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Measuring Performance at District Level: An Experiment in Punjab

During the year 2010-11, Punjab Government introduced Results Framework Documents (RFD) for performance management in its departments. In a meeting of Deputy Commissioners, held on 5th January 2011 under the Chairmanship of Deputy Chief Minister, Punjab, the state government decided to introduce a system of performance monitoring at district level. In pursuance of this, Performance Management Division (PMD) at the Institute held series of consultations with officers of the State Government, Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners and distinguished experts from outside the government. The PMD has now designed an RFD for Deputy Commissioners in the state.

While developing the RFD, the Deputy Commissioners themselves have identified empirically measurable indicators for performance and success. Most activities have been empirically graded against defined targets. Marks have been set apart for noteworthy achievements such as special initiatives and innovations by the officers.

An Advisory Task Force (ATF) comprising former civil servants who have served at the level of Chief Secretary in the state and Secretary in the Government of India, a former Chief Justice, former Vice Chancellors of Universities, a former Vice President of the World Bank, two former Director-Generals of Police, a former Air Marshal of the Indian Air Force and top executives from the corporate sector has been constituted. Association of such distinguished experts from outside the government adds great value to the deliberations in the Advisory Task Force. A formal presentation of the District RFD was made to the members of National ATF in March 2011. The system is proposed to be adopted at the District level in the State w.e.f. 1st April 2011.

District RFD is an ambitious project. One reason for optimism about its success is the fact that the question paper has been set by the examinee himself, that is, the Deputy Commissioner. The other cause of hope is that the initiative is fully backed by the political leadership of the state. The country is looking expectantly at the results of the Punjab's experiment for measuring performance at district level.

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