



Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions

Best Practices from States and
Union Territories

2026

Preface

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act marked as a watershed of empowering Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) for democratic decentralization and delivery of good governance. In recent years, significant policy reforms, institutional innovations, and digital transformation initiatives have strengthened Panchayats as effective institutions of local self-governance, enabling them to deliver services more efficiently, promote participatory development, and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Under the Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan Scheme (RGSA) Scheme, best practices of Gram Panchayats on various components are showcased to strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institutions through capacity building, institutional development, and knowledge sharing.

This Compendium of Success Stories in Strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions, highlights innovative initiatives undertaken by the States and Union Territories to strengthen local governance structure through improved governance systems, capacity building, digital solutions, financial empowerment, community participation, and institutional reforms. These exemplary cases demonstrate policy level changes and promotes peer learning by enabling the States/UTs to learn from successful experiences for strengthening local governance.

The publication serves as a repository of successful interventions & knowledge sharing document for policymakers to adopt best practices by the States/UTs accelerating the process of institutional strengthening and fostering innovations in local governance.

It is hoped that this compendium will inspire continued efforts towards building empowered, accountable, and resilient Panchayats, contributing to the vision of *Viksit Bharat through Vikshit Panchayat*.

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Good Governance Initiatives in Panchayats



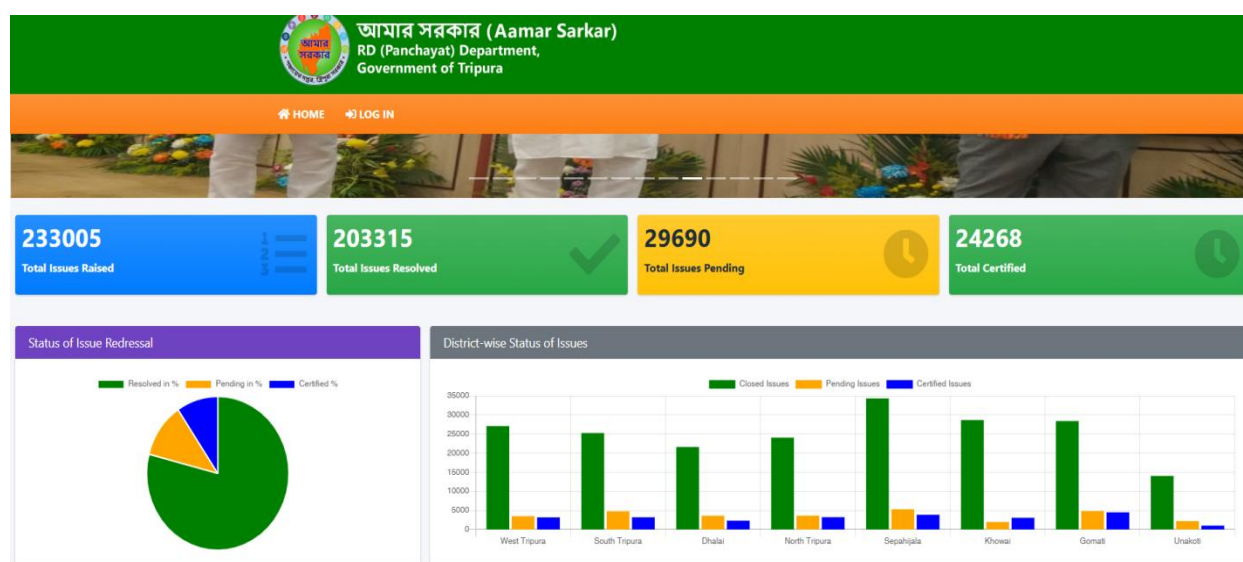
1.1 Aamar Sarkar: A Digital Model for Transparent and Responsive Rural Governance- Tripura

Introduction: Good governance requires responsive administration, timely grievance redressal, and close engagement with citizens, especially in rural areas. To strengthen transparency, accountability, and service delivery in Panchayats, the Government of Tripura launched “**Aamar Sarkar**” on 17 November 2022. The platform provides a structured, digital mechanism for identifying, registering, monitoring, and resolving issues faced by rural citizens. Embedded within the larger “Prati Ghore Sushasan” vision, Aamar Sarkar ensures that the government hears the voice of the poorest and reaches the last mile with timely solutions.

Background/Profile: Tripura’s rural administrative ecosystem comprises Gram Panchayats/Village Committees, Block Advisory Committees, Panchayat Samitis, and various departmental functionaries. Earlier, rural grievances were addressed through the **Panchayat Monitoring System (PMS)**, which lacked a robust mechanism for citizen participation, real-time monitoring, and interdepartmental coordination.

Aamar Sarkar was conceptualized as a web- and app-based multi-stakeholder platform involving 81 line departments and various levels of frontline staff.

The platform allows issues to be raised through three modes: **Village Walk**, **Aamar Sarkar Day**, and **General complaints**, ensuring systematic capturing of rural concerns with photographs, geo-tagging, prioritization, and escalation.



Problems: Why This Initiative Was Required:

Several operational and systemic gaps highlighted the need for a stronger grievance redressal mechanism:

- **Low frequency of issue reporting** under the previous PMS system despite widespread ground-level problems.
- **Poor monitoring** at District and Block levels, leading to delays, unresolved issues, and weak accountability.
- **No direct involvement of elected representatives**, resulting in limited community ownership and visibility of governance processes.
- **Inability of villagers to raise issues directly** before their Gram Panchayats/VCs in a structured manner.
- **Many GP/VC wards remained ignored**, with no formal mechanism ensuring coverage of all habitations.
- **Absence of escalation triggers**, meaning that unattended issues continued indefinitely.
- **Lack of real-time data**, which is making it difficult to assess the departmental performance.

These challenges made it essential to design a transparent, accountable, and technology-driven system to address the governance gaps.

Solution: The Aamar Sarkar Initiative:

Aamar Sarkar emerged as a comprehensive digital solution for grievance registration, issue resolution, departmental coordination, and monitoring.

Key Features of the Solution Include:

a. Structured Issue Identification

- Issues captured with photographs through three modes: **Village Walk, Aamar Sarkar Day, and General reporting.**
- Mandatory raising of **20 issues per GP/VC per month** from all wards.

b. Digital Workflow & Monitoring

- Issues tagged to concerned departments across the state (81 on boarded).
- Staged resolution process with photographs and final certification by the HoD.
- **Automatic escalation** of issues pending beyond four days.
- Geo-tagging improves field verification and precision.

c. Multi-Level Monitoring Mechanisms

- **Block-Level Monitoring Committees** chaired by PS/BAC leaders.
- **District-Level Monitoring Committees** headed by Hon'ble Sabhadhipati/DM.
- Special **Aamar Sarkar Cells** in departments to track and address pending issues.

d. Role of Elected Representatives

- Ward Members empowered to raise issues directly through the Aamar Sarkar portal.
- “Village Walk” every Thursday and “Aamar Sarkar Day” every Monday ensures continuous engagement.

e. Real-Time Dashboards & Alerts

- Dashboards accessible by CM, CS, Secretaries, HoDs, DMs, and BDOs for real-time performance assessment.
- SMS alerts sent during issue registration and closure for citizen reassurance.

Together, these measures established a transparent, responsive, and citizen-centric governance mechanism.

Outcome: Measurable Improvement in Rural Service Delivery and Citizen-Centric Governance



Conclusion

Aamar Sarkar has evolved into more than a grievance redressal system, it is a multi-dimensional governance tool that fosters proactive issue identification, strengthens interdepartmental coordination, supports data-driven planning, and brings administration closer to rural citizens. It marks a major step toward efficient service delivery, transparent governance, and empowered Panchayat Raj institutions in Tripura.

1.2 e-GramKachahari portal to ensure transparency and accountability in the functioning of Gram Kachaharies in Bihar

The Panchayati Raj System in the state of Bihar has been established with the primary objective of making rural citizens aware of their rights and entitlements and providing them with an opportunity for self-governance. In this framework, the institution of **Gram Kachahari** has also been incorporated to bring the justice delivery mechanism closer to rural communities.

Gram Kachahari has been established at each Gram Panchayat for dispensation of justice at the doorsteps of the rural populace, which has got the authority to bring amicable settlement of certain criminal and civic disputes between the rival parties and in case of failure to do so, to impose a fine up to rupees one thousand to the party found guilty after deciding on the matter through prescribed procedures. The Gram Kachahari consist of a Sarpanch elected directly by the electorates of the gram panchayat and one Panch from each ward of gram panchayat.

Introduction to the E-Court Initiative: To strengthen and modernize the functioning of Gram Kachahari, the **Government of Bihar has launched the “E-Court” initiative**. The primary objective of this initiative is to ensure **speedy, transparent, and efficient resolution of disputes at the village level**. Under the E-Court system, all legal proceedings of the Gram Kachahari will be conducted through a **digital platform**. This will simplify procedures, enhance transparency, and help make the justice delivery system **more efficient and free from corruption**.



Easy Access through URL-<https://egramkachari.bihar.gov.in/Default.aspx>

Objectives of the Gram Kachahari E-Court

Enhancing Transparency in the Judicial Process: In the traditional justice system, allegations of corruption and bias were common. Through the E-Court system, all proceedings will be digitally recorded, ensuring greater transparency, fairness, and accountability.

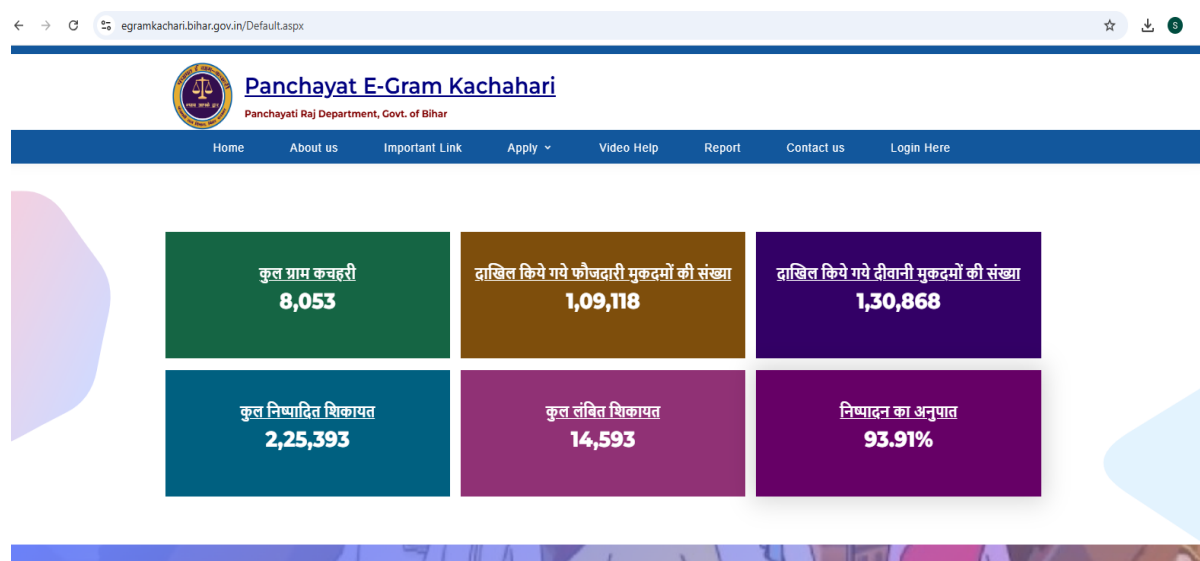
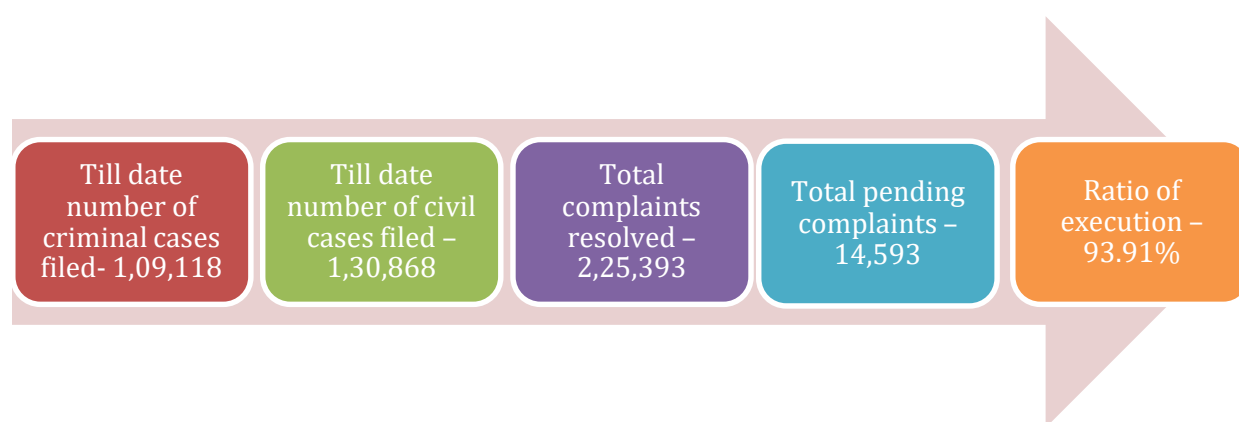
Saving Time: Under the conventional system, case disposal often took a long time. The E-Court mechanism will significantly speed up the process, enabling quicker resolution of cases.

Use of Technology: The E-Court system will maintain digital records of all documents and cases in the Gram Kachahari, ensuring better security, easier retrieval, and improved accessibility of records.

Online Complaint Registration: Rural citizens will be able to register their complaints online from their homes, making access to Gram Kachahari more convenient and citizen-friendly.

Promoting Digital Awareness in Rural Areas: The E-Court initiative will expose rural communities to digital tools and services, thereby improving digital literacy and encouraging the use of technology in everyday governance.

Key Achievements of e-Gram Kachahari

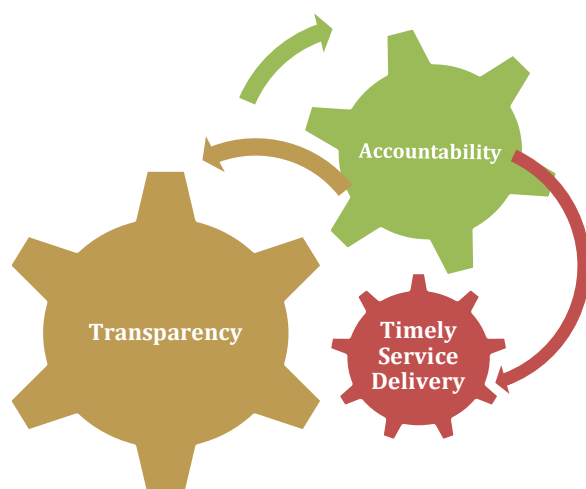


1.3. Right to Public Services (RTPS) Center for timely service delivery and transparency - Bihar

Over the last few years, Bihar has placed special focus and emphasis on Governance and administrative reforms. It has taken various steps to ensure better Government service delivery through measures aimed at improving transparency and accountability in Government processes and systems through policy interventions, e-governance initiatives, redressal mechanisms, etc. One such intervention is the Bihar Right to Public Services Act 2011, launched in August 2011, which gives rights to citizens for services that the Government is duty-bound to deliver to them, agreeing to deliver services within stipulated time limits, fixing accountability within the system by naming public servants who would be held responsible, and providing a chance to appeal in cases where services are delayed or denied. Thus, this act incorporates the concepts of accountability, timeliness, and service delivery- all essential ingredients for good governance.

Provision for Appeals under the RTPS Act:

Section 6 of the RTPS Act provides for the right of appeal, according to which, “Any person whose application for service is rejected by a designated public servant or who is not provided the service within the stipulated time limit, may take recourse to redressal by filing an appeal to the Appellate Authority within thirty days from the date of rejection of application or the expiry of the stipulated time limit”. Further, if the applicant or the designated public servant is aggrieved by the order of the Appellate Authority or there is non-compliance with the Appellate Authority order by the designated public servant, there is also a provision for a second appeal to the Reviewing Authority. Further, if the Appellate Authority fails to decide on an appeal within the stipulated time, the applicant may resort to making a second appeal to the Reviewing Authority.



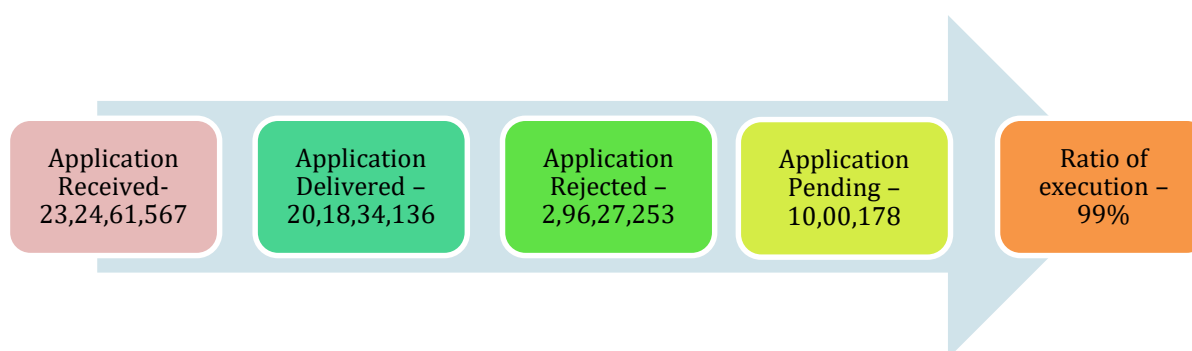
MANDATE TO

Key Benefits and Departmental Coverage under the Right to Public Services Act

The **Right to Public Services Act** has significantly strengthened citizen-centric governance in Bihar by ensuring a **transparent and legally backed grievance redressal mechanism** with clearly defined accountability. The Act mandates **time-bound service delivery**, enabling most grievances and service requests to be resolved within **15 working days**, thereby reducing delays and administrative discretion. Leveraging **e-governance**, it provides citizens with the facility of **online application, real-time tracking, and digital delivery of decisions**, enhancing accessibility, efficiency, and trust in public systems.

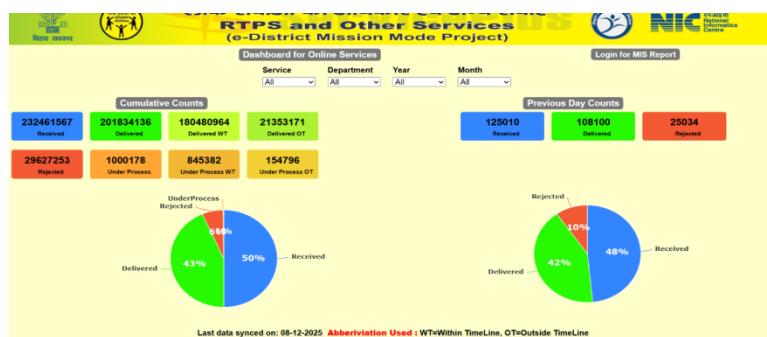
Under the Act, **53 essential public services** are covered across **14 key departments**, including Revenue, Health, General Administration, Planning and Development, Labour Resources, Home, Tourism, Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Food and Consumer Protection, Revenue and Land Reforms, Prohibition, Excise and Registration, Transport, Energy, and Agriculture. This comprehensive coverage ensures that a wide range of citizen services are delivered in a timely, transparent, and accountable manner, making the Act a cornerstone of effective governance and service delivery reform in the State.

Key Achievements of RTPS



Challenges and Their Resolution

Initial challenges, such as a shortage of manpower, low awareness among rural citizens, limited digital access, and infrastructure gaps, affected the rollout of the RTPS framework. These were addressed through the **deployment of Executive Assistants at Gram Panchayats**, **awareness programmes in rural areas**, **improved smartphone and internet penetration**, and the establishment of **dedicated RTPS Centers** with necessary facilities in Panchayats or alternative designated spaces. Together, these measures ensured smoother implementation and timely delivery of services under the Act.



Easy Access through URL - <https://serviceonline.bihar.gov.in/>

1.4 Establishment of Aadhaar Centers in Gram Sachivalayas of Uttar Pradesh

In a major step towards strengthening rural governance and expanding access to citizen services, the Panchayati Raj Department, Government of Uttar Pradesh, has launched the initiative “Establishment of Aadhaar Centers in Gram Sachivalayas.”

Under this initiative, Gram Sachivalayas are being developed as Aadhaar Centers to provide enrolment and update services within villages, thereby saving time and cost for rural citizens, especially senior citizens, women, and persons with disabilities.

For this purpose, the Directorate of Panchayati Raj has obtained authorization from UIDAI as a Registrar (Code 269) and Empanelment Agency (EA Code 4090).

The initiative also aims to enhance the Own Source Revenue of Gram Panchayats and economically empower Panchayat Sahayaks, in line with the State’s vision of “Digital Panchayat – Empowered Panchayat.”



Need for the Initiative

The establishment of Aadhaar Centers in Gram Sachivalayas was necessitated by the limited availability of Aadhaar services in rural areas, which forced citizens to travel long distances to block or district headquarters, leading to loss of time, wages, and added expenses.

This particularly affected elderly persons, women, persons with disabilities, and daily wage earners. At the same time, Gram Sachivalayas, despite having infrastructure and Panchayat Sahayaks, remained underutilised as service delivery centers.

There was also a pressing need to strengthen the Own Source Revenue of Gram Panchayats and to create additional income opportunities for Panchayat Sahayaks. The initiative therefore aimed to address citizen hardship, improve utilisation of Panchayat infrastructure, enhance Panchayat finances, and promote economic empowerment at the grassroots level.

Solution:

Authorization as UIDAI Registrar and Empanelment Agency: The Directorate obtained Registrar Code 269 and EA Code 4090, enabling every Gram Sachivalaya to function as an Aadhaar Center.

Training Panchayat Sahayaks as Aadhaar Operators: Panchayat Sahayaks are being trained and certified to operate Aadhaar systems, ensuring availability of skilled personnel in every village

Establishing Aadhaar Enrolment and Update Stations in Gram Sachivalayas: Each Sachivalaya is equipped to offer Aadhaar enrolment, biometric updates, demographic updates, mobile linking, and e-KYC services directly within the village.

Strengthening OSR and Promoting Digital Panchayats: Service fees from Aadhaar operations enhance Gram Panchayat OSR, while converting Sachivalayas into digital service centers aligns with the "Digital Panchayat – Empowered Panchayat" vision

Enhancing Economic Empowerment of Panchayat Sahayaks: The additional income earned by operators improves financial stability and incentivises better service delivery.

From Implementation to Impact

- The implementation of Aadhaar Centers in Gram Sachivalayas involves significant operational challenges, including large-scale training of over 57,000 Panchayat Sahayaks, ensuring adequate digital infrastructure, managing biometric equipment, maintaining data security, and coordinating among multiple stakeholders such as UIDAI, district authorities, and technology partners. Continuous monitoring and community awareness are also essential to ensure service quality and sustained citizen footfall.
- Despite these challenges, the initiative has delivered strong outcomes by providing Aadhaar services at the village level, reducing citizens' time and cost, strengthening the Own Source Revenue of Gram Panchayats, and economically empowering Panchayat Sahayaks. It has also accelerated the transformation of Gram Sachivalayas into digital service hubs, improving the government–citizen interface and reinforcing the vision of a Digital and Empowered Panchayat system.



1.5 Strengthening Grassroots Governance through Human Resource Reform- Odisha

1. The Accountant-cum-Data Entry Operator (ADEO) Initiative in Odisha

Background: Odisha's ADEO Initiative represents a transformative human resource reform aimed at strengthening financial discipline, digital governance, and administrative efficiency at the Gram Panchayat level. By institutionalizing **Accountant-cum-Data Entry Operators (ADEOs)** as a dedicated district cadre, the State addressed chronic staffing gaps that constrained effective utilization of devolved funds and delivery of citizen services.

Through structured recruitment, rigorous verification, and comprehensive capacity building in collaboration with Madhusudan Das Regional Academy of Financial Management (MDRAFM) and SIRD&PR, ADEOs have emerged as financial stewards, data custodians, and enablers of transparent, accountable governance, resulting in measurable improvements in service delivery, audit readiness, and evidence-based planning.



2. Context and Backdrop

Constitutional and Institutional Framework

The **73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992**, institutionalized Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) as the third tier of democratic governance, mandating fiscal decentralization and local self-government.

- **Articles 243(I) & 243(Y):** State Finance Commissions (SFCs)
- **Article 280:** Central Finance Commission (CFC) grants

These mechanisms empower Gram Panchayats to undertake local planning, infrastructure creation, and service delivery for economic development and social justice.

Scale of Fiscal Devolution

Over the last decade, fund flows to PRIs have increased significantly:

- **14th CFC (2015–2020):** Rs. 2,00,292 crore
- **15th CFC (2021–2026):** Rs. 2,36,805 crore (focus on basic services)
- **Average GP receipts:** Rs. 20–60 lakh per annum

While fiscal devolution expanded rapidly, human resource capacity at GP level remained critically inadequate, with most GPs operating with only two personnel against a requirement of 6–7, leading to gaps in financial management, record keeping, and service delivery.



The Reform: ADEO Initiative

To address systemic capacity gaps, the Government of Odisha created 7,142 posts of Accountant-cum-Data Entry Operators (ADEOs) as a dedicated District Cadre Service. The reform aimed to professionalise financial management, strengthen digital governance, and enhance transparency and audit readiness at the Gram Panchayat level.

Policy Decision

The Government of Odisha issued a Gazette Notification creating 7,142 posts of Accountant-cum-Data Entry Operators (ADEOs) as a separate District Cadre Service, institutionalizing professional financial and data management at the grassroots.

Recruitment Framework

Cadre Composition

- **70%** Direct recruitment through the State Staff Selection Commission
- **30%** Selection from eligible Gram Rozgar Sevaks (GRSs) under MGNREGA

One-Time Absorption of GRSs

- Minimum 5 years continuous service
- Selection by District-Level Committee chaired by Collector-cum-DM
- Strict adherence to Odisha Reservation of Vacancies (ORV) Act



Recruitment & Deployment Flow: Capacity Building and Institutional Support

A structured capacity-building programme was designed in collaboration with the Madhusudan Das Regional Academy of Financial Management (MDRAFM) and the State Institute for Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (SIRD&PR;). A nine-day training module, supported by Training of Trainers for 271 district-level master trainers, equipped 4384 ADEOs with competencies in budgeting, accounting, PFMS, e-GramSwaraj, audit compliance, GST, procurement, OGFR, PL Accounts, Treasury Rules; HRMS, asset registers, OSR augmentation, GP powers, committees, service rules, POSH Act and Panchayat administration.

Role Defined

ADEOs are equipped to:

- Ensure financial integrity
- Maintain real-time, accurate data
- Support evidence-based planning
- Enhance transparency & accountability
- Function as core GP administrative team members

ADEO – The New Backbone of GP Administration

Finance | Data | Audit | Digital Platforms | Planning Support

Quantitative Outcomes

- 90% GPs maintain daily updated statutory registers
- 90%+ GPs record GPDP and financial transactions on e-GramSwaraj & PFMS
- 40–50% reduction in service delivery timelines (pensions, certificates, utilities)
- 25% women ADEOs, strengthening gender-inclusive governance

Qualitative Outcomes

- Improved Governance Efficiency: PEOs focus on fieldwork and community engagement
- Enhanced Transparency: Better responsiveness and citizen trust
- Professional Work Culture: Data-driven decisions and systematic record keeping
- Audit Readiness: Improved reconciliations and compliance preparedness

Conclusion & Replicability

The ADEO Initiative demonstrates how targeted human resource reform can unlock the full potential of fiscal decentralisation. By institutionalising skilled financial and data professionals at the Gram Panchayat level, Odisha has strengthened transparency, efficiency, and service delivery. The model is scalable, replicable, and aligned with national priorities for strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions across India.

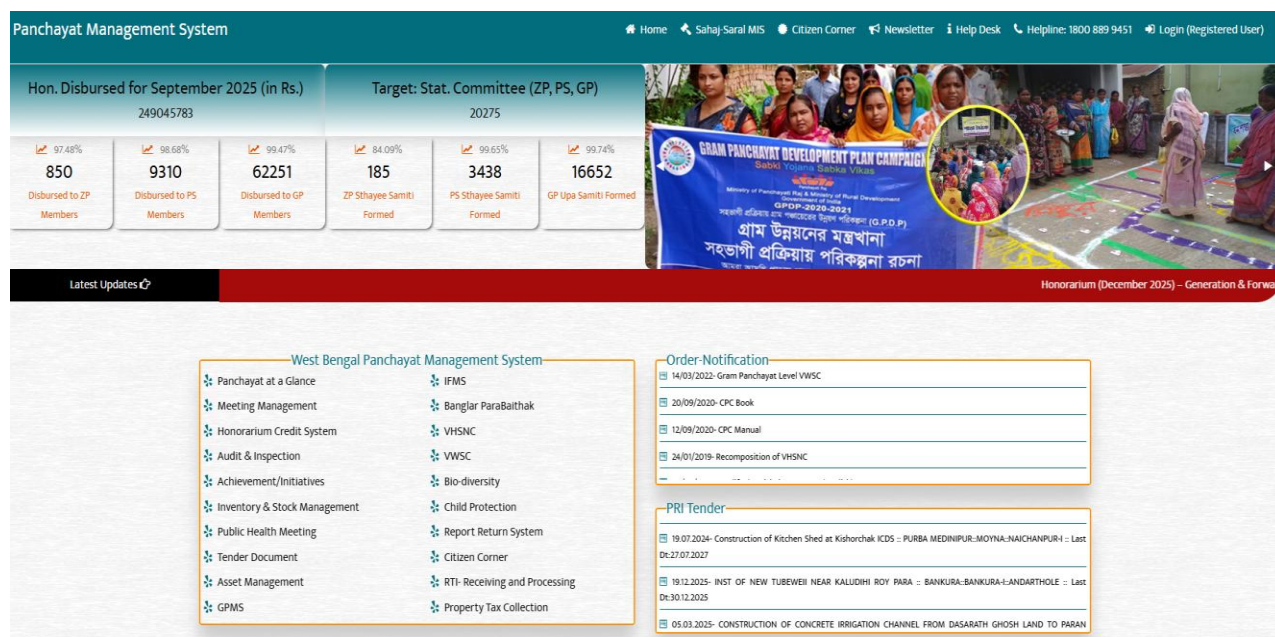
1.6 West Bengal Panchayat Management System (WPBMS)

Digital Transformation in Rural Governance

E-Governance has become a cornerstone of good governance, transparency, and efficient service delivery in India's rural governance landscape. In this context, the Government of West Bengal launched the West Bengal Panchayat Management System (WPBMS) as a state-wide digital platform to strengthen the administrative and operational capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). Accessible at <https://wbpmis.in>, the platform integrates multiple modules, enabling decentralized governance and seamless coordination across all tiers of the PRI structure. Through a secure Single Sign-On mechanism, employees, PRI members, citizens, and administrators can access various integrated modules according to their roles, promoting a unified and transparent digital ecosystem.

WPBMS as a Smart Governance Platform for Rural Administration

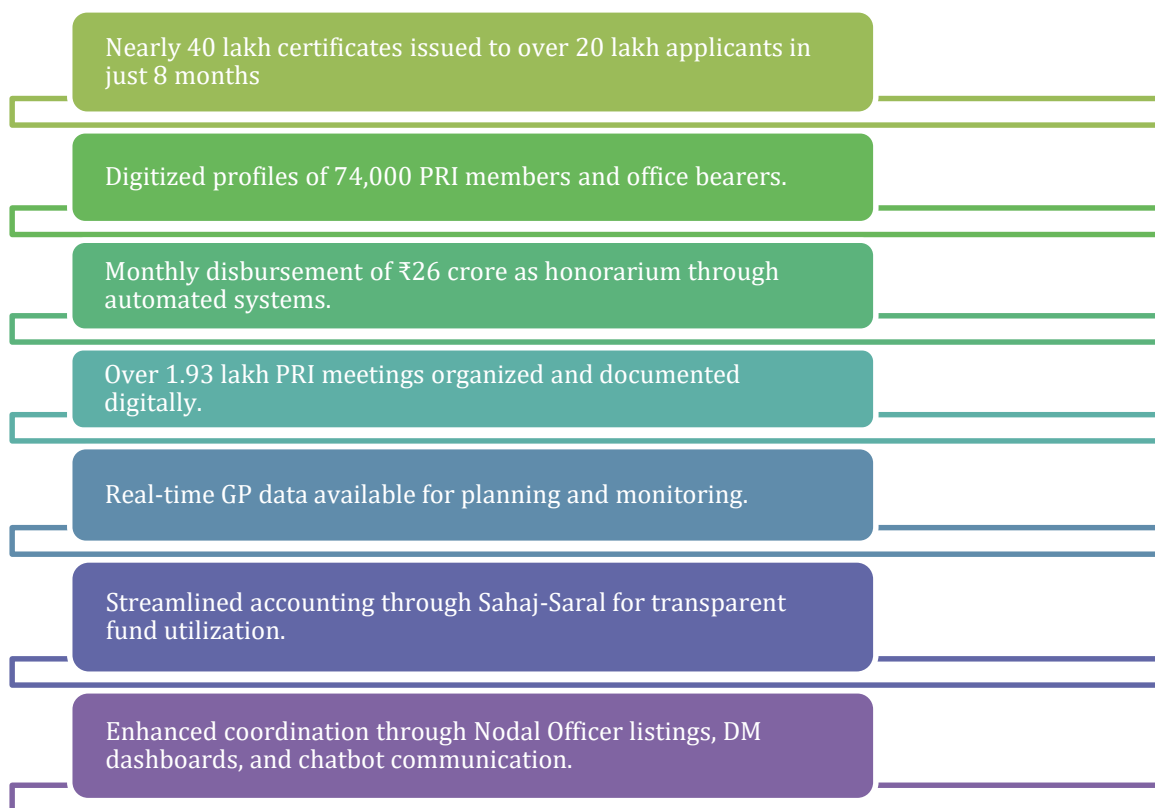
WPBMS is a comprehensive digital platform designed to streamline and modernize the functioning of Panchayati Raj Institutions through structured, tier-wise workflows and integrated service modules. It supports Panchayat profiling, meeting management, honorarium payments, certificate issuance, public health monitoring, financial accounting, IEC activities, and innovation tracking, while also linking key citizen services such as property tax, smart clinics, asset management, and Panchayat tourism. The system enables real-time data capture, transparent financial transactions, and secure record management across all levels. With features like a District Magistrate dashboard, mobile applications, a WhatsApp chatbot, and an integrated helpdesk, WPBMS ensures responsive governance, efficient service delivery, and enhanced accountability for both officials and citizens.



Easy Access through URL- <https://wbpmis.in>

Outcomes and Results Achieved

The implementation of WBPMS has significantly transformed rural governance in West Bengal. Some key outcomes include:



From Implementation Challenges to a Model of Digital Governance

The rollout of the West Bengal Panchayat Management System (WBPMS) marked a major transition from manual to digital governance and initially faced challenges such as resistance to change, migration of legacy data, and limited technical capacity at the field level. These issues were effectively addressed through supportive policy measures, structured capacity-building programmes, video-based training, centralized data validation, and a responsive helpdesk for real-time problem resolution. As a result, WBPMS has successfully emerged as a robust and integrated digital platform covering all 3,339 Gram Panchayats, 345 Panchayat Samitis, and 21 Zilla Parishads, significantly enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accountability in rural administration. By bringing administrative, financial, and citizen service functions onto a single digital system, WBPMS has strengthened grassroots democracy and stands out as a replicable model for other States seeking to modernize Panchayati Raj governance.

1.7 Mahtari Sadan: Strengthening Women's Empowerment through Institutional Convergence – Chhattisgarh

Summary

Mahtari Sadan is a flagship convergence initiative of the State Government aimed at promoting self-reliance, livelihood enhancement, and holistic empowerment of women and Self-Help Group (SHG) members. Conceived as a grassroots institutional platform, it seeks to create awareness among women about their social, economic, health, education, nutrition, and legal rights while ensuring smooth and effective delivery of women-centric schemes. By integrating the efforts of multiple departments, Mahtari Sadan functions as a single-window system to provide financial assistance, insurance coverage, skill development, livelihood support, and access to entitlements, thereby strengthening participatory governance and inclusive rural development.



Activities Details

The initiative focuses on strengthening health, nutrition, education, and socio-economic development outcomes for women through coordinated implementation of schemes such as Bihan Mission, Women and Child Development programmes, Health and AYUSH initiatives, Social Welfare pensions, Labour registration, Food Security services, MGNREGA, and Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan. Activities undertaken at Mahtari Sadan include institutional strengthening of SHGs, financial literacy, legal awareness, skill upgradation, livelihood promotion in agriculture and allied sectors, village development planning, and facilitation of access to housing, sanitation, and social security benefits. Nominal service charges, dedicated bank accounts, women-led management committees, and inter-departmental coordination ensure sustainability and community ownership.



To maintain uniformity and quality, standardized designs and cost estimates have been prepared by the Panchayat and Rural Development Department. During 2024–25, 202 Mahtari Sadans were approved for Rs. 29.20 lakh per unit, while in 2025–26, 166 Mahtari Sadans were approved for Rs. 30.00 lakh per unit. So far, 183 Mahtari Sadans have been completed and inaugurated, including a state-level virtual inauguration led by the Hon’ble Chief Minister. With its strong convergence framework and people-centric approach, Mahtari Sadan has emerged as a key instrument for advancing women’s empowerment and sustainable development at the village level.

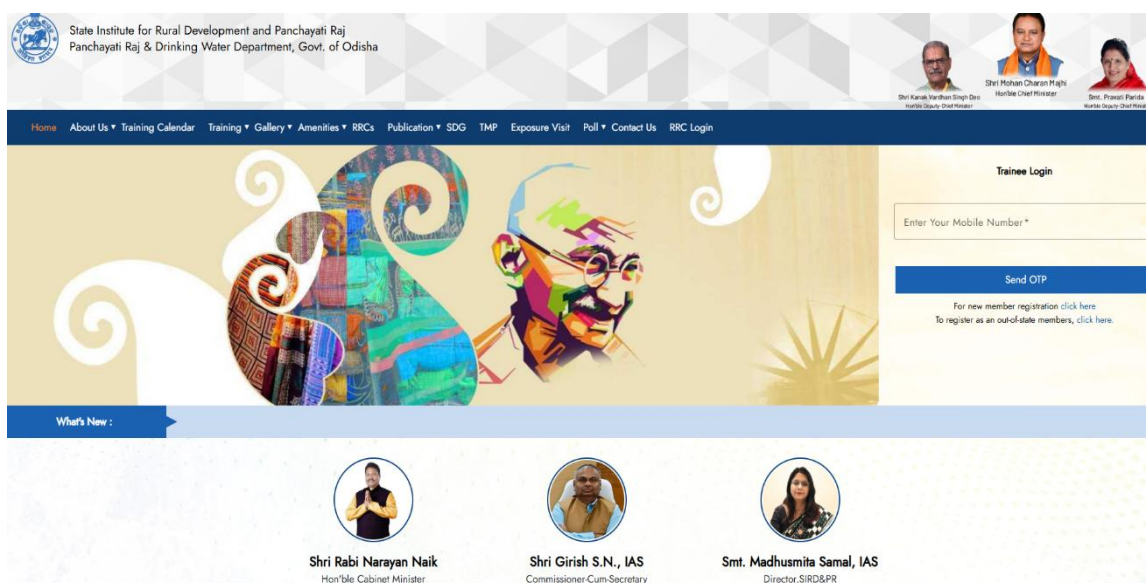
Achievements

Financial Year 2024–25	Financial Year 2025–26
• Total 202 Mahtari Sadans approved with 29.20 lakh • (Rs. 24.70 lakh composite + Rs. 4.50 lakh convergence)	• Total 166 Mahtari Sadan approved with Rs. 30.00 Lakh

Capacity Building & Training of Elected Representatives and PRI Functionaries



2.1 One Portal, Many Possibilities: Streamlining Training Management at SIRD & PR, Odisha



Skill development and capacity building are the foundations of effective grassroots governance. For Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to function efficiently, elected representatives and officials require regular, structured, and high-quality training. SIRD&PR, Odisha has developed a comprehensive online training management portal (tmppsird.odisha.gov.in) – a centralized platform to plan, monitor, and execute all training activities in a transparent, efficient, and accountable manner.

The key objectives of this project are:

- (i) To centralize the training data of the Elected Representatives and stakeholders of PRIs
- (ii) To avoid the duplicity of the participants & identify the unique trainee in the training program
- (iii) To strengthen the feedback mechanisms of the training program for improving the course materials of the session
- (iv) To develop a data set of the Resource Person & Subject Matter Specialists with domain expertise, educational qualifications, and experiences
- (v) To develop a robust, efficient, and transparent training ecosystem

This digital tool is a significant step towards efficacy in the training delivery, consistency and innovations at the grassroots level.

Background/ Profile: Capacity Building of PRIs is one of the important strides in empowering the Elected Representatives & Functionaries of Panchayats for effective delivery of their roles & responsibilities to strengthen the institutional capacity of PRIs. SIRD&PR Odisha is entrusted to plan & deliver the training program of the PRIs as the Apex Institute of the State. Managing huge training data became a challenge for the Institute and District Training Institutes to plan and monitor in an effective manner. Manual Processes for registration, scheduling, reporting, and monitoring often led to ineffectiveness, duplication of participants, delays in reporting, and a lack of real-time insights. To address this issue, SIRD&PR has conceptualized the development of a dedicated Training Management Portal to centralize, digitize, and streamline all processes of the training program.

Problems (Why this initiative was required): The development of the Centralized Training Management Portal was required for centralize the training data for real-time monitoring, resource utilization, and identification of unique participants through Aadhar registration and live photo during the training program.

- (i) **Duplicate Participants in the Training Program:** Elected Representatives & Functionaries of PRIs are trained in multiple batches at SIRDPR, District Panchayat Resource Center, and Extension Training Centers under different training categories. Identify the unique participants trained in the respective financial year and during the tenure of elected bodies caused inconvenience through the manual process.
- (ii) **Need for Systematic Feedback Mechanism:** Feedback of the Participants in the Training Program (both administrative & process) was not captured in a systematic approach. The feedback on training design, course content, and learning materials plays a crucial role in planning the training courses as well as the training contents
- (iii) **Lack of Centralized Data Set:** A huge number of participants are trained in different courses at various training institutes in a financial year. Lack of a centralized data set affected the number of the participants; quality of the training program, expenditure, and poor coordination with the States & Districts.
- (iv) **Need for empanelment of Resource Person/ Trainer:** Resource Person/ Subject Matter Specialists are mainly allocated the session as per their availability and areas of specialization. Despite the availability of physical infrastructure and Panchayat Sahayaks, Gram Sachivalayas were not fully utilised as service delivery centers for digital or citizen-centric services.



Solution: The Panchayati Raj Department, Odisha, designed a dedicated Training Management Portal to ensure the digitization of data.



- Aadhaar-based OTP verification and live photo capture of participants.
- Centralized database of participants, trainers, and training schedules.
- Real-time monitoring of attendance and resource utilization.
- Integrated feedback system for participants and trainers.
- Mobile app integration for resource persons and field monitoring.
- Feedback from trainees, trainers, and nodal officers was incorporated to fine-tune processes such as registration flow, reporting formats, and dashboard designs
- Capacity building of district/block-level officials was undertaken through online and offline sessions to ensure smooth adoption.

- New features such as polling during sessions (to assess participants' understanding), and the **TMPSIRD Mobile App** for trainers / resource persons were gradually introduced.

Implementation Challenges:

- Managing large-scale implementation across 30 districts, 314 blocks, 17 DPRCs, and 3 ETCs with varied capacity levels.
- Resistance to transition from manual processes to digital systems among field-level functionaries.
- Ensuring Aadhaar seeding, OTP access, and device availability for all participants.
- Initial data migration issues, including cleaning legacy records and standardizing formats.
- Need for continuous handholding, training, and technical support during rollout.
- Maintaining data privacy, security, and system uptime while scaling usage.
- Ensuring timely adoption of feedback mechanisms and effective use of insights for course correction.

Outcome:

- Improved efficiency, transparency, and accountability across the entire training ecosystem.
- Transformed large-scale training challenges into a robust, data-driven, and responsive system
- Implemented structured feedback and polling systems, empowering participants to directly influence training content and quality.
- Created a centralized digital database integrating trainee, trainer, and training schedules.
- Introduced Aadhaar-linked, OTP-based registration with live photo capture, effectively eliminating fake and duplicate entries.

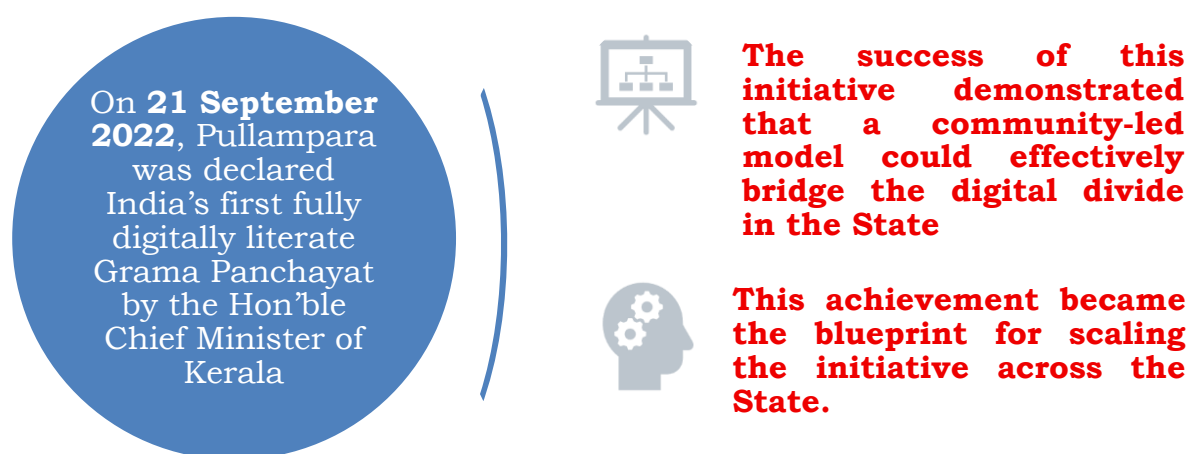
2.2 Digi Keralam: Towards Digital Literacy of Kerala

Kerala has long been recognised as a pioneer in human development and education. The State achieved the historic milestone of 100% literacy in 1991 and recorded a literacy rate of 93.91% in the 2011 Census, well above the national average. However, as governance, education, and commerce rapidly shifted to a new regime, Digital literacy emerged as an essential life skill, indispensable for accessing public services, financial systems, and social networks.

In this endeavour, the State launched Digi Keralam, a landmark, community-driven digital literacy mission. Based on Kerala's legacy of social mobilisation, the initiative aimed not merely to improve access to technology but to ensure that every citizen possessed the skills required to function confidently in a digital society. Through Digi Keralam, Kerala achieved another historic milestone, i.e, first digitally literate State in India.

From Chalkboards to Keyboards: The Genesis of Digi Keralam

The journey started at **Pullampara Grama Panchayat** of Thiruvananthapuram district, where an inclusive approach was adopted with aims to train **every resident of the GP**. The campaign, titled “*Digi-Pullampara – Digital Literacy Campaign*,” mobilised elected representatives, community volunteers, Kudumbashree members, NSS and NCC cadets, and students from engineering colleges for a common cause.

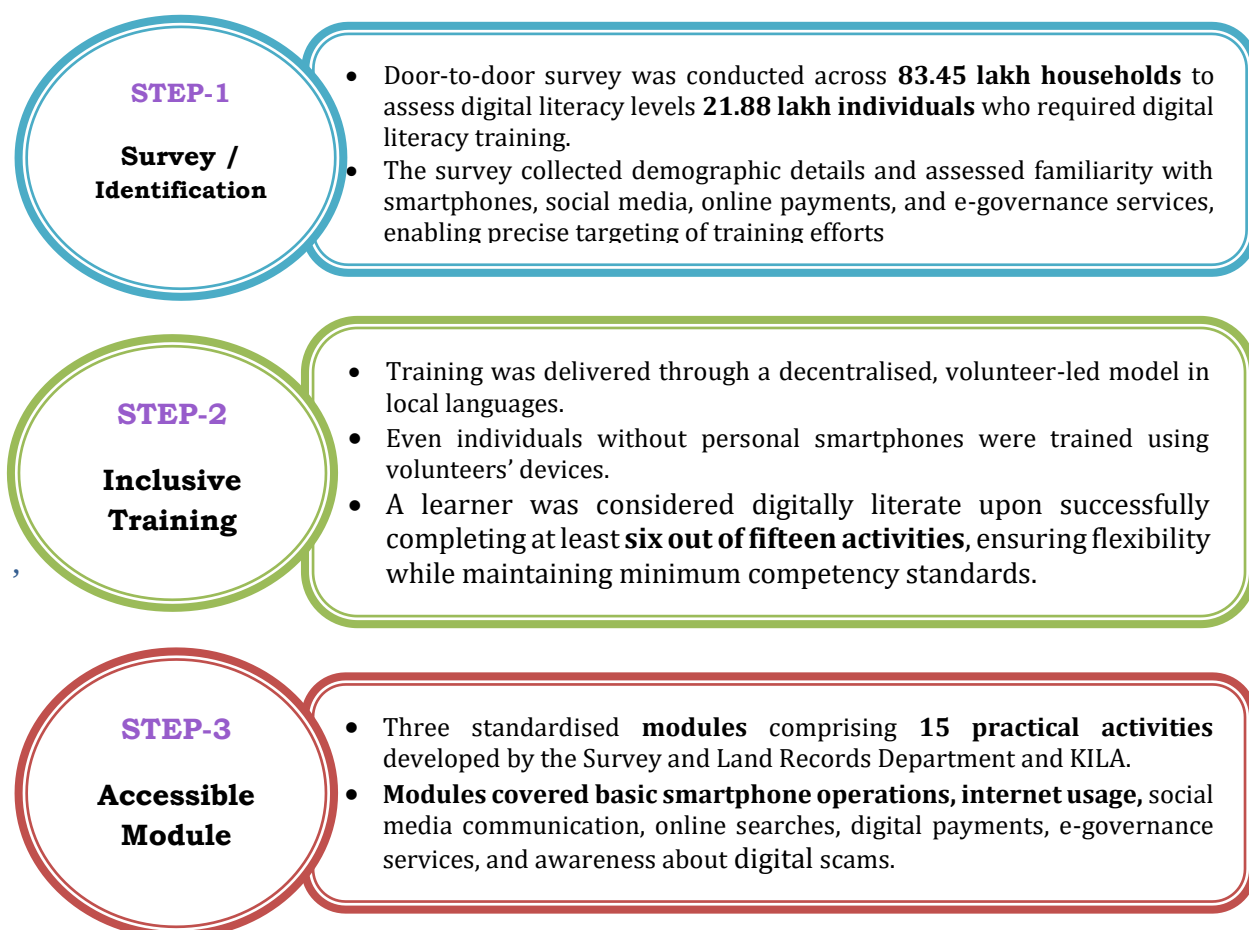


Digi Keralam: A State-wide Mission for Universal Digital Inclusion

Inspired by the success of Pullampara, the Government of Kerala launched Digi Keralam as a comprehensive State-wide mission. While national schemes such as the National Digital Literacy Mission and PMGDISHA focused on training one individual per household, Digi Keralam adopted a far more ambitious vision. **The mission targeted every individual between 14 and 65 years of age, including students, professionals, homemakers, senior citizens, and marginalised communities.**

The curriculum was designed in alignment with UNESCO's international digital literacy standards, ensuring that the programme was not only inclusive but also globally relevant. By integrating digital literacy with everyday life skills, such as accessing e-governance services and conducting digital payments, the mission ensured meaningful and sustainable digital empowerment.

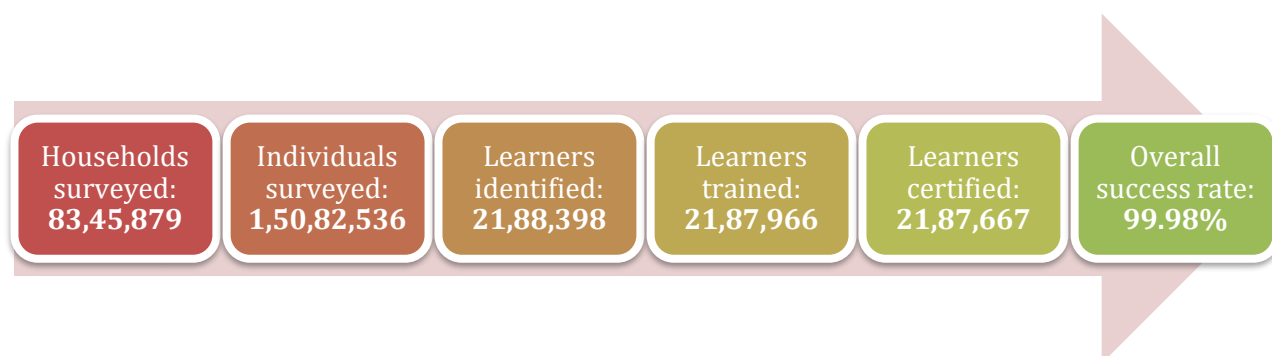
Implementation Framework



Strengthening Trust through Transparent Evaluation Mechanisms

Evaluation and Monitoring under Digi Keralam was designed to ensure transparency, credibility, and inclusiveness. All trainees were assessed through a dedicated mobile application and web portal on practical digital tasks such as messaging, app installation, online service access, and digital payments, with additional training and re-evaluation provided to those who did not qualify initially. A robust four-stage super-check system further strengthened monitoring, with **5% verification at the district level and 1% at the State level**, complemented by an independent **third-party validation of 2% beneficiaries by the Department of Economics and Statistics**, and final certification by District Collectors. This rigorous framework, supported by an extensive community volunteer network and local institutions, ensured accurate reporting, high-quality outcomes, and strong public trust in the programme.

Key Achievements of Digi Keralam



The mission reached citizens across all age groups, including **15,223 individuals above 90 years** and **1,35,668 individuals aged between 76 and 90**, highlighting its inclusive nature.

Turning Vision into Digital Reality

Digi Keralam has significantly enhanced citizen engagement with governance in Kerala by enabling people to independently access e-governance services, online payments, and welfare platforms, thereby improving transparency, efficiency, and ease of living. It has also strengthened data-driven governance through the creation of a verifiable digital literacy database for better targeting of services. The programme's grassroots, community-driven and mobile-enabled model has enabled it to scale across the State, making it a replicable framework for inclusive digital transformation. With the launch of Digi Keralam 2.0, Kerala is now advancing towards higher digital skills, cyber safety, and deeper citizen participation, reinforcing its leadership in human development and citizen-centric governance.

As part of Digi Keralam 2.0, the Government of Kerala has introduced DEED (Digitalization of Every Essential Document) is an initiative of the Local Self Government Department aimed at ensuring that all citizens benefit from digital technology by enabling secure digital storage and management of essential documents through DigiLocker.

The project focuses on digitizing and uploading citizens' important documents to DigiLocker for safe and permanent storage, thereby facilitating paperless governance and efficient delivery of government services through digital platforms. The initiative also supports electronic certificate verification and streamlined document management systems.

The major objectives of the project are:

- To include all families in the State under the DEED campaign and implement digitization of authentic documents.
- To digitize all essential documents of citizens within one year.
- To promote paperless governance by ensuring availability of certificates through DigiLocker.

Going Extra Mile: Inclusion of Tribal and Remote Areas

Special strategies were adopted for geographically isolated and marginalised regions such as **Edamalakkudy, Attappadi, and Parambikulam**. In areas with limited or no internet connectivity, offline training methods and pre-loaded video content in local languages were used. By working closely with local leaders and community structures, the mission ensured that even the most remote populations were included.

2.3 From Grants to Growth: The SIRD Tamil Nadu Transformation Story

How a Time-Tested Institute Reimagined Itself and Transformed from Grant-Dependent to Self-Sustaining

1. Introduction: When Stability Was Not Enough

For decades, the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD), Tamil Nadu, stood as a cornerstone of capacity building, reliable, respected, and deeply committed to strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions across the State. Its mission was unwavering, its contribution undeniable.

Yet, beneath this institutional strength lay a quiet reality: SIRD functioned almost entirely on government grants and scheme-based funding. While sufficient to sustain operations, this dependence limited the pace of improvement, innovation, and long-term sustainability. This image in the minds of stakeholders for the institute was sleepy, lazy and place of difficulties.

The journey of **“From Grants to Growth”** is not merely about earning income. It is the story of a mindset shift of asking uncomfortable questions, unlocking dormant potential, and transforming a traditional institute into a self-reliant, vibrant, and future-ready Centre of Excellence.

Before the Transformation: MESS

SIRD stood as a pillar of reliability- strong, rooted, and purpose-driven. Yet, its growth depended almost entirely on government funds. Idle infrastructure, limited services, and slow approvals reflected an institution constrained by its own stability. As one trainee put it, *“this place use to be a godforsaken place, the mess was truly a mess.”* It wasn’t a failure of intent, but a symptom of systemic dependence.

The Turning Point: A Question That Changed Everything

Then came a moment of reckoning. As new ideas took shape, one question changed everything:

“What if SIRD could generate its own resources using what it already has?”

That question became the spark that transformed a traditional training institute into a self-sustaining ecosystem.

The Challenge: Dependence & Untapped Potential



The Transformation: Strategy & Impact



The Transformation Strategy: From Dependency to Self- Reliance

From Neglect to Nourishment, Improving Food Standards

A professional tendering process was initiated to overhaul food services. The result was a thoughtfully custom designed variable menu balancing taste, nutrition, and hygiene

From Idle Assets to Income Generators

Unused gaps in the training calendar were converted into opportunities.

Strategic Partnerships for Capacity and Revenue

SIRD entered in to MoUs with premier higher educational institutions, leveraging academic partnerships while strengthening GPDP handholding support.

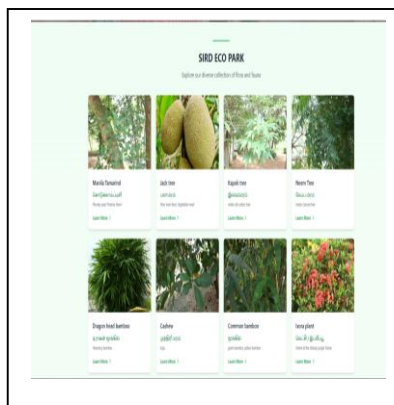
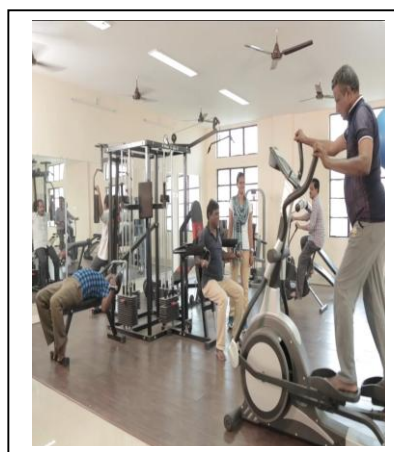
Policy as an Enabler

Creation of the District Training Officer (DTO) role by redesignating District Panchayat Secretaries.

Delegation of financial powers to AEEs/AEs posted at SIRD & PR, enabling in-house processing of estimates, measurements, and verifications.

Feedback Led Continuous Improvement

Every facility hostels, food, halls, services were subjected to structured feedback, ensuring continuous refinement and user satisfaction.



A Campus That Works, Earns, and Inspires

Financial Turnaround

Annual OSR generation of ₹1.24 crore, achieved through optimal use of infrastructure, audio-visual equipment, catering, and services.

Maximum Resource Utilisation

Campus spaces are active year-round, transforming downtime into productive engagement.

A Model of Partnerships

86 MoUs signed with higher educational institutions, placing Tamil Nadu among the leading states in academic collaboration for GPDP support.

Health, Well-being, and Human Experience

A hygienic, homely mess.

On-campus gym with a dedicated trainer, reinforcing a culture of wellness.

Green, Responsible, and Future-Oriented Campus

Rainwater harvesting, solar energy, waste composting.

A lush eco-park with native tree species and an in-campus lake.

Modern Learning Environment

A state-of-the-art library (RFID-enabled), computer labs, upgraded hostels, and a professional auditorium supporting immersive learning.

Connectivity: In this modern AI driven world connectivity is breathing. A brand new cellular based station tower is installed inside to bring universe to SIRD.

Beyond Numbers: A Culture Reimagined

Today, SIRD does not merely conduct training it **hosts, nurtures, and inspires**. The campus philosophy is visible in every corner, reflected in messages such as:

“Arrive as a Guest, Depart as a Friend”

SIRD’s journey stands as a replicable model for public institutions across India: Ask the right question, trust your resources, enable policy, and let transformation follow.

E-Governance & Digital Transformation



3.1 AI-Based Panchayat Gateway Portal: Digital Transformation for Functional Gram Sachivalaya in Uttar Pradesh

- The Panchayat Gateway is a digital governance initiative of Uttar Pradesh designed to make Gram Sachivalayas fully functional and accountable by ensuring that all Gram Panchayat payments are made only from the Sachivalaya.
- Through a secure portal linked with the e-GramSwaraj system, and a mobile app enabled with facial recognition and geo-location, the presence of the Sachiv, Gram Pradhan, or Panchayat Sahayak is digitally verified before any payment is processed.
- Each computer is mapped to its respective Gram Panchayat, and officials can access the system only after successful verification through a QR-based login. The platform also compares Panchayat Gateway and e-GramSwaraj data to identify defaulters, repeated vendor payments, and irregular expenditure patterns, enabling penalties and corrective action.
- By generating clean, actionable data and real-time analytics, Panchayat Gateway has significantly enhanced transparency, accountability, and the functional use of Gram Sachivalayas across the State.

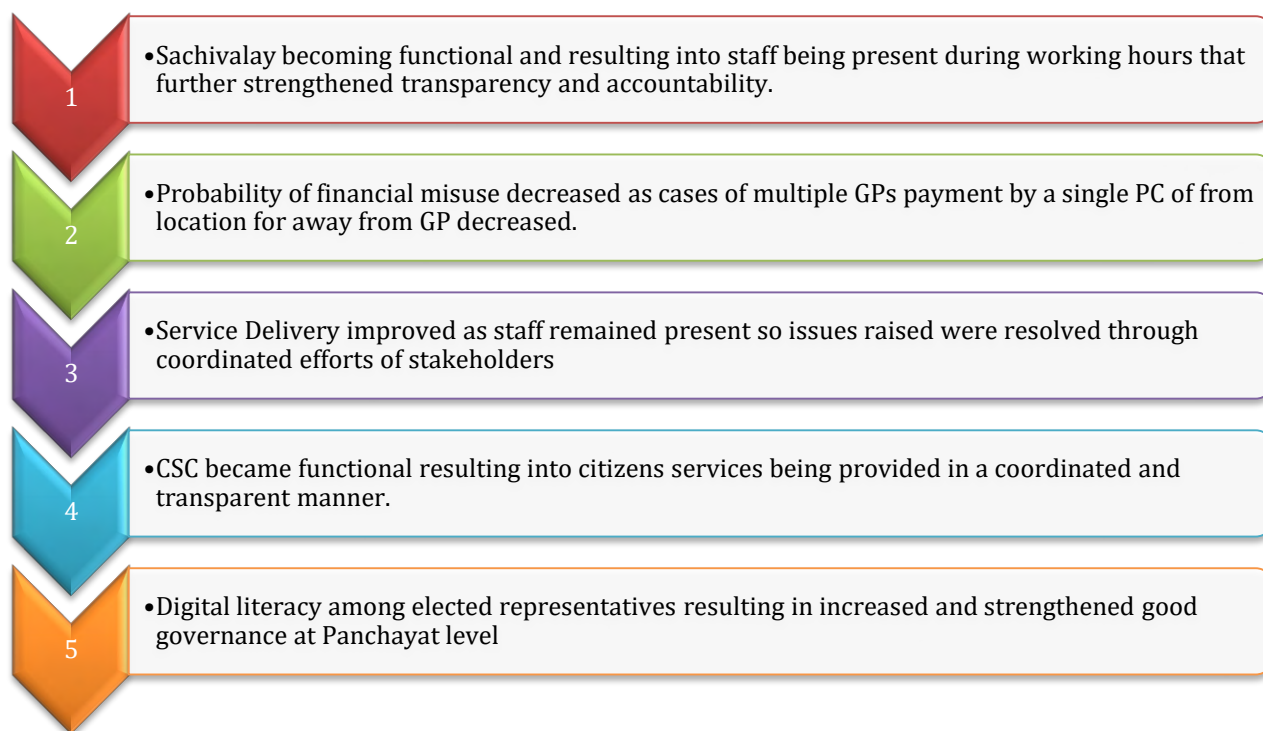
Safeguarding Transparency in Gram Panchayat Payments

- Although Panchayat Gateway had been in operation for over three years, certain malpractices and system gaps highlighted the need for further strengthening. In some cases, Panchayat Secretaries were not physically present at the Gram Sachivalaya and attempted to bypass the system using photographs during facial verification, prompting the introduction of AI-based facial recognition for greater robustness.
- There were also instances where payments were made from locations outside the Sachivalaya despite the LGD-based system mapping, which led to the implementation of a geo-fencing-enabled payment system to ensure transactions occur only within the Gram Sachivalaya.
- Additionally, to prevent unauthorised users or third-party vendors from making payments on behalf of officials, DSCs were uniquely bound to specific Gram Panchayats and user profiles, making them tamper-proof and non-transferable.
- These measures were critical to safeguarding the integrity, security, and credibility of the Panchayat Gateway system.

A Digital Shield for Gram Panchayat Finances

- The Panchayat Gateway introduced a robust, technology-driven framework to ensure that all Gram Panchayat payments are made only from the Gram Sachivalaya and in the verified presence of the Sachiv, Gram Pradhan, or Panchayat Sahayak, with each computer and user securely mapped to its respective Panchayat.
- Through a mobile app enabled with AI-based facial recognition, geo-fencing, and QR-based login, officials are authenticated before being redirected to the e-GramSwaraj portal for transactions. The system continuously compares Gateway and e-GramSwaraj data to identify defaulters, repeated vendor payments, and irregular spending patterns, enabling penalties and corrective action.
- These controls are reinforced through automated rule-based checks, continuous monitoring of habitual defaulters, a strong complaint management system with over 1.3 lakh cases resolved within SLA, and regular field-level training, collectively ensuring transparency, accountability, and smooth functioning of Gram Sachivalayas.

Outcomes: The key outcome of Panchayat Gateway was to make Gram Sachivalays functional by ensuring all payments are made from them. This resulted in the following quantifiable outcomes:



The Panchayat Gateway has delivered significant outcomes by transforming Gram Sachivalayas into fully functional and accountable centers of governance. By eliminating reliance on third-party operators and requiring in-house, verified financial transactions, the system has improved payment discipline, data quality, and transparency across Gram Panchayats. Integration with e-GramSwaraj and PFMS, supported by facial recognition, geo-fencing, and continuous monitoring, has enabled the State to track vendor payments, high-value transactions, and irregular patterns in real time. The availability of clean, field-aligned, and actionable data, along with penal action against defaulters, has strengthened compliance and accountability, making Panchayat Gateway a replicable model for credible and efficient grassroots financial governance.

3.2 e-Office across all Gram Panchayats in Tripura

Tripura, a small yet administratively significant state with 8 districts, 58 Blocks, and 1,193 Gram Panchayats and Village Committees serving over 3.5 million rural citizens, has historically faced challenges of manual record-keeping, weak monitoring systems, and limited digital connectivity in Panchayat functioning. To overcome these constraints and strengthen transparency, accountability and service delivery at the grassroots, the State launched a structured digital governance initiative in 2023, rolling out 100% cloud-based e-Office across all Panchayat tiers while aligning governance processes with the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 1.0, a national performance framework linked to the SDGs, thereby laying the foundation for data-driven and technology-enabled Panchayat administration.

Building Accountable Panchayats through Digital Governance

Tripura's Panchayats were constrained by manual, paper-based processes that led to slow file movement, missing or vulnerable records, delayed service delivery, and weak grievance redressal, resulting in low citizen trust and participation. In addition, poor data quality and fragmented digital records hampered effective planning, reporting, and performance assessment under national frameworks such as PAI. To address these systemic challenges, the State adopted a mission-mode, integrated strategy combining 100% implementation of cloud-based e-Office across all Panchayat tiers with the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) 1.0 as a governance framework. While e-Office enabled end-to-end digitization of files, approvals, service delivery, and integration with platforms such as eGramSwaraj, DBT, and Meri Panchayat, PAI provided a structured, indicator-based mechanism to assess performance across nine thematic areas. This was reinforced through extensive capacity building and continuous handholding, creating a strong synergy where clean digital data supported evidence-based decision-making and measurable improvements in Panchayat performance.

Implementation Challenges:

Digital Literacy Gaps: Many Panchayat staff initially lacked computer skills; extensive training was required

Connectivity Issues: Remote rural and hilly areas suffered unstable internet, requiring alternative solutions like VSAT or mobile internet connections

Resistance to Change: Some officials preferred traditional manual systems and were slow to adopt digital processes.

Resource Constraints: Continuous funding was required for hardware, upgrades, and maintenance.

Cybersecurity Risks: Increasing digital footprints necessitated stringent data protection measures.

Measurable Improvements in Panchayat Governance

The integrated implementation of e-Office and PAI 1.0 has delivered far-reaching and measurable improvements in Panchayat governance across Tripura. The initiative has significantly enhanced transparency and accountability through time-stamped digital records, complete audit trails, and public access to Panchayat decisions and service information, thereby strengthening compliance with RTI and governance norms. Service delivery has become faster and more efficient with reduced paperwork and real-time tracking of grievances, schemes, and fund utilization, leading to higher citizen satisfaction and trust. Tripura also emerged as a national leader in PAI 1.0, achieving 100% validated data entry, with 42 Gram Panchayats securing 'A' Grade and Rupaichari Village Committee ranking second in the country. These outstanding outcomes were further acknowledged through seven National Panchayat Awards in 2024, underscoring the success of Tripura's technology-driven, transparent, and performance-based Panchayat governance model.

3.3 Universal Palliative Care Project – Kerala

Kerala, with its 14 districts and a strong three-tier Local Self Government system, has built a robust, decentralised framework for local planning and service delivery through Gram Panchayats, Municipalities, and Corporations. In response to its ageing population and the growing burden of chronic and life-limiting illnesses, the State has developed one of India's most comprehensive palliative care ecosystems, comprising 1,142 government primary palliative care units, over 1,200 community-based and volunteer-driven units, and a wide network of 1,397 government facilities and 1,299 NGOs registered on the Kerala Care Grid, ensuring last-mile, universal access across rural and urban areas.

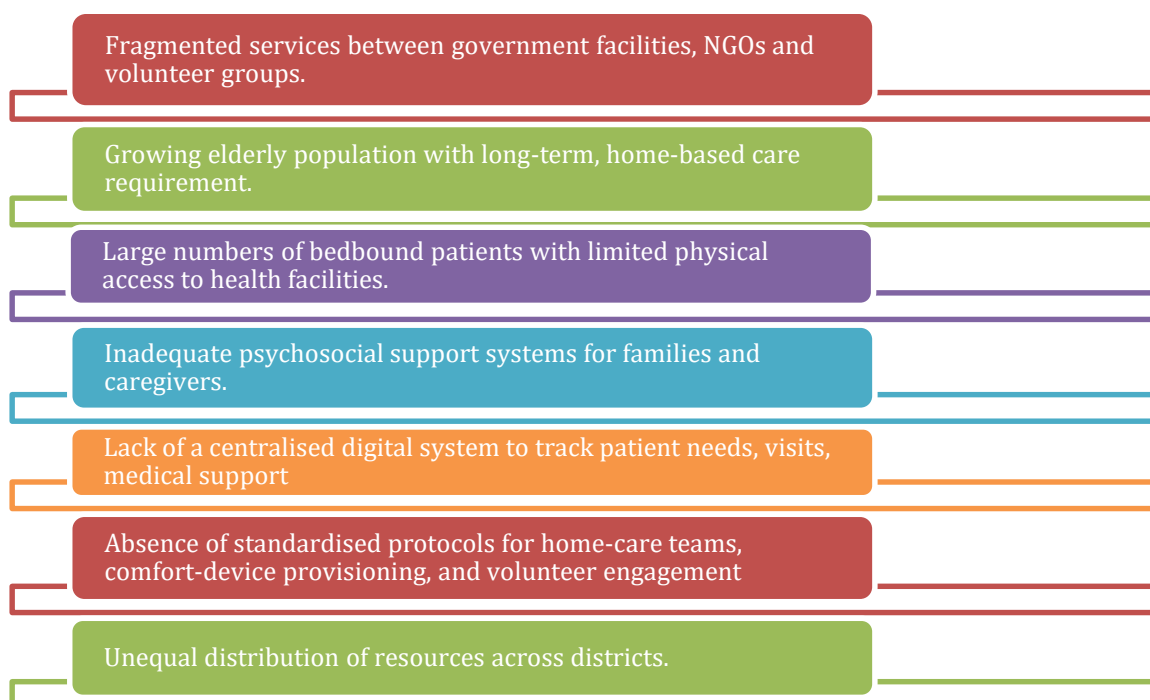
Background:

Kerala was the first Indian state to formulate a Palliative Care Policy (15 April 2008). The policy officially recognised palliative care as a basic right and emphasised a community-led, decentralised approach. A landmark decision mandated that all LSGIs implement a Palliative Care Project as a compulsory component of their annual plans with dedicated funds.

The state introduced the **Kerala Care Grid (kerala.care)**, a digital platform integrating government departments, NGOs, trained volunteers and community-based organisations. It supports patient registration, service delivery coordination, home-care scheduling, resource mapping and real-time monitoring.

The Universal Palliative Care Project emerged from this ecosystem, with the primary objective of ensuring **holistic, equitable, and universal access** to palliative care for all individuals experiencing serious health-related suffering. The Government of Kerala issued revised Palliative Care Guidelines 2025 which aims to ensure universal palliative care for all persons requiring long-term medical, physical, psychological, and social support. The programme covers patients suffering from cancer, chronic diseases, paralysis, severe diabetes, mental illness, age-related illnesses, and other serious health conditions.

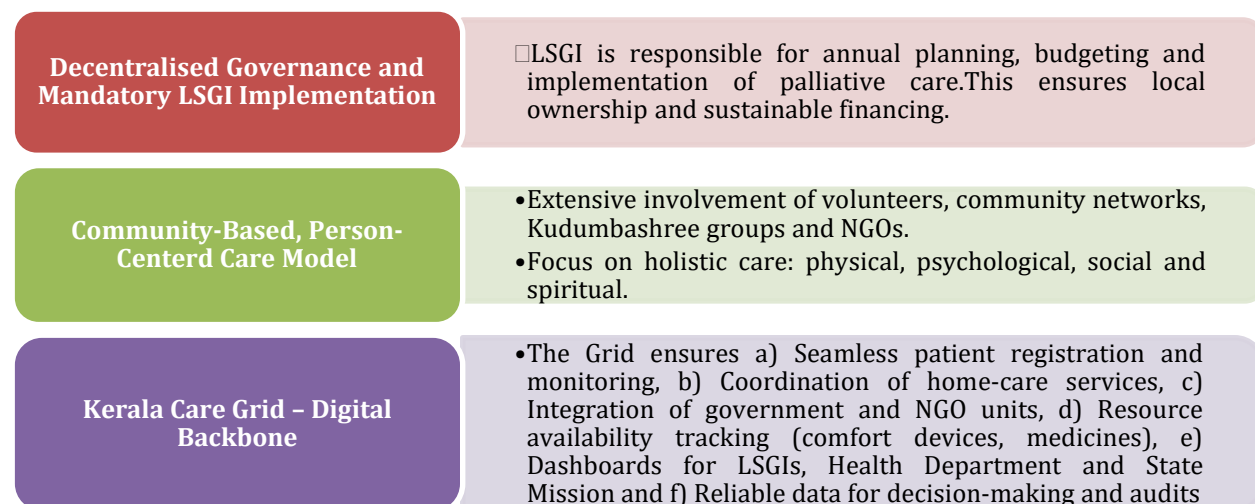
Problem: Before the project, Kerala faced several systemic and service-delivery gaps:



These challenges highlighted the need for an integrated system that could unify service providers and ensure universal access.

Solution

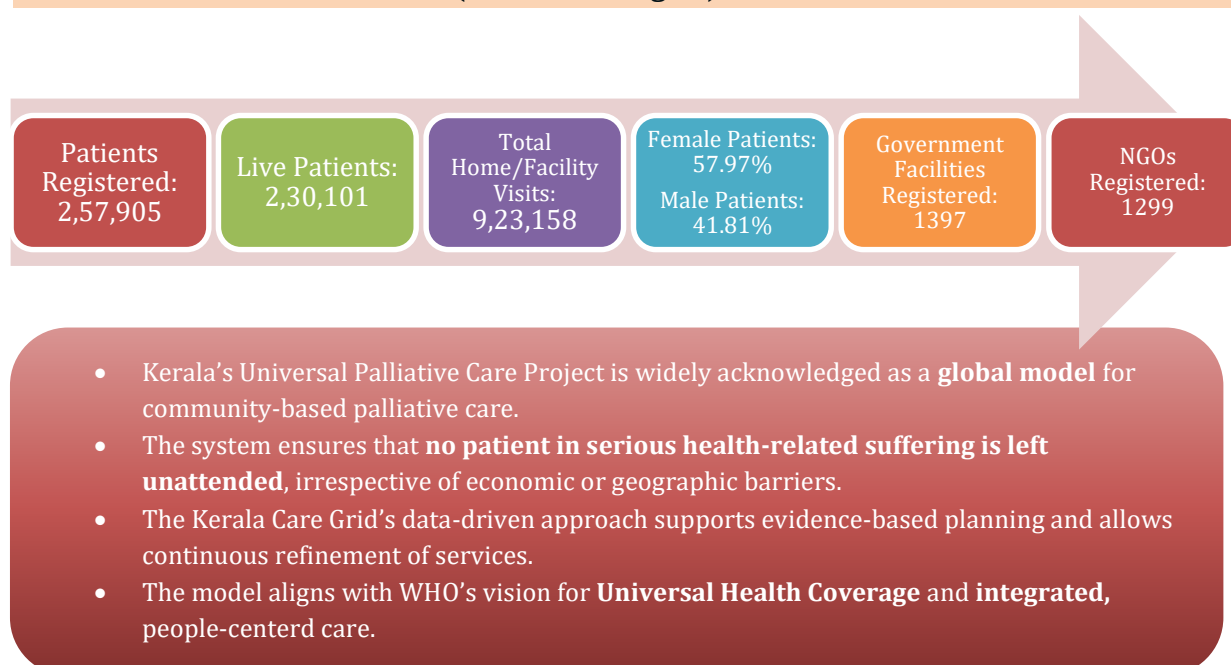
The Universal Palliative Care Project provides a multi-layered, community-driven solution:



Holistic Palliative Care at Your Doorstep:

The palliative care system in Kerala offers a comprehensive range of services through an integrated model that includes home-based care, such as doctor and nurse visits and domiciliary nursing, facility-based services through outpatient clinics, inpatient units, and care homes, and essential support services like medicines, comfort devices (including wheelchairs and waterbeds), psychosocial counselling, and caregiver support. This holistic approach ensures that even the most vulnerable bed-bound, terminally ill, elderly, and chronically ill patients receive continuous, dignified, and compassionate care, primarily within their own homes.

Present Status of Best Practices (Data and Insights)



3.4 Digital Transformation of Rural Libraries – “ArivuKendras” in Karnataka

Karnataka has pioneered a transformative grassroots initiative by converting traditional rural libraries into digitally empowered knowledge hubs known as **ArivuKendras (Knowledge Centers)**. Anchored within the Gram Panchayat ecosystem and implemented by the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (RDPR) Department, the initiative has emerged as a flagship model for inclusive digital education, community empowerment, and localized SDG achievement.

Background: The foundation of Karnataka’s public library system dates back to the **Karnataka Public Libraries Act, 1965**, which enabled the creation of libraries at the state, District, City, and Gram Panchayat levels. In 2019, **5,623 rural libraries** were transferred to the RDPR Department to ensure decentralized management and closer alignment with local governance. Under the **Grama Digi Vikasana** framework, these rural libraries - formally known as ArivuKendras - were reimagined as community-centric digital learning spaces. In 2021, Gram Panchayats were authorized to utilize grants from the 14th and 15th Finance Commissions and Own Source Revenue for augmenting digital infrastructure.

Why was this initiative required?

- Limited or no access to computers, internet connectivity, or digital learning tools
- Declining reading habits among children, aggravated during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Low digital literacy among rural youth, women, and marginalized communities
- Restricted access to quality educational resources, online services, and career guidance
- Absence of inclusive tools for children with disabilities

Solution

The RDPR Department initiated the **Digital Library Program** under *Grama Digi Vikasana*, converting ArivuKendras into technology-enabled learning spaces.

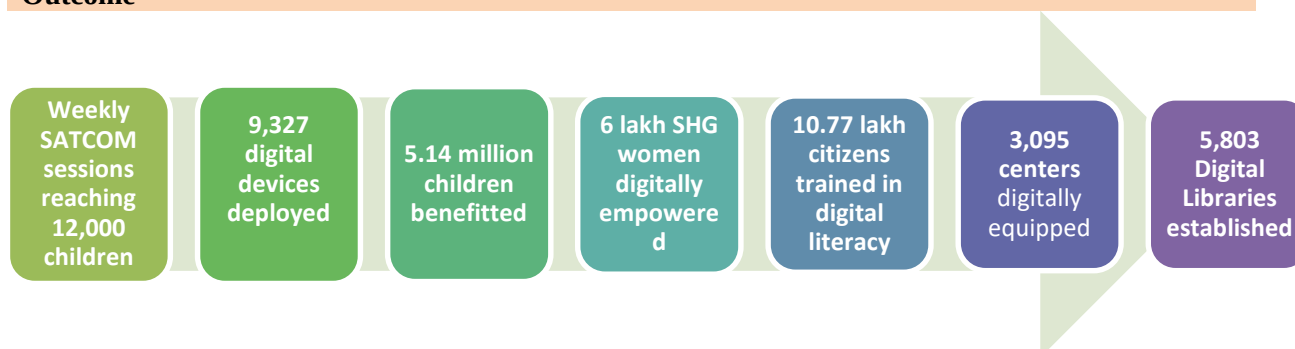
Digital Infrastructure Strengthening	Establishment of 5,803 Digital Libraries equipped with computers, UPS, Wi-Fi, routers, audio-visual aids, text-to-speech tools, and Alexa devices.
Strategic Partnerships with Civil Society Organisations	• Non-financial MoUs with reputed organizations and civil society • Deployment of preloaded educational content via the Sikshanapedia app • CSR-supported provision of Android devices, smart TVs, Wi-Fi hotspots, and Alexa assistant devices
Capacity Building & Learning Enrichment	• Digital literacy training for 10.77 lakh community members & 6 lakh SHG women • Training of 11,075 librarians and Digi Sakhis • Regular programs on functional English, arithmetic, career guidance, civic education, science, and environmental awareness

Child-Centric & Pandemic-Responsive Programs	- Launch of “OduvaBelaku” to sustain reading habits - Weekly Satcom programs in collaboration with Rotary-3191, bringing expert-led sessions on Science, Art, Literature, Skill, and Personality Development
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Implementation Challenges

Challenges included connectivity gaps, initial user resistance, the need for continuous technical support, and content standardization. These were mitigated through community engagement, librarian training, and regular monitoring.

Outcome



This initiative aligns with multiple SDG themes—Quality Education (SDG 4), Gender Equality (SDG 5), and Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8)

Snapshots & Coverage

“The new library in our village has made me so happy. I get so excited at the thought of being able to use the computer.”
- Pallavi, a student

Meet the Librarians Reviving Karnataka's Local Libraries

“Earlier, our village library had only books. Now, with computers and Wi-Fi, children come every day to learn English and explore new things online. Even SHG women use it to learn about markets and schemes. Our library has truly become a window to the world.”
— Library Supervisor, Arivu Kendra, Ramanagara Dist.

3.5 GP Smart Health Dispensary:- West Bengal

Introduction:

In order to improve access to primary-level curative health services, there is a need to reach the service closer to the public. However, with a robust health care infrastructure, the West Bengal Government health care system has reached every corner of the State.

Consequently, for reaching out primary health care closest to the rural population, the P&RD Department sanctioned a total 1,768 nos. of AYUSH Dispensaries (Homoeopathic, Ayurvedic & Unani) at the GP level with funding support by the State Budget head and NHM head of the H&FW Department. The task of engagement and other establishment issues of doctors, and also the monitoring of the GP dispensaries, are vested in the P&RD Department. These dispensaries are located in the Gram Panchayat Office or any other place arranged by the Gram Panchayat and function six hours daily every working day.



Now, with a view to providing better service to rural people through this Department's existing Homeopathy, Ayurvedic & Unani GP level Dispensaries, an online initiative called "GP Smart Health Dispensary" has been introduced by Panchayats and Rural Development Department, Govt. of West Bengal.

Background / Profile

In order to provide better service to rural citizens through this Department's existing Homeopathy, Ayurvedic & Unani Gram Panchayat Level Dispensaries, GP Smart Health Dispensary Portal, and a mobile application have been designed and developed. It will be helpful for Pradhans and PRI members to monitor the activities of the GP Dispensaries and to redress the grievances of the rural citizens/ patients within their jurisdiction.

- ✓ Managing Homeopathy, Ayurvedic & Unani Gram Panchayat level dispensaries under various Gram Panchayats in a hassle-free manner.
- ✓ Creation of a centralized database of GP-level dispensaries throughout the State.
- ✓ To enable rural citizens to book prior appointment.
- ✓ A doctor can generate an e-prescription.
- ✓ Both Doctors and Patients can download e-prescriptions through this portal.
- ✓ The medicine management system is incorporated in the system

Problems (why this initiative was required):

- ✓ Facing problems in accessibility & availability of doctors and scheduling of doctors.
- ✓ Facing problems in Patient appointment booking and access to medical records.
- ✓ Facing problems in the management of doctor registrations, doctor attendance monitoring, reporting, doctor schedules monitoring, and medicine distribution.
- ✓ Facing problems in managing records of prescription, Patient schedule management, patient care, and delivering quality healthcare services.

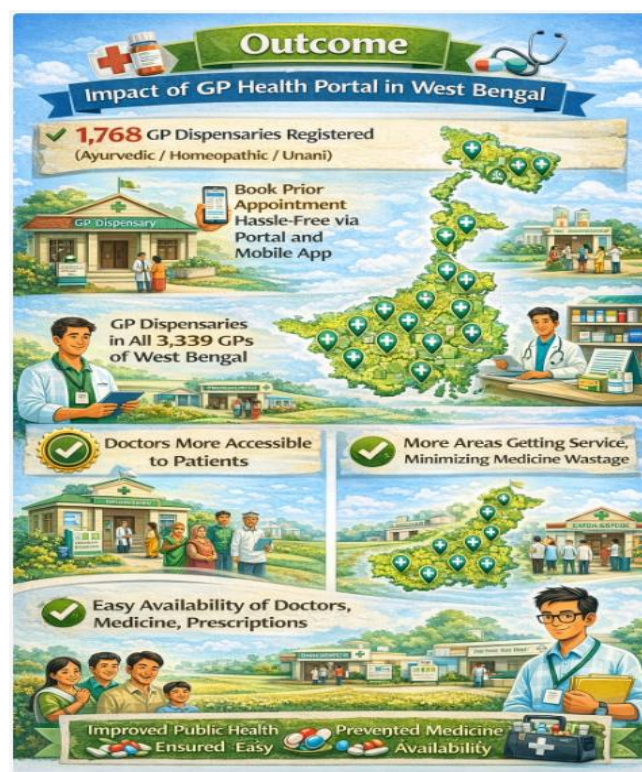
Solutions / Strategies / Approaches:

- ✓ User Registration: Allow users, including doctors and patients, to register and create accounts within the application to access its features and services.
- ✓ Appointment Booking: Enable patients to book appointments with doctors through the mobile app or web interface, providing convenience and flexibility in accessing healthcare services.
- ✓ Doctor Listing and Profiles: Display a comprehensive list of doctors available within the system, along with their profiles showcasing their specialization, qualifications, and experience, helping patients make informed decisions.
- ✓ Prescription Management: Enable doctors to write and manage prescriptions digitally, including patient details, symptoms, diagnosis, and prescribed medications, improving accuracy and efficiency in healthcare management.
- ✓ Schedule Management: Provide doctors with the ability to set and manage their schedules, specifying working hours, availability, and blocking specific dates for vacations or unavailability.
- ✓ Medical Records and History: Facilitate the storage and retrieval of patient medical records, allowing doctors to access relevant information for accurate diagnosis and treatment, and patients to keep track of their healthcare history.
- ✓ Notifications and Reminders: Send timely notifications and reminders to patients for upcoming appointments, medication reminders, and other important healthcare-related information.
- ✓ Administrative Dashboard: Provide administrators with a centralized dashboard to manage doctor registrations, monitor attendance, generate reports, and track medicine distribution.
- ✓ Medicine Inventory Management: Enable administrators to track and manage medicine inventory, including stock management, distribution from the state to the district, and monitoring medicine availability at different levels.
- ✓ Data Analytics and Reporting: Generate comprehensive reports and analytics on various aspects of the healthcare system, such as appointment statistics, doctor performance, patient demographics, Disease prevalence or outbreak, and medicine utilization, aiding in decision-making and resource allocation.

- ✓ Security and Privacy: Implement robust security measures to protect patient data, ensure privacy and compliance with data protection regulations, and maintain the confidentiality of sensitive healthcare information.
- ✓ Improve accessibility & increase availability of doctors: Increase access to healthcare services for rural populations by providing a user-friendly mobile app that has been introduced, enabling easy registration, appointment booking, and access to medical resources.

Implementation Challenges:

- ✓ Capacity Building & Training Gaps:
 - To organize training for GP staff, including Health Workers, Data Entry Operators, and ANMs.
 - Capacity building training among frontline workers for data entry.
 - Dependency on support teams during the initial months.
- ✓ Community Awareness & Adoption:
 - Patient awareness about the availability of Smart Dispensary services.
 - Community awareness among villagers to use digital registration or teleconsultation services.
 - Active IEC campaigns for better community participation.



3.6 From Data to Direction: How Payirchi is Rewriting the Story of Training Governance in Tamil Nadu

In early 2025, Virudhunagar was much like many districts- steady, compliant, but unremarkable in its training performance. Reports were submitted, targets were pursued, yet progress often plateaued midway through the year. Performance gaps at the Block and Gram Panchayat levels were known anecdotally, but actionable clarity remained elusive.

Everything began to change in February 2025, when the Payirchi Portal was introduced.

For the first time, district officials could see to just their own progress but how every other district in Tamil Nadu was performing. Training data was no longer buried in spreadsheets or static reports. It was visible, comparable, and disaggregated right down to the Gram Panchayat level. Underperforming Blocks and GPs in Virudhunagar were no longer hidden in averages; they stood out clearly on dashboards. Equally visible were districts that were doing better.

What followed was not a directive-driven correction, but a quiet shift in mind set. Healthy competition set in. Review meetings became sharper. Support was targeted where gaps were real. By the end of the year, Virudhunagar had completed 74% of its annual training target, moving decisively out of the “average” bracket.

Virudhunagar’s turnaround, however, is not the story. The real story is **Payirchi**.

The Genesis of Payirchi: Building Digital Foundations for Governance

In an era of rapid digital transformation, the Office of the Commissioner (Training), Government of Tamil Nadu, recognised that effective governance could no longer rely on fragmented data systems and delayed reporting cycles. The growing scale and complexity of training programmes spanning districts, institutions, finances, and human resources demanded a robust, integrated digital backbone.

To address this need, the Commissionerate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (Training) conceptualized and developed the Payirchi Portal, a comprehensive, user-friendly digital platform with custom-designed software to strengthen the Department’s Management Information System (MIS).

Payirchi was envisioned not merely as a reporting tool, but as a single source of truth, one that could support planning, implementation, monitoring, and informed decision-making across the State.



“Instead of checking emails or different emails or different websites, we now use payirchi portal for all training related information and documents. Now we can see training dates, batches, participants and expenses all in one place”

- SIRD Faculty

Why Payirchi was Necessary: The Challenge and the Solution



Before the introduction of the Payirchi Portal, training governance in Tamil Nadu relied on

fragmented data sources, multiple reporting formats, and limited real-time visibility.

Monitoring progress across districts and institutions was time-consuming, financial reconciliation was delayed, and accountability mechanisms were difficult to enforce.

The absence of a unified digital space further increased administrative effort and constrained timely decision-making.

Payirchi addressed these challenges through a single, integrated digital platform. It created a centralised and standardised data repository for training and financial information, enabled real-time tracking through dashboards, and strengthened transparency by linking expenditure to system-approved work codes. End-to-end training management, instant report generation, and single-window access to official documents significantly reduced manual effort and improved efficiency.

By transforming fragmented processes into a cohesive digital ecosystem, Payirchi has enabled faster reviews, targeted interventions, and data-driven governance laying a strong foundation for improved performance and accountability across the State.

Full Circle: Back to Virudhunagar and Beyond



Payirchi Portal – Outcomes That Matter

Shifting from retrospective reporting to real-time governance, enhancing transparency and effectiveness across districts.

The Digital Footprint

- 360 trainings
- 40,530 participants
- 37 districts unified

360

Total trainings conducted to date for effective governance.

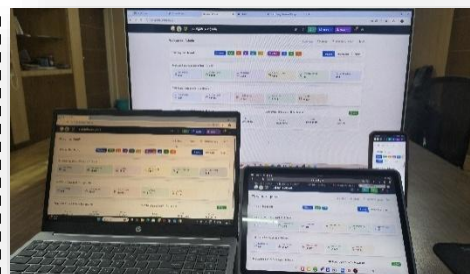
40,530

Number of participants engaged in training programs offered.

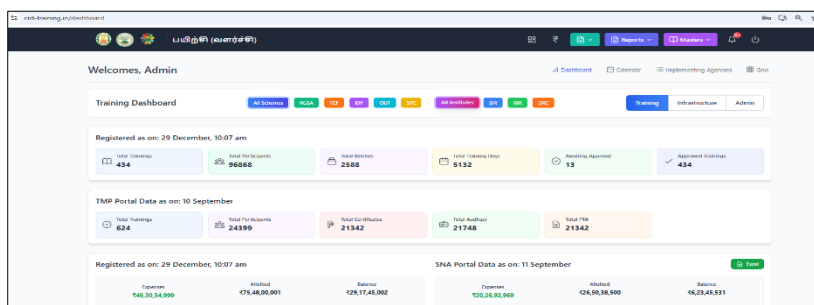
EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES THROUGH INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE SOLUTIONS.

Virudhunagar's progress from average performance to 74% target achievement—is not an isolated success. It is a visible outcome of a system where data is transparent, comparable, and actionable.

Phone or PC, tablet or screen -Payirchi works smooth, fast, and clean."
– DRCP(Mayiladuthurai)



Log into <https://crd-training.in> To know more about the portal



3.7 From Paper Registers to Digital Ease: The Story of Swarna Panchayat – Andhra Pradesh

The Daily Struggle of Paying Panchayat Taxes

In many villages, paying house tax or other Panchayat fees meant standing in long queues, handling cash, and waiting for receipts. Records were kept in paper registers, which were difficult to maintain and easy to damage or misplace. For Panchayats, matching collections with records was time-consuming, and for citizens, the process often felt confusing and inconvenient.

These problems affected trust, transparency, and revenue collection. The Government of Andhra Pradesh realised that to strengthen Panchayats, financial systems had to be simple, clear, and reliable.

A Digital Step Towards Simplicity

To solve this, the state introduced **Swarna Panchayat**, a digital system that allows Panchayats to manage taxes and payments in a smooth and transparent way. Instead of paper records, details of houses and properties were entered into a digital system. This included ownership details, tax amounts, and related charges.

Citizens were given easy options to check their dues and make payments using their mobile phones. They could pay through UPI, QR codes, bank cards, net banking, or even WhatsApp. Payments went directly to Panchayat accounts, removing the need for cash handling.

Making Technology Work for Ordinary People

The system was designed to be simple and mobile-friendly, keeping rural users in mind. Interfaces were easy to understand, and receipts were generated instantly. Panchayat officials could see real-time reports



showing how much tax was due and how much had been collected.

Supervisors checked and approved data to avoid errors. This ensured accuracy and built confidence in the system.

Easy Access through URL- <https://swarnapanchayat.apcfss.in/>

Overcoming the Initial Hurdles

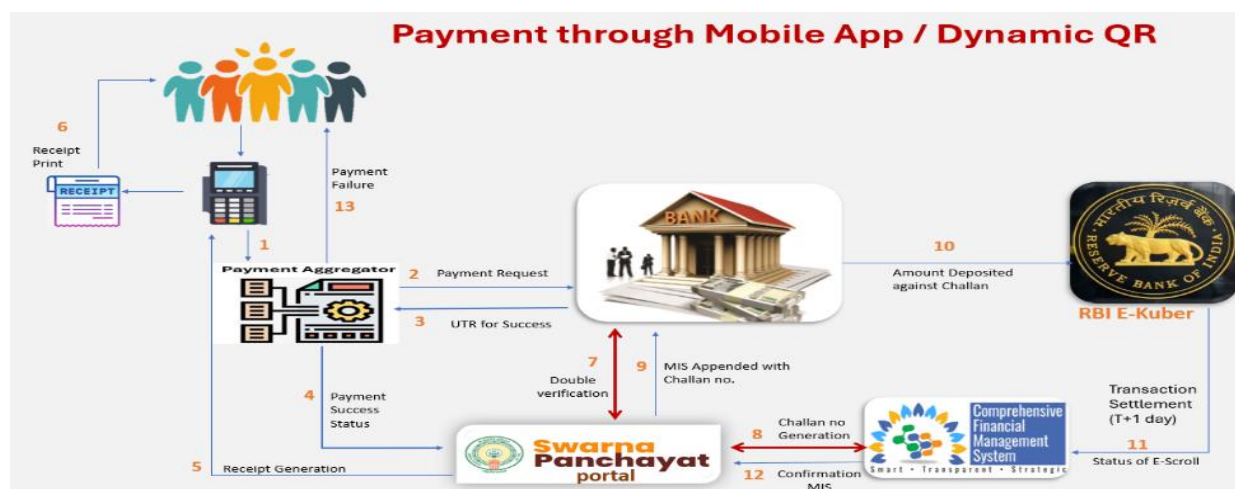
Introducing a new digital system was not easy. At first, some staff members found it difficult to adapt, and technical connections with banks took time. These issues were handled through regular training, discussions, and teamwork between departments and technology partners.

With practice and support, both staff and citizens became comfortable using the system.

Clear Benefits for Citizens and Panchayats

Swarna Panchayat brought visible change. More houses were brought under the tax system, and Panchayat income increased. Records became clean and organised. Citizens could pay from their homes without repeated visits to offices. Transparency improved, and trust grew.

What was once a slow, paper-based process becoming quick, clean, and dependable which also increased the Transparency and Accountability- As now the citizens can see real-time dues, receipts, and service requests.



A Model for the Future

Swarna Panchayat is more than a software system. It is a step towards stronger, self-reliant Panchayats. By making financial processes simple and transparent, it has shown how digital tools can improve everyday governance.

This initiative proves that when technology is designed with people in mind, it can make governance easier for everyone.

Before the Swarna Panchayat portal, manual house tax collection often caused doubts among residents. With the introduction of online receipts through Swarna Panchayat, transparency and public confidence have significantly improved. Through systematic house measures updation, the Panchayat increased house tax collections from ₹72 lakhs to ₹1.97 crores. The enhanced revenue is being effectively utilised for Panchayat developmental and infrastructure activities, directly benefiting the local community

V. Madhavi. Srinivasa Puram GP. Tirunati rural

Own Source Revenue (OSR)



4.1 Strengthening Own Source of Revenue (OSR) through Gram Suvidha

Introduction:

The financial self-reliance of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) forms a critical foundation for effective decentralization. While grants continue to be an important source of income, Gujarat has placed strong emphasis on strengthening Own Source of Revenue (OSR) to ensure that Gram Panchayats can plan and implement local priorities with autonomy and accountability. Gram Suvidha Portal, Government of Gujarat.

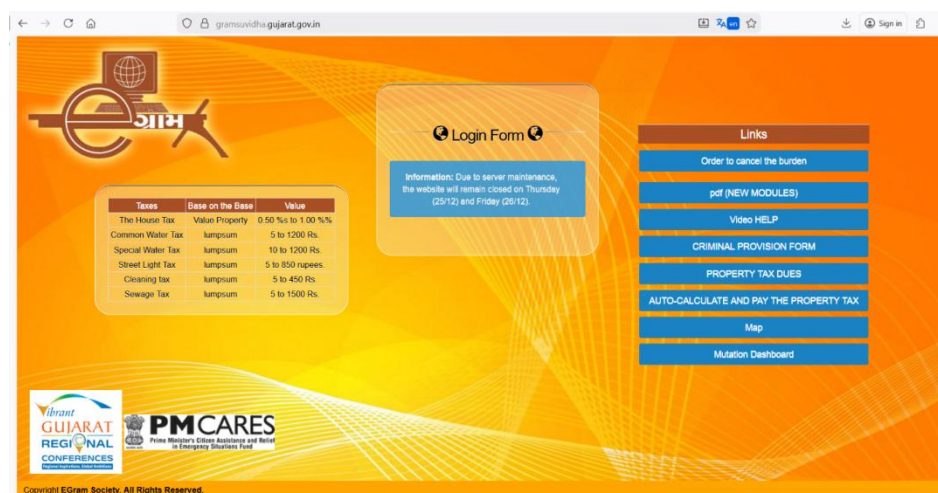
To advance this objective, the Government of Gujarat launched the Gram Suvidha Portal, an online platform for tax collection and revenue management. This digital system has modernized local tax administration, improved transparency, and enhanced the financial capacity of Gram Panchayats by bringing technology into the core of revenue governance

Background:

Gram Panchayats in Gujarat derive income from a range of taxes and non-tax sources under the Gujarat Panchayats Act, 1993. These include: Property tax, Professional tax, Water tax, Cleanliness tax, Lighting tax, Drainage tax, Entertainment tax, User fees, Land rent, Revenue from fairs and markets.

In 2015, Gujarat strengthened fiscal discipline by making property tax, water tax, and cleanliness tax compulsory for all Gram Panchayats. However, manual collection practices persisted in many villages, resulting in irregular assessments, delayed demand generation, inefficient record-keeping, lack of transparency, low recovery rates etc.

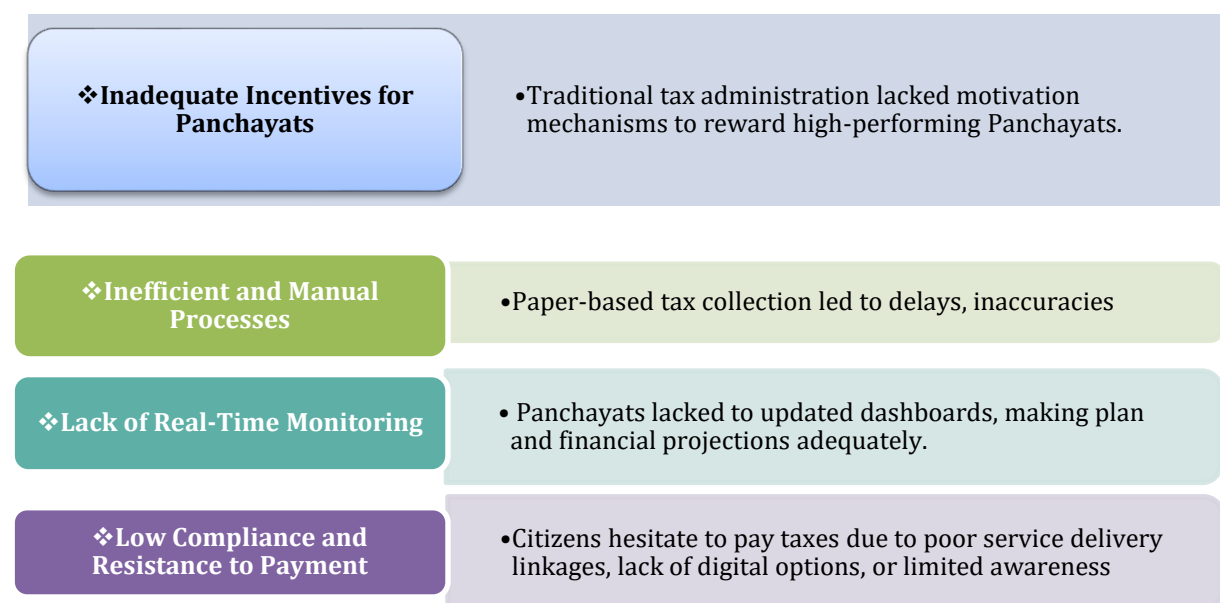
To address these structural issues, the Government of Gujarat launched the Gram Suvidha Portal in December 2020. The platform provides an integrated, web-based system for demand generation, online payments, reconciliation, and real-time data monitoring parking a paradigm shift in Panchayat Level revenue administration.



For details : www.gramsuvidha.gujarat.gov.in

Why was this initiative required:

The state recognized several critical challenges that limited effective OSR mobilization:



These challenges collectively affected the financial independence and developmental capacity of Gram Panchayats across the state.

Solution:

The Government of Gujarat introduced a comprehensive digital and administrative reform through the Gram Suvidha Portal, addressing key gaps in OSR mobilization.

Digitization of Revenue Processes: Online demand generation, property mapping, and taxpayer databases. Automated receipt generation and digital audit trails. Transparent, dispute-free, standardized systems across villages

Integration with eGramCenters: Citizens can pay taxes digitally at local eGramcenters Enabled more than 6.09 crore digital transactions in 2024–25

Performance-Based Incentives: Villages achieving more than 80% tax recovery are rewarded with performance grants up to ₹5 lakh, under the Swachh Gram Swastha Gram Yojana, Panchayats demonstrating strong tax and cleanliness outcomes receive grants up to ₹1 lakh.

Community Engagement and Behavioural Change Panchayats like Gadhka GP offer discounts, distribute dustbins, and create community pride around tax payment, focusing on linking tax payment to improved local services and infrastructure.

These reforms transformed OSR collection from a manual administrative process into a digitally driven, community-centred financial model.

Implementation Challenges:

Despite the strong outcomes, several challenges were observed during the reform rollout: like Low Tax Base and Incomplete Assessments, incomplete property surveys, and limited taxpayer databases, etc. The shift from manual to digital systems required significant time, resources, and expertise. Digital payment systems required extensive awareness campaigns and community engagement. Training and Handholding Requirements for PRIs and ongoing technical support during implementation

Outcome

The Gram Suvidha-enabled OSR reforms have delivered substantial results across Gujarat's Panchayati Raj system.

- ❖ **Revenue Growth;** OSR collections increased from ₹155.65 crore (2022) to ₹792.46 crore (2025–26)
- ❖ **Digital Transformation:** More than 6.09 crore digital transactions processed in 2024–25
- ❖ **Performance Incentives:** Villages with 80%+ tax recovery receive grants up to ₹5 lakh
- ❖ **Enhanced Autonomy:** Panchayats now fund essential infrastructure using their own revenue
- ❖ **Transparency and Efficiency in Tax Administration:** Real-time dashboards improved decision-making and reduced disputes, errors, and manual workload.
- ❖ **Strengthening Panchayat Autonomy:** Panchayats can now fund essential infrastructure, roads, drainage, water supply, using their own revenue. Dependency on state or central grants.
- ❖ **Community-Led Revenue Models:** Dharmaj GP and Vautha GP demonstrated how local resources, fairs, and community assets can be monetized sustainably.
- ❖ **Motivation through Performance Grants:** High-performing Panchayats receive financial recognition, promoting a culture of accountability and good governance.

By combining digital transformation with community engagement, the state has empowered Panchayats to become more self-reliant, transparent, and responsive to local development needs.

4.2 KSMART: Modernizing Local Revenue Governance in Kerala

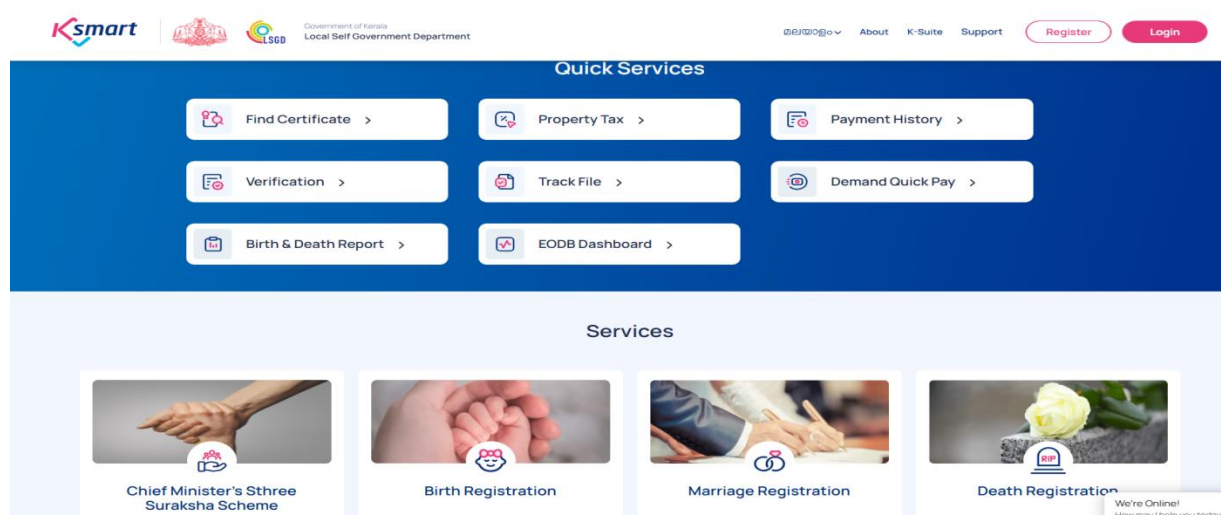
Kerala, with its strong tradition of decentralised governance and over **1,200 Local Self Government Institutions**, relies heavily on **Own Source Revenue (OSR)** such as property tax, licence fees, and building permit fees to ensure financial autonomy and effective service delivery. However, manual and fragmented systems led to inefficiencies, data errors and revenue leakages. To address these challenges, the Government of Kerala, through the **Information Kerala Mission (IKM)**, conceptualised and implemented **KSMART** as a unified, data-centric, and rule-based e-Governance platform. By digitising key revenue functions including **property tax assessment, licence issuance, and building permit management**, KSMART laid the foundation for a transparent, citizen-friendly, and technology-driven system that significantly strengthened OSR mobilisation and local governance across the State.

Why KSMART Was Needed

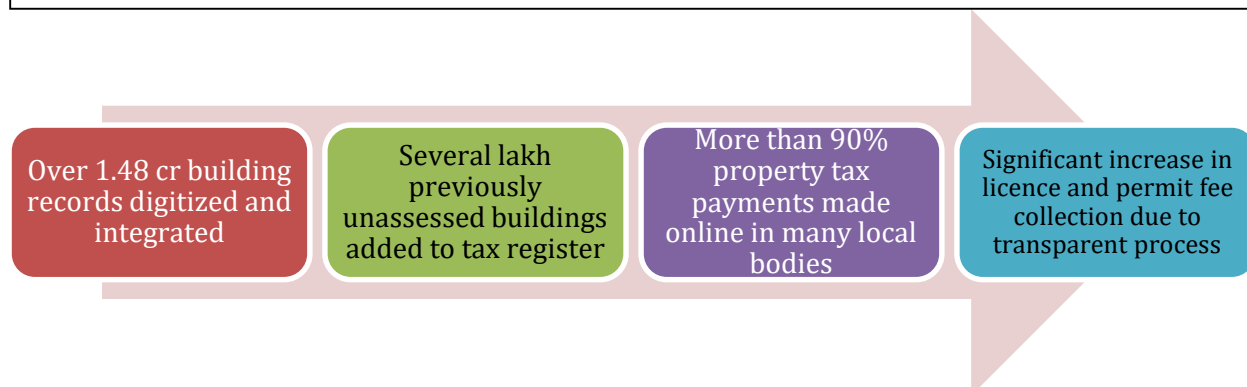
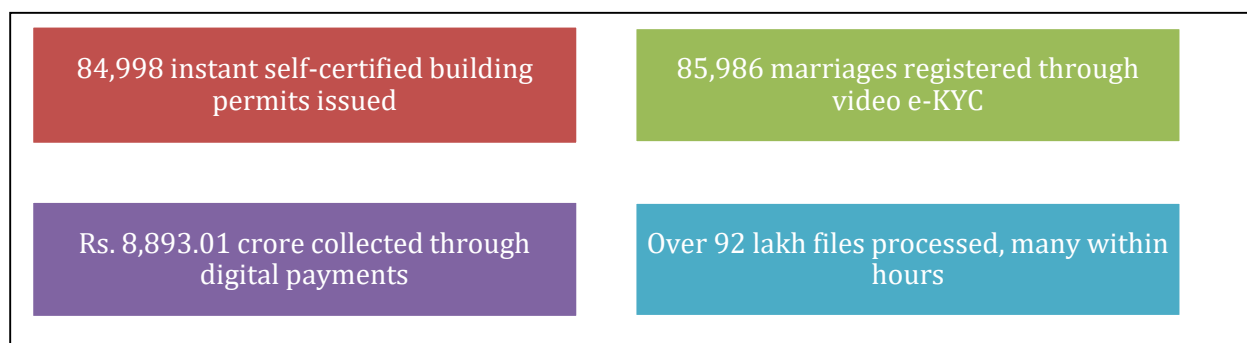
Before the implementation of **KSMART**, Local Bodies in Kerala struggled with **outdated and incomplete building records**, leading to incorrect plinth area assessments, under-assessment of property tax, and a large number of **unassessed or missing properties**, which significantly narrowed the tax base. **Manual and time-consuming processes** caused delays in assessing new buildings, distributing demand notices, and monitoring arrears. At the same time, the **lack of transparency** in tax, licence, and permit fee calculations weakened citizen trust, while **manual and inconsistent permit and licence systems** resulted in poor compliance, revenue loss, and frequent disputes. Together, these challenges constrained revenue mobilisation and undermined the efficiency of local revenue administration.

Smart Solutions for Smarter Local Governance

The implementation of KSMART delivered a comprehensive, technology-driven solution to long-standing challenges in local revenue administration. Through migration and reassessment of legacy property data, the Legacy Data Management System (LDMS) for identifying unassessed buildings, and the mandatory linkage of property tax with approved building completion plans, the platform ensured accurate and expanded tax coverage. Citizen-centric features such as “My Buildings”, auto-generated demand notices, SMS alerts, Quick Pay, and digital receipts improved convenience and transparency, while officials benefited from real-time DCB dashboards, ward-wise collection reports, online licence and profession tax modules, and GIS-enabled EDCR-based building permits with rule-based fee calculation. Together, these interventions created a unified, transparent, and efficient revenue administration framework for Local Bodies.



Key Outcomes:



From Reform to Replication

KSMART has emerged as a secure, scalable, and future-ready digital governance ecosystem, extending well beyond revenue administration through its integration with GIS, analytics, and mobile-based services. By introducing transparency, accuracy, and efficiency in property tax, licensing, and permit management, the platform has significantly strengthened the Own Source Revenue of Local Bodies while enhancing citizen trust and service delivery. As a result, KSMART stands out as a national best practice in digital local governance and a replicable model for strengthening financial sustainability and governance capacity across India.

4.3 Achieving Financial Self-Reliance through Digital Governance in Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh, the most populous state in India, has one of the largest and most diverse Panchayati Raj systems in the country. Administratively, the State comprises **75 districts, 826 Development Blocks, 57,694 Gram Panchayats, and 1,10,274 villages**, making it India's largest rural governance ecosystem. This huge scale large rural population, high village count and many small gram Panchayats shapes the fiscal challenge. At the same time, it provides significant opportunities to demonstrate leadership in decentralised governance, innovation, and fiscal empowerment of Panchayats. The Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) of Uttar Pradesh form a robust three-tier structure consisting of **Zila Panchayats, Kshetra Panchayats, and Gram Panchayats**. Gram Panchayats, being the frontline institutions, play a vital role in delivering essential civic services, maintaining local infrastructure, and implementing development schemes. Given the sheer number and population served by each GP, strengthening local financial autonomy is essential. This makes **Own Source Revenue (OSR)** mobilisation a critical strategy for enabling sustainable, responsive, and accountable governance at the grassroots level.

Why Panchayats Needed a Digital Revenue Backbone

The initiative for financial self-reliance through digital governance in Uttar Pradesh was launched to address low compliance and significant revenue leakages in Own Source Revenue (OSR) of Gram Panchayats, which includes property tax, water charges, CSC services, and other local levies essential for maintaining village infrastructure. With over 57,000 Gram Panchayats relying heavily on State and Central funds, manual and fragmented processes led to errors, poor collection efficiency, and lack of real-time visibility for District and State authorities. The absence of effective monitoring and enforcement mechanisms further weakened compliance, while limited locally generated funds constrained Panchayats from meeting routine maintenance and community needs, making digital reform essential for achieving fiscal autonomy and sustainable local governance.



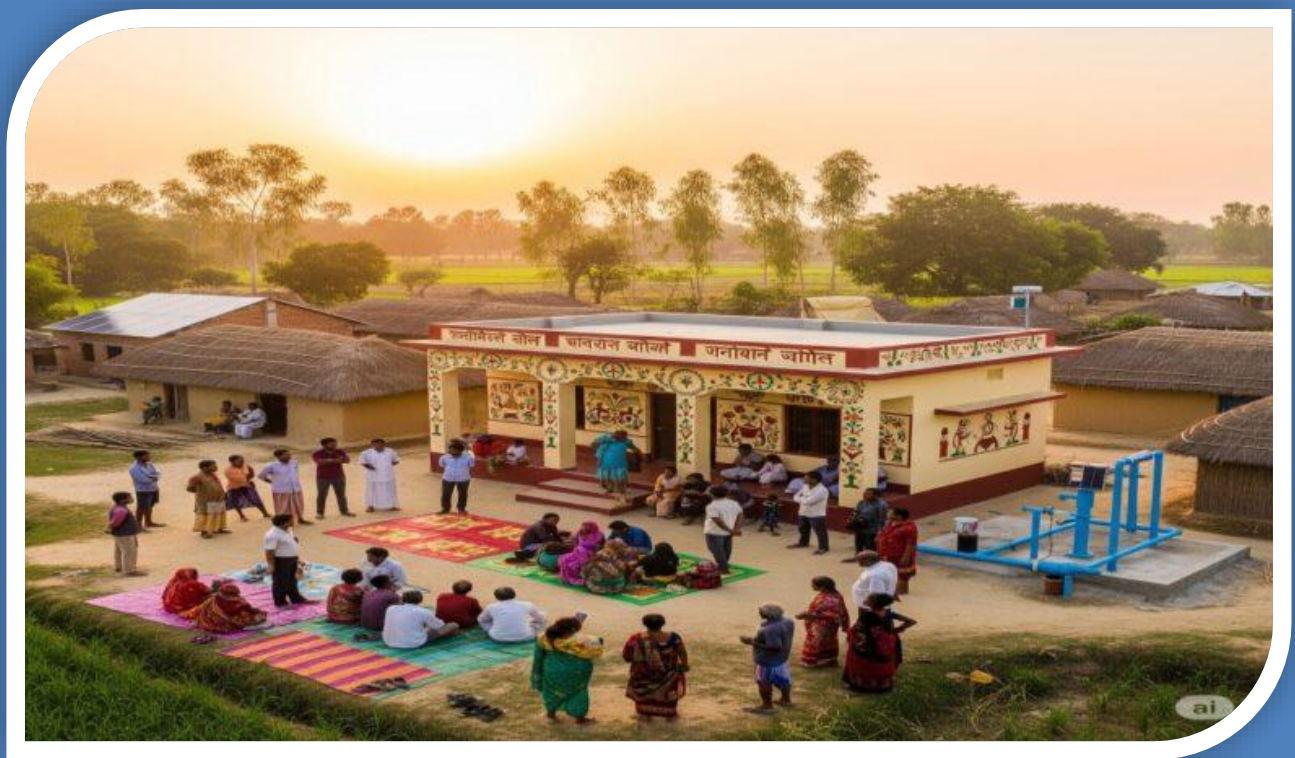
Challenges

- 1 • Operational Uniformity Across a Large and Diverse Panchayat Network
- 2 • Capacity Constraints of Local Functionaries
- 3 • Weak Assessment and Documentation Systems
- 4 • Digital Infrastructure and Connectivity Issues

Building a Financial Backbone for Rural Uttar Pradesh

The Own Source Revenue Management System has successfully transformed financial governance in Uttar Pradesh Gram Panchayats by replacing fragmented manual processes with a unified, real-time digital platform covering the entire OSR lifecycle from demand generation to instant bank reconciliation. This has created a strong technological foundation for improving revenue collection efficiency and enabling greater fiscal autonomy for rural development. The system has ensured instant audit readiness through standardized data, streamlined operations through verified asset mapping and uniform billing, and achieved wide digital adoption, with over 57,000 Panchayat Secretaries trained and nearly all actively using the platform, establishing transparency, accountability, and operational readiness across the State.

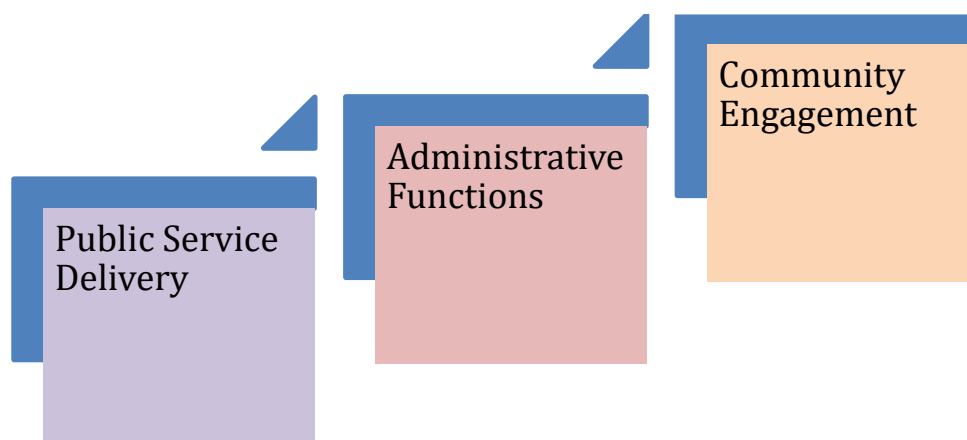
Creation of Basic Infrastructure for Panchayats



5.1 Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan: Bringing Government Closer to the People - Bihar

The Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan is a pivotal initiative of the Government of Bihar aimed at decentralizing administrative services and ensuring easy access for rural citizens. Established within Gram Panchayat areas, these multi-storey buildings function as mini-secretariats, housing multiple government offices under one roof. They provide essential citizen services such as issuance of birth, caste, income, and land-related certificates, eliminating the need for villagers to travel to block or district headquarters. Designed with adequate infrastructure and accessibility features for persons with disabilities, Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans play a vital role in reducing delays, enhancing transparency, streamlining administrative processes, and empowering rural communities by bringing governance closer to their doorstep.

Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan Supports for



A Hub of Services, Safety, and Civic Engagement

The Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan has been thoughtfully designed to serve as a comprehensive hub for local governance and community services. It features a well-organized reception and help desk to guide visitors, separate waiting areas, and dedicated offices for the Mukhiya, Sarpanch, Panchayat Secretary, and Kachahari Secretary, along with a meeting room for Gram Panchayat



members and a courtroom. Essential facilities such as separate restrooms for staff, male and female toilets, safe drinking water, and a store room ensure smooth functioning of daily operations. The building is also equipped with modern amenities, including computers, internet facilities for digital services, a post office, and a Common Service Center to promote e-governance and efficient public service delivery. The spacious open ground within the premises serves as a venue for Gram Sabha meetings, community gatherings, and administrative events. Beyond its everyday role, the Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan is designed as a secure

shelter during disasters, providing a safe place for the local population during floods, storms, or other emergencies, reflecting a vision of safety, accessibility, and community empowerment.

Overcoming Challenges to Make Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans Fully Functional

- Many Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans faced delays in construction due to difficulties in identifying suitable land or existing land disputes. In some areas, no government land was available, so the government took land as donations from local citizens. The state government also issued clear directives to gram panchayat functionaries to prioritize land identification for PSB construction.
- Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans were constructed without essential infrastructure such as internet connectivity, computers, printers, and reliable electricity supply or backup systems. The Government of Bihar gradually equipped all these amenities to PSBs.
- Initially, citizens were unaware of the services available at the Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan. To address this, awareness campaigns were conducted through local media, posters, Gram Sabha meetings, and school events to inform and engage the local community.
- After the completion of the construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawans (PSBs), the main challenge was to make them functional. There was a need for sufficient staff to ensure smooth operations. Several positions, such as Technical Assistant, Accountant-cum-IT Assistant, and Executive Assistant, were created at the Panchayat level. Additionally, a roster was prepared to assign different officers to serve in the PSBs

Key Achievements of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan

- Rural residents can now access essential certificates (birth, caste, income, land ownership) locally without traveling long distances
- Easier access to welfare schemes (pensions, scholarships, ration cards) has improved socio-economic conditions
- Administrative work shifted from block or district headquarters to the local panchayat level
- Faster processing of applications and grievance redressal
- Reduced the chances of middlemen exploitation and corrupt practices
- Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan serves as a hub for local government activities, improving coordination among officials
- The availability of a large ground and shelter facility has improved community preparedness during natural disasters

5.2 Atal Digital Suvidha Kendra (ADSK): Transforming Grassroots Service Delivery through Digital Governance - Chhattisgarh

Government of India and the State Government have introduced multiple digital platforms, to strengthen Gram Panchayats as effective institutions of local self-governance, however, the transition from manual systems to digital platforms exposed gaps in infrastructure, digital literacy and technical handholding at the Gram Panchayat level, which led to the launch of the Atal Digital Suvidha Kendra (ADSK) initiative across all



Gram Panchayats of Chhattisgarh on 24 April 2025, coinciding with National Panchayati Raj Day. This is an initiative of the State Government aimed at providing digital and financial services directly at village panchayats. The programme will initially benefit 1,460 village panchayats by enabling residents to access services such as cash transactions, issuance of birth and death certificates, payment of utility bills, and availing government benefits without the need to travel to distant development blocks or district headquarters.



The Atal Digital Suvidha Kendra (ADSK) initiative is a flagship e-governance intervention aimed at bridging the digital divide and ensuring transparent, citizen-centric service delivery at the Gram Panchayat level, particularly in rural and tribal areas. Implemented through a partnership between Gram Panchayats and the Common Service Center (CSC) ecosystem, ADSKs function as dedicated digital service points within Panchayat premises, facilitating convergence of multiple government schemes and services. The initiative provides access to key welfare schemes, certificates, banking, cash withdrawal, digital payments, and online applications, thereby enhancing ease of access, accountability, and trust in governance. Over 7,858 ADSKs have been established across the State, enabling substantial financial transactions and significantly improving service outreach through strengthened digital and physical infrastructure at the grassroots level.



- Access to schemes such as Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, MGNREGA, Swachh Bharat Mission, and various pension schemes

- Issuance of birth and death certificates, Ayushman Bharat cards, and cash withdrawal facilities

- Issuance of birth and death certificates, Ayushman Bharat cards, and cash withdrawal facilities

Challenges Faced and Solutions Provided

- Reluctance of CSC operators to operate from Panchayat buildings: Addressed through an incentive-based partnership model with Gram Panchayats
- Limited transactions during initial phases: Mitigated through regular publicity, awareness, and village-level outreach campaigns. Lack of computers and reliable internet connectivity in remote Panchayats: Resolved through provision of computers and internet facilities using RGSA funds.
- 1787 ADSK Buildings were sanctioned under RGSA and other Government Schemes out of which 374 Buildings completed.

Implementation of PESA & Tribal Governance





Introduction

Maharashtra's 5% Direct Fund Scheme stands as a testament to the power of grassroots empowerment, effectively placing the tools of development directly in the hands of local communities. This principle, deeply rooted within the PESA Act of 1996, has breathed new life into the Gram Sabhas of Maharashtra's Scheduled Areas, giving them direct control over financial resources and local development.

Background

Anchored in the legislative bedrock of Section 4(m)(vii) of the PESA Act, 1996 the scheme mandates for Panchayats and Gram Sabhas in Scheduled Areas to have control over local plans and resources, most notably tribal sub-plans, effectively deepening self-governance at the community level. To operationalize this Act, the Governor of Maharashtra, exercising

powers under paragraph 5(1) of Schedule 5 of the Constitution of India, issued a notification on October 30, 2014, amending Section 54-B of the Maharashtra Gram Panchayat Act. This amendment inserted clause (O), mandating the allocation of at least 5% of the total

Tribal Component Schemes outlined in the Annual Financial Statement to the Gram Panchayats in Scheduled Areas. The allocation was to be proportional to the Scheduled Tribe population of each Gram Panchayat.

It was also stipulated that the Panchayat's utilization of these funds would be based on the recommendations and within the limits set by the Gram Sabha. The 5% Direct Fund Scheme presently covers 8,833 PESA villages, 3,010 Gram Panchayats, 59 blocks, and 13 districts of Maharashtra. The Tribal Development Department allocated ₹270.13 crore for the Year 2024-25. It is designed to achieve communities empowered, local democracy, greater control over financial resources. Maharashtra is the only state in India to have introduced a scheme of this nature, a pioneer in direct community empowerment.

The scheme has strengthened local democracy by promoting participatory planning processes at the Gram Sabha level. Community members are actively involved in identifying their needs, prioritizing projects, and overseeing implementation.



How Funds are Utilized: Guiding Principles

To ensure that funds are used in a way that maximizes its impact, the scheme provides guidelines for their sector-wise utilization. As shown in the picture below, there are four categories of activities and 25% funds are allocated to each of these category.

Stories of two villages

1 In Tambadpada of Zari Village we see this empowerment in action as villagers build a lifeline to prosperity by constructing a Cement Nala Bandhara (C.N.B.). Their allocation of funds to basic infrastructure isn't just about construction; it's about envisioning a future with boundless opportunity. The 5% Direct Fund Scheme has enabled farmers to cultivate two crops a year, ensured a steady supply of drinking water for livestock, and helped to raise the groundwater level of the area. The discussions at Gram Sabha meetings are vibrant exchanges where community members passionately debate on best way to allocate resources, ensuring the preservation of their natural heritage for generations to come. The tangible results of this empowerment, like the Cement Nala Bandhara in Tambadpada of Zari Village, stand as testaments to their unwavering commitment to sustainable development.

Cement Nala Bandhara, Tambadpada, Zhari Panchayat, Block: Talasari, District: Palghar

2 Consider the weekly market of Boradi Gram Panchayat, a vital hub in Northern Maharashtra where small and large traders, shopkeepers, and vendors converge, and people and labourers from remote villages flock to buy essential household items. Through the 5% Direct Fund Scheme, the construction of nine platforms in this market, has significantly boosted the Gram Panchayat's revenue, amounting to ₹75,600 in the year 2021-22. This investment has not only improved the market infrastructure but has also empowered local commerce, turning it into a vibrant testament to the scheme's ability to ignite local economies and transform lives.

Platform construction in the weekly market of Boradi Gram Panchayat, Block: Shirpur, District: Dhule.

The Impact

The examples of Tambadpada of Zari Village and Boradi Gram Panchayat illustrate the 5% Direct Fund Scheme's profound impact:



Empowered Communities:

Gram Sabhas are now empowered to exercise self-governance and make informed decisions about their development.



Strengthened Participatory Local Democracy:

The scheme has strengthened local democracy by promoting participatory planning processes at the Gram Sabha level. Community members are actively involved in identifying their needs, prioritizing projects, and overseeing implementation.



Responsive Resource Allocation:

Resources are now allocated in a way that is more responsive to the specific needs and priorities identified by the tribal communities themselves. This ensures that development efforts are targeted, effective, and sustainable, maximizing their impact on the ground.

Challenges and the Way Forward

While the 5% Direct Fund Scheme has achieved significant milestones, some challenges remain. Aligning implementation policies with existing legal frameworks is an ongoing process that would keep throwing challenges for objectives of empowering tribal communities and promote self-determination through the direct devolution of financial resources and the enhancement of local control over development processes. Overcoming these challenges will require continued collaboration, innovation, and a steadfast commitment to the principles of PESA.



Conclusion

The 5% Direct Fund Scheme is a powerful tool for social transformation. This initiative is central to the core objectives of the PESA Act, enabling communities to exercise their constitutionally recognized powers and drive development initiatives that reflect their unique needs and priorities. By placing resources directly in the hands of Gram Sabhas, Maharashtra is fostering a new era of community self-rule. The transformative tales of villages like Tambadpada, Zari Village and the bustling marketplaces like Boradi serve as compelling evidence of this approach.



Odisha

STRENGTHENING TRIBAL LIVELIHOODS THROUGH PESA-ENABLED FOREST BASED ENTERPRISE

The Scheduled Tribes and other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006 (FRA), along with the Panchayat (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA), plays a transformative role in empowering tribal communities in India. These laws recognize the rights of forest dwellers over Minor Forest Produce (MFP), which includes non-timber forest products like bamboo, tendu/kendu leaves, honey, roots, herbs, and other plant-based resources.

Level of Implementation: In Odisha, the government has adopted several regulations like

- ▶ Orissa Gram Panchayat (Minor Forest Produce Administration) Rules, 2002
- ▶ Orissa Forest Produce (Control of Trade) Act, 1981



Conducting Gram Sabha by tribal communities

These laws empower Gram Panchayats to regulate procurement, issue trade licenses, and maintain sustainability in MFP collection. The Odisha government has approved trade in 69 types of MFP, making it a major grassroots enterprise for tribal and Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs).

The initiative in Mayurbhanj shows how tribal communities, empowered by FRA and PESA, can turn forest resources into sustainable livelihoods

Background

In the Mayurbhanj district, a Scheduled Area under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution, the trading of MFP has taken a structured and community-driven form since early 2022. Supported by departments like Panchayati Raj, Forest, ITDA, Mission Shakti, and the Odisha Livelihood Mission, tribal communities have organized into Producer Groups (PGs). Six such PGs operate under the Sulabha Green Shakti Producer Company Ltd, which functions as a collective tribal-owned enterprise.

Sulabha Green Shakti facilitates organized collection, value addition, and trading of various MFP like sal seeds & leaves, mahua flowers, wild honey, and medicinal fruits. With technical and financial support from the Indian School of Business (ISB) and in partnership with AAK Kamani Pvt. Ltd, the enterprise ensures transparent market linkages and inclusive financial practices.

This shift from informal, exploitative trade to a formal, community-owned, market-oriented system is a significant step toward economic empowerment, legal legitimacy, and environmental sustainability. It is a model of how tribal communities can turn forest wealth into lasting prosperity.

The initiative is implemented through a multi-structure model involving:

Community Stakeholder:	Institutional Patterned:	Government Support:	Marketing Linkage:
1583 shareholders organised into six Producer Groups.	The Indian School of Business (ISB) provides technical and strategic support and Gram Panchayat provides administrative support.	Department of Forest & Environment, Department of Panchayati Raj, Integrated Tribal Development Agency (ITDA), Department of Mission Shakti & Women Empowerment and Odisha Livelihood Mission promoting community, individuals and women-led livelihood collectives.	AAK Kamani Pvt. Ltd, a private Sector firm is offering end-to-end support for procurement, processing, and sales as well as the Gram Panchayat is also supporting local market linkage by providing infrastructure and local marketplaces.

Further, the initiative has created a network of tribal women entrepreneurs, encouraged financial inclusion through digital payments and established a community-led storage, sorting and processing eco-system using Gram Panchayats Market Complex, Mission Shakti Gruha, Local Community Halls. It showcases how forest-based economy can be revitalised.

Positive Outcome



1. Strengthened Tribal Livelihoods

- Organised collection and aggregation, reducing wastage and improving bargaining power.
- Decreasing migration of labours, who are moved to nearby towns and metropolitan cities in search of employment, and they are getting allied activities throughout the years.



2. Women Economic Empowerment

- Women Self Help Groups are not only collectors but also shareholders and decision making in the enterprises.
- Exposure to financial systems, enterprise management and digital tools.



3. Improved Market Access

- » Direct linkage with buyers ensures better prices and eliminates middlemen.
- » Products now qualify standard due to better sorting and packaging infrastructure.



4. Gram Panchayat Empowerment

- » Every step from member selection to market operation is sanctioned by the Gram Panchayat through conducting Gram Sabha or Palli reinforcing community who hold the control over local resources.



5. Financial Literacy

- » All payments to members are cashless routed through Bank accounts.
- » Members have been more informed about saving, credits and digital banking.

Conclusion

The initiative in Mayurbhanj shows how tribal communities, empowered by FRA and PESA, can turn forest resources into sustainable livelihoods. With strong Gram Panchayat support, women-led groups now earn fair incomes, reduce migration, and manage trade through transparent, community-owned systems—creating a model for inclusive tribal development.



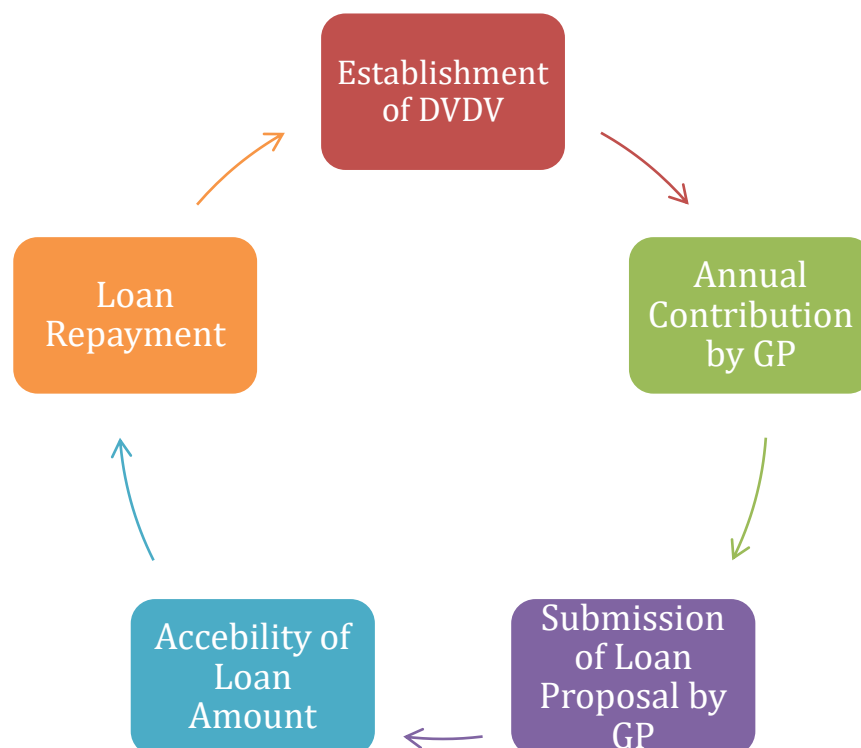
Drying Saf Seeds

Participatory Planning & Convergence

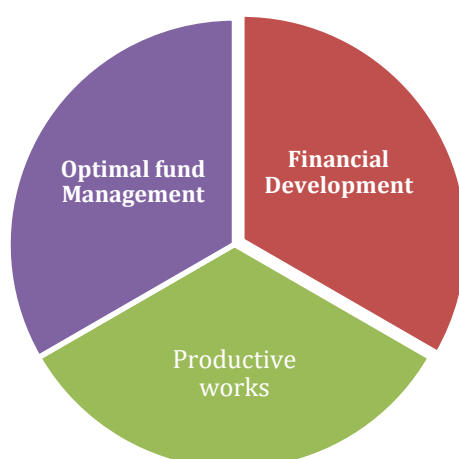


7.1 District Village Development Fund (DVDF) in Maharashtra: Institutional Framework for Financing Gram Panchayat Development Works

The District Village Development Fund (DVDF) in Maharashtra was established under Section 133 of the Maharashtra Gram Panchayat Act and is governed by the Bombay District Village Development Fund Rules, 1960. The fund is maintained at the Zilla Parishad level under the supervision of the Standing Committee and administered by the Dy. Chief Executive Officer (Village Panchayat). Its primary purpose is to provide financial assistance to Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the form of loans for local development activities and infrastructure creation.



The DVDF is financed through mandatory annual contributions from Gram Panchayats, amounting to 0.25% of their own-source revenue. To ensure financial sustainability and generate additional income, surplus funds are invested appropriately. The fund serves as an institutional mechanism to strengthen rural local bodies by enabling them to undertake productive and community-oriented development works that may otherwise face financial constraints.



Loan assistance under DVDF is provided after scrutiny of proposals submitted by Gram Panchayats, which include resolutions, financial records, project estimates, and repayment plans. The Standing Committee evaluates the repayment capacity and financial condition of the concerned GP before sanctioning assistance. Financial support of up to 75% of the project cost may be provided at an interest rate of 5% per annum, with repayment periods extending up to 20 years. The fund supports various public infrastructure projects such as Gram Panchayat buildings, water supply schemes, roads, schools, community halls, sanitation facilities, and other community assets.

Unique features of DVDF

- ❖ Depending on the nature of the project, the loan repayment period is fixed from 1 to 20 years
- ❖ The loan is repaid through the Gram Panchayat from their annual income per year.

7.2 Maata-Manthi – Grievance Redressal System- Andhra Pradesh

Listening to the People Where They Gather

In many villages, people often feel that their voices do not reach those who make decisions. Complaints about water, pensions, roads, or sanitation are written on paper, submitted to offices, and then lost in long processes. For women, elderly people, and those living in remote areas, reaching government offices itself becomes a challenge. Over time, this distance between people and officials weakens trust and participation.

To change this situation, the Government of Andhra Pradesh introduced a new and simple idea called **Maata-Manthi**, which means “a collective conversation.” The idea was clear, if people cannot easily reach the government, the government should come closer to the people.

Turning Cinema Halls into Spaces for Dialogue

Cinema theatres are familiar places where villagers naturally gather. Recognising this, the government decided to use theatres as meeting places where people could openly talk about their problems. On fixed days, villagers from nearby areas gathered in these theatres. Through live video connections, ministers and senior officials joined the discussion from the state level.

For the first time, villagers could speak directly, ask questions, and explain their problems in their own words. Officials listened in real time, gave directions on the spot, and assured follow-up action. Theatres that once showed movies now became places where real village stories are being heard.



Making Everyone Part of the Conversation

Special care was taken to ensure that women, self-help group members, youth, elderly citizens, and marginalised communities could participate. Villages were grouped and connected to nearby theatres to reduce travel. Where people could not reach theatres easily, community halls and mobile arrangements were used.

Local teams helped note down every issue raised, whether it was about drinking water, pensions, housing, or sanitation. Each concern was sent to the right department, and timelines were fixed for action.

This gave people confidence that their voices mattered.

Facing Challenges, Finding Solutions

At first, there were technical difficulties in connecting theatres with video systems. Some villages were unsure whether the programme would really help them. These challenges were slowly addressed through planning, technical support, and awareness campaigns. Women’s groups played an important role in spreading the message and encouraging participation.

As people saw their issues being discussed openly and resolved, attendance increased. What began as an experiment soon became a trusted platform.

A New Culture of Trust and Participation

MaataManthi changed the way people and the government interacted. Problems that once took months now receive quicker attention. People felt respected and heard. Officials gained a clearer understanding of ground realities. The distance between villages and decision-makers has been reduced.

Today, MaataManthi stands as a powerful example of how listening, openness, and simple use of technology can strengthen democracy at the grassroots. It shows that good governance begins with a conversation.

"During the virtual Mata-Manthi programme held by the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister at Tekkali Theatre, he patiently listened to Ravivalasa villagers developmental issues. We raised the issue of missing compound walls for the Zilla Parishad High School in Ravivalasa Gram Panchayat. His immediate intervention led to completion of the compound wall, ensuring safety and protection for school children "



