stage, 64% of the schemes have undertaken convergence initiatives at implementation stage and 16% schemes reported to be undertaking convergence at Monitoring and Evaluation stage. The latter has the lowest levels of collaboration and coordination among Ministries and Departments across all stages of a programme.
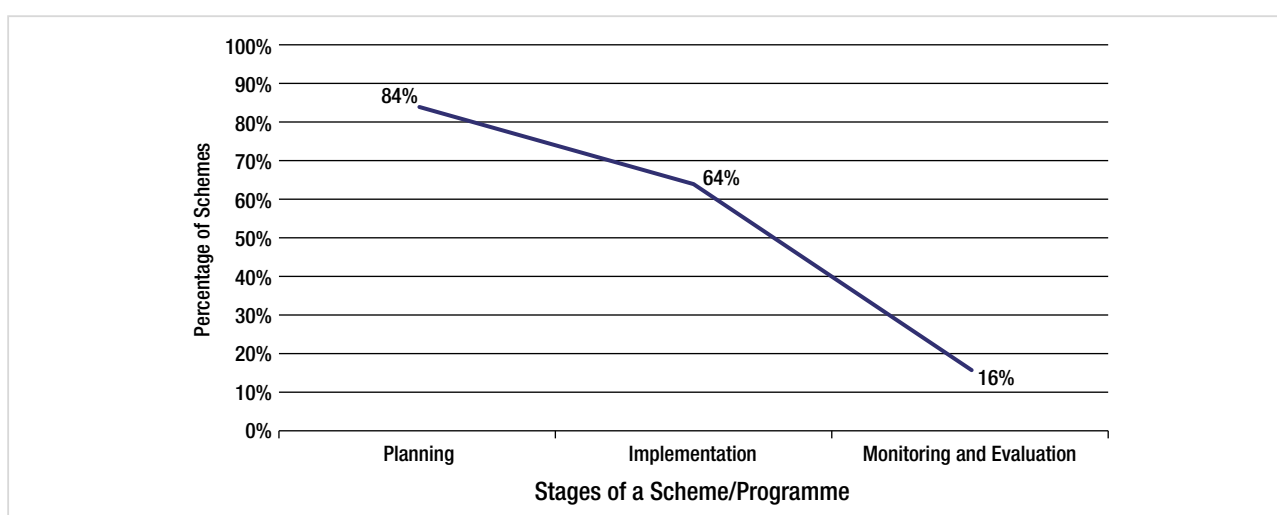
Figure 5: *Average proportion of schemes which have some or high level of convergence at each stage of the programme*

Next, we conducted sectoral analysis and analyzed level of convergence at each stage of the project. This was then color-coded into 3 categories: Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory and Unsatisfactory. Very Satisfactory means 50% or more schemes in a sector has high level of convergence. Satisfactory means 50% or more schemes in a sector has some level of convergence and Unsatisfactory means 50% or more schemes in a sector has no level of convergence. As we can see below, most of the sectors have performed satisfactory at planning and implementation stage however, for all the sectors, convergence is unsatisfactory at monitoring and evaluation stage.

■ Unsatisfactory   ■ Satisfactory   ■ Very Satisfactory

Sector	Planning	Implementation	Monitoring and Evaluation
Agriculture	■	■	■
Women and Child Development	■	■	■
Human Resource and Development	■	■	■
Urban Transformation	■	■	■
Rural Development	■	■	■
Health	■	■	■
Jobs and Skills	■	■	■
Water Resources	■	■	■
Social Justice and Empowerment	■	■	■

Figure 6: *Sectoral Analysis*

7.1 PLANNING

This section delves deeper into the convergence initiatives undertaken by schemes at each stage individually, starting from the Planning stage.

The process for convergence usually starts at the planning stage where the needs of the beneficiaries are identified and mapped with the objectives of a project/scheme/programme being designed. Since, each government program targets different aspects of a beneficiaries' life and addresses different needs, therefore, it is crucial for various project/scheme/programme to work in collaboration for overall enhancement of beneficiaries' quality of life. These collaborations are also helpful in reducing wastage of resources and duplication of efforts.

We studied 92 schemes under UCSS evaluations, to assess the actions undertaken in a scheme, as outlined in the evaluation studies, to converge with other Ministries/Departments at the planning stage of the schemes. We found that 20% (19 of 92) schemes don't have any convergence mechanism at planning stage, 59.7% (55 of 92) have some level of convergence and 19.5% (18 of 92) have undertaken a lot of initiatives at planning stage to ensure effective collaboration and communication across Ministries/Departments. Same is depicted below in Figure 7.

At the planning stage, it is essential to map the available resources for the program both, within and outside its scope, to identify gaps. Based on this, a convergence plan can be prepared and concerned stakeholders can be reached out to address these gaps. Planning is a very critical step towards effective implementation of a scheme/programme. Thus, it should take into account the maximum possible granularity. It is also essential to take into account all the aspects of planning like scope, objective, availability of resources, socio-economic requirements, availability of technology, infrastructural requirements, etc. for appropriateness of a program.

For example, it is observed that the Smart City Mission by design seeks synergies with other public and private initiatives to achieve the overall goal of the mission at the areas level and city levels. Convergence initiatives under the mission have also been drilled down to city level. Another example of such effort is the Mid-Day Meal Scheme where the scheme requirements are met through the support from various Ministries such as Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Ministry of Rural Development and Ministry of Panchayati Raj Institutions for infrastructure facilities such as Kitchen cum store, Drinking Water etc.

The planning level convergence would bring synergies between government programmes/schemes and facilitate sustainable development. One particular scheme which has shown high convergence at planning stage is: *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao*. It had scheme guidelines laid out, roles and responsibilities were clearly laid out too for all the stakeholders and at all levels – National, State and District. Further, there are committees at all levels from state to ward. These committees are reported to be meeting regularly which ensures coordination among all the stakeholders as well ownership of tasks allocated to all the stakeholders. Additionally, action plans have been developed at all levels so that outputs can be achieved.
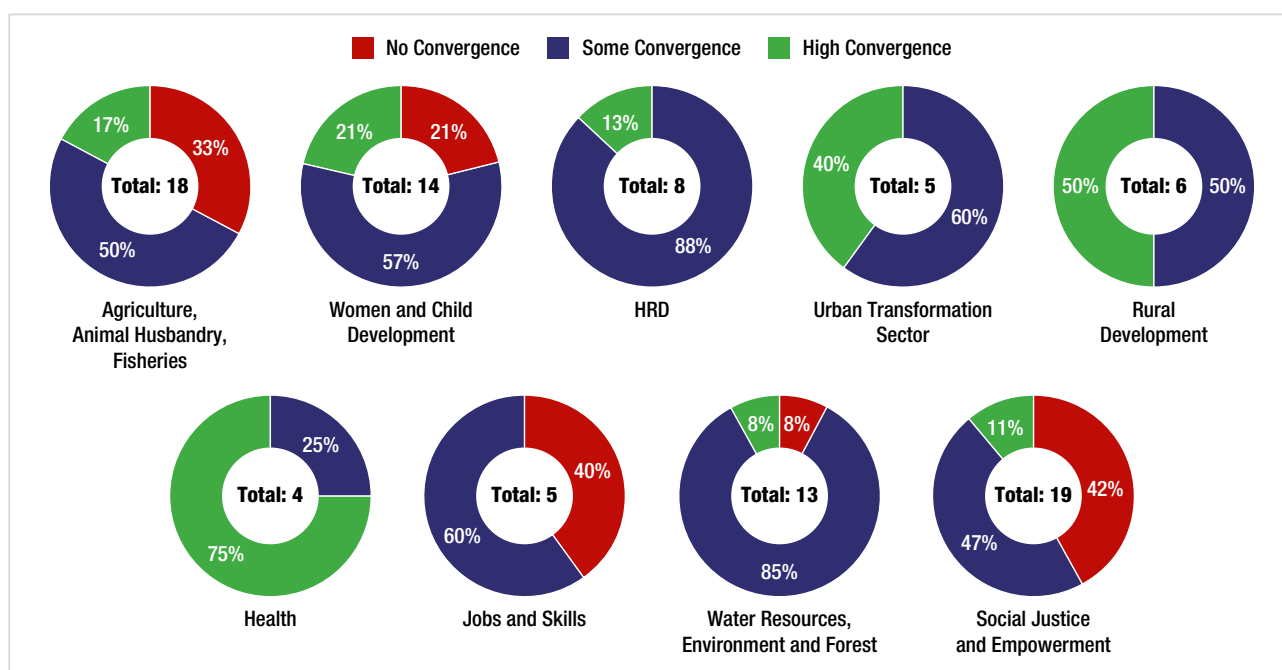
Figure 7: *Distribution of degree of convergence at planning stage by sectors*

7.2 IMPLEMENTATION

Once the plan for any government project is prepared, the second step is to ensure its effective implementation and reap maximum benefits from it. One may identify possible areas of convergence and build a common perspective with the concerned stakeholders. This will help in the negotiation with the stakeholders and drive more focus of the officials of the Ministry/Department, States, and other agencies to work towards a common goal.

In our analysis of UCSS sectors, we found that one-third (33 of 92) are found to be not taking any efforts for multi-sectoral collaboration, 52.17% (48 of 92) are having some convergence at implementation-level, and only 11.96% (11 of 92) schemes to have high level of convergence. Same has been depicted in Figure 8.

The implementation of any government program plays a very crucial role in the outcomes that are derived from it hence, focused involvement of officials from line ministries/departments, states, districts, etc is essential to achieve common goals and strengthen the convergence model. To address such concerns, various ministries/departments have taken up initiatives, for example, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA). The scheme has convergence of funds, technical know-how and human resources. Additionally, convergence action plans that

were developed at the planning stage were reported to be implemented in coordination with other Ministries/Departments. However, execution of these plans is flexible and can be modified depending on the phase of the implementation of the scheme. Moreover, the Block resource center overlooks the convergence of MGNREGS and other Ministries/Departments.

Another example is the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change where the 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats' scheme guideline includes a district level implementation committee to ensure convergence with other sectors. The committee comprises officials from Public Works Department (PWD), Tribal Department, Health Department, Agriculture Department, Power and Irrigation Departments, Education Department etc. Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) also recognizes the need for convergence for smooth implementation of their scheme and hence, took a collaborative approach and launched 'Angikaar' Campaign in the newly constructed PMAY(U) homes. The Angikaar campaign intends to converge with approximately seven ministries/ departments to meet its objectives such as the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change among others.
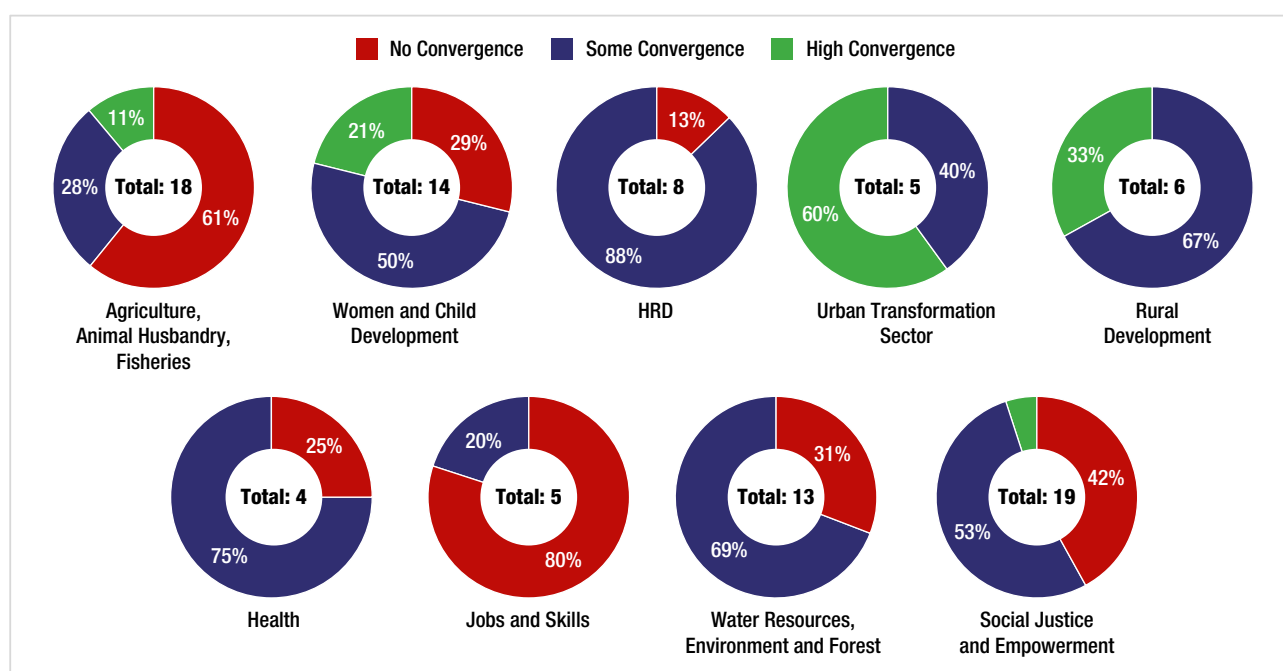
Figure 8: *Distribution of degree of convergence at implementation stage by sectors*

7.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Any convergence initiative needs rigorous monitoring through institutional framework placed at different levels. Monitoring at frequent intervals and at all levels keeps track of the programme development, fortifies productivity and ensures timely interventions. The government of India has taken up various monitoring initiatives and developed platforms for robust monitoring. Further, with the increase in public expenditure, there has been increasing concerns among the policy makers about the quality of public spending, outcomes derived from the programme, and its overall impact on the economy. This has led to an increasing demand for evaluations within Ministries/Departments and State governments. Undertaking frequent evaluations provides insights on the ground realities,

help in understanding the key gap areas and plays a pivotal role in assessing the overall performance of the project. These evaluations have also started to assess the possibility of convergence among M/Ds in a scheme to understand the utilization of all the available and overlapping resources. An evaluation not only brings forward the shortcomings of any programme but it also highlights its achievements and provides insights on the good practices that others may adopt.

Analysis of convergence initiatives undertaken under UCSS sectors found that 86% (79 of 92) were not undertaking any activities at monitoring and evaluation stage, 12% (11 of 92) found to be taking some steps and only 2% (2 of 92) were found to be making efforts which are leading to high collaboration and cooperation among M/Ds. Same has been depicted in Figure 9.

The skill India portal is developed by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MoSDE) that pulls together all skilling schemes at a common platform. While the Registration, accreditation and affiliation of Training Partners and candidate registration are done through this portal, the States are using the Skill Development and Management System to upload data and self-assess their skilling schemes. Another example is of *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* scheme wherein Project Monitoring Unit is reported to be providing technical and coordination support for implementation and monitoring of the State action plan, District action plan and Block action plan. Community is also involved at this stage – Gram Panchayat Samiti is responsible for the overall coordination and supervision for effectively carrying out activities under the plan. In addition to this, there is a State Task Force comprising of relevant stakeholders at state level which meets at least twice in a year to review and assess the progress on intermediary targets achieved by the districts. Monthly reviews also happen at district level. Moreover, scheme also undertakes comprehensive tracking of convergence initiatives by laying out some indicators and also making stakeholders accountable.

In the next section we delve deeper into the guiding questions we mentioned earlier as well as findings from observing EFC/SFC templates of Ministries/Departments.
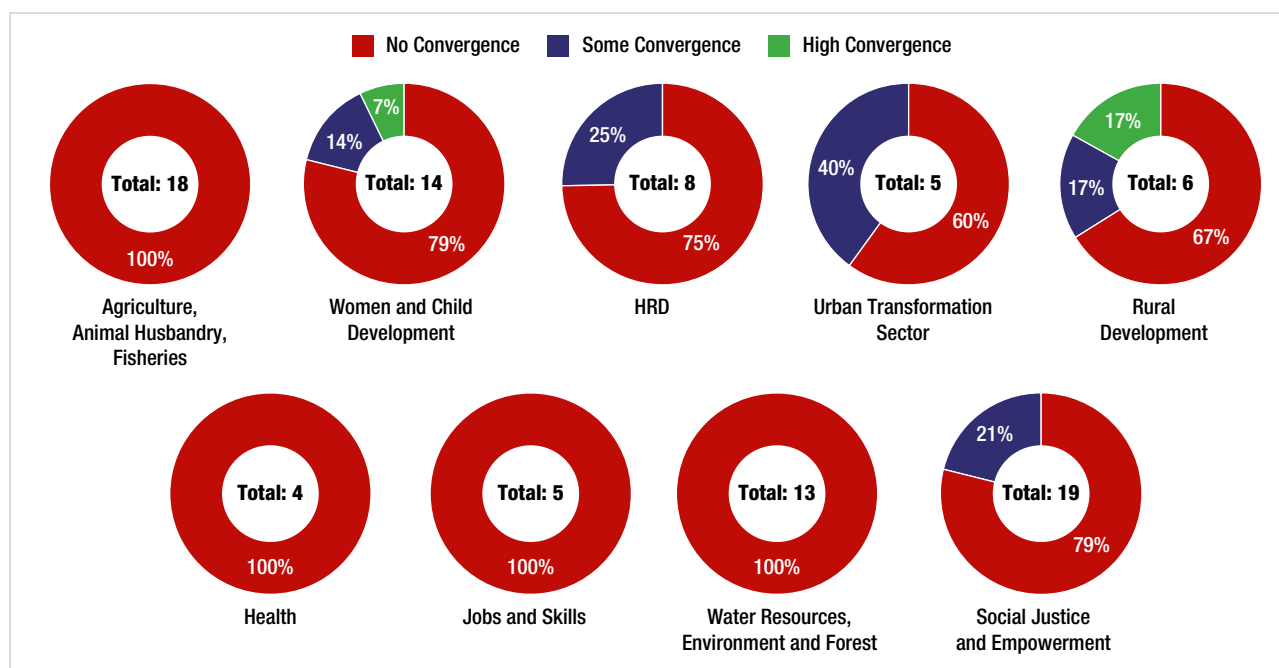
Figure 9: Distribution of degree of convergence at Monitoring and Evaluation stage by sectors

7.4 OVERALL CONVERGENCE

One of the key guiding questions that has been explored is: *Are there any existing mechanisms to ensure convergence across Schemes, Departments at different levels (i.e., National/State/District/ Block)? If yes, what are these?* We found that 65 schemes had information on the same, which is presented in Figure 10.
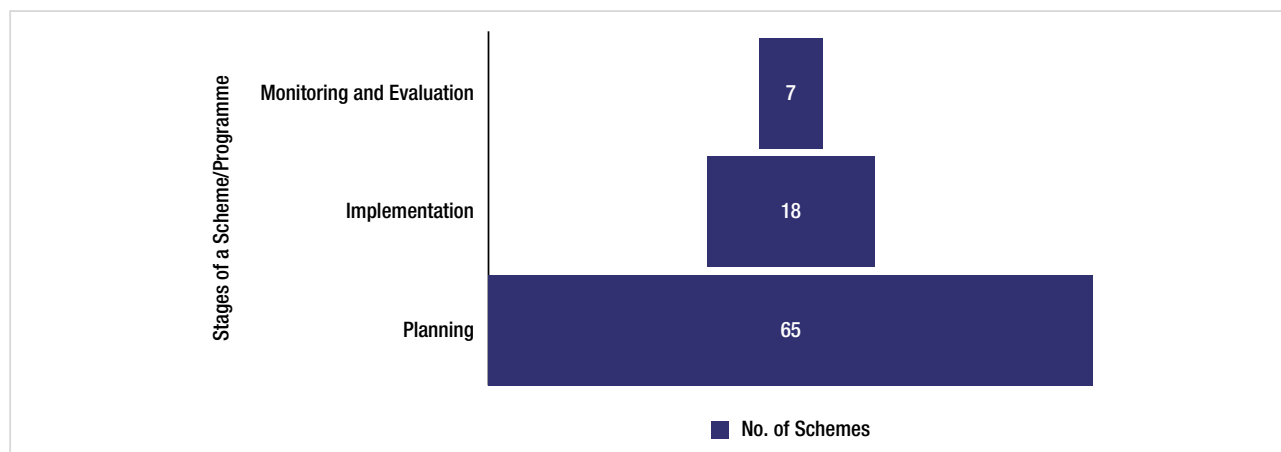
Figure 10: Existence of mechanisms at various stages of the scheme for convergence

The findings emerged from the above chart complements the findings mentioned earlier. All 65 schemes have mechanisms to ensure convergence at planning level however, a significant dip can be seen when we move to implementation and monitoring and evaluation. Further, we looked into the types of mechanisms which exists for convergence. Same is depicted in Figure 11:
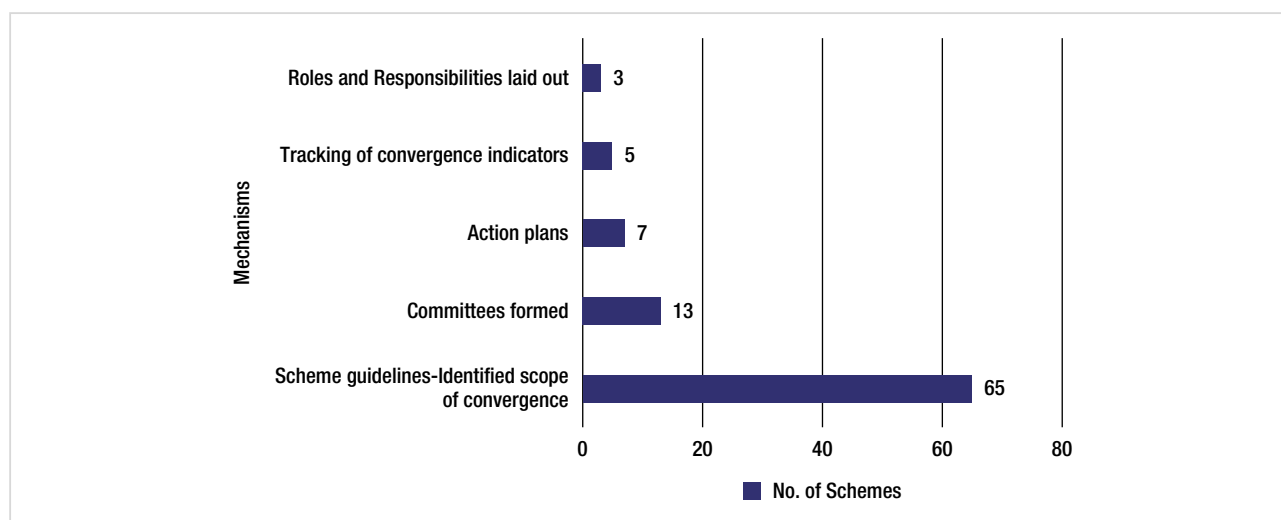
Figure 11: Types of mechanisms for convergence

All the schemes reported to have identified the scope of convergence through scheme guidelines at the planning stage however number of schemes which have other mechanisms in place are very low. Although 13 schemes have formed committees to drive collaboration however, only 5 of these have laid clear roles and responsibilities.

8. EFC/SFC ANALYSIS

We looked at 15 EFCs/SFCs[26] to understand the scope of convergence highlighted by the schemes, Ministries and Departments in these EFCs/SFCs. These findings align with the findings observed before:

1. We found that most of the scheme proposals either did not address the questions or their responses were incomplete and/or irrelevant. Such proposals indicated the schemes/sub-schemes which have significant overlap with the proposed scheme as well as the component of the costs and administrative structure that can be shared however, very little information was provided in terms of convergence frameworks to be adopted to consolidate outcomes and save public resources.

2. Even when the proposals mention administrative structure that can be shared, many Ministries and Departments don't specify the roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders and how the current system will be leveraged.

3. Mechanism to drive convergence and effective collaboration among various stakeholders was found to be missing. Only a handful of proposals addressed questions pertaining to the convergence framework in detail.

4. We also found that some proposals mentioned that there is no overlap and hence, convergence is not viable. However, analysis undertaken to come to this conclusion is not explained in detail.

Moreover, we looked at 14 more EFCs that were received between 1st September, 2021 and 22nd December, 2021, when the new scheme/project appraisal guidelines came into effect. This was undertaken to study if firstly, these EFCs were following the new template or not and secondly, to examine the details provided on questions pertaining to convergence by them. On the former, we found that 21% of these EFCs did not follow the new template at all, 50% were following it partially and only 29% followed the new template completely. Regarding the details provided by Ministries/Departments in these EFCs regarding convergence, 36% reported to be standalone schemes and hence convergence with other Ministries and Departments was inapplicable. For the remaining schemes, most of them (55%) were found to be providing some and incomplete information on questions pertaining to convergence, thus highlighting the scope for improvement.

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26 On the template which was applicable till 1st September, 2021

9. GOOD PRACTICES

This section talks about some of the good practices followed by various Ministries/Departments and State governments in tackling the issues and challenges they faced in undertaking the convergence initiatives. These have been identified using the UCSS evaluation reports.
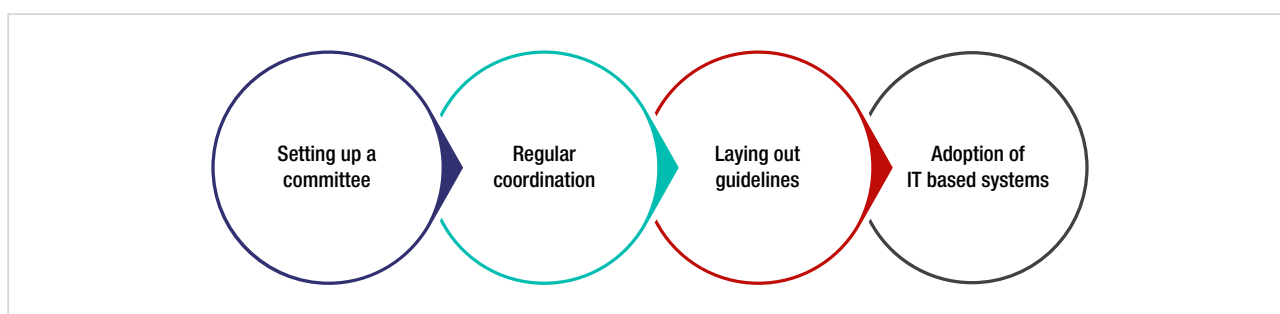
Figure 12: *Good practices for convergence*

9.1.1. Setting up a committee: One of the most highlighted best practices, not only in UCSS evaluations but also as per global evidence on multi-sectoral collaboration and convergence initiatives is setting up a committee which has representative members from each scheme to oversee the collaboration. If possible, it's recommended to set-up this committee at state, district and block level. These committees play a critical role in planning, implementing and monitoring and evaluation. They provide a platform for knowledge and resource sharing and help in reducing overlap as well duplication of efforts.

9.1.2. Regular coordination: Effective communication and coordination is the backbone of any convergence initiative and multi-sectoral collaboration. This has also emerged as one of the best practices in UCSS evaluations for schemes such as IDWH and tertiary care programs. As mentioned above, setting up a committee is one of the first key steps to consider. Additionally, it is critical to ensure that these committees meet regularly. These can be conducted on a monthly basis or quarterly basis. Regular meetings also help each department to stay on top of the activities of every other department. In absence of such a committee, ministries and departments should take the responsibility by proactively taking the initiative to arrange such meetings on regular basis.

9.1.3. Laying out guidelines: One of the best practices which helped the Ministries and Departments to come together and plan, implement, monitor and evaluate schemes has been presence of clear, detailed and easy to understand guidelines. They help lay out the role and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved therefore, reducing overlap and duplication of efforts and resources. As part of these guidelines, not only the importance of convergence initiatives must be underlined but also a framework or mechanism to achieve convergence must be highlighted. These must be laid for each stage of the scheme lifecycle – Planning,

Implementation, Monitoring and Evaluation. Currently, most of these guidelines are laid out as part of scheme guidelines, as studied during EFC/SFC analysis and UCSS evaluation studies however, these are neither detailed enough nor sufficient.

9.1.4. **Adoption of IT based systems:** Adoption of Management Information System (MIS) or Project Management System plays a critical role in the monitoring and implementation of the scheme. The architecture of the MIS creates an organized data capturing, processing and storing mechanism. It can be easily converted into informative insights to be used by policy makers for decision making. While periodic evaluations and social audits are undertaken by Ministries/ Departments or States for a given scheme or project, it cannot be the main mechanism for accountability and evidence generation. There are a number of dimensions to ensure effectiveness of a programme which needs a robust system while evaluations are conducted once in a few years. One such example is the One-Stop Centre (OSC) scheme which runs in convergence with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Ministry of Home Affairs; Department of police and Ministry of Legal Affairs at the national as well as district level. MWCD launched the 'Sakhi dashboard' which is a one stop platform for women help lines (WHL), Mahila police volunteers (MPV), etc. Some of the key KPIs captured by the dashboard are: number of women calling WHL, number of women referred to OSCs, the action taken by OSC to support the referred women, etc. The Sakhi Dashboard acts as a medium to functionally integrate OSC, WHL and MPV to populate and further monitor the violence cases against women.

Box 4: Convergence Guidelines for Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme

Keeping in mind the need for coordinated and convergence efforts to ensure survival, protection and education of the girl child, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme was launched in 2015 to address the issue of decline in Child Sex Ratio (CSR) and related issues of empowerment of girls and women over a life cycle continuum. Following initial success of the scheme, the initiative has been expanded to all 640 districts of the Country (as per Census 2011) through a nation-wide mass media campaign, and focused intervention and multi-sectoral action in select districts.

BBBP scheme released implementation guidelines in 2019 wherein emphasis has been given to enabling Inter-sectoral and inter-institutional convergence at District/Block/ grassroot level.

BBBP guidelines provide a detailed description of the linkages for convergent action with concerned Ministries for policy and programmatic interventions, training, capacity building and communication. The responsibilities of stakeholders across Departments, at the National, State and District levels are clearly defined. These guidelines also recommend strengthening linkages with partner Ministries and line Departments such as Panchayati Raj, Urban Local Bodies, Youth Affairs and Sports, Skill Development Mission, Registrar General of India (RGI).

Box 5: Enabling convergence in *Poshan Abhiyan*

POSHAN Abhiyaan is an umbrella scheme which covers a host of programs and services that target beneficiaries across the 1000-day cycle immediately after birth with nutrition interventions. These include take-home ration from Anganwadi Centres; anaemia prevention and control under the Anaemia Mukt Bharat program; antenatal care services; dietary counselling through VHSNDs; and schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyaan that provide quality antenatal check-ups.

Convergence in the POSHAN Abhiyan is achieved through the constitution of the National Council for Nutrition and the Executive Committee. Both these forums draw members from all the different departments contributing to the Abhiyaan. At the state level, this convergence is facilitated through the state, district and block level convergence committees that have been constituted, each led by the senior-most administrative head of that level. At the village level, the Village health nutrition and sanitation committee provides the convergence platform for service delivery by frontline functionaries of the two most critical departments – health and family welfare, and women and child development.

Convergence committees at the state, district and block levels support decentralized and convergent planning and implementation, supported by flexi-pool and innovation funds to encourage contextualized solutions. Emphasizing convergent actions among the frontline workforce is also seen through performance-linked joint incentives for the 3As (Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA), Auxillary Nurse Midwife (ANM) & Anganwadi Workers (AWW)).

10. KEY ISSUES & CHALLENGES

This section highlights the key issues and challenges which various Departments and Ministries have faced in undertaking convergence initiatives at different levels of the program namely planning, implementation and monitoring. Same has been depicted below.
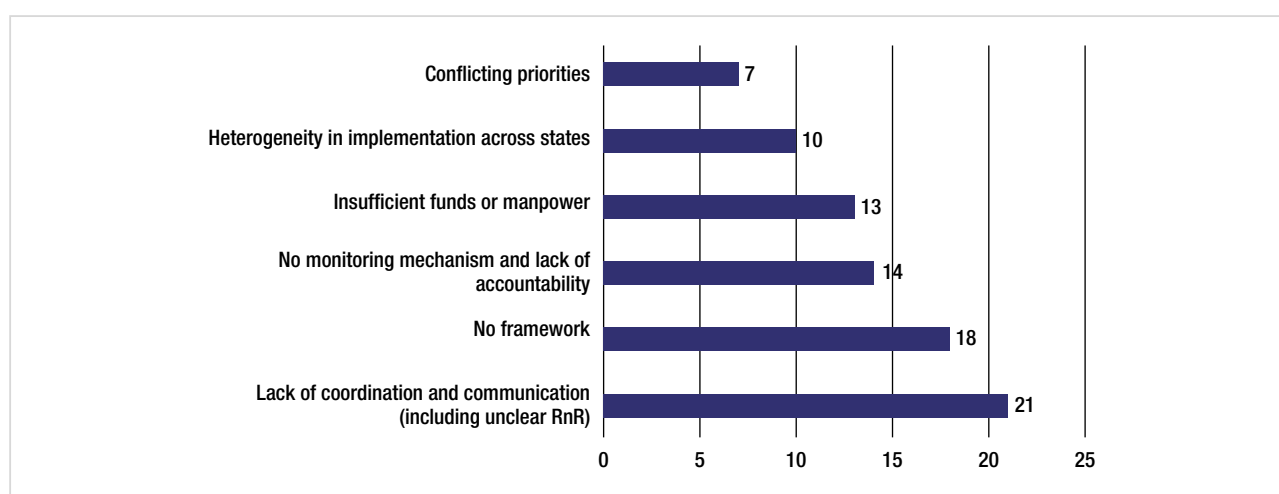
Figure 13: Key issues and challenges

10.1 PLANNING STAGE

Lack of a mechanism, complex guidelines and unclear roles and responsibilities - One of the key factors which has been observed to hinder convergence initiatives and multi-sectoral collaborations across sectors is the absence of a mechanism to understand and devise strategies for effective collaboration. Lack of easy-to-understand guidelines and a detailed action plan has made it difficult for various Ministries and Departments to work together efficiently. Additionally, unclear definition of roles and responsibilities and conflicting priorities of each Department and Ministry has also hampered effective coordination and implementation of various convergence initiatives undertaken.

In the UCSS evaluations, it was observed that in Umbrella schemes such as National Education Mission, SPEMM (HRD), PMGSY (Rural Development), and CNRE (Water resources, Environment and Forest) there are multiple factors hindering convergence initiatives. This included lack of a mechanism to ensure collaboration across Ministries and Departments, complex guidelines and unclear roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder involved.

Lack of coordination - One of the major driving forces of any convergence initiative is effective coordination and communication. Lack of coordination hinders planning and implementation of multi-sectoral collaboration by duplication of efforts and resources. It may also lead to inconsistency in data collected, delay in decision-making process, and causing sub-optimal delivery of services.

In the UCSS evaluations, it is observed that in Umbrella schemes such as RUSA and Saakshar Bharat, conflicting priorities and unclear roles and responsibilities lead to ineffective coordination. Other schemes such as SPMRM, WDC also find low inter-department coordination and differing implementation mechanisms across schemes to be challenging in sustaining convergence initiatives.

Lack of knowledge regarding convergence and strategies amongst officials - When officials who are responsible for planning, implementing and monitoring of convergence initiatives, have limited awareness of the objective of the initiative, limited knowledge of tools to be leveraged as well as limited know-how of methodologies for designing and implementing convergence in the initiative, then it poses a challenge to unlock synergies between various Ministries and Departments.

In the UCSS evaluations, it is observed that in schemes such as National Urban Livelihood Mission and National Rural Livelihood Mission, lack of trained officials and limited awareness regarding convergence has been identified as a key issue in undertaking convergence initiatives.

10.2 IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

Lack of motivation to work towards a common objective - When implementing a scheme which requires coordination and collaboration, it is very critical to define a common objective. In case of siloed approach, wherein each official is more focused on their respective vertical's/scheme's aims and objective of the policy, lack of a common goal can make it difficult for officials to streamline the activities/tasks that their respective verticals undertake in a convergence initiative. Similarly, in case of overlapping of some goals, a lack of common objective may result in duplication of resources and efforts.

In the UCSS evaluations, it is observed that in Umbrella schemes such as CSSTE, the lack of motivation of officials to work towards a common objective hindered the implementation of the convergence initiative.

Implementation of schemes can also be challenging due to the lack of inter-agency coordination due to the existing government hierarchical setup. This issue has been highlighted by a 2009 Government of India Report on Organisational Structure of Government of India**,** which mentions that **"**Most of the structures existing in the government are based on the Weberian model of division of work - a well-defined hierarchy, adherence to rules and, by and large, impersonal functioning. These organizational structures have stood the test of time to a considerable extent but are more suited to command-and-control functions and less so when it comes to developmental, promotional and facilitative functions of the State".[27]

Insufficient manpower/resources - One of the key requirements for implementing a successful implementation of any convergence initiative is adequate availability of manpower and resources. Insufficient manpower or resources can cause difficulty in tapping the full potential of the multi-sectoral collaboration. It may cause delays in delivering services as well.

In the UCSS evaluations, it is observed that in Umbrella schemes such as NEM, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Teacher Education (CSSTE), insufficient manpower, inadequate resources, such as infrastructure, financial constraints and absence of a detailed resource usage plan posed a bottleneck.

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27 Organisational Structure of Government of India (2009)

10.3 MONITORING AND EVALUATION STAGE

Lack of Clear Framework - Once a scheme has been implemented, it is critical to regularly monitor the progress of the program and to take any mid-course correction steps. Under a convergence initiative, absence of a clear monitoring framework or lack of a detailed and comprehensive list of indicators, outputs and outcomes, as well as irregular reporting of these indicators can create confusion among different officials and affect the overall efficiency of the initiative. It may also delay the key decision-making process

In the UCSS evaluations, schemes such as CSSTE, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Smart Cities Mission (SCM) have highlighted that absence of a common monitoring framework, to monitor relevant indicators which are common to the Ministries and Departments collaborating, with clear outcomes and indicators makes it challenging for different schemes with various objectives to come together. For example, DAY- NULM scheme monitors some convergence indicators on their monitoring systems. However, the tracking process is not yet comprehensive.

Various data portals across schemes - In a convergence initiative of various schemes, it is plausible that each scheme has its own data portal which has its own user interface and may make it difficult for various officials to come together and use data on different platforms in a sound manner. This issue was highlighted under NCS scheme wherein different employment portals managed by different stakeholders having distinct interfaces posed a challenge in multi-sectoral collaboration.

11. WAY FORWARD-MECHANISMS TO DRIVE GREATER CONVERGENCE

The above analysis shows that various Ministries/Departments have taken steps in the direction of effective collaboration of various sectors and stakeholders involved.

Through the UCSS evaluation studies, some specific initiatives, as enlisted below, have been taken at individual schemes or Ministry/Department but have the potential to be adapted more broadly through the lifecycle of a program.

11.1 PLANNING STAGE

- Formulation and issuance of **guidelines on convergent planning** which define the methodology, resource envelope, and timelines of related Schemes that implementing agencies can leverage.

- Undertake **mapping exercise to establish linkages/convergence combinations** across various centre and state schemes at the design stage. Such an exercise would identify components within a given scheme that can be leveraged in another scheme.

- **Pooling financial and human resources** in different schemes of government and their rationalization in implementing the plans at Household level and in area development plans.

11.2 IMPLEMENTATION STAGE

- Laying down clear set of guidelines on **what activities are permitted** under a particular scheme might help in undertaking more activities in convergence with other schemes.

11.3 MONITORING & EVALUATION STAGE

- Creation of **a common platform** where beneficiaries can be linked to all social benefit and safety net programmes. **Beneficiary and area tracking systems** may enable convergence of various government programs on an individual and area basis. The access enabled by schemes at any individual or area level may be tracked collectively to identify the benefits accrued at the relevant unit level.

- Use of **existing data systems and administrative structures** for monitoring of scheme implementation and outcomes.

Further to the practices already being undertaken individually by various stakeholders to enable convergence, the following administrative reforms might be undertaken throughout the lifecycle of a public program to further strengthen the convergence across programs.

11.4 PLANNING STAGE – *REVISION OF EFC/SFC TEMPLATE*

The intention to achieve convergence and save public resources has to be set at the design stage itself and hence, it is important to explore possible convergence within the scheme proposal. As a thinking tool, the following questions may be explored as part of the scheme proposal:

i. Is there any scheme with which convergence may be achieved at the design stage? *The identification could be through overlap of objectives, outcomes, outputs, activities or target groups between the proposed scheme and an existing scheme.*

ii. Is there any scheme with which convergence maybe achieved at implementation stage? *The identification could be through overlap of implementing agencies, human resources, technologies, financial resources, PMUs etc.*

iii. Is there any scheme with which convergence maybe achieved at Monitoring & Evaluation stage? *The identification could be through overlap of monitoring bodies, monitoring systems – MIS/data collection, joint evaluation systems etc.*

iv. For schemes identified in questions i-iii, what is envisaged to leverage this convergence? *These could be complementary activities to reinforce the impact created by each schemes individually, identifying grassroots agencies already trained in certain geography and program delivery skills that can be leveraged for implementation or even training a new set of staff if needed, or it could be identifying common intended impacts that can be evaluated to better understand the causal relationships etc.*

It is recommended that these questions may be asked at the design stage of a government program. As elaborated in the Background Section, Focus on Administrative Process, in a typical appraisal and approval process in government of India, there are already a series of questions which are designed in the EFC/SFC template to create the nudge towards enabling convergence. The questions highlighted above may replace the existing questions to promote better elicitation of convergence at the design or planning stage of a government program.

11.5 IMPLEMENTATION STAGE – *STRENGTHENING ECOSYSTEM*

Post identification of these convergence initiatives, as highlighted above under the good practices, it is recommended to form a committee which has all the relevant stakeholders. This committee should meet regularly, lay down guidelines for effective collaboration and communication. Additionally, all the roles and responsibilities should be clearly laid out. On a case-by-case basis, the committee may further intervene at ecosystem level to ensure,

◉ Building **capacities across levels of governance** to design for convergence at design, implementation and monitoring & evaluation of government programs and projects

◉ Formation of **joint implementation and review teams** to ensure convergent implementation happens throughout the program lifecycle

◉ Formation of **SPV or joint accounts for convergent fund flow** in case of common implementing agencies

11.6 MONITORING & EVALUATION STAGE - *CONVERGENCE CHECKLIST*

In order to ensure higher achievement on convergence, it is recommended to develop indicators, besides the questions mentioned in scheme proposals, which may be helpful in monitoring the level

of convergence at each stage of the program. The progress on these indicators may be tracked on quarterly or semi-annually basis. Additionally, it is recommended to incorporate these in the MIS systems of the schemes, if it exists. These indicators could be in the form of a simplified checklist which can also act as a self-help guide on program course correction for the implementing agencies.

1. At what all stages of the programme – planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation – are convergence initiatives being undertaken?

2. Has any committee been formed at any level– State, district, block, village – which constitutes members from all the relevant stakeholders?

3. If a committee has been formed, how frequently does it meet and what all is being discussed in these meetings?

4. Are all the roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder at each level of the programme clearly defined?

5. What all resources – funds, technical knowledge, human resources, others - are being converged?

6. Has a common mechanism been developed to monitor and track the progress of the scheme?

7. Has a common mechanism been developed to evaluate the scheme?

8. What mechanisms have been built for ensuring accountability and transparency related to convergence at each stage of the programme?

Overall, Ministries/Departments currently focus their efforts on convergence of funds. However, it is equally important to explore the convergence of human resources, data, and technical know-how as well. Also, analysis of UCSS evaluation of 92 schemes shows that currently, less efforts have been taken at the monitoring and evaluation stage. Therefore, going forward, it is suggested that Ministries and Departments take dedicated steps to ensure highest convergence at this level of the programme which may further inform collective design of converged schemes leading to unlocking of synergies across the various stages of program lifecycle.

As much as it important to develop all the mechanisms and committees, it is equally critical to build incentives for and capacity of officials and stakeholders involved in the programme to promote behavior change towards convergence. As mentioned earlier, one of the key issues has been to make the people involved with the programme, to realize the importance of horizontal collaboration as well as to motivate them. Therefore, appropriate training manuals and programs are recommended to strengthen the capacity.

12. LIMITATIONS-FURTHER AREAS OF INQUIRY

This study primarily builds upon the evidence collected through the UCSS evaluation of 125 Centrally Sponsored Schemes, and hence, we have tried to triangulate this with the administrative evidence that could be gathered. However, the study is still limited to the practices within Government of India and is not representative of practices in state governments. As also identified in the report, there are limited existing practices on convergence at monitoring & evaluation stage. Accordingly, the following further areas of inquiry have been identified for a nuanced understanding of future of convergence as well.

12.1. What convergence is being achieved with non-government and community initiatives and structures?

12.2. What kind of incentives can be designed within government for achieving convergence?

12.3. What kind of capacities and behavior change needs to be nudged to promote collaboration and achieve better convergence?

12.4. How to define the objective parameters on which we can benchmark the quality and extent of convergence across sectors and levels of governance?

ANNEXURE I

List of schemes evaluated under UCSS

Sl. No.	Ministry/Department	Scheme Name
Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries		
1	Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare	Integrated Scheme on Agriculture Marketing
2		Information Technology
3		Integrated Scheme on Agricultural Cooperation
4		Integrated Scheme on Agriculture Census and Statistics
5		National Bamboo Mission
6		National Food Security Mission
7		National Mission on Horticulture
8		National Project on Agro- Forestry
9		National Project on Organic Farming
10		National Project on Soil Health and Fertility
11		Organic Value Chain Development for North East Region
12		Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana
13		Rainfed Area Development and Climate Change
14		Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojna
15		Sub - Mission on Agriculture Extension
16		Sub- Mission on Agriculture Mechanisation
17		Sub- Mission on Plant Protection and Plant Quarantine
18		Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) - Per Drop More Crop
19		National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP)
20		Sub- Mission on Seed and Planting Material
21	Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying	Dairy Entrepreneurship Development
22		Dairy Processing and Infrastructure Development Fund
23		Livestock Census and Integrated Sample Survey
24		Livestock Health and Disease Control
25		National Dairy Plan-I
26		National Livestock Mission
27		National Programme for Dairy Development
28		Rashtriya Gokul Mission
29		Support to State Co-operative Dairy Federations

Sl. No.	Ministry/Department	Scheme Name
30	Department of Fisheries	Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund
31		Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries
Women & Child Development		
32	Ministry of Women and Child Development	Beti Bachao Beti Padhao
33		Gender Budgeting and Research, Publication and Monitoring
34		Mahila Police Volunteers
35		Mahila Shakti Kendra
36		One Stop Center
37		Swadhar Greh
38		Ujjawala
39		Women Helpline
40		Working Women Hostel
41		Anganwadi Services
42		Child Protection Services
43		National Creche Scheme
44		POSHAN Abhiyaan
45		Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana
46		Scheme for Adolescent Girls
Human Resource Development		
47	Department of School Education and Literacy	Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan
48		National Programme of Mid-Day Meal in Schools
49		Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan
50		Teacher Education/Teacher Training Institutions
51		Adult Education
52		Scheme for Providing Education to Madrasas & Minorities (SPEMM)
53	Department of Higher Education	Rashtriya Uchhatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)
Urban Affairs		
54	Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs	Smart Cities Mission
55		Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihood Mission (DAY-NULM)
56		Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY)- Urban
57		Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) - Urban
58		AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation)

Sl. No.	Ministry/Department	Scheme Name
	Rural Development	
59	Department of Rural Development	National Rural Livelihood Mission
60		Annapurna Scheme
61		Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)
62		Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)
63		Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)
64		National Family Benefit Scheme
65		Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (PMAY) - Grameen
66		Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna
67		Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program
68		Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission
	Health	
69	Department of Health and Family Welfare	National Rural Health Mission
70		Human Resources for Health and Medical Education
71		National Urban Health Mission (Support from National Investment Fund)
72		Tertiary Care Programs
73	Ministry of AYUSH	National AYUSH Misson (NAM) (Support from National Investment Fund)
	Jobs & Skills	
74	Ministry of Labour and Employment	Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY)
75		National Career Scheme (NCS)
76		National Career Scheme - SC/ST
77		National Career Scheme - Differently Abled
78	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship	Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana
	Water Resources, Environment & Forests	
79	Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change	Conservation of Natural Resources and Ecosystems (Funded from NCEF)
80		Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (Funded from NCEF)
81		National Mission for a Green India (Funded From NCEF)
82	Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation	Groundwater Irrigation
83		Surface Minor Irrigation
84		Repair, Renovation and Restoration (RRR
85		National River Conservation Programme - other Basins
86		Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Program
87		Flood Management and Border Areas Programme (FMBAP)
88		Har Khet Ko Pani
89		Impact Assessment Studies
90		Irrigation Census
91		Special Package for Irrigation Projects to address agrarian distress in districts of Vidarbha and Marathawada and other chronically drought prone areas of rest of Maharashtra
92		PMKSY- Per Drop More Crop
93		Servicing of Loans from NABARD under PMKSY

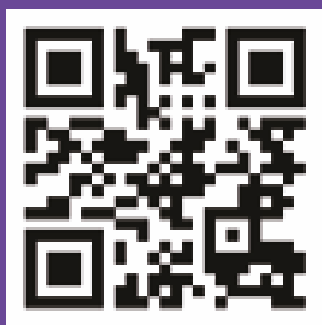| Sl. No.	Ministry/Department	Scheme Name
94	Department of Land Resources	Watershed Development Component
Home Affairs, Law & Justice and Social Inclusion		
95	Ministry of Home Affairs (Police)	Assistance to States & UTs for Modernization of Police
96		Assistance to States for Special Projects/Programmes for Upgrading Police Infrastructure
97		Crime and Criminal Network Tracking System (CCTNS)
98		Special Central Assistance for 30 Most LWE Affected Districts
99		Special Infrastructure Scheme (SIS) including the Construction of 250 Fortified Police Stations
100		Border Area Development Program
101	Ministry of Law & Justice	Gram Nyayalayas
102		Infrastructure Facilities for Judiciary
103	Ministry of Minority Affairs	Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakaram
104	Ministry of Tribal Affairs	Special Central Assistance
105		Support to Tribal Research Institutes
106		Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme to the Students Belonging to Scheduled Tribes for Studies in India
107		Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme for Needy Scheduled Tribe Students Studying in Classes IX and X
108		Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)
109		Tribal Festival, Research, information and Mass Education
110		Minimum Support Price for Minor Forest Produce (MSP for MFP)
111	Department of Social Justice and Empowerment	Strengthening of Machinery for Enforcement of protection of civil Right Act1995 and Prevention of Atrocities Act1989
112		Post Matric Scholarship Scheme for SC
113		Pre-Matric Scholarship to SC Students studying in class IX-X
114		Babu Jagjivan Ram Chhatrawas Yojana
115		Pre-Matric Scholarship for Children of those engaged in unclean occupations and prone to health hazards
116		Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana
117		State scheduled castes Development Corporation
118		Special Central Assistance
119		Scheme of Assistance for Prevention of Alcoholism and Substance (Drugs) Abuse
120		Post-Matric Scholarship for Backward Class
121		Pre-Matric Scholarship for Backward Class
122		Boy and Girl Hostel for Backward Class
123		Dr. Ambedkar Scheme of Post-Matric Scholarship for EBCs
124		Dr. Ambedkar Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarship for DNTs
125		Upgradation of Merit for SC Students

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