

## **Research: Service Delivery at the Grassroots: A case study in Nepal**

Conflict affects countries at all levels of development. Conflict is also defined as development in reverse. Institutions and agencies delivering services to the people rarely escape the ravages of violent conflict. The conflict situation in the country has jeopardized effective service delivery system at the local level. Local institutions (VDCs, municipalities and DDCs) have often been the targets of the rebel attack. VDC buildings in many districts have already been demolished and VDC secretaries are either forced to resign from their post or to stay at district headquarters. Similarly, sectoral offices of the line ministries have not been able to deliver services, as expected, because of the conflict situation.

Against this background, Institute of Governance and Development (IGD) decided to assess the effectiveness of service delivery at the grassroots during this situation of conflict. The agencies covered by the study are the Village Development Committees (VDCs), Health Posts, Schools, Agricultural centres in particular.

The major objectives of the survey are

- To undertake overall assessment of the public services delivered by local bodies VDC and other sectorial agencies especially health, education, agriculture at village level and impact of the ongoing conflict on them.
- To obtain information direct from the stakeholders regarding the present situation of the various services being provided to citizens by VDCs and other services providing institutions.
- To obtain information on means and modality of basic services to be accessed by local citizens from the public agencies at the grassroots level.
- To analyze the status of public goods and services provided by VDCs and other agencies at the local level.

### **Methodology**

Altogether ten districts from five development regions were selected to assess the situation of service delivered are representative of the geographical regions one district were selected while making selection of the VDCs within the district consultation was held with the DDCs concerned. Care was taken to ensure that the VDCs selected cover the social demographics of the district. Moreover, local users of the services were also interviewed to gauge into the level of satisfaction from the services.

Structured questionnaires were prepared to reflect the provision of services provided by various local institutions at the village level. Basic areas of services such as education, health and agriculture were identified as major sectors for the survey and attention was also provided to other services such as electricity, safe, drinking water, postal services etc. In addition to the information received from the respective service providing institutions a set of questioners were also administered to receive feed back from the

users. Check list was also prepared to collect secondary on how to build rapport with the respondents, local citizens, the users administer the instruments. They were also briefed on how to negotiate with the difficult situations, if any to be emanated from the conflict, in the field and elicit relevant information from the respondents.

### **Major Key Findings**

The key findings are:

- The most affected service to the public is that of the service provided by VDCs.
- Majority of VDC secretaries are providing services either from district head quarter or from the place where they live.
- Majority of VDC building of the surveyed VDCs are destroyed.
- Absence of elected representatives have made local people reluctant to visit local institutions (VDCs and DDCs) with their demands or needs
- The student pressure in government schools in rural areas is mounting.
- The scarcity of educational facilities including physical infrastructures in school are common
- Free education virtually does not exist in government schools.
- Comparatively the service provision in health centers is found relatively better
- The number of farmers visiting to access services from agriculture centers is decreasing