



DELIVERING DEMOCRACY

G20 CIVIL20 WORKING GROUP

POLICY PACK



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Delivering Democracy

Policy Pack

**G20 C20 Delivering Democracy
Working Group**



INDIA COORDINATOR

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1

BACKGROUND

Within the aegis of the G20 Presidency, India is observing three primary tracks of engagement. Of this, the Civil 20 or C20 is one of the 31 engagement groups and within C20, Delivering Democracy, is one of the 15 working groups. The 'Delivering Democracy' Working Group seeks to ensure engagement from all the concerned stakeholders in generating a platform for discussions for strengthening democracy, and for members of civil society organizations across the world to voice people's aspirations before world leaders who are members of the G20 nations.

While India is home to a glorious democratic heritage, there is a need for frequent iterations on what should be done in order to strengthen democracy in the modern world, given the synergetic features of globalization, technologization and the emergent demographic dividend in the nation. Development without democracy is akin to a society without morality. Any deliberation on democracy should explore the manner in which developmental activities should weave democratic principles into its workings.

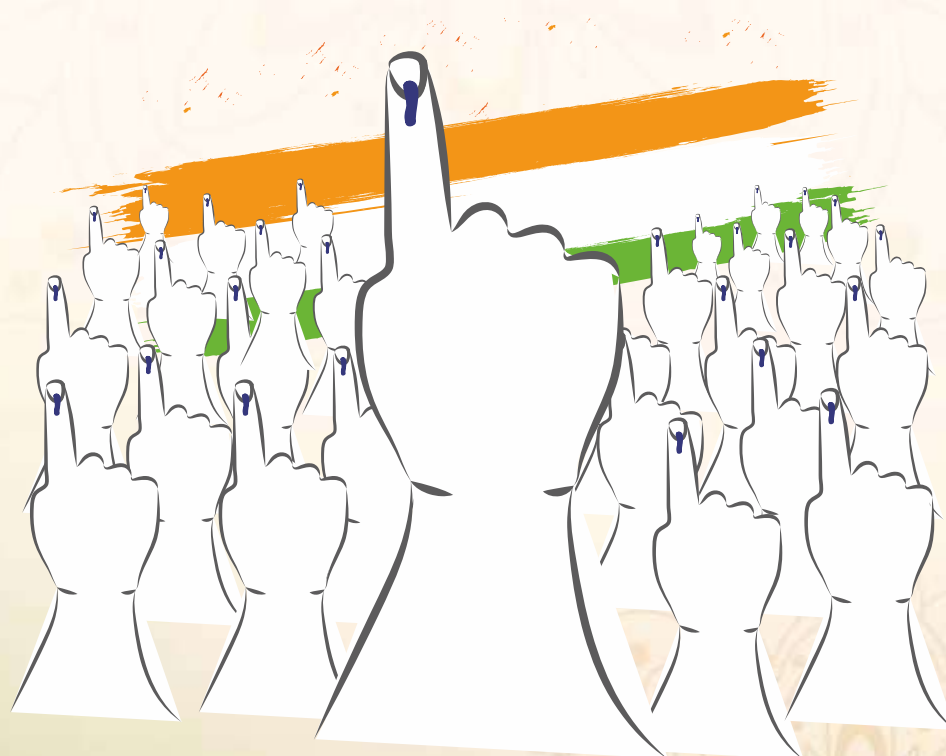
The objectives of the Delivering Democracy Working Group are as follows:

- Understanding and appreciating the rich history of democracy of the member countries: i.e., native models of democracy and governance, values and ethos, best practices and learning
- To explore how our democratic heritage can be a foundation for our democratic prospect
- To deliberate the role of civil society in 3Ps (Participate-Partner-Promote) Democracy as catalyst stakeholder
- To discuss upon youth (the present and future of democracy) and their engagement socially and politically as a responsible citizen
- To deliberate on ways and means for inclusive democracy
- To appreciate the role of democratic institution in delivering good governance and democratic participation of citizenry
- To discuss upon technology for democracy – how ICT can be leveraged to augment people's participation in governance and create a responsible citizenry at all levels

The Delivering Democracy Working Group has anchored following knowledge assimilation events, through both in person and virtual mediums.

- Inception Meeting/ Curtain Raiser Bangalore Civil Society Roundtable
- International Conference on 'Delivering Democracy: Retrospect and Prospect'
- International Webinars with the theme 'Democratizing Development' : 04
- Regional Roundtables in India : 04
- Youth for Democracy – Understanding youth's voice (Poster Campaign)
- My Stance on Democracy – Opinion Sharing by Stakeholders
- Shades of Indian Democracy – Exploring Rich Heritage of India's Democracy

The working group seeks to ensure engagement from all the concerned stakeholders in generating a platform for fruitful deliberations on strengthening democracy. Critical sub-themes such as youth and democracy, people's participation and grassroots democracy, strengthening and deepening democracy through civil society engagement and participatory structures, and responsible citizenry and responsive governance have been discussed in various events.



2

Strengthening Democracy: Enabling Youth, Engaging Media and Empowering Civil Society

When it comes to strengthening democracy, the responsibility is not only of governments but also of core social stakeholders such as the youth, media and civil society organizations. An enabling environment and strong support system should be provided for these stakeholders to contribute effectively to the strengthening and deepening of democracy.

2.1 Youth

Problem:

Challenges are experienced by the youth in accessing democratic processes worldwide. The issues such as lack of awareness, communalism, lack of press freedom, erosion of democratic norms and political polarization, as well as the absence of democratic government in some nations has led to limiting youth's participation in a healthy democracy. Nepotism/dynastic politics, the gap between the eligible age of voting and the eligible age for contesting office, lesser interest of women youth in politics compared to male youth, negative perception of student politics, poor political education and religious and class divides also hinder meaningful youth engagement in the political system.[1]

Solutions:

1. There is a need to engage young people in democratic processes beyond voting. Tools such as sports, music, dance, and theatre can be used to foster young people's leadership and decision-making abilities.
2. Technology should be leveraged to increase youth participation in democratic processes. For example, social media platforms can be used to facilitate dialogue between young people and elected officials, while online voting systems can make it easier for young people to exercise their right to vote.
3. Encourage young people to view democracy through an everyday lens, wherein they can participate in democratic processes to shape their local communities. Creating a safe space for young people to discuss and engage with democratic processes can yield a transformative effect. Also, there is a need to use

participatory training and engagement tools to inculcate democratic values and competencies in young people. Exemplars include UNICEF India's YuWaah!'s #Young Warrior Movement (with both tech and non-tech platforms) which was launched to mobilize young people to take action against COVID-19. YuWaah! has also initiated gamified tools combining knowledge development and on-ground action to nurture the capacities of young people to lead volunteerism. A 10-hour curriculum has been developed by the Capacity Building Commission, Govt of India to help young people kickstart their leadership journey.

4. The education system should include modules on transparency, governance, civic values and ethical practices to instil democratic values and competencies in the next generation. Training youth in civic education aside from their school curriculum will deepen their democratic involvement. G-20 countries should pass laws to develop basic content and benchmarks of achievement for civic education. Departments of Education in G-20 countries should make funding available for civic education that focuses on democratic principles.[2]
5. While offering civic education, schools and universities should offer students exposure to democratic institutions. In Sweden, the school curriculum includes lessons on the theory and practice of democracy. Representatives of political parties visit schools, helping students to learn about the political system.[3]
6. If youth demonstrate their value in civic and political positions, leaders may be more willing to include them in decision-making.[4] Youth should be included in committees or forums that meet periodically to discuss and debate upon various issues like Sustainable Development Goals, Global warming etc. Youth engagement in key decision-making processes would boost the youth involvement in Democracy.
7. Political parties and legislatures should develop creative ways of engaging youth in decision making processes. Lowering the voting age, establishing a youth ombudsman and/or including youth representatives in democratic decision-making bodies are examples of such innovative mechanisms. In Austria, the voting age was lowered to 16 for all elections at all levels in 2007. Evidence indicates that such reform is linked with a higher electoral turnout and also high levels of trust in the political system.[5]
8. Introducing student politics in university campuses is key in invigorating a sense of participatory democracy and facilitating youth engagement in decision-making processes. Numerous iconic leaders began their foray into politics by emerging as leaders from university campuses. However, the implementation of reforms for free and fair student elections and politics is a must for cleaning up the same and improving youth perception of student and campus politics. Even at the school

level, the school cabinets should be fostered following an empowerment approach. Respecting democratic processes and institutions should be inculcated from the school level onwards.

9. Have fellowship programs for youth to engage youth on issues of democratic values and democratic processes e.g. have youth fellows in local self-governing institutions
10. Youth Empowerment Ministry in Governments, where are present in different countries, should keep Governance and Democracy as one of the major agenda in the department's programs. Youth Parliament in Colleges and Youth Assemblies in the Community should be organized more systematically, leveraging the support of Civil Society Organisations.

2.2 Civil Society Organizations

Problem

Civil Society Organizations are a pillar of democracy. Countries need a strong civil society with the possibility of open dialogue with the government and to bring a rich consensus to government actions and public policies. It is important for civil society organizations to play an informative, consultative, deliberative and implementation role but it is difficult to fulfil these roles if the government does not establish systems that guarantee the support of institutions.

In reality, CSOs' role in strengthening democracy remains constrained owing to factors such as lack of resources and capacity of many CSOs, credibility and transparency gaps in some (not all) CSOs, and gaps in the establishment's trust towards CSOs in general. Around the world, CSOs have faced challenges such as lack of trust, constrained access to funding and political interference.[6] Even in Europe, CSOs have been reported to face various challenges such as: hurdles when accessing financial resources, difficulties in accessing decision makers, harassment of human rights defenders, and negative discourse aimed at delegitimising CSOs. [7]

Similar challenges have been is coming out a little too strong faced in other G20 countries. In India, many CSOs are seen as 'self-appointed do-gooders', characterized by a lack of accountability to communities or governments. Many CSOs are seen as 'personal fiefdoms of charismatic founders'. Jobs in CSOs are seen as last resort employment.[8]

A global civil society movement can be an important enabler for civil society empowerment and responsive governance around the world. However, there are barriers for a unified and coordinated global civil society such as cultural and linguistic barriers.[9]

Solution

1. A vibrant civil society is the cornerstone for strong democracy and ultimately leads to a more open and thriving society. There should be a constructive engagement between state and CSOs.
2. The government should focus on strengthening civil society; there should be institutional mechanisms set up for smooth coordination with and capacity building of CSOs, and there should be dedicated funds for the same. The period of the COVID pandemic has demonstrated the advantage of synergistic partnering between the state and the CSOs. Governments should create and implement good legal, organizational and financial structures and frameworks to bring together and support CSOs and aid constructive relations with policy-makers. Governments should provide measures for the financial sustainability of CSOs
3. In some countries CSOs sit in the panel or in government committees to contribute to policy-making and implementation; these mechanisms can enhance the confidence of common people in participatory democracy. Civil society can play a catalytic role in finding pragmatic and empirical solutions of various issues of national importance like population control and addressing malnutrition among children.
4. If we look back in history, there are several successful national and international campaigns taken up by CSOs, focusing on socio-economic human development, climate change, protection of natural resources etc. These campaigns have resulted in positive social change and development. These ongoing campaigns should be converged with the G20 and global south countries' CSOs for cross-pollination of ideas, for learning and exchange of best practices, and for cross-replication of methods of delivering democracy.
5. Election Management Bodies (EMBs) should work in cohesion with CSOs to promote and strengthen democracy. There are many countries that provide innovation platforms to CSOs to come out with interesting projects to strengthen democracy and governance.

2.3 Media

There is a deterioration of press freedom in many countries around the world. The space for free and non-agenda-based journalism is shrinking. Commercial interests are guiding media houses in many areas, resulting in restricted freedom for ethical journalists. Linkages with corporates and political interests are reducing the freedom of media, and reducing the role of media in amplifying people's genuine concerns to the

larger society. Often big media houses are driven by ratings, and they prefer to relay news that would create 'sensation', rather than news that serves the public interest. [10]

Solutions

1. Various news portals are using social media platforms as alternate platforms of relaying news. Civil society should support these portals, through donations or sharing their news, for sustaining such portals.[11]
2. Governments must support independent and public interest journalism by designing incentives for philanthropic donations to the news sector and considering tax concessions to support public interest journalism[12]
3. Citizen journalism and participatory video-making should be encouraged and fostered. Citizen journalism is journalism that is conducted by people who are not professional journalists, but who disseminate information using websites, blogs, and social media. Citizen journalism has played a major role in 21st-century political events. For instance, Twitter was an important outlet for the dissemination of information during the protests following the Iranian presidential election in June 2009. The tweets of citizen journalists showed the potential of citizen journalists using social media for evading government censorship.[13]



FIGHTING LAND CORRUPTION IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA: PARTICIPATORY VIDEO MAKING

Land corruption is a major problem in Sub-Saharan Africa. Shady deals between private investors and local authorities, citizens having to pay bribes to secure title deeds, and customary laws that deny women their land rights are all forms of land corruption that harm the marginalized.

In Ghana, a video was made with 10 widowed women from Kulbia, a village in the eastern part of the country. In this village, customary laws dictate that when a woman's husband dies, the land they both worked on is given to male-headed households. The documentary film documents the corruption and abuse that denied the widows their access to land.

The aim of this project was to enable community members to document land issues affecting them, so they can push for change in regressive traditional practices and bring an end to the corruption and exploitation that they face.[14]

3

Responsible Citizenry and Responsive Governance: Effective voting and beyond

Problem:

There are three dimensions of people's polity, a system of governance broadly referred to as democracy: (i) Limits on the ruler(s) (ii) Accountability of the ruler(s); (iii) people's direct or indirect participation in governance and / or their rights of self-governance.

Bringing people together is a major challenge in democracy. For instance, urban residents are often lacking interest in civic participation and holding their local representatives accountable. People's participation in public affairs is constrained by a lack of perceived clear benefits/incentives, increased individualism, cynical opinion of leaders and institutions, corruption in public life, and the 'free rider' and 'collective action' problems.

The global average voter turnout has decreased significantly since the 1990s. The sharply declining voter turnout in Europe, which contains the largest number of established as well as new democracies, is a cause for concern. [15]

Furthermore, people often vote according to identity-based criteria and not according to rational performance or credibility-based criteria. Voter choice in fragmented societies is determined not by performance considerations but by identity-based factors such as the ethnic identity of the candidate. [16]

Solution:

1. Election Management Bodies (EMBs) should intensify India's SVEEP (Systematic Voter Education Engagement Program)-like initiatives more systematically and beyond the election period. Creating Electoral Literacy Clubs in educational institutions and planning activities like Each on Reach One (every youth to educate one voter) are recommended
2. Using data from many countries, Birch (2010) finds that perceptions of electoral integrity are positively associated with voter participation. To enhance voter turnout, measures should thus be taken to ensure the freeness and fairness of elections, including the formulation and proper enforcement of code of conduct. In the Netherlands, the Ministry of the Interior adopted a Code of Conduct on Transparency of Political Advertisement in 2021. The Code committed its

signatories (political parties and online platforms) to abide with the ethical use of voter data in microtargeting, promote transparency in online political advertisements, and not to disseminate misleading content, hate speech and messages that incite violence. The Code was signed by 11 out of 13 parliamentary parties and 4 global online platforms in Netherlands. [17]

3. EMBs need to create a Democracy Coalition including members of Civil Society to plan and implement democracy and good governance campaigns beyond the election period. Training programs should be conducted for communities and community-based organizations, including self-help groups and families, to enhance their understanding of democracy and their role as stakeholders in the decision-making process.
4. In Egypt, one of the factors shaping the sharp increase in voter turnout in the 2012 elections was improved voter registration procedures. Improving voter participation requires action by election stakeholders, such as governments, EMBs, political parties, the international community and civil society actors.[18] Efforts should be made to get more people to vote by removing the barriers to voter registration and simplifying the process. Campaigns such as #Getinked campaign of Young India Foundation in India may be supported and scaled up. EMBs should partner with civil society to enhance the number of registered voters and to encourage registered voters to cast their ballots. Campaigns like Making Democracy Work carried out by civil society organizations like GRAAM and SVYM in India should be supported.
5. Performance indicators and measurement systems for legislators should be developed and implemented, for independent evaluation of performance. Such indicators may include attendance and frequency of speaking in parliament/legislature,[19] raising of issues of national or local importance, quality of debate, adherence to code of conduct, decorum and parliamentary speech and conduct, and contribution to the development of the electoral constituency.
6. The office of the head of the state or governance unit should be entrusted with actionable items that must be met during the tenure of the officer.
7. Governments, with support from civil society and the media, should provide the public with open and transparent data on budgets, expenditures and policies and their outcomes so that people can hold governments accountable. [20]
8. Important documents or policies prepared by the government should be floated in the public domain by employing the aid of technology. This would allow for greater transparency and an increased number of stakeholders providing their insights

and views on the concerned policy document. Placing the draft bill in the public domain for a suitable period of time should be followed diligently and for a larger number of bills. Also, social media should be effectively leveraged to disseminate draft policies/bills at the pre-legislative stage, as well as during policy implementation to have continued engagement.

9. Global governance must ensure the fair representation and participation of citizens, regardless of a country's affluence, because in a globalized world, the policies of one country can affect the lives of citizens in other countries. [21] On the lines of the UN General Assembly, there should be Global Citizen's Assemblies for debating issues of global importance. Both in-person and virtual participation mechanisms for the same should be made available.

Best Practices and Udhaharans

Making Democracy Work – a campaign to make voters informed

Civil Society Organizations like Swami Vivekananda Youth Movement (SVYM) and Grassroots Research and Advocacy Movement (GRAAM) in India have implemented a program called Making Democracy Work to complement the Election Commission of India's objectives. The widespread campaign is focused on engaging youth effectively, sharing information that is relevant and important for the voters, and making them informed voters.



4

Decentralization and Grassroots Democracy

Problem :

Empowered Deliberative Democracy (EDD) embodies principles such as practical orientation of finding solutions to real world problems, bottom-up participation (i.e. free participation by ordinary citizens) and deliberative solution generation (i.e. the generation of solution through rational debate and discussion).[22] EDD in its actual functioning involves public meetings or deliberative forums in local governance, whereby local residents gather, discuss and decide on governance issues affecting their lives.

EDD forums such as Village Assemblies in actual practice are constrained by certain challenges. In India, for instance, Village Assemblies known as Gram Sabhas are important forums of direct deliberative democracy for channelizing people's voice in decision making. However, in many contexts, Gram Sabhas are not serving as effective forums of direct deliberative democracy, and people's participation in these forums is often low. Low attendance in Village Assembly meetings, social divides, weak civil society and a lack of social capital have been cited as reasons as to why these assemblies have failed to elicit widespread people's participation and to exercise any decisive influence on decision-making, in spite of being given extensive powers.[23] In some contexts, villagers do attend these forums, but decision-making and the proceedings of these assemblies are dominated by the functionaries of the Village Council.

In Uganda, attendance in the deliberative mechanism of annual budget conferences in local councils is lower than required by laws, meetings are not as frequent as desired, and the language and style of these meetings are alienating many residents from attending.[24]

Solutions:

1. Variations in the activeness of deliberative forums such as Village Assemblies in different contexts should be addressed through capacity building. The services and support of CSOs should be leveraged to activate these forums. CSOs in turn should conduct capacity building and sensitization of members of the community for more active and effective participation in deliberative forums.
2. There is a need to improve the honorariums paid to the members of the local government in order to incentivize them to perform their roles more holistically.

3. Innovations in grassroots democracy and people's participation such as habitation/micro level assemblies should be implemented for effective grassroots-level community participation even in remote areas.
4. There is a need to map the responsibilities of members of the local government and discern the roles of the elected representatives. This would allow them to optimize their contributions towards their goals.
5. Community Radio: Each Village Council/unit of local government should think of a community radio station that can be used to hear the problems of the public directly from them.
6. There is a need for suitable training of elected representatives of rural local self governing institutions:
 - a) Training should use suitable participatory pedagogies so that the lessons are found engaging by the participants.
 - b) Voluntary technical groups consisting of CSO representatives and skilled retired professionals should be formed in rural local government areas and these should advise and support Village councils/rural local governing institutions in their work
 - c) Peer networks of elected representatives from vulnerable communities should be formed for mutual learning
7. Power and resources should be transferred to local governments to ensure better responsiveness to local needs and better administration at the lower level. Social audits carried out by villagers to know the actual usage of the public funds should be supported and institutionalized, and made active in their functioning with the support of CSOs.
8. Local development planning must be done seriously to make development more participatory and responsive to local needs.
9. Citizen's assemblies are means through which a group of citizens deliberate together and make recommendations on specific policy issues. Such assemblies have been used in more than 25 countries. Examples include Ireland (to decide on the constitutional status of abortion, gender equality and on addressing climate change), and France, Germany and the UK (on climate change). This kind of deliberative democracy results in benefits such as more informed preferences, resolving deadlocks and eliciting greater public confidence in the decisions of these bodies. Deliberative polling, a technique that brings people with different viewpoints together in a moderated discussion about key public issues, can help foster constructive dialogue between groups with differing opinions and resolve

deadlock. In Uganda, deliberative polling allowed different groups to talk to each other, which sometimes helped people change their initial opinions and move towards consensus or agreement.[25]

International Best Practice: The Ostbelgien Model of Belgium providing a permanent Citizen's Council

In 2019, a permanent Citizens' Council was established in Ostbelgien (Eastern Belgium) which constitutes the third fundamental democratic institution along with the Parliament and the Executive. Every inhabitant of the Ostbelgien region is eligible to be included in the Council, provided that they are at least 16 years old and don't hold political office. Those who take part will have their costs covered and also given a small per diem allowance.[26]

In the Ostbelgien model, 24 randomly selected citizens form the Citizens' Council. They are supposed to represent fellow citizens for one and a half years. Among the first 24 members, six were randomly selected among the participants of a previous Citizens' Panel that took place in the region; six were politicians – one from each political party, and twelve were randomly selected citizens from the population of Ostbelgien.[27]

The tenure of the Permanent Citizens' Council is similar to that of an upper house of legislature such as India's Rajya Sabha. Every six months, one-third of the cohort of members is rotated out, to be replaced with randomly selected citizens. The politicians will be the first to be rotated out and will be replaced by citizens selected through a civic lottery. This is to ensure that the Citizens' Council does not become a body of politicians.

The Citizens' Council has the power to decide its own agenda. Citizen proposals that have the support of at least 100 citizens, as well as proposals of parliamentary groups or the government can also be submitted for the consideration of the Citizens' Council.

The Citizen's Panel can also constitute up to three ad hoc Citizens' Panels on the most pressing policy issues of their choice. Each Citizens' Panel will comprise 25 to 50 randomly selected citizens, who will meet for a minimum of three times over three months.

The obligation of the authorities to consider the recommendations of the Citizen's Panel is a noteworthy feature of the system. According to the law, the regional parliament is required to debate and respond to the recommendations developed by the Citizens' Panels. The implementation of accepted recommendations is further monitored by the Citizens' Council.

The Ostbelgien model is thus an example where citizens are given a genuine voice in setting the policy agenda and empowered to actively explore issues of their choice.

International Best Practice: Concerted Campaign by Council of Europe for Strengthening Local Participatory Democracy in Georgia

The Division of Elections and Civil Society (DGII) of the Council of Europe, together with the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe, initiated a new three-year project titled "Strengthening participatory democracy and human rights at the local level in Georgia". [28]

The aim of the project is to improve the legal framework for citizen participation, enhance existing mechanisms, and to promote new tools of citizen participation in partnership with civil society actors and local authorities.

The project entails the introduction of innovative participatory tools in at least 10 pilot municipalities. The planned activities include awareness-raising campaigns, cascade-mode training sessions of representatives of CSOs, authorities and experts, and peer-to-peer exchanges.

The project will provide policy and legal expertise and technical assistance to local governments and CSOs, who intend to implement concrete initiatives for the effective political participation of citizens in their community, in areas like urban planning and school participatory budgeting.



5

Digital Democracy

Problem:

ICTs (Information and Communication Technologies) offer many advantages such as greater access to information, greater connectivity between people, etc. However, an imbalance exists in access to digital technology, which is known as the digital divide. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the specialized agency of the United Nations (UN), revealed in 2021 that almost half of the earth's population does not even have access to the Internet. Digital divide affects 52 % of women and 42% of men in the world. According to data from the Internet portal World Stats as of December 2021, in Africa, only 43.1 % people had Internet access, compared to 88.4 % of Europeans and 93.4 % of Americans.[29] The causes of digital divide range from the high price of devices to the lack of knowledge about their use or the lack of infrastructure for their access. The lack of digital skills or lack of digital literacy is an important factor shaping the digital divide. [30]

With respect to the regulation of the Internet there is a striking gap in coordinated global governance. There are many problems ranging from privacy and free expression of individuals to protection against systemic risks such as cyber-criminal organizations and unlawful surveillance by businesses and governments. There are many institutions for the global governance of the internet ecosystem, including the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, the International Telecommunication Union, the Internet Engineering Task Force and the World Intellectual Property Organization. However, there is the lack of a single global agency to coordinate these various organizations.[31]

Solutions:

1. There is a need to reduce the digital divide through digital literacy campaigns. Digital literacy campaigns should be customized and implemented for different age groups, genders, social categories and education levels. In Odisha, India, for example, rural and tribal women were trained by trained master trainers from their community ("Digital Sathis") in a campaign designed and implemented by CYSD in collaboration with the Foundation for Rural Entrepreneurship Development (FRIEND) and supported by Google.[32]
2. For citizens to better understand policies, and have informed opinions on them for

better accountability, more infotainment content on policy matters should be developed and disseminated through social media.

3. The social media platform service providers should be held more accountable for being more proactive to check fake news and malicious propaganda. It is in the interest of the government to have a civic sphere that is not murky with fake news but is productive with positive conversation.
4. There is a need for a multinational organization that can coordinate and mobilize governments and their multiple organizations working on internet governance. The United Nations is well equipped to house such a coordinating agency and the G20 should push it to take a leadership role to that end.[33]
5. G-20 democracies should address the use of bots in social media manipulation. Bots (automated accounts pretending to be real people) can be used to distort the online media environment by spreading false information, creating discord, and drowning independent reporting and factual information. In the United States, the Bot Disclosure and Accountability Bill would authorize the Federal Trade Commission to mandate the public disclosure of bots intended to replicate human activity.[34]
6. Digital technology should be well utilized to make governance more transparent, innovative and participatory (see Udaharans below).

Digital Platform for Community Participation - Udaharans (Best Practices):

The Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Govt of Karnataka, India is contemplating livestreaming Gram Sabha (Village Assembly) meetings on social media platforms. This would enable the community members out of the village, especially the youth to join these assemblies from wherever they are, without missing their education or employment, and have their say as well.

Holding School Level Election using Voting Applications

This enables achievement of the objective of creating interest among children about voting, participation in democratic processes as well as using technology. School level elections should be mandated and an existing free application may be used. Some of the CSOs are already practising this at their own level to conduct school elections.

6

Inclusive Democracy

Problem:

When marginalized groups are excluded from the democratic process of their country, the quality of governance suffers, and elected officials become deprived of vital input on public priorities.[35] There remain many barriers to the democratic participation of women and also marginalized communities such as the disabled and indigenous peoples or tribals.

There are several gaps in women's participation in democracies. Latest data from UN Women shows that women represent 22.8% of Cabinet members heading Ministries. Only 26.5 % of members in single or lower houses of parliament in the world are women. Data from 136 countries shows that women constitute nearly 34 per cent of elected members in local bodies. Only two countries have reached 50 per cent women's representation in local government.[36]

Evidence shows that gender quotas have helped enhance women's participation in political governance forums. In countries with legislated candidate quotas, women's representation is five percentage points higher in parliaments and seven percentage points higher in local government, compared to countries without such legislated quotas.[37]

Solution:

1. As the evidence shows, reservation or quotas for women's participation in political governance have been effective. Countries that have not adopted such quotas as per the law should take steps to do so. CSOs should take the lead in organizing a concerted campaign to bring the issue higher on the policy agenda.
2. Intrinsic democratic ethos of the tribal communities, which is characterized by consensus-based decision making, respect for freedom of all, harmony, listening to all, community ownership and gender equality, can serve as an example for strengthening and deepening democracy.
3. Democracy is truly realized when an asset – less individual is able to hold the institutions of democracy accountable. Therefore, pro-active measures should be taken to mobilize and give incentives for participation of the socially and economically weaker sections of society. The government should encourage and

incentivize participation of citizens via non-monetary means in the decision-making process, especially in rural areas.

4. There is a need for democratic empowerment of the most vulnerable sections of society, for example through voter education and awareness of specially-abled individuals
5. Run public campaigns using role models among disabled persons to boost the morale and democratic participation of the community.
6. Decriminalize and de-stigmatize stigmatized communities such as Sex Workers, in order to promote both recognition and rights.
7. Employ the use of media to highlight the challenges experienced by members of the gender-expansive community as well as sexual minorities.
8. Gender mainstreaming or gender equality mechanisms should be applied to all public policies in G20 countries. [38]
9. Digital Dignity Volunteers at the grassroots level are required to preserve sanity and sanctity on social media platforms. As these platforms are an opportunity to engage citizens for democracy and good governance, they should be safeguarded from fake content and hate messages. This will also enhance youth participation and volunteering.
10. Migrants should be empowered to participate in the democratic process. In Australia, the government has invested in educating migrants in several languages through the Democracy Ambassadors Program. In this process, migrant women have become the most active participants in voting.
11. People sitting on the last ladder of the society should be kept in mind while framing policies and programs. Inputs should be taken from the aggrieved sections such as Persons with Disability, so that they can better say what is good and what is not good for them. Service providers and administrators also must be fully sensitized about the issues and challenges of persons with disabilities.

7

Democratizing Development

According to Amartya Sen, development is enhanced by democracy and the protection of human rights. Such rights, especially freedom of the press, speech, assembly, and so forth increase the likelihood of honest, clean, good government. Development is the process of expanding human freedom. It is “the enhancement of freedoms that allow people to lead lives that they have reason to live”. Hence “development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systemic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or overactivity of repressive states” .[39]

Health and education are critical aspects of development. Due to the commonly followed top-down models of governance, there is often a gap between people's needs and the services that are provided. Such gaps are all the more pronounced for the most vulnerable communities such as the indigenous peoples who have their distinct values, world view and lifestyle.

To increase the likelihood of health, education and other such services being more responsive to people's needs and aspirations, there is a need to ensure a strong participatory orientation in health, education and other aspects of development governance.

Solution:

Various participatory or 'communitization' mechanisms should be adopted at the local or hyper-local levels for enabling local communities to participate actively in decision making, resource allocation, implementation and monitoring of services in various domains such as health, education, water and sanitation, skill development and livelihood. This section provides several best practices and Udaharans that shed light on such mechanisms adopted in India, Brazil, Thailand and other countries.

Udaharans and best practices from civil society

Community Monitoring for Strengthening Responsible Participation Leveraging ICT – Experience of Arogya Shreni in Karnataka and Jan Arogya Shreni in Jharkhand[40]

Social accountability can be enhanced through the use of citizen report cards, which give citizens a voice in assessing the performance of public institutions. Such experiments have been attempted in India, with the Public Affairs Centre (PAC), which developed a framework for measuring citizen satisfaction with urban public service providers in Bangalore, India. The report card exercise raised awareness of service providers' poor performance and pressurized them to take corrective action.[41] Over successive rounds of the survey, citizen satisfaction with civic services in Bangalore showed improvement.

GRAAM, India has pioneered a technology-based citizen participation model, bringing community ranking cards for strengthening community participation and accountability of primary health care services in the states of Karnataka ('ArogyaShreni') and Jharkhand ('Jan Arogya Shreni').

Monitoring, which has the goal of ensuring the implementation of activities vis-à-vis the plan, is often considered a fault-finding process. The essence of monitoring, however, is to be vigilant about the processes and align the project activities to achieve the planned outputs. Community is usually considered as a beneficiary or target of interventions, instead of being given the status of stakeholder. The effort previously done by GRAAM through its Arogya Shreni project in Karnataka, and done recently in Jharkhand through its Jan Arogya Shreni action research project, is to provide the community with stakeholder status. Involving the community as part of the solution instead of seeing them as the reason for the problem is a paradigm shift in planning and thinking.

Arogyashreni - an action research project implemented by GRAAM across Mysore District of Karnataka covering 112 rural Primary Health Centres (PHC)s, involved building the capacity of communities for monitoring the PHCs with the aid of technology. The community representatives responded to a questionnaire about the availability and quality of services of their PHCs using Interactive Voice Response technology (IVRS) through their mobile phones. The responses were analyzed and used to rank PHCs in Mysore district.

India's National Health Mission recognizes that the community should be an integral part of the public health system. Jan Arogya Samiti (JAS) – translated as People's Health Committee - is one such platform at the grassroots level, created through the guidelines of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, to enable effective community monitoring of Health and Wellness Centres. In the Jan Arogya Shreni project, a community monitoring tool has been administered to JAS members through IVRS and the responses have been used to rank Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) and prepare ranking cards.

While expecting the community to participate in structures such as JAS, it is most important to create an enabling environment, build capacity and establish means and ways (process) for their engagement. The Jan Arogya Shreni action research project of GRAAM is one such initiative to establish processes of community engagement. The innovation in the whole process of community participation in monitoring of health services at the grassroots level lies in how the project leverages simple communication technology for unbiased, free and efficient monitoring.

International Best Practice: Participatory Budgeting for the participation of and enhancing allocation of resources towards the poor in Porto Alegre Brazil[42]

Participatory Budgeting is a participatory tool to allow local residents to shape decision-making and allocation of resources in their areas. Participatory Budgeting (PB) in the city of Porto Alegre, Brazil, is widely considered to be the most noteworthy use of PB in the world, with 17,200 citizens involved at its peak in 2002, who distributed around \$160 million of public funds.

PB in Porto Alegre involves three streams of meetings: neighbourhood assemblies, thematic assemblies, and meetings of delegates for citywide coordinating sessions (the Council of the Participatory Budget). Such tiered meetings allow PB to be applied at different levels (i.e. the hyperlocal districts and the city region).

The neighbourhood assemblies discuss the funding allocations for the 16 districts of the city. The debates in these assemblies decide the criteria on the basis of which the budget is to be allocated among the districts, e.g. population, or poverty index. City-wide participatory thematic assemblies are held to discuss issues that are not neighbourhood specific, such as environment, education, health, and transportation.

Each of the 16 districts in the city gives two sets of rankings of priorities at the end of the deliberations: one for items that affect the district specifically, such as the building of schools or sewers; and another for items that affect the entire city, such as transport or beach cleaning. They also elect delegates who proceed to the Council of the Participatory Budget (COP) with the districts' suggestions. The role of the COP is to refine and apply the budget rules developed by the neighbourhood and thematic assemblies.

The PB system has proven effective in mobilizing the participation of poor and politically marginalized residents. In the PB process, women, ethnic minorities, low-income, and low-education participants were overrepresented, and as a result, funding shifted to the poorest parts of the city. It brought those usually excluded from the political process into the heart of decision-making and improved local people's lives through the more effective allocation of resources.

International Best Practice on Institutionalized Engagement of CSOs with Health Systems: National Health Assembly of Thailand

In Thailand, the National Health Assembly has helped build civil society's capacity to engage with the policymaking process and for bringing evidence more strongly into policy discussions.[43]

The National Health Assembly in Thailand is based on the concept of the 'triangle that moves the mountain'. The 3 points of the triangle are government technocrats, policy-makers and politicians (referred to often as the 'government sector'); civil society, communities, and the population ('people's sector'); and academia, think tanks, and research institutions ('knowledge sector'). The core principle of the NHA is to bring together the three groups represented by the triangle corners (WHO, 2021).

The NHA passes consensus-based resolutions in each year that are not binding on policy makers. All the 3 groups mentioned above have to be consulted in the process of making decisions. An important feature of NHA is the effort invested by the National Health Commission Office associated with the NHA in building the capacity of civil society organizations, community groups, and provincial health authorities so that they are able to better and more effectively engage in the NHA and other participatory spaces. The NHA has been found to be beneficial to civil society and community groups as it has empowered them to engage more meaningfully with the health policy-making process. The NHA has obtained legal status and its sustainability as a participatory structure is a lesson for other health systems.[44]

Best Practices

School Cabinet to inculcate civic responsibilities, appreciate constitutional duties and develop leadership

In the public school system of Karnataka, India, young students are being inculcated early in life with the values and competencies related to democratic participation. The School Parliament and the School Cabinet allow students to exercise leadership, have a say in school affairs, escalate issues to authorities and take responsibility in addressing various issues and problems in the school. GRAAM, India under its program Sugamya Shiksha, is playing a catalytic role in building capacities for and galvanizing students' participation in such structures. Students take responsibility for their respective portfolios. All the representatives of the school cabinet get an opportunity to take part in the children's parliament which is held in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority. The heads of different government departments at the district level take part, respond to children's questions and address the issues raised.

People's Committee to Communitize Development

School Development and Monitoring Committees (SDMCs) in the public schools of Karnataka, India are a useful platform for community and parental participation not only in school management but also in school development and monitoring. However, in practice, the functioning of these committees often lacks inclusion and participation and is dominated by head teachers. In this context, GRAAM, India under its Sugamya Shiksha program, has taken up the sensitization and capacity building of stakeholders for more active, inclusive, and participatory SDMCs. SDMCs are fostering stakeholderism and investing community resources to make their school the best. Various CSOs across the country are working for strengthening School Management Committees (SMCs) to make education a community movement.

8.1 India's G20 Presidency:

The Group of Twenty (G20) is the premier forum for international economic cooperation. It plays an important role in shaping and strengthening global architecture and governance on all major international economic issues.

India holds the Presidency of the G20 from 1 December 2022 to 30 November 2023. The G20 Presidency gives India a unique opportunity to strengthen its role in the world economic order. With the theme of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,' India is steering an ambitious, people-centric agenda to address global challenges and facilitate sustainable economic development.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, which translates to "One Earth, One Family, One Future," is the theme of India's G20 presidency. It is inspired from the Maha Upanishad, an old Sanskrit scripture. Through a range of activities and events, India is striving to demonstrate its commitment to multilateral cooperation and building bridges between different countries and regions.

More about G20 India at: <https://www.g20.org/en/about-g20/#overview>

8.2 Civil 20 India:

C20 is one of the official Engagement Groups of the G20. It provides a platform for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) around the world to voice people's aspirations with the world's leaders in G20. C20 also aims to protect the essence of the sector, promote social and economic development with the vision that no one should be left behind.

Civil society culture in India has been shaped by illustrious figures such as Mahatma Basaveshwara, Dayanand Saraswati, Ramkrishna Paramahansa, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Mahatma Phule, Lokmanya Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. These figures have laid a foundation of self-motivated efforts to provide solutions to social problems. Continuing this tradition in post-independence India, Vinoba Bhave, Maharshi Karve, Baba Amte, and Sundarlal Bahuguna ensured that the spirit of volunteerism manifested in multiple ways. While considering the previous communiqués and policy packs, India's C20 Presidency aims to focus on issues

ranging from wellness to sewa (service) and from cyberspace to social justice.

Read more at: <https://civil20.net/c20-india-2023/about/>

8.3 About GRAAM – The Secretariat of Delivering Democracy Working Group

GRAAM, a development research and policy engagement initiative in India that specializes in Governance and Democratization, Learning-Skill Development & Livelihood, Health and Wellness, and Tribal Development. Our expertise includes policy research, impact assessment, community engagement, policy engagement, strategic consultation, and academic programs. Working with all four key stakeholders of development - Government, Citizenry, Civil Society Organizations, and Corporates - we aim to empower grassroots communities by developing human and social capital. Our evidence-based research leads to actionable policy recommendations that incorporate community voices, resulting in citizen-centric public policy. Join us in driving sustainable change and positively impacting the world. More at www.graam.org.in

8.4 Delivering Democracy Working Group

Under the G20 India has formed several working groups. Civil20 (C20) is one of the key engagement groups under G20. The C20's Delivering Democracy Working Group has hosted a variety of knowledge assimilation events, through in-person and virtual modes. The events ensured engagement of stakeholders from all the sections, and created a vibrant platform for discussion and debating of diverse national and international viewpoints. Finally, it enabled the working group to find a democratic direction derived from all the deliberations. The Delivering Democracy working group provided a platform for Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) around the world to voice people's aspirations to world leaders in G20.

Composition of Working Group:

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- **Mr. Bhagavan Bidrakote**, Head – IIK CON, GRAAM
- **Mr. Devendra Pai**, Course Director, Indian Institute of Democratic Leadership, Mumbai
- **Mr. Atul Kulkarni**, Chairman, Amazing Namaste Foundation, Guwahati, Assam
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