

***Minutes of the Virtual Meeting held with the States under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2021 to discuss activities proposed to be undertaken under the aegis of Ministry of Panchayati Raj to commemorate India's 75 years of Independence.***

1. Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar, Additional Secretary chaired the first virtual meeting with State/UT Department of Panchayati Raj to discuss the action plan proposed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj to commemorate the 75 years of India's independence. At the outset, while welcoming the participants, AS, PR briefly outlined the significance of commemoration of India's 75<sup>th</sup> year of independence and the duration of celebration i.e. 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 to 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2022.

2. Dr. Bijaya Kumar Behera, Economic Adviser outlined the proposed action plan keeping in view the role and contribution of the PRIs that have been sent to the PMO and Sectoral Group of Secretaries on Agriculture and Rural Development. The action plan includes the activities like (i) selecting good performing PRIs as **Panchayat Brand Ambassador**, (ii) **Special Capacity Building Training**, (iii) **Special Panchayat Sabhas**, (iv) **Release of Special Issue of Ministry's Magazine** and (v) **Intensification of People's Plan Campaign**.

3. While elaborating the action Plans, particularly the item on selection of Gram/Panchayat Brand Ambassadors, AS, PR remarked that this is an opportunity to showcase remarkable achievements in the field of Panchayati Raj after the 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment to the Constitution was enacted, and this the very objective behind identifying best performing 75 Gram Panchayats, 75 Block Panchayats and 75 District Panchayats across the country as "Agents of Change" or "Panchayat Brand Ambassadors" or "Beacon Panchayats" for their exemplary developmental works worth emulating. Ministry intends to finalise a list of 75 Gram Panchayats, 75 Block Panchayats and 75 District Panchayats covering all States/ UTs in consultation with States/UTs. The list of Panchayats shortlisted by the Ministry was circulated among the States based on their overall performance-based ranking in implementation of the Mission Antyodaya (for GPs) and awardee BPs and ZPs under Incentivisation of Panchayats (IoP) scheme of the Ministry. He sought suggestions on the list. However, referring to suggestions from some States, he clarified that the States are

free to nominate other GPs/BPs/ZPs with proper justification subject to the maximum number as indicated in the list.

4. While expressing their views, all the participants of the meeting confirmed the receipt of MoPR's action plan and the list of shortlisted Panchayats along with MoPR's D.O. letter dated 9/2/2021. During the discussion, it emerged that some States like Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland and West Bengal have firmed up their action plans for carrying out different activities during year-long celebration of India @ 75.

5. Activities proposed by Karnataka such as One Beacon Panchayat per Block / Taluka, converting Panchayat Libraries into Digital Knowledge Centres, comprehensive Gram Panchayat-wide strategy for Solid Waste Management (SWM), mixed use of playgrounds in Taluka Panchayat / District Panchayat to build self-esteem in children with disabilities / special needs, setting up Crèche / day care centres in Panchayats, helping women members of self-help groups to become micro-entrepreneurs by providing them training in skills etc. to commemorate India @ 75 were appreciated by the Chair.

6. The representative of Himachal Pradesh informed that Himachal Pradesh is celebrating Golden Jubilee of its Statehood, and the celebration of India @ 75 will be clubbed with the ongoing Golden Jubilee celebrations. Department of Panchayati Raj will organise District-wise Panchayat Sammelan and documentaries/ short-films on best-performing Panchayats will be screened during these Panchayat Sammelans. Other activities will also be organised.

7. The representative of Nagaland informed that a series of activities marking India @ 75 will be organised at Block / District level / notified villages starting from 14<sup>th</sup> April – Birth Anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr. B. R. Ambedkar-Ji.

8. The representative of West Bengal informed that activities such as awareness about importance of breastfeeding at Panchayat level to fight malnutrition, use of solar street lights in Panchayats, child-friendly ICDS etc. will be conducted. Other activities in the light of advisory from the Ministry will also be planned.

9. Other States like Bihar, Haryana, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Manipur and Telangana confirmed that they have received the communication/ advisory from the Ministry and they will come up with their feedbacks and State-specific action plan to commemorate India @ 75 in a befitting manner. Andhra Pradesh has also informed that activities are being planned to celebrate India @ 75 in the State.

10. AS, PR also requested the States to provide their action plan, if any, particularly the State of Karnataka that has already drawn up which can be circulated to other States.

11. After detailed discussion, **the following action-points emerged:**

- (i) The States to communicate the name of GP/BP/ZP with justification if they do not fully agree with the list of 75 GPs/BPs/ZPs drawn up.
- (ii) States /UT Departments of Panchayati Raj will offer their feedback/ comments on the action plan formulated by the Ministry at the earliest.
- (iii) States /UT Departments of Panchayati Raj may like to frame / work out their own action plan with different innovative activities intimate the Ministry for reporting purpose.
- (iv) The States to be ready with content/ write-ups/ success stories and photographs etc. to be provided for the Special Issue of Gramoday Sankalp.
- (v) Well-thought-out and well-structured action plan of Karnataka to be shared with the Ministry for consideration for its circulation to other States/UTs for conceptualization of similar action plan.
- (vi) State/UT Departments of Panchayati Raj may like to designate an Officer as Nodal Officer for India @ 75 and his/her name and contact details may be shared with the Ministry for further communication in the matter.

The meeting concluded with thanks to the Chair.

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