Monitoring govt. schemes in real time

In a bid to make "data-driven decision making" more than a mere buzzword, the Ministry of Rural Development this week launched the DISHA dashboard, a nifty tool that will make it easier to monitor governance by geography in real time.

The application, which is now available to all members of Parliament and State Assemblies as well district officials, allows the user to track the progress of multiple and diverse schemes in a certain district, block, or even a gram panchayat. Currently, 18 schemes are covered; the ultimate plan is to integrate all 42 Central schemes — representing a total outlay of Rs. 3 lakh crore — which are already monitored by DISHA or District Development Coordination and Monitoring Committees.

"Government systems and schemes work in silos," said Seema Gaur, Chief Eonomic Advisor to the Rural Development Ministry. "Several schemes have good MIS [or Management Information Systems], but they don't talk to each other. So it is difficult for elected representatives and local planners to go through all the data and get a sense of what is happening in a particular place."

Demonstrating the dashboard to State representatives at a consultation this week, Ms. Gaur showed how the application automatically turns sets of statistics and data into interactive and visually accessible graphics and maps.

Currently, geographic mismatches make it difficult to unite data; for instance, while the Rural Development Ministry tracks its schemes by gram panchayat, the Health Ministry tracks it by anganwadis, which are mapped by population, while crime data uses different boundaries.

"This is an outstanding tool for monitoring specific geographies," Amarjeet Sinha, Rural Development Secretary told *The Hindu* . "So many schemes have overlaps and potential for synergies, but it is hard to see them without this kind of tool... It will help MPs, MLAs and District Magistrates to make data-driven decisions."

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