Measuring Progress of Tribal Education

A Case Study on the Efforts of the Tribal Welfare Department, Government of Andhra Pradesh, India to measure the progress of their Education Programs

ABSTRACT: This paper describes the performance appraisal system developed for the tribal education programs of the Tribal Welfare Department in the state of Andhra Pradesh located in the South Central region of India. The state is home to a tribal population of five million, which is approximately 7% of the state’s population. The Tribal Welfare Department allocates a significant portion of their annual budget towards education programs---in 2009-10, the department proposed to allocate 79% of their budget--- and have developed certain performance criteria for their programs. The purpose of this paper is to describe the performance criteria, nature and format of tracking and reporting performance indicators, and review their performance appraisal system.

Literature lists the benefits and challenges that Government departments face when they begin measuring performance of their programs. The use of outputs as opposed to outcomes is the most common way to dilute the process. This paper provides insights in to some of the organizational and technical challenges that program managers face. Being able to measure the progress that Government is making towards tribal education assumes significance given the Indian context and the efforts of Government of India to bridge the gap in access to development between indigenous populations and the mainstream. The Tribal Welfare Department of Andhra Pradesh understands tribal education as a strategy to provide greater access to development among the tribal population and thus it is of paramount importance to be able to measure, and measure accurately, the progress of their tribal education programs.

The paper also highlights some limitations of the case and discusses future areas of research and training that are needed to build the department’s capacity to design and implement an effective performance measurement system that will help them understand how they contribute to the progress of the state’s tribal population towards whom the Constitution of India guarantees rights, development, and well being.
The state of Andhra Pradesh is located in South Central India and since the latter half of the 1990s it has emerged as one of the fastest growing regional economies of India powered by growth in the information technology (IT) sector. Traditionally known as the rice bowl of India, the state is home to three major rivers and boasts of a prosperous agricultural economy. In addition, the state of Andhra Pradesh has a sizeable tribal population of 5 million (this constitutes 6.59% of the state’s total population in nine provinces of the state), a majority of whom live in remote places of the state and do not have access to development. These indigenous populations are given special status by the Constitution of India by way of various programs and policies and are referred to as Scheduled Tribes (STs). There are 35 scheduled tribes in Andhra Pradesh recognized by the Constitution of India out of which 12 are scheduled as Particularly Vulnerable Groups. Although there are cases of individuals belonging to STs benefiting from Government programs and policies, a vast majority of them still live in unacceptable conditions.

Thus, the Tribal Welfare Department’s mandate is to safeguard the interests of STs, guarantee rights as laid down in the Constitution, and ensure development of the tribal population through various programs and policies of the department. The department also coordinates with other departments and ministries to achieve their goals. In order to protect the economic and social interests of the tribals from industrial exploitation and to increase the pace of access to development, the department has adopted what it calls a Tribal Sub Plan Strategy since 1975. Under this plan, several programs have been introduced to bring larger sections of the tribal population under the state’s welfare programs. In addition, all other departments of the state are expected to allocate a certain percentage of their annual budgets towards development programs of scheduled tribes. Among all developmental programs, the department gives special emphasis to tribal education. In the 2009-10 annual budget, the department has proposed to allocate 79% of their budget towards education. The department believes that by giving a special impetus to education programs, which will ensure universal enrollment for primary education and provide access to tribal children to pursue higher studies in the urban areas, the socio-economic gap between tribal population and the general population can be bridged effectively.

The department has made impressive strides in this direction; however, there is a need to be able to measure the progress of their programs. Measuring the performance of the Tribal Welfare Department’s education programs assumes further significance given the budgetary allocation and the link education has to development of tribal communities. Thus, in the last decade there has been an attempt to streamline administrative procedures and set up systems to measure the performance of the department’s programs.
The Background

The push to orient department personnel towards articulating their roles and responsibilities, clarifying organizational goals, mission, vision, defining development indicators and prepare the ground for a performance appraisal system really began between the years 1998-2000\(^1\). Prior to this period department personnel knew, in general, their area and scope of work and the department dispensed what was expected out of it, but there was definitely room for generating greater understanding and clarity. The state’s leadership and senior administrative machinery began preparing a vision document titled Vision 2020.

In order to achieve this vision, immediate areas of action were identified and a process of systematic reforms across the department began: (i) department personnel at various levels first began defining their jobs, roles and responsibilities and spelled out the department’s goals, mission, and vision (ii) every officer had to understand the organizational hierarchy and list it out at every level right to the grass root level officer. This exercise included defining and clarifying job titles and also the number of employees in each category (iii) the department identified indicators whose performance they would track and report. Effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery of these indicators was the focus. Guidelines were provided for each indicator as to how to achieve the desired service delivery. The indicators identified were basically the main programmatic areas of the department (iv) strategy and policy related reforms were to be identified for each indicator so as to create an administrative atmosphere that would help achieve the goals set for the indicator (v) every unit within the department is required to engage in resource mobilization so as to raise the required resources to complete the planned work. The resource mobilization exercise is in addition to the annual budgetary allocations from the State Government budget. Public-Private-Partnerships, community participation, and external donor funding were some of the methods under discussion (vi) computerization, use of Information Technology, digitalization of files, records and databases was undertaken at all levels of the organization and the necessary training was provided (vii) reviews, inspections, and meetings were to become a regular feature and serve the purpose of monitoring and evaluating the work at various levels.

Broadly, these were the areas within the administrative domain indentified as needing immediate action and reforms in order to professionalize the department personnel. The above mentioned efforts paved the way to prepare the atmosphere for designing and implementing a performance appraisal system.

The Performance Appraisal System (PAS)

Coming up with a PAS turned out to be a herculean task for the department personnel, however, after much effort in 2002 the department came up with a document that was able to
clearly articulate and describe the PAS. Firstly, the PAS is designed to measure performance of each province across the selected indicators. The system is designed for all programmatic areas of the department, but for the purpose of this paper the focus will be on the education program. Each programmatic area is referred to as core indicator. For each core indicator, a set of performance indicators are identified. Furthermore, a set of guidelines are provided as to how to measure the performance indicator. Thus, the basic framework of the PAS consists of the following: a core indicator, performance indicators, and guidelines. This framework is applied to each province. Thus, for each province in the state where the Tribal Welfare Department operates the performance of the identified core indicators and their related performance indicators is measured. The PAS is mostly target based and based on the achievement (in comparison to the set target) a grade would be assigned to each of the performance indicator.

For the core indicator of Education the department indentified eight performance indicators, which broadly can be summarized as following: (i) admissions and retentions at Government residential schools (ii) enrollment of tribal children to Government schools (iii) processing and approving scholarships (iv) enrollment under certain special purpose programs (for example, the best performing students are identified and sent to schools in urban areas, which is referred to as the Best Available Schools Program) (v) inspections (or regular monitoring visits of the physical infrastructure) of educational institutions (vi) examination results (under the public examination system) (vii) student activities at all institutions (viii) recruitment of teachers to make sure there no vacancies at schools. Each of the eight performance indicators in turn has a set of guidelines as to how to achieve them. The PAS has a reasonable composition of performance indicators that are output based and outcome based.

The tables presented below are samples of the formats used for measuring and reporting. Table 1 presents the formant for reporting the targets set for a performance indicator; it includes annual and quarterly targets. Table 2 below describes the format of how a performance indicator is measured, reported, graded and ranked. The format includes a target, achievement (units of measurement for both are numbers), a percentage based on the target and what was achieved, a letter grade based on the percentage and a numerical rank based on the grade. The grades range from A-D, A being excellent to D being poor. The same format is applied to all the provinces (or districts in the Indian context) and based on the grade a numerical rank is assigned; provinces with a grade of A get a rank of #1. Thus, essentially the PAS reports from the perspective of each province---how is a certain core indicator/performance indicators performing in a given province?
Table 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Unit</th>
<th>Annual Target</th>
<th>Quarterly Target</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Enrolment of children in educational institutions</td>
<td>No. of Students</td>
<td>&lt;intentionally left blank&gt;</td>
<td>&lt;intentionally left blank&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Performance Indicator</th>
<th>Admissions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serial No.</td>
<td>District/Province</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Srikakulum</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Outlook for Performance Measurement

Although the PAS described above might be judged as rudimentary, such an effort for the department is a significant step in the right direction. The department personnel realize that there is much to learn and plenty of room available for improving the system, which will ultimately help them in understanding their performance and identify areas that need attention. Even though the concept of performance measurement holds much promise in the domain of public management it must be acknowledged that particularly in the case of the Tribal Welfare Department of Andhra Pradesh the process was viewed as highly complex, time consuming, and unsustainable. The problem was compounded because this was the first time that department officials were engaged in a highly professional managerial exercise. During the entire process (pre and post) of designing and implementing the PAS, department officials gained greater clarity of their department’s goals, work, programs, gained new insights in to how they can do the same work in a different more efficient and effective way. However, officials reported that the highly time consuming and data intensive nature of the process proved major deterrents. As a result, a few years later the PAS is not followed as intensely as it was initially.
However, the legacy of the PAS and the initial effort continues even to this day in the department. Every aspect of program design, implementation, strategy, or department related management practice is viewed through the lens of performance, measurement, outputs/outcomes, efficiency, effectiveness, and indicators. Department personnel at the top, middle, and lower levels are aware of most terms that are related to modern public management practices and are able to have useful and frank discussions with scholars and consultants about their limitations and expectations regarding improving the overall performance of the Tribal Welfare Department. As a testimony of their commitment to administrative reforms and adopting modern management practices, the Tribal Welfare Department’s 2009 annual financial budget is titled *Outcome Budget*. The department now realizes that what matters are not only results, but how we describe results and determine how to measure them so as to make sure the department is progressing in the right direction. Table 3 below presents a sample from the 2009-2010 budget, which provides a good example of how the department is keen on looking at outcomes for their schemes/programs. Thus, by looking at this document any stakeholder can easily understand what the expected results are for each scheme or program.

Table 3 (reproduced from Tribal Welfare Department’s 2009-2010 *Outcome Budget*)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S. No</th>
<th>Scheme/Program Name</th>
<th>Objective/Outcome</th>
<th>Outlay 09-10 (Rs in Crores)</th>
<th>Quantifiable Deliverables</th>
<th>Projected Outcomes</th>
<th>Process/Timeline</th>
<th>Risk Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Post Matric Scholarship</td>
<td>The objective of the scheme is to provide financial assistance to ST students studying post matric education and also to provide necessary textbooks to those pursuing professional courses under Book Bank Scheme.</td>
<td>41.80 123 0.00</td>
<td>•Intended to sanction scholarships to 250,000 ST students •Sanctioning of arrears •Online verification of scholarships</td>
<td>•Increased participation of STs in post matric studies</td>
<td>•All renewals to be completed by August 2009 •All fresh applications of non-professional courses to be sanctioned by October, 2009 •All fresh applications of professional courses to be sanctioned by November 2009</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Implications and Limitations of the Case Study

Although the performance measurement process or performance appraisal system described in this case might not be as advanced as what one can find from Governments of other developed nations, the case of the Tribal Welfare Department’s PAS holds significance for other developing nations who share similar administrative and managerial challenges. The case teaches the following valuable lessons for public managers who manage departments with human resources that are not tuned to modern public management practices: (i) performance measurement is not limited to Government departments of highly advanced nations where administrative and managerial challenges might be relatively less (ii) it is possible to train your staff (who might lack the required professional managerial training and might also be reluctant towards embarking on what they feel is only value addition work like performance measurement) to measure performance of their programs and that it is not in isolation of the officer’s role and responsibility; in fact, it improves the understanding and increases clarity, and (iii) although the PAS framework provided is simple, the framework can used as an introductory platform to introduce the staff to performance measurement rather than introducing a highly advanced system that can scare the staff away. The framework is simple enough that it can be further built upon.

The issue of the development of indigenous populations across the world is slowly assuming significance. It assumes greater importance with the United Nations General Assembly adopting on September 13th, 2007 The Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples by a majority of 144 states in favor. There continues to be a need for a framework on how we can measure the progress of tribal populations, how can they be integrated in to the mainstream development process even as their culture and environment is kept secure, and how to measure Government supported social welfare programs, in general. In this context, the Tribal Welfare Department of Andhra Pradesh has identified that tribal education is the key to bridging the gap between tribals and the mainstream. In order to do this, the department has designed and implemented several tailor made schemes and has also began looking at more holistic ways of measuring the progress they are making towards tribal education. Thus, the case provides for an opportunity to compare the efforts of the state of Andhra Pradesh’s Tribal Welfare Department with other Social Welfare/Tribal Welfare departments across the world that are striving for the development of tribal population.

The case does not analyze the performance data and does not provide a detailed description of the department’s various tribal education programs/schemes, but does mention them in the narrative. In addition, the case does not explain the methodology of how the department identified the performance indicators for each core indicator. The case only presents the performance appraisal system of 2002-03. The case would have provided more
valuable lessons for public managers had the PAS data been available for at least three to four consecutive years. In addition, the case will be of greater value if there is an analysis of what other factors are responsible for good/bad performing provinces with respect to their core indicators. Also, the case does not discuss how the outcomes listed in the Outcome Budget will be measured.

The Way Forward

The Tribal Welfare Department is keen on taking what they have built so far as part of the performance appraisal system further by refining it and prepare the ground for a performance measurement system. Currently, the department’s appraisal system focuses only one program management, but there is a need for the measurement system to focus on other governance aspects involved in tribal education programs. For example, the new and improved performance measurement system will also include variables like leadership, strategic planning, human resources, incentives, process management and so on. The department is first committed to invest in research and development (R&D) of the system before it is rolled out across the department to all levels. As part of the R&D, the department hopes to examine and reflect upon their previous attempt of designing and implementing a performance appraisal system. It is important to understand if there are any other factors responsible for what is appearing in the PAS as a good performer or bad performer. In addition, the biggest challenge in the process of performance measurement is determining indicators and then measuring them. The department has already selected certain indicators, but further research is needed to determine if the indicators selected are relevant or not and whether they are doing a good job of measuring the progress of the department’s tribal education programs. Towards this end, the department has agreed to design and implement a pilot study in one province where citizen engagement (or the direct beneficiaries of the programs) will play a key role in identifying indicators and determining the methods to measure them. In this way, the department will involve tribals directly in the governance process and empower tribal communities to define in their own terms and words what progress means to them.
Notes

1. Information regarding the political and social background of the initiative, administrative and managerial challenges, and staff response to the exercise of implementing the performance appraisal system has been provided by the officials themselves during interviews and meetings that were scheduled to begin the joint research project to evaluate the department’s previous appraisal system. Discussions also included on how to take the research forward in order to develop a new performance measurement system that can be used by the officials as managerial tool.

References

Outcome Budget 2009-10, Department of Tribal Welfare, Andhra Pradesh. Also available online at http://www.aptribes.gov.in/


Performance Appraisal System, Tribal Welfare Department, Andhra Pradesh: Guidelines for Preparation of Department Action Plans at Unit Level, January, 2002