

(By email)

N-11014/4/2023-PESA
Government of India
Ministry of Panchayati Raj
(Policy Division)

11th Floor, JP Building, New Delhi
25 K. G. Marg, New Delhi-110001
Date: 15th Nov, 2023


OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject: Minutes of the First Meetings of the 'Advisory Committee to examine the issue of Women Pradhans being represented by the male members of their families and also examine other issues related thereto' held on 19/10/2023 – reg.

The undersigned is directed to forward herewith approved Minutes of the First Meetings of the 'Advisory Committee to examine the issue of Women Pradhans being represented by the male members of their families and also examine other issues related thereto' held on 19/10/2023 in the Ministry of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of Shri. Sushil Kumar, Secretary to the Government of India (Rtd.) for necessary information and action.

2. The above mentioned Minutes of the meeting have been approved by the Chairman of the Committee.

Encl: As above


15/11/2023

(Ajay Kumar)

Under Secretary to the Government of India
Email: ajay.k42@nic.in

To,
All Members of the Committee

N-11014/4/2023-PESA
Government of India
Ministry of Panchayati Raj

**“Advisory Committee to examine the issue of Women Pradhans being represented by the male members of their families and also examine other issues related thereto” –
Minutes of the first meeting held on 19^h October 2023**

The first meeting of the above-mentioned Committee under the chairmanship of Shri Sushil Kumar, Secretary to the Government of India (Rtd.) was held in the Conference Hall of Jeevan Bharati Building, MoPR on 19th October 2023. Two members namely Dr. Mallinath Kalshetti, DDG, YASHADA, Pune, Govt. of Maharashtra and Shri Sajith Sukumaran, Chief Operation Officer, Kudumbashree, Govt. of Kerala attended the meeting through video conferencing (VC). Being sick, Ms. Nisha Oraon, Director, Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Jharkhand could not attend the meeting. The list of participants is at **Annexure – I**.

2. The meeting started with the PowerPoint Presentation (PPT) made by Ms. Mamta Varma, Joint Secretary cum Member-Convenor of the Committee. In her presentation, she highlighted the following points. The entire presentation is at **Annexure-II**.

- Interim Order of the Supreme Court of India permitting the PIL petitioner to make a representation to the respondent (Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of India) to look into the grievances raised by the former and as to whether there is a better mechanism to implement the object of women reservation.
- Representation by the petitioner of PIL to MoPR requesting the latter to constitute a committee to examine the matter of Women Pradhans being represented by the male members of their family.
- Composition and Terms of Reference (ToR) of the Advisory Committee constituted to examine the issue mentioned above.
- State-wise Status on Provision of Women Reservation on State Panchayat Acts.
- Advisories and DOs issued by MoPR to strengthen Elected Women Representations (EWRs) in PRIs.

3. After the presentation, the Chairman sought three suggestions from each committee member. The suggestions made by the members of the Committee are as follows:

3.1 Shri Sajith Sukumaran, Chief Operation Officer, Kudumbashree, Govt. of Kerala:

- He urged the committee to look into the diversity of participation of males representing women in PRIs across the States. He suggested to devise different strategies for different areas within the Panchayati Raj, especially for PESA and 6th Schedule Areas as each one is at a different stage in its evolution in empowerment mechanisms of PRIs.

- Strengthening Self-Help Group (SHG) - PRI Convergence.
- Ensuring participation of women in Mahila Sabhas, Tribal Sabhas as a means for mobilising more women participation in the Gram Sabhas.

3.2 Dr. Mallinath Kalshetti, DDG, YASHADA, Pune, Govt. of Maharashtra:

- Provision for Soft-skill training such as on public speaking, leadership, and management to the EWRs similar to the initiative of Kranti Jyoti by the Govt. of Maharashtra.
- Provision in the respective Panchayati Raj Acts to restrain male representatives from interfering in the PRI duties of EWRs.
- Strengthening SHG-PRI Convergence.

3.3 Dr. N.V. Madhuri, Head, Centre for Gender, NIRD&PR:

- Cognizance of deep-rooted social customs such as patriarchy, dowry practice, and double-burden of working women needs to be considered.
- Sensitization and training programmes of the men who are involved in interfering process in women ER's official works need to be considered.
- Continuous capacity-building training of EWRs to improve their managerial skills, especially investing in their leadership training.
- Formation of a network of EWRs for peer learning through discussions, and field visits.
- Strengthening SHG-PRI Convergence as this might help to address the issue.

3.4 Dr. Anita Brandon, Sr. Consultant, UNFPA:

- Strengthening and promotion of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) to motivate EWRs through pre-selective inspirational short films such as '*Sansodhan*' by Govind Nihalani, UNICEF Production in 1993-94, a documentary film titled '*Gaon Nahi Kinhi Panch Ka*', etc. Similarly, the use of media campaigns with captions showing women asserting power, etc. for motivating EWRs.
- Peer-learning Workshops with EWRs in leadership roles to share their experiences and promote women's leadership in PRIs.
- Usage of Mobile phone networks for continuous nudging and stirring women into action through sharing of 5-minute short films on her roles and responsibilities, and messages on leadership issues and facilitate Gram Sabha meetings.

- Provision for GP '*Ninda Prastav*' in Gram Sabhas against male members who are trespassing in the functioning of PRIs and give wide publicity in local news networks.
- MoPR may consider coming up with a booklet of inspirational blocks and panchayats where women leaders have done exemplary work. These could be disseminated through You tube channels in forms and formats of short documentaries, serials, and capsules for motivating EWRs. Along with the You tube channel, tapping All India Radio, Prasar Bharati, etc. for outreach till the last mile to be done.
- To conduct the Panchayat Pre-election Campaign for voters across the States/UTs where women could be made aware to contest for Panchayat elections and take ownership of their PRI responsibilities and not rely on their male relatives.
- Inviting EWRs from Zilla Panchayats, Intermediate/Block Panchayats and Gram Panchayats and non-governmental organisations working in the area of PRIs such as ISS, PRIA, Hunger Project in later committee meetings to solicit their expert views and suggestions to address the said issue.

3.5 Dr. P.P. Balan, Consultant, MoPR:

- Continuous Capacity-Building Training for EWR.
- Sensitising and orienting the close relatives of women members to render support in their functions as EWRs in PRIs.
- Composition of one Standing Committee exclusively for women.
- 1/3rd reservation of seats for EWRs in each standing committee of the Panchayat.
- Separate Component – 'Women Component Plan' for preparing plan exclusively for women focusing on livelihood, strengthening women's participation, etc.
- Component on Gender Budgeting in training and its proper orientation programme for ERs and EWRs.

3.6 Shri. Satish Kumar Singh, Sr. Advisory Centre for Health and Social Justice:

- Documenting success stories of EWRs region-wise.
- Environment building in social groups to reduce peer pressure of masculinity among men.
- Capacity-building of ward members.
- Capacity building of male ERs to influence and sensitization and hold them accountable for creating an enabling environment for EWRs.
- Reservation of 30% of seats for women in the post of Panchayat Secretaries.

3.7 Shri. V.K.Bhasin, Secretary to the Government of India (Rtd.):

- Ensuring internet connectivity till the last mile.
- Penalties through disincentive/incentives to be linked with the practice of proxy participation.
- Considering male members representing EWRs as trespassers for interfering in the PRI duties.
- Sharing the content of the ToR with States and UTs for their inputs.

4. The Chairperson also sought suggestions from the officers and consultants of the Ministry associated with the committee. Accordingly, the suggestions received from senior officers and consultants are as follows:

- Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar, Additional Secretary, MoPR** emphasised three aspects to address the issue (a) Overcoming infrastructure limitations such as ensuring training facilities till the block level that would enable EWRs to access training; (b) Taking IEC campaigns till the GP level through VC facility connectivity till the last mile; and (c) Incentivizing the EWRs for their exemplary works.
- Shri. Mahesh Shairwal (Rtd) Consultant** emphasised the provision of disqualification of proxy participation to be incorporated in the Constitution of India and such offence to be treated as a criminal offence under IPC and CRPC.
- Mr. Nilay Singh, Consultant** focused on restricting the rotation of seats of Sarpanch and ward members within the family and prioritised the SHG-PRI convergence.
- Ms. Priyanka Dutta, Consultant** highlighted (a) the need to have mobile training facilities for EWRs to enable them to acquire the proposed training; (b) sensitizing the family members of EWRs; and (d) emphasizing the need to analyse the parameters influencing EWRs.

5. The Chairperson of the committee requested the members to delve further into the topic and develop a matrix emphasising– What is being done? What should be done? What are the lessons learned from the experience?

6. Based on the discussion, the Chairman assigned the following tasks to the committee members:

6.1 Shri Sajith Sukumaran, Chief Operation Officer, Kudumbashree, Govt. of Kerala:

- Kudumbashree to undertake an analytical study on the Diversity of participation by male members with EWRs in the PRI system. NIRD&PR may also be associated with Kudumbashree for giving detailed framework/structure to the study. The two organisations can have a meeting facilitated by MoPR to work out the structure of the study.

- A Report on the Road Ahead in Strengthening SHG Convergence into PRI leadership with Specific Recommendations to be prepared.

6.2 Dr. Mallinath Kalshetti, DDG, YASHADA, Pune, Govt. of Maharashtra:

- To push the inputs of MoPR from the study in the selected Aspirational Block of the State of Maharashtra.
- To come up with respective IEC Strategy for National/State/District/Block and GP level;
- Create WhatsApp groups for (i) within the Block, (ii) within the District and (iii) within the State to capture the works undertaken by EWRs independently or through of proxy participation.

6.3 Dr. N.V. Madhuri, Head, Centre for Gender, NIRD&PR:

- To associate with Kudumbashree in undertaking the analytical study on the Diversity of participation by male members with EWRs in the PRI system.

6.4 Dr. Anita Brandon, Sr. Consultant, UNFPA:

- Design 5-6 questions to elicit responses from all States and UTs on empowering women elected representatives and covering proxy participation.

6.5 Shri. V.K. Bhasin, Secretary to the Government of India (Rtd.):

- To undertake a comparative study of all State Panchayati Raj Acts.

7. Further the Chairperson highlighted the following points for consideration as recommendations by the Committee to address the issue of proxy women representation:

- Associating Female MPs and MLAs with EWRs and act as mentors for influencing and motivating leadership in PRIs and facilitate cross-learning experience.
- Promoting EWRs through Youtube channel through a partnership with third-party agencies.
- Comparing 5 years of GP performance before and after electing EWRs.
- Mechanism for incentivizing (awards) EWRs at the District level similar to that of Nirmal Gram Puruskar.
- Provision of two-term seat reservations for women as in the case of Tamil Nadu may be considered.
- Partnership with MyGov to be explored.

- Publicising best/exemplary/path-breaking practices steered by the EWRs.
- A network of Panchayats, if not set up, for exchange of ideas, posing of issues, and suggestive solutions to address the issue. For reference, the case of the Indian Disaster Knowledge Network can be referred (<https://idrn.nidm.gov.in/About/Index>). The UN Solution Exchange can also be referred.
- The partnerships with women's colleges and women's department in universities to be considered. The field studies by university students to be explored.
- Consider putting minutes of Mahila Sabha minutes in Gram Sabha and if not agreed to give reasons – taking the example from Maharashtra.
- Consider training partnerships with women-empowering bodies like SEWA, National/State Women Commissions, North East Network, Makaam, Swaniti, Mitti Ke Rang and such organisations working in women empowerment. But the State Governments should be consulted before considering partnerships.
- Examine whether Women ERs fall in the category of 'public servants' like the MLAs and MPs.
- Study whether States have set up Virtual Learning Centres or Panchayat Virtual Learning Centres.
- Study Maharashtra's intervention as to how Panchayats addressed the issue of widows at the Panchayat levels to draw lessons.
- Consider KILA's practice of training for sensitization of family members of the EWRs.
- Examine the legality of standing committees for women including reservation of women in standing committees.
- Women component plan within Panchayat budget and gender budgeting to be examined in detail.
- Consider two terms limits imposed for panchayat elections as imposed by the Tamil Nadu government.
- Creche example to be considered if implemented in the State.
- The last-mile transmission of IEC campaigns at the GP level is to be ensured.
- For VC learning centres, the modules of NIC may be considered. This will save costs as these are available for govt. programmes.
- Database to be created for inspirational stories of women ER who chartered their own path and prohibited interference of husbands and relatives.

8. Further, the committee requested the Ministry to collect information on State-wise reservation of seats for women in the post of Panchayat Secretaries.

9. The Joint Secretary cum Member-convenor requested the members of the committee to think about the other possible areas for undertaking studies, which would contribute to the committee's work. The members were requested to suggest names of States and UTs and dates for possible field visits that could be conducted to examine the situation of proxy participation. Regarding inviting Prasar Bharati and My Gov team as special invitees in the committee meeting that decision is to be taken with prior discussion with the Chairperson.

10. The meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks by the Joint Secretary cum Member-Convenor to the Chairperson and all the participants.

List of Participants

Committee Members

- i. Shri. Sushil Kumar, Secretary to the Government of India (Rtd.) Ministry of Mines – Chairperson
- ii. Shri. V.K. Bhasin, Secretary to the Government of India (Rtd.) Ministry of Law & Justice
- iii. Smt. Mamata Verma, Joint Secretary, Policy Division MoPR
- iv. Dr. Anita Brandon, Sr. Consultant, UNFPA
- v. Dr. N.V. Madhuri, Head, Centre for Gender, NIRD&PR
- vi. Shri. Satish Kumar Singh, Sr. Advisory Centre for Health and Social Justice
- vii. Dr. Mallinath Kalshetti, DDG, YASHADA, Pune, Govt. of Maharashtra (joined online through VC)
- viii. Shri. Sajith Sukumaran, Chief Operation Officer, Kudumbashree, Govt. of Kerala (joined online through VC)
- ix. Dr. P.P.Balan, Consultant, MoPR

Officials and Consultants from the Ministry

- x. Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar, Additional Secretary, MoPR
 - xi. Shri. Ajay Kumar, Under Secretary, MoPR
 - xii. Ms. Priyanka Dutta, SDG Consultant, MoPR
 - xiii. Shri. Nilay Kumar Singh, Consultant, MoPR
 - xiv. Shri. Mahesh Shairwal, Consultant, MoPR
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Measures taken towards Empowering Elected Women Representatives

Government of India
Ministry of Panchayati Raj
19/10/2023



Supreme Court Order

- ❖ Order Date: 06th July 2023
- ❖ Order issued:

“We feel that it is for the respondent-Ministry of Panchayati Raj to look into the grievance raised by the petitioner as to whether there is a better mechanism to implement the object of women reservation.

Thus we permit the petitioner to make a representation to the respondent which should naturally look into the issue flagged by the petitioner-foundation”.



Representation of Petitioner

❖ Order Date: 09.08.2023

- MoPR to constitute a Committee to examine the matter of Women Pradhans being represented by their male family members.
- Based on the report submitted by the Committee, MoPR to take further necessary steps.



Constitution of an Advisory Committee to Examine Women Pradhans being represented by their Male Family Members

- ❖ Date : 19th September 2023.
- ❖ Chairperson : Shri Sushil Kumar, Secretary (Rtd.) Ministry of Mines.
- ❖ Member-Convenor : Joint Secretary Smt. Mamata Verma (Policy Division)
- ❖ Other Member :

Shri V.K. Bhasin (Rtd.) Secretary Ministry of Law & Justice, Ms Nisha Oraon Director Dept of Panchayati Raj, Jharkhand, Dr. Anita Brandon Sr. Consultant UNFPA-India, Shri Satish Kumar Singh Sr. Advisor Centre for Health & Social Justice, New Delhi, Shri Sajith Sukumaran Chief Operating Officer Kudumbashree, Dr. N.V. Madhuri Head, Centre for Gender Studies, NIRD&PR, Hyderabad, Dr. Mallinath Kalshetti DDG YASHADA, Pune and Dr. P.P. Balan Consultant, Ministry of Panchayati Raj.



Terms of Reference

- ❖ To suggest measures for eliminating proxy practices, ensuring good governance, and increasing women's representation in the political decision-making power at the grassroots.
- ❖ To examine the legal framework to overcome the practices of EWRs being represented by their male family members.
- ❖ To provide recommendations for empowering the EWRs of PRIs and ensuring participation in political decision-making power.



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- ❖ To suggest Capacity Building Needs of EWRs for empowering them with competencies for effective political leadership in PRIs.
- ❖ Assessing the ability of EWRs to plan, prepare the agenda mobilise participation and conduct the Meetings.
- ❖ To suggest IEC campaign for promoting change in social mindsets for eliminating Gender-Based Discrimination and proxy practices.
- ❖ To suggest measures to empower rural women through intensifying Panchayat - SHGs - CBOs Convergence.



State-wise Status on Provision of Women Reservation on State Panchayat Acts

- ❖ Article 243 D (2) and (3) of the Constitution of India mandates 33% reservation of seats for women in the Panchayats.
- ❖ Around 21 States and 2 UTs have mandated 50% reservation of seats for women –
Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Daman & Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Gujarat, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Tripura, Uttarakhand and West Bengal
- ❖ The State-wise provision made in the Panchayat Acts of 21 States and 2 UTs.



Action by MoPR

- ❖ Joint Advisory of MoPR & MoRD to State/UTs for PRI-SHG Convergence Effort for integration into GPDP in F.Y. 2022-23.
- ❖ D.O. Letter on Revamping of National Panchayat Awards based on 9 themes of LSDGs.
- ❖ Advisories on Mandating at least 6 Mahila Sabhas prior to Gram Sabhas.
- ❖ Advisory on providing training on women and child issues and conducting Mahila Sabhas, under the Annual Action Plan of the Revamped RGSA scheme.



Gist of Advisories issued towards Empowerment of Women in Panchayats

❖ Advisory on Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant 16.08.2021:

Vide its advisory dated 16.8.2021 Ministry has requested States not to allow Proxy attendance by 'Pradhan Pati' or 'GP Ward Member Pati' of the women Sarpanches/Ward Members to attend Gram Sabha/Sub-committee meetings.

❖ **Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals through PRI:**

- On 07.12.2021 Ministry introduced thematic GPDP, covering 17 SDGs into 9 Themes.
- Theme 9 on Women Friendly Panchayats seeks to achieve gender equality, provide equal opportunities, and empower women and girls in a safe environment.



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❖ D.O. Letter on Revamping of National Panchayat Awards on Themes of LSDGs 29.06.2023:

Vide its D.O. letter dated 29.06.2022 Ministry has requested States and UTs to inform States of the Revamping of the National Panchayat Awards aligning them with 9 localisation of SDGs themes aggregating 17 SDGs for Panchayat Awards 2023.

❖ Joint Advisory of MoPR & MoRD to State/UTs for PRI-SHG Convergence Effort for integration into GPDP in F.Y. 2022-23 20.07.2022:

Joint Advisory of MoPR & MoRD issued on 20.07.2022 seeks to achieve PRI-SHG convergence thus paving the way towards strengthening SHG women's active participation in the decision-making process and raising issues related to poor, vulnerable and marginalized sections of society.



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Advisory on Institutionalisation of Mahila and Bal-Balika Sabhas 01.09.2022

Vide its advisory dated 01.09.2022 Ministry has requested States and UTs to institutionalise Sabhas and Bal-Balika Sabhas prior to Gram Sabhas to enable the priority highlighted in the Sabhas such as on women and child health and nutrition to be discussed in Gram Sabhas and incorporates in GPDP. It also mandated 100% participation of EWRs, member-cum beneficiaries, Anganwadi Workers, SHG members and line department officials.

❖ Advisory on Making PRIs Women and Child Responsive 07.02.2023:

Vide its advisory dated 07.02.2023 Ministry has requested States to provide orientation on women and children-related issues.



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Other D.O. letters related to Empowering EWRs:

❖ Dated 06.03.2023:

Aligned with the Theme of International Women's Day – 'DigiAll: Innovation and Technology for gender equality', States/UTs instructed to conduct Mahila Sabhas in GPs on women empowerment and spreading awareness on the importance of technology in bridging gender gaps and issues of cyber safety.

Dated 01.09.2023:

To MoWCD requesting for examining and exploring suitable mechanism of partnership among Dept. of WCD, Police and ERS of PRIs especially EWRs in mitigating the violence against women and child trafficking.



Action by States

❖ **Maharashtra**: Issued a circular ZPA 1005/94 Mus/P.Cr.104/Pr-9 dated 17-07-2007 to restrain the male members of PRI women representatives from interfering in the working of PRIs.

❖ **Madhya Pradesh**: Intimated instructions to the Chief Executive Officers to tackle the situation when such problems of male members interfering with women representatives' PRI duties arise, the State Government from time to time issues.

However, there is no provision in the Panchayati Raj Act and Rules of Madhya Pradesh to restrain the male members of PRI women representatives from interfering in the working of PRIs.



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- ❖ **Himachal Pradesh**: Issued directions from time to time instructing that there will be no interference from the male members of the families of women representatives in discharging the activities of the Panchayats as well as in the meeting held by the Panchayats.
- ❖ **Haryana**: Neither such provision is there in the Act nor any cases registered.
- ❖ **Karnataka**: Karnataka High Court passed in interim order in 2017 restraining the husbands of women members from interfering in the meeting in Zilla Parishad.

In 2022, the State Government also issued direction under the Panchayats Act for GPs, IPs and ZPs thereby restraining male members from interfering with the works of women members at PRIs.
- ❖ **Telangana**: Issued a Memo dated 16/08/2020 to restrain male members from interfering in the women representatives discharging PRI duties.



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Official Documents awaited:

- ❖ **Andhra Pradesh:** Issued an A Memo Dated 24.07.1996 directing that women representatives in PRIs shall attend and represent in the meetings of PRIs on their own, but unauthorized members shall not represent on their behalf.
- ❖ **Odisha:** Issued an Executive instruction to restrain male members from interfering in the women representatives discharging PRI duties.



THANK YOU



Joint Advisory PRI-SHG Convergence Effort for integration into GPDP FY 2023-24

File No. M-11015/435/2020-Governance-Part(2) (Computer No. 26756)
146660/2022/1006

सचिव
राज्यीय विकास मंत्रालय
Nagendra Nath Sinha
Secretary
Department of Rural Development



सचिव

सुनील कुमार
सचिव
पंचायती राज मंत्रालय
Sunil Kumar
Secretary
Ministry of Panchayati Raj

D.O. No. M-11015/435/2020-Governance

Dated: 20th July, 2022

Dear Chief Secretary,

We are writing to seek your personal intervention and support in ensuring effective convergence between over 2.78 lakh Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) (including Traditional Local Bodies) having nearly 31.5 lakh Elected Representatives and Community Based Organisations (CBO) such as Cluster Level Federations (CLF), Village Organisations (VOs), Self-Help Group (SHGs) representing over 8.39 crore women members by ensuring mandatory representation to the Standing Sub-Committees of GPs and Intermediate Panchayats.

2. As you are aware, the Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDPs) are now being prepared by almost all GPs. The GPDP is expected to be an integrated plan for economic and social development of the local community, especially poor and marginalised sections including women at the GP level. Further, quite often critical areas like education, health, nutrition do not get due attention in the GPDPs. The GPDPs are approved in meetings of Gram Sabha. However, in several parts of the country, meetings of Gram Sabha are poorly attended.

3. It is strongly felt that Self Help Groups (SHGs), Village Organisations (VOs) and Cluster Level Federations (CLFs) can play a pivotal role in bringing forth the Community's requirements and demands and also play a useful supportive role in the decision making process at the ground level. Convergence with SHGs/VOs/CLFs at Gram Panchayat / Intermediate Panchayat level could lead to broad-basing of development and expedite attainment of Thematic Goals under Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs). Women, being at the helm of SHG and their close affinity to local community, have distinct understanding of the local need, its prioritisation in line with available resources and find better solutions to local problems. Active involvement of SHG members and Village Organisations will improve the quality of GPDP preparation, implementation and monitoring.

4. In its advisory on 'Making Gram Sabha Vibrant' issued on 16th August, 2021, MoPR had suggested that GP should invariably have six Standing Sub-Committees, namely,

- General Standing Committee
- Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee
- Planning & Development Committee
- Education Committee
- Social Justice Standing Committee, and
- Water Supply, Water & Environment Conservation Committee.

These six sub-committees are directly or indirectly concerned with women related issues. Hence, the representation of SHG/VO members in the Standing Sub- Committees of Gram Panchayats will strengthen the committee by providing useful insights and effectively articulating felt needs of local community, especially poor and marginalised sections including women.

5. The CLFs, which typically function over 25-30 villages, articulate the needs of SHGs for service and community infrastructure which cannot be addressed at the GP level. CLFs are also playing an important role in ensuring universal livelihood of SHG members. The natural forum for such aggregation is at the level of Intermediate Panchayat. Thus, more effective PRI-CBO partnership could be forged if CLFs are invited as ex-officio members or special invitees to Standing Sub-Committees of Intermediate Panchayats. The envisaged partnership would not only enable the CBO network to understand the democratic functioning of PRIs but would also help them to actively participate in their functioning and effectively raise issues relating to the poor, vulnerable and marginalised sections of society.

6. In the light of the above, it is evident that time has come to consider, evolve and operationalize an institutionalised framework for PRI-SHG interface. It is suggested that States may amend their Panchayati Raj Rules and include provision for mandatory representation of SHG Federation members to the Standing Sub-Committees of GPs and Intermediate Panchayats as ex-officio members or special invitees, as may be considered appropriate. Representatives of each VO may be made ex-officio member or special invitee to the Standing Sub-Committees of GPs. Likewise one member from each CLF may be nominated as member or Special invitee to the Standing Sub-Committees of Intermediate Panchayats. Even if the State intends to give them permanent representation in the said Committees through legislative amendments, which may take some time, as an interim arrangement, State may consider making them special invitees. An alternative platform of Gram Panchayat Co-ordination Committee (GPCC) having representatives from the Gram Panchayat, CBO and Government departments may also be considered for effective partnership of the PRIs and CBO.

7. We believe that these steps will go a long way in institutionalizing the PRI-CBO convergence and pave the way for strengthening of PRIs and grass roots democracy.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Nagendra Nath Sinha)
Department of Rural Development


(Sunil Kumar)
Ministry of Panchayati Raj

The Chief Secretaries/Advisors to Administrators in States/UTs



D.O. Letter to States/UTs on Thematic Awards

डॉ. चन्द्र शेखर कुमार, आई.ए.एस.
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D.O. No.: N-11019/18/2020-Governance-Part(1)

Dated: 29th June, 2022

Subject: Revamping of National Panchayat Awards aligning them with 9 Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) themes aggregating 17 SDGs.

Dear Madam/Sir,

As you are aware that Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has been giving awards to the best performing Panchayats/States/UTs since the year 2011 as a part of Incentivization of Panchayats scheme. These awards are given annually on 24th of April during the celebrations of National Panchayati Raj Day, an event usually graced by Hon'ble Prime Minister.

2. Hon'ble Union Minister of Panchayati Raj on 7th December, 2021 released the report on "Localization of Sustainable Development Goals through Panchayati Raj Institutions" prepared by an Expert Committee constituted in this Ministry. The Committee in its report has identified 9 themes aggregating 17 SDGs for action at local (Gram Panchayat) level as a way forward for attainment of SDGs by the year 2030. These 9 themes are (i) Poverty free and enhanced livelihoods village, (ii) Healthy village, (iii) Child friendly village, (iv) Water sufficient village, (v) Clean and Green village, (vi) Self-sufficient infrastructure in village, (vii) Socially secured village, (viii) Village with good governance and (ix) Engendered development in village.

3. Accordingly, Ministry of Panchayati Raj is revamping these awards to establish a multi-level pyramidal structure of awards competition (at Block, District, State/UT and National Level) aligning it with 9 Localization of Sustainable Development Goals themes. The draft structure of revamped awards and their questionnaires are enclosed at Annexure-I and II respectively.

4. It is proposed to launch the revamped version of National Panchayat Awards shortly. I, therefore, request you to kindly review the enclosed proposed awards structure and draft questionnaires and share your comments at email behera.bk@nic.in, with a copy marked to manoj.sharma12@nic.in, pooja.sharma80@nic.in and chandrani.saha@nic.in. Deliberations regarding this will be held on 05th July, 2022 (03.30 PM – 04.30 PM) during the "National Write-Shop on Preparedness of Roadmap and Draft Plan of Action on Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) in PRIs" wherein States and UTs may present their views on this matter.

Enclosed: As above

Principal Secretary/Secretary,
Panchayati Raj Department of States/UTs

Resan

Yours Sincerely,
29.6.2022
(Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar)



Advisory to States/UTs on Mahila Sabha

श्री. चंद्रशेखर कामर, अतिरिक्त सचिव
 Dr. Chandrashekhara Kamara, IAS
 ADDITIONAL SECRETARY
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 Email: cskamara@nic.in

संघीय गृह विभाग
 Ministry of Panchayats
 भारत सरकार
 GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

संघीय महिला समिति
 Union Women's Commission
 2011-12, 101, 102, 103
 नई दिल्ली-110001
 MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
 LICCHAKI BHAVAN, 2ND FLOOR
 JAMA RASTI, DELHI
 TEL: 011-237211001

D.O. No. M-12815/200/2022-CB Dated: 09th September, 2022

Dear Madam / Sir,
 As you are aware, Ministry of Panchayats, Raj (MOPR) has adopted a thematic approach towards localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through 2023. There are 3 Themes, namely: Healthy Villages, Women and Children. These 3 Themes are interrelated, interdependent and indivisible in nature. The Theme 2: Healthy Villages, Women and Children, Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) along with other 28 Ministries and 28 Departments have together signed the resolution to support the Panchayats to address 9 themes of SDG.

1. To take forward the commitment to meet 17 SDGs in 99 Themes, the Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) vide D.O. No.PA/128/2022-CBMU dated 30th June, 2022 conveyed that MWCD has also decided that role and extent of community participation in providing services and good health should be greatly emphasized. To this end, it is felt that community participation through the medium of "PDSMAN Panchayats" will play a significant and transformational role in bringing about behavior change at the grass root level. This programme which commences on 2, 3 and 9 of SDGs, will make the Jan Aardhan Jee Jan Shiksha for achieving a "Kishoree Jeevan Shiksha", flagging the issue of promoting nutrition and good health in the Mahila Sabha and Shiksha Sabhas are organized prior to Gram Sabhas in the Gram Panchayats, will go a long way in achieving the said objectives.

2. Earlier also MOPR vide D.O. No. M-12815/98/2021-22 dated 15th August 2021 regarding "Making Green Sabhas Green" suggested that a measure of one Gram Sabha meeting at a monthly frequency in a year may be conducted. In this reference, it has also been recommended that Special Mahila Sabhas & Raj Sabhas may continue to be organized in addition to these Gram Sabha meetings as required or as provided for in the respective states/UTs/institutions of State Governments. Therefore, it becomes important to conduct Mahila Sabha and Shiksha Sabhas prior to the Gram Sabhas to enable the priority issues highlighted in the Sabhas to be discussed in Gram Sabhas. In these Sabhas adequate representation of membership beneficiaries may be ensured and one of the agenda of the Mahila Sabha and Shiksha Sabhas may be on women, adolescent girls and child health and nutrition.

3. The D.O. under reference also advised States and UTs to activate the standing committees/sub-committees of the Gram Panchayats including women and child committees to achieve the objectives of SDGs, particularly Theme 2 - Healthy Villages, Theme 3 - Child-friendly Villages and Theme 9 - Women-friendly Villages.

4. To make women and children an integral part of the 3-tier Panchayat development process of the Panchayats, States and UTs may likely to ensure the following:

- 1. SDGs play a crucial role in decision-making process through their Village Poverty Reduction Plan (VPRP) of Gram Sabhas related issues to both women and child health. Currently, only 20% registered SHG members attended the Gram Sabhas for preparation of VPRP 2022-23 out of 8.33 Cr. members. State-wise SHG participation in Gram Sabhas is placed in Annexure-1. In this regard, States and UTs may strive for 100% attendance of SHG members in the Mahila Sabhas. SHG members may also be called as

- members in the Standing Committee for Women and Child Development for adequate coverage of interrelated PDSMAN Activities/Initiatives.
- 2. States and UTs should aim for 100% attendance of Women Elected Representatives at the Mahila Sabha and Shiksha Sabhas along with at least 50% beneficiaries of PDSMAN Activities as members.
- 3. Members participation of Anganwadis, ICDS workers and officials from the departments in the Mahila Sabha and Shiksha Sabhas may be aimed at by Department of Women and Child Development for adequately addressing the pressing issue of malnutrition among mother and child at grassroots level.
- 4. States and UTs may also strive that the Beneficiaries of the Mahila Sabhas and Shiksha Sabhas are discussed at the Gram Sabhas where the Gram Panchayat Planning Committee (GPC) consisting of some female members of standing committees/sub-committees among other members address the issues through specific agenda in the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP).

We believe these joint efforts will succeed in achieving the objectives of Agenda 2030 and to assure that "No One is Left Behind".

Yours faithfully,
 End. As Above

Rajesh
 Dr. Chandrashekhara Kamara

The Chief Secretary
 All States/UTs
 Kalyani
 Principal Secretary/Secretary
 Panchayats Raj Departments
 All States and UTs



सत्यमेव जयते



D.O. Letter to MoWCD on Joint Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Women and Children

File No. M-11015/205/2022-CB (Computer No. 28651)
166999/2023/SECY-MoPR

सुनील कुमार, आई.ए.एस.
सचिव
Sunil Kumar, IAS
Secretary

भारत सरकार
पंचायती राज मंत्रालय
डॉ. राजेन्द्र प्रसाद रोड,
कृषि भवन, नई दिल्ली-110001
Government of India
Ministry of Panchayati Raj
Dr. Rajendra Prasad Road,
Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110001

D.O.No. 11015/205/2022-CB

September 1, 2023

Dear *Indevar,*

I compliment you on the initiative of Nari Adalat and launch of its pilot project in the State of Assam and UT of J&K. Further, Mission Shakti Scheme of your Ministry with sub-schemes of 'One Stop Centre' and 'Women Helpline' under 'Sambal' and 'Anti Human Trafficking Unit (AHTU)' under 'Samarthya' components as well as Scheme of 'Ujjwala' are also being implemented to ensure women's protection and security from trafficking at the grassroots.

2. Here, I would like to reiterate that Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has adopted a thematic approach towards Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) through PRIs, merging 17 SDGs in 09 Themes. **Theme number 9 i.e. "Women-Friendly Panchayat"** aims at ensuring secured, responsive, equitable, just, inclusive, and participatory development at the grassroots for gender-based transformative outcomes and promote women's participation in political decision-making at the PRI level.

3. However, while both the Ministries are making all out efforts to ensure safety for women in rural areas, the issues related with trafficking of girl child and women remains significantly critical that need further attention and, more importantly, the convergence of efforts of various stakeholders including Women & Child Development Department, Panchayats, and local Police in the States.

4. Given their extensive outreach among the people, there is no doubt, the support and active participation of Elected Representatives of the Panchayats, especially the Elected Women Representatives, will be significantly effective in prevention of trafficking as well as other forms of violence against women

5. I, therefore, would like to request you to get the matter examined in your Ministry for exploring suitable mechanism of partnership among the Department of WCD, Police and ERs of PRIs in mitigating the violence against women, especially, women and child trafficking. Shri Vikas Anand, Joint Secretary from this Ministry will be coordinating with the concerned Officers of your Ministry on this matter.

With best wishes,

Yours Sincerely,

Sunil Kumar
(Sunil Kumar)

Shri Indevar Pandey,
Secretary to Govt. of India,
Ministry of Women & Child Development,
Shastri Bhawan, New Delhi



Advisory on Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant

128333/2021/MOPR
सुनील कुमार, आई.ए.एस.
SUNIL KUMAR, IAS



सचिव
भारत सरकार
पंचायती राज मंत्रालय
SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
Date: 16th August, 2021

D.O. No. M-11015/98/2021-FD

Dear

In the recent past intensive engagement and consultations with the States/UTs have been undertaken by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) to revitalize the institution of Gram Sabhas, which are Constitutional bodies, so that they may be strengthened to oversee implementation of various development programmes of Government. The discussion paper on the subject "Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant" had been circulated to all States. This was followed by Video Conference (VC) meetings with States/UTs on 23rd March, 2021 and 23rd July, 2021 wherein various aspects of the discussion paper were deliberated upon. During these meetings and subsequently, valuable suggestions have been received from States.

2. Based on these deliberations, as well as feedback and broad consensus arrived at, certain valuable action points which have emerged in our joint effort towards making the Gram Sabhas vibrant institutions are as under:-

- The Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the States / UTs may be facilitated to hold their **Gram Sabha meetings** at such frequency so as to have a **minimum of six (bimonthly frequency)** meetings and a **maximum of twelve (monthly frequency)** meetings in a year.
- The **agenda** for the Gram Sabha meetings may be prepared so as to contain regular standing agenda items, followed by discussions on themes of National priority areas. The regular standing agenda may include *inter alia* the confirmation of minutes of previous meeting & Action Taken Report thereon, review of receipt & expenditure, consideration of Audit and social audit reports, review of implementation of Citizen's charter with special focus on service delivery, proper selection/ sanction/ monitoring of progress of infrastructure works and identification of the correct beneficiaries for the various welfare schemes of the Government in the priority areas.
- An **annual calendar** may be drawn up in advance for all the GPs in the States/UTs for the Gram Sabha meetings considering the requirements as above.
- The scheduling of Gram Sabha meetings may be staggered so that only Gram Panchayats in selected clusters go in for Gram Sabha meetings on a particular day of the week, so as to enable the district/block administration officials to participate actively in these meetings.
- The District Administration under the leadership of the District Collector/ CEO need to take initiative and ensure attendance of Group A and B officers in all the Gram Sabha meetings.
- Efforts need to be made to ensure **maximum attendance of all eligible citizens** in the Gram Sabha meetings through various awareness generation and communication means. The minimum quorum for the meeting should be 10% of the members out of which at least 30% should be women members. This quorum requirement would need to be enforced even for the subsequently held meetings if a scheduled meeting is postponed for want of minimum quorum.

contd...21-

- The suggested tagline "Gram Sabha Hamari Shakti, Gram Adyati Panchayat" or its similar version in the regional language may be popularized and displayed in the Gram Sabha meetings to facilitate the citizens to get involved intensely with the campaign. Towards inculcating the citizens' participation in the GS meetings, various mechanisms like health camps, demonstrations of rural technology projects, inspection visits to school/ health centres, awards for exemplary performance of citizens etc., may also be considered for being tagged along with the Gram Sabha meetings.
- Towards grievance redressal of the citizens, a separate facility to register the complaints and a predictable resolution mechanism at the GP level may be introduced.
- An integrated real time **online monitoring system**, where all the major performance parameters of key focus areas at the GP/ Village levels are tracked and displayed in the public domain is proposed to be established. The Gram Sabha meetings may be encouraged to deliberate upon the results displayed in the form of a dashboard in such portal. The portal, proposed to be developed and launched by MoPR shortly, would also have facility to schedule meetings, upload the photovideo recordings of the Gram Sabha / Standing Sub Committee meetings as well as their record of proceedings.
- In order to revitalize their functioning, GPs should invariably have **six standing sub-committees**, namely:
 - General Standing Committee;
 - Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition Committee (VHSNC);
 - Planning & Development Committee;
 - Education Committee (School Management Committee);
 - Social Justice/Sending Committee; and
 - Water Supply, Water & Environmental Conservation Committee.
 Additional sub-committees may also be constituted to oversee other sectors as required locally. Project / Scheme specific Committees at GP level under the Scheme Guidelines, may be subsumed under the relevant above-mentioned Standing Sub-Committees of the Gram Panchayat. Apart from Ward Members and Sarpanch, other expert Government and Non-Government members could be included as Special Invites.
- All the ward member/elected representatives of the GPs should invariably be made members of these sub-committees, with each ward member not occupying the position in more than two sub-committees. Ward members, who have been identified and trained as a "Sector enabler", should be made part of the sub-committee dealing with the concerned sector. Suitable remuneration to the ward member/elected representatives for their services to the sub-committees may be provided from State Government Funds/ Own Source of Revenues (OSRs) of the GPs, which may be up to Rs. 1000/- per month per Sub-Committee meeting to ward members and up to Rs. 5000/- per month to Sarpanches or as deemed fit by the State Government.

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- GPs may consider constituting one Ward Member, by rotation in every month, as "Day Officer" of the GP who will be responsible for ensuring opening of the GP office, supervision of the cleanliness of the premises, organizing meetings etc to provide the much-needed morale boost to them and also contribute to the well-being of the constituency.
- The detailed descriptions of the above requirements are provided in the enclosure. It is requested that suitable instructions may be issued towards operationalizing the above action points in your State/UT **on or before 8 October 2021** to the concerned departments, which may also include making appropriate changes in the relevant Act/Rules/Regulations, towards making the Gram Sabhas vibrant. The Ministry proposes to launch the portal in the last week of September, 2021.
- We believe that through our joint efforts we will succeed in strengthening the Panchayati Raj institutions and making them an effective and responsive institution of local governance working towards realization of Sustainable Development Goals with full support of concerned Departments and Government functionaries.

Yours sincerely,

(Sunil Kumar)

Secy, MOPR,

The Chief Secretary,
All States/UTs.



D.O. Letter on Conducting Mahila Sabha to on Use of Technology

128333/2021/MOPR
सुनील कुमार, आई.ए.एस.
SUNIL KUMAR, IAS



सचिव
भारत सरकार
पंचायती राज मंत्रालय
SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ
Date: 16th August, 2021

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(Sunil Kumar)

Secy, MOPR,

The Chief Secretary,
All States/UTs.