India (2009 - 13)

Global Research Project: Varieties of Governance, Effective Public Service Delivery

Research: Rural Governance and Effective Public Service Delivery in India

Grantee: Hari Krishna Nagarajan, Omkar Joshi (formerly with NCAER)

Hari Nagarajan is a scholar with extensive expertise on democratic decentralization. In 2009, he, along with his team, received a grant to take part in the GDN Global Research Project on Varieties of Governance: Effective Public Service Delivery, along with 15 other organizations spread across developing and transition countries to study the delivery system in education and water through the rural Panchayat system in India.

By focusing on the bottom level of decentralized governance in India, the Panchayat system, the team highlighted how women empowerment in village-level assemblies has an impact in the choice of service providers in the rural areas, on private expenditure and accountability, on making choices between public and private service providers and on citizen participation.

In his case, the grant was instrumental to link together a number of smaller grants obtained from other sources, and to allow developing an overarching theoretical framework and integrated data collection. In an interview, Nagarajan told GDN that despite limited short-term impact on the notoriously complex and slow implementation of India's Panchayat system, **the research has a large scope to impact the access and participation to democratic institutional (incomplete?)** across rural India, and allowed Nagarajan to bring together different strands of his research. GDN helped the Indian research team disseminate their research findings by organizing a Policy Dialogue in New Delhi in 2014 providing a platform to discuss several issues on the research with some of the key government functionaries that included the erstwhile Honorable Minister of Rural Development, Government of India, the erstwhile Minister of Panchayati Raj and the erstwhile Additional Secretary of the Department of Rural Development, Government of India along with several other key stakeholders.