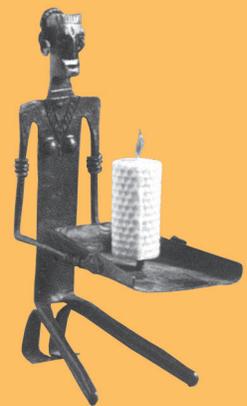


**A New State,
a New Beginning...**





A New State, a New Beginning...

The formation of a new State is a historic event. It is also an opportunity. The State of Chhattisgarh was born on 1st November 2000. It was a momentous occasion, the realisation of a long cherished dream of the people of Chhattisgarh. It was a day to celebrate and look back on past sacrifices and endeavours.

The hope and heightened expectations of the people of Chhattisgarh was apparent that day. It brought forth opportunities to understand the needs and expectations of the people and a chance to grasp this unique opportunity for change.

The Government of Chhattisgarh wished to put people at the forefront of the development process. A beginning had been made in 1995 by Madhya Pradesh, which had prepared and published a State Human Development Report. This Report provided an assessment of the status of key components of human development, including education, health and income. By identifying deficiencies and disparities amongst districts, this Report (and a subsequent report published in 1998), provided a useful basis for reorienting priorities and expenditures. Developed by the State Government through

a broad process of consultation, the reports laid the foundation for the initiation of people-centred planning.

Chhattisgarh has gone a step further. The Chhattisgarh Human Development Report has been prepared by the people. The Report is the voice of the people, an articulation of their needs and perceptions, collated and presented by a team of specialists. The Human Development Report derives from the *Jan Rapats*, (People's Reports) which were prepared at the village level by the people themselves, articulating their perceptions and aspirations, their disappointments and hopes as well as their expectations and contributions.

More than 19,000 *Jan Rapats* were prepared at the village level on the basis of an extensive process of discussion, debate and consultation by the people of each village. In this exercise the village community was assisted by *sangwaaris*¹, young men and women from the village trained and deployed for this purpose.

The outcome of this initiative, stupefying in its scale, is presented in this Report. The result is

¹ *Sangwaari* means companion. Through the exercise, and in this Report, the word is used to identify persons from village communities who assisted the processes of discussion, debate, Report preparation and analysis.

no doubt important, especially as it is available in thousands of villages and at aggregations at the district level. The process is as important because it has been far reaching in its impact. It has led to an awakening, an unparalleled sense of participation and has reiterated the State's faith in its people. The process of preparation of the State Human Development Report has been a '*gaon dahar chalay*' (return to the villages) campaign, a clarion call to go back to the villages.

Commitment to the people and their development requires little elaboration. Translating this commitment to reality, the premise of this Report, has been a challenge that has required 'out of the box' thinking and enormous participatory effort.

Skill, empathy, innovation and clarity of thought and objective have been the key ingredients of this exercise. A methodology was developed, that would encourage discussion and ensure that the voice of each sub-group of people in the village was heard, respected and recorded. At subsequent stages, the reports were reviewed, discussed and collated by special teams.

People were given the space to articulate their concerns and priorities in the manner that they wanted, or were comfortable with. They were encouraged to explore choices and develop those issues that were central to their lives. As a result, development issues have been viewed, possibly for the first time on this scale in the country, through the people.

The *Jan Rapats* provide a village level plan based on the people's analysis of their own situation. These can serve as a basis for future action for their villages, and in collated form, as guideposts for the State's planning initiatives.

Structure of the Village *Jan Rapats*

The *Jan Rapat* consist of three parts

Part I: A secondary database of the village, based on a pre-designed data format. The database development forms Part I of the *Jan Rapat* and was constructed without the active participation of the people. The secondary information was collected by officials of various Government departments.

Part II: A guideline for the Village Level Task Force was developed regarding the discussions to be carried out within the villages. More than 6,000 *sangwaaris* (women and men) were selected and trained to carry out this exercise. At the village level, group discussions were held in groups that were formed in one of three ways - a general group, a marginalised group and a highly marginalised group. There were at least four to six group discussions in each village, so that everyone got an opportunity to articulate their concerns. The discussions covered natural resources (water, forests and land), livelihoods, education, health and well-being, society and institutions and other specific issues. These discussions, held with different groups of people in the village, form Part II of the *Jan Rapats*.

Part III: Once the discussions were complete, they were collated and documented with the help of the respective Village Level Task Forces to form Part III of the *Jan Rapats*. The essential points from these discussions were presented to the Village Assembly in every village. The Village Assemblies had the freedom to modify, change, reject or ratify the draft reports. The final reports, ratified by the Village Assemblies, form Part III of the *Jan Rapats*.

Based on the basic structure of the Village *Jan Rapats*, a broad format for the District Reports was evolved² and a strategy for developing the District Reports through a process of sample selection was also finalised. The District *Jan Rapat* were based on a sample of about 10-15 percent of Village *Jan Rapats*. Village *Jan Rapats* were selected from every block on the basis of 16 identified categories like distance from the main road, villages close to all-weather roads, villages where a dominant community is in majority, villages close to forests, villages far away from forests, village close to coal mines, villages near the State or district boundaries, villages with substantial migration, villages close to district or block headquarters, etc.

A simple matrix was then designed to capture the qualitative content of each of the topics taken up for discussion in the Village Reports. From this, a qualitative scale was developed categorising people's perceptions about a variety of issues such as natural resources, employment and livelihood as well as access to health, education and social institutions.

District Jan Rapats

The District *Jan Rapats* are a collation of selected Village Reports based on the 16 criteria mentioned earlier. These reports portray the status of development in the district but also highlight at every stage that generalisations cannot be made for the district as a whole despite the numerous common problems and issues. These reports form an integral part of the State Report.³

² Debate, an NGO, developed the methodology for the District Report.

³ For details regarding the process and methodology, please see Chapter 8.

Box 1

Formulation of the Jan Rapat

From Village Reports to the State Human Development Report

- Village *Jan Rapats* were written by the people of 19,128 villages of Chhattisgarh.
- These reports were then ratified by the village community.
- District Reports were prepared for the 16 districts of Chhattisgarh based on a 10 to 15 percent sample of Village Reports, selected on the basis of 16 criteria.
- Of the total number of Village *Jan Rapats*, 2869 reports were selected for the perception analysis. (Except in the chapter on Society and Institutions where the analysis refers to all the villages that discussed a particular issue). A matrix was developed to categorise people's perceptions on a qualitative scale, from the discussions and comments documented in the reports. However different subjects were taken up for discussion by different villages, depending on whether the issues were seen as being important, relevant, or of no importance. People's perceptions are the corner stone of this Report.
- Members of the *Jan Rapat* project team at the State level, prepared the State Report.

State Level Jan Rapat – the Human Development Report

The *Jan Rapat* at every level is a stand-alone Report. The methodology of writing the Chhattisgarh Human Development Report derives from the Village and District Reports and it highlights and translates issues raised at the village level to the State level. The State Report is the culmination of the '*gaon dahar chalay*' campaign.

Since the Village and District *Jan Rapats* are the primary source of information, all arguments and suggestions are supported by these documents. The State Report has a wider perspective than the Village Reports and contains many of the actionable suggestions which have been made in the Village *Jan Reports*.