



सत्यमेव जयते

Government Of India



An Evaluation of Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) 2026

Prepared By

Institute of Rural
Management Anand (IRMA),
Tribhuvan Sahkari
University (TSU),
Gujarat

Submitted To

Ministry of Panchayati
Raj (MoPR)
Government of India

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS

Prof. Santosh Kumar Dash	Principal Investigator
Prof. Dhanshyam Mahavadi	Co-Principal Investigator
Prof. Rahul Kamble	Co-Principal Investigator
Prof. Lalit Pankaj	Member

RESEARCH TEAM

Dr. Anupam Sharma	Research Consultant
Dr. Prasanth A	Project Manager
Yash Rasaliya	Research Associate
Mauli Kathule	Research Associate
Ravi Dodalingannavar	Research Associate



**INSTITUTE OF
RURAL MANAGEMENT
ANAND**

**Institute of Rural Management Anand
Post Box No. 60, Anand 38800, Gujarat, India**

**An Evaluation of
Centrally Sponsored Scheme of
Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan
(RGSA)**

Submitted to
**Ministry of Panchayati Raj
Government of India**

August 2025



**INSTITUTE OF
RURAL MANAGEMENT
ANAND**

**Institute of Rural Management Anand
Post Box No. 60, Anand 388001, Gujarat, India**

Preface

The Ministry launched the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) in 2018 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to strengthen Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) through capacity-building and digital governance. Between 2018-19 and 2021-22, ₹2,364.13 crore was invested, benefiting over 1.36 crore stakeholders through structured training programs. A third-party evaluation in 2021-22 endorsed the scheme's impact, leading to the approval of the Revamped RGSA (2022-26) with a financial outlay of ₹5,911 crore. The revamped model focuses on deepening governance capacity across 2.78 lakh rural and traditional local bodies, incentivizing high-performing Panchayats, fostering inter-ministerial collaboration, integrating e-governance, and encouraging Own Source Revenue (OSR) generation.

A key study finding highlights that Capacity Building & Training (CB&T) initiatives have expanded participation and enhanced foundational knowledge among PRI stakeholders. However, gaps remain in training participation, methodology quality, and trainer effectiveness, necessitating a stronger focus by the Ministry and State Panchayati Raj Departments. Institutions such as the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), State Institutes of Rural Development, and other key training institutions of national importance with a focus on rural development can play a pivotal role in assessing and improving training for Elected Representatives and other key stakeholders of the Programme.

The Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) is privileged to present this comprehensive evaluation of the Revamped RGSA, as entrusted by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR). The study is structured into two reports. The first assesses RGSA's impact on capacity-building, outreach, training quality, SDG-focused implementation, OSR generation, and Gram Panchayat Development Planning (GPDP), based on extensive surveys across 16 states. The second evaluates Andhra Pradesh's Grama Sachivalayam model, designed to enhance local governance and service delivery through a decentralized framework. This report offers critical insights into its successes, challenges, and policy recommendations for refining both interventions.

We extend our sincere gratitude to all stakeholders, including MoPR, State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs), Panchayati Raj & Rural Development Departments (PRRDs), and key training institutions, for their contributions to this evaluation. We hope this report serves as a valuable resource for policymakers and institutions committed to strengthening PRIs as self-sufficient, accountable, and dynamic pillars of rural governance.

Finally, I sincerely appreciate the efforts of the IRMA Study Team, led by Dr. Santosh Kumar Dash, for producing this insightful report and providing valuable policy recommendations to enhance local governance at the grassroots level.

Dr. Saswata Narayan Biswas
Director, IRMA

Acknowledgements

The evaluation study of the Revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), conducted by the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) on behalf of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), greatly benefited from the collaboration and guidance received throughout the project. This report would not have been possible without the support, cooperation, and insights from all stakeholders and officials at various levels, to whom we extend our sincere gratitude.

We deeply appreciate the guidance and support from the senior officers of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR). We sincerely thank Shri Vivek Bharadwaj, Secretary, MoPR, for his valuable suggestions during the presentation by the IRMA team on 10th June, 2025 at his office at Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi. We are also deeply grateful to Shri Sushil Kumar Lohani, Additional Secretary, and Shri Vikas Anand, Joint Secretary, for their continued guidance and insightful suggestions throughout the process. We sincerely acknowledge the valuable support received from Shri Vipul Ujwal, Director (Capacity Building & Training, RGSA); Shri Pankaj Kumar, Under Secretary; and Dr. Bijaya Kumar Behera, Economic Adviser. Additionally, we are also thankful to other officers, consultants, and support staff of the Ministry, particularly Mr. Aditya Vikram Singh, Mr. Anuj Tandon, Dr. Mohd Tauqueer Khan, Mr. Vijay Singh, Ms. Pragya Singh, and others, for their generous support during the study.

We are grateful for the timely coordination between the Ministry and State Departments, which facilitated the successful execution of the field survey. Our sincere appreciation goes to the State and District Nodal Officers for RGSA and other State officials for sharing their insights on the scheme's implementation. Special thanks to the Block Development Officers and Nodal Officers at the State and District levels for their support in coordinating stakeholder meetings and facilitating data collection, despite challenges such as elections, heavy rainfall, and unforeseen circumstances.

We also appreciate the Directors, Joint Directors, and faculty of SIRDs, as well as the faculty of DPRCs, BPRCs, and ETCs, for their valuable perspectives on training programs and capacity-building under RGSA. Additionally, we thank District Panchayat officials, especially the Chief Executive Officers, for sharing their experiences and insights.

Our sincere appreciation goes to the Elected Representatives, Panchayat Functionaries, line department members, SHG members, and beneficiaries at all levels for their time and valuable inputs, which were crucial in assessing the implementation of RGSA.

We greatly value the detailed interactions with officials and the facilities provided during our scoping visits to various states. Their logistical support and insights significantly contributed to our assessment. Special thanks to Ms. Neela Patel from SIRD, Gujarat, for her discussions on the genesis and evolution of RGSA and its implementation.

We acknowledge the efforts of AMC Research Group Pvt. Ltd. and Datamation Research Services Pvt. Ltd. in conducting the primary survey, as well as the support of Mr. Prabhat Kumar, founder of AMC, and Mr. Chetan Sharma, founder of Datamation Research

Services, during the fieldwork. We also appreciate the Field Assistants for their diligent transcription work and proofreading support.

At IRMA, we are deeply grateful to our former Director, Prof. Umakant Dash and current Director, Prof. Saswata Narayan Biswas, for their continuous support, encouragement, and guidance throughout the project. We also thank Prof. Saswata Narayan Biswas, Dean (Research, Consulting, and Training), for his valuable inputs. The contributions of other faculty members, particularly Prof. Abhinav Rajverma, were instrumental in navigating challenges during the initial stages. Special thanks to Dr. Anjali Gairola and Dr. Khushboo Bhati for their prompt research assistance in the early phases of this project.

We also acknowledge the behind-the-scenes contributions of IRMA's administrative team, including CFO Mr. Arumugam, the Accounts Team, Administration/HR, and the Purchase Committee. We sincerely appreciate the prompt assistance provided by Mr. Ashish Bhai from Administration/HR department.

Finally, my deepest gratitude goes to the entire research team for their dedication and hard work from inception to completion. Special thanks to Dr. Anupam Sharma for his outstanding research consultancy and support throughout the study. I would also like to thank our PGDM(RM) participants — Nalla Senapathy V., Krishnavamsi P., Keranikaa T., Ahamed Meeran S., and Siddhant R. Khandelwal — for their excellent research assistance in preparing the state-wise factsheets on key indicators reflecting the achievements of the revamped RGSA and Kirubasankar G R, Gaurav Kabdwal for their support in designing the layout of the report. I am thankful to Mr. Mohana Rao and Vishal Borade—PhD scholars at the University of Hyderabad—for their critical support in data collection and analysis in the Grama Sachivalayam study.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to this study. Your support and cooperation played a pivotal role in making this report a success.

Dr Santosh Kumar Dash
Principal Investigator
IRMA

August 2025

List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR	Augmented Reality
AR&P	Action Research & Publicity
AR&RS	Action Research & Research Studies
BC	Backward Class
BP	Block Panchayat
BPDP	Block Panchayat Development Plan
BPRC	Block Panchayat Resource Centres
C4D	Communication for Development
CASPA	Climate Action Special Panchayat Award
CB&T	Capacity Building and Training
CBO	Community Based Organisations
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CFC	Central Finance Commission
CFC	Central Finance Commission
CGG	Centre for Good Governance
CLF	Cluster Level Federation
CSC	Common Service Centre
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
DDUPSVP	Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar
DP	District Panchayat
DPRC	District Panchayat Resource Centres
EC	Executive Committee
EDIE	Economic Development and Income Enhancement
ER	Elected Representatives
ETC	Extension Training Centers
FDP	Faculty Development Programs
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Financial Year
GeM	Government e-Marketplace
GP	Gram Panchayat
GPCC	Gram Panchayat Coordination Committee
GPDP	Gram Panchayat Development Plan
GPPFT	Gram Panchayat Planning and Facilitation Team
GS	Gram Sabha
ICT	Information and Computer Technology
IEC	Information, Education, and Communication
IIPA	Indian Institute of Public Administration
IITF	India International Trade Fair
IoP	Incentivization of Panchayats
IRMA	Institute of Rural Management Anand
IT	Information Technology
ITI	Industrial training Institutions
KILA	Kerala Institute of Local Administration

LDF	Line Department Functionaries
LIF	Local Indicator Framework
LSDG	Localised Sustainable Development Goals
MGNREGS	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme
MoPR	Ministry of Panchayati Raj
MTU	Mobile Training Units
NCAER	National Council of Applied Economic Research
NCBF	National Capability Building Framework
NDSPSVP	Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar
NeGP	National e-Governance Plan
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NIC	National Informatics Centre
NIF	National Indicator Framework
NIRD&PR	National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
NPA	National Panchayat Awards
NPPACs	National Panchayat Performance Assessment Committees
NPRD	National Panchayati Raj Day
NRDWP	National Rural Drinking Water Programme
NRHM	National Rural Health Mission
NRLM	National Rural Livelihood Mission
OBC	Other Backward Caste
OSR	Own Source Revenue
OTT	Over-The-Top
PAI	Panchayat Advancement Index
PDI	Panchayat Development Indicator
PDP	Panchayat Development Plan
PDS	Public Distribution System
PEAIS	Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme
PESA	Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas
PF	Panchayat Functionaries
PIB	Press Information Bureau
PKNSSP	Panchayat Kshamta Nirman Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar
PLC	Panchayat Learning Centres
PoC	Point of Contact
PR	Panchayati Raj Department
PRA	Participatory Rural Appraisal
PRI	Panchayati Raj Institutes
PRIT	Panchayati Raj Institutes of Training
PRP	Poverty Reduction Plan
PRRD	Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Department
PRTI	Panchayati Raj Training Institutes
RAC	Research Advisory Committee
RFP	Request for Proposals
RGPSA	Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan
RGPSA	Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan
RGSA	Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan
SBM	Swachh Bharat Mission
SC	Scheduled Castes

SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SFC	State Finance Commission
SHG	Self Help Groups
SIRD	State Institute of Rural Development
SIRD&PR	State Institutes of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj
SMART	Seeking Modern Applications for Real Transformation
SPA	State Panchayat Awards
TA/DA	Travelling Allowance/Dearness Allowance
TMP	Training Management Portal
TNA	Training Needs Assessment
ToT	Training of Trainers
TVF	The Viral Fever
UC	Utilization Certificates
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VC	Village Committee
VO	Village Organization
VR	Virtual Reality
VWSC	Village Water & Sanitation Committee
WER	Women Elected Representative
ZP	Zila Panchayat/Zila Parishad
ZPDP	Zilla Parishad Development Plan

Table of Contents

Contents

Preface	III
Acknowledgements	IV
List of Abbreviations	VI
Table of Contents	IX
List of Tables	XIV
List of Figures	XVI
List of Boxes	XVIII
Executive Summary	XIX
Major Recommendations	XXIV
A Case for Extension of Revamped RGSA	XXVI
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Challenges Faced by PRIs	2
1.2.1 Difficulties in Raising OSR	2
1.2.2 Limited Access to Capacity-Building Resources	2
1.2.3 Delays in Fund Allocations from State Governments	2
1.2.4 Impact on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals	3
1.3 The Revamped RGSA: Emergence and Evolution	3
1.4 Objectives of the Revamped RGSA	4
1.5 Capacity Building Focus	5
1.5.1 Improving Governance Practices	5
1.5.2 Enhancing Financial Management and Resource Mobilization	5
1.5.3 Promoting Transparency and Accountability	6
1.5.4 Addressing Governance Deficits in Rural Areas	6
1.5.5 Link to the Sustainable Development Goals	6
1.6 Need for the Mid-Term Evaluation	7
1.7 Grama Sachivalayam in Andhra Pradesh	7
1.8 Evaluation Objectives	8
1.9 Report Structure and Preview	9
Chapter 2: Summary of the Findings	10
2.1 Training Attendance and Barriers	10
2.2 Training Communication	10
2.3 Assessment of Quality of Training/Methodology	11
2.4 Access and Quality of Training Infrastructure	11
2.5 Quality of Residential Training Infrastructure	12
2.6 RGSA Training Experience of Elected Representatives	12
2.7 Challenges Reported by Training Participants	12
2.8 Assessment of Panchayat Infrastructure	13
2.9 Status of LSDG and OSR	13
2.10 Governance Knowledge among ERs	13
	IX

2.11 Qualitative Insights	14
Chapter 3: Research Design	15
3.1 Introduction	15
3.2 Methodology	15
3.3 Literature and Background Review	15
3.4 Scoping Visits and Consultations	16
3.5 Stakeholders of the Evaluation Study	17
3.6 Survey Design: Quantitative Survey	17
3.6.1 Sampling Design	17
3.6.2 Sampling Plan for Respondents	20
3.6.3 Data Collection	22
3.7 Survey Design: Qualitative Survey	23
3.8 Data Triangulation and Analysis	24
3.8.1 Quantitative Data analysis	24
3.8.2 Qualitative Data analysis	24
Chapter 4: Survey Findings and Analysis	25
4.1 Introduction	25
4.2 Sample Description	25
4.2.1 Demographic Representation of ERs	25
4.3 Professional Data of ERs	28
4.3.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Panchayat Functionaries	30
4.4 Assessment of Knowledge Levels of ERs and WERs	32
4.4.1 Overall Knowledge Levels of ERs	32
4.4.2 Knowledge about Women's Reservation in Panchayats (WER Sample)	34
4.4.3 Decision-Making in Panchayat Meetings (WER Sample)	35
4.4.4 State-wise Knowledge Levels of ERs	35
4.5 Assessment of Outreach of RGSA program	37
4.5.1 Mode of Communication about Trainings	37
4.5.2 Assessment of Training Programmes Attendance	39
4.5.3 Assessment of Training Programmes (Physical Mode)	43
4.5.4 Assessment Training Venues for ERs (Physical Mode)	44
4.5.5 Assessment of ER Participation in Residential Training	45
4.5.6 Representation of Trainings Sessions Group and Language of ERs	46
4.6 Assessment of Training Modules and TNA Methodology	47
4.6.1 Training Content	47
4.6.2. Challenges in Identifying the Most Relevant Training Modules	50
4.6.3 Training on Digital Platforms	51
4.6.4 Modes of Training	54
4.7 Assessment of Training Quality/Methodology	58
4.7.1 Quality of Training Infrastructure	59
4.7.2 Quality of Residential Training Infrastructure	62
4.7.3 Overall RGSA Training Experience of Elected Representatives	67
4.7.4 Challenges Reported by Participants of Training Sessions	71
4.8 Assessment of Quality of Infrastructure	72
4.8.1 Status of Panchayat Bhavans	72
4.8.2 Infrastructure Facilities in Gram Panchayats	73

4.8.3 RGSA Fund Utilization for GP Infrastructure Development	75
4.8.4 Panchayat Bhavan Infrastructure under Revamped RGSA	77
4.8.5 Status of Innovative Project Implementation under RGSA	79
4.9 Assessment of Status of LSDG and OSR	81
4.10 Key Challenges Faced by Panchayats	86
4.11 Overall Assessment of RGSA: Gains, Gaps, and State-wise Divergences	86
4.11.1 Assessing the Reach and Engagement of the RGSA Program	87
4.11.2 Assessing Effectiveness of the Training Methods	87
4.11.3 Assessing the Learning Infrastructure Provided by RGSA	88
4.11.4 Assessing the Effectiveness of Post-Training Support	89
4.11.5 Assessing RGSA's Impact on Panchayat Infrastructure and LSDG Goals	89
4.11.6 Evaluating the Effectiveness of RGSA across States	89
4.12 Conclusion	90
Chapter 5: Stakeholder Analysis	91
5.1 Beneficiaries	91
5.1.1 Demographic Profile	91
5.1.2 Panchayat Infrastructure, Operations, & Services	92
5.2 Line Department Functionaries	98
5.2.1 Knowledge and Collaboration in Panchayat Development Processes	98
5.2.2 Training Impact and Methodology	101
5.2.3 Participation in Planning, Implementation and Monitoring	104
5.3 Self-Help Groups	110
5.3.1 Demographic Profile	110
5.3.2 Training Participation and Involvement in Feedback	111
5.3.3 SHGs Involvement in Community-Based Monitoring	112
5.3.4 Summary of Insights from SHGs	114
5.4 Faculty	115
5.4.1 Basic Profile	115
5.4.2 Institutional Involvement in Revamped RGSA Training	115
5.4.3 Level of Training	118
5.4.4 Training Need Assessment, Content and Methodology	120
5.4.5 Assessment of Trainers' Quality	127
5.5 Officials of PRI (State and District)	131
Chapter 6: Qualitative Analysis	139
6.1 Challenges in Training (Barriers faced by Trainers)	139
6.2 Developing the Training Sessions	143
6.3 Mechanism to ensure the quality of training	146
6.4 Feedback Mechanism in the Trainings	149
6.5 Assessing Trainer Performance	150
6.6 Strengthening Training Program: Faculty & Official Recommendations	154
6.7 Key Discussion	157
Chapter 7: Innovative Projects and ED&IE Projects	159
7.1 Summary of Projects	159
7.1.1 Project Types and State-wise Distribution	159
7.1.2 Summary of Project Coverage	162

7.1.3 Orientation in Projects Sanctioned	163
7.1.4 Summary of Finished Projects	163
7.1.5 Summary of On-Going Projects	164
7.1.6 Common Trends in Types of Projects Sanctioned	164
7.1.7 Thematic Analysis of Innovative Projects and ED&IE Projects	165
7.2 Success Stories	167
7.3 Challenges Experienced in Implementation	168
7.4 Case for Continuation of Both Projects	170
7.5 Suggestions for Strengthening these Interventions	172
Chapter 8: Incentivization of Panchayat Scheme	174
8.1 Evolution of the Scheme	175
8.2 Rationalization and Alignment with SDGs	175
8.3 Structure and Categories of Awards	175
8.4 Achievements of the Scheme	177
8.5 Rationale for Continuation Beyond 2025–26	178
8.6 Recommendations for Strengthening the Scheme beyond 2025–26	180
Chapter 9: Action Research & Publicity Scheme	184
9.1 Scheme Objectives	185
9.2 Key Observations	185
9.2.1 Strategic Publicity for Participatory Governance	185
9.2.2 Publicity Innovations	185
9.2.3 Audio-Visual Campaigns	186
9.2.4 Event-based Publicity Interventions	186
9.2.5 Digital and Social Media Interventions	187
9.2.6 Action Research as Institutional Learning for Decentralised Governance	188
9.3 Rationale for Continuation	191
Chapter 10: Digital Governance Interventions	192
10.1 Digital Planning and Financial Management Tools	192
10.2 Linguistic Inclusion and Accessibility	195
10.3 Data and Decision-Making	196
10.4 Panchayat Advancement Index	196
10.4.1 Report of PAI Version 1.0 and Key Achievements	197
10.4.2 PAI Version 2.0 Launched	198
10.5 Capacity Building and Human Resource Development	198
10.6 Spatial Planning with Gram Manchitra	198
10.7 Weather-Based Risk Planning	198
10.8 Accountability through Digital Audits	199
10.9 Strengthening Citizen Interface and Trust	199
10.10 Recommendations for Strengthening the e-Panchayat Ecosystem	200
Chapter 11: Recommendations and Conclusion	205
11.1 Improving the Training Attendance of the Stakeholders	205
11.2 Improving the Knowledge Levels of ERs and WERs	214
11.3 Improving Trainer Performance	219
11.4 Improving the Infrastructure of Training Resources	223

11.5 Strengthening Digital Governance	224
11.6 Improving Physical Infrastructure of the Gram Panchayats	228
11.7 Improving Implementation of Innovative Projects and Strengthening OSR	231
11.8 Incentivization of Panchayats and the National Panchayat Awards	233
11.9 Action Research and Media Outreach	234
Chapter 12: The Revamped RGSA: Gains, Gaps, and Road Ahead	236
12.1 Overall Impact Assessment	236
12.1.1 Panchayat Infrastructure under Revamped RGSA	237
12.1.2 Financial Sustainability of Gram Panchayats	238
12.2 The Case for Continuing the Revamped RGSA	239
12.2.1 Capacity Building Needs Sustained Investment	239
12.2.2 Strengthening Panchayat Financial Autonomy	240
12.2.3 Leveraging Technology for Governance and Accountability	241
12.2.4 Sustaining Training Infrastructure for Effective Capacity Building	242
12.3 Conclusion	243
References	247
Appendix A1	1
List of Sampled States, Districts, Blocks and GPs	1

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Number of Districts, Blocks, and GPs Sampled.....	19
Table 3.2: Stakeholder-wise Sample Size (Planned – Quantitative Survey)	22
Table 4.1: State-wise Gender & Age Representation of ERs (%).....	26
Table 4.2: Educational Qualification-wise Representation of ERs (%).....	26
Table 4.3: Social Category-wise Representation of ERs (%).....	27
Table 4.4: Distribution of ER Designation by Gender (%)	27
Table 4.5: Distribution of ER Designation by Caste (%)	28
Table 4.6: Caste-wise Distribution of ERs by Gender and Age Cohorts (%)	28
Table 4.7: State-wise Panchayat level Representation (%).....	29
Table 4.8: State-wise Representation of Experience of ERs (%).....	29
Table 4.9: Number of Times Elected as ERs	30
Table 4.10: Distribution of Major Roles Contributed by ERs (%).....	31
Table 4.11: Designation of Panchayat Functionaries.....	31
Table 4.12: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of PFs.....	32
Table 4.13: Gender-wise Knowledge Levels of ERs (%).....	32
Table 4.14: Caste-wise Knowledge Levels of ERs (%).....	33
Table 4.15: Education-wise Knowledge Levels of ERs (%)	33
Table 4.16: Caste-wise Knowledge Levels of WERs	34
Table 4.17: Education-wise Knowledge Levels of WERs (%).....	35
Table 4.18: Knowledge Level of ERs about Governance (%).....	36
Table 4.19: Knowledge Level of Women ERs (%).....	37
Table 4.20: Training Outreach – Various Communication Channels (%)	38
Table 4.21: Distribution of Attendance of Trainings (%).....	40
Table 4.22: RGSA Training Attended by Different Stakeholders (%)	40
Table 4.23: Distribution of Trainings Attended by ERs (%): PESA Regions	42
Table 4.24: Distribution of Training Programmes (Physical Mode) (%)	44
Table 4.25: Distribution of Training Programme (Physical Mode) ** (%).....	45
Table 4.26: Distribution of ER Participation in Residential Training (%)	46
Table 4.27: LSDG Themes Covered in Thematic Training - Part 1 (%).....	48
Table 4.28: LSDG Themes Covered in Thematic Training – Part 2 (%)	49
Table 4.29: Assessment of Software Learning – Part 1 (%)	52
Table 4.30: Assessment of Software Learning – Part 2 (%)	53
Table 4.31: Pedagogies Types Adopted for RGSA Training – Part 1 (%)	55
Table 4.32: Pedagogies Types Adopted for RGSA Training – Part 2 (%)	57
Table 4.33: Audio-Visual Teaching Technologies Used in Training (%)	58
Table 4.34: Adequacy of Training Infrastructure Facilities (Mean).....	60
Table 4.35: Adequacy of Residential Infrastructure Facilities – Part 1 (Mean).....	64
Table 4.36: Adequacy of Residential Infrastructure Facilities – Part 2 (Mean).....	66
Table 4.37: Distribution of Post Training Experience (%)	68
Table 4.38: Types of Handholding Support Received by ERs (%)	69
Table 4.39: Assessment of Panchayat Infrastructure under RGSA (%)	73
Table 4.40: Infrastructure Availability in GPs Across States – Part 1 (%).....	74
Table 4.41: Infrastructure Availability in GPs Across States – Part 2 (%).....	75

Table 4.42: Panchayat Infrastructure Developed under RGSA Fund (%).....	76
Table 4.43: GP Infrastructure Improvements under Revamped RGSA – Part 1 (%).....	78
Table 4.44: GP Infrastructure Improvements under Revamped RGSA – Part 2 (%).....	79
Table 4.45: Localized SDGs (Sankalps) Taken Up by GPs during 2023-24 (%).....	82
Table 4.46: Distribution of State-wise OSR Sufficiency and Fund Awareness (%)	84
Table 5.1: Region and State-wise Representation of Beneficiaries	91
Table 5.2: Gender of the Respondents	92
Table 5.3: Social Category of the Respondents.....	92
Table 5.4: Frequency of Participation in Gram Panchayat Meetings	98
Table 5.5: Inter-Departmental Coordination	98
Table 5.6: Frequency of Interaction between GP and LDF (%).....	99
Table 5.7: Effectiveness of GP Collaboration in Development Projects	99
Table 5.8: Self-Rating on Knowledge of the GPDP Process.....	99
Table 5.9: Submission of Action Plans to Gram Panchayat for Approval	100
Table 5.10: Frequency of Assistance from GP in Project Implementation	100
Table 5.11: Availability of Sufficient Resources	100
Table 5.12: Challenges in Planning and Implementation at GP Level	101
Table 5.13: Additional Training Needs of LDF.....	103
Table 5.14: Preferred Mode of Training Delivery.....	104
Table 5.15: Frequency of Participation in Block Development Meetings	105
Table 5.16: Training Needs for Effective Participation in the BDP.....	106
Table 5.17: Awareness of Funding Support for Innovations under RGSA.....	106
Table 5.18: Types of Innovative Projects Funded/Proposed under RGSA.....	106
Table 5.19: Support Needed for Better Project Implementation	107
Table 5.20: Effectiveness, Challenges, & Support for Infrastructure Projects	107
Table 5.21: Challenges in Implementing Good Governance Practices	107
Table 5.22: Importance of Good Governance Aspects.....	108
Table 5.23: Main Challenges Faced in Working with the GP	109
Table 5.24: Geographical Distribution across Region and States (%).....	110
Table 5.25: Distribution of Roles of Respondents in SHG	111
Table 5.26: Age Distribution among SHG Members	111
Table 5.27: Educational Level in SHG Members	111
Table 5.28: Social Category among SHG Members.....	111
Table 5.29: Distribution of Socio-Demographic Profile of Faculty	115
Table 5.30: Distribution of RGSA Officials Participated in Survey.....	131
Table 7.1: Summary of Innovative Projects.....	160
Table 7.2: Summary of ED&IE Projects	161
Table 7.3: Coverage of Projects during 2022-24	162
Table 7.4: Summary of Completed Projects and Fund Used	164
Table 11.1: Recommendations for Improving Training Attendance/Outreach	206
Table 11.2: Recommendations for Improving Governance-related Knowledge.....	215
Table 11.3: Recommendations for Improving Trainer Performance	219
Table 11.4: Recommendations for Improving Panchayats Infrastructure	229

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Research Design: Evaluation of Revamped RGSA.....	16
Figure 4.1: Gender and Age Representation of ERs (%).....	25
Figure 4.2: Trainings by Functionaries Type and Learning Medium.....	47
Figure 4.3: LSDG Themes Learned in Thematic Training by ERs and PFs (%).....	48
Figure 4.4: Major Training Barriers Faced (%).....	71
Figure 4.5: Sankalps Taken Up by GPs during 2023-24 (%).....	81
Figure 4.6: Distribution of Major Revenue Sources in the Panchayat (%).....	85
Figure 4.7: Distribution of OSR Initiatives Taken at Panchayat Level (%).....	85
Figure 4.8: Distribution of Panchayat Working/Issues (%).....	86
Figure 5.1: Attendance of Gram Sabha Meetings (%).....	92
Figure 5.2: Number of Mahila Sabha Conducted Annually (%).....	93
Figure 5.3: Number of Bal Sabhas Conducted (%).....	94
Figure 5.4: Improvements in the Overall Functioning of the GP (%).....	94
Figure 5.5: Improvements in Panchayat Infrastructure and Facilities.....	95
Figure 5.6: Improvements in Panchayat Operations in Last Three Years (%).....	95
Figure 5.7: Improvements in Panchayat Services (%).....	96
Figure 5.8: LDF Participation in RGSA Training (%).....	101
Figure 5.9: Mode of Training Attended by LDF (%).....	101
Figure 5.10: Venue of Training Attended by Line Functionaries (%).....	102
Figure 5.11: Type of Training Attended by Line Functionaries (%).....	102
Figure 5.12: Post-Training Confidence in Scheme Implementation (%).....	102
Figure 5.13: Confidence in Training Other Stakeholders in GPDP Processes (%).....	103
Figure 5.14: Participation in Preparation of the BPDP (%).....	104
Figure 5.15: Inclusion of Respondents' Contributions in Planning Decisions (%).....	105
Figure 5.16: State-wise Faculty Representation (%).....	116
Figure 5.17: Faculty Share by Training Institution (%).....	117
Figure 5.18: Employment Status of Faculty Involved in Training (%).....	119
Figure 5.19: Level of Training by Institute Type (%).....	120
Figure 5.20: Role under Revamped RGSA at Various Level (%).....	120
Figure 5.21: Training Content delivered under Revamped RGSA (%).....	121
Figure 5.22: Stakeholder Involvement for Training at Different Levels (%).....	121
Figure 5.23: Training Methodologies Adopted (%).....	122
Figure 5.24: Quality Measure of Training (%).....	123
Figure 5.25: Training Material Quality Insurance (%).....	123
Figure 5.26: Feedback Mechanism (%).....	124
Figure 5.27: Feedback Incorporation (%).....	124
Figure 5.28: Assessment of Training Module.....	124
Figure 5.29: Approaches of Localising Content (%).....	125
Figure 5.30: Training Content Alignment with SDG (%).....	125
Figure 5.31: Training Needs Assessment (%).....	126
Figure 5.32: TNA Methods (%).....	126
Figure 5.33: TNA Impact (%).....	127

Figure 5.34: Trainer Quality Check (%)	127
Figure 5.35: Technical Support (%)	128
Figure 5.36: ToT Methods (%)	129
Figure 5.37: Recommendations for Improving the Quality of Training (%)	129
Figure 5.38: Training Infrastructure Facility (% Satisfactory)	130
Figure 5.39: Residential Infrastructure Facility (%)	130
Figure 5.40: Designation of PRI Officials.....	132
Figure 5.41: Communication Methods Adopted for RGSA Training (%).....	132
Figure 5.42: Pre-Training Information to the Beneficiaries (%).....	132
Figure 5.43: PoC Establishment & Communication for Trainee Queries (%)	133
Figure 5.44: Stakeholders Informing Training Needs to Resource Centre.....	133
Figure 5.45: Methods Stakeholders Used to Communicate Training Needs (%).....	134
Figure 5.46: Incorporating Feedback Received from Stakeholders	134
Figure 5.47: Adequate Project Based Support for EDIE Scheme (%)	134
Figure 5.48: Perception of Training Infrastructure (% Adequate).....	135
Figure 5.49: Assessment of Residential Infrastructure (% Adequate)	135
Figure 5.50: Methods Used to Communicate Follow-Up Sessions (%).....	136
Figure 5.51: Frequency of Post-Training Follow Up (%)	137
 Figure 7.1: Distribution of Projects.....	 159
Figure 7.2: State-wise Distribution of Total Funding.....	162
Figure 7.3: Distribution of Projects Funding across Themes.....	165
Figure 7.4: Funding for Livelihood Enhancement & Economic Empowerment.....	166

List of Boxes

Box 4.1: Best Practices - The Rajasthan PRC Model for PRI Capacity Building.....	70
Box 5.1: Mapping Institutional Roles in RGSA Training.....	118
Box 6.1: Best Practices: Trainees as Influencers.....	152
Box 9.1: Ensuring Transparency in Research: Process and Implementation.....	190

Executive Summary

Launched in 2018 and revamped in 2022, the *Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan* (RGSA) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme aims at strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) by improving training infrastructure, fostering digital governance, and focusing on the localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs). Approved by the Government of India on April 13, 2022, the Revamped RGSA is aligned with the XV Finance Commission period, running from April 1, 2022, to March 31, 2026, with a substantial allocation of ₹5,911 crore (₹3,700 crore from the Central Government and ₹2,211 crore from State Governments). It has extended its coverage to all States and Union Territories (UTs), including regions where PRIs are absent aiming at governance structures reaching even the most remote rural areas. Till date, the scheme has provided the required financial support to address key gaps in human resources, technology adoption, infrastructure, and governance capacity, enabling *Gram Panchayats* (GPs) to function effectively as the third tier of government. A significant component of RGSA is the promotion of e-Governance through platforms like e-GramSwaraj, aimed at increasing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in local administration.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR) has entrusted the Institute of Rural Management Anand (IRMA) to undertake this mid-term evaluation study to assess the implementation, impact, and challenges of RGSA across different states, with a particular focus on capacity building, institutional strengthening, financial autonomy, and participatory governance. This evaluation aimed to evaluate the outreach and quality of training provided to elected representatives, the adequacy of training methodologies and materials, the condition of infrastructure created under the scheme, and the effectiveness of trainers. Additionally, it examines the impact of RGSA on governance knowledge levels, the quality of projects implemented under its *Economic Development and Income Enhancement* component, and the overall success of the scheme in empowering PRIs for improved rural governance.

This report is organized into *twelve* chapters, providing a structured assessment of the revamped RGSA program and its role in strengthening PRIs. **Chapter 1** introduces the revamped RGSA scheme, explaining the gaps in its earlier framework, the reasons for its revamp, and its key objectives, and the purpose of the evaluation. **Chapter 2** presents a summary of the study's key findings. **Chapter 3** discusses the research design, which combines both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess RGSA's effectiveness across different states. The study was designed to capture diverse governance experiences, covering sixteen states selected in consultation with the MoPR. These include states from across five regions, namely Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu from the Southern region; Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh from the Northern region; Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and West Bengal from the Eastern region; Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan from the Western region; and Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim from the North-Eastern region.

The study's quantitative component involved large-scale surveys conducted across 48 districts across 16 states, covering multiple tiers of PRI governance. The sample included Elected Representatives (ERs), Women Elected Representatives (WERs), Panchayat

Functionaries (PFs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), officials from line departments, and faculty members from training institutes like State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRD) and District Panchayat Resource Centres (DPRC), Block Panchayat Resource Centres (BPRC), and Extension Training Centers (ETC). Each stakeholder responded to structured questionnaires covering topics such as training effectiveness, governance knowledge, financial management, digital governance, and service delivery. The survey was conducted in two blocks per district, with five GPs sampled per block. To complement the survey data, the qualitative component included in-depth interviews. Interviews with officials from the MoPR, state-level administrators, and training institutions from National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR) to ETCs helped capture challenges in policy implementation. Interactions and discussions with elected representatives and Panchayat Functionaries (PFs) during the Scoping Visits provided insights into governance reforms and capacity-building experiences, while interactions with trainers highlighted challenges in delivering training and imparting knowledge. These qualitative insights are presented alongside the quantitative findings to provide a comprehensive understanding of revamped RGSA's impact, with the aim of offering recommendations to improve its effectiveness in strengthening local governance. In addition to the surveys and the qualitative interviews, several data was provided by the MoPR about digital governance initiatives, incentivization of Panchayats and the efforts made in Action Research and Publicity Scheme, under the revamped RGSA framework. Complementing such information with several interactions with the MoPR officials, we also developed detailed chapters (8, 9, and 10) on these elements, providing a thorough capturing of the efforts and presenting recommendations based on what has been achieved and what could be achieved further.

Chapters 4, 5, and 6 document key findings from the evaluation of the revamped RGSA, highlighting its achievements, challenges, and state-wise variations from multi-stakeholder perspective. The study found that while RGSA has made significant progress in expanding training participation, promoting digital governance, and enhancing Panchayat infrastructure, several gaps remain, particularly in outreach, infrastructure readiness, and post-training support. The impact of RGSA varied widely across states, reflecting regional governance structures, administrative efficiency, and local capacity-building efforts.

A key goal of the scheme is to improve the skills and knowledge of ERs through structured capacity-building programs. However, participation in these programs remains uneven. While 53% of ERs attended the mandatory orientation training, refresher training saw a lower completion rate of 41.4%, and only 35.8% attended thematic sessions on various subjects. Trainings focused on LSDG have generally seen stronger participation, particularly those on themes such as *Healthy Village* and *Water Sufficient Village*. Exposure visits—designed to provide hands-on learning—were not used much either. Many representatives report missing training programs due to conflicts with agricultural work, last-minute notifications, or travel difficulties, while women often face additional constraints linked to household responsibilities. Even when training is conducted, the methods used by trainers have limitations. Most sessions rely heavily on lectures, with more engaging techniques such as case studies and role-playing exercises used only occasionally. Post-training support is also often insufficient, leaving many without adequate follow-up assistance. Digital training was introduced to improve accessibility,

but its impact has been limited by poor internet connectivity, particularly at the DPRCs and BPRCs, as well as by low levels of digital literacy and inadequate infrastructure. Many representatives also reported struggling with online learning, finding it less engaging and less effective than in-person sessions.

Another key achievement of the revamped RGSA was the improvement in Panchayat infrastructure in the Panchayats. More than ninety percent of the Panchayats had their own Panchayat Bhawans. While several states had adequate Panchayat infrastructures, many infrastructural challenges persisted. For instance, only 70.1% had internet access, and around 30.5 percent ERs had access to video conferencing tools for digital governance. Basic facilities like washrooms (71%) and meeting halls (73.6%) were available, yet critical governance tools such as Common Service Centers (CSCs) (63.2%) and video conferencing facilities (only 30.5%) remained limited.

Financial sustainability of gram panchayats was another key challenge, with only 34.4% of Panchayats generating adequate Own Source Revenue (OSR). Many lacked mechanisms to collect local taxes or service fees, making them dependent on state and central government grants. While most Panchayats in states like Maharashtra and West Bengal successfully mobilized local revenues, economically weaker states struggled due to institutional constraints. Many Panchayats were unaware of available RGSA funding, limiting their ability to use resources effectively.

It is also worth mentioning that the Innovative Projects and Economic Development & Income Enhancement (ED&IE) components of the revamped RGSA were designed to promote locally grounded, need-based interventions that combine economic empowerment, digital inclusion, sustainability, and community participation. While states such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal have emerged as consistent beneficiaries, uptake overall has been modest, with only 16 states accessing these funds between 2022–24. Funding trends show a rising emphasis on innovative, experimental projects, particularly in digital governance, eco-tourism, and renewable energy, alongside steady investments in livelihood generation, SHG support, and local industries. Success stories from across states, ranging from Smart Health Clinics in West Bengal and eco-tourism in Himachal Pradesh, to dairy-based SHG enterprises in Madhya Pradesh, highlight their transformative potential. However, implementation challenges remain, including moderate awareness among ERs and PRIs, delayed elections, somewhat weaker handholding for proposal development, procurement delays, and modest fund utilization (with completion rates in 2023–24 as low as 7% for innovative projects). Despite these gaps, the evidence shows that these projects contribute meaningfully to national development priorities, from poverty reduction and digital empowerment to climate resilience and women's economic inclusion. Strengthening institutional capacity, simplifying procedures, extending timelines, and enhancing monitoring will be critical for scaling impact and ensuring that these strategic components of RGSA fulfill their promise of empowering PRIs and fostering sustainable, inclusive rural development.

Digital governance efforts also faced barriers that should be addressed to realize the goals of the revamped RGSA scheme. For instance, although platforms like e-GramSwaraj were introduced to improve transparency, awareness remained uneven—only 69.1% of

Scheduled Tribe ERs and 72.2% of ERs with limited education reported knowing how to use digital tools. Even where aware, many ERs struggled with routine navigation of governance portals, planning modules, and financial management systems. While Panchayat Secretaries often act as primary operators, ERs are expected to be familiar with these processes; limited access to devices, electricity, and reliable internet meant that this expectation was not fully met. Only 63.2% of GPs reported the presence of a CSC, which not only hindered last-mile access but also restricted both citizens and elected representatives from accessing online services, applying for schemes, or monitoring GPDPs, further deepening the digital divide in local governance. Moreover, the existing digital infrastructure in Gram Panchayats was often outdated, with computers operating at limited functional capacities, peripherals like printers and scanners either outdated or missing, and inconsistent technical support for troubleshooting. Even when Panchayats were formally “digitally onboarded,” weak infrastructure meant that platforms were under-utilized.

Capacity constraints also emerged as a barrier. Many ERs and PFs lacked systematic digital training, relying instead on informal peer support or one-time workshops. Without continuous micro-learning or embedded digital fellows, adoption remained poor. This contributed to low usage of advanced tools like GeM procurement, AuditOnline, or geo-spatial platforms, despite their availability. Linguistic barriers also played a role; while e-GramSwaraj has recently been integrated with BHASHINI for multilingual access, many ERs in tribal and remote regions still may find digital services intimidating due to lack of localized, visual, and hands-on training. These challenges may risk making digital governance appear as a compliance exercise rather than an empowering mechanism for grassroots accountability. Unless these bottlenecks are addressed, the promise of platforms in improving transparency, efficiency, and citizen trust will remain only partially realized. In light of these findings, this report makes the following recommendations (elaborated upon in **Chapter 10**): upgrading Panchayat computer systems and peripherals, expanding CSC coverage, strengthening internet and power connectivity, embedding continuous training through TMP and micro-modules, and deploying regional implementation cadres or Panchayat Digital Fellows for last-mile support. These investments are essential to move beyond symbolic adoption and ensure that digital governance truly strengthens the transparency, accountability, and inclusiveness of PRIs.

A critical obstacle for training effectiveness was the limited coordination between training institutions. SIRDs, RIRDs, DPRCs, and BPRCs were often found to operate independently, without sufficient collaboration. Trainers at the district and block levels faced salary delays and job insecurity, affecting their motivation and commitment. The revamped RGSA also aims to ensure that the elected representatives are aware about governance practices and have decision-making power and authority. However, despite increased women’s participation in Panchayati Raj, decision-making independence among WERs remained limited. Many WERs reported that their governance roles were influenced by family members or local political actors, particularly in tribal communities. Leadership training programmes lacked gender-sensitive mentoring and networking opportunities, making it harder for women to take independent decisions. Practical socioeconomic barriers were also persistent among WERs, such as lack of childcare

facilities which often discouraged their participation in training and governance activities.

Many Panchayats had limited awareness of funding opportunities under the revamped RGSA, which hindered their ability to initiate development projects. While governance and technology-driven initiatives received some support, capacity-building efforts remained underutilized due to a lack of information among stakeholders. Additionally, there was no standardized system to track and evaluate the success of these projects, making it difficult to identify best practices and scale up effective interventions.

A key initiative of the revamped RGSA is the Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP) scheme, implemented through the National Panchayat Awards (NPA), which has become a significant driver of grassroots governance reform (discussed in detail in **Chapter 8**). By rewarding high-performing Panchayats with substantial financial incentives (now up to ₹1 crore for Gram Panchayats, ₹2 crore for Block Panchayats, and ₹5 crore for District Panchayats) the scheme has moved beyond symbolic recognition to directly enabling developmental impact. In 2023, its framework was realigned with nine Localized SDG themes, ensuring that Panchayat performance is measured against national and global development priorities. Participation in the IoP scheme has surged from around 20,000 Panchayats in 2022 to more than 2.41 lakh in 2023, demonstrating both awareness and credibility. The fully digitized award process enhances transparency, while dissemination of best practices fosters peer learning and replication. As India approaches 2030, continuation of IoP beyond 2025–26 is important to sustain momentum, deepen accountability, and ensure that Panchayats remain at the heart of localizing the SDGs.

The MoPR has also taken initiatives within the RGSA to acknowledge evidence-making and publicity through the Action Research & Publicity (AR&P) Scheme, which combines strategic communication with rigorous policy research. On the publicity side, the Ministry has moved beyond conventional promotion to adopt innovative, multimodal strategies, from community radio and folk theatre to social media campaigns and OTT films like *Phulera Ka Panchayati Raj*, to raise awareness, foster behavioural change, and strengthen citizen participation in Panchayati Raj. Complementing this, the Action Research & Research Studies component commissions evidence-based studies on decentralisation, financial viability, Gram Sabha participation, and other critical themes, providing timely inputs for policy reform and course correction. By bringing together outreach and research, the scheme creates a feedback loop where evidence informs communication and communication generates new insights for policy. Its continuation, with enhanced resources, is significant to deepen democratic decentralisation and support responsive governance across India's 2.69 lakh Panchayats (discussed in detail in **Chapter 9**).

Overall, the revamped RGSA has strengthened PRIs through capacity-building and training initiatives, improved both digital and physical infrastructure at the Panchayats, and raised awareness of, and promoted adoption of, the LSDGs. However, its impact was somewhat uneven due to gaps in training participation, weak infrastructure, financial dependency, and digital governance challenges. Addressing these issues will require more inclusive training approaches, better revenue generation strategies, stronger coordination between institutions, and improved digital governance support to ensure that Panchayats can function effectively as self-reliant grassroots institutions. Based on

these findings, we provide the following broad recommendations, which are detailed and specifically presented in **Chapter 11**.

Major Recommendations

1. Training Attendance and Outreach

Drawing from both field findings and the Ministry's own deliberations in multiple interactions, there is a case for strengthening training systems under RGSA. Thus, we emphasize the need for predictable training schedules, better monitoring mechanisms, and incentives to improve outreach, especially for women and marginalized ERs. Building on those directions, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Publish annual training calendars with advance notifications, reminders, and public dashboards for transparency.
- Introduce QR/biometric attendance systems and link sitting fees/honoraria to verified participation.
- Expand localized access through BPRCs, PLCs, and Mobile Training Units (MTU); align training with cropping cycles.
- Provide travel stipends, childcare support, and safe accommodation to improve participation of women and marginalized ERs.
- Make refresher trainings dynamic and adaptive (retain 50–60% essentials, add 30–40% new content, use interactive formats).

2. Improving Knowledge of ERs and WERs

- Extend orientation training to five days for first-time ERs; ensure simple, practical, local-language delivery.
- Institutionalize governance-focused refresher modules, mentoring, and peer-led support.
- Launch gender-sensitive leadership programs for WERs, leveraging SHGs/Mahila Mandals and legal awareness campaigns.
- Embed digital literacy programs at GP level, prioritizing marginalized and less-educated representatives.

3. To Enhance Training Effectiveness Through Interactive Learning

- Shift from lecture-based methods to case studies, role-playing, and real-world problem-solving exercises.
- Introduce WhatsApp-based microlearning modules and video demonstrations for flexible learning.
- Establish post-training mentorship programs, pairing experienced ERs with newly elected representatives.

4. Trainer Quality and Performance

- Shift from lecture-heavy to participatory pedagogy (role plays, case studies, simulations).
- Provide trainers with digital literacy, refresher ToTs, and continuous professional development.
- Institutionalize a Trainer Assessment & Mentorship Program, with clear recruitment and career pathways.

- Ensure timely, adequate remuneration and reduce administrative burdens by assigning logistics staff.
- Establish trainer networks and peer-learning platforms; expand NIRD&PR's ToT capacity in SDG/governance themes.

5. Training Infrastructure (BPRCs/PLCs)

- Launch a dedicated sub-scheme for BPRCs as block-level hubs for training, digital literacy, and handholding.
- Invest more in ICT-enabled classrooms, video conferencing, and upgraded Panchayat computers.
- Ensure inclusive facilities (safe hostels, child-friendly spaces, amenities for women/marginalized trainees).
- Introduce performance-based incentives for BPRCs and mandate annual digital infrastructure audits.

6. Digital Governance

- Bridge state-level gaps with dedicated facilitation teams, upgraded hardware, solar backups, and vernacular Information, Education and Communication (IEC).
- Deploy Panchayat Digital Fellows for last-mile support; promote offline functionalities and microlearning.
- Use Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) data for targeting: performance-linked grants for high performers, intensive mentoring for laggards.
- Institutionalize citizen-facing tools: Participatory Audit Days, Citizen Charters, GP-level awareness drives, and digital feedback modules.
- Ensure sustainability through dedicated IT budgets, convergence with BharatNet/Digital India, and regular e-governance training.

7. Gram Panchayat Infrastructure

- Adopt need-based funding models with cost-adjusted allocations for hilly/NE states.
- Prioritize internet connectivity, sanitation, training halls, and inclusive amenities (e.g., baby feeding corners).
- Operationalize Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs) with clear SOPs; deploy modular kiosks in remote areas.

8. Innovation, Financial Sustainability, and Revenue Mobilization (OSR)

- Conduct awareness campaigns on RGSA innovation funds and simplify approval processes.
- Document and disseminate OSR success stories, with exposure visits to high-performing Panchayats.
- Embed digital skills training for project management and revenue tracking.
- Encourage diversified revenue streams (markets, tourism, user fees) and advocate for relaxation of restrictive tax policies.
- Train Panchayat functionaries in financial management and budgeting to enhance local revenue streams.

9. Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP/National Panchayat Awards)

- Further increase award amounts and introduce tiered disbursements linked to milestones
- Expand categories to include individual recognitions (e.g., Sarpanch awards), training performance, and PESA Panchayats.
- Institutionalize State Panchayat Awards for wider recognition.
- Couple recognition with capacity building: mentorship, Performance Clinics, and exposure visits.
- Integrate citizen feedback into evaluation; conduct post-award impact studies.
- Develop a Digital Knowledge Hub to share awardee innovations and best practices nationally.

10. Action Research & Publicity (AR&P)

- Earmark a dedicated budget for IEC–research linkages to sustain outreach and evidence cycles.
- Scale up community media (radio, folk, local youth correspondents) alongside digital platforms.
- Establish a Panchayat Knowledge Hub consolidating IEC materials, case studies, and research outputs.
- Move to impact-based monitoring, tracking participation, behavior change, and platform uptake.
- Build long-term partnerships with academia and media institutions for research and culturally resonant campaigns.

11. Overall Governance and Devolution

- Empower Panchayats with Funds, Functions, Functionaries, and Flexibility, ensuring staff accountability to PRIs.
- Institutionalize performance-based incentives and sectoral rewards for high-performing Panchayats.
- Address PFMS challenges through a detailed diagnostic study and post-training handholding for users.

A Case for Extension of Revamped RGSA

Finally, **Chapter 12** examines the overall impact of the revamped RGSA and assesses the need for its continuation beyond March 2026. The Revamped RGSA has strengthened local governance by supporting India's PRIs. With 2.69 lakh Panchayats and 31.88 lakh elected representatives, including 45.6% women, the program has provided structured training and resources for effective functioning. *A key achievement is its focus on capacity-building, enabling over 2.47 lakh Gram Panchayats to adopt participatory planning through the Gram Panchayat Development Plan*, aligning local priorities with broader goals like localisation of SDGs. Financial self-reliance has improved as training in tax collection, property mapping, and digital financial management has helped states like Kerala and Karnataka boost revenue. Additionally, technology adoption has enhanced governance, with over 2.47 lakh Panchayats using digital platforms like e-GramSwaraj and AuditOnline for real-time monitoring of development projects.

Despite these advancements and achievements, a few challenges remain that could be addressed by extending the revamped RGSA beyond its current tenure. Limited devolution of powers continues to restrict PRIs, with only 10 states fully implementing the transfer of funds, functions, and functionaries (3Fs) as mandated by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. RGSA has encouraged states like Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh to expand Panchayat responsibilities and has strengthened Gram Sabhas in tribal areas under the PESA Act. Many elected representatives, coming from diverse backgrounds, may need continuous training to navigate governance effectively. Our findings suggest that revamped RGSA has been *instrumental* in building their confidence and decision-making skills and it also acknowledges that learning is an ongoing process. The gains made so far highlight the importance of the sustained support. *Therefore, extending the revamped RGSA beyond its current tenure for another phase —guided by our actionable recommendations—would ensure that the PRIs continue to evolve as effective, self-reliant institutions, contributing to rural development in a meaningful way.*

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) are the cornerstone of local self-governance in India, established under the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. These institutions have been entrusted with the responsibility of driving rural development by addressing critical issues such as poverty, public health, nutrition, education, gender equality, sanitation, drinking water, and livelihood generation. Effective leadership and governance at the Panchayat level are pivotal for realizing these objectives and achieving the SDGs in the 2030 Agenda.

Historically, local governance in India faced numerous challenges, including limited representation and inadequate resource allocation. The introduction of PRIs through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment marked a pivotal shift towards decentralized governance, aiming to empower local communities and enhance their participation in decision-making.

While the 73rd Amendment marked a major step toward decentralized governance, PRIs face significant challenges. The devolution of powers and resources remains inconsistent across states, with many Panchayats struggling with limited financial autonomy. Additionally, capacity building and governance training for elected representatives have been inadequate in many regions, which hampers their ability to deliver on their mandates effectively.

Most of the current challenges include political interference that undermines the autonomy of PRIs, lack of financial independence, which limits their operational capabilities, and insufficient training programs that fail to equip elected representatives with the necessary skills for effective governance. India has approximately 2.69 lakh Panchayats and 31.88 lakh Elected Representatives (ERs), of whom about 45.6% are women. However, the capacity of these institutions to deliver on their mandate varies across states, primarily due to the inconsistent devolution of the 3Fs—funds, functions, and functionaries. States have been slow to fully empower Panchayats, leading to governance and service delivery gaps. Additionally, the implementation of the Panchayat Extension to Scheduled Areas (PESA) Act of 1996, intended to strengthen self-governance in Scheduled Areas, has seen limited success due to insufficient legal amendments by states and inadequate efforts to empower Gram Sabhas. Capacity building is essential not only for enhancing governance capabilities but also for fostering community engagement and ensuring that local needs are met effectively. Well-trained representatives can better advocate for their constituents, leading to improved service delivery and greater public trust in local governance.

In response to these ongoing challenges, various schemes like the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), launched in 2018, have been introduced to build the capacity of PRIs and strengthen their governance capabilities. The Revamped RGSA, launched in 2022, is part of the government's continuous efforts to enhance the role of PRIs in rural development and align their objectives with the SDGs.

1.2 Challenges Faced by PRIs

Despite their crucial role in grassroots governance, PRIs face several challenges that limit their effectiveness in delivering local development outcomes and achieving the SDGs. While the 73rd Constitutional Amendment empowered PRIs by devolving certain powers, the implementation of these powers has been inconsistent across states, leading to a range of governance and operational issues. Some critical challenges PRIs face includes difficulties in raising their own source revenues (OSRs), limited access to capacity-building resources, and delays in fund allocations from state governments.

1.2.1 Difficulties in Raising OSR

One of the most significant challenges for PRIs is their limited ability to generate their own revenue. PRIs largely depend on funds from state and central governments, which restricts their financial autonomy and flexibility in addressing local needs. While Panchayats have the power to levy taxes on property, water, and markets, in reality, they often face resistance from local communities in implementing these taxes. Moreover, many Panchayats lack the technical capacity and systems to collect and manage these revenues efficiently. This heavy reliance on external funds means that Panchayats are frequently constrained in carrying out development projects and improving infrastructure in their jurisdictions.

Without sufficient OSRs, Panchayats struggle to maintain essential public services, let alone implement larger projects that align with the SDGs, such as ensuring clean water and sanitation, improving health infrastructure, or promoting sustainable agriculture.

1.2.2 Limited Access to Capacity-Building Resources

While PRIs are responsible for implementing a wide range of developmental schemes, the capacity of elected representatives and Panchayat staff to manage these responsibilities remains limited. Many elected representatives, especially in rural and remote areas, lack formal education or previous experience in governance. As a result, they often face challenges in decision-making, financial management, and project implementation.

Although the RGSA and other initiatives provide training to improve the governance capacities of PRIs, the availability of these resources is often uneven across states. Many Panchayats have limited access to high-quality training modules, and the frequency of capacity-building workshops is insufficient to meet local governance's diverse and evolving needs. Without the necessary skills and knowledge, PRIs are ill-equipped to implement complex development programs and manage resources effectively, directly impacting their ability to achieve the SDGs.

1.2.3 Delays in Fund Allocations from State Governments

Timely access to financial resources is critical for PRIs to function effectively. However, there are often significant delays in the transfer of funds from state governments to Panchayats. These delays can be due to bureaucratic inefficiencies, lack of coordination between state and local bodies, or delays in approving Panchayat budgets. When funds are not disbursed on time, Panchayats are unable to execute development projects within their scheduled timeframes, leading to stalled infrastructure projects, unmet community needs, and underutilization of allocated funds.

In addition to fund disbursement delays, the lack of transparency in the flow of funds from higher levels of government also poses challenges. Panchayats often find it difficult to track the status of funds, which leads to uncertainties in planning and resource allocation. As a result, projects aimed at improving education, healthcare, water supply, and sanitation—critical areas linked to the SDGs—face severe setbacks, limiting the overall development of rural areas.

1.2.4 Impact on Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

These challenges collectively hinder the ability of PRIs to plan and execute development initiatives aligned with the SDGs effectively. Financial constraints due to limited OSRs prevent Panchayats from addressing urgent local needs. Inadequate capacity-building resources mean PRIs often cannot design and implement solutions to complex governance problems. Finally, delays in fund allocation disrupt the flow of resources necessary to achieve timely outcomes in areas such as health, education, infrastructure, and environmental sustainability.

Given their role as the closest tier of governance to rural communities, PRIs must be strengthened to drive the achievement of the SDGs. Overcoming these challenges requires coordinated efforts to empower PRIs with financial autonomy, capacity-building opportunities, and a streamlined system for timely resource allocation.

1.3 The Revamped RGSA: Emergence and Evolution

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme, “*Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)*”, initially introduced in 2018, sought to build on the foundation laid by its predecessor, the *Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan* (RGPSA, 2013-2018). The scheme was designed to strengthen the institutional capabilities of PRIs and enhance their governance capacities, particularly in achieving the SDGs. Based on state submissions of utilization certificates, the demand-driven model demonstrated the need for a more structured approach to capacity building.

In 2022, the RGSA was revamped to address the emerging challenges of rural governance and to make its interventions more effective. The revamped RGSA, launched in FY 2022-23, represents a significant investment in rural governance with a total budget of ₹5911 crore (₹3700 crore from the central government and ₹2211 crore from State governments). A key goal is strengthening PRIs as the third tier of government, enabling them to effectively localize the SDGs through participatory governance and thematic planning.

The RGSA's design incorporates recommendations from the Capacity Building Commission, focusing on modernizing training infrastructure, improving stakeholder coordination, and adopting a more practical approach to capacity building. The program now employs an immersive and results-oriented strategy, equipping elected representatives, PRI functionaries, and other stakeholders with the skills necessary for effective grassroots leadership. This involves comprehensive training programs delivered through a network of state-level training institutes, including State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs), Extension Training Centers (ETCs), District Panchayat

Resource Centers (DPRCs), and Block Panchayat Resource Centers (BPRCs). These training programs cover a wide range of topics, including basic orientation, refresher courses, thematic sessions focusing on the nine key thematic areas derived from the 17 SDGs, GPDP training, and specialized training modules tailored to specific needs. The overarching aim is to empower elected representatives with the knowledge and skills to effectively manage Panchayat functions.

The revamped RGSA significantly leverages e-governance to enhance transparency, accountability, and service delivery within PRIs. This includes a "whole-of-government" approach fostering collaboration between central and state entities and PRIs for effective SDG localization. The initiative promotes inclusive governance, resource convergence, and increased Panchayat revenue generation, aiming for a robust and sustainable rural development framework.

Central to this is e-GramSwaraj, a unified digital platform streamlining Panchayat administration. It facilitates planning, monitoring, and management of local governance, including GPDP creation, budget allocation, expenditure tracking, and real-time progress reporting. Integrated financial accounting ensures accountability and reduces the risk of mismanagement.

Beyond e-GramSwaraj, the RGSA integrates other digital tools supporting various administrative functions. These include platforms for property tax collection, asset management (with geo-tagging for improved resource allocation), and citizen service delivery. AuditOnline further strengthens financial integrity through online audits. This comprehensive digital ecosystem enhances operational efficiency and PRI capacity to achieve SDGs, particularly those related to infrastructure, public services, and accountability.

1.4 Objectives of the Revamped RGSA

The key objectives of the Revamped RGSA are as follows:

- a) Develop governance capabilities of PRIs to deliver on the SDGs.
- b) Focus on developing the capacity of elected representatives of PRIs for leadership roles to enable the Gram Panchayats to function effectively as the third tier of Government.
- c) Enhance capabilities of Panchayats for inclusive local governance with a focus on optimum utilization of available resources and convergence with other schemes to address the issues of national importance.
- d) Enhance the capabilities of Panchayats to raise their source of revenue.
- e) Strengthen Gram Sabhas to function effectively as the primary forum for people's participation in the Panchayat system.
- f) Promote devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats according to the spirit of the Constitution and PESA Act 1996.
- g) Strengthen institutions for capacity enhancement of PRIs at different levels; collaborate with other Departments & stakeholders for optimal use of available training infrastructure to ensure quality standards in infrastructure facilities, human resources, and outcome-based training.

- h) Collaboration with Academic Institute/ Institute of Excellence to support capacity building and handholding for PRIs.
- i) Promote e-governance and other technology-driven solutions to enable good governance in Panchayat administrative efficiency and improved service delivery with transparency and accountability.
- j) Recognize and incentivize the performance of PRIs towards attaining SDGs.
- k) Enhance capabilities of Panchayats through action research and publicity to reach out to multiple and diverse target groups and take up research studies related to PRIs for assessments and informed policy decisions.
- l) Exchange of information/ideas through international organizations and exchange programs in local governance.

1.5 Capacity Building Focus

Capacity-building programs play a critical role in enhancing the effectiveness of PRIs by equipping ERs and functionaries with the skills necessary to perform their duties effectively. In rural governance, where many ERs lack formal education or prior experience in administrative roles, these training programs are indispensable for improving governance practices, financial management, transparency, and overall service delivery.

1.5.1 Improving Governance Practices

The governance responsibilities of ERs encompass a wide range of functions, including decision-making, planning, implementation of development schemes, and dispute resolution. Without adequate training, many ERs struggle to navigate the complexities of these roles. Capacity-building programs provide them with practical knowledge and skills, helping them understand government procedures, laws, and policies that guide Panchayat administration. These programs also foster leadership skills, empowering ERs to address local issues and ensure participatory governance through effective Gram Sabha meetings.

By improving governance practices at the grassroots level, capacity-building programs ensure that PRIs are better equipped to meet the needs of their communities, particularly in areas such as public health, education, water supply, and sanitation. These improvements directly contribute to rural development and the achievement of the SDGs.

1.5.2 Enhancing Financial Management and Resource Mobilization

One major challenge PRIs face is the efficient management of financial resources. Elected representatives are tasked with managing funds allocated by central and state governments and raising their OSR. However, many lack the technical skills required for budget preparation, financial accounting, and resource mobilization. This can lead to underutilization of available funds, misallocation of resources, and delayed implementation of development projects.

Capacity-building programs focus on training ERs and Panchayat functionaries in financial management practices. This includes budget planning, accounting, auditing, and revenue generation strategies workshops. By strengthening the financial management skills of ERs, these programs enable Panchayats to utilize their financial resources more

effectively and ensure greater accountability. This, in turn, promotes transparency in the allocation and use of funds, which is crucial for maintaining public trust and ensuring good governance at the local level.

1.5.3 Promoting Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are foundational principles of effective governance, especially at the grassroots level. Without proper oversight mechanisms and accountability measures, PRIs may fall prey to inefficiencies, corruption, and mismanagement of public resources. Capacity-building programs address this by training ERs and Panchayat staff in implementing transparent processes for decision-making, financial transactions, and project execution.

The use of e-governance platforms, which is increasingly promoted under the Revamped RGSA, also plays a significant role in enhancing transparency. Capacity-building programs familiarize ERs with digital tools like e-GramSwaraj, which allow them to track Panchayat finances, monitor the implementation of schemes, and provide real-time updates to the public. By leveraging technology and promoting transparent governance practices, these programs reduce corruption and ensure that resources are used efficiently for the benefit of the community.

1.5.4 Addressing Governance Deficits in Rural Areas

Many rural areas face significant governance deficits, which can be attributed to the lack of capacity among elected leaders and Panchayat functionaries. These deficits manifest in delayed project implementation, inefficient public service delivery, and limited citizen participation in governance. Capacity-building programs help bridge these gaps by equipping local leaders with the knowledge and tools they need to govern effectively.

For instance, training programs focused on participatory planning enable ERs to actively involve citizens in formulating GPDPs. This participatory approach not only improves the relevance of development projects but also increases community ownership and accountability, leading to more successful outcomes. Additionally, capacity-building initiatives focusing on key sectors such as agriculture, health, and education allow ERs to design and implement sector-specific interventions aligning with local priorities and national development goals.

1.5.5 Link to the Sustainable Development Goals

Capacity-building programs are directly linked to the achievement of the SDGs at the local level. By strengthening the governance capacities of ERs, these programs enable PRIs to contribute more effectively to the fulfilment of SDG targets such as poverty reduction, clean water and sanitation, quality education, and gender equality. For instance, well-trained ERs are better equipped to plan and implement projects that improve water management, sanitation facilities, and access to healthcare—all of which are critical for meeting SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation) and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being).

Moreover, capacity building also empowers women representatives, promoting gender equality (SDG 5) and ensuring that the needs of marginalized communities are addressed in local governance. As PRIs play a pivotal role in localizing the SDGs, capacity-building

programs are essential for ensuring that elected representatives and Panchayat staff can effectively contribute to these global goals.

1.6 Need for the Mid-Term Evaluation

The mid-term evaluation is essential for assessing the Revamped RGSA's progress and identifying areas that need improvement. Despite the investments made in building capacities, improving infrastructure, and training personnel, challenges remain in areas such as generating OSR and ensuring convergence with other schemes. Regular monitoring and progress reports are necessary to stay updated on implementation status across states and address any gaps.

Capacity-building programs are at the RGSA's core and aim to enhance the governance capabilities of ERs and PFs. Capacity-building and Training Effectiveness metrics can assess these programs' effectiveness in improving local leaders' skills and knowledge.

Key Indicators:

- Number of training sessions conducted and the percentage of ERs and Panchayat staff who attended.
- Participant feedback on training quality, relevance, and applicability.
- Improvements in ERs' and functionaries' knowledge of governance, financial management, and technology (e.g., e-GramSwaraj usage).
- Changes in governance practices following training, such as better planning, budgeting, and decision-making.

Convergence among different schemes is critical for fostering good governance, pooling resources, transferring technologies, and enhancing productivity. Best practices, such as the Grama Sachivalayam system, can be studied and replicated in other regions for better governance. Drawing from international and national literature, various indicators and evaluation methodologies, such as the Rural Transformation Index, have been employed to assess village-level development. A similar approach could be used to monitor and evaluate the progress of the RGSA scheme.

This study seeks to evaluate the effectiveness of RGSA in multiple dimensions, including the implementation of capacity-building initiatives, the use of technology, the formulation of GPDPs, and the functioning of Gram Sabhas. The study also explores collaborations with institutions of excellence and assesses the challenges and successes in achieving the scheme's objectives.

1.7 Grama Sachivalayam in Andhra Pradesh

Grama Sachivalayam, also known as a Village Secretariat, is a local governance initiative launched in Andhra Pradesh on October 2, 2019. Its primary goal is to decentralize administration by consolidating various government departments' services and welfare programs in one accessible location. This initiative marks a significant step forward in local governance reform. Andhra Pradesh established 3,842 ward secretariats and 11,162 village secretariats under this program, generating over 4 lakh employment opportunities across the state.

A vital aspect of this initiative is the introduction of ‘Navaratnalu,’ a set of nine welfare schemes that align with the SDGs and aim to improve the living standards of the people of Andhra Pradesh. To achieve these goals, the Government of Andhra Pradesh strengthened Gram Panchayats and Wards by positioning functional assistants in Village/Ward Secretariats. The initiative was inaugurated on Gandhi Jayanti, in alignment with Mahatma Gandhi’s vision of *Grama Swarajya*, where villages are self-sufficient and autonomous.

To ensure effective delivery of services, the government also deployed village and ward volunteers to provide doorstep services to all eligible households. The system seeks to ensure timely and transparent delivery of government programs and schemes to all citizens, thereby transforming rural governance in the state. Currently, 835 Grama Sachivalayams have been established with the following objectives:

- a) To provide various Government/other services at the doorsteps of Citizens through a single window system and ensure delivery of *Navaratnalu*.
- b) Enable convergence of all line departments that provide services at the Village level.
- c) Preparation and timely implementation of village plans.
- d) Mapping the field-level functionaries with clearly specified roles, making them accountable to Gram Panchayats/Gram Sabha with a well-defined Citizen Charter.
- e) Integrate the institution of village volunteers with the village secretariat system, enabling them to provide citizen services efficiently.

In addition to these objectives, the system promotes significant changes in service delivery, transparency, accountability, poverty alleviation, empowerment of local communities, and digital transformation. International examples of successful decentralized governance, such as participatory budgeting in Brazil or e-governance initiatives in Estonia, can provide valuable lessons that can inform India’s approach to enhancing local governance through RGSA.

1.8 Evaluation Objectives

The mid-term evaluation of the Revamped RGSA aims to assess the scheme’s progress and impact, especially regarding capacity-building initiatives and infrastructure development. Now in its second year, the scheme requires an evaluation to ensure its objectives are met efficiently and inclusively. Additionally, this evaluation will focus on identifying challenges and suggesting improvements to make the scheme more responsive to the needs of its beneficiaries.

Additionally, the MoPR has expressed interest in studying the concept, functioning, and impact of the Grama Sachivalayam system in Andhra Pradesh. A detailed evaluation could provide insights into good practices, challenges, and the potential for replicating successful elements of the system in other states.

This evaluation study has the following objectives:

- a) Identifying the outreach of the training programs conducted through the RGSA Scheme for all stakeholders of PRIs with particular stress on ERs amongst SC, ST

categories, Women Elected Representatives (WERs), and also those from marginalized communities.

- b) Assessment of quality of training/methodology provided to the ERs, WERs, Panchayat functionaries, facilitators, Master Trainers, and other related stakeholders.
- c) Assessing the knowledge levels of ERs
- d) Assessment of quality of infrastructures, i.e., Panchayat Bhawan, SPRC, DPRCs, and PLCs created under the Scheme.
- e) Assessment of Training Modules, Methodology followed by Training Need Assessment, and Training Materials prepared by the States for imparting training to Panchayat stakeholders.
- f) Assessment of quality of trainers at State/District/Block level
- g) Assessment of quality of projects implemented under the Economic Development and Support for Innovation component in the RGSA scheme.
- h) Overall impact assessment of the RGSA scheme.
- i) Detailed study of the Grama Sachivalayam system in Andhra Pradesh

1.9 Report Structure and Preview

The outcome of the evaluation study is organized into two reports, each focusing on different but complementary aspects of the study: the Revamped RGSA, and the Grama Sachivalayam initiative.

Report-A of the evaluation study offers a comprehensive assessment of the revamped RGSA scheme. It begins with an introduction outlining the scheme's background, significance, and objectives, followed by a summary of key findings in **Chapter 2**, highlighting its impact on local governance and capacity building. **Chapter 3** details the research design, including methodology, data collection, and analytical techniques. **Chapter 4** provides an in-depth discussion of the findings, supported by both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Survey results from other stakeholders are presented in **Chapter 5**, while **Chapter 6** shares qualitative insights from interviews with key stakeholders and field observations on the RGSA framework. **Chapter 7** evaluates projects under the Innovative Projects and Economic Development & Income Enhancement components. **Chapter 8** assesses the Incentivization of Panchayats scheme, launched to reward high-performing PRIs. **Chapter 9** reviews the Action Research & Publicity (AR&P) Scheme, restructured in 2022 by merging Media & Publicity with Action Research & Research Studies to jointly support information dissemination and evidence-based policymaking. **Chapter 10** discusses digital governance initiatives under the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project, which have significantly enhanced rural digital governance. **Chapter 11** summarizes survey insights and offers recommendations for policymakers, local governments, and development practitioners. Finally, **Chapter 12** examines the overall impact of the revamped RGSA and the case for its continuation beyond March 2026.

Report-B, submitted separately, focuses on the Grama Sachivalayam system in Andhra Pradesh, an innovative governance reform aimed at decentralizing service delivery at the village level.

Chapter 2: Summary of the Findings

This chapter provides a summary of key findings from our quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews with stakeholders. It highlights patterns in training participation, communication methods, training quality, and governance knowledge among ERs and PFs. A more detailed analysis and discussion of these findings are presented in **Chapter 4**.

2.1 Training Attendance and Barriers

Training participation among ERs showed considerable variation. Orientation training had a participation rate of 52.8%, while GPDP training saw 57.5% attendance. However, refresher training was lower at 41.4%, and thematic training saw only 35.8% participation. The lowest engagement was observed in exposure visits, with just 12.3% of ERs attending. Panchayat functionaries followed a similar trend, with 43.6% attending orientation training and 66.3% participating in GPDP training. Despite moderate attendance, several barriers limited participation. Time constraints were a primary concern, with many ERs juggling governance responsibilities alongside household and livelihood work. Travel posed another challenge, especially for those in remote areas where transport options were limited. Many faculty trainers highlighted that in some districts, ERs had to travel 60-70 km for training, making attendance difficult. Additionally, last-minute notifications often left little time for ERs to adjust their schedules.

State-level variations in training participation were stark. In West Bengal and Maharashtra, over 90% of ERs attended at least one training, reflecting strong outreach efforts. In contrast, Haryana (21.7%) and Karnataka (24.7%) had some of the lowest participation rates. Among social groups, OBCs had the highest training attendance (31.5%), followed by Scheduled Tribes (28.6%), while Scheduled Castes (SCs) lagged at 17.7%.

2.2 Training Communication

The modes of communication about training varied widely across states. 57.4% of ERs reported receiving information through official orders, making it the most common channel. WhatsApp was also widely used, with 56.7% relying on it, while 41.7% were contacted via phone calls. Less than 10% reported learning about training through public notices or in-person visits. West Bengal (98.9%) and Sikkim (97.4%) had the highest reliance on official orders, whereas Chhattisgarh (88.0%) and Tamil Nadu (86.3%) relied heavily on WhatsApp. Email communication was relatively limited, with Kerala leading in email use at 77.9%. In some states, informal communication channels were dominant. A district official in Tamil Nadu described how they used WhatsApp groups for real-time updates, complementing formal office orders. Stakeholders expressed concerns that training schedules were often communicated at the last minute, limiting ERs' ability to plan. In response, some officials suggested structured reminders—email notifications 15 days before training, followed by subsequent reminders 10 days and 7 days prior—to improve participation.

2.3 Assessment of Quality of Training/Methodology

Lecture-based training was the most widely used method, reported by 83.6% of ERs and 84.4% of Panchayat functionaries. Faculty trainers relied on lectures even more, with 95% using this approach. However, interactive methods such as case studies (48.4% for ERs, 51.2% for PFs) and video demonstrations (65%) were also incorporated in some states. Simulations and role-plays were less commonly used, with only 33.9% of ERs and 31.3% of PFs engaging in them. Some states, like West Bengal and Maharashtra, showed strong adoption of interactive methods, with nearly 100% of trainees participating in case studies and video-based learning. In contrast, states like Uttar Pradesh and Haryana relied predominantly on lectures, with minimal use of experiential learning techniques. Field visits were rare, with only 29.2% of ERs and 27% of PFs participating in on-ground exposure programs. Experience-sharing, which enables participants to learn from real-life governance examples, was also underutilized, with only 20.5% of ERs and 22.7% of PFs engaging in such sessions.

On content, training on governance-related themes such as Healthy Village (87.5% for ERs, 80.5% for PFs), Water-Sufficient Village (87.8%, 77.7%), and Clean & Green Village (82.2%, 83.2%) saw the highest participation. However, knowledge-focused themes like Socially Secure Village (76.6%, 69.6%) and Good Governance (75.3%, 64.1%) had lower engagement. Digital literacy training was also unevenly distributed. 91.2% of ERs and 88.4% of PFs received training on the e-Gramswaraj portal, but only 29.5% of ERs learned about PFMS (Public Financial Management System), a key digital tool. In contrast, 63.1% of PFs received PFMS training, reflecting their more direct involvement in financial management.

2.4 Access and Quality of Training Infrastructure

The RGSA training framework also emphasizes audiovisual and digital teaching tools to enhance the learning experience for ERs and Panchayat functionaries. We found that most training centers were equipped with basic audiovisual tools, but access to advanced digital infrastructure varied significantly. LCD projectors were the most used technology, with 80.8% of ERs and 84.43% of PFs reporting their use. Whiteboards were also widely available in 77.9% of ER sessions and 75.61% of PF sessions. However, advanced digital tools like video conferencing and computers for participants were significantly less accessible. Only 30.47% of ERs and 54.33% of PFs had access to video conferencing tools, while just 15.07% of ERs and 36.33% of PFs had access to computers for hands-on digital training. PFs generally had better access to digital tools compared to ERs, particularly video conferencing setups (54.33% for PFs vs. 30.47% for ERs) and computers (36.33% for PFs vs. 15.07% for ERs). This reflects their higher technical role expectations in handling digital governance tools.

We also gathered feedback from ERs, PFs, Faculty, and Officials to assess the adequacy of training facilities across states. Across all parameters, training centers were rated moderately satisfactory, with most average scores ranging between 4.0 and 4.3 (out of 5). The highest-rated aspects were classroom capacity (4.26), audiovisual tools (4.32), and lighting/ventilation (4.27), indicating that basic teaching environments were largely adequate. However, computer & internet access (4.23) and air conditioning in classrooms (3.99) scored slightly lower. Stakeholder interviews highlighted the structured layout of

training centers in Tamil Nadu, where facilities such as round-table discussions, projectors, audio-visual aids, computer labs, and hostel facilities were available. Another key factor impacting the training experience was the provision of food and refreshments. Some states, like Tripura, arranged for meals even in non-residential training, ensuring that trainees remained engaged throughout the day. West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh had the highest satisfaction ratings for infrastructure, while states like Maharashtra, Arunachal Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh reported some of the lowest scores. The latter states particularly struggled with digital access, sanitation, and water purifier availability.

2.5 Quality of Residential Training Infrastructure

Residential training programs are crucial for ensuring attendance, particularly for participants traveling long distances. In Tripura, separate hostels for male and female participants were provided, along with accessibility features such as ramps for physically challenged individuals. Karnataka had training centers specifically designed for blind trainers and physically disabled trainees, integrating recreation activities and physical engagement before classes. Despite overall positive feedback, challenges remain. While residential facilities were rated satisfactory in most states, issues such as water purifier availability (4.29) and separate hostel facilities (3.91) were noted. West Bengal and Maharashtra had the best-rated residential facilities, while Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh had the lowest adequacy ratings.

2.6 RGSA Training Experience of Elected Representatives

We analyzed the post-training experience of elected representatives (ERs) under RGSA. While most participants underwent assessment (67.67%) and received certificates (69.01%), significant variation was observed across states. West Bengal had near-universal training validation (98.9% assessment and 100% certification), whereas states like Uttar Pradesh and Odisha lagged behind, with fewer than half of ERs receiving certification. Feedback collection varied significantly, with Kerala, Maharashtra, and West Bengal exceeding 85%, while states like Tripura, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh had much lower feedback engagement. Handholding support post-training was another critical issue—only 51.7% of ERs received such support, with significant disparities across states. West Bengal provided the highest support (95.6%), while Odisha and Uttar Pradesh were among the lowest. The type of handholding support also varied. In Maharashtra and West Bengal, structured physical visits were common, whereas in states like Rajasthan and Haryana, support was largely remote or inconsistent. Online support was widespread in Karnataka and Rajasthan, but limited digital literacy and infrastructure constraints in other states posed challenges.

2.7 Challenges Reported by Training Participants

The biggest challenge cited by 51.27% of respondents was the inability to identify the most applicable training modules for real-world governance. A lack of localized content (32.49%) also hindered training effectiveness. Other issues included inadequate pre-training communication (4.06%). Respondents suggested increasing training frequency, conducting sessions at local levels, incorporating exposure visits, and improving transportation and DA/TA allowances. States like West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Sikkim demonstrated strong models of sustained engagement, while states like Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Arunachal Pradesh need stronger post-training support mechanisms.

2.8 Assessment of Panchayat Infrastructure

Under RGSA, 93.6% of surveyed Panchayats had Panchayat Bhavans, with Odisha, Tripura, Haryana, West Bengal, and Maharashtra reporting the highest ownership rates. However, only 14% of Panchayat Bhavans were funded under RGSA, with Tamil Nadu (71%) and West Bengal (41%) having the highest RGSA-funded Panchayat Bhavans, while Odisha had the least (10%). Infrastructure quality varied widely. States like Kerala, Karnataka, and West Bengal had well-equipped Panchayat Bhavans, while Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh faced severe gaps in digital infrastructure, sanitation, and training spaces. Despite some progress, many Panchayats lacked adequate computer facilities, Common Service Centers (CSCs), and separate rooms for ERs and PFs.

2.9 Status of LSDG and OSR

While many Panchayats prioritized goals like Healthy Villages (61.7%), Clean and Green Villages (64%), and Water Sufficiency (62.5%), governance-related goals such as Good Governance Villages (36.9%) and Women-Friendly Villages (31.9%) were less frequently adopted. Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh reported strong engagement across multiple SDGs, while states like Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra showed lower engagement in governance-related goals. Only 34.4% of Panchayats generated sufficient OSR, relying heavily on allocations from the 15th Finance Commission. Maharashtra and West Bengal had the highest OSR sufficiency, while Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka reported lower levels. Challenges such as tax restrictions, lack of awareness, and bureaucratic hurdles limit revenue generation at the Panchayat level.

2.10 Governance Knowledge among ERs

Our analysis of governance knowledge among elected representatives shows significant variations across gender, caste, and education levels. While gender differences were relatively small, caste and education disparities played a more prominent role in shaping awareness levels.

Female representatives reportedly demonstrated slightly better awareness of the role of the Sarpanch in Gram Sabha meetings (75.2% vs. 74.6% among men), while men showed marginally higher familiarity with the 73rd Constitutional Amendment (63.1% vs. 60.7% among women). In digital literacy, both genders displayed comparable awareness of the GPDP Portal, with 78.3% of women and 77.1% of men reporting familiarity.

Caste-based disparities were more pronounced. General category ERs consistently exhibited the highest awareness of governance rules and digital platforms, while SC and ST representatives lagged. 77.1% of General category ERs knew the Sarpanch presides over Gram Sabha meetings, compared to 76.3% of OBCs, 76.9% of STs, and 68.4% of SCs. The most significant gap was in GPDP Portal awareness, where 83.0% of General category ERs reported familiarity, compared to 77.8% of OBCs and 82.1% of SCs. ST representatives had the lowest awareness at 69.1%. Similarly, SC and ST representatives had lower awareness of maintaining Gram Sabha records (49.5% and 51.9%, respectively).

On the other hand, we found that education likely had the strongest influence on governance knowledge. Graduates reported the highest awareness across all indicators, with 76.5% recognizing the Sarpanch's role in Gram Sabha meetings, compared to 72.4% among literates without formal education. Awareness of the 73rd Amendment varied widely, with 73.0% of graduates familiar with its objectives, while only 49.1% of those with no formal education were aware. Digital governance knowledge followed a similar trend, with 83.1% of postgraduates familiar with the GPDP Portal, compared to 72.2% of those with less than matriculation-level education.

Beyond governance related knowledge, decision-making autonomy among Women Elected Representatives (WERs) varied. While 76.1% of WERs knew about the 50% reservation policy, only 63.8% reported making independent decisions. Caste differences were evident, with SC women displaying the highest decision-making autonomy (69.0%), while ST women had the lowest self-influence (60.5%). ST women also reported the highest husband's influence in decision-making (47.4%), compared to 27.4% among SCs and 24.5% among OBCs. Party influence was also highest among ST women (22.4%) and lowest among OBCs (12.8%).

2.11 Qualitative Insights

The qualitative insights we gathered from trainers, faculty, and governance officials highlighted key structural and implementation challenges within the RGSA training framework. Trainers frequently reported difficulties in ensuring participant engagement, particularly due to the complexity of governance concepts and varying levels of prior knowledge among elected representatives. Many trainees struggled to grasp technical frameworks, especially when training content did not align with their practical governance experiences. The shortage of adequately trained faculty members further compounded these challenges, with trainers often tasked with delivering sessions without sufficient pedagogical or technological preparation. Additionally, financial and logistical constraints limited the ability to conduct essential field visits, which were widely recognized as critical for translating theoretical knowledge into real-world governance practices.

Another key theme that emerged was the inconsistency in training quality across states and districts. While some training centers adopted interactive methodologies such as case studies and role-playing, many continued to rely on lecture-heavy approaches, reducing participant engagement. Digital literacy training, though essential for modern governance, remained underutilized due to inadequate infrastructure and trainers' unfamiliarity with digital tools. Trainers also noted that the lack of structured follow-up and post-training handholding support limited the long-term impact of capacity-building efforts. In response, some stakeholders suggested more localized training models, enhanced financial support, and regular feedback loops to refine training content and delivery methods. Despite these challenges, the qualitative findings also revealed promising practices in certain regions, particularly where trainers had greater autonomy to adapt content and implement participatory learning techniques.

Chapter 3: Research Design

3.1 Introduction

The revamped RGSA scheme encompasses various components aimed at strengthening PRIs through capacity building, infrastructure development, and governance reforms. The evaluation of the revamped RGSA programme involved understanding the aspects (a) to (h) discussed in the evaluation objectives listed in the Introduction chapter (Section 1.4). The mid-term evaluation of such a multi-faceted and diverse initiative as Revamped RGSA demanded an in-depth understanding of both quantitative outcomes (performance indicators) and qualitative insights (experiences and challenges). In this chapter, we discuss the detailed research design, and the methodology adopted for the evaluation study.

3.2 Methodology

Given the vast geographic and institutional variations in the programme's implementation, we employed a mixed-method approach to capture the breadth and depth of the RGSA's progress.

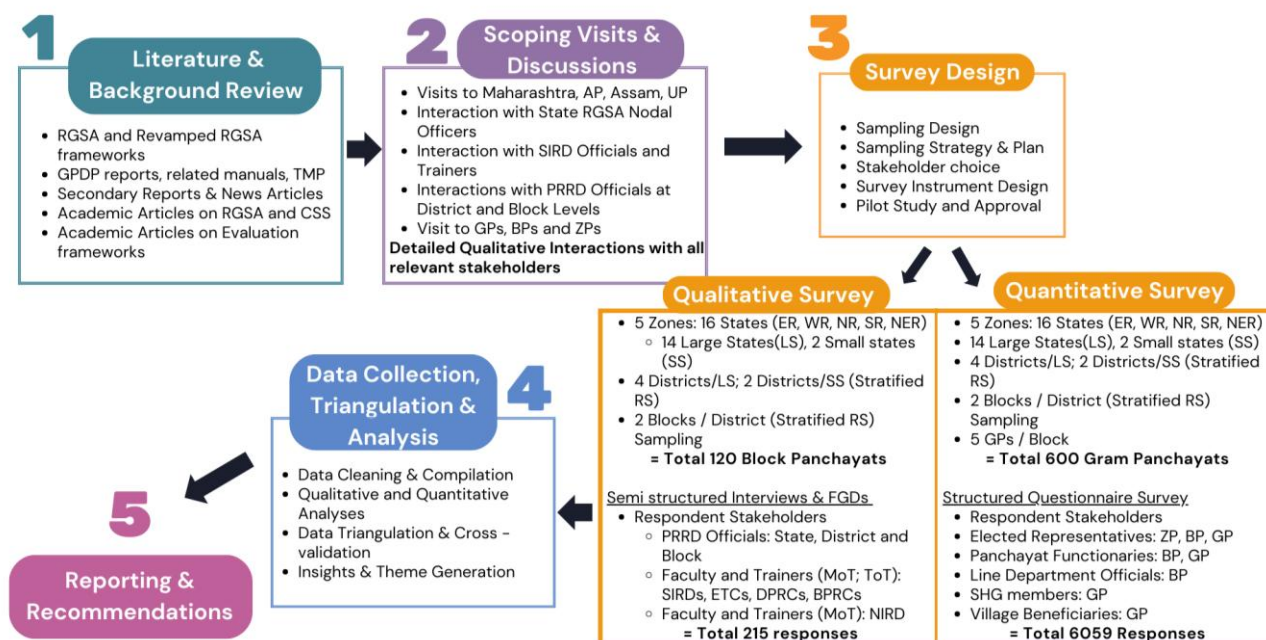
A mixed-method approach is particularly suited for exploring the impact of multi-stakeholder interventions such as revamped RGSA, especially given the complex governance structure of Panchayati Raj Institutions, the approach allows for the collection of both in-depth qualitative insights from key stakeholders and quantitative data that can be analyzed for emerging patterns and trends (Creswell, 2014). Quantitative data offers measurable outcomes, while qualitative insights capture the nuances of stakeholder experiences, ensuring that evaluations reflect both statistical significance and contextual relevance. In this specific case, we captured the experiences and qualitative perceptions of different stakeholders – ranging from State and District Officials to Trainers and line functionaries through semi-structured interviews and FGDs, while also allowing for detailed empirical assessment of perspectives of various beneficiaries—ERs, PFs and line department functionaries to the SHG members and GP beneficiaries on various quantitative indicators and metrics, such as knowledge levels, training effectiveness, training infrastructure, perceived impact of training, satisfaction with Panchayat services, etc. through structured quantitative questionnaire. Further, we triangulated our findings using various data analysis techniques and derived detailed insights and recommendations for improving the scheme's implementation. The following flowchart in **Figure 3.1** graphically illustrates the research design, described further in the following sections.

3.3 Literature and Background Review

Our research study began with exploring various relevant knowledge material from the Ministry and those available in the public domain, including but not limited to the RGSA and revamped RGSA frameworks, MoPR's Training Management Portal (TMP), e-GramSwaraj website, model GPDP plans, MoPR's nine LSDG framework, earlier evaluation reports and other white paper reports, policy briefs, various evaluation frameworks, relevant news articles and secondary reports, etc. We consolidated various reports and synthesized an initial understanding of the RGSA implementation

frameworks and state-wise variations. Based on the preliminary understanding thus gained, we prepared tentative drafts of unstructured survey questions for scoping visits and discussions with the Ministry.

Figure 3.1: Research Design: Evaluation of Revamped RGSA



3.4 Scoping Visits and Consultations

As with any evaluation study, a clear idea about expectations and outcomes requires detailed discussions and consultations with the principals, policymakers and the implementors of the policy. For the evaluation of the revamped RGSA, we consulted various officials and nodal officers of the Ministry, PRRD departments, NIRD&PR and SIRDs and gathered relevant information about the data sources and expected outcomes apart from the objectives enlisted in **Section 1.4**.

Following this, we visited various states – Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, for scoping visits. Scoping visits were aimed at gaining insights into state-level variations and field-level nitty-gritties and implementation issues with the scheme. For this, we visited and interacted with authorities at state PRRDs, faculty members and trainers of SIRDs, ETCs, DPRCs, BPRCs, and line department officials at the district and block levels. Additionally, we also visited Block and Gram Panchayats and interacted with the Panchayat Secretaries, Elected Representatives, staff, beneficiaries, SHG members and members of various standing committees. We used the initial unstructured questionnaire developed in the first stage to ask specific questions and gather diverse perspectives about the scheme, its implementation, challenges, and perceived usefulness and impact.

The scoping visits deepened our understanding and equipped us with adequate starting information to design our survey and further research plan, detailed in subsequent sections.

3.5 Stakeholders of the Evaluation Study

For comprehensive evaluation, we required to capture the perspectives of all stakeholders who are either directly involved in implementing the programme or those directly or indirectly benefitting from the programme. Following multiple consultations and brainstorming sessions, we narrowed down the following stakeholders as survey respondents:

- a) **Elected Representatives (ERs):** The elected representatives of the Panchayats included the Sarpanch, Deputy Sarpanch, Panch, and the ward members.
- b) **Panchayat Functionaries (PFs):** These individuals, such as the Panchayat Secretary, were non-elected members of the Panchayat who assist the ERs in the functioning of the Panchayat.
- c) **Self-Help Groups (SHGs) members:** Members of informal groups primarily comprised of women from similar social and financially disadvantaged backgrounds formed to improve their living conditions.
- d) **Line Department Officials (LDF):** These individuals were affiliated with administrative agencies responsible for implementing government policies and initiatives.
- e) **Faculty and Trainers:** Faculty and trainers of State Institutes of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (SIRD&PR), District Panchayat Resource Centres (DPRCs), and Block Panchayat Resource Centres (BPRCs) are responsible for training Gram Sabha members, Panchayat officials, and other individuals.
- f) **Officials of the State and District Units of RGSA:** These representatives from the Department of Panchayati Raj at the district and state levels were engaged in the RGSA implementation process.
- g) **Beneficiaries at the GP level:** These represent the final beneficiaries who either directly or indirectly benefited due to the potential changes brought up due to the programme's implementation.

3.6 Survey Design: Quantitative Survey

The quantitative survey design for this study comprised various decisions and activities such as sampling design, sample plan, stakeholder and respondent choice, survey instrument design, pilot study, and validation and approval. The following section contains the details of this meticulous exercise.

3.6.1 Sampling Design

We employed a multi-stage iterative sampling strategy to select Panchayats and sample respondents for this evaluation study. Stakeholder engagement was integral to the evaluation process. Regular consultations were held with representatives from PRIs, government officials, and community members to ensure their perspectives were incorporated into both the sampling strategy and data collection methods. The detailed sampling strategy adopted is explained below.

Sampling of States

The sampling frame comprised states from each region of the country, as prescribed by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), to ensure comprehensive and representative coverage for the evaluation. The Ministry sampled 16 states from all five regions of India,

maintaining regional diversity. Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh were selected from the Northern Region. For the Southern Region, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu were included in the initial selection; however, Telangana was later excluded due to pending local body elections, as there were no elected bodies in the state during the study period. In the Eastern Region, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and West Bengal were chosen, while in the Western Region, the selected states included Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Rajasthan. Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim represented the North-Eastern Region. This diverse selection of states, covering large, small, and tribal-dominated regions, aimed to capture a wide range of implementation contexts for the Revamped RGSA scheme. By including states from varied areas, we gained insights into how the scheme functioned across different governance structures and local conditions, ensuring a more holistic and inclusive evaluation¹.

In consultation with the Ministry, we categorized the sampled states as large or small using the *state's population density* as the criterion. Consequently, we categorized the sixteen sampled into population density-based quartiles, and classified the first quartile states as small, while those in the higher quartiles as large. This approach allowed for a more systematic sampling process across diverse regions, ensuring proportional representation in the evaluation. **Table 3.1** summarizes the small and large states for our study. Subsequently, the selection of districts, blocks, and GPs was finalized in consultation with the Ministry.

Sampling of Districts

We employed a stratified sampling technique to sample districts from each state. To cater to the potential geographic variations within states, we sampled four districts in large states and two districts in smaller states. For this purpose, we ordered the districts based on their population density and classified them into four quartiles for large states and two categories for small states (with a median split). Finally, we sampled one district from each category.

Additionally, we considered several purposive inclusion criteria to cater to the specific requirements of the study, as:

- a) At least one PESA district was selected if it existed in the state. If multiple PESA districts existed in a quartile, simple random sampling was employed to pick one, with preference given to districts fully covered by PESA.
- b) Similarly, at least one aspirational district was selected if it existed.
- c) If both PESA and aspirational districts were present in a quartile, preference was given to the PESA districts.
- d) At least one non-PESA and non-aspirational district was also selected from the state.
- e) Following the district selection, efforts were made to ensure diversity in regional distribution. In cases where regional distribution was not achieved, we resampled it following the same criteria, till it was reasonably maintained.

¹ This study has not sampled any Union territories (UTs), therefore the findings are limited in transferability to UTs.

Sampling of Blocks

We extended a similar stratified sampling technique to sample two blocks each from the sampled districts. We stratified the blocks within each district into two groups based on their distance from the district headquarters, using the median. Then we sampled one block each from the two groups through Simple Random Sampling (SRS). Additionally, we applied similar inclusion criteria, as in the case of district sampling, to ensure the representation of PESA and aspirational blocks. At least one aspirational block was chosen if it existed in the district. SRS was employed to select one in cases where multiple aspirational blocks existed in a group.

Sampling of Gram Panchayats (GPs)

At this stage, we sampled five GPs each from the sampled blocks using Simple Random Sampling. As suggested by the Ministry, we set the inclusion criterion to ensure that at least two out of the five GPs from each block were headed by a Woman Sarpanch or President. Where this criterion was not met in the initial selection, we resampled it to fulfil the requirement. Additionally, wherever applicable and possible, we ensured representation of at least one GP with Sarpanch from a marginalized community.

Table 3.1: Number of Districts, Blocks, and GPs Sampled

Sl. No.	Region	State	Pop Density (SQ Km)	Pop. Density Quartile	Catego ry	Sample Districts	Sample Blocks	Sample GPs
1	Northern	Haryana	414	IV	Large	4	8	40
2		Himachal Pradesh	121	II	Large	4	8	40
3		Uttar Pradesh	763	IV	Large	4	8	40
4	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	213	III	Large	4	8	40
5		Karnataka	203	II	Large	4	8	40
6		Kerala	298	III	Large	4	8	40
7		Tamil Nadu	307	III	Large	4	8	40
8	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	166	II	Large	4	8	40
9		Odisha	246	III	Large	4	8	40
10		West Bengal	750	IV	Large	4	8	40
11	Western	Madhya Pradesh	203	II	Large	4	8	40
12		Maharashtra	217	III	Large	4	8	40
13		Rajasthan	176	II	Large	4	8	40
14	North-Eastern	Tripura	251	III	Large	4	8	40
15		Arunachal Pradesh	17	I	Small	2	4	20
16		Sikkim	51	I	Small	2	4	20
Total						60	120	600

Source: Population density figures adapted from respective state websites as of 30 May 2024.
Sample sizes estimated based on the sampling strategy adopted for evaluation

Through this multi-stage iterative sampling strategy, we sampled a total of 600 GPs across 120 blocks in 60 districts in the above 16 states. The list of sampled districts, blocks, and Gram Panchayats for each state is annexed as **Appendix A1** to this report. **Table 3.2** summarizes the number of districts, blocks, and gram panchayats sampled for the study, with each administrative unit as the unit of analysis.

3.6.2 Sampling Plan for Respondents

The quantitative survey respondents correspond to all the relevant stakeholders, and they were sampled as follows.

Sample Size

For the quantitative survey, we employed a robust sampling strategy to ensure that the sample captures reliable data from the stakeholders while maintaining statistical accuracy. We calculated the required sample size to achieve a confidence level of 90%, with a maximum allowable error margin of 5% from the actual population parameters, as a minimum of 273 respondents per region. Therefore, a total sample size of 1365 beneficiaries were envisaged for the five areas. This sample was allocated proportionally across states based on the number of Gram Panchayats sampled in each region.

Similarly, for the six other stakeholders, excluding the training beneficiaries, we proposed an aggregated sample size of approximately 300 per stakeholder group, taking the targeted sample size to around 1800. Thus, the total sample size proposed was approximately 5800 (273 beneficiaries/region for five regions + 300 respondents/stakeholder group for six stakeholder groups, with a factor of 1.8 to compensate for low response rate and invalid responses) for the quantitative study. Thus, we envisioned a total sample size of 5800 for the quantitative study. Through efficient field operations, 6,059 valid responses were obtained, far exceeding the minimum sample size required for statistical robustness.

Field Sampling Plan

For the field-level data collection plan, we developed state-wise sampling frames (with limited available information) for various stakeholders to sample survey respondents. We sampled the respondents was conducted at multiple levels, i.e., district, blocks, and GP, ensuring representation from different levels of Panchayat within each state. The total number of respondents varied based on whether the state was classified as large or small, as large states comprised four districts, eight blocks, and 40 GPs, while small states contained half of them, two districts, four blocks, and 20 GPs. Accordingly, we adjusted the sample size for the small states proportionately.

Elected Representatives (ERs)

In large states, a total of 92 ERs were sampled. This included 12 ERs from district and block levels, with at least one ER from each district and block (4 district-level ERs and eight block-level ERs per state). At the GP level, two ERs were selected from each of the 40 GPs, totalling 80 ERs per state. Mandatory inclusion criteria were followed, requiring the inclusion of either the Sarpanch or Deputy Sarpanch, one woman ER, and, where applicable, one ER from a marginalized community. In small states, the sample was proportionally taken as 46 sample ERs.

Panchayat Functionaries (PFs)

In large states, a total of 88 PFs were sampled. This included one bureaucrat or government employee from each of the eight blocks, preferably the Extension Officer or Panchayat Secretary (8 PFs). At the GP level, two Panchayat functionaries from each of the 40 GPs were selected, mandating the inclusion of the Panchayat Secretary or the acting officer if the Secretary was unavailable. This brought the total number of PFs

sampled at GP levels in large states to 80. In small states, the sample was adjusted to 44 PFs in total.

Self-Help Group (SHG) Members

In large states, 80 SHG members were sampled, with two members selected from different SHGs within each of the 40 GPs. Efforts were made to ensure at least one representation from SHG formed within the last three years. This sample was proportionately adjusted to 40 SHG members from 20 GPs in small states.

Line Department Functionaries (LDF)

In large states, 40 officials from various line departments were sampled, with five different departments represented at the block level (5 officials from each of the eight blocks). The mandatory inclusion of the Revenue Officer and Engineering Assistant (or equivalent) ensured a comprehensive representation. Efforts were made to include line department officials working at the GP level wherever possible. In small states, the sample size was adjusted to 20-line department officials.

Beneficiaries

In large states, 80 beneficiaries were sampled at the GP level. Two beneficiaries per GP were selected, ensuring the respondents had attended at least one Gram Sabha within the last three years, with a minimum of one-woman beneficiary in each GP. In small states, 40 beneficiaries were sampled from 20 GPs.

State and District Officials

A total of 12 officials were sampled in each large state to capture both state-level governance perspectives and district-level implementation insights. At the state level, four officials were selected: the state-level nodal officer for RGSA, a senior official such as the State Commissioner, Joint Commissioner, or Assistant Commissioner of Panchayati Raj & Rural Development, and two additional officials, such as secretaries or consultants, who assist in the administration and implementation of the RGSA scheme. At the district level, eight officials were sampled from four districts. These included one district-level nodal officer for RGSA from each district and one bureaucrat or government employee from each District Panchayat, preferably the CEO or Secretary of the Zilla Parishad. In smaller states, where only two districts were selected, the sample size was reduced proportionally, with eight officials being sampled in total (four at the state level and four at the district level). Such comprehensive sampling representation from both policy-making bodies at the state level and the key administrative personnel responsible for on-ground implementation at the district level.

Faculty and Trainers

A total of 18 respondents were sampled from each large state, ensuring representation across state, district, and block levels to capture insights into training and capacity-building efforts under the RGSA. At the state level, six respondents were selected, including the administrative head of the SIRD, such as the Director or Joint Director, and one faculty member from SIRD who had been trained as a Master Trainer by NIRD&PR. Additionally, if applicable, one representative from the curriculum or course material design committee was included, along with a state-level master trainer or expert who had

been trained on localized SDG themes. Two faculty members were selected from SIRDs or ETCs or their equivalents, with at least one being an RGSA nodal faculty, if any existed.

At the district and block levels, a total of 12 respondents were sampled. This included one faculty member from each DPRC, preferably a District Level Master Trainer (DLMT), from the four selected districts, and one faculty member from each BPRC, preferably a Block Level Master Trainer (BLMT), from the eight selected blocks. This sampling strategy ensured that the faculty and trainers at all relevant Panchayati Raj training infrastructure levels were represented, providing a holistic understanding of the training and capacity-building activities under RGSA. In smaller states, the sample size was proportionately adjusted to 12.

Additionally, at the national level, a detailed Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was conducted with the faculty members, trainers, and consultants who are all involved in designing and implementing RGSA training programmes at the NIRD&PR.

Sample Representation Summary

The overall sample size for this study was derived using a multi-stage iterative sampling strategy, ensuring a robust representation of stakeholders across regions, states, districts, blocks, and GPs. The total maximum expected sample size was 6,160 respondents, distributed across different levels and stakeholder groups in both large and small states. The detailed breakdown of the estimated number of respondents per stakeholder group and administrative level is presented in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Stakeholder-wise Sample Size (Planned – Quantitative Survey)

Stakeholder	State Level		District Level		Block Level		GP Level		Total / State		Total		Grand Total
	L	S	L	S	L	S	L	S	L	S	L	S	
ER	-	-	4	2	8	4	80	40	92	46	1288	92	1380
PF	-	-	-	-	8	4	80	40	88	44	1232	88	1320
SHG	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	40	80	40	1120	80	1200
Line Dept.	-	-	-	-	40	20	-	-	40	20	560	40	600
Faculty/Trainer	6	6	4	2	8	4	-	-	18	12	252	24	276
S&D officials	4	4	8	4	-	-	-	-	12	8	168	16	184
Beneficiaries	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	40	80	40	1120	80	1200
Total Estimated Sample Size (Max.)											5740	420	6160

Note: L – Large; S – Small states

Source: Numbers are estimated based on the sampling strategy adopted for evaluation.

3.6.3 Data Collection

We developed individual structured questionnaires for the seven key stakeholder groups in consultation with the Ministry. The seven key stakeholders are ERs, PFs, LDFs, Faculty and Trainers, RGSA Officials, SHG members, and Beneficiaries. The questionnaire covered a range of questions capturing RGSA objectives, including capacity building, training programmes, e-enablement, inclusivity in local planning, localization of SDGs, infrastructure development, and incentivization, among others. We did multiple rounds

of iterations of our survey instruments through discussions with the Officials and faculty members of various states.

We tested the questionnaires for the reliability and validity of questions and responses using quick pilot surveys, collaborating with the faculty members of various states. We made slight modifications based on some specific inputs to make the questionnaire more robust. The instruments, thus created, were finally validated and approved by the Ministry. We translated the survey questionnaires into multiple regional languages, including Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Odia, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Nepali, to facilitate effective data collection.

We conducted quantitative field surveys using CAPI-based (Computer-Assisted Personal Interviewing) questionnaires, leveraging the Kobo toolbox platform for data collection. For this purpose, we engaged two third-party survey agencies, M/S AMC Research Group Pvt. Ltd. and M/S Datamation Research Services Pvt. Ltd., working under IRMA's supervision. We conducted two-day intensive online training sessions for field enumerators and district supervisors/coordinators of the survey agencies via Zoom, to ensure accurate data collection. The training covered an overview of the project, the sampling strategy used to select respondents, a detailed discussion of the questionnaires, and a demonstration of the online survey tool (Kobo toolbox). Before the full rollout, the questionnaires were pilot-tested, and necessary revisions were made to improve clarity and accuracy. Enumerators underwent mandatory training and it was ensured that they were comfortable with the questionnaire and data collection technology. Continuous support was provided throughout the fieldwork phase to address any challenges faced by enumerators. A total of 6059 valid responses were collected through close interactions with the concerned authorities to inform stakeholders and relevant offices in advance, ensuring smooth data collection.

3.7 Survey Design: Qualitative Survey

We adopted the qualitative survey method to gain deeper insights into potential shortcomings in the training process and its overall effectiveness. Based on the consultation with the MoPR, we developed semi-structured interview (SSI) to guide our discussion with the concerned stakeholders.

We adopted purposive sampling of the Officials of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development Department (PRRD) and faculty and trainers at various levels (state, districts, and blocks) within the sampled provisions, as in Section 3.5. We sampled the respondents long enough till the time we experienced similar arguments and repetition of information. We started with an initial estimate of around 150 qualitative survey responses (including interviews). Through effective field management, we managed to conduct 215 in-depth SSIs with the RGSA officials, faculty members and trainers from State SIRDs, ETCs, DPRCs, and BPRCs. The surveys were administered in-house by IRMA's research team to ensure better data quality and probe into deeper insights. Ethical considerations were paramount throughout the evaluation process. Informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to participation, ensuring they understood the purpose of the study and their rights. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing responses and securely storing data.

3.8 Data Triangulation and Analysis

We adopted an integrated approach for data triangulation and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative survey observations.

3.8.1 Quantitative Data analysis

Once the quantitative data were collected from all the selected states, a thorough cleaning and validation process was conducted. A detailed data tabulation plan was prepared to organize the collected data in a meaningful manner. Quantitative data was analyzed using statistical software to identify trends and correlations among performance indicators. Each table generated from this plan was analyzed to extract insights into the various dimensions of the RGSA scheme across states.

3.8.2 Qualitative Data analysis

For the qualitative survey, once we collected the field data, we worked with a few professional transcribers to translate and transcribe the data, as it was recorded in multiple languages. To ensure accuracy, the team members who were native to the research context and familiar with the languages checked a random sample of 8 transcripts during the transcription process.

The survey data were analyzed using the Thematic analysis approach, and the results were presented based on the identified themes and sub-themes. The team members manually coded the data to develop first-order codes. The entire team then developed second-order themes and theoretical constructs through iterative discussions. We conducted a reflexive thematic analysis of the interview data, following the framework developed by Braun and Clarke (2006). The framework is mentioned below.

1. **Familiarization:** Become familiar with the data by reading and re-reading it without taking notes.
2. **Generate codes:** Create initial codes.
3. **Search for themes:** Combine codes into themes.
4. **Review themes:** Review the themes.
5. **Define and name themes:** Name the themes concisely, informatively, and memorably.
6. **Write-up:** Create a report of the findings.

This structured analysis helped derive key findings that informed the overall evaluation of the programme's impact and effectiveness. Further, we triangulated the qualitative and quantitative findings to identify clear patterns and derived insights to develop actionable recommendations.

Chapter 4: Survey Findings and Analysis

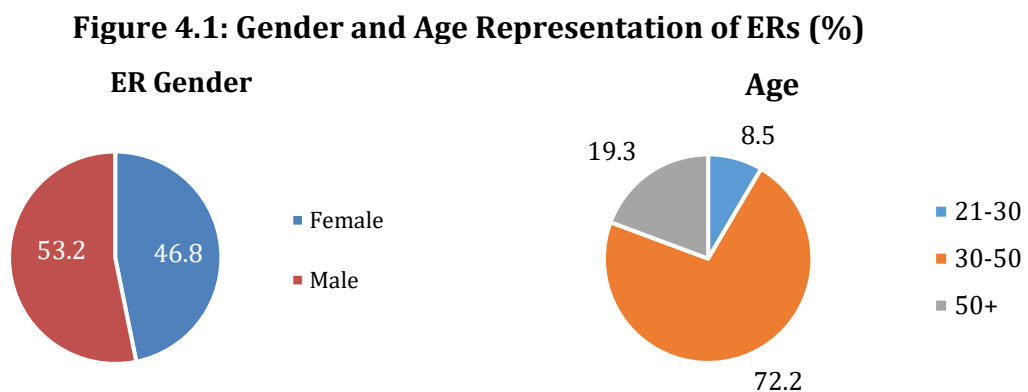
4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, we begin with describing the demographic representation of ERs. We then synthesize key insights from both the quantitative and qualitative surveys, highlighting the main findings related to the evaluation objectives. In the following chapter, we present the sociodemographic characteristics of the key stakeholder participants in the survey, including elected representatives, panchayat functionaries, and faculty and trainers.

4.2 Sample Description

4.2.1 Demographic Representation of ERs

Figure 4.1 reflects a balanced gender representation of ERs (53% Males and 47% Females) in our survey data on an aggregate level, enabling us to capture the WERs' perspectives with reasonable precision. **Figure 4.1** shows that the sample predominantly comprises the younger and middle-aged ER cohort (around 80%).



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.1 presents state-wise representation of gender and age cohorts. Karnataka (58.4%) and West Bengal (56.5%) have higher female representation, while Haryana (32.5%) has relatively less equitable representation.

Table 4.2 shows a representation of ERs from sampled states as per Educational Qualification, which indicates Matriculate has the highest percentage, 27.5 percent, followed by Intermediate with 23.3 percent and 4.9 percent of Post Graduate ERs. About 20 percent had less than matriculation-level education. About 14.8 percent were with graduate degrees and 4.9 percent with postgraduate or higher qualifications. Only 8.8 percent had some non-formal education. The percentage of Postgraduates and Graduates is highest in Chhattisgarh and Haryana, with 14.1 and 27.5 percent, respectively, while the highest Literate (but with No Formal Education) observed in Arunachal Pradesh at 59.5 percent.

Table 4.1: State-wise Gender & Age Representation of ERs (%)

State	Gender		Age-Group Cohorts		
	Female	Male	21-30	30-50	50+
Andhra Pradesh (AP)	50.0	50.0	5.6	64.8	29.6
Arunachal Pradesh (AR)	35.7	64.3	4.8	76.2	19.1
Chhattisgarh (CG)	46.7	53.3	9.8	70.7	19.6
Himachal Pradesh (HP)	51.5	48.5	3.0	83.8	13.1
Haryana (HR)	32.5	67.5	5.0	88.3	6.7
Karnataka (KA)	58.4	41.6	6.5	70.1	23.4
Kerala (KL)	52.3	47.7	1.2	59.3	39.5
Maharashtra (MH)	49.5	50.5	8.4	72.6	19.0
Madhya Pradesh (MP)	46.3	53.7	10.5	67.4	22.1
Odisha (OD)	45.8	54.2	19.4	70.8	9.7
Rajasthan (RJ)	40.6	59.4	13.5	66.7	19.8
Sikkim (SK)	50.0	50.0	10.5	65.8	23.7
Tamil Nadu (TN)	52.6	47.4	3.2	68.4	28.4
Tripura (TR)	33.3	66.7	1.2	79.8	19.1
Uttar Pradesh (UP)	49.4	50.6	10.8	80.7	8.4
West Bengal (WB)	56.5	43.5	22.8	59.8	17.4
Total (%)	46.8	53.2	8.5	72.2	19.3
Total	618	702	112	953	255

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.2: Educational Qualification-wise Representation of ERs (%)

State	Literate NFE*	Less than Matriculate	Matriculate	Intermediate	Graduate	PG & above
AP	16.7	33.3	11.1	22.2	7.4	9.3
AR	4.8	59.5	23.8	4.8	7.1	-
CG	7.6	29.4	13.0	16.3	19.6	14.1
HP	1.0	11.1	24.2	40.4	16.2	7.1
HR	-	2.5	29.2	37.5	27.5	3.3
KA	18.2	13.0	14.3	39.0	13.0	2.6
KL	-	-	33.7	33.7	24.4	8.1
MH	5.3	24.2	42.1	5.3	14.7	8.4
MP	36.8	27.4	19.0	9.5	4.2	3.2
OD	4.2	38.9	27.8	15.3	13.9	-
RJ	12.5	17.7	37.5	17.7	8.3	6.3
SK	2.6	23.7	34.2	29.0	5.3	5.3
TN	22.1	19.0	26.3	24.2	7.4	1.1
TR	4.8	32.1	22.6	20.2	19.1	1.2
UP	2.4	16.9	41.0	21.7	16.9	1.2
WB	-	18.5	33.7	25.0	17.4	5.4
Total (N)	116	273	363	307	196	65

Note: Literate NFE*: Literate with No Formal Education. – Indicates Data Not Available.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Due to the Non-Compulsory Mandate of Educational Qualification for ERs by the State Panchayat Act, there could be a notable lag in Educational Qualification.

Table 4.3 shows the Social Category wise Representation of ERs among states, indicating the highest representation of OBC in total with 31.1% and 21.8% General. Among the surveyed social groups, Scheduled Castes recorded the lowest representation at 21.6%, with Scheduled Tribes marginally higher at 21.8%. It indicates that state-wise variations exist in the socio-economic representation of ERs in sampled GPs. ST representation is highest in Arunachal Pradesh (100%), followed by Madhya Pradesh (57.7%). SCs are most represented in Tamil Nadu (40.4%) and Uttar Pradesh (34%), while OBCs dominate in Sikkim (56.9%), Uttar Pradesh (56.6%), and Maharashtra (53.8%).

Table 4.3: Social Category-wise Representation of ERs (%)

State	General	OBC	SC	ST
AP	27.8	44.4	1.9	25.9
AR	0.0	0.0	0.0	100.0
CG	1.1	25.0	5.4	68.5
HP	44.4	9.1	41.4	5.1
HR	30.8	35.0	34.2	0.0
KA	22.1	29.9	26.0	22.1
KL	34.9	57.0	5.8	2.3
MH	32.6	34.7	11.6	21.1
MP	4.2	25.3	16.8	53.7
OD	5.6	27.8	25.0	41.7
RJ	16.7	38.5	13.5	31.3
SK	7.9	21.1	5.3	65.8
TN	39.0	24.2	34.7	2.1
TR	27.4	17.9	25.0	29.8
UP	13.3	67.5	19.3	0.0
WB	16.3	26.1	45.7	12.0
Total (N)	288	410	285	337

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024

The ERs in our sample hold a range of leadership positions within the Panchayati Raj system. Approximately 48 percent hold positions such as Chairman, President, or *Sarpanch*. On the other hand, 34.9 percent were general members, representing their constituencies and contributing to policy discussions. The remaining 16.2 percent held the designation of vice-president, supporting Panchayat leadership in administrative and managerial functions. The gender composition was relatively balanced, with 46.8 percent females and 53.2 percent males.

Table 4.4: Distribution of ER Designation by Gender (%)

Designation	Chairman/President /Sarpanch	General Member	Vice-President
Female	51.3	45.8	35.5
Male	48.7	54.2	64.5
Total (N)	645	461	214

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.4 shows that women in our sample had notable representation in leadership, with more than half of the Chairpersons being female, though their presence was somewhat lower among General Members and Vice-Presidents. Among Chairpersons, OBCs and STs held significant representation, while SCs and the General category were more evenly distributed (**Table 4.5**)

Table 4.5: Distribution of ER Designation by Caste (%)

Designation	General	OBC	SC	ST	Total
Chairman/President/Sarpanch	21.7	28.7	22.2	27.4	21.7
General Member	20.4	34.1	20.8	24.7	20.4
Vice-President	25.2	31.8	21.5	21.5	25.2
Total	21.8	31.1	21.6	25.5	21.8

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

The caste composition of ERs was diverse yet balanced, with 31.1% belonging to OBCs, the largest social group in the sample. Almost 25 percent belong to STs. General category comprised 21.8 percent, while SCs formed 21.6 percent. **Table 4.6** provides a comparative overview of the representation of ERs across different social categories, disaggregated by gender and age. It reveals that male representation is higher across most groups, with males comprising 53.2% of the total, except in the SC category, where females (52.6%) outnumber males. In terms of age distribution, the 30–50 age cohort dominates across all social categories, accounting for 72.2% overall, indicating that ERs are largely mid-career individuals. The youngest cohort (21–30) better represented among SCs (10.5%) and STs (12.2%). The data also shows that representation tends to decline significantly in the 50+ age group, particularly among SCs (14.4%). This distribution highlights both gender imbalances and generational gaps in representation across caste lines.

Table 4.6: Caste-wise Distribution of ERs by Gender and Age Cohorts (%)

Social Category	Gender		Age Cohort		
	Female	Male	21-30	30-50	50+
General	43.8	56.3	4.2	73.6	22.2
OBC	44.9	55.1	7.1	72.9	20.0
SC	52.6	47.4	10.5	75.1	14.4
ST	46.9	53.1	12.2	67.7	20.2
Total	46.8	53.2	8.5	72.2	19.3

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

4.3 Professional Data of ERs

Table 4.7 shows ER representation at various levels of Panchayat, including Traditional Local Bodies (TLB), indicating the highest representation of ERs from Gram Panchayat level with 82.2 percent (Total) followed by Block Panchayat with 14.7 percent (Total) and District Panchayat with least while TLBs with only 0.2 percent. The representation of block and district panchayats are less due to the non-availability of ER at the time of survey and pending elections of specific blocks and district panchayat in some states. The

highest representation of ERs at BP level come from Uttar Pradesh (47%), Himachal Pradesh (35.4%) and Madhya Pradesh (27.4%).

Table 4.7: State-wise Panchayat level Representation (%)

State	Gram Panchayat (GP)	Block Panchayat (BP)	District Panchayat (DP)	TLB*
AP	92.6	3.7	1.9	1.9
AR	97.6	0.0	2.4	0.0
CG	85.9	10.9	3.3	0.0
HP	61.6	35.4	2.0	1.0
HR	65.8	20.8	13.3	0.0
KA	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
KL	84.9	11.6	2.3	0.0
MH	95.8	2.1	2.1	0.0
MP	72.6	27.4	0.0	0.0
OD	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
RJ	83.3	15.6	1.0	0.0
SK	100.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
TN	88.4	7.4	4.2	0.0
TR	82.1	16.7	1.2	0.0
UP	51.8	47.0	1.2	0.0
WB	85.9	9.8	4.4	0.0
Total (N)	1085	194	38	3

Notes: TLB*: Traditional Local Bodies

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.8: State-wise Representation of Experience of ERs (%)

State	0 – 5 years	6 – 10 years	More than 10 years
AP	87.0	7.4	5.6
AR	76.2	14.3	9.5
CG	72.8	20.7	6.5
HP	91.9	7.1	1.0
HR	97.5	2.5	0.0
KA	93.5	2.6	3.9
KL	75.6	14.0	10.5
MH	94.7	3.2	2.1
MP	75.8	20.0	4.2
OD	94.4	5.6	0.0
RJ	92.7	5.2	2.1
SK	68.4	23.7	7.9
TN	79.0	20.0	1.1
TR	82.1	16.7	1.2
UP	73.5	24.1	2.4
WB	63.0	26.1	10.9
Total (%)	81.9	12.9	3.9
Total	1081	170	51

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.8 represents the number of years of experience of the ERs across States. A notable trend is that most ERs (81.9%) have less than five years of experience, indicating a relatively new political cohort in most sampled states. States like Haryana (97.5%) and Himachal Pradesh (91.9%) have particularly high proportions of ERs with limited experience, i.e., less than five years, whereas states like West Bengal and Sikkim show a higher share of more seasoned representatives with over 10 percent having more than 11 years of experience. The overall trend suggests a dominance of newer ERs, with only a small fraction (3.9%) having over a decade of experience across states.

Table 4.9 shows the frequency of ERs by the number of times they have been elected to the Panchayat. A majority of ERs are first-time representatives (60.2%). Around 18.2 percent have been elected twice, implying significant service and administration in previous terms. Only a small proportion have been elected more than 3 times, highlighting a minority of highly experienced ERs. The data suggests a predominant representation of younger ERs.

Table 4.9: Number of Times Elected as ERs

No. of Times	Percent
1	60.2
2	18.2
3	7.1
4	5.9
5	2.5
More than 5	6.1

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Overall, **Table 4.10** indicates that distribution of major roles performed by ERs varies considerably across states, with General Administration being the most commonly reported function at 66.4%, followed by Planning and Execution (58.6%) and Service Delivery (54.6%). Regulation and Supervision (53.3%) also saw substantial engagement, whereas Accounts and Finance is relatively lower at 36.1%. Notably, states like West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu exhibit high engagement across multiple roles, while states such as Arunachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh reported lower participation in most domains.

4.3.1 Socio-Demographic Profile of the Panchayat Functionaries

The surveyed panchayat functionaries held a variety of designations. **Table 4.11** shows that about 36.5% individuals reported being in key administrative positions such as CEO, BDO, or VDO.

Table 4.12 shows that among the 1,185 Panchayat functionaries, the gender composition showed that men form most of the sample at 64.6% while women constituted 35.4%. In terms of age, most functionaries fell within the 30-50 years range, making up 74% of the sample, while younger functionaries aged 21-30 years account for 9.5% and those aged 50+ years make up 16.5%.

Their social background also revealed a mixed representation, with the OBC category being the largest group at 410 (34.6%), followed by General category respondents at 329 (27.8%). SC and ST categories account for 237 (20%) and 209 (17.6%) respondents, respectively. Nearly half of the PFs, 46.6%, were graduates, with 14.8% having pursued post-graduate education or higher. About a quarter, 22.3%, have completed higher secondary education, while 12.7% respondents have completed matriculation. Only 3.5% reported having less than a matriculate qualification.

Table 4.10: Distribution of Major Roles Contributed by ERs (%)

State	General Admini- stration	Service Delivery	Accounts and Finance	Planning and Execution	Regulation and Supervision	Others
AP	87.0	57.4	51.9	63.0	61.1	1.9
AR	59.5	16.7	21.4	88.1	73.8	0.0
CG	82.6	10.9	23.9	56.5	51.1	1.1
HP	76.8	23.2	15.2	44.4	48.5	4.0
HR	30.0	65.0	10.8	27.5	29.2	1.7
KA	81.8	54.6	48.1	61.0	48.1	0.0
KL	50.6	51.8	23.5	62.4	44.7	7.1
MH	94.7	83.2	48.4	61.1	32.6	0.0
MP	50.5	44.2	29.5	57.9	40.0	0.0
OD	52.8	80.6	34.7	73.6	90.3	1.4
RJ	43.8	47.9	18.8	63.5	59.4	2.1
SK	81.6	79.0	65.8	89.5	79.0	0.0
TN	90.4	81.9	88.3	62.8	59.6	1.1
TR	48.8	32.1	19.1	39.3	48.8	0.0
UP	63.9	54.2	28.9	43.4	33.7	1.2
WB	88.0	88.0	72.8	90.2	94.6	1.1
Total (%)	66.4	54.6	36.1	58.6	53.3	1.5
Total	875	720	476	772	702	20

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.11: Designation of Panchayat Functionaries

Designation of Panchayat Functionaries	Percent
Any other	63.5
CEO/BDO/VDO/Secretary	36.5
Total (%)	100

Note: Any other* refers to Anganwadi Workers (AWW), Gram Rojgar Shaaya's, Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), Village Extension Officer (VEO), and Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA).

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.12: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of PFs

Category	Subcategory	Frequency (%)
Gender	Male	64.6
	Female	35.4
Age	21-30	9.5
	30-50	74.0
	50+	16.5
Social Category	General	27.8
	OBC	34.6
	SC	20.0
	ST	17.6
Education	Graduate	46.6
	Post-Graduate and above	14.8
	Intermediate	22.3
	Matriculate	12.7
	Less than Matriculate	3.5

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

4.4 Assessment of Knowledge Levels of ERs and WERs

4.4.1 Overall Knowledge Levels of ERs

We examined how knowledge of key governance-related indicators varies across gender, caste, and education levels of the elected representatives. We focused on four key aspects: (1) whether respondents knew that the Sarpanch presides over Gram Sabha meetings, (2) awareness of the objective of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, (3) knows about GPDP Portal (E-Gram Swaraj), and (4) knowledge of maintaining Gram Sabha records.

In our sample, gender differences in awareness levels were relatively small across all four indicators (**Table 4.13**). Female ERs were slightly more likely to believe that the Sarpanch presides over Gram Sabha meetings (75.2%) compared to males (74.6%). However, awareness of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment was marginally higher among men (63.1%) than women (60.7%). A similar pattern was observed for familiarity with the GPDP Portal, where 77.1 percent of men and 78.3 percent of women reported awareness. The most notable gender gap appeared in knowledge of Gram Sabha records, with 57.8 percent of women reporting awareness compared to 53.6% of men. Although these differences are not large, they suggest *minor* variations in how governance-related information reaches men and women.

Table 4.13: Gender-wise Knowledge Levels of ERs (%)

Gender	Presides Gram Sabha	Awareness of 73rd Amendment	Knows GPDP Portal	Knows Gram Sabha Records
Female	75.2	60.7	78.3	57.8
Male	74.6	63.1	77.1	53.6
Total (%)	74.9	62.0	77.7	55.5

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.14 shows caste-based differences in governance awareness were *more pronounced* than gender differences. General category respondents exhibited the highest awareness levels across most indicators. Knowledge that the Sarpanch presides over Gram Sabha meetings was highest among General category respondents (77.1%), followed by OBC (76.3%), ST (76.9%), and SC (68.4%). Awareness of the 73rd Amendment was also highest among the General category (62.8%), while SC (50.9%) and ST (53.1%) respondents reported the lowest awareness levels.

Table 4.14: Caste-wise Knowledge Levels of ERs (%)

Caste	Presides Gram Sabha	Awareness of 73 rd Amendment	Knows GPDP Portal	Knows Gram Sabha Records
General	77.1	62.8	83.0	52.4
OBC	76.3	76.3	77.8	64.9
SC	68.4	50.9	82.1	49.5
ST	76.9	53.1	69.1	51.9
Total (%)	74.9	62	77.7	55.5

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

A particularly noticeable difference was observed in knowledge of GPDP Portal, with General category respondents showing the highest awareness (83.0%), followed by SC (82.1%) and OBC (77.8%) (**Table 4.14**). ST respondents reported the lowest awareness at 69.1 percent. Knowledge of Gram Sabha records also varied significantly, with OBC respondents reporting the highest awareness (64.9%) and SC respondents the lowest (49.5%). These differences indicate that access to governance-related information is not uniform across caste groups, with SC and ST respondents consistently showing lower awareness levels for specific indicators.

Table 4.15: Education-wise Knowledge Levels of ERs (%)

Education Level	Presides Gram Sabha	Awareness of 73 rd Amendment	Knows GPDP Portal	Knows Gram Sabha Records
Graduate	76.5	73	78.6	54.6
Intermediate	69.7	63.5	79.5	54.1
Less than Matric	75.1	56.4	72.2	52.7
Literate-NFE	72.4	49.1	74.1	56
Matriculate	79.1	62.3	79.9	57.6
Post-Graduate & Above	75.4	66.2	83.1	64.6
Total (%)	74.9	62	77.7	55.5

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.15 illustrates the relationship between the education of ERs and their governance awareness in our sample. Respondents with higher education reported greater awareness across all indicators. Among graduates, 76.5 percent believed that the Sarpanch presides over Gram Sabha meetings, compared to 72.4 percent among Literate-NFE respondents. Knowledge of the 73rd Amendment showed the most variation, with

73.0% of graduates aware of its objectives, compared to less than half among Literate-NFE respondents. Awareness of the GPDP Portal was highest among postgraduates (83.1%) and lowest among respondents with less than matric-level education (72.2%). Similarly, knowledge of Gram Sabha records increased with education, with postgraduates reporting the highest awareness (64.6%), while respondents with less than matric-level education had the lowest awareness (52.7%).

It is noteworthy that while gender-based differences in governance awareness are relatively small, caste and education levels play a more significant role. General category respondents, OBC respondents, and those with higher education tend to have higher awareness, while SC, ST, and lower-educated respondents display lower levels of knowledge, clearly patterning privilege and disadvantage.

We additionally assessed some knowledge and empowerment indicators among *Women Elected Representatives*. Women's representation in local governance has been strengthened through up to 50% reservation in Gram Panchayats. However, beyond mere representation, the extent of women's participation in decision-making is also a crucial factor in assessing their political independence.

4.4.2 Knowledge about Women's Reservation in Panchayats (WER Sample)

Across caste groups, OBC women (80.4%) reported the highest awareness that 50% of Panchayat seats are reserved for women, followed closely by SC (79.3%) and ST (74.7%) women (**Table 4.16**). General category respondents exhibit moderate awareness (67.5%). This suggests that knowledge of reservation policies is not uniform across caste lines and the targeted groups are aware while the privileged are not to the same extent. The high awareness among OBC, SC, and ST women could also be attributed to targeted government outreach and mobilization efforts.

Table 4.16: Caste-wise Knowledge Levels of WERs

Caste	Knows about Women Reservation	Panchayat Decisions Not Influenced	Influenced by Party	Influenced by Father	Influenced by Husband
General	67.5	63.8	14.5	5.8	21.7
OBC	80.4	61.7	12.8	9.6	24.5
SC	79.3	69	8.3	8.3	27.4
ST	74.7	60.5	22.4	15.8	47.4
Total (%)	76.1	63.8	14.2	9.9	30

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.17 shows that education followed a similar pattern: Matriculate (84.5%) and Graduate (82.9%) respondents have the highest awareness, while Literate-NFE respondents (62.0%) have the lowest. This gap may suggest that formal education could play a significant role in spreading awareness of women's political rights.

Table 4.17: Education-wise Knowledge Levels of WERs (%)

Education Level	Knows about Women Reservation	Panchayat Decisions Not Influenced	Influenced by Party	Influenced by Father	Influenced by Husband
Graduate	82.9	52.5	25	12.5	22.5
Intermediate	77.5	72.3	13.8	10.8	26.2
Less than Matric	72.2	60.3	14.1	10.3	35.9
Literate-NFE	62	79.1	4.7	0	25.6
Matriculate	84.5	59.3	12.8	12.8	36
Post-Graduate & Above	60.9	54.5	27.3	9.1	9.1
Total (%)	76.1	63.8	14.2	9.9	30

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

4.4.3 Decision-Making in Panchayat Meetings (WER Sample)

The extent to which WERs actively made decisions varied significantly. Across caste groups, SC women reported the highest levels of independent decision-making (69.0%), followed by General (63.8%) and OBC (61.7%) women (**Table 4.16**). However, ST women reported the lowest self-influence (60.5%). We also examined external influences on decision-making and found that ST women reported the highest influence from husbands (47.4%), significantly higher than the other caste groups (ranging from 21.7% to 27.4%). Party influence was also reportedly highest among ST women (22.4%), suggesting that their decision-making is more likely to be shaped by external pressures.

Education-wise, Intermediate-level respondents reported the highest levels of independent decision-making (72.3%), while perplexedly Graduate women reported the lowest (52.5%) (**Table 4.17**). This may suggest that higher education alone may not always translate into greater decision-making power—political agency could be shaped by multiple socio-political factors. The role of husbands and fathers in decision-making also varied by education of WERs. Less than matric (35.9%) and Matriculate (36.0%) respondents reported the highest influence of husbands, whereas Literate-NFE respondents show zero influence from fathers but still experience moderate influence from husbands (25.6%).

4.4.4 State-wise Knowledge Levels of ERs

Table 4.18 presents the state-wise distribution of knowledge level of ERs about governance. The knowledge levels of ERs and WERs show significant differences across states. Kerala and Maharashtra have the highest levels of governance awareness and computer literacy among ERs. For example, in Kerala, over 98% of representatives are familiar with digital governance portals like E-Gram Swaraj. Similarly, Andhra Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh show strong performance in both governance-related awareness and digital literacy.

On the other hand, states like Arunachal Pradesh, Haryana, and West Bengal show mixed results. While Haryana has high awareness of governance rules, such as the role of the Sarpanch, its performance in other areas like Gram Sabha records is weaker. Arunachal Pradesh has the lowest awareness in most categories, especially in computer literacy.

Table 4.18: Knowledge Level of ERs about Governance (%)

State	Governance-related Awareness				Computer Literacy	
	No. of Gram Sabhas Held*	Sarpanch Presides GS Meeting	Objective of the 73 rd Amendment	GS Records^	GPDP Portal: E-Gram swaraj	Expenditure Income Portal: E-Gram swaraj
AP	68.5	92.6	61.1	85.2	92.6	88.9
AR	4.8	88.1	21.4	52.4	2.4	2.4
CG	53.3	75.0	73.9	29.4	65.2	62.0
HP	35.4	57.6	20.2	1.0	57.6	55.6
HR	6.7	92.5	90.8	38.3	86.7	90.0
KA	7.8	27.3	53.3	41.6	89.6	44.2
KL	48.8	86.1	89.5	81.4	98.8	97.7
MH	47.4	85.3	92.6	91.6	86.3	91.6
MP	70.5	71.6	57.9	87.4	94.7	91.6
OD	18.1	88.9	75.0	62.5	80.6	81.9
RJ	41.7	90.6	70.8	52.1	78.1	83.3
SK	29.0	100.0	89.5	92.1	89.5	92.1
TN	22.1	69.5	57.9	65.3	90.5	90.5
TR	10.7	54.8	51.2	26.2	72.6	64.3
UP	12.1	62.7	53.0	47.0	72.3	69.9
WB	1.1	73.9	21.7	71.7	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	30.0	74.9	62.0	55.5	80.6	77.7
Total	396	989	818	256	1064	1025

Notes: * No of Gram Sabhas held four times in a year; ^GS Records: Minute Registers, Agenda Register, Attendance Registers

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.19 highlights that WERs in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha show demonstrate knowledge levels, especially in understanding the reservation system and decision-making powers. However, Uttar Pradesh has the highest awareness of seat reservation (78.1%) but lower decision-making independence. Maharashtra stands out for the high percentage of women facing challenges (89.4%), despite good governance awareness. Overall, southern and western states like Kerala and Maharashtra perform better in governance knowledge, while northeastern and some northern states lag behind.

Table 4.19: Knowledge Level of Women ERs (%)

State	Reservation of Seats Not less than 33%	Panchayat Decision - Self	No. of Mahila Sabha (1-2)	No. of Mahila Sabha (3-5)	No. of Bal Sabha (1-2)	No. of Bal Sabha (3-5)	WER Challenge
AP	55.6	100.0	85.2	7.4	3.7	88.9	29.6
AR	20.0	53.3	40.0	6.7	66.7	6.7	0.0
CG	11.6	100.0	7.0	37.2	34.9	20.9	30.2
HP	27.5	70.6	70.6	21.6	51.0	21.6	11.8
HR	15.4	53.9	35.9	5.1	71.8	25.6	28.2
KA	28.9	100.0	57.8	37.8	2.2	64.4	11.1
KL	11.1	100.0	44.4	20.0	4.4	51.1	15.6
MH	36.2	100.0	21.3	76.6	6.4	19.2	89.4
MP	29.6	63.6	52.3	13.6	43.2	15.9	6.8
OD	54.6	100.0	48.5	9.1	60.6	33.3	0.0
RJ	30.8	48.7	25.6	18.0	66.7	18.0	25.6
SK	15.8	73.7	84.2	10.5	31.6	68.4	31.6
TN	0.0	100.0	36.0	18.0	8.0	32.0	46.0
TR	42.9	50.0	67.9	14.3	14.3	64.3	21.4
UP	78.1	46.3	39.0	22.0	26.8	29.3	19.5
WB	1.9	100.0	75.0	11.5	38.5	55.8	25.0
Total (%)	27.4	79.3	47.7	22.7	31.7	37.1	26.1
Total	169	449	295	140	229	109	161

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

4.5 Assessment of Outreach of RGSA program

4.5.1 Mode of Communication about Trainings

Our survey with the ERs found that the dissemination of information regarding training for elected representatives was conducted through multiple channels, including office orders, emails, WhatsApp messages, telephonic communication, public notices, and in-person visits. **Table 4.20** indicates that office orders (57.4%) to be the most prominent mode of communication, followed by WhatsApp (56.7%) and telephonic communication (41.7%). The less frequently used methods included emails (33.1%), public notices (9.4%), and in-person visits (7.9%). Official orders were used highly possibly due to their formal nature and widespread acceptability in bureaucratic communication. WhatsApp's significant usage also suggests a growing reliance on digital, instant messaging platforms for official communication. One of the officials from Uttar Pradesh highlighted the emphasis on structured administrative communication in Indian bureaucracy,

It is an office order and also an email But, we don't communicate directly with ERs We communicate through our district offices, and communicate with ERs (RGSA State Official, Uttar Pradesh).

Another official from Tamil Nadu highlighted the use of a mixed communication channel of formal office orders as well as reliance on informal digital media such as WhatsApp for faster reach of schedules and information regarding the training.

I am an inspector of this training block. Through proper letter communication, which is approved by the collector, we will communicate to the Panchayat. And also, phone contact. Authority is email and letter. We are having a WhatsApp group among BDO, Zonal Deputy BDO. SC ST WhatsApp group is also available (228 Panchayat). Through this group, we are communicating. (RGSA District Official, Tamil Nadu)

Across states, a mix of digital and non-digital approaches was observed (**Table 4.20**). West Bengal (98.9%), Sikkim (97.4%), Arunachal Pradesh (90.5%), and Andhra Pradesh (83.3%) reflected a strong reliance on official orders. In contrast, Chhattisgarh (88%), Tamil Nadu (86.3%), and Odisha (83.3%) exhibited a high dependence on WhatsApp. Kerala dominantly used email (77.9%).

Non-digital methods like public notices and in-person visits were less frequently employed but still played a role in some states. West Bengal (35.9%) and Karnataka (29.9%) showed relatively higher usage of public notices, indicating that Gram Panchayat notice boards remain a relevant information source. Sikkim (26.3%) and Rajasthan (26.3%) showed the highest use of in-person visits, highlighting a preference for face-to-face engagement.

Table 4.20: Training Outreach – Various Communication Channels (%)

State	Office Orders	e-Mail	WhatsApp	Telephonic	Public Notice*	Visits**
AP	83.3	3.7	42.6	20.4	3.7	5.6
AR	90.5	4.8	45.2	23.8	11.9	0.0
CG	58.7	13.0	88.0	31.5	0.0	5.4
HP	55.6	14.1	37.4	28.3	4.0	6.1
HR	39.5	42.9	52.1	76.5	17.7	7.6
KA	62.3	45.5	70.1	67.5	29.9	13.0
KL	31.4	77.9	19.8	18.6	4.7	5.8
MH	29.5	27.4	68.4	21.1	5.3	9.5
MP	60.2	30.1	43.0	14.0	3.2	4.3
OD	26.4	5.6	83.3	51.4	4.2	2.8
RJ	46.3	30.5	47.4	16.8	4.2	26.3
SK	97.4	7.9	34.2	7.9	7.9	26.3
TN	73.7	36.8	86.3	79.0	3.2	5.3
TR	57.8	15.7	55.4	44.6	2.4	0.0
UP	57.0	39.2	38.0	22.8	10.1	0.0
WB	98.9	89.1	75.0	98.9	35.9	12.0
Total (%)	57.4	33.1	56.7	41.7	9.4	7.9
Total	752	434	743	547	123	104

Notes: Public Notice*: Notice displayed on GP Notice Board, Visits*: in Person visits to the GP

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Our qualitative interviews also highlighted several perspectives from stakeholders on effective communication strategies. Many stakeholders pointed out that training schedules are often communicated at the last minute, leaving little time for Sarpanches

and other participants to fulfil their commitments. *This issue becomes even more critical in regions where elected representatives juggle multiple responsibilities or need to travel from remote areas.* One stakeholder from Sikkim shared their perspective on the matter:

To improve outreach, which refers to how we communicate with ERs and individuals participating in training, we need to find better ways to engage more people in these programs. One suggestion we received is to implement a notification system. For example, we could start by sending an email 15 days before the training to inform participants. Then, we could send a reminder 10 days in advance and another reminder one week before the training. (RGSA State Official, Sikkim)

This simple, structured approach to communication could help ERs plan and prioritize their attendance. Currently, as the stakeholder noted, many participants only receive notifications a few days before training sessions, leading lower turnout in attendance.

4.5.2 Assessment of Training Programmes Attendance

The training attendance patterns among PFs and ERs under the revamped RGSA was also explored to understand training outreach. It has been found that their attendance varied significantly, highlighting both strengths and areas that could benefit from further attention. While some training types had relatively stronger participation, others saw minimal engagement.

As per **Table 4.21**, Orientation training was attended by 302 functionaries (43.6%), while 390 (56.4%) did not report participating. Interestingly, ERs showed higher engagement, with 450 (52.8%) attending and 402 (47.2%) not attending. Refresher training followed a similar trend, with 237 functionaries (34.2%) participating, compared to 353 ERs (41.4%). What stood out was the significantly higher attendance in GPDP training, which had the strongest participation among both stakeholders—459 functionaries (66.3%) and 490 ERs (57.5%). This may suggest that training focused on planning and development was widely regarded as essential for governance roles.

Training Session at SIRD, Jorethang, Sikkim



Table 4.21: Distribution of Attendance of Trainings (%)

Training Type	Panchayat Functionaries	Elected Representatives
Orientation Training	43.6	52.8
Refresher Training	34.2	41.4
GPDP Training	66.3	57.5
Thematic Training	31.4	35.8
Exposure Visits	4.8	12.3

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Surprisingly, thematic training, which covered specific governance topics, had lower attendance despite its potential importance in enhancing governance capabilities. Only 217 functionaries (31.4%) and 305 ERs (35.8%) attended. The most striking finding was the poor participation in exposure visits, with only 28 functionaries (4.8%) and 105 ERs (12.3%) attending. Their limited engagement is surprising, considering the valuable practical learning opportunities these visits offer.

Table 4.22: RGSA Training Attended by Different Stakeholders (%)

State	ER	PF	SHG	LDF
AP	88.9	74.7	86.6	15.5
AR	73.8	47.5	45.0	10.0
CG	90.2	92.1	70.0	82.5
HP	21.7	34.1	65.7	1.4
HR	51.5	47.1	38.3	41.5
KA	24.7	23.5	47.5	17.0
KL	81.4	68.8	76.0	30.0
MH	60.0	68.6	53.8	17.1
MP	93.7	92.9	95.7	81.0
OD	86.1	21.6	72.0	13.0
RJ	53.1	55.8	55.8	40.9
SK	89.5	80.5	44.4	4.8
TN	89.5	51.4	87.5	9.5
TR	26.2	33.3	39.5	26.5
UP	39.8	50.0	55.0	27.9
WB	98.9	88.9	90.2	47.5
Total (%)	64.6	58.9	65.9	28.4

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

It is observed that ERs consistently participated more in structured training like orientation, refresher, and thematic sessions, possibly due to their leadership responsibilities. On the other hand, functionaries were more engaged in GPDP training, which aligned more closely with their role in administrative planning. While participation in GPDP training was strong, the relatively lower attendance in thematic training and exposure visits suggest some areas for improvement. Strengthening outreach efforts and ensuring that stakeholders see the practical benefits of these sessions could enhance their engagement.

Across states, Maharashtra and West Bengal stand out with exceptionally high training participation, with most stakeholder groups reporting attendance rates above 90 percent (**Table 4.22**). Maharashtra has a near-universal engagement among elected representatives, Panchayat Functionaries, and SHG members. West Bengal showed a similar pattern, with elected representatives registering 98.9 percent attendance in any of the trainings. These suggest a well-established system of capacity-building efforts in these states.

In contrast, states such as Haryana and Karnataka record some of the lowest training participation level. Haryana's engagement is particularly weak, with only 21.7 percent of elected representatives attending and a negligible 1.4 percent participation among Line Department Functionaries. Karnataka also exhibits similarly low engagement across categories, with elected representatives and Panchayat Functionaries both reporting training attendance below 25 percent. These numbers could be indicative of significant gaps in outreach and access to training, which may limit the overall effectiveness of governance at the local level.

Some states, such as Chhattisgarh and Kerala, show a more balanced distribution of training participation across different stakeholder groups. In these states, the attendance of elected representatives, Panchayat Functionaries, and SHG members is relatively high and comparable. *However, a common trend across most states is the persistently low participation of Line Department Functionaries.* Except for a few exceptions like Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, where their participation exceeds 80 percent, most states report LDF attendance below 20 percent, highlighting a weak integration of these key stakeholders into the training framework.

The RGSA training program also showed a moderate participation among women (47.5%) and marginalized communities (46.5%). The representation of SCs and STs comprised 17.7 percent and 28.6 percent of attendees, respectively. Among caste groups, OBCs have the highest participation at 31.5 percent, followed by the General category at 22 percent.

The data therefore suggests that RGSA training is *broadly* inclusive. However, lower participation among younger and more educated representatives points to potential gaps in outreach or varying levels of engagement.

Explaining the Moderate Attendance in RGSA Trainings

Our qualitative findings from interviews with various stakeholders show that securing consistent attendance from elected representatives in RGSA training programs is not a straightforward task. When we conducted interviews with key stakeholders, including faculty trainers and panchayat functionaries, primary challenges were discussed.

A significant barrier is the practical difficulty of attending training sessions due to time constraints and travel challenges. Many ERs come from rural and remote areas where transportation options are limited. As one faculty trainer explained:

Many participants come from distant areas with limited bus connectivity, often relying on just one or two buses. This restricts us from extending training sessions beyond certain hours for them... Additionally, participants have household responsibilities, including taking care of cattle, farm work, and other field duties. Given these constraints, it's difficult for them to commit to a 5-day training course. (SIRD Faculty, Himachal Pradesh)

For many ERs, especially those balancing governance responsibilities with daily livelihood activities, attending long training programs is a significant burden. While shorter refresher courses may help, longer sessions are needed for deeper engagement. Trainers recognize this and suggest alternative formats to make training more feasible:

If we were to introduce longer courses, such as 5 or 10-day programs, those who are mentally prepared and can manage to leave their responsibilities behind would be more likely to attend. (SIRD Faculty, Himachal Pradesh)

This unpacks the importance of designing training programs that align with the realities of ERs' lives. While longer courses could enhance learning, they must be flexible enough to accommodate participants' constraints.

One potential way to address logistical barriers is to bring training closer to the participants. Some respondents suggested conducting training at the cluster or block level to reduce travel difficulties. As one district-level trainer noted:

Since our district is small, it's manageable, but in other districts, especially in hilly areas, people often have to travel 60-70 km for training. To improve results and make it easier for everyone, the basic training should be held at the cluster level... I believe this would lead to better participation and outcomes. (DLMT Faculty, Himachal Pradesh)

By organizing smaller, localized sessions, more ERs could participate, leading to better engagement and learning outcomes.

Table 4.23: Distribution of Trainings Attended by ERs (%): PESA Regions

State*	Orientation Training	Refresher Training	GPDP Training	Thematic Training	Exposure Training
Chhattisgarh	1.82	1.82	98.18	0	0
Himachal Pradesh	100	0	0	0	0
Maharashtra	0	30	100	90	0
Madhya Pradesh	23.1	19.2	53.9	26.9	0.0
Odisha	41.2	76.5	35.3	17.7	5.9
Rajasthan	12.5	6.3	18.8	93.8	0.0
Total (%)	15.6	18.0	68.0	26.6	0.8
Total	128	128	128	128	128

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Note: * Andhra Pradesh is not included in the table, as none of the surveyed GPs in Vizianagaram and East Godavari (PESA-designated districts out of the surveyed four districts) fall under PESA.

PESA act plays an important role in empowering tribal communities in Scheduled Area as mentioned in PESA act, sample PESA states in our study are Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, and Rajasthan.

As compared to full sample (all states), training attainment under each category for PESA region is less due to overall literacy level and demographic features of respective regions. Overall training attainment in PESA region for most important trainings i.e., Orientation and Refresher Training is 15.6 percent and 18 percent respectively (**Table 4.23**).

4.5.3 Assessment of Training Programmes (Physical Mode)

Among all the modes of training programmes, physical mode (or in class/in-person mode) stands out as the dominant, with 91.4 percent coverage under it for various training programmes under Revamped RGSA.

Table 4.24 shows that most sample states report exceptionally high reach of orientation training, with West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Tripura reaching 100% of ERs. Similarly, GPDP training also sees notable reach, especially in states like Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal, and Tamil Nadu, where 100 percent of elected representatives attended.

This high level of engagement signifies a strong commitment to equipping ERs with essential governance skills. However, there are some variations in refresher and thematic training, with states like Haryana and Rajasthan having comparatively lower physical reach (18.2% and 52.9% for orientation training in Haryana and Rajasthan, respectively).

Swatch Bharat Mission Training of ERs and Panchayat Workers, PRIT, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh



Overall, average attendance remains high across all types of training, indicating robust engagement in physical mode training programs, particularly for GPDP training (92.8%) and orientation training (90.4%).

Table 4.24: Distribution of Training Programmes (Physical Mode) (%)

State	Orientation Training	Refresher Training	GPDP Training	Thematic Training
AP	95.4	96.6	91.7	100.0
AR	95.2	100.0	100.0	100.0
CG	100.0	100.0	97.5	
HP	85.7	81.8	84.6	71.4
HR	18.2	21.1	37.5	25.0
KA	90.9	87.5	94.1	100.0
KL	89.6	100.0	97.1	90.9
MH	100.0	100.0	100.0	98.4
MP	100.0	100.0	88.9	100.0
OD	90.0	71.2	64.3	50.0
RJ	52.9	64.7	72.4	62.5
SK	93.6	81.8	87.5	66.7
TN	97.6	100.0	95.8	100.0
TR	100.0		85.7	100.0
UP	76.5	81.3	100.0	100.0
WB	97.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total (%)	90.4	87.3	92.8	89.1
Total	388	308	453	271

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

4.5.4 Assessment Training Venues for ERs (Physical Mode)

Table 4.25 shows significant variations in attainment across different sample states and training types reflecting 53.2 percent and 51.7 percent (In Total) attainment for Refresher and Thematic Training at DPRC while significant attainment at Block BPRC for GPDP and Orientation Training with 57.7 percent and 44.6 percent showcasing skewed distribution. This points towards variation in administration and implementation structures of training programmes across states.

While BPRC is observed as the primary training center across the sample states for various trainings, field observations highlight a significant need to strengthen the training infrastructure at the BPRC level.

The venue matters because BPRCs are typically more accessible to ERs, providing a localized setting that fosters community involvement and engagement. This proximity allows for better interaction among participants and trainers, enhancing the learning experience.

Table 4.25: Distribution of Training Programme (Physical Mode) ** (%)

State	Orientation Training		Refresher Training		GPDP Training		Thematic Training	
	BPRC	DPRC	BPRC	DPRC	BPRC	DPRC	BPRC	DPRC
AP	97.6	2.4	96.4	3.6	87.9	9.1	100.0	0.0
AR	68.4	21.1	90.9	9.1	47.1	52.9	57.1	42.9
CG	83.3	16.7	100.0	0.0	89.9	8.9	-	-
HP	65.5	20.7	66.7	33.3	72.7	18.2	40.0	40.0
HR	0.0	0.0	75.0	0.0	66.7	33.3	25.0	25.0
KA	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
KL	46.5	11.6	38.1	42.9	50.0	25.0	55.0	5.0
MH	61.1	27.8	6.1	93.9	48.4	39.1	3.2	96.8
MP	66.7	33.3	72.7	27.3	82.8	10.3	85.7	0.0
OD	66.7	33.3	48.7	51.4	77.8	22.2	100.0	0.0
RJ	22.2	33.3	27.3	63.6	38.1	47.6	60.0	13.3
SK	0.0	0.0	11.1	0.0	7.1	0.0	16.7	0.0
TN	35.0	30.0	32.4	26.5	43.5	34.8	24.6	15.4
TR	61.1	16.7	-	-	100.0	0.0	100.0	0.0
UP	53.9	38.5	38.5	61.5	80.0	20.0	100.0	0.0
WB	5.8	93.0	3.8	92.4	16.3	83.8	6.2	92.3
Total (%)	44.7	34.5	36.7	53.3	57.7	32.9	25.8	51.7
Total*	383	383	308	308	447	447	271	271

Notes: ** This analysis focuses on physical mode training, as 89.6% of ERs attended training through this mode; * A total of 383 ERs could recall the venue of their orientation training, which took place at BPRC, DPRC, ETC, and SIRD. – Data Not Available. ^ Most training sessions in Sikkim are conducted at SIRD.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

4.5.5 Assessment of ER Participation in Residential Training

Table 4.26 indicates ERs participation in residential training across various Sample states where GPDP and Orientation training show the highest (60.4% and 58.3%) average participation rate, stressing the physical and dedicated engagement for these trainings.

In contrast, refresher training has the lowest overall participation at 33 percent, suggesting a potential need for increased emphasis on this type of training. States like Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and Rajasthan stand out for their remarkable engagement in refresher training.

The variations in participation rates can be attributed to several factors, including the perceived relevance of the training content, state-specific governance priorities, and the availability of resources to facilitate such training.

Table 4.26: Distribution of ER Participation in Residential Training (%)

State	Orientation Training	Refresher Training	GPDP Training	Thematic Training
AP	45.5	51.7	61.1	0.0
AR	14.3	100.0	89.5	100.0
CG	0.0	100.0	82.7	
HP	65.7	18.2	53.9	57.1
HR	90.9	15.8	25.0	18.8
KA	9.1	100.0	52.9	100.0
KL	60.4	14.3	31.4	40.9
MH	38.9	3.0	66.2	3.1
MP	15.4	90.9	86.1	85.7
OD	36.4	21.2	28.6	50.0
RJ	0.0	100.0	96.6	87.5
SK	87.1	45.5	31.3	22.2
TN	75.6	23.5	41.7	24.6
TR	72.2	-	0.0	0.0
UP	88.2	6.3	20.0	0.0
WB	75.3	27.9	47.5	60.0
Total (%)	58.3	33.4	60.4	39.0
Total	252	235	194	196

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

DPRC Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh

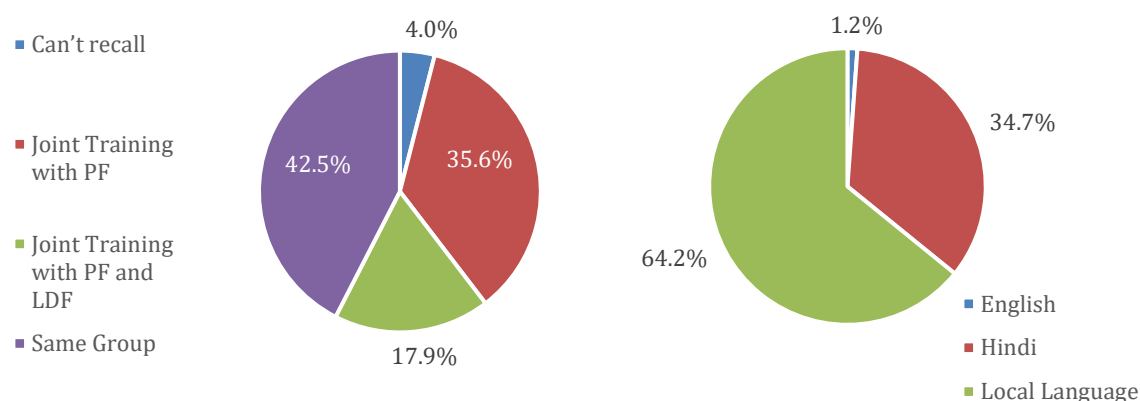


4.5.6 Representation of Trainings Sessions Group and Language of ERs

Our sample survey represents training session conducted across various training types and groups in all states as shown in **Figure 4.2**. Across all sampled states, 42.5% of ERs reported attending training programs (excluding orientation and refresher training) alongside their peers. Additionally, 35.6% attended these programs jointly with PF, while 17.9% participated alongside both PF and LDF.

The analysis reveals that across all sample states, the most training programmes are conducted in the regional language, with 64 percent of sessions conducted in the regional language, allowing content to be readily understood. In contrast, 35 percent of training sessions were delivered in Hindi, as illustrated in **Figure 4.2**.

Figure 4.2: Trainings by Functionaries Type and Learning Medium



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

A state-wise analysis highlights a clear trend: in Hindi-speaking states such as Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh, over 95 percent of training sessions were conducted in Hindi. Similarly, in non-Hindi-speaking states, over 95 percent of sessions were held in the respective regional languages."

4.6 Assessment of Training Modules and TNA Methodology

4.6.1 Training Content

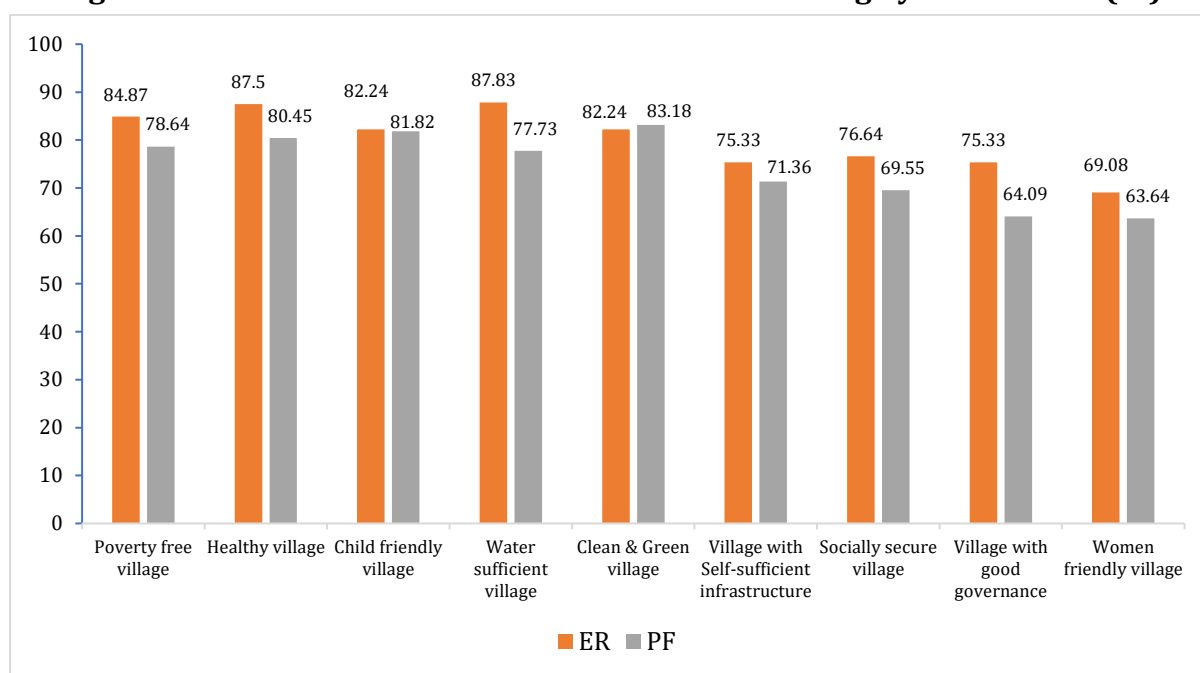
We also explored several aspects about the training materials, modules, and the modes of delivery. Stakeholders reported that the revamped RGSA training framework has covered a diverse range of themes aimed at strengthening grassroots governance. The data from our primary survey highlights notable variations across states and between ERs and Panchayat functionaries in terms of training coverage.

On average, the training participation was relatively high for certain themes, with ERs reporting an overall engagement rate of over 75 percent in the following categories (**Figure 4.3**). The most commonly attended thematic areas included *Healthy Village* (87.5% for ERs, 80.4% for PFs), *Water Sufficient Village* (87.8% for ERs, 77.7% for PFs), and *Clean & Green Village* (82.2% for ERs, 83.2% for PFs). However, some themes showed lower participation, particularly those related to governance and social security.

If we look at the state variations, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, and Tripura consistently reported high levels of training participation across multiple themes, with several themes showing 100 percent attendance for ERs (**Table 4.27**). Maharashtra and West Bengal demonstrated consistently high engagement among both ERs and PFs. In contrast, Madhya Pradesh showed minimal engagement, particularly among ERs, with little to no participation across most themes. Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim, and

Rajasthan reported moderate participation but with clear discrepancies between ERs and PFs in some areas.

Figure 4.3: LSDG Themes Learned in Thematic Training by ERs and PFs (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.27: LSDG Themes Covered in Thematic Training - Part 1 (%)

State	Poverty-Free Village		Healthy Village		Child-Friendly Village		Water Sufficient Village		Clean & Green Village	
	ER	PF	ER	PF	ER	PF	ER	PF	ER	PF
AP	100.0	100.0	100.0	50.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	50.0	100.0	100.0
AR	14.3	57.1	85.7	85.7	85.7	85.7	85.7	71.4	71.4	100.0
CG		100.0		50.0		50.0		100.0		100.0
HR	56.3	57.1	87.5	57.1	68.8	71.4	81.3	64.3	68.8	78.6
HP	85.7	50.0	85.7	66.7	71.4	50.0	71.4	33.3	85.7	83.3
KA	100.0	50.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	83.3	100.0	100.0	100.0
KL	72.7	66.7	77.3	66.7	72.7	58.3	68.2	58.3	72.7	83.3
MP	0.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	0.0	14.3	57.1	57.1	28.6	28.6
MH	98.4	98.4	98.4	98.4	98.4	96.7	100.0	100.0	98.4	100.0
OD	87.5	100.0	87.5	100.0	62.5	100.0	75.0	83.3	75.0	50.0
RJ	91.7	69.6	66.7	60.9	79.2	73.9	62.5	60.9	75.0	60.9
SK	66.7	45.5	77.8	45.5	77.8	45.5	77.8	36.4	66.7	54.6
TN	82.8	90.9	89.1	100.0	75.0	90.9	95.3	81.8	75.0	100.0
TR	100.0	75.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
UP	66.7	57.1	66.7	71.4	33.3	85.7	33.3	42.9	0.0	42.9
WB	100.0	88.9	96.9	91.1	93.9	91.1	96.9	86.7	93.9	88.9
Total (%)	84.9	78.6	87.5	80.5	82.2	81.8	87.8	77.7	82.2	83.2

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.28: LSDG Themes Covered in Thematic Training – Part 2 (%)

State	Village with Self-sufficient infrastructure		Socially-Secured village		Village with Good Governance		Women -Friendly village	
	ER	PF	ER	PF	ER	PF	ER	PF
AP	100.0	50.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
AR	85.7	100.0	0.0	71.4	0.0	85.7	0.0	57.1
CG		0.0		0.0		0.0		50.0
HR	50.0	50.0	50.0	57.1	31.3	28.6	12.5	21.4
HP	28.6	33.3	28.6	33.3	28.6	33.3	28.6	33.3
KA	100.0	50.0	100.0	50.0	100.0	50.0	50.0	100.0
KL	68.2	66.7	59.1	66.7	54.6	58.3	59.1	50.0
MP	0.0	0.0	14.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
MH	98.4	98.4	98.4	98.4	98.4	98.4	98.4	96.7
OD	87.5	16.7	75.0	16.7	75.0	16.7	75.0	16.7
RJ	25.0	26.1	62.5	39.1	16.7	8.7	25.0	17.4
SK	66.7	72.7	66.7	36.4	55.6	36.4	77.8	45.5
TN	73.4	90.9	81.3	90.9	100.0	81.8	78.1	81.8
TR	0.0	100.0	0.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	0.0	100.0
UP	0.0	28.6	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.3
WB	95.4	88.9	92.3	86.7	92.3	86.7	89.2	82.2
Total (%)	75.3	71.4	76.6	69.6	75.3	64.1	69.1	63.6

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

As discussed earlier in Section 4.5.2, a significant difference was observed in the training received by ERs and PFs. While ERs generally reported higher participation rates across thematic areas, PFs had a stronger engagement in specific themes, particularly in states like Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, and Tamil Nadu, where functionaries reported higher training coverage in themes such as Healthy Village and Women-Friendly Village. In Odisha, for instance, PFs had full participation in *Healthy Village* and *Child-Friendly Village* training, while ERs lagged behind. In some states like Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh, the difference was more pronounced, with ERs showing much higher participation than PFs across several categories.

Certain themes related to governance and self-sufficiency saw relatively lower coverage across states. "Village with Good Governance" had a lower training participation, with an overall average of 75.3 percent for ERs and only 64.1 percent for PFs. Similarly, "Socially Secure Village" training had lower engagement, especially among PFs, except in states like Maharashtra and West Bengal where participation was significantly higher.

A particularly interesting pattern was the disparity in training on "Women-Friendly Villages," where ERs reported an average participation of 69.1 percent, while PFs had a slightly lower engagement at 63.6 percent. However, in some states like Andhra Pradesh and Tripura, PFs had complete coverage in this theme, whereas ERs had little to no participation.

LSDG Info-Board made by Hamirpur DPRC Faculty, Himachal Pradesh



4.6.2. Challenges in Identifying the Most Relevant Training Modules

Deciding which training modules were truly the “best” or most relevant under the revamped RGSA framework was a challenge. While the framework offered a wide range of modules, the process of choosing what to deliver often lacked a uniform, structured approach. In many cases, changes were made because of the needed flexibility, depending on the trainer’s judgement or the immediate training environment. As one trainer put it, “Yes, we have to change sometimes; we have to change the atmosphere and some modules.” (DLMT, Kerala).

This flexibility could be valuable, but it also meant that the choice of modules was not always based on systematic evaluation. Often, modules that had been used in previous sessions were repeated without a clear understanding of their continued relevance, while potentially more suitable content went unexplored. This challenge likely stemmed from the heavy administrative workload and multiple training commitments trainers were already managing. A practical way forward would be to appoint additional training staff at the DPRC, helping to reduce the burden and ensure a more structured and comprehensive process for selecting modules.

A more fundamental challenge lay in the gap between what was taught and what could realistically be applied in the field. Trainers acknowledged that some modules were

strong on paper but struggled to resonate with participants because they did not align with local governance realities. As one respondent noted, *“There is a difference between what we teach and what is reality. Sometimes we cannot do it because of the teaching envelope.”* (DLMT, Tripura). When this happened, engagement levels dropped, and the sessions became more of a formality than a learning opportunity.

Efforts to identify the right modules through TNA² were not consistently applied. Where they did occur, they could be effective, *“What is lacking there? We will identify the gap, and accordingly, we will integrate it into the next batch”* (SIRD Faculty, Kerala), but such practices were not the norm. In many places, modules remained unchanged over several cycles, even when governance contexts and policy priorities had shifted.

Another layer of complexity came from the content itself. Overlaps and redundancies were common, especially between orientation and refresher trainings. While orientation sessions provided a foundation, *“Orientation training serves as a vital introduction for new participants...”*, refresher courses sometimes repeated the same material without introducing fresh perspectives or updates. This not only limited the value of the training but also consumed time that could have been spent on emerging or locally relevant topics. The effectiveness of any module also depended heavily on who delivered it. The same content could yield very different results depending on the trainer’s preparation and pedagogical skills. As one candidly admitted, *“First of all, if I am a trainer myself, then I don’t have an understanding about the methodology of what should be done in the training or how to teach it. The trainers have not received training on it, so they provide training based on what they have learned on their own.”* (DLMT, Himachal Pradesh). This uneven preparedness meant that even well-designed modules could fall flat.

Finally, although feedback mechanisms were in place, they did not always provide detailed insights into the strengths or weaknesses of specific modules. Feedback often touched on broader training issues, such as logistics or engagement, rather than module content. As one trainer from Karnataka reflected, *“Trainees are finding it difficult to make the training learnings functional; possible reasons might be limited field exposures and delays in payments for both trainers and trainees.”* In such situations, systemic barriers overshadowed module-specific concerns, making it harder to refine content in a targeted way.

4.6.3 Training on Digital Platforms

Digital skills are becoming more important in governance and local administration. With more government services moving online, it is essential for ERs and PFs to be trained in using digital tools. The revamped RGSA training has included lessons on key software and portals used for planning, financial management, and tracking development work. Our study looked at how well ERs and PFs learned these digital skills during the training.

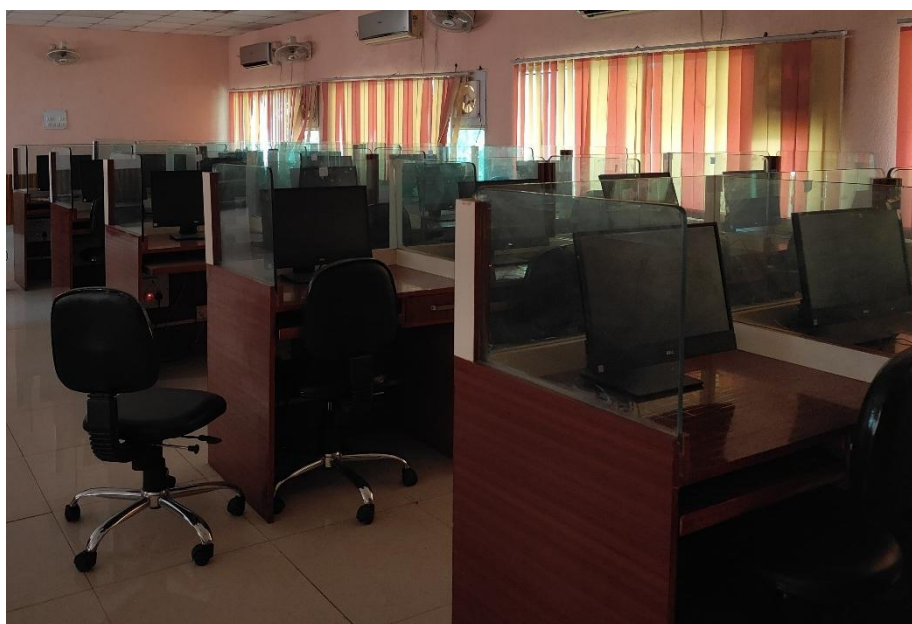
² The TNAs that were conducted often followed a top-down approach rather than being developed through wider consultation, and they were not carried out on a regular, periodic basis.

Table 4.29: Assessment of Software Learning – Part 1 (%)

State	e-Gramswaraj		PFMS		TMP		National Asset Directory	
	ER	PF	ER	PF	ER	PF	ER	PF
AP	91.7	96.2	39.6	45.3	25.0	15.1	4.2	15.1
AR	22.6	52.6	3.2	52.6	3.2	42.1	38.7	15.8
CG	91.6	93.8	4.8	2.5	21.7	8.6	9.6	0.0
HR	88.5	79.3	26.9	72.4	30.8	17.2	23.1	24.1
HP	78.4	70.0	17.7	70.0	17.7	25.0	2.0	30.0
KA	100.0	89.5	10.5	52.6	0.0	15.8	0.0	10.5
KL	88.6	74.6	10.0	41.8	21.4	34.6	7.1	7.3
MP	100.0	100.0	3.5	100.0	3.5	18.6	3.5	10.2
MH	100.0	93.6	71.9	93.6	48.3	64.1	3.4	62.8
OD	93.6	100.0	1.6	37.5	1.6	12.5	4.8	12.5
RJ	98.0	93.7	9.8	73.0	17.7	15.9	7.8	15.9
SK	100.0	97.0	50.0	93.9	8.8	57.6	8.8	18.2
TN	95.3	86.8	52.9	60.5	7.1	7.9	0.0	0.0
TR	90.9	66.7	9.1	66.7	4.6	11.1	4.6	22.2
UP	81.8	80.5	24.2	80.5	6.1	24.4	3.0	4.9
WB	98.9	100.0	63.7	65.6	75.8	46.9	37.4	18.8
Total (%)	91.2	88.4	29.5	63.1	23.4	27.9	10.0	18.1

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Computer Lab, SIRD, Nilokheri, Haryana



Overall, ERs and PFs had different levels of engagement with digital tools. **Table 4.29** and **Table 4.30** show that ERs were more likely to learn about governance-related software, while PFs showed higher participation in financial management and administrative tools. For example, 91.2 percent of ERs learned about the e-Gramswaraj portal, compared to 88.4 percent of PFs. However, when it came to PFMS, PFs had much higher participation (63.1%) compared to ERs (29.5%). This suggests that PFs, who handle more technical aspects of panchayat administration, received more training in financial tracking.

Table 4.30: Assessment of Software Learning – Part 2 (%)

State	Tool for Geo-Tagging of Assets		Count of Panchayat NIRNAY/Meri Panchayat/PDI		Others	
	ER	PF	ER	PF	ER	PF
AP	6.3	11.3	10.4	17.0	4.2	0.0
AR	19.4	31.6	32.3	31.6	0.0	36.8
CG	56.6	61.7	57.8	63.0	6.0	1.2
HR	23.1	20.7	34.6	17.2	0.0	27.6
HP	9.8	10.0	15.7	7.5	0.0	12.5
KA	0.0	21.1	26.3	26.3	0.0	5.3
KL	11.4	14.6	11.4	14.6	7.1	1.8
MP	22.8	3.4	21.1	10.2	0.0	33.9
MH	2.3	7.7	1.1	78.2	0.0	10.3
OD	1.6	0.0	1.6	25.0	1.6	0.0
RJ	7.8	4.8	19.6	9.5	0.0	15.9
SK	38.2	36.4	23.5	45.5	0.0	39.4
TN	3.5	39.5	50.6	47.4	1.2	7.9
TR	4.6	0.0	4.6	3.7	0.0	18.5
UP	0.0	4.9	3.0	4.9	0.0	2.4
WB	39.6	51.6	59.3	35.9	5.5	1.6
Total (%)	17.4	22.2	26.3	31.3	2.2	11.9

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

A similar pattern was seen in training for the National Asset Directory, where only 10.0 percent of ERs received training, compared to 18.1 percent of PFs. This shows that PFs were more involved in learning about asset tracking. On the other hand, ERs had better training on tools related to decision-making and governance.

We also found some major differences in digital training across states. Some states showed very high participation in digital learning, while others lagged behind. Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and West Bengal performed the best, with high engagement in multiple digital platforms. In Maharashtra, for example, almost all ERs (100%) and PFs (93.6%) were trained in e-Gramswaraj, and PFs had strong participation in PFMS (93.6%). Similarly, in West Bengal, over 98 percent of both ERs and PFs received e-Gramswaraj training.

However, some states had low participation in key digital tools. In states like Madhya Pradesh, while 100 percent of ERs and PFs were trained in e-Gramswaraj, very few received training in financial and asset management tools. Only 3.5 percent of ERs in MP learned PFMS, even though 100 percent of PFs were trained in it.

Some states showed clear differences between ERs and PFs. In Tamil Nadu, for example, 52.9 percent of ERs received PFMS training, compared to 60.5 percent of PFs, showing a balanced approach. However, in states like Odisha, only 1.6 percent of ERs were trained in PFMS, while 37.5 percent of PFs were. Similarly, in Arunachal Pradesh, only 3.2 percent of ERs learned PFMS, while 52.6 percent of PFs did.

Another important trend was seen in the training for geo-tagging tools. Overall, 22.2 percent of PFs learned about geo-tagging assets, compared to only 17.4 percent of ERs.

States like Chhattisgarh (61.7% of PFs) and West Bengal (51.6% of PFs) performed well in this area, while states like Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu had very low participation.

It is noteworthy to mention that in our survey, when respondents were asked about their awareness of digital platforms available for PRIs, the Gram Manchitra application was not cited even once. This absence is significant: it suggests that despite being a central spatial planning tool developed by MoPR, Gram Manchitra has not yet permeated grassroots governance practice or awareness in any meaningful way. The lack of recall indicates both a gap in outreach and a missed opportunity to integrate evidence-based, spatial data-driven decision-making into local planning processes.

Gram Manchitra has the potential to transform how Gram Panchayats plan and monitor development projects. By combining geo-spatial mapping with demographic and infrastructure data, it enables precise identification of gaps, prioritisation of interventions, and tracking of progress. However, without awareness and practical skills, this potential remains untapped. The complete absence of mention in our survey responses reinforces the need for targeted, hands-on training that introduces Panchayat functionaries to the platform, demonstrates its relevance to their day-to-day work, and builds the confidence to use it effectively.

Such training should go beyond introductory demonstrations to include real, practice-oriented exercises, for instance, mapping existing infrastructure, overlaying population data, and generating actionable insights for the GPDP. By embedding Gram Manchitra into routine planning processes, Panchayats can shift from intuition-based decision-making to data-backed governance, ensuring that investments are better aligned with local needs.

Addressing this awareness gap is critical. Without a deliberate push to familiarise local officials with Gram Manchitra and integrate its use into training modules, the tool risks remaining underutilised despite its strategic value. Building this capacity can help institutionalise a culture of evidence-based planning, making local governance more transparent, targeted, and impactful.

4.6.4 Modes of Training

Training methodologies are important in ensuring that the stakeholders effectively absorb and apply the knowledge disseminated through the RGSA training framework. A well-designed training program not only provides theoretical knowledge but also enhances practical skills through interactive methods. We therefore assessed the training pedagogies adopted by training resource centers and we here highlight the overall trends, key differences between ERs and PFs, and significant state-level variations.

Table 4.31 reveals that Lecture-based training remains the most commonly used method across all states, with 83.6 percent of ERs and 84.4 percent of PFs receiving training through this approach. Faculty members reported an even higher reliance on lectures, with nearly 95 percent adopting this method. While lectures provide a broad overview of governance concepts, their effectiveness is often debated, especially when dealing with practical aspects of panchayat administration.

Table 4.31: Pedagogies Types Adopted for RGSA Training – Part 1 (%)

	Lecture				Case Studies				Video Demonstration			Games & Simulation			Role Plays		
State	ER	PF	F*	O**	ER	PF	F*	O**	ER	PF	F*	ER	PF	O**	ER	PF	O**
AP	85	85	90	100	50	62	100	100	46	40	100	6	15	86	13	21	86
AR	97	100	100	100	39	0	75	0	52	67	50	13	33	0	23	33	0
CG	99	94	100	80	8	9	44	60	82	78	100	1	2	40	1	1	40
HR	69	38	100	60	10	77	20	20	16	46	100	2	38	0	6	46	0
HP	52	65	91	100	68	4	45	80	58	27	91	32	4	40	42	0	40
KA	100	63	100	88	84	47	100	88	95	58	100	42	11	88	32	26	88
KL	84	80	88	100	44	51	69	100	74	67	81	29	33	92	31	33	92
MP	97	90	100	100	96	49	64	57	86	46	55	86	23	43	82	15	14
MH	90	99	100	100	52	91	100	89	50	97	77	37	86	100	19	78	56
OD	94	100	100	82	26	13	83	82	65	38	67	5	13	55	8	13	64
RJ	53	42	100	100	61	50	100	100	45	50	100	18	42	71	8	17	71
SK	94	94	50	25	35	38	50	0	85	75	0	32	22	0	47	53	0
TN	77	82	94	75	33	58	76	88	82	61	82	64	63	63	20	29	0
TR	32	72	100	100	23	22	100	100	23	33	86	5	6	75	41	44	50
UP	64	61	78	57	36	51	56	43	24	29	100	25	5	14	19	22	29
WB	100	100	100	100	90	84	100	100	92	95	100	66	47	100	77	69	100
Total (%)	84	84	95	87	48	51	77	77	65	65	84	34	31	62	31	34	53

Notes: F*: Faculty; O**: Officials

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

To make training more engaging, some states incorporated interactive methods such as case studies, video demonstrations, games, simulations, and role plays. Interestingly, PFs were more likely to receive training through case studies (51.2%) compared to ERs (48.4%), possibly reflecting a greater focus on problem-solving for functionaries involved in day-to-day operations. Similarly, video demonstrations were used for both groups at similar shares (64.7% for ERs, 64.7% for PFs).

Many stakeholders in our interviews emphasized the importance of interactive learning, particularly for workshops and specialized training sessions. Rather than relying solely on lectures, trainers encourage discussions, hands-on activities, and real-world problem-solving. As one faculty member explained:

For workshop-type of things or entrepreneurship kind of training, it is basically expert opinions that matter. We generally spend the whole sessions conducted by the experts themselves. Generally, they extensively try to take either group discussion or interactive sessions. And sometimes audio-video and sometimes data analysis. (SIRD Faculty, West Bengal)

However, more dynamic and experiential learning techniques, such as games, simulations, and role plays, saw lower adoption. Only 33.9% of ERs and 31.3% of PFs were trained using games and simulations, while role plays were used even less frequently (31% for ERs, 34.4% for PFs). This suggests that while some efforts were made to introduce interactive elements, they might have remained secondary to traditional methods.

Training Hall, SIRD (Yashada), Pune, Maharashtra



There were significant differences across states in the types of training methodologies adopted. West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh showed strong adoption of interactive training methods. In West Bengal, for example, 100% of ERs and PFs received training through lectures, case studies, video demonstrations, and role plays, making it one of the most well-rounded training models. Maharashtra also had high participation across multiple training formats, with over 97% of PFs engaging in video demonstrations and 85.5% involved in games and simulations.

Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu performed relatively well, with a balanced mix of methodologies. Karnataka had 100% lecture-based training for ERs but also incorporated video demonstrations (94.7%) and games (42.1%). Similarly, Kerala reported strong use of video demonstrations (74.3% for ERs, 67.3% for PFs) and case studies (44.3% for ERs, 50.9% for PFs). On the other hand, some states still relied heavily on traditional lectures with limited interactive methods. In states like Uttar Pradesh and Haryana³, the use of case studies, video demonstrations, and simulations was lower. For example, in Uttar Pradesh, only 14.3% of PFs participated in role plays, and just 4.9% were trained through games, indicating that training in these states may have been less engaging.

³ However, exceptions remain. In one of our qualitative interviews a trainer from Haryana shared that training videos have been introduced to supplement face-to-face sessions. These videos explain key concepts, test participants' understanding, and encourage self-paced learning. The trainer described the approach:

We created training videos that explain content and include questions to test understanding. This approach has proven effective for participants, as they can learn at their own pace by watching the videos... In addition, we include field visits in our training schedule, whether at the district, block, or state level. On these visits, participants are divided into groups, and they conduct interviews and presentations based on their observations. This method enhances their understanding of how to implement schemes in real life, bridging the gap between theory and practice. (SIRD Faculty, Haryana)

The traditional method of lectures was widely preferred because of its accessibility and convenience. While virtual training has its advantages, stakeholders overwhelmingly agreed that in-depth training sessions require face-to-face interaction. Many felt that virtual training lacks engagement and control, making it unsuitable for complex topics. As one respondent explained:

If you want to give intentional training, then it is good to give face-to-face training. If you want to give a small message, then virtual training can be useful. But if you want to give something deep, then I don't think virtual training is useful. Because people don't sit there. There is no control. And there is no chance for interaction... Sometimes there is connectivity, sometimes not. Sometimes there is power supply, sometimes not. It is not possible to do it there. (DLMT, Maharashtra)

Such a perspective highlights the challenges of online learning in rural settings, where unreliable infrastructure and distractions reduce its effectiveness. Face-to-face training, on the other hand, ensures better engagement, controlled learning environments, and meaningful discussions.

Beyond classroom-based training, field visits and experience-sharing were included in some states, but not consistently (**Table 4.32**). Only 29.2% of ERs and 27% of PFs reported field visit-based training, suggesting that practical exposure remains limited. States such as West Bengal and Odisha had relatively better coverage, while others like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan had minimal participation in this method.

Table 4.32: Pedagogies Types Adopted for RGSA Training – Part 2 (%)

State	Participant Presentation				Assignment				Field Visit			Experience Sharing			
	ER	PF	F*	O**	ER	PF	F*	O**	ER	PF	O**	ER	PF	F*	O**
AP	21	26	100	100	6	21	100	86	17	19	100	8	15	100	100
AR	61	33	75	0	29	33	75	0	19	0	0	26	0	75	0
CG	12	26	33	40	23	14	67	40	6	4	20	2	4	100	60
HR	12	15	20	20	10	23	40	0	20	46	20	35	15	60	20
HP	29	15	36	60	45	31	64	20	36	15	60	13	12	55	80
KA	32	21	100	88	26	16	100	75	37	37	88	26	11	100	88
KL	49	53	88	67	37	38	75	92	17	27	92	29	49	88	92
MP	82	5	73	29	72	36	55	29	62	5	71	44	5	82	71
MH	9	80	85	44	15	71	69	56	2	58	89	6	34	100	100
OD	42	75	67	64	11	50	75	64	13	25	64	5	25	83	82
RJ	31	17	100	43	45	8	86	57	24	25	86	18	8	100	86
SK	44	59	50	25	65	56	50	0	53	50	0	44	50	100	25
TN	57	61	47	50	61	34	82	38	62	45	38	12	21	100	63
TR	18	39	86	75	0	11	71	75	41	28	75	23	22	100	100
UP	20	27	67	29	15	27	56	14	9	7	43	2	0	100	29
WB	87	83	100	100	78	84	100	100	44	30	100	40	42	100	100
Total (%)	42	45	72	57	38	40	75	54	29	27	67	21	23	91	75

Note: F*: Faculty; O**: Officials

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Experience-sharing, which allows ERs and PFs to learn from real-life governance examples, was relatively underutilized, with only 20.5% of ERs and 22.7% of PFs engaging in such sessions. However, states like Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra stood

out, with 81.8% of faculty and 100% of officials in Maharashtra incorporating this approach.

4.7 Assessment of Training Quality/Methodology

A well-equipped training infrastructure is needed for effective learning, especially when training focuses on digital governance, financial management, and participatory decision-making. The RGSA training framework has placed significant emphasis on the availability of audiovisual and digital teaching tools to enhance the learning experience for ERs and PFs.

Table 4.33 shows that most training centers were well-equipped with basic audiovisual tools, but access to advanced digital infrastructure varied significantly. LCD projectors were reportedly the most commonly used technology, with 80.8% of ERs and 84.4% of PFs reporting their use in training sessions. Similarly, whiteboards were available in 77.9% of ER sessions and 75.6% of PF sessions, making them a standard tool for instruction.

However, when it came to more advanced digital tools such as video conferencing setups and computers for participants, the accessibility was much lower. Only 30.5% of ERs and 54.3% of PFs had access to video conferencing tools, suggesting a significant gap in remote training capabilities. Similarly, just 15.1% of ERs and 36.3% of PFs had access to computers for hands-on digital training. This could mean that while traditional teaching tools are widely used, digital literacy training may have been constrained by a lack of direct access to computers.

Table 4.33: Audio-Visual Teaching Technologies Used in Training (%)

	LCD Projectors			Whiteboard		Video Conference			Computer for Participants			Others		
State	ER	PF	O**	ER	PF	ER	PF	O**	ER	PF	O**	ER	PF	O**
AP	87.2	92.5	71.4	78.7	77.4	0	24.5	71.4	2.1	7.6	85.7	89.6	0	0
AR	64.5	66.7	0	90.3	100	22.6	0	0	12.9	33.3	0	0	0	0
CG	94	93.8	80	55.4	56.8	2.4	82.7	60	0	2.5	60	86.8	0	20
HR	45.2	38.5	60	83.9	84.6	35.5	15.4	0	25.8	15.4	20	6.5	0	20
HP	51	61.5	100	68.6	73.1	5.9	23.1	80	27.5	19.2	60	0	3.9	20
KA	94.7	84.2	87.5	94.7	73.7	26.3	68.4	87.5	0	26.3	87.5	73.7	0	12.5
KL	95.7	94.6	100	47.1	50.9	10	25.5	91.7	0	23.6	100	88.6	0	0
MP	91.2	97.4	100	80.9	89.7	35.3	46.2	42.9	8.8	5.1	14.3	0	0	0
MH	97.8	100	100	95.7	100	92.4	97.4	88.9	87	94.7	66.7	8.7	15.8	0
OD	95.2	87.5	100	54.8	25	8.1	0	54.6	0	37.5	45.5	74.2	0	18.2
RJ	35.3	16.7	85.7	88.2	91.7	19.6	0	71.4	9.8	8.3	71.4	2	0	0
SK	100	81.3	25	67.7	68.8	55.9	62.5	0	17.7	71.9	0	0	0	0
TN	81.2	79	87.5	84.7	65.8	14.1	50	75	1.2	55.3	37.5	98.8	7.9	0
TR	63.6	77.8	100	86.4	66.7	13.6	27.8	100	4.6	0	50	4.6	0	0
UP	39	48.8	57.1	84.8	82.9	10.2	12.2	28.6	10.2	9.8	0	1.7	2.4	0
WB	100	92.2	100	97.8	90.6	81.3	90.6	100	3.3	81.3	100	100	0	0
Total (%)	80.8	84.4	85.3	77.9	75.6	30.5	54.3	66.1	15.1	36.3	56.9	47.4	2.9	5.5

Notes: O**: Officials; Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

SATCOM SIRD (Yashada), Pune, Maharashtra



Interestingly, PFs had better access to digital tools compared to ERs in some areas, particularly video conferencing setups (54.3% for PFs vs. 30.5% for ERs) and computers (36.3% for PFs vs. 15.1% for ERs). This could be reflective of the higher technical requirements of their roles, where functionaries are expected to handle digital governance tools more frequently than ERs.

4.7.1 Quality of Training Infrastructure

We also gathered feedback from ERs, PFs, faculty, and officials to provide a comprehensive picture of how well-equipped they perceived the training facilities to be across states.

Across all infrastructure parameters, training centers were rated moderately satisfactory, with most average scores ranging between 4.0 and 4.3 on a scale of 1 (very unsatisfactory) to 5 (very satisfactory) (**Table 4.34**). The highest-rated aspects were classroom capacity (4.3), audiovisual tools (4.3), and lighting/ventilation (4.3), indicating that the basic teaching environment was largely adequate. However, computer & internet access (4.2) and air conditioning in classrooms (4.0) scored slightly lower.

Among basic amenities, separate washrooms (4.3), safety & security (4.2), and electricity/power backup (4.1) were rated higher than facilities like water purifiers (4.1) and dining halls (4.1), which were slightly less satisfactory.

In our interviews, many stakeholders reported on their experience with the training infrastructure. For instance, in Tamil Nadu, stakeholders described the structured layout of training centers, which ensures a focused learning experience:

Classroom capacity will not exceed 30 members. Round table and chairs, mode of presentation are Screen and whiteboard, AC rooms, Projector, audio-visual aids facilities... Computers lab, generator, Internet facilities, drinking water (RO)

facilities, Safety security facilities, and Hostel facilities (AC rooms also available) are available. (RGSA State Official, Tamil Nadu)

Table 4.34: Adequacy of Training Infrastructure Facilities (Mean)

State	Classroom Capacity	Audio-Visual Tools	Computer & Internet	Lighting and Ventilation	AC in Classroom	Conference Rooms/Auditoriums
AP	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.3	3.8	4.3
AR	3.7	3.0	3.5	3.8	3.0	3.2
CG	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.6	3.5	3.2
HR	4.0	4.2	4.8	4.0	3.9	3.9
HP	4.0	4.0	3.9	4.1	3.9	4.0
KA	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.1	3.9
KL	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.0
MP	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.9
MH	3.8	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.3	3.9
OD	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.8	3.2
RJ	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.2	3.8	4.6
SK	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.0	4.2
TN	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.1	3.4
TR	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.4
UP	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.6
WB	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.5
Overall	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.0

Note: Responses obtained from ERs, PFs, Faculty, and Officials.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Training session at DPRC Chandauli, Uttar Pradesh



This structured classroom setting allows for interactive discussions and ensures that each participant has access to learning resources. Smaller class sizes further enable personalized attention and active engagement.

Another key aspect of training center infrastructure is the provision of food and refreshments, which significantly impacts trainees' ability to concentrate and engage throughout the day. Structured breaks also help in maintaining energy levels and creating informal spaces for discussion. As noted by a stakeholder in Tripura:

Even if it is not residential, we are trying to provide working lunch to our trainees out of the funds which are allotted to us and available from time to time. (RGSA State Official, Tripura)

Providing meals during training sessions ensures that participants do not have to worry about food arrangements, which is particularly beneficial for those traveling from rural areas. It also reinforces the idea that training is a well-organized and serious endeavour, encouraging greater commitment from participants.

West Bengal and Madhya Pradesh reported some of the highest satisfaction ratings across multiple infrastructure aspects. West Bengal scored the highest in classroom capacity (4.8), audiovisual tools (4.8), and computer & internet facilities (4.7), making it one of the best-equipped states. Similarly, Madhya Pradesh had high scores across most categories, particularly in conference rooms (4.9) and dining hall facilities (5.0), reflecting a well-developed training infrastructure.

Conference Room, SIRD, Nilokheri, Haryana



In contrast, Maharashtra, Arunachal Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh reported some of the lowest infrastructure adequacy scores. Maharashtra's computer & internet facilities (3.7) and air conditioning (3.3) were among the lowest rated, indicating weaker digital infrastructure. Arunachal Pradesh consistently scored below 3.8 across most parameters, reflecting significant gaps in training center infrastructure adequacy. Chhattisgarh had one of the lowest scores for water purifiers (3.4).

**A dilapidated and Dysfunctional DPRC Building,
Upper Subarnsiri, Arunachal Pradesh**



4.7.2 Quality of Residential Training Infrastructure

Training programs often require participants to travel long distances, making residential facilities essential for ensuring consistent attendance. High-quality hostels with adequate amenities contribute to a better learning experience by reducing logistical challenges for trainees.

For instance, in Tripura, training infrastructure was described as being well-developed, with separate hostels for male and female participants:

We have got a huge auditorium of the capacity of around 800 or 750 seating arrangements... Apart from this, for the residential trainings, we have got separate hostels for males and females. There is adequate drinking water arrangements, toilet, ramps for physically challenged trainees also." (RGSA State Official, Tripura)

Residential Facility, SIRD, Nilokheri, Haryana



The inclusion of accessibility features, such as ramps for physically challenged participants, demonstrates a commitment to inclusive training programs. Additionally, ensuring safe and comfortable accommodations helps attract more trainees, particularly women, who may have concerns about staying away from home. Inclusivity has been a priority for other states as well. In some states, training centres have taken initiatives to enhance inclusivity, particularly for persons with disabilities. Karnataka, for example, has integrated training facilities for blind trainers and physically disabled trainees:

Blind trainers are also there; they are very much capable and highly knowledgeable persons to train such physically handicapped persons. Every training centre has recreation every evening and physical activities are there. They are arranging walking, talking and clapping etc. Before going to the training class all such activities were provided. (RGSA State Official, Karnataka)

For such residential training programs, **Table 4.35** reveals that the overall adequacy of residential facilities (4.0), mess & dining facilities (4.3), and electricity & appliances (4.3) were rated as satisfactory, suggesting that most training centers provided *decent* living conditions. Clean beds (4.3) and housekeeping services (4.2) also received positive feedback. However, separate hostel facilities (3.9) and water purifiers (4.3) scored slightly lower. Additionally, access to libraries (4.2) and recreation facilities (4.1) was rated lower compared to other infrastructure elements⁴.

⁴ Beyond classroom facilities, access to digital resources is becoming increasingly important. While many training centers offer computer labs and projectors, stakeholders also pointed out gaps in digital access, particularly in hostels:

In the hostel, Internet facilities were not available. (Tamil Nadu RGSA State Official)

Table 4.35: Adequacy of Residential Infrastructure Facilities – Part 1 (Mean)

State	Adequacy of Res. Facility	Separate Hostels	Clean Beds	House-keeping	Electricity & Appliances	Water Purifier	Mess & Dining Facility
AP	4.0	4.7	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.4
AR	3.4	5.0	3.8	3.7	3.6	3.4	3.6
CG	4.2	4.0	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
HR	1.5	1.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.0
HP	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.1	4.0
KA	4.2	3.9	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4
KL	4.1	3.9	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.3
MP	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.7
MH	4.9	4.9	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.5
OD	3.0	2.7	4.3	4.1	4.5	4.5	4.4
RJ	4.4	4.0	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
SK	3.4	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2
TN	4.2	4.3	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.1
TR	4.6	4.8	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2
UP	3.7	2.6	4.0	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9
WB	4.1	4.4	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7
Overall	4.0	3.9	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3

Note: Data generated from the responses of ERs, PFs, Faculties & Officials.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Mess & Dining Facility, SIRD, Nilokheri, Haryana



State wise we see a lot of variations. While DPRCs are functional in some areas, they are not uniformly established. In many cases, training takes place in Panchayat buildings rather than dedicated training centres. A stakeholder from Rajasthan noted,

DPRCs are functional, but not everywhere... Infrastructure is happening in the video buildings, in the Panchayat building. But, the manpower, that is approximately 50% blocks, there is. 50% means, approximately somewhere around 160-170, something like that. At the same time, we have hostels. And district and block levels, there are 6 PTCs, which have hostels. And other than that, at district level, they manage on their own. Basically, they make good accommodations at some hotel or something like that." (RGSA State Official, Rajasthan)

This may suggest a lack of uniformity in infrastructure across different levels. While some training centers are well-equipped with hostels, others rely on external accommodations, which may not always be ideal.

Residential Facility, DPRC, Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh



Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Andhra Pradesh provided the best-rated residential facilities, with Maharashtra scoring 4.9 for overall adequacy, 4.9 for separate hostels, and 4.9 for water availability. West Bengal also performed well across most categories, particularly in cleanliness (4.8), medical facilities (4.4), and safety (4.7), making it one of the most well-equipped states for residential training.

In contrast, Haryana, Arunachal Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh reported some of the lowest adequacy ratings. Haryana had the lowest overall adequacy score (1.5) and the lowest rating for separate hostels (1.0), reflecting *major* gaps in accommodation facilities. Arunachal Pradesh also scored below 3.8 across most categories, highlighting inadequate residential infrastructure. Madhya Pradesh had moderate scores but performed poorly in self-learning and recreation facilities (3.5 and 3.46, respectively).

It is also important to note that some training centers go beyond academic infrastructure by incorporating wellness initiatives such as yoga and gym facilities. In Tamil Nadu, for example, morning yoga sessions and gym facilities are part of the training center amenities.

In the SIRD hostel, Morning Yoga and Gym facilities are available. In the RIRD hostel, GYM facilities are available. (RGSA State Official, Tamil Nadu)

Table 4.36: Adequacy of Residential Infrastructure Facilities – Part 2 (Mean)

State	Water for Sanitation	Medical Facility	Safety & Security	Creche Facility	Library/ Reading Room	Recreation Facilities
AP	4.7	4.2	4.4	4.1	3.9	4.1
AR	2.8	3.0	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6
CG	3.9	4.2	4.4	3.9	4.3	4.0
HR	3.0	4.1	4.0	3.6	3.8	3.9
HP	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.5
KA	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.8	4.0
KL	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.2
MP	3.4	3.3	3.8	3.2	3.5	3.5
MH	4.9	4.4	4.4	4.1	4.4	4.5
OD	3.9	4.1	4.5	2.9	3.9	4.0
RJ	4.5	4.1	4.3	3.7	3.6	3.9
SK	3.4	4.0	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.1
TN	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1
TR	4.6	4.0	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1
UP	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.8
WB	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.6
Overall	4.2	4.1	4.3	3.9	4.2	4.1

Notes: Data generated from the responses of ERs, PFs, Faculties & Officials

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Library, SIRD, Nilokheri, Haryana



While such facilities may seem secondary to the training content, they contribute to a holistic learning environment. Health and wellness initiatives can improve focus and motivation, making participants more receptive to learning.

Gym, SIRD (Yashada), Pune, Maharashtra



4.7.3 Overall RGSA Training Experience of Elected Representatives

We also assessed how the ERs perceived their experience with the RGSA training. The analysis of post-training experience of elected representatives in our sample under RGSA highlighted both successes and gaps in ensuring the long-term impact of governance training. While the majority of participants reported undergoing assessment and receiving feedback, the extent of support varied significantly across states, with some excelling in post-training assistance and others leaving ERs to navigate governance responsibilities with minimal guidance. **Table 4.37** presents findings from the survey on various dimensions of the training experience.

An encouraging finding is the high percentage of ERs who underwent formal assessment and received certificates after completing training. Overall, 67.7 percent of ERs reported undergoing assessment, while 69.0 percent received certification, indicating a structured process in place for validating training participation. However, significant variation exists across states. West Bengal is a highlight, with nearly universal training validation—98.9 percent of ERs reported undergoing assessment, and 100 percent received certification. Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu also performed well in this regard, ensuring that the majority of trained ERs received formal recognition of their learning. In contrast, states like Uttar Pradesh and Odisha lagged, with fewer than half of their ERs receiving assessment and certification.

Feedback collection, which also plays a crucial role in refining training content and delivery, showed a similar pattern. In states like Kerala, Maharashtra, and West Bengal, over 85 percent of ERs reported that feedback was actively sought post-training. The high feedback engagement in these states suggests a structured approach to incorporating participant reflections into training improvements. However, in states like Tripura, Odisha, and Uttar Pradesh, feedback collection was significantly lower. The absence of

structured feedback could limit the ability of training institutions to address gaps and tailor future sessions to the evolving needs of ERs.

Table 4.37: Distribution of Post Training Experience (%)

State	Assessment	Feedback	Certificate	Handholding Support required	Handholding Support received	If Handholding Support = "Yes" satisfaction
AP	72.9	68.8	81.3	41.7	41.7	45.0
AR	3.2	22.6	64.5	32.3	32.3	80.0
CG	79.5	80.7	42.2	24.1	24.1	90.0
HR	33.3	35.3	58.8	45.1	45.1	60.9
HP	67.7	64.5	67.7	61.3	61.3	68.4
KA	63.2	47.4	57.9	42.1	42.1	87.5
KL	80.0	88.6	84.3	67.1	67.1	91.5
MP	89.1	88.0	95.7	75.0	75.0	92.8
MH	63.2	61.8	51.5	44.1	44.1	100.0
OD	45.2	21.0	30.7	32.3	32.3	50.0
RJ	45.1	33.3	52.9	39.2	39.2	90.0
SK	76.5	91.2	97.1	79.4	79.4	96.3
TN	92.9	95.3	95.3	38.8	38.8	78.8
TR	59.1	31.8	72.7	54.6	54.6	58.3
UP	25.4	28.8	23.7	32.2	32.2	79.0
WB	98.9	98.9	100.0	95.6	95.6	97.7
Total (%)	67.7	66.3	69.0	51.7	51.7	84.7
Total	607	595	619	464	393	393

Note: States same as Table 4.27.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024

One of the most critical post-training challenges is reportedly the availability of handholding support, which could determine how well ERs translate their training into real governance practices. Despite its importance, just over half of the respondents—51.7 percent—reported receiving such support, despite an equal proportion expressing the need for it (**Table 4.38**). West Bengal again stood out, providing handholding support to 95.6 percent of ERs, followed closely by Sikkim, Maharashtra, and Haryana, which have relatively well-structured post-training assistance. The presence of this support in these states indicates that ERs are not left to navigate governance responsibilities alone but receive continued guidance. In contrast, states like Odisha and Uttar Pradesh performed poorly, with barely a third of ERs receiving support after training.

Even where handholding support was provided, the type and nature of assistance varied widely. In some states, particularly Maharashtra, Odisha, and West Bengal, ERs benefitted from frequent physical visits, allowing them to engage directly with trainers or facilitators for clarifications and implementation support. Maharashtra and West Bengal had particularly strong models, with over 90 percent of ERs reporting structured physical visits. However, in states like Rajasthan and Haryana, physical support was minimal, suggesting that post-training assistance is largely remote or inconsistent.

An increasing reliance on online handholding support is also evident, particularly in Karnataka and Rajasthan, where nearly all ERs reported receiving assistance through digital channels. While this shift towards digital engagement has the potential to make support more accessible, it also presents challenges for ERs with limited digital literacy or poor internet access. In Odisha and Arunachal Pradesh, for example, reliance on online support was significantly lower, pointing to possible digital inclusion gaps that need to be addressed to ensure equitable post-training assistance.

The availability of relevant materials as part of handholding support also varied across states. West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Odisha stood out for providing ERs with training materials for reference. However, Arunachal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh provided limited materials, likely making it more difficult for ERs to recall key concepts and apply them effectively. Another critical gap lies in the limited use of field visits as a form of post-training assistance. While West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Odisha made relatively better use of this method, in many states, field visits were either non-existent or highly infrequent, limiting opportunities for ERs to gain hands-on experience in governance practices.

Table 4.38: Types of Handholding Support Received by ERs (%)

State	Physical Visit	Online Support	Relevant Material	Field Visit
AP	55.6	33.3	44.4	0.0
AR	100.0	37.5	12.5	25.0
CG	94.4	55.6	11.1	0.0
HR	28.6	42.9	21.4	14.3
HP	23.1	92.3	30.8	23.1
KA	71.4	100.0	57.1	14.3
KL	45.2	66.7	14.3	4.8
MP	92.2	85.9	82.8	51.6
MH	40.0	30.0	56.7	3.3
OD	80.0	20.0	70.0	30.0
RJ	5.6	94.4	27.8	11.1
SK	76.9	50.0	34.6	38.5
TN	44.0	80.0	40.0	4.0
TR	42.9	28.6	42.9	42.9
UP	60.0	80.0	33.3	20.0
WB	94.1	83.5	90.6	63.5
Total (%)	67.5	69.1	53.7	30.7
Total	264	270	210	120

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Despite the inconsistencies in support, where handholding was provided, it was largely found to be effective. The overall satisfaction rate for those who received assistance stood at a promising 84.7 percent, with Maharashtra, Kerala, and Sikkim showing particularly high levels of satisfaction.

Box 4.1: Best Practices - The Rajasthan PRC Model for PRI Capacity Building

A compelling model for effective capacity building in PRIs can be observed in the successful implementation of Panchayat Resource Centers (PRCs) in various districts of Rajasthan. This initiative offers valuable insights into approaches that have successfully enhanced the participation and effectiveness of ERs, demonstrating how a rethinking of traditional methods can lead to significant improvements in local governance.

The success of the Rajasthan PRC model stemmed from a deliberate departure from conventional, centralized training paradigms. The concept of Panchayat Resource Centers as an intermediate-level capacity building instrument for strengthening PRIs was conceived by organizations like UNNATI, which had been working on capacity building for PRI representatives since the first round of elections after the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992). This initiative gained significant traction and was implemented with substantial support from the UNDP. For instance, in the third five-year PRI term in Rajasthan (which began around 2005-2006, following the 2005 PRI elections), with the support of UNDP, PRCs were set up in all blocks of Jodhpur district. This crucial decentralization drastically reduced the geographical and logistical burdens on ERs, making training far more accessible, particularly for women representatives who often face greater mobility constraints. What is noteworthy is that these PRCs were conceived not merely as episodic training venues but as continuous support systems, providing ongoing handholding, practical assistance with administrative tasks, and a readily available point of contact for problem-solving. This constant, localized presence fostered a deep sense of trust and relevance, transforming the learning experience from a formal, one-off event into an integrated and sustained process of empowerment.

Furthermore, the methodology employed by the PRCs prioritized a need-based and highly participatory learning environment. Instead of imposing a standardized curriculum, training modules were developed and adapted based on the specific challenges and requirements identified at the local panchayat level. Interactive methods, including group discussions, real-life case studies, and role-playing, were extensively utilized to ensure that the content was directly applicable and engaging for participants from diverse educational backgrounds. Special emphasis was placed on empowering Women Elected Representatives, acknowledging their unique socio-cultural barriers. This involved training local women as "Master Trainers" to provide relatable mentorship and creating supportive spaces within the PRCs. Additionally, initiatives like "Pratinidhi Pati Sammelans" (gatherings for husbands of WERs) were organized to sensitize families and the broader community, thereby fostering a more conducive environment for women's active participation and leadership within the PRIs.

The results of such concerted initiatives have ignited hope for the success of capacity-building programmes. Reports indicate a significant improvement in training coverage for PRI elected representatives, moving from approximately 34% in 2008-09 to over 67% in 2010-11, with the total number of ERs and functionaries trained increasing from about 1.5 million to over 2.4 million in the same period, reflecting the impact of such decentralized and sustained efforts.

Thus, the Panchayat Resource Centre model in Rajasthan demonstrates that effective capacity building for PRIs necessitates a strategic shift towards decentralized, continuous, and context-specific support. By addressing fundamental issues through localized centres, practical handholding, and tailored, participatory learning approaches, the program successfully transformed the engagement levels and operational effectiveness of elected representatives. This success story showcases the importance of cultivating a sustained ecosystem of learning and support that genuinely empowers local governance actors to fulfil their roles as agents of change.

Sources: 1) UNNATI. "Capacity Building of Panchayati Raj Institutions." Civic Leadership Governance and Social Accountability.; 2) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). "From Reservation to Participation: Capacity Building of Women Elected Representatives and Functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions." 3) National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) publications and reports on decentralized training models for PRIs. 4) Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. "Status Report: PRI Capacity Building and Training in India."

4.7.4 Challenges Reported by Participants of Training Sessions

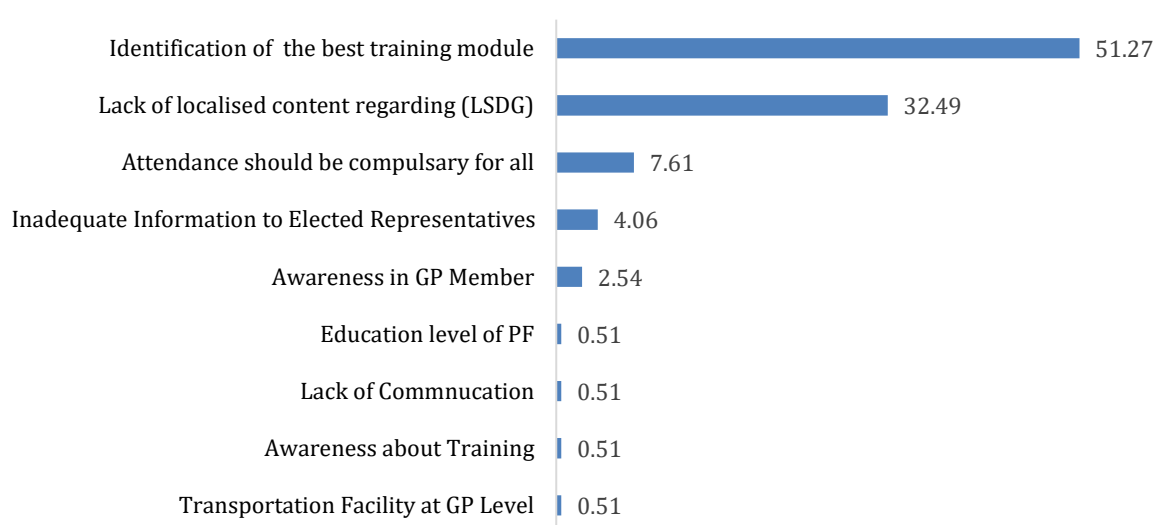
In our study, we incorporated open-ended questions to gain deeper insights into the challenges faced by elected representatives during training sessions. The analysis of these responses revealed several critical barriers affecting the effectiveness of these programs. The survey findings are reported in **Figure 4.4**.

The most prominent issue, cited by 51.3 percent of respondents, was the inability to identify the best training module for practical, on-ground implementation. Without clear guidance on which modules are most effective, ERs struggle to apply their learning in real-world scenarios.

Following closely, 32.5 percent of ERs reported a lack of localized content as a major barrier. Training materials that do not reflect the unique socio-cultural, economic, and administrative contexts of different regions fail to engage participants meaningfully, reducing the overall impact of these initiatives.

Other challenges included attendance compulsion (7.6%), which suggests both logistical difficulties and a possible lack of motivation or perceived relevance among participants. Additionally, inadequate information provided to ERs (4.1%) points to communication gaps that leave representatives underprepared or unaware of the training's objectives and benefits.

Figure 4.4: Major Training Barriers Faced (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Lower-frequency barriers, each reported by 0.5 percent of respondents, included issues such as the education level of Panchayat Functionaries, lack of communication, awareness about training programs, and transportation facilities. While these were less frequently mentioned, they still reflect structural challenges that can hinder participation, particularly in rural or underserved areas. Awareness among Gram Panchayat members (2.5%) was also highlighted.

Based on open-ended responses from elected representatives, several suggestions were provided to improve training effectiveness. A key recommendation was to increase the frequency of training sessions and conduct them at block or panchayat levels for better accessibility. Many ERs emphasized the need for exposure visits and field-based training to enhance practical understanding. There were calls for better communication about training schedules, ideally informing participants a week in advance, and improving transportation facilities to boost attendance. Additionally, ERs requested localized content, job-oriented modules, and the provision of DA/TA allowances to encourage participation.

These findings make it clear that while RGSA has made considerable efforts in training elected representatives, ensuring the lasting impact of these efforts requires a stronger commitment to post-training support. West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Sikkim demonstrate effective models of sustained engagement, while states like Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, and Arunachal Pradesh need to strengthen mechanisms for post-training handholding. A well-trained ER without post-training support is likely to struggle with implementation, reducing the overall effectiveness of governance at the grassroots level. Moving forward, states could institutionalize follow-up mechanisms, standardize handholding support, and expand digital accessibility while ensuring that traditional in-person guidance remains available for those who need it. Without these measures, training risks being a one-time event rather than a transformative process that empowers ERs to lead effectively.

4.8 Assessment of Quality of Infrastructure

4.8.1 Status of Panchayat Bhavans

Under the RGSA scheme (2018-2022), the MoPR provided funding for the development of infrastructure at the Panchayats, including Panchayat Bhavans, Panchayat Learning Centre (PLC), and Common Service Centres. In the subsequent Revamped RGSA scheme (2022-2026), the Ministry also allocated budgets for these assets at the Panchayats. Consequently, this primary survey sought feedback from ERs at various tiers of Panchayats regarding the availability and adequacy of the infrastructure.

Distribution of Panchayat Bhavan infrastructure under various Schemes as shown in **Table 4.39** reveals that 93.6 percent Panchayat owns a Panchayat Bhavan with leading sample states observed are Odisha, Tripura, Haryana, West Bengal, and Maharashtra in owning a panchayat Bhavan with more than 97 percent Panchayat.

As per our survey from sample state, 37.12 percent owned Panchayat Bhavans are funded under RGSA Scheme, and across the sample states, Chhattisgarh (82.95%) has highest RGSA funded Panchayat bhavan. Whereas, Odisha has the least-funded Panchayat Bhavans under RGSA (around 10%), representing self-sufficiency in this regard.

Table 4.39: Assessment of Panchayat Infrastructure under RGSA (%)

State	Owned Panchayat Bhavan = Yes	If Panchayat Bhavan Owned, Source of Fund			
		RGSA	PESA	PESA	Not Sure
AP	81.5	45.5	0.0	25.0	29.6
AR	59.5	32.0	4.0	12.0	52.0
CG	95.7	83.0	5.7	6.8	4.6
HR	84.9	54.8	11.9	0.0	33.3
HP	99.2	37.0	35.3	5.0	22.7
KA	97.4	13.3	21.3	2.7	62.7
KL	96.5	18.1	13.3	28.9	39.8
MP	97.9	24.7	2.3	3.4	69.7
MH	91.6	21.8	47.1	8.1	23.0
OD	100.0	9.7	40.3	0.0	50.0
RJ	96.9	30.1	16.1	3.2	50.5
SK	76.3	69.0	0.0	6.9	24.1
TN	95.8	12.1	1.1	71.4	15.4
TR	100.0	52.4	11.9	3.6	32.1
UP	92.8	63.6	32.5	0.0	3.9
WB	98.9	45.1	0.0	40.7	14.3
Total (%)	93.6	37.1	16.9	14.0	32.0
Total	1235	394	172	457	208

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

4.8.2 Infrastructure Facilities in Gram Panchayats

We also assessed the availability of infrastructure at GPs. We recorded responses from ERs and Panchayat functionaries in our primary survey that provide insights into the state of office spaces, meeting facilities, sanitation, digital infrastructure, and public amenities across different states (**Table 4.40** and **Table 4.41**).

Across states, separate rooms and washrooms were fairly common. However, only 48.6 percent of GPs had PLCs, which are important for decentralized service delivery. Similarly, sitting arrangements for villagers (66.4%) were present in about two-thirds of the GPs, but essential public amenities such as baby feeding corners (38.5%) remained limited.

The availability of digital infrastructure was mixed. While 79.9 percent of GPs had computers, printers, and scanners, only 70.1 percent had internet connections, indicating that not all Panchayats could fully utilize digital governance platforms. Other key governance infrastructure, such as Notice Boards (82.6%) and CSCs (63.2%), showed significant variation across states.

Table 4.40: Infrastructure Availability in GPs Across States – Part 1 (%)

State	PLCs	Separate Room for ERs	Separate Room for PFs	Conf./ Meeting Halls, VC Facilities	Sitting Arrangements for Villagers	Baby Feeding Corner
AP	62.4	80.0	69.6	69.6	64.8	52.0
AR	0.0	6.1	0.0	3.7	3.7	0.0
CG	22.2	67.8	54.4	60.0	52.2	31.1
HR	51.5	42.1	41.6	55.5	90.1	31.7
HP	43.5	63.0	69.6	65.8	60.9	23.4
KA	95.6	91.1	94.9	88.6	91.1	85.4
KL	68.1	91.0	88.0	92.2	90.4	92.8
MP	20.4	43.1	37.6	74.0	37.0	26.5
MH	53.6	68.7	60.9	49.7	58.1	21.8
OD	93.6	78.9	92.7	90.8	85.3	38.5
RJ	27.3	82.3	90.9	94.7	81.8	11.5
SK	28.2	76.9	85.9	74.4	65.4	18.0
TN	33.7	45.0	63.9	47.9	52.1	34.9
TR	53.3	69.1	78.2	58.2	61.2	27.3
UP	51.5	68.5	64.9	85.5	55.2	38.8
WB	69.5	78.1	90.9	95.1	84.2	71.3
Total	48.7	66.5	68.4	70.6	66.4	38.5

Note: Data obtained from the responses of ERs and PFs

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 4.41 reveals that Kerala, West Bengal, and Karnataka emerged as the best-performing states, with high availability meeting halls, sanitation facilities, and digital infrastructure. Kerala reported over 94 percent availability of washrooms, sanitation, computers, internet, and CSCs, reflecting a well-developed governance setup. West Bengal also had one of the highest digital infrastructure levels, with 99.4 percent of GPs having internet and digital devices.

In contrast, Arunachal Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh showed significant gaps in infrastructure. Arunachal Pradesh had the lowest availability of basic facilities, with almost no separate rooms for ERs (6.1%) or PFs (0%), and only 8.5 percent of GPs had washrooms. Chhattisgarh also reported low levels of digital infrastructure (only 20.6 percent had computers, and 33.3 percent had internet access). Madhya Pradesh had poor sanitation and internet access, further limiting effective governance.

Some states had strong but imbalanced infrastructure. Rajasthan had high meeting hall availability (94.7%) but weak digital connectivity (only 25.8% had CSCs). Odisha performed well in office spaces and digital infrastructure but lacked public amenities such as baby feeding corners (38.5%).

Table 4.41: Infrastructure Availability in GPs Across States – Part 2 (%)

State	Separate Washrooms	Housekeeping and Sanitation	Computers, Printers, Scanners	Internet Connection	Notice Board	CSCs
AP	69.6	78.4	83.2	84.0	92.8	81.6
AR	8.5	0.0	4.9	0.0	4.9	0.0
CG	37.8	63.9	20.6	33.3	88.9	22.2
HR	55.5	81.7	40.1	48.5	50.0	76.7
HP	71.2	38.0	79.9	55.4	76.1	67.4
KA	89.2	86.7	94.9	95.6	94.9	96.8
KL	94.6	95.8	96.4	96.4	96.4	95.2
MP	54.1	50.3	87.9	33.2	56.9	35.9
MH	52.0	61.5	92.2	83.8	96.1	79.3
OD	92.7	90.8	86.2	90.8	96.3	93.6
RJ	91.9	72.7	91.4	83.3	94.3	25.8
SK	87.2	92.3	100.0	56.4	96.2	59.0
TN	79.3	83.4	95.9	81.7	93.5	90.5
TR	64.2	57.6	95.8	95.2	94.6	39.4
UP	81.8	49.1	95.2	61.8	71.5	52.7
WB	95.1	91.5	99.4	99.4	99.4	88.4
Total (%)	71.0	69.0	79.9	70.1	82.6	63.2

Note: Data obtained from the responses of ERs and PFs

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

4.8.3 RGSA Fund Utilization for GP Infrastructure Development

To support effective local governance, RGSA funding has been allocated for infrastructure development in Gram Panchayats. The patterns reveal both priorities in utilization of such funding, suggesting areas where investments have been strong and where gaps remain (**Table 4.42**).

The most commonly developed infrastructure under RGSA funding includes CSCs (52.6%), washrooms (53.3%), and fans & lighting (49.6%), indicating that a significant portion of the funds has gone toward improving basic amenities and service delivery infrastructure. However, more specialized infrastructure like community/training halls (30.8%) received comparatively lower utilization, suggesting that training and accommodation facilities for governance activities are not yet a priority in many states.

In terms of digital infrastructure, only 39.8 percent of GPs utilized RGSA funds for computers, showing a moderate investment in technological capacity, which is crucial for e-Governance initiatives. Meeting/conference halls were developed in 37.7 percent of GPs.

Karnataka, Odisha, and Maharashtra were among the highest fund-utilizing states, with over 90 percent of GPs in Karnataka and Maharashtra using RGSA funds to establish CSCs. Odisha had the highest investment in washrooms (86.5%) and meeting halls (81.1%).

Tamil Nadu and West Bengal also reported strong investments across multiple infrastructure types, particularly in meeting halls, CSCs, and digital tools.

Table 4.42: Panchayat Infrastructure Developed under RGSA Fund (%)

State	CSC	Wash-rooms	Fans & Lights	Computers	Meeting/Conference Halls	Community/Training Halls	Others
AP	76.8	59.2	59.2	31.0	22.5	23.9	7.0
AR	7.5	12.5	17.5	5.0	75.0	10.0	0.0
CG	23.9	45.5	51.1	26.1	20.5	19.3	14.8
HR	50.0	50.0	53.7	26.8	36.6	46.3	0.0
HP	61.2	31.8	20.0	18.8	21.2	23.5	0.0
KA	92.6	76.5	69.1	74.1	61.7	58.0	2.5
KL	53.8	51.3	27.5	30.0	28.8	25.0	26.3
MP	43.0	38.4	51.2	37.2	22.1	16.3	0.0
MH	91.7	56.0	73.8	50.0	28.6	25.0	0.0
OD	70.3	86.5	81.1	73.0	81.1	51.4	0.0
RJ	23.0	68.1	46.0	20.4	45.1	28.3	0.0
SK	45.0	20.0	22.5	60.0	20.0	15.0	0.0
TN	54.1	47.3	59.5	68.9	41.9	39.2	17.6
TR	35.8	53.1	45.7	38.3	40.7	29.6	0.0
UP	45.1	67.1	47.6	34.2	29.3	17.1	0.0
WB	69.4	68.1	59.7	68.1	63.9	63.9	12.5
Total	52.6	53.3	49.6	39.8	37.7	30.8	5.3

Notes: Data obtained from the responses of ERs and PFs.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Conversely, Arunachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh had some of the lowest fund utilization rates. Only 7.5 percent of GPs in Arunachal used RGSA funds for CSCs, and a mere 5 percent for computers, showing that digital investments remain weak. Chhattisgarh also reported low spending on CSCs (23.9%) and computers (26.1%). Rajasthan showed an unusual pattern, with strong investment in washrooms (68.1%) but low allocation for computers (20.3%).

Participants in our interviews highlighted challenges in utilizing funds for Panchayat infrastructure development under the RGSA. It is to be noted that there is no provision under RGSA for the construction of Guest Houses or Hostels at the Panchayat level or within the Panchayat Infrastructure Block. A key concern is the inadequate allocation for capacity building, particularly for exposure visits, which are crucial for enhancing practical knowledge among elected representatives. On the infrastructure side, while ₹25 lakhs per Panchayat Bhawan is allocated for constructing facilities like GP rooms and conference halls, cost escalations due to regional disparities pose serious challenges. For example, transporting cement from Dapur to Jammu & Kashmir significantly inflates costs, with prices reaching ₹2000 per bank. This leads to inconsistent building quality across states, as uniform state-level funding doesn't account for region-specific material and transportation costs. Participants stressed the need for a region-wise funding

approach to ensure equitable development, especially when current funding models favour plain areas over more remote or geographically challenging regions.

Further, the MoPR has, over the past few years, undertaken a series of ambitious e-Governance initiatives aimed at modernising and streamlining the functioning of PRIs. These include the development of various digital portals and applications to support core governance functions such as planning, budgeting, monitoring, service delivery, and citizen engagement. From the e-Gram Swaraj portal for planning and reporting to online accounting systems, GIS-based mapping tools, and mobile applications for data collection, these platforms represent a decisive shift toward transparent, efficient, and technology-enabled governance at the grassroots.

However, the effective implementation of these digital platforms depends fundamentally on the availability of reliable and modern computer infrastructure at the Gram Panchayat level. In practice, many Panchayat Bhavans still rely on outdated computers that cannot meet the technical requirements of the latest software and applications. In numerous cases, the existing systems suffer from slow processing speeds, insufficient storage capacity, limited RAM, and obsolete operating systems, which severely restrict their ability to run updated governance tools. In some Panchayats, hardware limitations prevent even basic functions such as video conferencing, online form submissions, or the smooth operation of real-time data entry systems.

The problem is compounded by the fact that several Panchayat offices lack not only the required hardware specifications but also the necessary peripheral devices and upgrades. Many systems do not have sufficient disk space to store large datasets, GIS maps, or multimedia training resources. In certain cases, lack of adequate storage has forced officials to either delete older records prematurely or rely on personal devices, raising issues of data security and privacy. Moreover, slow boot times and frequent system crashes hinder day-to-day tasks, causing delays in service delivery and frustrating both officials and citizens. In addition to addressing these infrastructural gaps, it is important to ensure regular hands-on training for GP staff, particularly the PEO and the Technical Assistant. For larger GPs, the appointment of two Technical Assistants could further support the smooth functioning of developmental work.

As the Ministry rolls out more advanced e-Governance solutions, some of which involve higher processing requirements, integration with cloud-based services, or advanced security protocols, the technology gap becomes more apparent. Without timely hardware upgrades, Gram Panchayats risk being unable to fully participate in or benefit from these initiatives. This could exacerbate existing disparities between better-equipped Panchayats and those with limited resources, undermining the very goal of universal, inclusive digital governance.

4.8.4 Panchayat Bhavan Infrastructure under Revamped RGSA

The revamped RGSA also aimed to strengthen the infrastructure of Panchayat Bhavans. To assess its impact, in our survey, ERs and Panchayat functionaries responded with their perception on the changes they observed in their respective Gram Panchayat infrastructure over the past three years.

Table 4.43 shows that while significant improvements have been made in Panchayat Bhavans, most upgrades were moderate rather than substantial. On average, 74.6 percent of respondents reported some improvement in Panchayat Bhavans, while only 8.8 percent observed high improvement. Similarly, community/meeting halls (73.6%) and public information boards (73.5%) also showed moderate levels of enhancement. However, nearly one-fifth of respondents (16.6%) reported no improvement in Panchayat Bhavan infrastructure, indicating uneven progress across states.

Table 4.43: GP Infrastructure Improvements under Revamped RGSA – Part 1 (%)

State	Panchayat Bhawan			Community/Meeting Halls			Public Information Board		
	HI	I	NI	HI	I	NI	HI	I	NI
AP	13.9	76.9	9.2	7.0	70.2	22.8	14.5	71.0	14.5
AR	0.0	31.8	68.2	9.5	47.6	42.9	0.0	12.5	87.5
CG	12.0	61.3	26.7	4.2	68.1	27.8	11.8	72.1	16.2
HR	2.5	93.7	3.8	10.1	89.9	0.0	12.9	85.7	1.4
HP	7.5	58.8	33.8	5.2	52.0	42.9	4.1	63.5	32.4
KA	1.3	79.8	19.0	6.3	79.8	13.9	6.3	74.7	19.0
KL	28.8	60.0	11.3	27.5	60.0	12.5	32.5	55.0	12.5
MP	4.2	78.9	16.9	1.6	85.5	12.9	0.0	86.4	13.6
MH	1.2	81.0	17.9	2.6	64.1	33.3	1.2	75.9	22.9
OD	15.0	64.5	20.6	11.9	69.7	18.4	11.9	69.7	18.4
RJ	4.4	83.3	12.2	1.1	88.9	10.0	3.3	82.2	14.4
SK	15.0	80.0	5.0	7.9	84.2	7.9	14.3	83.3	2.4
TN	12.3	83.0	4.7	16.2	78.1	5.7	18.9	73.6	7.6
TR	3.6	89.3	7.1	5.3	68.0	26.7	1.2	81.5	17.3
UP	0.0	81.6	18.4	0.0	88.0	12.0	0.0	79.7	20.3
WB	14.0	62.4	23.7	9.9	70.3	19.8	13.0	67.4	19.6
Total (%)	8.9	74.6	16.6	8.3	73.7	18.1	10.1	73.5	16.4

Note: HI – High Improvement, I – Improvement, NI – No Improvement

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

When it comes to public amenities, responses on improvements were more varied (**Table 4.44**). Sitting arrangements for villagers saw some improvement in 70.1 percent of GPs, but only 10.1 percent reported high improvement. Baby feeding corners, an essential facility for inclusivity, saw lower progress, with 57.6 percent of GPs reporting some improvement but 32.3 percent stating no improvement. Similarly, while separate washrooms for men and women improved in 68.8 percent of GPs, 21.3 percent of respondents noted no progress in sanitation facilities.

Kerala and Odisha were among the states with the highest reported improvements across multiple infrastructure areas. In Kerala, 28.6 percent of respondents reported high improvement in Panchayat Bhavans, and the state also had some of the highest scores for community halls (27.5%) and public information boards (32.5%). Odisha followed closely, with over 70 percent of respondents reporting some improvement across all categories.

In contrast, Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Maharashtra reported minimal progress. In Arunachal Pradesh, 68.2 percent of respondents reported no improvement in Panchayat Bhavan infrastructure, and 87.5 percent saw no change in public information boards. Madhya Pradesh also showed limited improvement, particularly in community halls (only 1.6% reported high improvement). Maharashtra had one of the highest rates of no improvement in sitting arrangements (44.2%) and baby feeding corners (61.4%).

Table 4.44: GP Infrastructure Improvements under Revamped RGSA – Part 2 (%)

State	Sitting Arrangements for Villagers			Baby Feeding Corner			Separate Washrooms for Males & Females		
	HI	I	NI	HI	I	NI	HI	I	NI
AP	12.1	74.1	13.8	5.7	75.5	18.9	6.6	73.8	19.7
AR	0.0	30.0	70.0	0.0	0.0	100.0	0.0	25.0	75.0
CG	7.5	62.7	29.9	9.7	32.3	58.1	4.9	53.7	41.5
HR	13.5	83.8	2.7	11.4	70.5	18.2	12.7	80.0	7.3
HP	4.0	57.9	38.2	4.7	17.2	78.1	5.2	66.2	28.6
KA	10.1	73.4	16.5	5.2	79.2	15.6	3.8	79.8	16.5
KL	32.1	55.1	12.8	28.6	59.7	11.7	32.5	55.8	11.7
MP	0.0	78.8	21.2	0.0	75.9	24.1	6.0	76.0	18.0
MH	1.3	54.6	44.2	0.0	38.6	61.4	2.6	69.7	27.6
OD	13.0	70.4	16.7	15.3	79.6	5.1	12.8	64.2	22.9
RJ	4.9	84.2	11.0	0.0	46.4	53.6	2.4	85.9	11.8
SK	9.8	90.2	0.0	17.4	65.2	17.4	26.2	71.4	2.4
TN	16.5	73.8	9.7	17.7	68.6	13.7	21.4	63.1	15.5
TR	1.4	73.6	25.0	6.8	37.3	55.9	0.0	64.0	36.0
UP	2.1	70.8	27.1	0.0	63.4	36.6	0.0	79.1	20.9
WB	12.1	67.0	20.9	8.5	42.7	48.8	11.0	61.5	27.5
Total	10.1	70.1	19.8	10.1	57.6	32.3	9.9	68.8	21.3

Note: HI – High Improvement, I – Improvement, NI – No Improvement

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh showed strong improvement trends in specific areas. Rajasthan had one of the highest improvements in separate washrooms (85.9%), while Uttar Pradesh reported steady improvements across public amenities despite limited high-impact changes.

4.8.5 Status of Innovative Project Implementation under RGSA

The revamped RGSA encourages Gram Panchayats to implement innovative projects aimed at improving governance, integrating technology, and enhancing capacity-building efforts.

In our survey, we collected responses from ERs on funds received by GPs under the revamped RGSA for innovative projects. However, when triangulated with official data from the MoPR, it became evident that most ERs lacked awareness of such categorical funding streams and were often unclear about their scope and application. This gap in

knowledge was reinforced during field interactions, where ERs expressed confusion regarding the purpose and utilization of these funds. To ensure accuracy, we present an analysis in **Chapter 7** which relies primarily on official Ministry records of innovative projects, while also acknowledging here the limited awareness among ERs as a significant capacity-building challenge.

We have also explored about the utility of funds for innovative projects during our qualitative interactions with the state holders. During these discussions, several stakeholders highlighted the challenges associated with funding for the implementation of such projects. While many panchayats expressed a strong desire to launch new initiatives, they were often unable to proceed due to the non-receipt of allocated funds. A stakeholder from Uttar Pradesh explained:

Yes, we have a component which we book. But we haven't received a fund yet. Many panchayats are interested in this. If we get a fund, they will be able to take up economic development. There was a workshop in Bangalore. They gave a presentation. But we haven't received an approval from the government. Our panchayat in Sultanpur has submitted a project on home stay. They have planned to implement a home stay project. There are many other panchayats. But we haven't received a fund yet. We haven't been able to work with RGSA. But the scope is there, and it is a good project. (RGSA District Official, Uttar Pradesh)

This shows that while panchayats have identified promising ideas, they are struggling waiting for funds. The delay means that innovative local governance projects, such as the home stay initiative, cannot take off.

In some cases, projects are prepared at the district level but do not reach the final approval stage. A stakeholder from Kerala shared:

Like currently we do not have any projects. Yes ma'am. But we have prepared some projects from the district level itself, but it has not been forwarded to the ministry for approval. Because as the, we did not come to know about the schedule of the central empowerment committee for this particular project. So, we already have some projects from the district. We have waited for this project, and it is with us, but it is not forwarded to the ministry as of now. (RGSA State Official, Kerala)

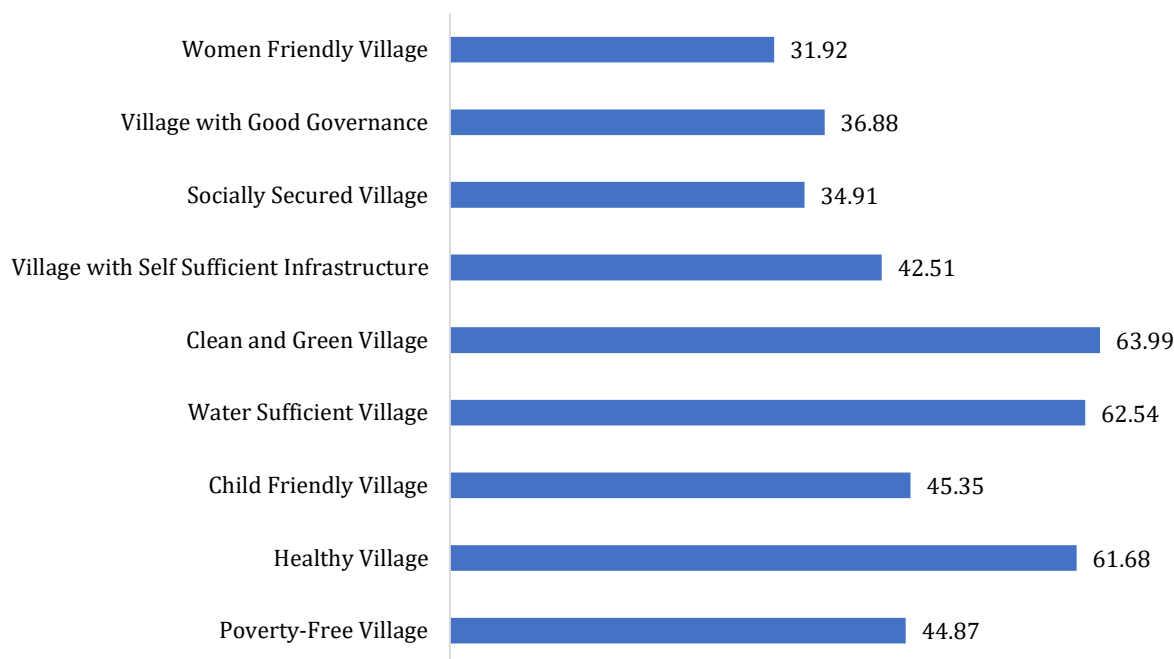
While the revamped RGSA has raised awareness and generated interest in innovative projects among panchayats, delays in funding and approval processes remain significant barriers. Stakeholders across various states emphasized the challenge of waiting for allocated funds, with many panchayats ready to move forward but unable to do so due to a lack of financial support. These delays are preventing panchayats from capitalizing on opportunities for governance improvement and economic development. Addressing the bottlenecks in funding and approval is essential to unlocking the full potential of the RGSA.

4.9 Assessment of Status of LSDG and OSR

4.9.1 Localized SDGs Taken Up by the GPs

Our analysis of localisation of SDGs, or Sankalps, taken up by Gram Panchayats during 2023-24 reveals some interesting trends (**Figure 4.5**). Overall, GPs have shown a stronger focus on goals related to health, clean environments, and water sufficiency, while areas like social justice, good governance, and women-friendly initiatives see relatively lower engagement.

Figure 4.5: Sankalps Taken Up by GPs during 2023-24 (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

On average, across all states, the most adopted Sankalps were for Healthy Villages (61.7%), Clean and Green Villages (64.0%), and Water Sufficient Villages (62.5%) (**Table 4.45**). This suggests that GPs are prioritizing basic health and environmental needs, which aligns with broader rural development goals. On the other hand, goals like Villages with Good Governance (36.9%), Socially Just and Socially Secured Villages (34.9%), and Women-Friendly Villages (31.9%) were less frequently pursued.

However, this overall trend masks significant variations across states. For instance, Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh stand out for their broad engagement with multiple SDGs. Tamil Nadu's GPs show high adoption rates for Water Sufficient Villages (92.5%) and Villages with Good Governance (74.0%), while Uttar Pradesh leads with an impressive 90.7 percent of GPs focusing on Healthy Villages and a strong commitment to poverty reduction and governance-related goals.

In contrast, states like Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra show lower engagement in several areas. Chhattisgarh's GPs, for example, have particularly low adoption rates for Child-Friendly Villages (6.9%) and Self-Sufficient Infrastructure (6.3%), while Maharashtra, despite excelling in environmental goals like Water Sufficient Villages (83.8%) and Clean

and Green Villages (87.4%), lags significantly in governance and social justice goals, with only 7.8 percent of GPs focusing on Good Governance.

Karnataka and Odisha show balanced adoption across multiple SDGs. Karnataka has high percentages for Healthy Villages (79.1%), Child-Friendly Villages (72.2%), and Self-Sufficient Infrastructure (58.2%). Similarly, Odisha shows strong numbers across categories, with more than 60 percent of GPs taking up Poverty-Free Villages, Healthy Villages, and Good Governance initiatives.

Table 4.45: Localized SDGs (Sankalps) Taken Up by GPs during 2023-24 (%)

State	Poverty	Health	Child	Water	Clean & Green	Infra-structure	Social	Good Governance	Women
AP	30.6	66.7	52.3	79.3	80.2	45.1	45.1	49.6	49.6
AR	22.2	70.4	64.2	71.6	67.9	48.2	22.2	22.2	14.8
CG	30.2	34.6	6.9	56.6	61.6	6.3	3.1	12.0	17.0
HR	51.2	76.0	56.6	67.4	65.1	42.6	44.2	48.1	27.9
HP	45.8	68.2	58.9	59.8	57.0	52.3	49.5	35.5	20.6
KA	58.9	79.1	72.2	70.9	65.8	58.2	46.2	42.4	37.3
KL	47.4	59.2	44.7	40.1	63.8	34.9	31.6	31.6	40.1
MP	32.3	36.2	15.4	35.4	49.2	22.3	21.5	17.7	23.1
MH	23.4	35.9	20.4	83.8	87.4	55.1	10.2	7.8	8.4
OD	68.8	73.4	64.2	65.1	70.6	60.6	56.9	60.6	56.0
RJ	48.1	57.9	43.2	55.2	50.8	17.5	42.1	32.8	25.7
SK	18.2	49.4	32.5	22.1	41.6	39.0	16.9	33.8	16.9
TN	61.0	76.0	58.2	92.5	63.0	53.4	52.7	74.0	55.5
TR	43.8	81.0	49.6	69.3	70.8	46.0	39.4	46.7	35.8
UP	64.0	90.7	57.0	48.8	48.8	45.4	44.2	45.4	43.0
WB	62.1	53.8	50.3	63.5	67.6	68.3	37.9	41.4	40.7
Total	44.9	61.7	45.4	62.5	64.0	42.5	34.9	36.9	31.9

Note: Poverty: Poverty-Free Village; Health: Healthy Village; Child: Child Friendly Village; Water: Water Sufficient Village; Clean & Green: Clean and Green Village; Infrastructure: Village with Self-Sufficient Infrastructure; Social: Socially Just and Socially Secured Village; Good Governance: Village with Good Governance; Women: Women Friendly Village.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Kerala and Sikkim present an interesting case where despite having traditionally strong governance systems, the percentage of GPs focusing on governance-related goals is lower than expected. Kerala shows moderate adoption across most SDGs, but only 31.6 percent of GPs focused on Good Governance. In Sikkim, while 49.4 percent of GPs prioritized Healthy Villages, only 16.9 percent focused on Good Governance or Women-Friendly Villages.

Another notable trend is the focus on environmental and infrastructure goals in states like Andhra Pradesh and Haryana. Andhra Pradesh has 79.3 percent of GPs focusing on Water Sufficiency and 80.2 percent on Clean and Green Villages, while Haryana shows

high adoption in health (76.0%) and environmental areas, but less focus on gender-specific initiatives, with only 27.9 percent of GPs working on Women-Friendly Villages.

Our interactions with the faulty yielded several perspectives on the lack of improvement in LSDGs which can be attributed to a complex interplay of inadequate monitoring, funding constraints, poor community engagement, and coordination gaps. One of the primary challenges is the lack of robust data collection and evaluation mechanisms, which hinders the ability to track progress effectively. Without systematic data, it becomes difficult to assess where interventions are succeeding or failing. This gap raises the question: Would initiatives like the Panchayat Development Index (PDI), if conducted annually, bridge this gap?

Financial constraints further complicate the issue. Local bodies often face limited funding for projects aligned with SDGs, directly affecting their successful implementation. While grants-in-aid are provided to support specific functions, these are often conditional, limiting flexibility in addressing local needs. The challenge of increasing OSR persists, as many local bodies have a limited taxable base, restricting their capacity to generate independent income.

However, even when resources are available, poor community engagement significantly reduces the grassroots impact of SDG initiatives. Take the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) for example: despite its national prominence, low community participation diminishes the effectiveness of sanitation drives. ERs often struggle to mobilize communities and foster a sense of ownership. As one official remarked,

The initiative the government has taken by introducing this 45-day training program for elected representatives and functionaries is a path-breaking effort. The concept of LSDG needs time to be injected into not only the minds but also the attitudes of our trainees. Through such residential programs, slowly but steadily, we instil the concept into their behaviour, which will give a positive impetus in the days to come.

This reflects the potential of training programs to shift mindsets but also highlights the slow pace at which such change occurs.

Adding to these challenges are coordination gaps between local, state, and national agencies, resulting in fragmented implementation of SDG initiatives. Furthermore, skill gaps among local leaders and officials, due to insufficient training and capacity building, limit their ability to effectively drive projects forward.

4.9.2 Status of OSR

Survey analysis across states as shown in **Table 4.46** indicates that only 34.4 percent of Panchayats from Sampled States are generating sufficient OSR, primarily due to inadequate awareness of the funding support available through the Revamped RGSA for various projects, including economic development and innovation. Most Panchayats rely on major revenue sources such as allocations from the 15th Finance Commission, water tax, and license tax, which collectively account for nearly 60 percent of their total revenue. To enhance their OSR, many Panchayats have initiated measures like imposing taxes on

marriage halls, unauthorized constructions, certificate issuance fees, and tourism tax collection.

Across sample states Maharashtra and West Bengal record the highest OSR sufficiency at 71.4 and 55.7 percent respectively, indicating strong local revenue generation. In contrast, Arunachal Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, and Karnataka show lower levels.

While limited OSR in hilly and poorer states is understandable, Karnataka's low OSR is surprising. Despite being a developed state with industrial growth, Karnataka's Panchayats have not fully leveraged their taxation powers or the region's economic development.

Table 4.46: Distribution of State-wise OSR Sufficiency and Fund Awareness (%)

State	OSR Sufficiency	Awareness Level	
		Innovation Fund	EDIE-RGSA*
AP	46.0	24.0	0.0
AR	7.3	17.1	7.3
CG	16.5	32.9	10.1
HR	35.0	63.3	65.0
HP	31.7	43.0	15.2
KA	26.0	10.4	1.3
KL	32.9	39.7	20.6
MP	71.4	74.7	16.5
MH	30.4	39.1	31.9
OD	11.1	30.6	16.7
RJ	29.5	41.0	20.5
SK	50.0	47.4	60.5
TN	23.8	67.9	9.5
TR	37.7	15.9	14.5
UP	39.5	39.5	30.2
WB	55.7	89.9	46.8
Total (%)	34.4	44.1	21.6
Total	372	477	234

Note: EDIE-RGSA: Economic Development and Income Enhancement under RGSA

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

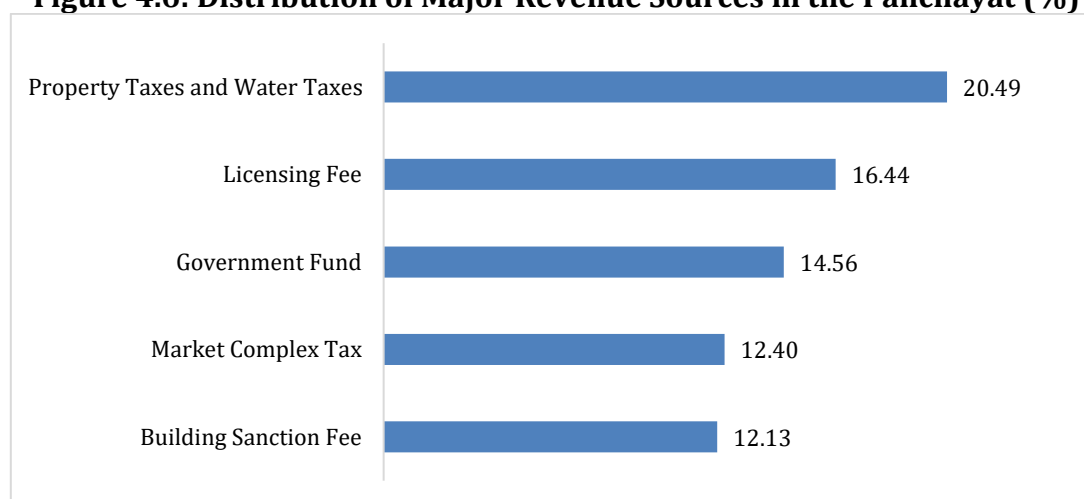
During our visits to sample states, both state and district officials expressed concerns about low OSR levels and an overreliance on the Union Finance Commission and central funding. They pointed to various constraints, such as state-imposed restrictions on property taxes, user charges for water supply, and market complex fees. Therefore, states should be encouraged to lift certain tax moratoriums, enabling Panchayats to fully realize their revenue potential.

Figure 4.6 illustrates the major revenue sources for Panchayats across states that support the Sankalp (LSDG Themes). The analysis shows that property and water taxes, as well as license taxes, contribute substantially, representing approximately 20 percent and 16 percent respectively. It is important to note that revenue from taxes, tariffs, and

fees remains largely underutilized in most Gram Panchayats, despite its potential as a valuable resource to support the SDGs.

Other key revenue sources for states include OSR, government funds, market complex tax, and building tax, each contributing less than 15 percent. This distribution demonstrates a diverse mix of internal and external revenue sources, with a notable reliance on central funding.

Figure 4.6: Distribution of Major Revenue Sources in the Panchayat (%)

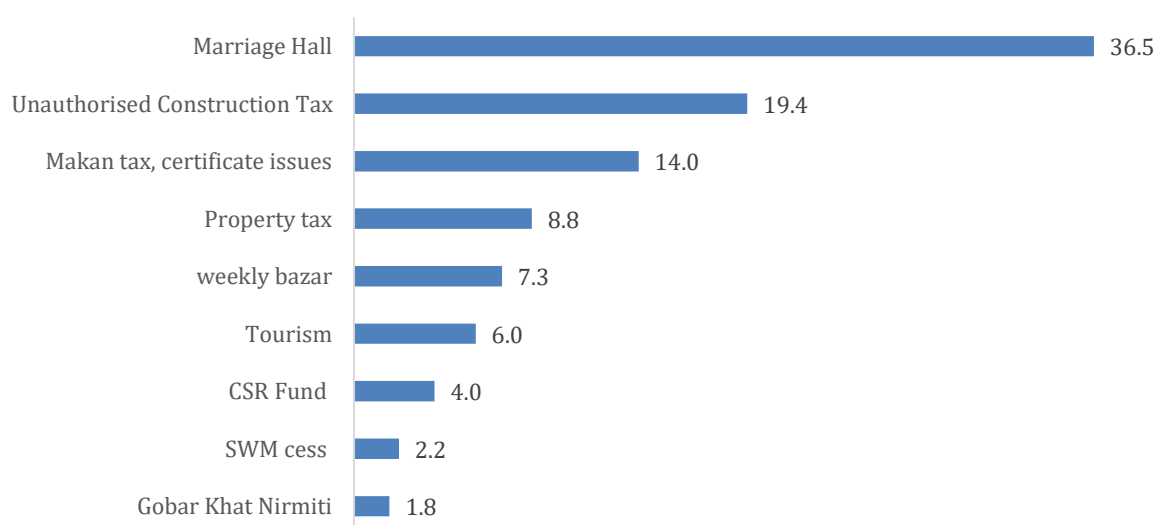


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Note: Based on responses from the ERs.

Figure 4.7 shows the range of initiatives Panchayats have implemented to boost OSR. Survey responses indicate that Panchayats have adopted various innovative approaches, such as constructing marriage halls, collecting fines and dues from unauthorized constructions, and imposing market taxes and certificate issuance fees. These initiatives contribute to nearly 70 percent of the states' OSR.

Figure 4.7: Distribution of OSR Initiatives Taken at Panchayat Level (%)



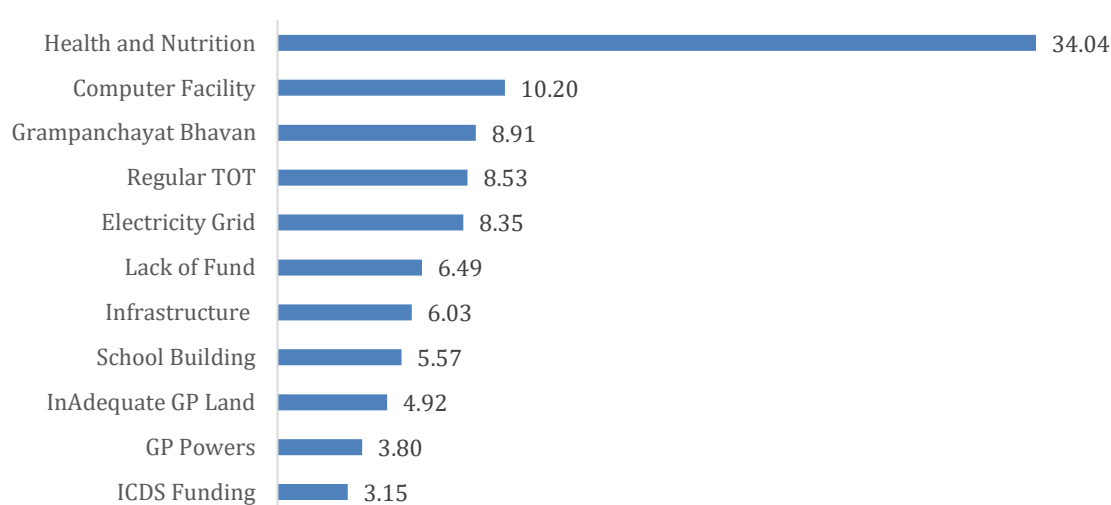
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

To further enhance revenue, Panchayats should be encouraged to actively pursue Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funding and implement user charges on essential services, like water supply, that they provide. These measures could significantly strengthen Panchayat finances and support sustainable development efforts.

4.10 Key Challenges Faced by Panchayats

The survey inquired about the challenges faced by the Elected Representatives within their Panchayats. **Figure 4.8** illustrates the key issues affecting Panchayat operations in the sampled states, with health and nutrition concerns for women and children emerging as the most prominent issue, accounting for 34 percent of the total. This underscores the urgent need for targeted public health and nutrition program interventions to support vulnerable populations.

Figure 4.8: Distribution of Panchayat Working/Issues (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Other significant challenges include improving digital governance and administrative efficiency, as well as addressing the lack of essential infrastructure like Panchayat Bhavans (8.9%) and computer facilities, which collectively account for approximately 20 percent.

Overall, the key issues affecting Panchayat functioning include challenges related to health and nutrition (34%), limited access to computer facilities (10%), and the lack of independent Panchayat Bhavans (10%), all of which impede overall development and effectiveness.

4.11 Overall Assessment of RGSA: Gains, Gaps, and State-wise Divergences

The revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan set out with a bold vision: to strengthen local governance through capacity-building, digital integration, and infrastructure development, while embedding SDGs at the grassroots level. While we found that the program has achieved considerable success in expanding training participation and promoting digital governance, it has also revealed gaps in outreach, infrastructure readiness, and post-training support. The effectiveness of RGSA, therefore, presents a complex picture—one of both progress and persistent challenges.

In this section, we present the overall findings together, explaining possible trends and highlighting key questions that merit further robust investigation. By weaving together quantitative data and qualitative insights, we sought to understand not *just what has been achieved, but also why certain patterns have emerged and where future efforts must be concentrated*.

4.11.1 Assessing the Reach and Engagement of the RGSA Program

One of RGSA's most significant achievements lies in its ability to broaden training participation among grassroots stakeholders. On average, over 60 percent of elected representatives participated in at least one training session. Thematic areas closely tied to community well-being, such as Healthy Villages (87.5%), Water Sufficiency (87.8%), and Clean & Green Villages (82.2%), saw particularly high levels of engagement. However, participation rates are significantly low for sessions focused on governance structures, financial management, and administrative skills. Only 35.8 percent of ERs and 31.4 percent of Panchayat functionaries attended governance-focused training, while exposure visits, which offer hands-on, experiential learning had the lowest participation rates, with just 12.3 percent of ERs and 4.8 percent of PFs attending.

This discrepancy raises several important questions. Why are participation rates lower in areas that directly enhance governance capacity? Logistical challenges were frequently cited in qualitative interviews, particularly by participants (mostly faculty) from rural and remote areas. Limited transportation options, long travel distances, and the need to balance governance responsibilities with household or agricultural duties were all noted as barriers. However, this alone does not fully explain the pattern. Why do logistical barriers affect some types of training more than others? For example, exposure visits, despite their practical benefits, saw lower attendance than more traditional, lecture-based sessions. This suggests that there may be other factors at play, such as the perceived relevance of the training or political interests, the scheduling and location of sessions, or the way these sessions are communicated to participants.

Another puzzling trend is the low attendance in orientation sessions, which are often mandatory. Despite their compulsory nature, many ERs did not participate in these foundational sessions. This raises further questions: Is there a lack of enforcement for mandatory sessions, or do representatives perceive these sessions as less valuable? To address these challenges, some stakeholders suggested conducting localized training at the block or cluster level to reduce travel burdens. Additionally, introducing shorter, more flexible training modules could help accommodate the demanding schedules of ERs. Furthermore, the use of combined notification systems via WhatsApp groups, emails, or official letters could be an effective improvement to ensure that representatives are well-informed and can plan accordingly. Some states have shown to prefer one mode of communication over another. However, given that the reach of such notifications could widely vary within the state geographies as well, a systemic combined method could be used. We provide more details in the Key Recommendations in **Chapter 11**.

4.11.2 Assessing Effectiveness of the Training Methods

While RGSA succeeded in expanding training participation, the methods used to deliver these sessions raise some questions about their effectiveness in building practical governance skills. The overwhelming reliance on traditional lectures used in 83.6 percent

of ER sessions and 84.4 percent of PF sessions reflects a preference for conventional approaches. While lectures are effective for delivering theoretical knowledge, they often fall short in engaging participants or equipping them with the hands-on skills necessary for effective governance.

Efforts to introduce interactive methods, such as case studies, video demonstrations, and role plays, were evident but inconsistently implemented. Case studies were incorporated into 48.4 percent of ER sessions and 51.2 percent of PF sessions, while video demonstrations featured in 64.7 percent of sessions for both groups. However, more dynamic, experiential approaches such as games, simulations, and role plays were far less common, used in less than 34 percent of training sessions.

This raises important questions: Why are interactive methods, which are known to enhance engagement and practical learning, underutilized in RGSA training? Stakeholders, particularly faculty trainers, emphasized the transformative power of experiential learning—such as group discussions, hands-on activities, and real-world problem-solving exercises. Yet, these methods remain sporadic, pointing to potential systemic barriers within training institutions, such as a lack of resources, skilled trainers, or institutional inertia favouring traditional pedagogies. Understanding these barriers requires further exploration.

Additionally, the reliance on virtual training tools presents its own set of challenges. While digital learning platforms offer convenience and scalability, qualitative interviews revealed that many participants found virtual sessions less engaging than face-to-face training. Unreliable internet connectivity and frequent power outages in rural areas further hampered the effectiveness of online training. This raises another critical question: Is the push for digital training outpacing the readiness of local infrastructure and digital literacy levels among participants? Many states have, in fact, tried to balance digital and in-person training to maximize both accessibility and impact.

4.11.3 Assessing the Learning Infrastructure Provided by RGSA

On a positive note, most training centres were well-equipped with basic facilities such as LCD projectors (80.8%) and whiteboards (77.9%), creating a conducive environment for standard instruction.

However, when it comes to digital infrastructure, the picture is less optimistic. Despite RGSA's emphasis on digital governance, only 30.5 percent of ERs and 54.3 percent of PFs had access to video conferencing tools during training sessions. Even fewer participants had access to computers for hands-on digital training, 15.1 percent of ERs and 36.3 percent of PFs. This gap between digital training objectives and the available infrastructure could mean that many representatives are being introduced to digital tools in theory but lack the opportunity to practice using them in a controlled learning environment.

Moreover, qualitative data revealed inconsistencies in the quality and availability of basic amenities across training centres. While some centres offered modern facilities, including air-conditioned classrooms and reliable internet connections, others lacked even basic sanitation facilities or consistent electricity. This raises important questions about the

equity of access to high-quality training environments and how infrastructural disparities may affect learning outcomes.

4.11.4 Assessing the Effectiveness of Post-Training Support

While RGSA's initial training sessions have been successful in reaching a broad audience, the post-training experience reveals significant gaps in ensuring long-term governance improvements. Formal assessments were conducted for 67.7 percent of ERs, and 69 percent received certification upon completing their training. However, only 51.7 percent of ERs reported receiving handholding support after the sessions which has been highlighted as a critical component for translating theoretical knowledge into practical governance improvements.

This inconsistency in post-training support is particularly troubling given the complex nature of governance tasks at the local level. Many ERs expressed a desire for ongoing mentorship or periodic follow-ups to help them navigate the challenges of implementing new policies or using digital tools. Yet, the availability of such support varied widely, and in many cases, representatives were left to manage on their own.

An interesting pattern emerged regarding the type of post-training support provided. While some states favoured physical visits and face-to-face mentorship, others relied heavily on digital follow-ups via WhatsApp groups or email. However, the reliance on digital methods raises another question: Does digital post-training support effectively reach those with limited digital literacy or poor connectivity? The answer likely varies by region, but it highlights the need for a more tailored, hybrid approach to post-training engagement.

4.11.5 Assessing RGSA's Impact on Panchayat Infrastructure and LSDG Goals

RGSA's infrastructure development efforts have also yielded mixed results. While many Panchayat Bhavans reported improvements in basic amenities such as separate washrooms (68.8%) and meeting halls (73.6%), more advanced infrastructure, like Common Service Centres (CSCs) and digital tools remained underdeveloped in many regions. For example, only 39.8% of Gram Panchayats utilized RGSA funds for purchasing computers, highlighting a disconnect between the push for digital governance and the resources available at the local level.

The localization of Sustainable Development Goals, a key focus of RGSA, has seen progress but remains uneven. While themes like Healthy Villages (61.7%), Clean and Green Villages (64%), and Water Sufficiency (62.5%) were widely adopted, governance-related goals, such as Good Governance Villages (36.9%) and Women-Friendly Villages (31.9%), received less attention.

4.11.6 Evaluating the Effectiveness of RGSA across States

While the overall trends under RGSA offer valuable insights, we found several state-level differences indicating the complexity of the program's implementation. Maharashtra, West Bengal, and Odisha consistently emerged as top performers, with high training participation rates, strong digital integration, and robust infrastructure development.

These states also demonstrated balanced attention to both governance reforms and community-oriented LSDG goals.

In contrast, states like Madhya Pradesh and Arunachal Pradesh struggled across multiple dimensions. Low training participation, weak digital infrastructure, and inconsistent fund utilization in these regions point to systemic barriers that limit RGSA's effectiveness. Interestingly, even in high-performing states, certain anomalies exist—such as low participation in governance-focused LSDGs in Maharashtra, despite its otherwise strong performance. Local political dynamics, administrative capacity, and resource availability could play a compounding role in shaping the desired outcomes of RGSA.

4.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, we presented the findings from our evaluation of the RGSA program, drawing on data from our primary survey conducted in 2024. Our analysis covered key aspects of the program, including its training outreach mechanisms, training participation, effectiveness of training modules, accessibility of digital tools, quality of training infrastructure and Panchayat infrastructure and the financial sustainability of the Panchayats. We also examined state-wise variations in these outcomes, identifying patterns in implementation and areas for improvement. Our findings highlight a mix of successes and persistent gaps, with certain states demonstrating better engagement with the program and infrastructure while others continue to face challenges in outreach and participation.

Further, our findings suggest that the revamped RGSA has made notable progress in expanding training opportunities for ERs and Panchayat Functionaries, with a blend of training methodologies. However, disparities in training participation persist in certain thematic areas like governance and digital literacy. The use of digital tools in panchayat administration has increased, but accessibility and training on financial and governance software remain uneven across states. While training infrastructure is generally adequate, gaps in residential facilities, digital access, and post-training support likely limit the program's effectiveness. Importantly, our analysis warrants the need for stronger outreach strategies, sustained handholding support, and localized content to improve engagement and applicability. The assessment of Panchayat infrastructure under RGSA also reveals significant improvements, particularly Panchayat Bhavans and public amenities, though variations exist in fund utilization and accessibility. We detail some of these issues in **Chapter 6**, where we present our findings from the qualitative interviews with the stakeholders. Moving forward, addressing these gaps through targeted interventions, better integration of digital governance tools, and enhanced monitoring of training impact will be crucial for strengthening grassroots governance under RGSA.

Chapter 5: Stakeholder Analysis

Chapter 4 focused on the experiences of elected representatives, Women Elected Representatives, and panchayat functionaries—the direct beneficiaries of the program. However, local governance does not operate in isolation. Beyond elected officials and faculty and trainers, there are other crucial actors— line department functionaries, SHG members, and government officials involved on successful implementation of revamped RGSA—who contribute to these training initiatives. Additionally, the survey also captured the views of beneficiaries who are randomly chosen from the panchayat on conduct of various Gram Panchayat activities, improvement in services, and status of panchayat infrastructure. To capture a more holistic picture, our study also included surveys with these stakeholders. This chapter presents key findings from these surveys, offering a broader understanding of how different groups perceive and engage with the RGSA framework.

5.1 Beneficiaries

5.1.1 Demographic Profile

The demographic profile of beneficiary sample for the impact evaluation of the revamped RGSA presents a diverse representation across regions, genders, and social categories. Our sample is evenly represented across all regions (**Table 5.1**), and predominantly represented by males (60.4% as in **Table 5.2**) and evenly represented in terms of social category (**Table 5.3**).

Table 5.1: Region and State-wise Representation of Beneficiaries

Region	Frequency	Percent		State	Frequency	Percent
Eastern	283	22.0		Chhattisgarh	81	6.3
				Odisha	109	8.5
				West Bengal	93	7.2
North-Eastern	167	13.0		Arunachal Pradesh	41	3.2
				Sikkim	42	3.3
				Tripura	84	6.5
Northern	241	18.8		Haryana	79	6.2
				Himachal Pradesh	82	6.4
				Uttar Pradesh	80	6.2
Southern	334	26.0		Andhra Pradesh	69	5.4
				Karnataka	79	6.2
				Kerala	80	6.2
				Tamil Nadu	106	8.3
Western	259	20.2		Madhya Pradesh	82	6.4
				Maharashtra	87	6.8
				Rajasthan	90	7.0
Total	1,284	100		Total	1,284	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.2: Gender of the Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	508	39.6
Male	776	60.4
Total	1,284	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

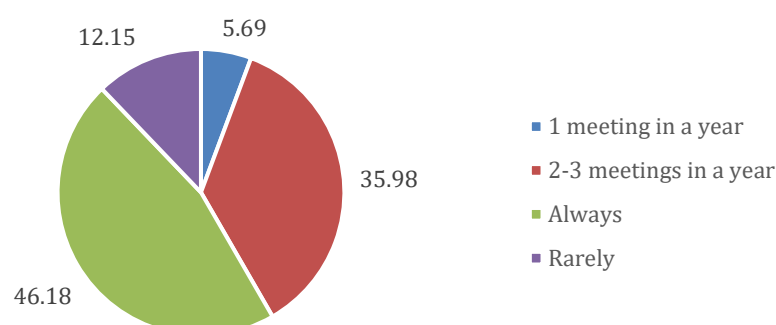
Table 5.3: Social Category of the Respondents

Social Category	Frequency	Percent
General	290	22.6
OBC	416	32.4
Others	15	1.2
SC	280	21.8
ST	283	22.0
Total	1,284	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

5.1.2 Panchayat Infrastructure, Operations, & Services

The survey results regarding the revamped RGSA program indicate a generally positive perception of community engagement and the functioning of Gram Panchayats. Approximately 46.2 percent of participants attend Gram Sabha meetings regularly, and 36.0 percent attend two to three times a year, highlighting the importance of local democratic participation. However, 12.2 percent of respondents attend rarely, indicating a need to encourage broader community involvement to enhance local governance.

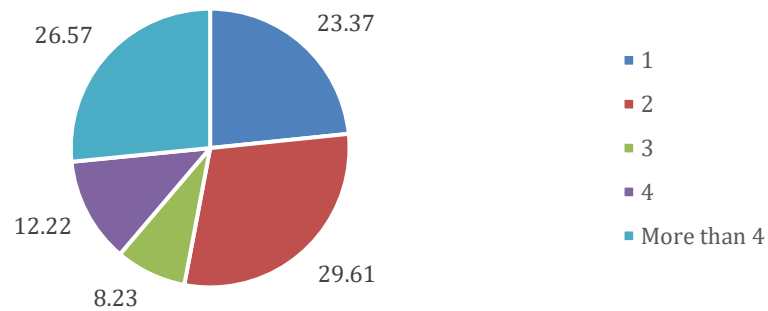
Figure 5.1: Attendance of Gram Sabha Meetings (%)

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

The findings also reveal that 58.6 percent of respondents reported the existence of Mahila Sabhas, with a substantial number conducting at least three meetings annually (**Figure 5.2**). This demonstrates a commitment to women's involvement in decision-making, although further efforts are necessary to increase both the frequency and effectiveness of these gatherings. Conversely, Bal Sabhas are less common, with only 43.6 percent of respondents indicating their existence (**Figure 5.3**). Importantly, the finding also highlights the efforts made under RGSA to strengthen participatory democracy by promoting the regular conduct of Gram Sabhas, which needs to be recognized as a

significant achievement. At the same time, a recommendation is to *emphasize* the importance of sustaining and further institutionalizing these forums, ensuring that Mahila Sabhas, Bal Sabhas, and Gram Sabhas become more inclusive, frequent, and effective in shaping local governance.

Figure 5.2: Number of Mahila Sabha Conducted Annually (%)

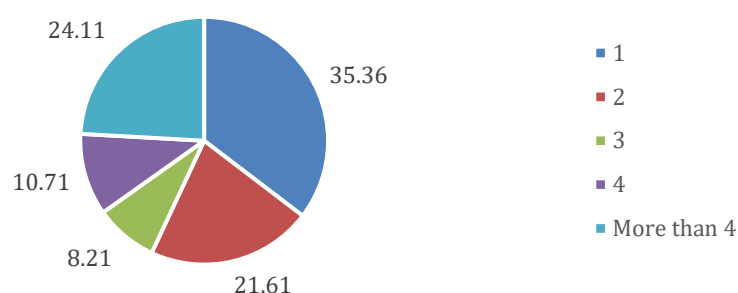


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Gram Panchayat Sabha Hall, Maharashtra



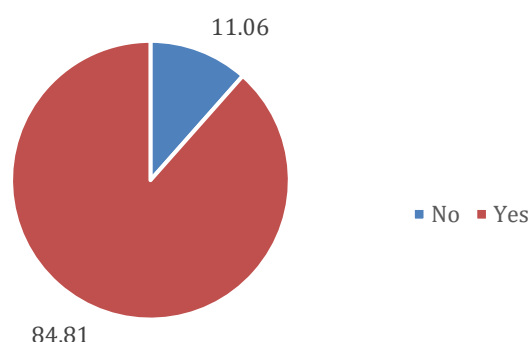
Figure 5.3: Number of Bal Sabhas Conducted (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

When assessing the overall functioning of Gram Panchayats, 84.8 percent of respondents noted positive improvements over the past three years (**Figure 5.4**). This high approval rate suggests effective local governance, although the 11.1 percent who perceived no improvement underscores the necessity for ongoing transparency and accountability to build trust within the community.

Figure 5.4: Improvements in the Overall Functioning of the GP (%)

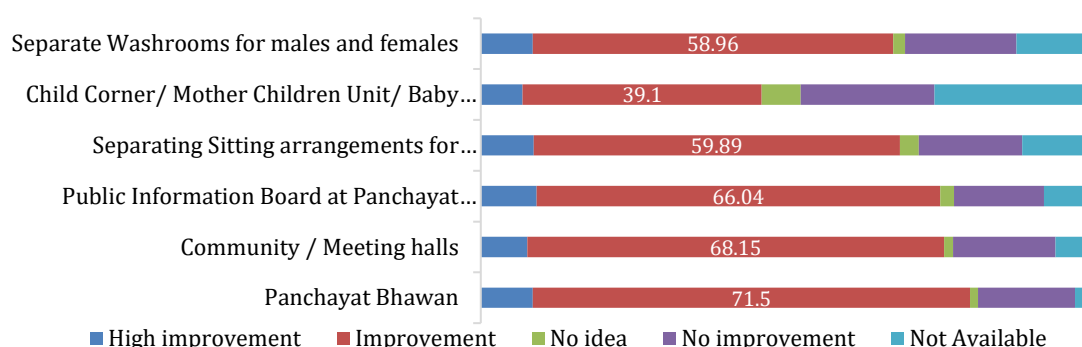


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

In terms of infrastructure, 71.5 percent of participants reported improvements in Panchayat Bhavans, though 15.9 percent indicated no change, signalling a need for further investment. Similarly, 68.2 percent noted enhancements in community and meeting halls (**Figure 5.5**). Improvements were also reported for public information boards (66.0%) and separate sitting arrangements for villagers (59.9%). However, the establishment of child corners and mother-child units showed less favourable results, with only 39.1 percent acknowledging improvements, while 25.8 percent reported these facilities were absent.

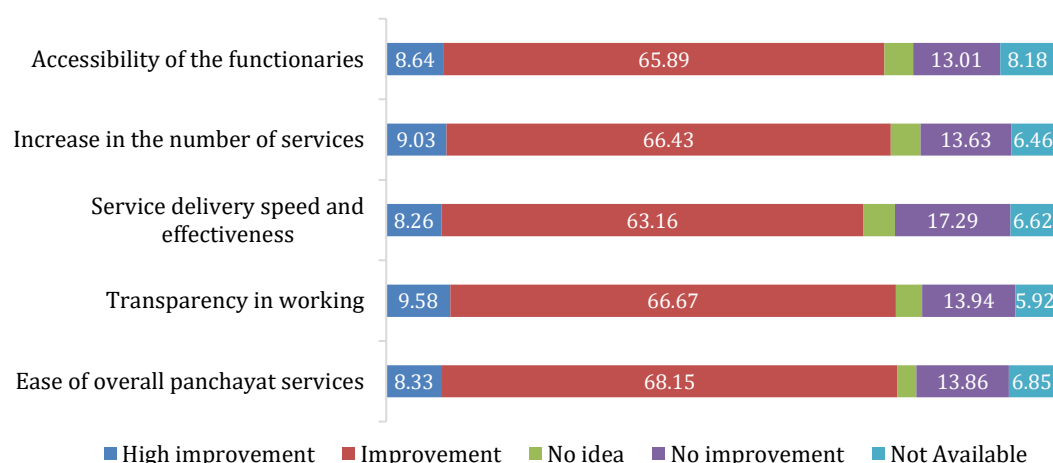
Regarding washroom facilities, 59.0 percent reported improvements, yet 12.4 percent stated there were no washrooms available, highlighting ongoing sanitation challenges (**Figure 5.5**). Overall, while there have been notable advancements in infrastructure and facilities, addressing identified gaps is crucial for enhancing local governance's effectiveness and accessibility.

Figure 5.5: Improvements in Panchayat Infrastructure and Facilities



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.6: Improvements in Panchayat Operations in Last Three Years (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

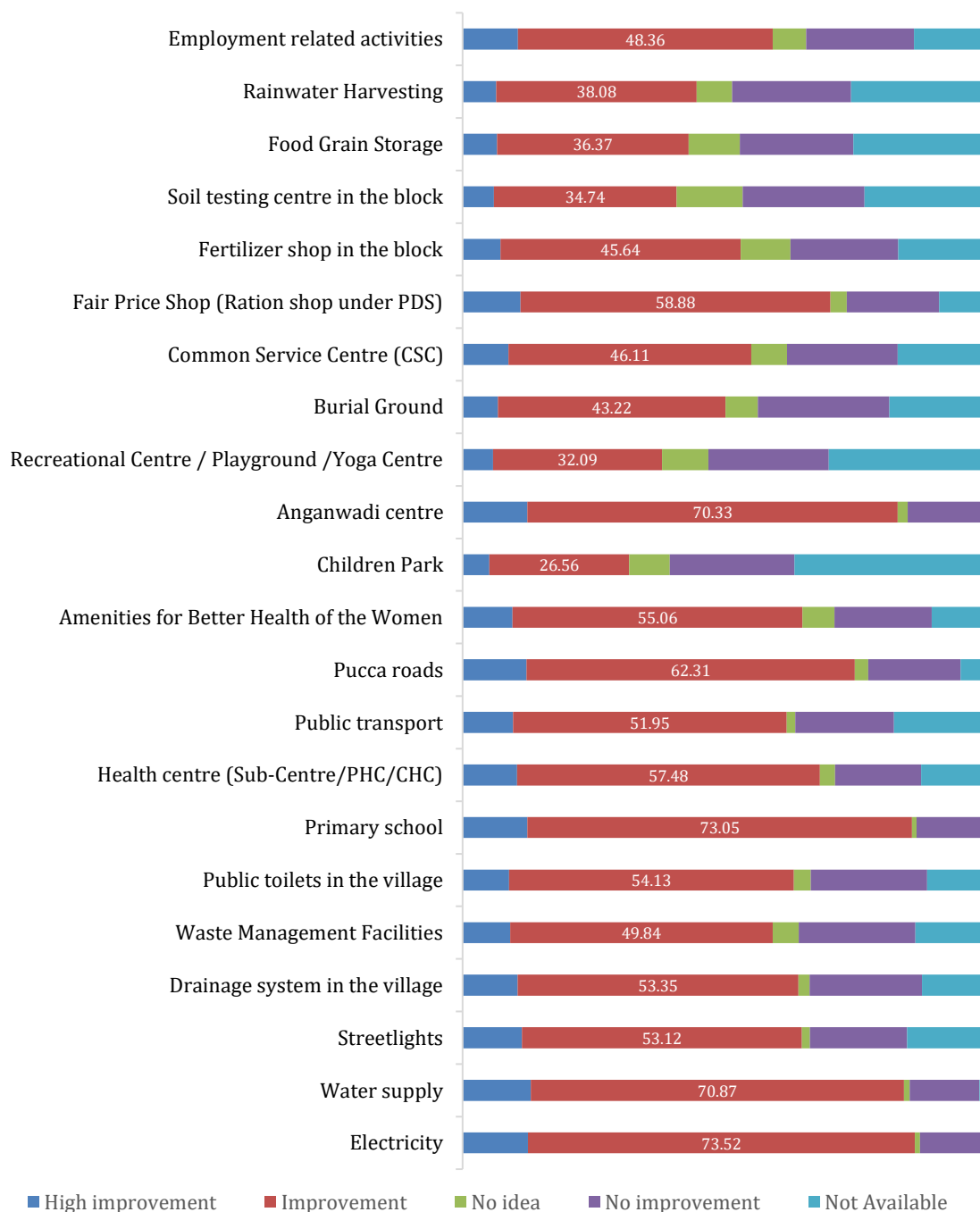
On operational improvements, 68.2 percent of respondents reported easier access to Panchayat services, and 66.7 percent noted enhanced transparency (**Figure 5.6**). Yet, 13.9 percent felt there had been no improvement in service access, indicating barriers remain. The perception of improved service delivery speed was noted by 63.2 percent of respondents, while 66.4 percent reported a rise in the number of services offered.

Moreover, **Figure 5.7** highlights significant improvements in various service areas, including electricity (73.5%) and water supply (70.9%), with positive feedback on health facilities for women (55.1%) and Anganwadi centres (70.3%). However, challenges persist in public toilets, recreational facilities, and economic opportunities, with gaps in employment-related activities reported by 20.5 percent of respondents.

The survey results indicate that improvements in the functioning and services of Gram Panchayats are largely attributable to the training provided under the RGSA, which has equipped elected representatives and Panchayat functionaries with the necessary skills and knowledge to enhance governance and implement sustainable development goals. While there have been significant strides in improving the quality of life for residents,

ongoing efforts are required to address remaining challenges and further enhance the overall effectiveness of Gram Panchayats.

Figure 5.7: Improvements in Panchayat Services (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Model Gram Panchayat, Maharashtra



Renewable Energy Plant, Model Gram Panchayat, Maharashtra



5.2 Line Department Functionaries

Line department functionaries play a pivotal role in implementing the RGSA by facilitating the convergence of various government schemes at the grassroots level. Their responsibilities encompass planning, execution, and monitoring of development initiatives, making them essential for effective governance and rural development.

5.2.1 Knowledge and Collaboration in Panchayat Development Processes

The survey results indicate a positive level of engagement among line functionaries in Gram Panchayat meetings, with 39.2 percent attending always and 21.9 percent attending often (**Table 5.4**). However, 23.9 percent participate only sometimes, and 10.2 percent attend rarely, suggesting a gap in sustained engagement that hinders coordination across departments. Streamlining RGSA training programs could enhance interest and continuous participation among functionaries.

Table 5.4: Frequency of Participation in Gram Panchayat Meetings

Participation in GP Meetings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	289	39.2
Often	161	21.8
Sometimes	176	23.9
Rarely	75	10.2
Never	36	4.9
Total	737	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.5 shows that a significant majority (79.0%) of respondents perceive effective interdepartmental coordination in implementing Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP), reflecting successful cooperation among departments that is essential for scheme convergence and resource utilization.

Table 5.5: Inter-Departmental Coordination

Existence of Inter-Departmental Coordination	Frequency	Percent
Yes	582	79.0
No	94	12.8
Not sure	61	8.3
Total	737	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.6 indicates that interaction frequency between line functionaries and Gram Panchayats varies, with 32.3 percent engaging monthly and 25.8 percent weekly. While most functionaries interact at least monthly, 17.4 percent report rare interactions, which are vital for development scheme implementation. Increased interaction is necessary to improve governance and scheme execution.

Table 5.6: Frequency of Interaction between GP and LDF (%)

Frequency of Interaction with GP	Frequency	Percent
Daily	151	20.5
Weekly	190	25.8
Monthly	238	32.3
Rarely	128	17.4
Never	30	4.1
Total	737	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.7 shows that the collaboration effectiveness is underscored by 92.1 percent of functionaries reporting strong cooperation with Gram Panchayats, facilitating effective project execution at the grassroots level. However, challenges such as communication gaps, differing departmental priorities, and bureaucratic hurdles must be addressed to enhance interdepartmental cooperation.

Table 5.7: Effectiveness of GP Collaboration in Development Projects

Collaboration with GP	Frequency	Percent
Very effective	281	38.1
Effective	398	54.0
Neutral	56	7.6
Ineffective	2	0.3
Very ineffective	0	0.0
Total	737	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

As per **Table 5.8**, most line functionaries (84.7%) believe they possess a good to very good understanding of the GPDP process, indicating effective training under RGSA. Nevertheless, 14.5 percent rate their knowledge as average, highlighting a need for additional training to close knowledge gaps.

Table 5.8: Self-Rating on Knowledge of the GPDP Process

Knowledge	Frequency	Percent
Very good	243	33.0
Good	381	51.7
Average	107	14.5
Bad	5	0.7
Very bad	1	0.1
Total	737	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.9 depicts a substantial 80.9 percent of departments submit action plans to Gram Panchayats, indicating strong alignment between line departments and local governance. Furthermore, 49.9 percent of line functionaries frequently seek assistance from Gram

Panchayats, demonstrating a healthy level of collaboration essential for effective local governance (**Table 5.10**).

Table 5.9: Submission of Action Plans to Gram Panchayat for Approval

Submission of Action Plans to GP	Frequency	Percent
Yes	596	80.9
No	96	13.0
Don't know	45	6.1
Total	737	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.10: Frequency of Assistance from GP in Project Implementation

Frequency of assistance from GP	Frequency	Percent
Always	368	49.9
Often	188	25.5
Sometimes	128	17.4
Rarely	35	4.8
Never	18	2.4
Total	737	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.11 displays that while 71.2 percent of functionaries feel adequately resourced to perform their duties, 17.0 percent disagree or are uncertain, revealing potential resource allocation gaps that could hinder departmental effectiveness in self-governance.

Table 5.11: Availability of Sufficient Resources

Availability of sufficient resources	Frequency	Percent
Yes	525	71.2
No	125	17.0
Not sure	87	11.8
Total	737	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.12 highlights that key challenges identified include resource shortages (62.1%), insufficient training (41.0%), and a lack of community cooperation (38.5%). Other minor challenges include poor inter-departmental coordination (28.6%), limited authority (25.8%), bureaucratic obstacles (24.3%), and unclear roles (21.7%). These issues highlight critical areas for strengthening the RGSA scheme, particularly in capacity building and resource allocation.

Overall, the findings emphasize the need to enhance engagement and collaboration among line functionaries and Gram Panchayats to improve governance and project implementation. While there is a solid foundation for participation and coordination, addressing challenges such as resource limitations and training gaps will further strengthen the RGSA scheme's impact and ensure sustainable development at the Panchayat level.

Table 5.12: Challenges in Planning and Implementation at GP Level

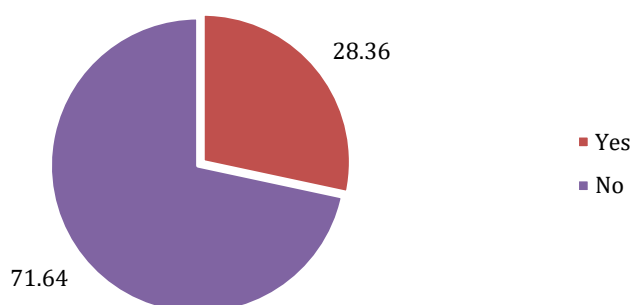
Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Lack of resources	458	62.1
Poor inter-departmental coordination	211	28.6
Insufficient training	302	41.0
Bureaucratic hurdles	179	24.3
Lack of cooperation from the community	284	38.5
Lack of clarity in roles	160	21.7
Limited authority	190	25.8
Others	42	5.7
Total*	1826	247.8

Note: * Multiple responses obtained

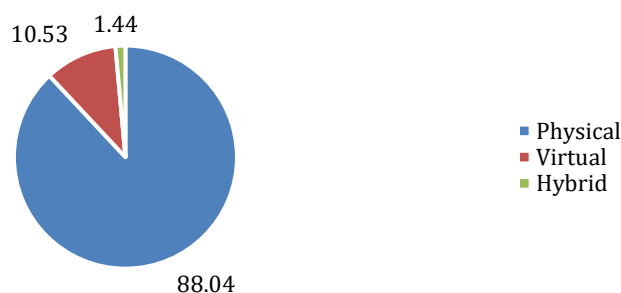
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

5.2.2 Training Impact and Methodology

A significant gap in outreach is evident, with only 28.4 percent of line department functionaries having attended any RGSA training program (**Figure 5.8**). However, this differs from state to state. Further, **Figure 5.9** shows that among those trained, 88.0 percent preferred physical training, while only 10.5 percent attended virtually. This preference suggests challenges in digital accessibility, making it essential to expand virtual and hybrid training options.

Figure 5.8: LDF Participation in RGSA Training (%)

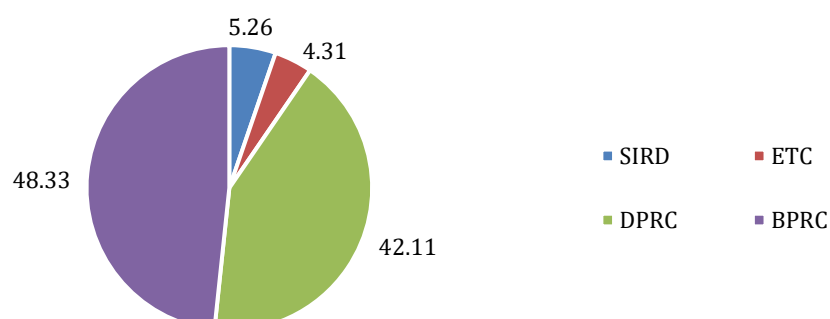
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.9: Mode of Training Attended by LDF (%)

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

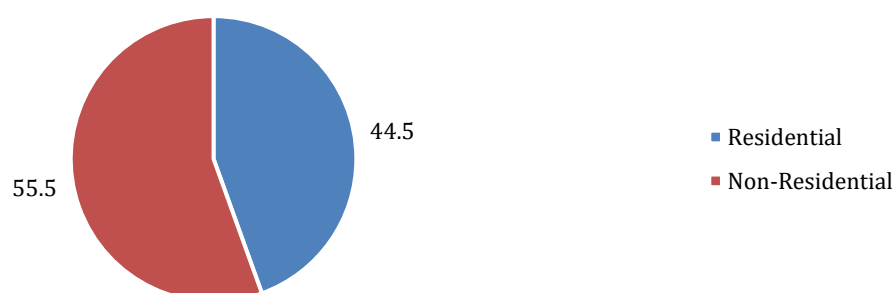
Figure 5.10 shows that the majority of LDF training sessions were held at BPRC (48.3%) and DPRC (42.1%), indicating the effectiveness of localized training venues. A majority (55.5%) attended non-residential programs, indicating limited infrastructure for residential training (**Figure 5.11**).

Figure 5.10: Venue of Training Attended by Line Functionaries (%)



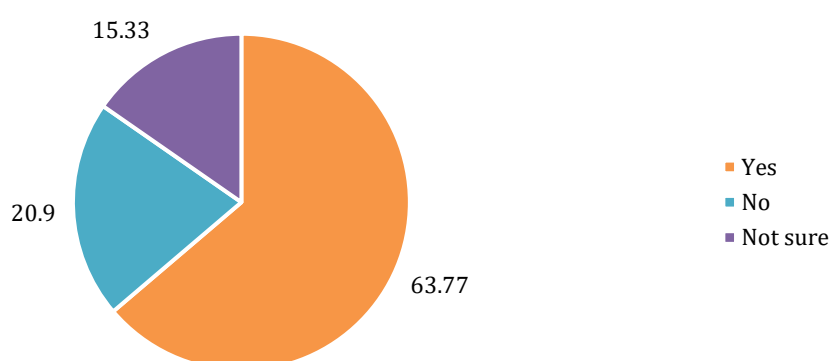
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.11: Type of Training Attended by Line Functionaries (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.12: Post-Training Confidence in Scheme Implementation (%)

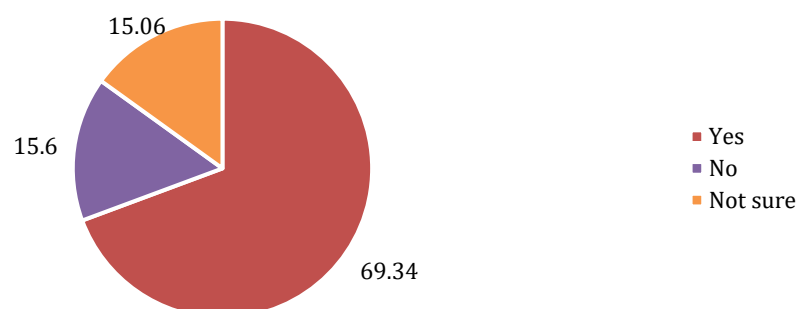


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Post-training, 63.8 percent of line functionaries reported confidence in implementing government schemes at the Gram Panchayat level, though 20.9 percent felt unconfident

and 15.3 percent were unsure (**Figure 5.12**). This underscores a need for additional support and training to ensure all participants gain the necessary confidence for their roles. Further, **Figure 5.13** shows that 69.3% of respondents felt confident in training others on GPDP processes, while 15.6% lacked confidence and 15% were unsure, indicating overall positive outcomes with some areas needing further support.

Figure 5.13: Confidence in Training Other Stakeholders in GPDP Processes (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.13 shows training needs identified include technical skills (68.8%), administrative skills (51.8%), project management (48.3%), and financial management (43.4%). Community engagement (35.3%) and data analysis (31.9%) were also recognized as important areas. Other niche areas of interest included SDG implementation, water resource management, and auditing, reflecting a demand for specialized training aligned with Panchayat development goals.

Table 5.13: Additional Training Needs of LDF

Training Needs	Frequency	Percent
Technical Training	507	68.8
Administrative Training	382	51.8
Project Management	356	48.3
Financial Management	320	43.4
Data analysis and reporting	235	31.9
Community engagement	260	35.3
Policy and regulatory framework	211	28.6
Environmental and social impact assessment	217	29.4
Others	24	3.3
Total*	2512	340.8

Note: * Multiple responses obtained

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

A robust feedback mechanism is necessary for evaluating training effectiveness and refining content. **Table 5.14** indicates that preferences for training delivery methods show a strong inclination towards in-person workshops (56.3%), alongside interest in online courses (37.4%) and on-the-job training (39.3%). This suggests that future RGSA

training programs should adopt a hybrid model, combining traditional methods with flexible online options to accommodate diverse learning styles.

Table 5.14: Preferred Mode of Training Delivery

Preferred Training Mode	Frequency	Percent
In-person workshops	414	56.3
Online courses	275	37.4
On-the-job training	289	39.3
Seminars and conferences	231	31.4
Others (please specify)	12	1.6
Total*	1221	166.1

Note: * Multiple responses obtained

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

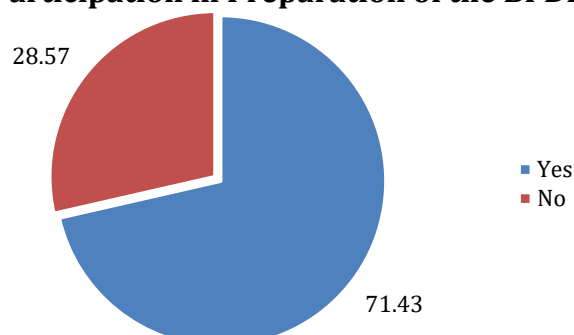
Overall, the analysis emphasizes the need for expanded outreach and diversified training approaches. Addressing identified skill gaps through comprehensive training programs will enhance the effectiveness of line department functionaries and support better Panchayat governance.

5.2.3 Participation in Planning, Implementation and Monitoring

Survey data illustrates the critical responsibilities of line departments in the Block Development Programs, encompassing planning, implementation, and monitoring across multiple sectors essential for rural development. Key responsibilities include action plan and budget preparation aligned with various schemes, with a significant emphasis on agricultural and livelihood support, social welfare, and capacity building.

Planning is vital for implementing programs like the GPDP, particularly in agriculture, livelihoods, and rural infrastructure. The line departments play a crucial role in agricultural extension, animal resource development, and forming SHGs, which enhance rural economies, empower women, and ensure food security. Additionally, they focus on social welfare, particularly women's and child development, and support programs like MGNREGA to improve health and nutrition.

Figure 5.14: Participation in Preparation of the BPDP (%)

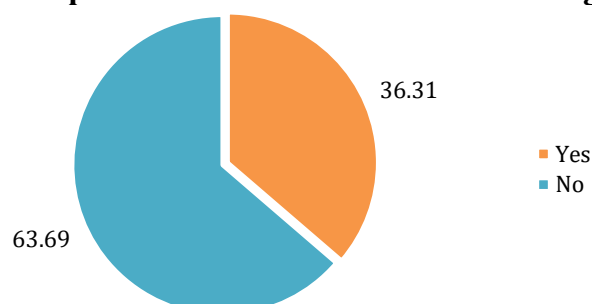


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.14 reveals that despite 71.4 percent of respondents engaging in Block Panchayat Development Plan preparation (BPDP), 28.6 percent have not participated,

indicating a gap in inclusivity that needs addressing. Enhancing capacity-building efforts and improving interdepartmental communication can foster more inclusive planning. Notably, 63.7 percent of respondents feel their contributions are undervalued, suggesting a disconnect between participation and influence (**Figure 5.15**). To remedy this, better feedback mechanisms and transparency in decision-making are essential.

Figure 5.15: Inclusion of Respondents' Contributions in Planning Decisions (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.15: Frequency of Participation in Block Development Meetings

Participation Frequency	Frequency	Percent
Monthly	243	48.2
Quarterly	130	25.8
Annually	88	17.5
Never	43	8.5
Total	504	100

Source: Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.15 highlights that officials contributing to the planning process engage in capacity building, facilitation, and monitoring, ensuring plans are actionable and aligned with community needs. Regular participation in meetings is also crucial, with 48.2 percent attending monthly, though there remains room for improvement in engagement.

Monitoring and supervision of block programs emphasize regular meetings, coordination, and field visits. The use of technology, such as e-Gram Swaraj, enhances transparency and efficiency, while community engagement fosters local ownership.

Integrating women-friendly goals into the GPDP promotes governance participation, economic empowerment, and social well-being. Key strategies include reserving seats for women in Panchayats, supporting SHGs, and developing infrastructure for safety and health.

Table 5.16 illustrates that training needs identified include project preparation (63.3%), resource mobilization (54.0%), and data collection (48.2%), indicating gaps in technical skills for effective project management. Additionally, awareness of funding support for innovations under RGSA is lacking, with only 45.0 percent of respondents knowledgeable about available resources (**Table 5.17**).

Table 5.16: Training Needs for Effective Participation in the BDP

Training Needs	Frequency	Percent
Project preparation	319	63.3
Data collection and analysis	243	48.2
Resource mobilization	272	54.0
Stakeholder coordination	192	38.1
Monitoring and evaluation	241	47.8
Others	17	3.4
Total*	1284	254.8

Note: * Multiple responses obtained

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.17: Awareness of Funding Support for Innovations under RGSA

Type	Frequency	Percent
Yes	227	45.0
No	197	39.1
Not Sure	80	15.9
Total	504	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Despite these challenges, 70.6 percent of respondents have proposed innovations to enhance Gram Panchayat governance, with 58.3 percent leveraging technology for local solutions, according to **Table 5.18**. Additional training (66.1%) and increased financial resources (59.0%) were highlighted as essential supports for effective project implementation, alongside improved interdepartmental collaboration (54.2%) (**Table 5.19**).

Table 5.18: Types of Innovative Projects Funded/Proposed under RGSA

Types of Innovative Projects	Frequency	Percent
Innovation in strengthening GP governance and service delivery	303	70.6
Innovation in the use of technology to deliver local solutions	250	58.3
Innovative methodologies of capacity building	139	32.4
Any other	10	2.3
Total*	702	163.6

Note: * - Multiple responses obtained

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.20 indicates that line department officials identify essential support mechanisms for successful infrastructure project implementation within panchayats. Technical training is deemed critical by 68.9 percent of respondents, followed by financial resources (62.1%) and government support (58.8%). While community engagement is acknowledged by 47.0 percent of LDFs, its lower emphasis indicates an opportunity to

enhance local participation in future projects. Integrating technical training with financial support under the RGSA scheme is essential.

Table 5.19: Support Needed for Better Project Implementation

Type of Support Needed	Frequency	Percent
Additional Training	150	66.1
More Financial Resources	134	59.0
Better Coordination with Other Departments	123	54.2
Improved Infrastructure	102	44.9
Enhanced Community Engagement	81	35.7
Others	2	0.9
Total*	592	260.8

Note: * Multiple responses obtained;

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.20: Effectiveness, Challenges, & Support for Infrastructure Projects

Support Required	Frequency	Percent
Technical Training	508	68.9
Financial Resources	458	62.1
Government Support	433	58.8
Community Engagement	346	47.0
Access to Information	197	26.7
Collaboration with NGOs	108	14.7
Total*	2050	278.2

Note: * Multiple responses obtained.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.21: Challenges in Implementing Good Governance Practices

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Lack of awareness among citizens	506	68.7
Insufficient resources	425	57.7
Resistance to change	237	32.2
Lack of training and support	298	40.4
Others	22	3.0
Total*	1488	201.9

Note: * Multiple responses obtained.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.21 highlights that respondents also face significant challenges in implementing good governance practices. A lack of citizen awareness is cited by 68.7 percent as the primary barrier, underscoring the need for targeted awareness campaigns. Insufficient resources (57.7%) and inadequate training (40.4%) further complicate effective governance, while resistance to change (32.2%) highlights the necessity for change management strategies. Overall, these findings underscore the need for comprehensive

training programs and awareness initiatives to empower both citizens and panchayat officials.

Survey results, presented in **Table 5.22**, reveal a strong consensus on the importance of good governance aspects such as transparency (51.2%), accountability (53.5%), participation (52.4%), responsiveness (50.1%), and the rule of law (49.1%). These results indicate a demand for training modules focused on enhancing these governance principles, aligning with the RGSA scheme's goals.

Table 5.22: Importance of Good Governance Aspects

Aspects of Good Governance	Very Important		Important		Neutral		Not Important		Can't say	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Transparency	377	51.2	322	43.7	28	4	5	0.7	5	0.7
Accountability	394	53.5	310	42.1	24	3	4	0.5	5	0.7
Participation	386	52.4	318	43.2	21	3	6	0.8	6	0.8
Responsiveness	369	50.1	328	44.5	32	4	3	0.4	5	0.7
Rule of Law	362	49.1	333	45.2	28	4	10	1.4	4	0.5

Note: F: Frequency; %: Percentage

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Successful Initiatives Led by the Panchayat for Women's Safety and Empowerment

Panchayats have implemented several successful initiatives to enhance women's safety and empowerment. Key strategies include awareness campaigns that educate communities on women's rights, legal protections, and health issues, often addressing social problems like child marriage and domestic violence. Legal aid clinics and safety measures, including mobile applications for safety, have provided essential support for women, fostering an environment where they can actively participate in their communities.

Economic empowerment through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) allows women to engage in various economic activities, with financial support and skill development training playing a vital role in promoting independence. Health and sanitation initiatives, such as the distribution of sanitary pads and maternal health programs, further enhance women's well-being. By addressing legal, economic, health, and safety aspects, panchayats effectively create supportive environments for women.

Suggestions to Enhance Collaboration Between GPs and Line Departments

Line department officials report several challenges in working with GPs, primarily insufficient resources (57.1%), which hinder effective collaboration (**Table 5.23**). The lack of coordination (50.8%) between GPs and line departments leads to misunderstandings and inefficiencies, while a lack of community participation (38.6%) indicates a disconnect between local governance and citizens. Bureaucratic hurdles (27.7%) further complicate administrative processes. Addressing these challenges, especially resource constraints and coordination issues, is crucial for enhancing collaboration and improving governance outcomes.

Table 5.23: Main Challenges Faced in Working with the GP

Challenges	Frequency	Percent
Lack of coordination	374	50.8
Insufficient resources	420	57.1
Bureaucratic hurdles	204	27.7
Lack of community participation	284	38.6
Others	33	4.5
Total*	1315	178.7

Note: * Multiple responses obtained

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

To improve collaboration between GPs and line departments, establishing regular communication channels is essential. Monthly or weekly meetings can foster alignment on project objectives and enhance information sharing. Capacity building and training for both GP and line department staff are critical for equipping personnel with necessary skills, while awareness programs can increase citizen engagement.

Addressing resource and infrastructure gaps is also vital, with respondents suggesting increased human resources at both GP and line department levels and improved communication facilities. Focusing on enhanced communication, capacity building, resource allocation, and infrastructure development will significantly strengthen collaboration.

Additional Comments on the Functions and Responsibilities of the Line Department in Gram Panchayat

Feedback from line department officials highlights the need for improved coordination and communication. Regular joint meetings and a clear division of responsibilities are crucial for effective governance. Human resource shortages hinder implementation, necessitating additional personnel and ongoing training programs for both GP officials and line department staff.

Timely financial resources and transparent budget allocation are essential for project execution. Enhancing community engagement in planning and executing projects is vital for fostering ownership in local governance. Digital platforms can offer essential training resources for line department officials in smaller states, while robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms can assess performance and accountability. Future evaluations should consider longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of RGSA training on local governance practices.

Suggestions for Improving the RGSA Scheme and Its Implementation

Line department functionaries emphasize the need for targeted training, better resource allocation, and improved inter-departmental coordination in implementing the RGSA scheme. Increased and specialized training programs for village-level functionaries, especially women, are essential for practical application in various committees. Community awareness programs targeting citizens, along with timely financial support, are also critical for successful RGSA implementation.

Respondents stress the need for better collaboration between line departments and panchayats to prevent delays in project execution. Decentralized planning that allows GPs to align projects with local needs is essential, along with improvements in infrastructure and social inclusion. Addressing these key areas will enhance the effectiveness and impact of the RGSA scheme.

5.3 Self-Help Groups

SHGs, as an important contributor to rural income and women empowerment, are key stakeholders in our study. Under the expectation that better capabilities of the ERs and PFs could translate into better ecosystem and higher participation of SHG members in local governance, we attempt to uncover any impact of RGSA, and the support provided thereof, on the SHG ecosystem.

5.3.1 Demographic Profile

The SHG sample demographic profile in **Table 5.24** indicates approximately balanced representation across states and regions. Our SHG sample is adequately represented by members from all social categories (**Table 5.28**), with majority represented by the working age group, followed by younger age group (21-30) (**Table 5.26**) and at least matriculate qualification (**Table 5.27**). Majority of the sample comprises mere SHG members, while we have ensured adequate representation of other roles as well (**Table 5.25**).

Table 5.24: Geographical Distribution across Region and States (%)

Region	Frequency	Percent	State	Frequency	Percent
Eastern	262	20.9	Chhattisgarh	82	6.5
			Odisha	40	3.2
			West Bengal	80	6.4
North-Eastern	157	12.5	Arunachal Pradesh	70	5.6
			Sikkim	81	6.5
			Tripura	80	6.4
Northern	231	18.4	Haryana	104	8.3
			Himachal Pradesh	80	6.4
			Uttar Pradesh	93	7.4
Southern	346	27.6	Andhra Pradesh	100	8.0
			Karnataka	86	6.9
			Kerala	36	2.9
			Tamil Nadu	80	6.4
Western	259	20.6	Madhya Pradesh	81	6.5
			Maharashtra	80	6.4
			Rajasthan	82	6.5
Total	1,255	100.0	Total	1,255	100.0

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.25: Distribution of Roles of Respondents in SHG

Role in SHG	Frequency	Percent
Bookkeeper	106	8.5
Member	528	42.1
President	458	36.5
Vice President	94	7.5
Other*	69	5.5
Total	1,255	100.0

Note: Other* roles in SHG are Coordinator, Treasurer, Samooch Sakhi, Community Resource Person, and Ward Resource Person.

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.26: Age Distribution among SHG Members

Age Group (in years)	Frequency	Percent
21-30	196	15.6
30-50	944	75.2
50+	115	9.2
Total	1,255	100.0

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.27: Educational Level in SHG Members

Education	Frequency	Percent
Graduate	127	10.1
Intermediate	303	24.1
Less than matriculate	296	23.6
Literate but no formal education	119	9.5
Matriculate	395	31.5
Post-Graduate and above	15	1.2
Total	1,255	100.00

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Table 5.28: Social Category among SHG Members

Social Category	Frequency	Percent
General	123	10
OBC	564	45
SC	289	23
ST	278	22
Total	1,255	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

5.3.2 Training Participation and Involvement in Feedback

Training Participation Overview

Self-Help Groups (SHG) or Federations have received training under the RGSA scheme. As per the Primary Survey Analysis of IRMA 44.4 percent confirmed they had personally received training. Additionally, 13.0 percent mentioned that another member (but not him/herself) of their SHG or Federation had undergone training.

Specific Training under RGSA Scheme

Among those who received training under the RGSA scheme, various programs were mentioned, though a notable 46.3 percent did not report participation in any specific training. Of the specialized training programs, 5.1 percent were trained in the formulation and implementation of plans, while a smaller percentage, 1.0 percent, received training in financial management and budgeting. Only 0.4 percent participated in digital governance and e-panchayat training, and 4.2 percent received training related to women and child development.

Training Participation Across Different Categories

Training Participation by SHG members across different categories shows a significant 45.2 percent of respondents indicated that at least one member of their SHG or Federation had attended a training program under thematic training areas such as SDGs related to women and child development.

Training participation by SHG Members in the preparation of GPDP was reported by 3.6 percent of respondents, while SDG leadership training was reported by 2.7 percent.

Detailed Insights on Specific Training Programs

Primary survey analysis by IRMA shows that the key training area frequently mentioned by SHGs were the formulation and implementation of Panchayat Development Plan, Financial management and budgeting training.

The training programs offered cover a broad spectrum of topics, including governance, financial management, women and child development, SDGs, and topics which particularly helps in fostering better convergence between PRIs and community-based Organizations (CBOs).

Training Effectiveness and Feedback Collection

The responses on the effectiveness of training sessions under the RGSA scheme shows 53.6 percent, found the training to be reasonably effective, while 30.2 percent considered it only slightly effective. A smaller portion, 16.3 percent, felt that the training was not effective at all.

5.3.3 SHGs Involvement in Community-Based Monitoring

Primary field survey analysis by IRMA indicated that involvement of SHGs in community-based monitoring of schemes and projects, is limited with 75.9 Per cent indicating no involvement. Regarding facilities provided by the Gram Panchayat to SHGs, a majority, 58.3 percent, reported that the GP provided an independent space for SHGs to use as an office.

When it comes to the prioritization of SHGs in accessing common resources like land and ponds, only 26.1 percent said that SHGs were given priority, whereas a larger 73.9 percent reported that SHGs were not prioritized by the GP in accessing these resources.

SHGs are Involved in Delivering Local Services On Behalf of Gram Panchayats.

Primary field Survey Analysis by IRMA reflected that 41.5 percent SHGs indicated their involvement in local service delivery. Specifically, in the delivery of mid-day meals, 47.2

percent of respondents noted that SHGs are involved, in the house-to-house collection of taxes. SHG involvement is nearly evenly split SHGs are more actively engaged in solid waste management, where 51.6 percent of respondents confirmed their involvement. Overall, SHG participation varies across these services, with higher engagement in solid waste management.

Role of SHGs in Gram Panchayat Functioning and Gram Sabha

Survey responses shows that SHGs and their federations are most active in publicity and awareness campaigns (69.8%) and in mobilizing and encouraging women (56.0%), but their participation decreases in roles such as facilitating discussions (41.3%) and representing community needs (34.6%). They are least involved in activities like monitoring decisions (27.0%), documenting processes (17.8%), and other roles (4.9%).

In the Gram Sabha, 48.0 percent of SHGs or their federations participate regularly, 30.3 percent participate occasionally, while majority of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) or their federations (61.0%) reported their regular participation in the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) planning exercise.

Cooperation from Gram Panchayat (GP) Members and Staff

A majority of SHGs or their federations report receiving strong cooperation from both elected representatives and staff of the Gram Panchayat. Specifically, 76.5 percent of SHGs receive cooperation from elected representatives. As compared to ERs, the Cooperation from GP staff is slightly higher, with 79.0 percent indicating support.

Impact of PRI-CBO Convergence on GP Functioning

The survey data indicates that there is a mixed perception on whether the convergence of PRI and CBOs has improved the functioning of GP, with 78.7 percent of respondents indicating that it has not, and only 21.3 percent feeling that it has had a positive impact. However, most respondents (60.3%) believe that the GP has contributed positively to their livelihoods, suggesting that it is playing an effective role in supporting economic activities or initiatives that enhance the livelihoods of individuals and groups.

The most significant form of support cited by respondents is training and skill development (55.6%), indicating that the GP has played a crucial role in enhancing the skills and knowledge of individuals and groups. Access to credit and finance is also a critical factor for livelihood generation, and 17.4 percent of respondents indicated that the GP facilitated access to credit and finance.

Support provided by the GP to SHGs

Survey Responses highlights that there are several areas where the support provided by Gram Panchayats (GP) to Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and their federations could be improved. Most respondents (59.1%) reported not receiving support in accessing various government schemes and benefits, indicating that some group members may feel underserved by the GP, highlighting potential gaps in support.

Facilitation of market linkages for products and services is also an area where the GP may need to enhance its outreach or support programs, with a substantial majority (76.0%) of respondents reporting no support received.

- a) Main Challenges in PRI Convergence Communication barriers
- b) Limited financial support
- c) Bureaucratic delays
- d) Lack of formal recognition insufficient training and resources

Improved effectiveness of PRIs reveals critical insights into the perceptions of SHGs and federations.

Most respondents (60%) believe that there is a need for support or changes to enhance the effectiveness of PRIs, indicating a need for improvements in this area. Increased training and capacity building is seen as necessary by most respondents (57.5%), suggesting that improvements in this area could help to enhance the effectiveness of PRIs.

Better communication channels are seen as one of the areas for change, with 41.2 percent respondents indicating that changes are necessary. Stronger community engagement is also seen as a one of the areas for change, with a strong consensus among 32.1 percent respondents that changes are necessary.

Enhanced financial support is not seen as necessary by most respondents (94.2%), indicating that the current financial support system may be sufficient for the needs of PRIs.

5.3.4 Summary of Insights from SHGs

The RGSA training program could greatly benefit from enhancing the support and capacity-building provided to SHGs, particularly in specialized skills that remain underrepresented, such as financial management, digital governance, and GPDP exercise. Equipping SHGs with expertise in these areas would not only empower them in governance roles but also enable them to manage local initiatives more effectively, which could assist better Gram Panchayat functioning. Additionally, the program should address SHGs' challenges in accessing government schemes and establishing market connections, incorporating practical training modules, and facilitating interactions with experts to improve SHGs' resource access and sustainability. To strengthen collaboration between GPs and SHGs, Revamped RGSA could foster more structured engagement, aligning SHG activities with PRI objectives toward LSDGs and enhancing communication channels to achieve unified goals. Furthermore, SHGs have shown less involvement in community-based monitoring and advocacy for local needs, suggesting that RGSA could expand training in these areas to help SHGs represent their communities more effectively. Finally, given the SHGs' successful engagement in public health and awareness campaigns, RGSA should continue to prioritize training in public outreach and advocacy skills, which would enhance SHGs' impact in mobilizing and educating their communities on critical health and social issues aligned with LSDGs, thus supporting stronger local governance outcomes.

Importantly, under the Innovative and ED&IE component of RGSA, States are continuously being awarded projects aimed at OSR generation, promoting local arts and crafts, and fostering local tourism activities. RGSA has already witnessed several success stories under this component across different States. Notably, many of these projects are now run and maintained by local SHGs, with SHGs also actively involved in their monitoring. At present, more than 1,000 SHGs across India are engaged in such projects.

This demonstrates that SHGs are not only central to livelihood promotion and local economic development but also play a vital role in sustaining community-based initiatives.

5.4 Faculty

5.4.1 Basic Profile

Our sample is represented by faculty and trainers from all study states (**Figure 5.16**) and diverse backgrounds with varied age groups, educational qualifications, designations and experience (**Table 5.29**). Faculty-trainers take on various roles under RGSA, including Faculty, Master Trainer, and combinations of both. Their involvement spans multiple levels of training, ranging from the state level down to district, block, and gram panchayat levels, with majority representation from SIRDs (**Figure 5.17**).

Table 5.29: Distribution of Socio-Demographic Profile of Faculty

Category	Sub-Category	Frequency (%)
Age	26-30	6.5
	31-40	24.0
	41-50	38.3
	51-60	24.0
	60+	7.1
Education	Graduation	23.4
	Intermediate	1.3
	PhD and above	7.8
	Post Graduation	67.5
Teaching Experience	0 - 2 Years	11.0
	2 - 5 Years	15.6
	5 - 10 Years	18.8
	More than 10 years	54.5

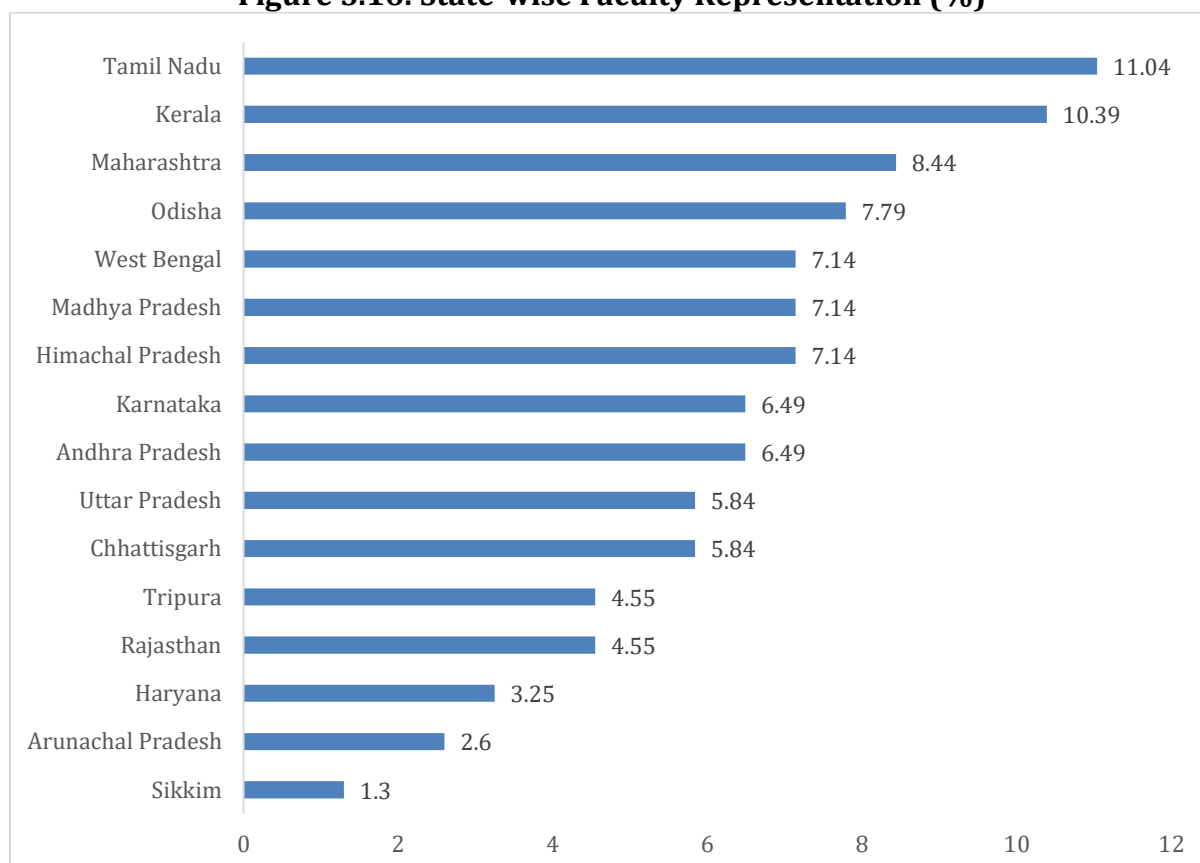
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

5.4.2 Institutional Involvement in Revamped RGSA Training

The capacity building at various levels of Panchayat system is operational through various levels of training machinery. The current framework of SIRDs, ETCs/RIRDs, DPRCs, and BPRCs together forms a multi-tiered training ecosystem. This layered structure underscores the decentralized nature of capacity building, with each level catering to a different category of stakeholders ranging from senior officials to grassroots representatives.

SIRDs function as apex institutions at the state level, providing comprehensive support through training, research, and policy-related activities. They mainly focus on ERs at the district level, senior officials at the district level, while also conducting ToTs focusing on master trainers at the state, district, and block levels that cascade down to districts and blocks. With stronger infrastructure, residential facilities, and academic resources than other institutions, SIRDs remain at the core of the training ecosystem. They also lead TNA at the state level and develop course curricula and training modules, which serve as the basis for programs delivered across all levels.

Figure 5.16: State-wise Faculty Representation (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

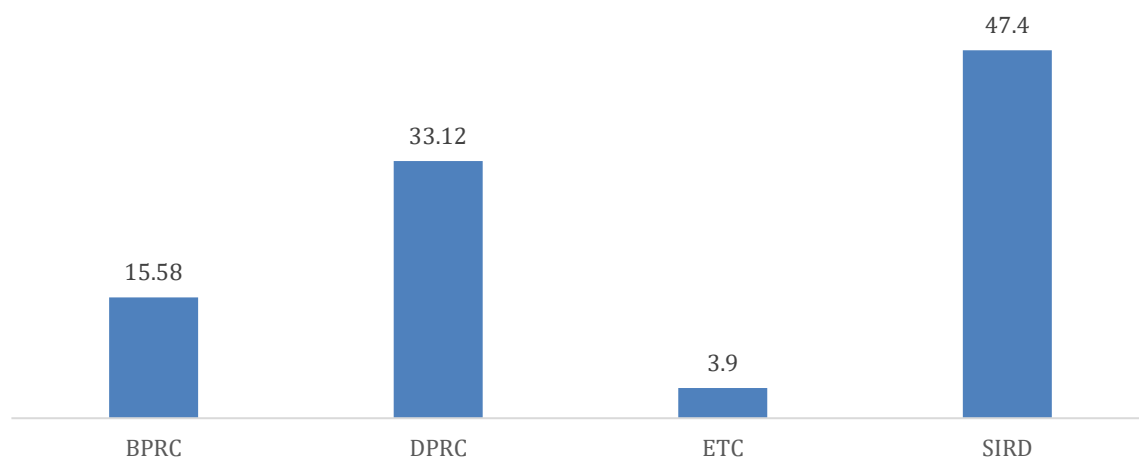
ETCs/RIRDs were designed to provide specialized training in technical and thematic aspects of Panchayati Raj and rural development at the regional level. Their primary beneficiaries include ERs at block levels, PFs, and LDFs at the sub-district levels. Despite having physical infrastructure, residential facilities, and technical resources, their role has remained limited under the revamped RGSA, contributing only a small proportion of total training (**Figure 5.17**). At present, most states utilize RGSA mainly to cover training costs, leaving their facilities underutilized. Greater integration with the training network, coupled with structured programs, could significantly enhance their contribution.

DPRCs, situated at the district level, play a crucial role in consolidating training needs across blocks and delivering programs for a diverse set of stakeholders. Their target groups include ERs at the block and GP levels, block and GP-level administrative staff, technical personnel, and functionaries of community-based organizations. With dedicated buildings in most states and relatively better facilities such as training halls and digital resources, DPRCs are capable of conducting thematic and technical training for a wide audience. However, shortages of staff and the absence of adequate residential infrastructure constrain their full potential.

BPRCs, located at the block level, are the most immediate training institutions for grassroots stakeholders. They focus on GP-level ERs, administrative, and technical staff. Functioning largely from BDO offices and supported with basic digital infrastructure under RGSA, BPRCs are highly accessible to local beneficiaries. However, limited

infrastructure, the absence of residential facilities, and a shortage of trainers have been observed to reduce their effectiveness despite their critical role in the last-mile delivery of training.

Figure 5.17: Faculty Share by Training Institution (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

The distribution of training programs under the revamped RGSA (**Figure 5.17**) suggests variations in the role and outreach of institutions across different levels. SIRDs account for the largest share of training, followed by DPRCs and BPRCs, while ETCs/RIRDs have been found to have a relatively limited role. SIRDs act as central institutions responsible for state-level planning, curricula, and ToTs; ETCs/RIRDs hold infrastructural capacity but remain underutilized; DPRCs extend training to block and GP-level ERs and officials with partial gaps in staffing and infrastructure; and BPRCs serve as the most immediate points of training for grassroots stakeholders but face resource and institutional limitations. Importantly, structural and functional differences across states also affect how efficiently each level performs, as some states have stronger DPRCs with dedicated infrastructure, while in other states, they remain the weakest link due to overdependence on district and block offices. Strengthening district and block institutions, ensuring optimal utilization of ETCs, and enhancing coordination across all levels will be essential to building a more balanced, inclusive, and effective capacity-building framework under RGSA.

The following **Box 5.1** summarize the detailed mind map of the role of various tiers, along with their roles, functions, challenges and constraints.

Box 5.1: Mapping Institutional Roles in RGSA Training

Institutional Level	Role & Key Functions	Target Stakeholders	Strengths & Limitations
State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD)	Functions as the apex institution at the state level. Provides comprehensive support through training, research, and policy activities. Leads Training Needs Assessment (TNA) and develops course curricula and modules for all levels. Accounts for the largest share of training (47.4%) under revamped RGSA.	Primarily focuses on senior officials and Elected Representatives (ERs) at the district level. Also conducts Training of Trainers (ToTs) for master trainers at the state, district, and block levels.	Forms the core of the training ecosystem. Has stronger infrastructure, residential facilities, and academic resources than other institutions.
Extension Training Centres (ETCs) / Regional Institutes of Rural Development (RIRDs)	Designed to provide specialized training in technical and thematic aspects of Panchayati Raj. Their role has remained limited under the revamped RGSA, contributing only a small proportion of the total training (3.9%).	Primary beneficiaries include ERs at the block level, Panchayat Functionaries (PFs), and Line Department Functionaries (LDFs) at the sub-district level.	Possess physical infrastructure, residential facilities, and technical resources. Their facilities are currently underutilized, and greater integration is needed to enhance their contribution.
District Panchayati Raj Centres (DPRCs)	Plays a crucial role in consolidating training needs from various blocks and delivering programs for a diverse set of stakeholders. Accounts for 33.12% of total training.	Targets ERs at the block and Gram Panchayat (GP) levels, block and GP-level administrative staff, and functionaries of community-based organizations.	Most states have dedicated buildings with relatively good facilities like training halls and digital resources. However, shortages of staff and the absence of adequate residential infrastructure constrain their full potential.
Block Panchayati Raj Centres (BPRCs)	Serves as the most immediate and accessible training institution for grassroots stakeholders. Accounts for 15.58% of total training.	Focuses on GP-level ERs, as well as administrative and technical staff.	Highly accessible to local beneficiaries as they often function from Block Development Officer (BDO) offices and have basic digital infrastructure under RGSA. They face limitations due to limited infrastructure, lack of residential facilities, and a shortage of trainers, which reduces their effectiveness despite their critical role in last-mile delivery.

5.4.3 Level of Training

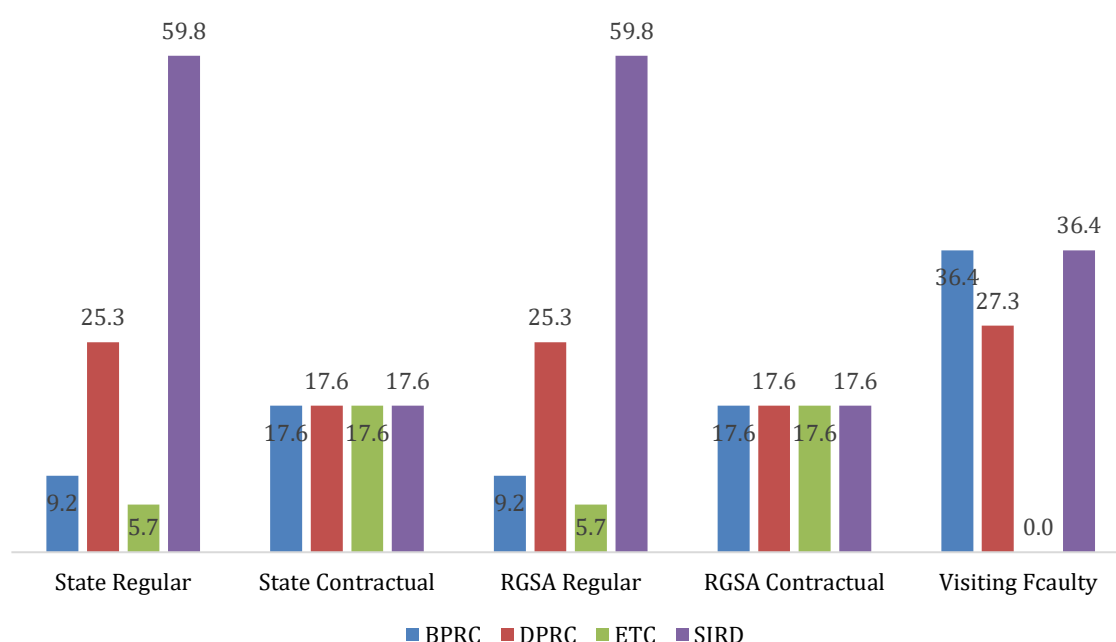
Sixty percent of faculty hold regular positions, primarily within the SIRD, indicating stability and a focus on long-term training. However, DPRCs and BPRCs also have lower share of regular faculty (less than 30%) (**Figure 5.18**). As most states seek to enhance

training quality through the external expertise of visiting faculty, over 25 percent of the representation at all levels within the sample came from visiting faculty. Similarly, as the revamped RGSA emphasises on decentralization of training, sufficient representation has been ensured at district, block and GP levels, along with the State level (**Figure 5.19**). Additionally, we have also interacted with faculty at NIRD to understand the similarities and differences between training modules and practices of different states.

ETC, Pune, Maharashtra



Figure 5.18: Employment Status of Faculty Involved in Training (%)

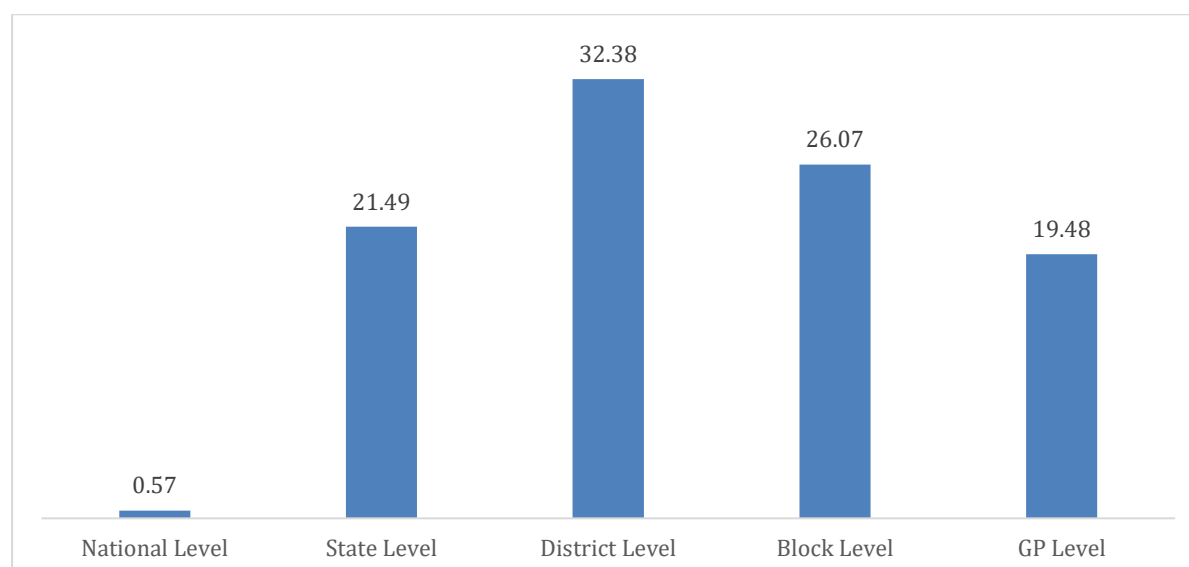


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

In addition to this, the role of Additional Master Trainers and trainers from the nine RGSA-empanelled agencies also deserves attention. These trainers are actively involved in conducting training across many States, and States have the flexibility to draw upon

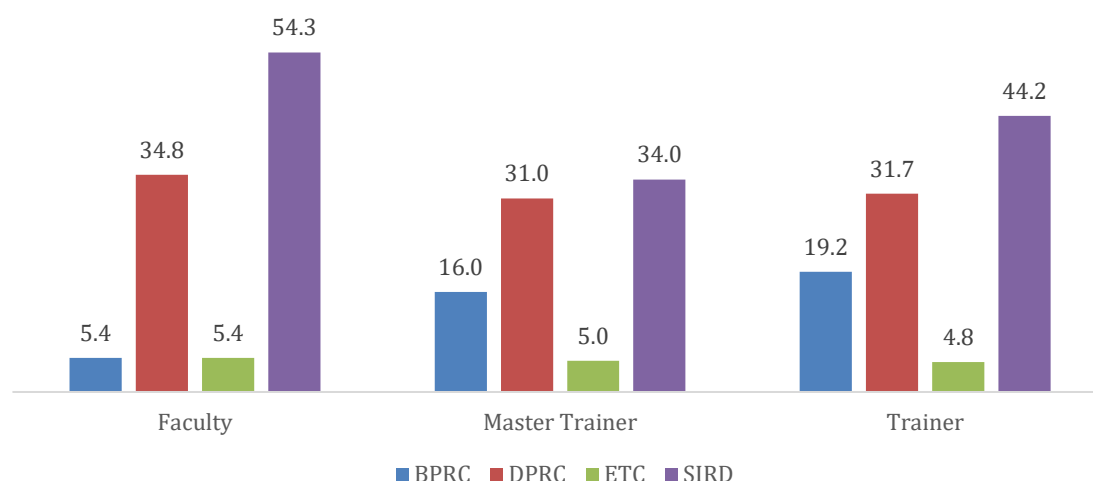
their services as and when required. Including this dimension provides a more comprehensive picture of the training ecosystem under RGSA and highlights the importance of both regular and empanelled faculty in strengthening the overall capacity-building framework.

Figure 5.19: Level of Training by Institute Type (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.20: Role under Revamped RGSA at Various Level (%)



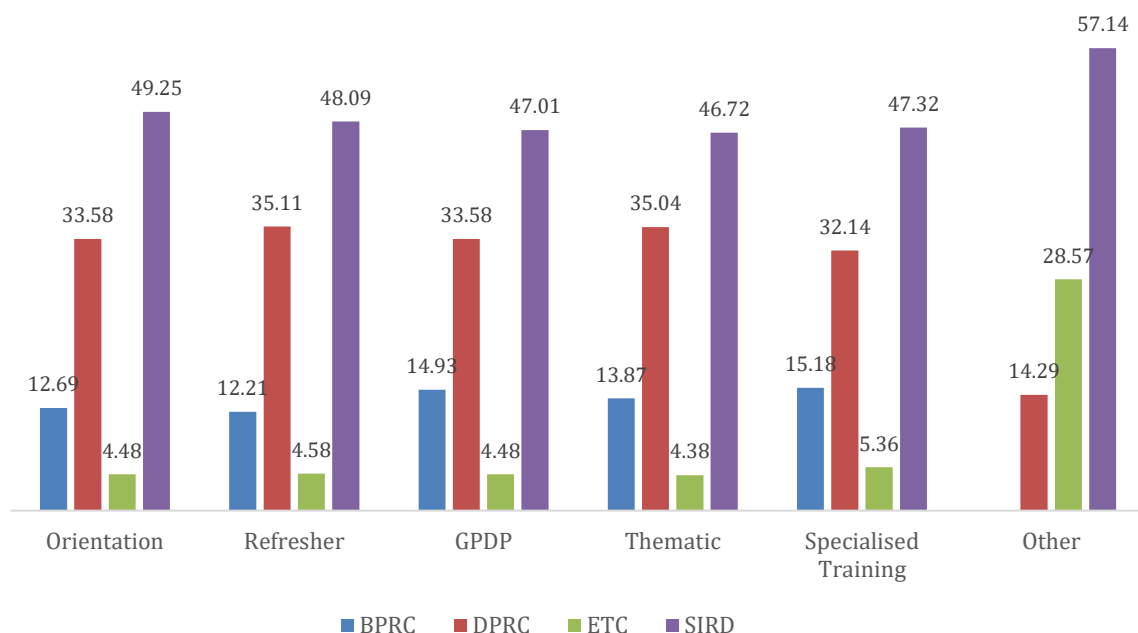
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

5.4.4 Training Need Assessment, Content and Methodology

The content delivered under RGSA is a diverse mix of orientation, refresher, GPDP, thematic training and specialised training (**Figure 5.21**). SIRD is a central contributor across various training types, including Orientation (49.2%), Refresher (48.1%), GPDP (47.0%), Thematic (46.7%), Specialized (47.3%), and others (57.1%), highlighting its role in building foundational skills. Remaining coverage is supported by DPRCs, BPRCs, and ETCs. To enhance RGSA training, strengthening BPRC and DPRC roles with more resources and tailored materials for elected representatives and Panchayat functionaries

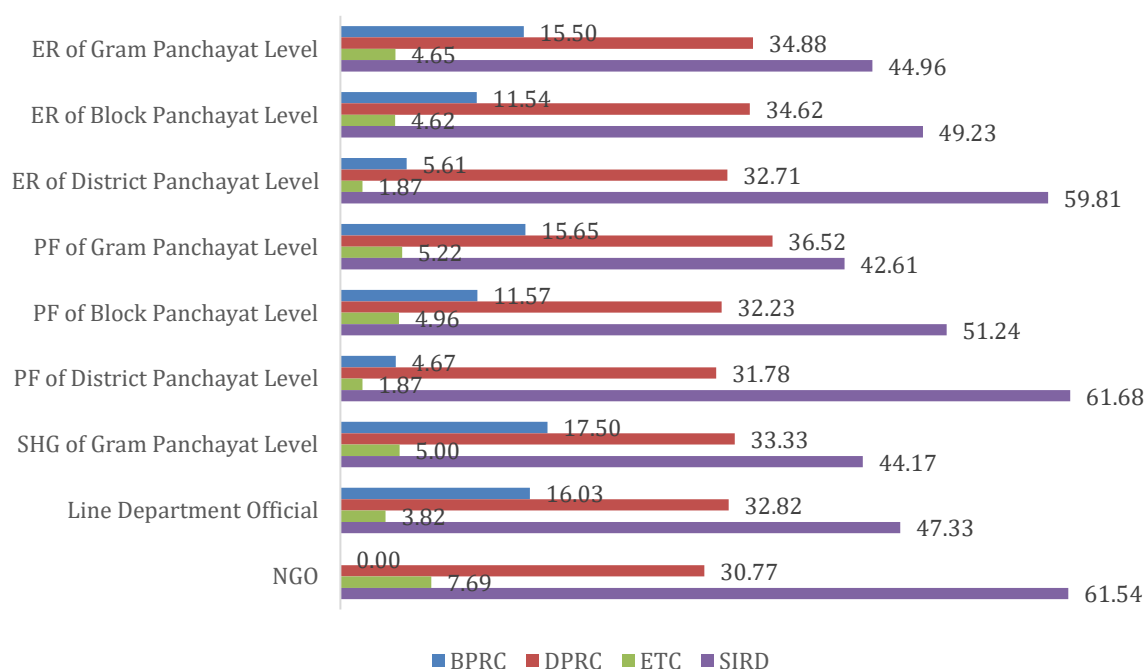
is recommended. Additionally, partnerships with NGOs could bring innovative approaches and external insights. Establishing regular feedback mechanisms can ensure ongoing curriculum relevance, effectively addressing local governance challenges.

Figure 5.21: Training Content delivered under Revamped RGSA (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.22: Stakeholder Involvement for Training at Different Levels (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

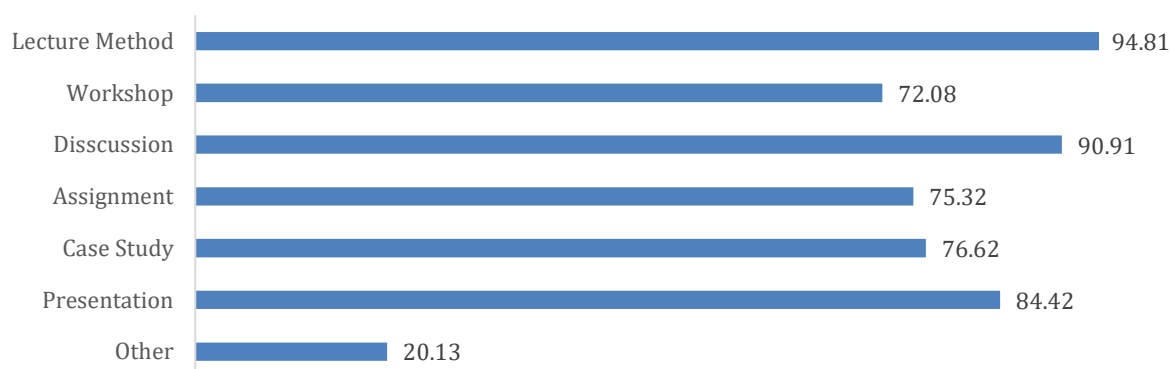
ETC, Pune, Maharashtra



Multi-stakeholder involvement is visible with significant representation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and line department officials, although NGO participation is low, representing a missed opportunity for additional expertise (**Figure 5.22**).

Regardless of the type of training institution, faculty primarily use lecture method, supplemented by discussions, presentations, assignments, and case studies, focusing on traditional instruction with interaction and practical application (**Figure 5.23**). Workshops, though effective for hands-on learning, are used less frequently, and unconventional methods are rare, indicating a structured approach balancing theory and practice.

Figure 5.23: Training Methodologies Adopted (%)

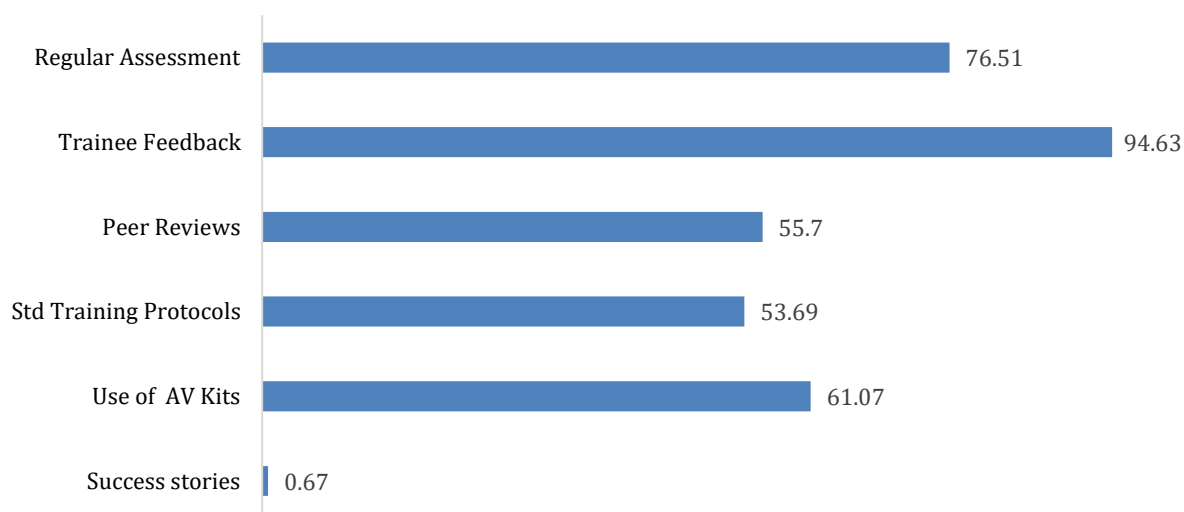


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Quality assurance in RGSA training relies mainly on trainee feedback and regular assessments to track progress. Audio-visual aids moderately support quality, while peer reviews and standard protocols are used less frequently, suggesting a greater emphasis

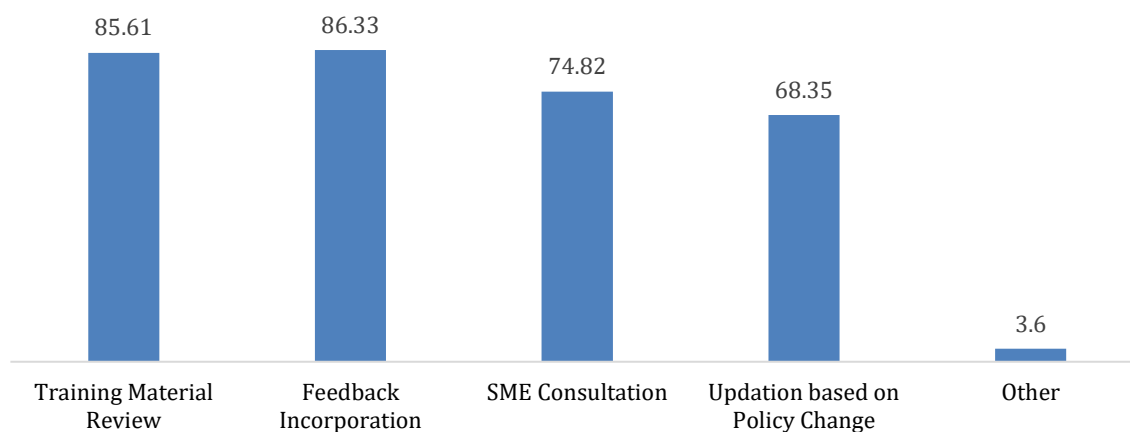
on flexibility over rigid procedural evaluations (**Figure 5.24**). Training material quality is maintained through consistent participant feedback integration, regular content review, and consultation with subject matter experts (**Figure 5.25**), ensuring materials remain accurate and relevant. Updating materials based on policy changes occurs but is secondary to established quality measures.

Figure 5.24: Quality Measure of Training (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

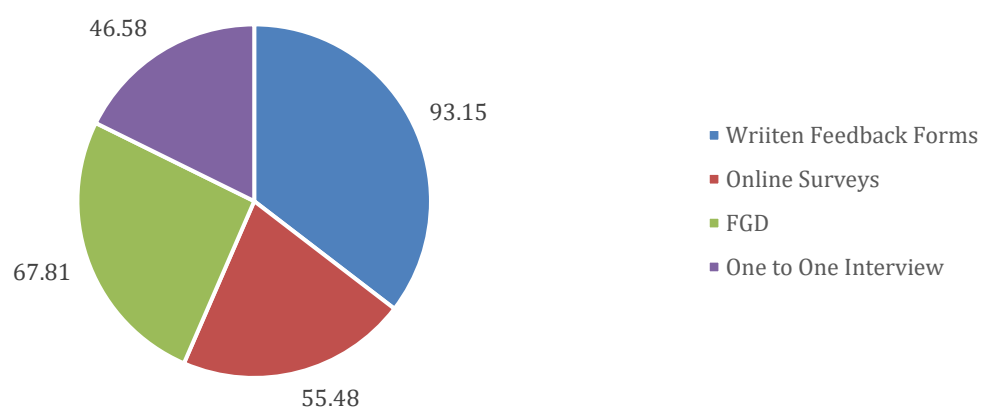
Figure 5.25: Training Material Quality Insurance (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

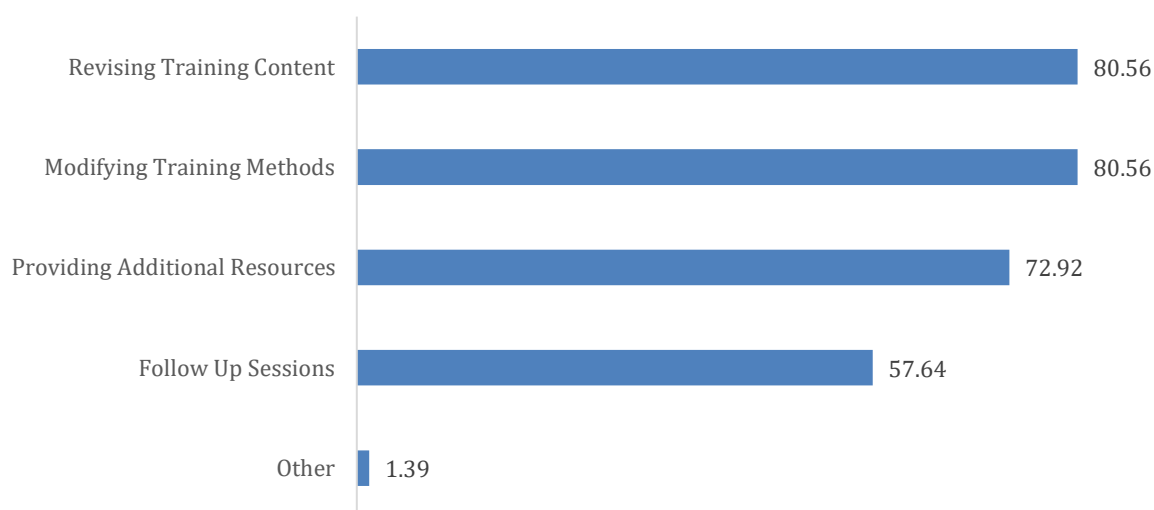
Institutes predominantly use written feedback forms and focus group discussions (FGDs) to gather participant insights, with online surveys moderately adopted (**Figure 5.26**), indicating a gradual shift toward digital feedback. One-to-one interviews, though valuable, are less common due to time and resource demands. Feedback incorporation prioritizes revising training content and modifying delivery methods based on participant input (**Figure 5.27**). Additional resources are provided to address specific learning needs, while follow-up sessions are less frequent, emphasizing content refinement and responsive teaching methods.

Figure 5.26: Feedback Mechanism (%)



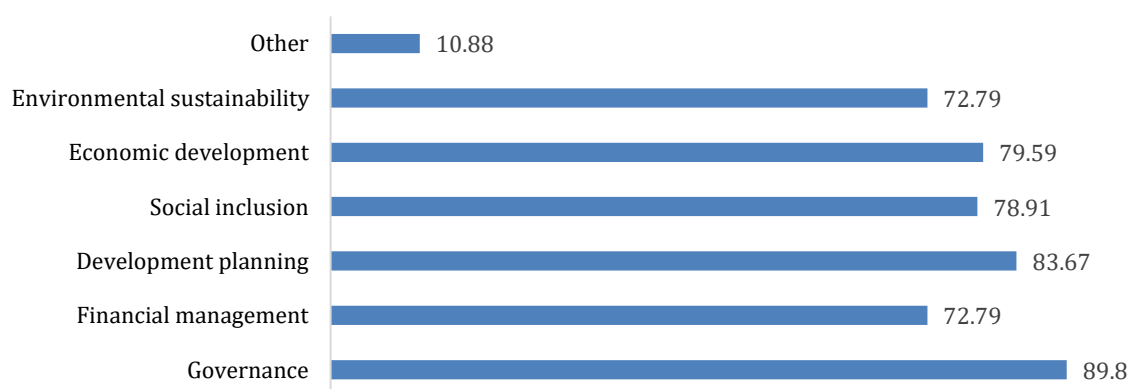
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.27: Feedback Incorporation (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

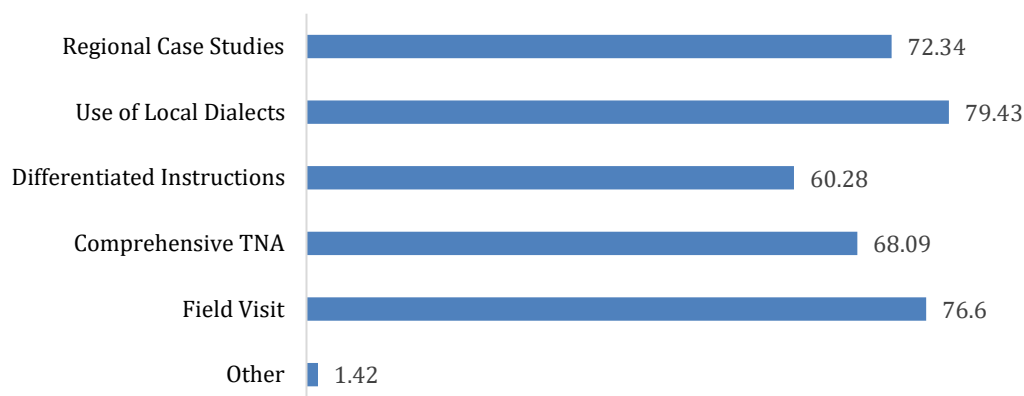
Figure 5.28: Assessment of Training Module



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

The Revamped RGSA program’s training module prioritizes governance (**Figure 5.28**), highlighting the need to strengthen decision-making, accountability, and administration at the local level. Development planning also receives considerable attention, aimed at equipping local leaders to craft effective community-focused plans. Social inclusion and economic development follow, emphasizing participation of marginalized groups and supporting local economies through job creation and entrepreneurship. Financial management and environmental sustainability are moderately covered, reflecting the need for sound financial practices and eco-friendly approaches.

Figure 5.29: Approaches of Localising Content (%)

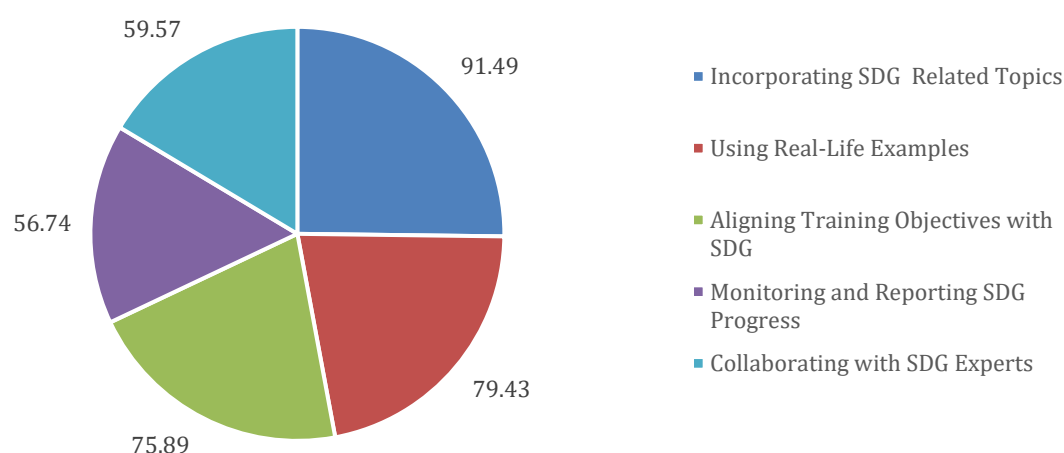


Source: IRMA’s Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

For localization and customization of training content, the trainers often incorporate local dialects for improved accessibility and practical exercises like field visits (**Figure 5.29**), enabling participants to connect theory with real-life applications. Regional case studies are widely used to make the content more relevant, while TNA moderately guide customization, ensuring the training addresses specific participant requirements.

Training Alignment with LSDG

Figure 5.30: Training Content Alignment with SDG (%)



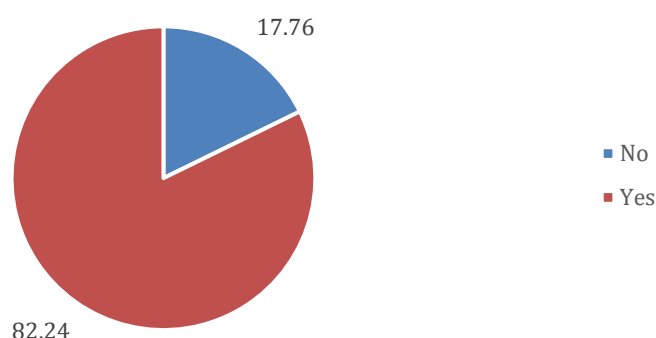
Source: IRMA’s Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.30 illustrates that training modules are strongly aligned with SDGs, integrating related topics (91.5%) and real-life examples (79.4%) to make these goals applicable to local governance. Training objectives are designed with clear connections to SDGs (75.9%), enabling participants to recognize their roles in sustainable development. Monitoring and reporting progress on SDGs and collaboration with experts receive moderate emphasis, underscoring a commitment to transparency, accountability, and expert guidance.

TNA Methodology

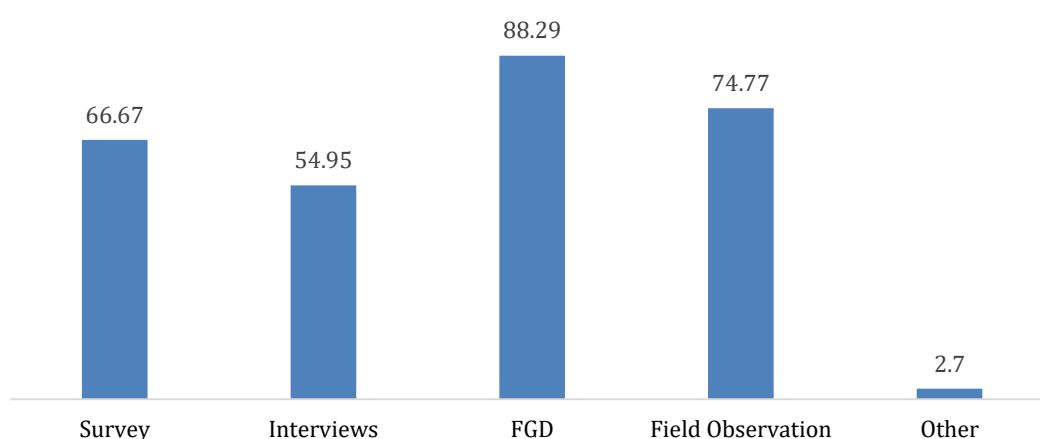
Most training institutions (82.2%) conduct TNA before training (**Figure 5.31**), using focus group discussions (**Figure 5.32**) to gather qualitative insights, field observations to assess on-the-ground realities, and surveys to collect broad-based quantitative data. Interviews are used less frequently, likely due to logistical challenges. This TNA methodology enables training programs to capture diverse needs, shaping more effective training content.

Figure 5.31: Training Needs Assessment (%)



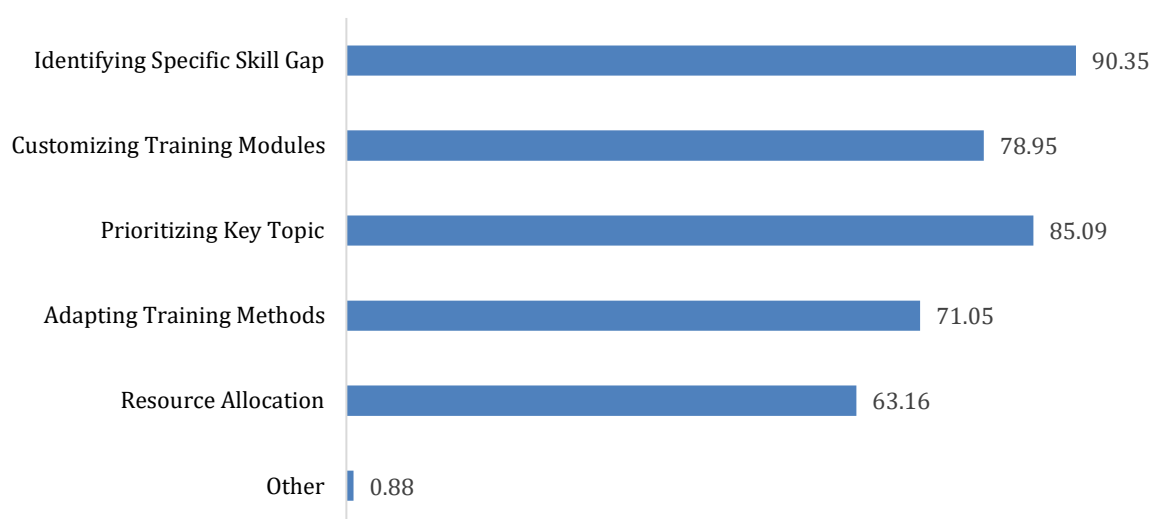
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.32: TNA Methods (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.33: TNA Impact (%)



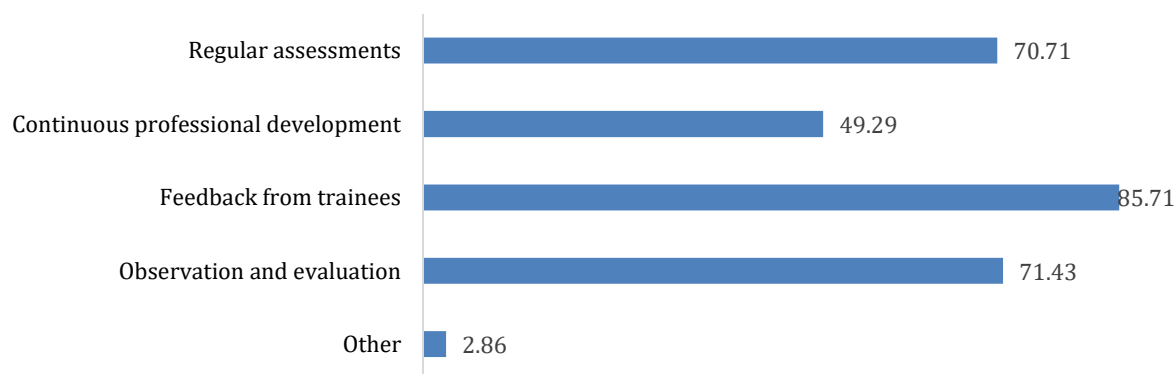
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.33 reveals that the TNA informs training design by identifying specific skill gaps (90.2%), customizing modules (78.9%), prioritizing key topics (85%), adapting teaching methods (71%), and guiding resource allocation (63.1%). This ensures that the training is targeted, adaptable, and resource-efficient, focusing on essential areas that address participants' real needs.

5.4.5 Assessment of Trainers' Quality

The Revamped RGSA scheme employs several key strategies to ensure high trainer quality. **Figure 5.34** suggests that trainee feedback is the most emphasized assessment method (85.7%), providing insights on trainer effectiveness and fostering accountability. Regular assessments of trainers ensure consistency in performance, while observation of training sessions allows for real-time feedback to help trainers refine their techniques. Continuous professional development for trainers is moderately emphasized, indicating some focus on ongoing skill enhancement but suggesting room for more structured opportunities.

Figure 5.34: Trainer Quality Check (%)

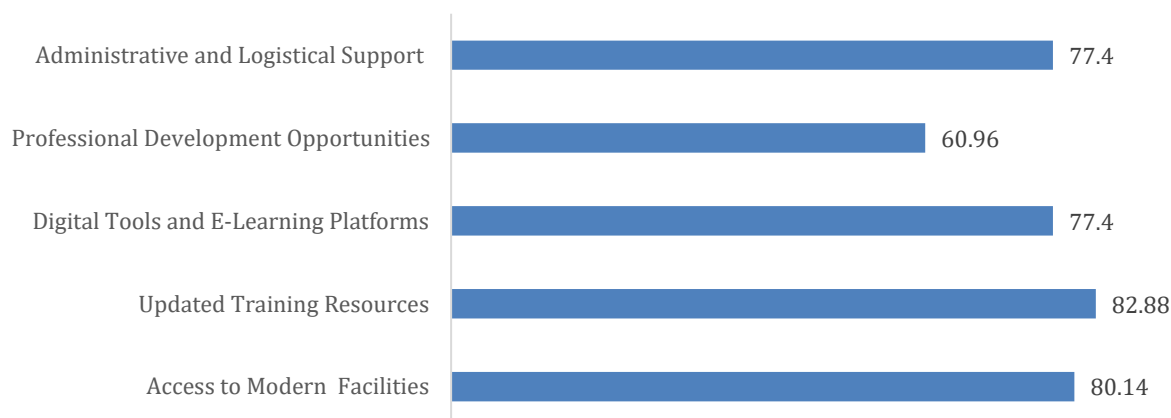


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Support Ecosystem for the Trainers

Training institutes extend substantial support to trainers, particularly by providing updated resources (**Figure 5.35**) that ensure access to the latest materials for effective teaching. Modern facilities and digital tools, including e-learning platforms, are increasingly available, making training sessions more engaging and interactive. Administrative and logistical support is also offered, allowing trainers to concentrate on content delivery. While professional development opportunities exist, these remain limited and signal the need for more structured and continuous programs.

Figure 5.35: Technical Support (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Beyond the institutional level, the MoPR plays a role in strengthening trainer capacities nationwide. The MoPR regularly organizes training for Master Trainers on key themes such as Faculty Development Programs (FDP), WER, OSR, and several others. It also takes responsibility for periodically updating training modules and disseminating them to States, thereby ensuring consistency, quality, and alignment with evolving governance priorities. This central support complements state-level efforts and significantly enhances the overall training ecosystem under RGSA.

Training methods for Training of Trainers (ToTs)

The RGSA's ToT program employs a diverse approach, with workshops and seminars as primary methods for knowledge sharing (**Figure 5.36**). Practical demonstrations are significant, supporting hands-on learning, while peer learning and case studies are moderately used, enhancing collaborative and scenario-based learning. Continuous assessment is less emphasized but provides valuable feedback on skill mastery.

To improve ToT effectiveness, the program could expand field-based sessions and case studies for practical learning. Structured peer learning, digital tools, and interactive methods like gamified learning could enhance engagement and retention, while frequent, smaller assessments would ensure ongoing progress and sustained learning.

Figure 5.36: ToT Methods (%)



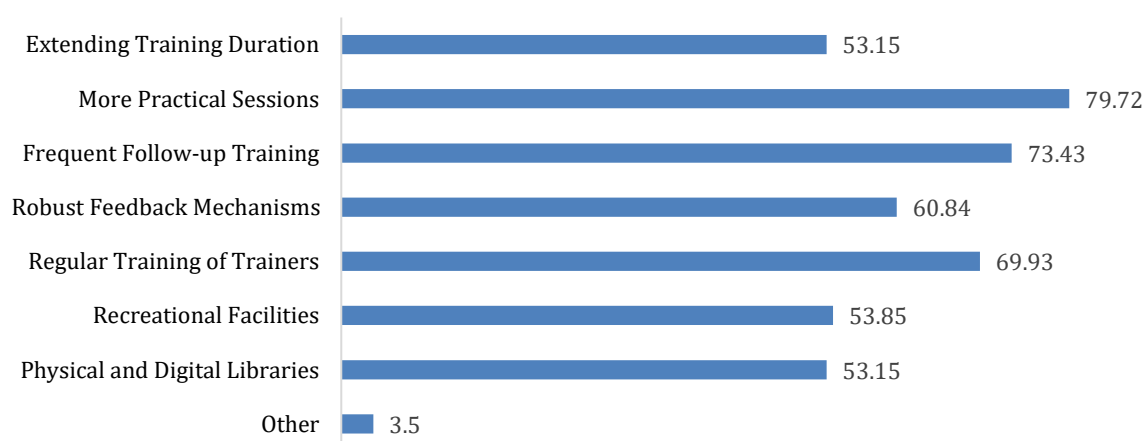
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Recommendations for Improving Quality of Training

To enhance the RGSA Program's effectiveness, faculty recommend more practical sessions (79.7%), emphasizing hands-on learning (73.4%) (**Figure 5.37**) to reinforce theoretical knowledge. They also advocate for frequent follow-up training to ensure continuous learning.

Regular training for trainers is advised to maintain consistent skill development, while improved feedback mechanisms are suggested for more responsive progress tracking and training adjustments. Additionally, extending the training duration and incorporating physical and digital libraries are seen as essential for deepening learning, and recreational facilities are recommended to support participant well-being during training.

Figure 5.37: Recommendations for Improving the Quality of Training (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Training and Residential Infrastructure

The training infrastructure for RGSA programs generally meets satisfaction levels, with high ratings for classroom capacity, ventilation, conference rooms, and safety features

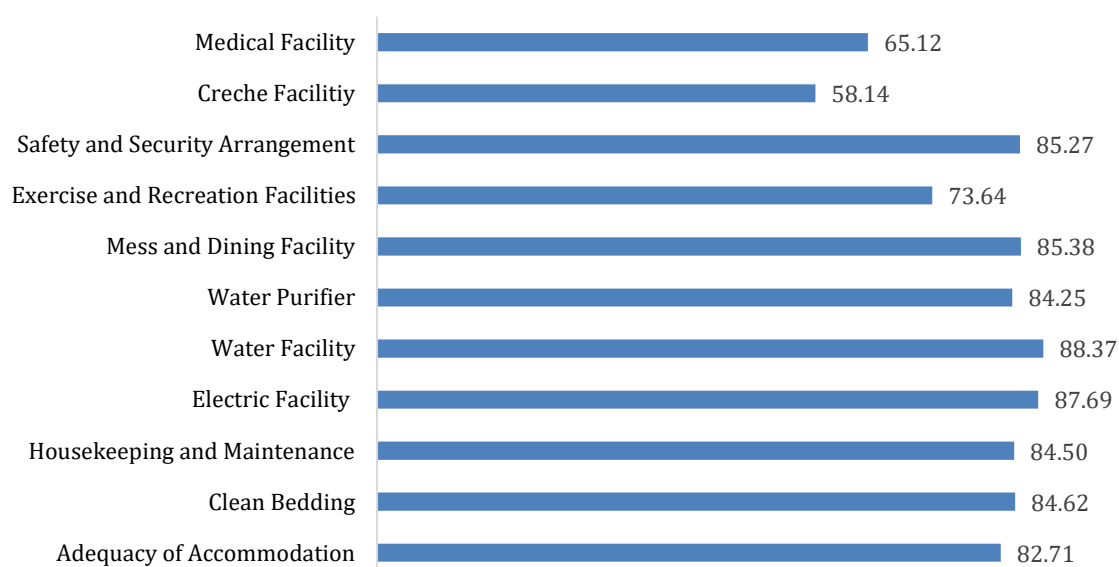
(**Figure 5.38**), creating a conducive learning environment. However, ICT resources and dining facilities receive lower satisfaction ratings, indicating a need for better technology and meal quality to enhance the training experience.

Figure 5.38: Training Infrastructure Facility (% Satisfactory)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.39: Residential Infrastructure Facility (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Further, **Figure 5.39** shows that residential facilities are similarly satisfactory, with high ratings for essentials like water, electricity, and cleanliness. However, exercise and recreation facilities, along with creche and medical services, receive lower satisfaction scores. Addressing these gaps would support participant well-being and inclusivity, making the environment more supportive for all trainees. Overall, while infrastructure generally meets participants' needs, enhancing ICT, dining, recreation, and family-friendly amenities could further improve the training environment under the Revamped RGSA Program.

Dining facility, SIRD, Jorethang, Sikkim



5.5 Officials of PRI (State and District)

5.5.1 Sample representation

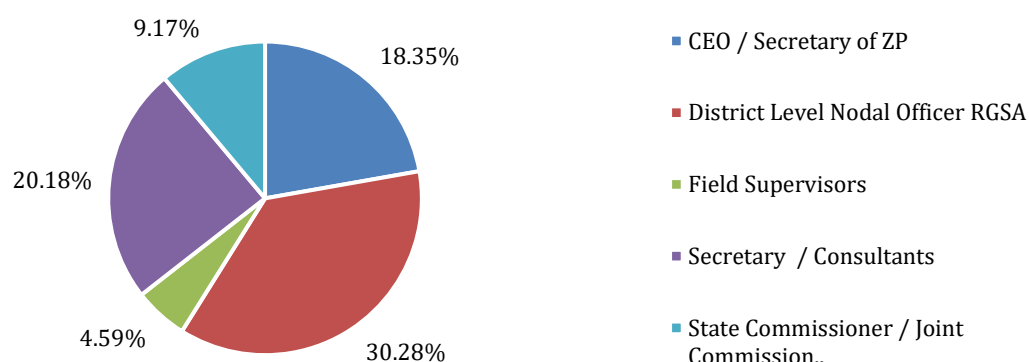
In terms of PRI officials, our sample is well represented across all states, with Odisha and Kerala contributing most due to the inclusion of pilot test samples (**Table 5.30**). We ensured adequate representation of officials at various designation and levels of administration (**Figure 5.40**).

Table 5.30: Distribution of RGSA Officials Participated in Survey

Region	Frequency	Percent	State	Frequency	Percent
Eastern	24	22.0	Chhattisgarh	5	4.6
			Odisha	11	10.1
			West Bengal	8	7.3
North-Eastern	10	9.2	Arunachal Pradesh	2	1.8
			Sikkim	4	3.7
			Tripura	4	3.7
Northern	17	15.6	Haryana	5	4.6
			Himachal Pradesh	5	4.6
			Uttar Pradesh	7	6.4
Southern	35	32.1	Andhra Pradesh	7	6.4
			Karnataka	8	7.3
			Kerala	12	11.0
			Tamil Nadu	8	7.3
Western	23	21.1	Madhya Pradesh	7	6.4
			Maharashtra	9	8.3
			Rajasthan	7	6.4
Total	109	100	Total	109	100

Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.40: Designation of PRI Officials

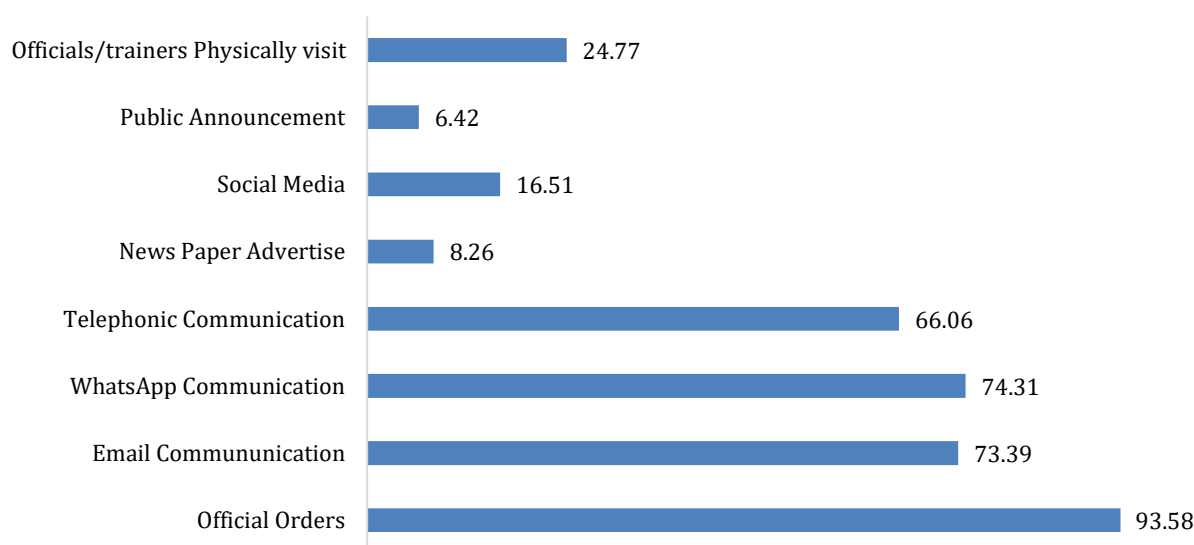


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

5.5.2 Involvement in RGSA Scheme

The major source of training-related communication remains Office Orders, while they are also proactively complemented by digital media such as WhatsApp, email and Telephone (Figure 5.41).

Figure 5.41: Communication Methods Adopted for RGSA Training (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

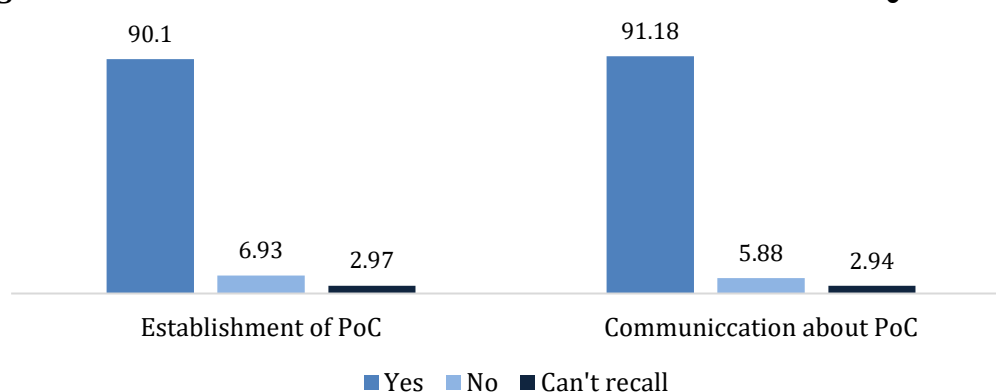
The pre-training communication is generally detailed wherein the potential trainees are briefed about the training needs, training type, residential facilities and other details including that of modules (Figure 5.42). In order to ensure better dissemination of information, PoCs have been assigned to resolve specific queries and informed to the potential beneficiaries (Figure 5.43).

Figure 5.42: Pre-Training Information to the Beneficiaries (%)



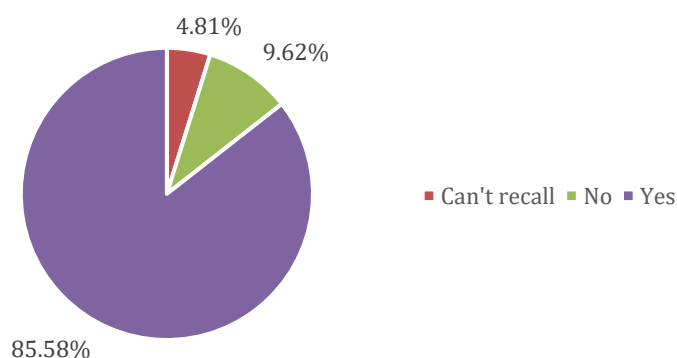
Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.43: PoC Establishment & Communication for Trainee Queries (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.44: Stakeholders Informing Training Needs to Resource Centre



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

The Officials reported having streamlined processes for communicating individual training needs with the authorities (**Figure 5.44**). Verbal modes of communication have been used the most, though digital modes have been adopted selectively (**Figure 5.45**).

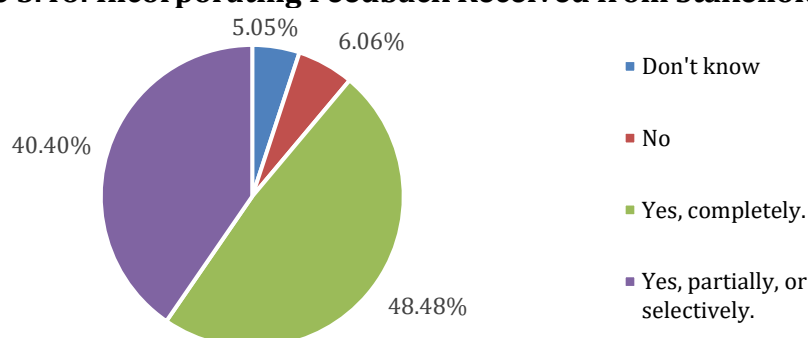
Figure 5.45: Methods Stakeholders Used to Communicate Training Needs (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Our findings also hint towards existence of reasonable feedback mechanisms which have been reasonably incorporated while design of modules (**Figure 5.46**).

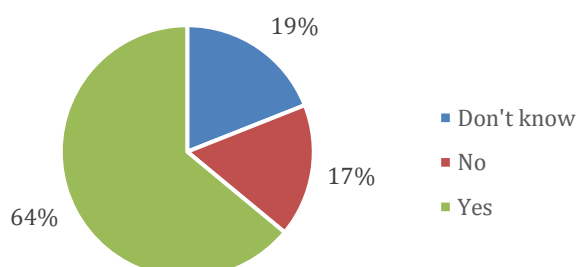
Figure 5.46: Incorporating Feedback Received from Stakeholders



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

While a sizable number of officials confirmed that the department provided project-based support to a few panchayats for economic development and income enhancement (**Figure 5.47**), there persists incomplete information dissemination and proactive engagement by the Officials for such schemes.

Figure 5.47: Adequate Project Based Support for EDIE Scheme (%)

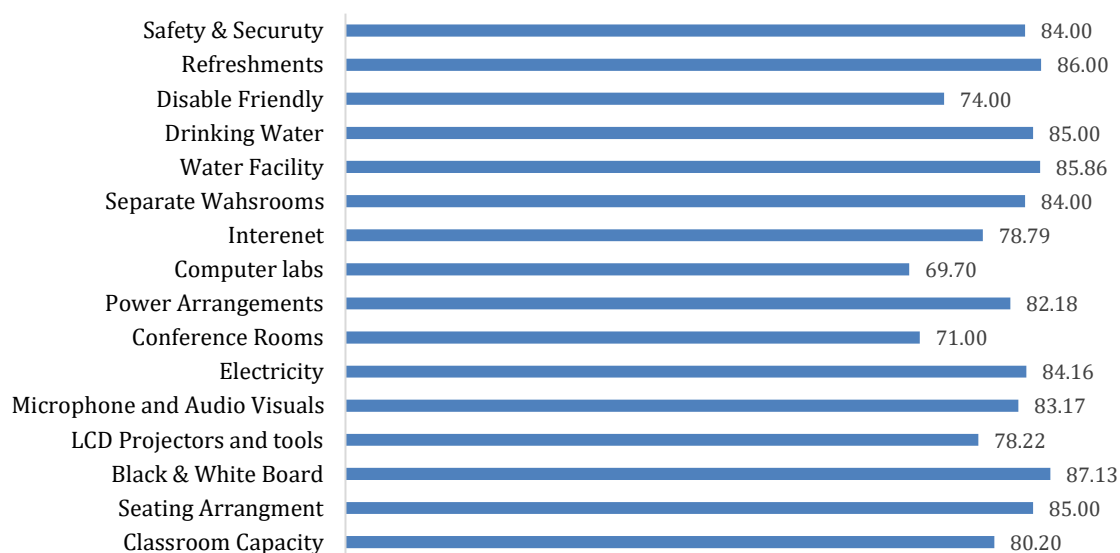


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

The PRI officials perceive the capacity building infrastructure as generally adequate (**Figure 5.48**), with recognition of improvement potential in essentials such as Internet, Power arrangements, conference rooms, Projection facilities, etc., and inclusivity aspects

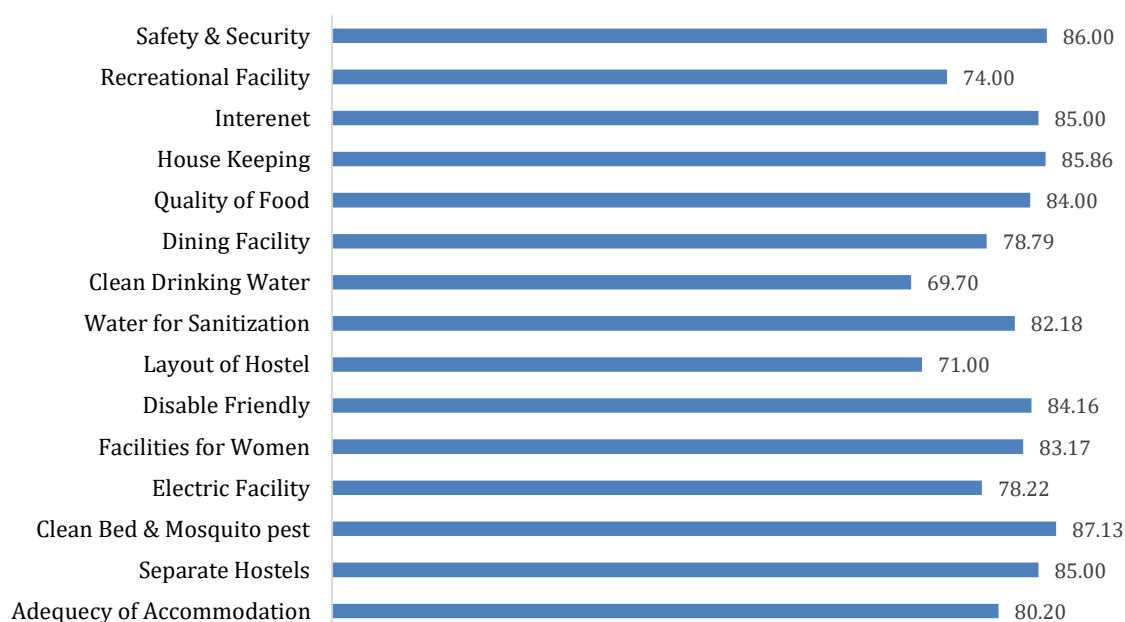
such as disabled-friendly facilities and separate washrooms. Similar observations have also been reported for residential infrastructure, wherein specific essentials such as electricity, clean drinking water and dining facility have great potential for improvement (Figure 5.49).

Figure 5.48: Perception of Training Infrastructure (% Adequate)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Figure 5.49: Assessment of Residential Infrastructure (% Adequate)

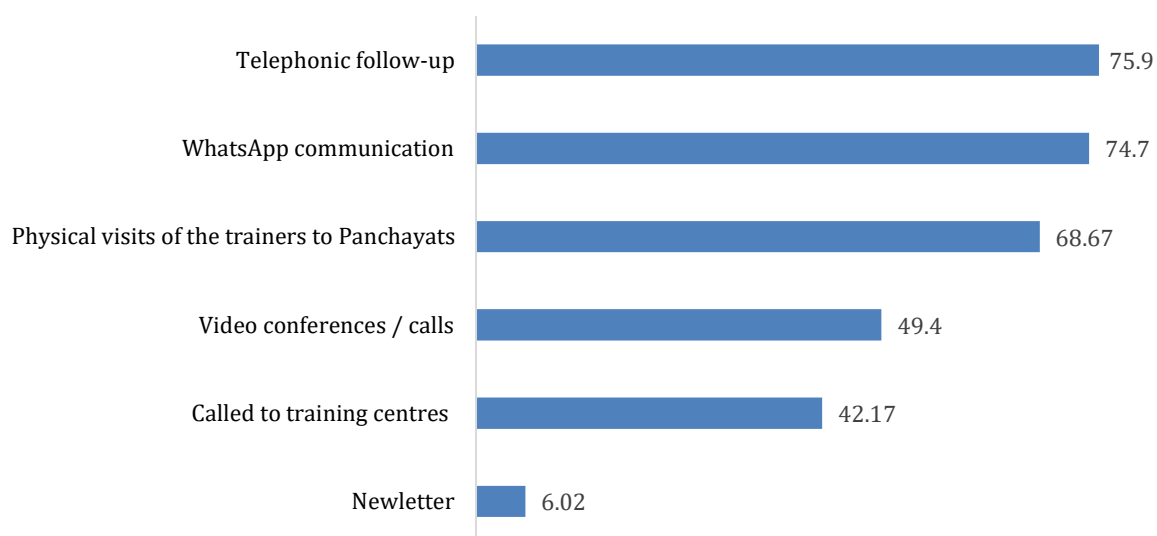


Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

Hostel Room, SIRD (Yashada), Pune, Maharashtra



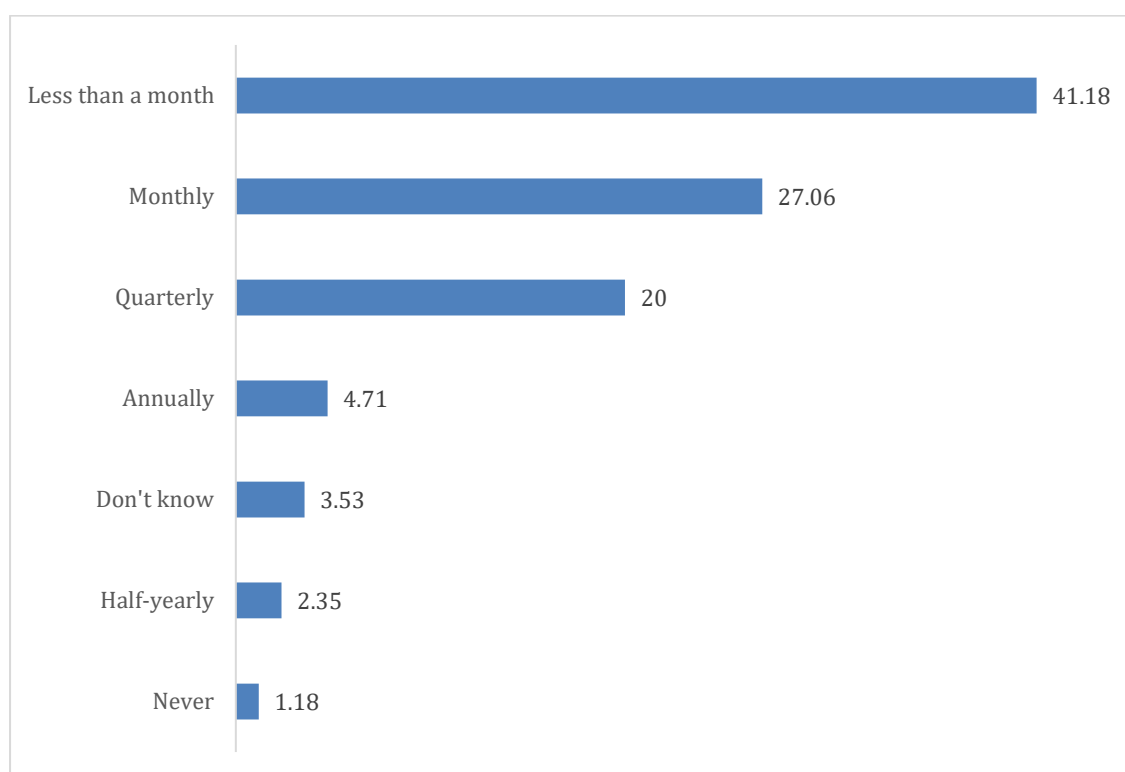
Figure 5.50: Methods Used to Communicate Follow-Up Sessions (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

The PRI Officials have claimed to engage with the RGSA trainee beneficiaries on a regular basis through several modes of post-training follow-up, telephonic follow-up being the most common mode of engagement (**Figure 5.50**). The engagement has been reported to be quite frequent in most cases, while some Officials engage only on limited annual occasions (**Figure 5.51**).

Figure 5.51: Frequency of Post-Training Follow Up (%)



Source: IRMA's Calculations based on the Primary Survey, 2024.

5.5.3 Summary of insights from PRI Officials

Execution and Implementation of various trainings, without well-equipped work force is crucial task, the gap needs to be fulfilled especially in North-eastern states. Since most ERs are from the Gram Panchayat level, it is essential to engage more officials and secretaries at the DPRC and BPRC levels to strengthen and rejuvenate the scheme.

The survey reveals that official orders are the primary method of communication between RGSA officials and ERs, released from district level, so to enhance communication effectiveness it is recommended that RGSA could establish a centralized digital platform that consolidates official orders, emails, and real-time messaging (like WhatsApp) into one accessible interface. also, Trainee ERs can access training details, TA/DA information, and POC contacts in one place. additionally, a feedback mechanism could be added to capture specific training needs directly from ERs, enabling resource centres to adjust programs dynamically this platform could facilitate quicker, more streamlined updates and improve coordination.

It is recommended that training institutes diversify teaching methods further by incorporating more interactive elements like role plays and participant presentations and establishing partnerships with SHG federation for training as these methods foster greater engagement.

To strengthen participant learning retention, it is recommended that RGSA incorporate more hands-on computer sessions to align practical training with digital needs. establishing a structured follow-up plan could ensure consistent engagement post-

training. this plan could include regular quarterly follow-ups for long-term support while encouraging officials to continue using diverse communication channels to reach participants effectively.

Chapter 6: Qualitative Analysis

In this chapter, we report the results from the qualitative aspect of our study, which aimed to capture the in-depth, individual experiences of various stakeholders with the revised RGSA framework. To achieve this, we conducted in-depth interviews with key stakeholders, including faculty members, trainers, and state and district RGSA officials. Additionally, the study incorporated field observations to provide a comprehensive understanding. Below, we present our qualitative findings organized thematically.

6.1 Challenges in Training (Barriers faced by Trainers)

Challenges in Understanding Training Content

The training programs designed for elected representatives and other stakeholders encountered several challenges that impacted both trainers and participants. It was found that trainers frequently observed that many trainees struggled to comprehend complex governance concepts, particularly those pertaining to planning and implementation frameworks. Additionally, some participants lacked prior experience with structured training, which hindered their ability to engage effectively with the technical content presented.

"We try to inform the participants to prepare GPDP based on the LSDG-9 theme in the training, but the members are not able to comprehend the details as well as the need for LSDGs. They have not received any prior training on that." (SIRD Faculty, Uttar Pradesh)

"... the problem is we don't have a uniform type of education level in panchayat. This disparity poses challenges in delivering effective training, and we must find ways to bridge these gaps"

"We follow up with trainees through regular assessments and monitoring. It's essential to ensure that learning continues beyond the initial training program; otherwise, participants may forget what they've learned."

There were also reports of slowed pace of training which likely reduced overall efficiency.

Shortage of Qualified Faculty

Another pressing challenge reported by trainers was the shortage of qualified faculty members. Trainers frequently arrived at training venues only to find that the required faculty support was unavailable. The inconsistency in faculty availability disrupted session planning and limited the depth of discussions, forcing trainers to either adjust their delivery or proceed with fewer facilitators than necessary. This issue was further compounded by the increasing pressure on trainers to remain updated with new governance policies and digital tools.

Many trainers faced difficulties keeping up with technological advancements, as they had not received adequate training in digital platforms themselves. This created a significant

burden, as trainers were expected to teach digital governance tools without having mastered them, leading to ineffective knowledge transfer.

It is therefore recommended that the MoPR strongly advocate for the recruitment of qualified faculty at both the BPRC and DPRC levels (especially domain specific experts) to address this persistent gap. At present, many States tend to avoid recruitment at the block level, resulting in negligible BPRC and BPMU staff across the country. Without adequate staffing at these tiers, the quality and reach of training will remain constrained, ultimately undermining the broader objectives of capacity building under RGSA.

Resource and Financial Constraints

Resource constraints substantially affected the efficacy of the training sessions. A prominent concern cited by trainers was financial limitations, which restricted both the frequency and quality of the training programs. Many facilitators noted that funding deficiencies precluded them from conducting essential field visits and hands-on learning experiences, which may account for the limited exposure to training and field visits observed in the study.

Practical exposure was seen as essential for reinforcing theoretical knowledge, yet budget limitations meant that many trainees had to rely solely on classroom-based learning.

"If faculty and trainer go out for training, they can understand the context better. They need observation and visits outside of the country or state to gain practical insights and deliver to the participants." (SIRD Faculty, Karnataka)

Exposure benefits, regularly for a couple of times a year, could also benefit trainers to learn and adapt to challenging situations.

Training Hall, SIRD Jaipur, Rajasthan



Administrative inefficiencies, particularly in processing payments and reimbursements, further discouraged both trainers and trainees from fully committing to the training process.

“Trainees are finding it difficult to make the training learnings functional; possible reasons might be limited field exposures and delays in payments for both trainers and trainees.” (DLMT, Karnataka)

Delays in financial disbursements often caused frustration, reducing motivation levels and making it difficult to sustain engagement across multiple sessions.

Participant Engagement Issues

Trainers also faced challenges in fostering participant engagement, a critical component for the effective implementation of the training program. This difficulty was largely due to inconsistent attendance, as many trainees were unable to commit to full participation. Factors such as irregular punctuality and competing personal obligations necessitated the repetition or modification of numerous training sessions to accommodate absent participants.

“Sometimes all members cannot participate in the training. There is no punctuality.” (DLMT, Kerala)

Additionally, reaching diverse demographic groups posed its own challenges.

“Difficulty in reaching senior citizen ERs—age group differences make it challenging to engage all trainees.” (DLMT, Karnataka)

Trainers also faced language barriers, particularly in regions where multiple languages were spoken. Many training sessions required translation or additional facilitators to bridge communication gaps, but faculty shortages often made this difficult to implement effectively. Without proper language support, some trainees struggled to fully grasp key concepts, resulting in uneven learning outcomes.

Challenges in Practical Application

Even when training sessions were successfully conducted, applying the lessons in real-world governance settings remained a major obstacle. Many trainees found that what they learned in training did not align with the practical realities of governance in their districts or villages.

“What is lacking there? We will identify the gap, and accordingly, we will integrate it into the next batch. This process helps us pinpoint specific areas that need improvement, allowing us to tailor our training to better meet the needs of our trainees.” (Without identifying and addressing gaps, translating training into practical application will be a challenge.)” (DLMT, Tripura)

Trainers repeatedly got feedback that certain governance frameworks discussed in sessions were difficult to implement due to bureaucratic barriers or lack of institutional support.

"We used to refer to the module, which is prepared by the NIRD&PR, and later on, we used to get customized as per the need of the state, as per the need of our stakeholders. This customization is crucial for maintaining engagement and relevance in our training programs. But restrictions from the state and national government often hinder our ability to implement training effectively." (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)

Another key concern was the lack of coordination among government agencies, which made it challenging for trainees to integrate their newly acquired knowledge into their day-to-day governance roles.

"There is no collaboration, no synergy among various line department officials. They work in silos." (SIRD Faculty, Tamil Nadu)

Trainers often emphasized collaboration as a crucial component of effective governance, yet participants found that various government departments continued to work in isolation, preventing efficient policy implementation.

"We have to coincide with each other; unless we coincide, we cannot achieve our goal. This is a collective effort." (SIRD Faculty, Odisha)

Government-Imposed Restrictions

Government-imposed restrictions further hindered the effectiveness of training programs. Many trainees expressed a desire for more experiential learning, particularly field visits that would allow them to observe governance best practices firsthand. However, financial and logistical barriers prevented such initiatives from being widely implemented.

Infrastructure and Resource Gaps

Trainers also encountered difficulties in motivating participants who were less inclined to participate in the trainings. In some cases, tensions between local leaders and ward members led to lower participation rates, requiring trainers to step in and personally encourage attendance. Beyond engagement challenges, many trainees lacked access to basic infrastructure during training sessions. Issues such as inadequate facilities, unreliable internet access, and lack of transport to training locations created logistical obstacles that trainers had to navigate on a regular basis. These limitations not only affected session effectiveness but also made it harder for participants to focus on learning.

Despite these challenges, some promising practices have emerged in specific contexts. While not uniform across all training programs, these approaches have shown potential in improving training effectiveness. The following themes highlight strategies from trainers and faculty members that could be strengthened and scaled to address these barriers, making RGSA training more inclusive and impactful.

6.2 Developing the Training Sessions

Collaborative and Adaptive Approach to Training Development

The development of training sessions under the revamped RGSA framework was not a rigid, one-size-fits-all process. Instead, as reported by a few faculty, it evolved through collective brainstorming, feedback loops, and an ongoing commitment to making the sessions more relevant and engaging for participants. In fact, a few faculty members and trainers described how, before finalizing any curriculum, they brought together various stakeholders (policy experts, local governance representatives, and training facilitators) to discuss what the sessions should cover.

"In our initial brainstorming sessions, we gather diverse stakeholders to discuss the objectives and goals of our training programs" (SIRD Faculty, Kerala).

"This collaborative approach allows us to explore various perspectives and ideas, ensuring that our training is not only relevant but also tailored to meet the specific needs of the participants." (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)

While this approach showed to have potential for effective implementation and collaborative efforts brought to the trainings, its implementation was staggered across states and regions. Only a few faculty highlighted implementing this approach. In such cases, these discussions were not just about listing out topics but about shaping the very structure of the training, making sure it addressed real-world governance challenges rather than staying theoretical. While this approach facilitated an inclusive and structured curriculum, there were also challenges in ensuring consistency across sessions and in tailoring content effectively to the diverse needs of participants.

Emphasis on Interactive Training Methods

Beyond just deciding on content, some trainers paid close attention to how the sessions were delivered. Many times, they attempted to move away from purely lecture-based approaches and incorporate more interactive and participatory methods. As one trainer aptly put,

"Developing a robust pedagogical framework is fundamental in creating effective training modules. We carefully consider various teaching methods that encourage active participation while facilitating a deeper understanding of the subject matter." (SIRD Faculty, Sikkim)

"We showcase success stories of women from other districts who are actively engaged in SHGs. This helps trainees relate and understand real-world applications." (BLMT, Rajasthan)

"We emphasize a participatory methodology, incorporating case studies, icebreaker sessions, group discussions, and audio-video presentations. We also include interactive activities led by resource persons to engage the participants fully." (DLMT, Tamil Nadu)

While there were instances of successful implementation of interactive learning, feedback suggested that in some cases, these methods were inconsistently applied or

lacked proper facilitation, limiting their full potential. Our quantitative insights present nuanced data on this, which highlight that interactive learnings were limited due to limited infrastructure and trainings regarding the same. For instance, in some cases, instead of long, one-way presentations, the sessions attempted to use case studies, group discussions, and role-playing exercises to enhance understanding. However, ensuring trainers were adequately prepared to deliver these techniques remains an area for improvement.

Emphasis on Continuous Learning and Feedback-Driven Improvement

A key aspect of the training is on continuous learning and improvement. Rather than treating each session as a standalone, some trainers established a system of feedback loops to refine the process. After every training session, they actively sought input from participants on what worked well and what needed improvement.

"This involves gathering insights on what worked well and what could be improved. We assess the availability of resources and materials to ensure that participants have access to everything they need." (DLMT, Maharashtra)

"At the end of the training, we also ask if they need any improvements, extra classes, or have any suggestions. If participants share specific feedback or recommendations, we carefully consider them and take steps to implement improvements where necessary. This helps us continuously enhance the training experience." (DLMT, Tripura)

While some training centers successfully implemented these feedback loops, others lacked a systematic mechanism to ensure that participant feedback translated into actionable improvements. In some cases, logistical challenges such as time constraints and resource limitations hindered the effective implementation of iterative improvements.

Inclusivity in Training

Inclusivity was another pivotal theme in the design of these training sessions, although its implementation was reported by only one respondent. In this instance, particular emphasis was placed on empowering women in governance roles, acknowledging that local bodies often remain male-dominated. The trainer highlighted this focus, stating,

"Women empowerment is a central theme in our training initiatives. We aim to create a supportive environment where women can express their thoughts, share their experiences, and acquire the skills necessary for leadership roles in their communities." (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)

Such training modules encouraged open conversations on gender equality, helping women participants gain the confidence to take up leadership roles in PRIs. While this was a promising initiative, there were limitations in ensuring that gender-sensitive training extended beyond surface-level discussions and translated into meaningful action. Beyond gender inclusivity, one faculty from Kerala shared that their training programs also aimed to create a safe and supportive space for LGBTQI+ individuals, acknowledging the specific challenges they face in governance spaces.

"We are committed to inclusivity in all our training programs, particularly for the LGBTQI (sexual minorities such as Transgenders) community." (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)

"Recognizing the unique challenges they face; we design sessions that address these issues directly while promoting understanding and acceptance among all participants." (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)

While some commendable efforts were made toward inclusivity, some feedback indicated that trainers often lacked adequate sensitization to handle such discussions effectively, leading to variations in how inclusivity was addressed across different sessions.

Structured and Progressive Learning in Training Programs

Another key feature of the training programs was their structured, step-by-step approach to learning. As reported by a few respondents, their participants did not just attend a single session and move on; instead, they progressed through different levels of training that built upon each other. As discussed, orientation sessions may have provided a foundation, helping participants understand the basics of governance and the program's objectives. This was usually followed by refresher training (per the directive protocols), which helped reinforce earlier lessons and introduced policy and governance practices updates.

"Orientation training serves as a vital introduction for new participants entering our programs," explained one trainer. "It provides foundational knowledge about our objectives, methodologies, and expectations, helping individuals acclimate to the training environment." (PRIT Faculty, Uttar Pradesh)

While this structured approach created a strong foundation, there were gaps in ensuring that refresher training effectively built upon earlier sessions. Some participants found the content repetitive, indicating a need for better curriculum alignment across different training levels. This may require rethinking the content of the refresher training: they should not be repetitive but more about building from the earlier training content after a brief recap.

Field Visits and Exchange Programs: Bridging Theory with Practice

Field visits and exchange programs were also an essential component of the training as per the RGSA framework, giving participants direct exposure to best practices in governance. Rather than learning about successful governance initiatives through slides and lectures, trainees were expected to have taken to Gram Panchayats, where effective policies were implemented. While these efforts were well-received in some regions, their implementation was inconsistent. In many cases, logistical issues and limited funding restricted the extent to which these programs could be carried out effectively (please refer to the quantitative findings in **Chapter 4** for a more detailed analysis of this).

“Field visits and exchange programs provide invaluable hands-on experience for participants by allowing them to observe successful practices implemented in different contexts.” (DLMT, Tamil Nadu)

“These opportunities foster shared learning and collaboration, enabling participants to gain insights that can be adapted for use in their own communities.” (DLMT, Tamil Nadu)

Although these visits were considered valuable, inconsistencies in their execution meant that some participants gained meaningful experiences, while others found them ineffective due to limited exposure or inadequately planned logistics.

Language Inclusivity in Training for Better Engagement

An additional aspect contributing to the training programs in some regions was the emphasis on language inclusivity (mostly seen in non-Hindi-speaking states such as from the South). Since participants came from different linguistic backgrounds, trainers made efforts to conduct sessions in local languages to ensure better comprehension and engagement.

“We place great importance on language inclusivity during our training sessions because effective communication is key to successful learning outcomes.” (DLMT, Karnataka)

“By offering training in local languages, we ensure that all participants can fully engage with the material presented and contribute meaningfully to discussions without language barriers hindering their participation.” (DLMT, Karnataka)

6.3 Mechanism to ensure the quality of training

Quality Assurance and Continuous Refinement in Training Programs

Quality assurance in the RGSA training programs was also positioned as an integral part of the process, with structured feedback mechanisms, adaptability in content delivery, and ongoing assessment playing key roles, as shared by many of our participants. However, while the intention was to ensure effective training, several challenges persisted in translating these mechanisms into consistent and meaningful improvements. For instance, a recurring theme in participants’ reflections was the importance of interactive feedback sessions, where trainees had a platform to voice their experiences. These sessions were meant to form the foundation of a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) process, allowing trainers to identify gaps systematically. *“What is lacking there? We will identify the gap, and accordingly, we will integrate it into the next batch” (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)*, reflecting an approach that is aimed at continuous refinement. Another faculty from Uttar Pradesh shared similar thoughts,

“We refer to our trainers as resource persons. After training at the block or GP level, we hold a one-day workshop for orientation and evaluation. During these sessions, we discuss what went well and identify areas needing improvement. For instance, we will soon conduct refresher courses over the next couple of months. After these programs, or even during them, we gather input about attendance issues or challenges related to training materials.” (SIRD Faculty, Uttar Pradesh)

However, the effectiveness of this process varied across states, with some trainers actively implementing feedback while others struggled to make substantial revisions due to structural, financial, and other logistical constraints. There was also a gap in ensuring that the feedback led to meaningful changes at the district and block levels. For instance, in many cases, training modules remained unchanged over multiple sessions (at DPRC and BPRC levels), suggesting a need for more robust mechanisms to translate insights into action.

Post-Assessment Evaluations

Another strategy for training quality was post-assessment evaluation, where participants' knowledge retention was measured through structured assessments. However, our field observations revealed that this was not fairly or even done in some districts⁵. However, some trainers highlighted that feedback alone was insufficient unless coupled with tangible revisions to the training content.

"After taking the feedback, we revise training content. We conduct post-assessments to evaluate how well the participants have grasped the material," (Field Facilitators, Sikkim) noted a faculty member, emphasizing an evidence-based approach.

But while these assessments were conducted in some states and cases, their impact on actual curriculum improvement was also uneven, with many trainers acknowledging the lack of systematic updates in response to assessment findings.

Adaptability of Training Materials to Diverse Learner Needs

The ability to adapt training materials to the specific needs of different groups was another crucial element in ensuring quality. Trainers emphasized the need for flexibility, especially given the wide variation in educational backgrounds among trainees.

"Yes, we have to change sometimes; we have to change the atmosphere and some modules. This reflects our adaptability in our training approach, as we recognize that different groups may respond better to varied content and teaching styles (DLMT, Kerala)

"Developing a robust pedagogical framework is fundamental in creating effective training modules tailored to participant needs. We carefully consider various teaching methods that encourage active participation while facilitating deeper understanding of subject matter—ensuring that learning is engaging, relevant, and impactful"

"Whenever we need assessment, we call the ER or officials from different regions of state... We invite representatives because there will be wide variations and diverse imbibers. We cull out particular needs based on these assessments"

Despite these acknowledgments, reports indicated that adaptations were often ad hoc rather than systematically integrated. Panchayat representatives, coming from diverse literacy levels, required customized approaches, but many training sessions continued to rely on standardized content that did not fully address their varied learning needs. This

⁵ Our quantitative data in **Chapter 4** shows this evidence.

may also be explained through the varied levels of knowledge about governance among ERs from different educational backgrounds and social identities as discussed and shown in **Chapter 4**.

One approach to quality assurance suggested by a few participants was needs-based customization, where training modules were refined through stakeholder consultations.

"We have improved our module through stakeholder consultation. Identifying the needs of our trainees has been a structured process." (SIRD Faculty, Maharashtra)

Challenges in Consistency and Follow-Ups in Training Implementation

However, while this process aimed to align training with real-world governance challenges, the extent to which it was consistently applied across regions remained uncertain. Some consultations were comprehensive, while others appeared to be more of a formality, with limited impact on actual training modifications. Regular follow-ups were also recognized as important for reinforcing learning, yet their implementation was inconsistent.

"We follow up with trainees through regular assessments and monitoring. It's essential to ensure that learning continues beyond the initial training program," (SIRD Faculty, Karnataka) noted one facilitator.

Impact of Financial Incentives on Training Engagement

While this highlights an understanding of training as a continuous process, practical challenges such as lack of resources, logistical difficulties, and insufficient follow-up mechanisms often hindered the sustainability of learning outcomes. In some cases, financial incentives were introduced to encourage participation, but this still did not capture proper attendance among the trainees. Although financial incentives contributed to attendance, there was concern that they may have inadvertently encouraged passive participation rather than meaningful engagement, raising questions about the long-term effectiveness of such an approach.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Strengths, Challenges, and Regional Variations

Monitoring and evaluation strategies further attempted to reinforce training quality, but their implementation also varied significantly. Some regions employed regional customization to accommodate differences in governance practices, ensuring localized relevance. Trainers consulted subject matter experts and used pre- and post-training assessments to gauge learning outcomes.

However, challenges remained in standardizing these practices across training centers. Peer reviews and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were employed to maintain consistency in some states, yet variations in adherence to these guidelines meant that training effectiveness was uneven. One trainer mentioned following the SAT (Systematic Approach to Training) cycle, which helped standardize training while allowing room for contextual variations. While this was a positive step, its full implementation across all training centers was limited (presented and discussed in **Chapter 4**).

Trainer Support and the Challenges of Training of Trainers (ToT)

Trainer support and professional development were frequently highlighted as critical yet underdeveloped program elements. Many participants emphasized that an underprepared trainer could not effectively impart knowledge.

Despite recognition of this issue, ToT remained a significant challenge, with participants highlighting persistent gaps in access, quality, and consistency of training programs. Limited opportunities for skill enhancement meant that many trainers relied on outdated methodologies, reducing the effectiveness of the training sessions. To address this, in some districts, some efforts were made to equip trainers with resources, technology, and expert guidance, but these measures were not uniformly implemented.

While technology was increasingly integrated into training, connectivity issues, lack of familiarity with digital tools, and uneven distribution of resources frequently posed barriers to its widespread adoption.

6.4 Feedback Mechanism in the Trainings

Every training has its kind of limitations and to make it better, respondent feedback is crucial. In this line as well, only in a few cases feedback mechanisms emerged not just as a formality in the RGSA training programs but an integral part of ensuring quality and effectiveness. In such few cases, one of the keyways in which feedback was utilized was through faculty evaluations, where participants rated the performance of trainers and the relevance of each session. If a session consistently failed to meet expectations, it was either revised or completely removed from the training curriculum.

“What is lacking there? We will identify the gap, and accordingly, we will integrate it into the next batch. This process helps us pinpoint specific areas that need improvement, allowing us to tailor our training to better meet the needs of our trainees.” (SIRD Faculty, Maharashtra)

This approach created a system of accountability. By regularly assessing the effectiveness of faculty members, the training initiative fostered an environment where trainers were encouraged to continuously improve their delivery methods.

Qualitative methods such as focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews also played a major role in gathering insights from participants in some cases. There, these discussions allowed trainees to provide detailed reflections on their learning experience, making it easier to identify areas needing improvement.

“We have not received any online feedback in the last three years, which has limited our ability to gauge participant satisfaction through that channel. However, we have actively conducted focus group discussions and one-on-one interviews to gather qualitative feedback. This approach allows us to understand participants’ experiences and perspectives in a more personal and detailed manner.” (SIRD Faculty, Arunachal Pradesh)

The reliance on these methods highlights an important distinction: quantitative ratings alone are insufficient for understanding the complexity of participant experiences. While

numerical evaluations can indicate overall satisfaction levels, open-ended discussions provide deeper insights into how training sessions are perceived, what challenges participants face, and what adjustments would enhance learning outcomes.

“Through our Training and Evaluation (T&E) process, we commit to making regular updates to the content. We convene all relevant stakeholders, including experts in the field, to participate in workshops where we collaboratively discuss and refine the training materials. This inclusive approach ensures that we consider various viewpoints and expertise when adapting our content.” (SIRF Faculty, Odisha)

This approach showed to have great potential making the sessions for effective, in the very few cases where it was effectively implemented, bringing the RGSA framework closer to achieving its goals. *One suggestion here could be to formally institutionalize this, with better implementation, rather than surface-level implementation.*

Integrating Feedback for Regular Update of Content

Beyond individual session assessments, feedback also showed to have potential in the content development process, in a few states. In such cases, training materials were regularly updated through a Training and Evaluation (T&E) process, where trainers, governance experts, and relevant stakeholders participated in reviewing and refining the content. With this approach, the material and content remained relevant, aligned with governance needs, and adaptable to policy changes. The involvement of stakeholders in content revision added another layer of credibility and responsiveness, as the process incorporated both participant perspectives and expert recommendations.

In addition to refining content, in some cases, feedback was also used to adjust the methodology of training sessions. If certain teaching approaches were found to be ineffective, some trainers adapted their delivery styles, incorporated interactive elements, or introduced new instructional strategies. But such flexibility was reportedly not uniform across districts/states.

“Yes, we have to change sometimes; we have to change the atmosphere and some modules. This reflects our adaptability in our training approach, as we recognize that different groups may respond better to varied content and teaching styles.” (SIRD Faculty, Tamil Nadu)

A major strength of this system could be its ability to remain dynamic and responsive, ensuring that training programs did not become outdated or rigid but evolved to meet participants’ changing needs.

6.5 Assessing Trainer Performance

The success of any training program largely depends on the performance of trainers, who are responsible for delivering content in a way that is engaging, effective, and relevant to participants. From our qualitative interviews, we got a sense that some mechanisms for assuring trainer quality have worked and have the potential to enhance effectiveness. However, there are significant structural barriers that hinder consistency and long-term sustainability.

Trainer Performance and the Importance of Interactive Learning

One of the primary indicators of trainer performance was the level of interactivity in their sessions. Trainers were expected to go beyond one-way lectures and create an engaging learning environment. As one participant shared,

“How the session is interactive or not. And how the faculty is taking, or resource person is taking the class. This aspect is crucial because it determines the level of engagement and learning that occurs during training.” (SIRD Faculty, Sikkim)

The ability of trainers to connect with participants and sustain their attention is essential. In some cases, the sessions were observed to assess whether trainers adjusted their teaching methods based on participant responses, ensuring that learning was dynamic, and participant centered. In such cases, trainers who failed to maintain engagement or struggled to communicate effectively were flagged for further evaluation. However, in several cases, trainers lacked structured pedagogical training, leading to inconsistencies in delivery.

Structured Evaluation and Performance Monitoring of Trainers

According to a limited number of respondents, trainer performance was also continuously assessed based on participant feedback and structured evaluation processes. Trainers were rated on a scale of 0-4, with those scoring below 3 being removed from future training sessions. Additionally, a dedicated evaluation committee was responsible for monitoring trainer effectiveness. Trainers were not evaluated randomly; instead, a structured review process was conducted annually by a panel that included the Principal of RIRD (Regional Institute of Rural Development) and AD Panchayat.

“A separate committee is there including the RIRD Principal, AD Panchayat will evaluate... One year once it will be done. Having structured evaluation committees helps maintain high standards in trainer performance assessments.” (SIRD Faculty, Tamil Nadu).

Such institutionalization of trainer evaluation can be a positive step, ensuring assessments were objective and standardized. However, these mechanisms were not uniformly applied across different regions (in fact, only one faculty shared this), leading to disparities in how trainer performance was monitored.

Box 6.1: Best Practices: Trainees as Influencers

Trainees as Influencers: How Trainees Showcased as Influencers Transformed Participation in Capacity-Building Schemes of DSAG!

The Development Support Agency of Gujarat (DSAG), a nodal agency set up for the support and welfare of the scheduled and tribal communities of Gujarat, had undertaken various capacity building initiatives to train the local SC-ST youth to upskill themselves and support them with the prospects of better employment and entrepreneurial orientation. Notable of the initiatives were the "Vocational Training Centre (VTC)" and "High-End Skill Training" schemes. Under the VTC scheme, the DSAG tied up with various well-equipped vocational training centres in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar, and the youth from across the state were nominated in batches, fully sponsored, and trained in various vocational traits through short-term residential programmes, post which hand-holding employment support was extended. Under the HEST, the DSAG had empanelled the CIPET (Central Institute of Petrochemicals Engineering & Technology) and IGTR (Indo-German Tool Room) to provide long-term residential training in various Engineering traits.

While the schemes were well-designed, the empanelled institutes had initially struggled with the lower uptake of the opportunities and high rates of discontinuation and dropouts by the youth from the districts farther from Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. Despite various incentivization policies, the scenario prevailed for some time. IRMA—which was given the responsibility to assess the effectiveness of the schemes—identified that the major reasons for the lower uptake and dropouts were lower trust in the potential of the training and aversion to learning, the distance from the home district, lower willingness of the youth to travel the distances due to multiple community-level constraints. A crucial recommendation to overcome the former issues was use of "Influencer Campaigning" by successful trainees from the community.

Following IRMA's recommendation, DSAG had initiated the Influencer Campaigning initiative to nudge the local youth. It included onboarding the successful trainees from their communities, who have undergone the capacity building programmes, and enhanced their livelihood prospects through support of the schemes. The trainees, so onboarded, were sponsored for tours and campaigns at various localities in the remote districts of Gujarat. As part of these, these trainees/alumni were showcased as "influencers", who demonstrated how the capacity building programmes enrich their lives. By doing this, the DSAG could appeal to both the trust and usefulness aspects of the youth. Simultaneously, the limelight the successful trainees could gather because of the success provided them the much-required inspiration and turned an otherwise cumbersome activity (of getting trained) into aspiration.

The results were almost immediate. The enrollment and uptake increased in the immediate next cycle by almost 20%, whereas the dropout rates reduced significantly from the erstwhile 40% to less than 5%. The initiative of influencer campaigning by converting "Trainees as Influencer" has huge potential of breaking the barriers in various other capacity-building initiatives as well and has a good potential of being scaled up at various levels.

Source: Narrative by Prof Dhanshyam, Investigator, DSAG project.

Trainer Motivation, Employment Challenges, and Recruitment Gaps

The performance of trainers also hinges on how motivated they are. Several trainers shared a recurring concern that they operated on contractual employment at the SIRD, DPRC, and BPRC levels, often receiving low pay. While the contractual nature of their employment did not necessarily hinder training quality, field interactions with them indicated that the lack of experience-based incentives and promotions led to demotivation among trainers. Trainer also shared that there was no clear or structured recruitment policy at the SIRD and DPRC levels, with trainers not necessarily being hired based on necessary qualifications. Hence, many a times, once recruited, trainers were often left without formal pedagogical training, limiting their ability to deliver high-quality instruction.

While experience was considered valuable, it was not the sole determinant of trainer effectiveness. Trainers with extensive field exposure were often better equipped to contextualize their teaching, making sessions more practical and relatable. One participant pointed out,

“Our field facilitator first came to SIRD used to conduct thorough TOTs here... they are experienced trainers because they are already in the field for more than 17 years. Their extensive experience plays a significant role in delivering quality training.”
(SIRD Faculty, Sikkim)

However, experience alone was not enough. Many trainers lacked training, affecting their ability to convey information effectively. One respondent candidly admitted,

“First of all, if I am a trainer myself, then I don’t have an understanding about the methodology of what should be done in the training or how to teach it. The trainers have not received training on it, so they provide training based on what they have learned on their own.” (DLMT, Himachal Pradesh)

This highlights a major gap: while some trainers had extensive practical exposure, they lacked the pedagogical tools necessary for structured, effective training delivery. There was reportedly a clear need for a structured faculty development program that would provide continuous training to trainers. However, most trainers reported having little to no time for such capacity-building initiatives due to administrative responsibilities. Many trainers were also expected to manage logistics, such as arranging food and organizing training sessions, which added unnecessary burden and detracted from their primary role as educators.

Additionally, some trainers expressed concerns about the lack of time to document their learnings, limiting their ability to reflect on and improve their training approaches. Establishing mechanisms for structured documentation and peer learning networks could help address this issue. The National Institute for Development and Capacity (NIDC) should play a more proactive role in training new faculty and fostering state-level networks to enhance trainer preparedness.

6.6 Strengthening Training Program: Faculty & Official Recommendations

The challenges faced in the training program point to several areas that require deeper reflection and strategic improvements. *What could be done to ensure that the training remains impactful, accessible, and adaptable to the needs of participants?* Based on these concerns, we highlight key questions that need careful attention, along with insights from participants on how these gaps might be addressed.

One of the most pressing concerns is trainer capacity and preparedness. *What could be done to ensure that trainers are equipped to handle participants with varying levels of prior knowledge?* Many trainers noted that trainees struggled to grasp complex governance frameworks, slowing down the learning process. A participant suggested that continuous faculty development programs should focus on refining teaching methodologies, ensuring trainers can simplify complex topics and tailor sessions to different learning needs.

As digital governance becomes increasingly important, another critical question arises—*how can we ensure that trainers themselves are proficient in digital tools before teaching them?* Many trainers admitted to feeling overwhelmed by the rapid integration of technology, affecting their ability to effectively deliver digital governance modules.

“It is adding extra pressure on the faculty because they have to be equipped with the latest things. If the faculty member is not familiar with the technology, then they end up in failure.” (SIRD Faculty, Karnataka)

A possible solution, as suggested by another respondent, is to increase more FDPs for the digital literacy programs.

“Using assistive technologies and digital literacy programs will not only make training more effective but also engage participants better.” (DLMT, Karnataka)

Several trainers emphasized the need for additional technical support and structured capacity-building programs to ensure they remain updated on digital platforms.

“The trainer should be trained. If the trainer is not trained, then he is not capable of effectively imparting knowledge to others. Thus, ongoing professional development for trainers is essential.” (DLMT, Kerala)

“Trainers receive support through technology such as e-learning platforms, administrative support, and logistics. Continuous feedback mechanisms improve the training system significantly.” (SIRD Faculty, UP)

Additionally, the challenges posed by limited digital infrastructure were highlighted. Some trainers expressed concerns over inconsistent internet connectivity and lack of access to necessary tools.

“Digital support isn’t directly required; however, learning can be done through studios or websites like YouTube where everything is available. All my recordings will be shown to them, but there’s still a need for more interactive solutions like

tablets that can facilitate better engagement during training.” (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)

What could be done to address faculty shortages at the block and district levels? Many training programs faced disruptions due to the lack of available trainers. One facilitator highlighted the issue, saying, *“Sometimes, we go to the block to give training, and we don’t have the needed faculty. Sometimes we need two faculties outside, but that faculty is not available.” (DLMT, Madhya Pradesh)* Expanding faculty recruitment and providing incentives for trainers to remain engaged in long-term training programs could be potential solutions.

Beyond trainer-related concerns, financial constraints remain a major challenge. **How can funding challenges be addressed to ensure that training programs are sustainable and effective?** One trainer said, *“Today... Kila can't conduct this number of inter-visits because of the lack of funds. There is a limitation.” (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)* The lack of financial resources restricts practical learning opportunities, including field visits, which many trainees see as essential for real-world application.

What could be done to improve timely financial resource allocation for training activities? Delays in payments and fund disbursement negatively impact training participation. One trainer noted,

“Trainees are finding it difficult to make the training learnings functional; possible reasons might be limited field exposures and delays in payments for both trainers and trainees.” (SIRD Faculty, Karnataka)

Participants suggested that streamlining financial planning and ensuring timely fund releases would help sustain training momentum and improve engagement. Engagement remains a critical issue.

How can training programs be adapted to increase attendance and participation? Trainers frequently observed that trainees missed sessions due to competing commitments, personal constraints, or lack of motivation. One respondent pointed,

One possible approach is to extend training duration and offer weekly or monthly sessions instead of short-term intensive programs. A participant suggested,

“Instead of just a few days of classroom instruction, we should consider weekly or monthly sessions that allow for deeper engagement and learning retention.” (SIRD Faculty, Andhra Pradesh)

Another challenge is inclusivity in training programs. **What could be done to make training more accessible to diverse groups, including women, senior elected representatives, and those facing language barriers?** Trainers struggled to engage older participants, with one respondent noting, *“Difficulty in reaching senior citizen ERs—age group differences make it challenging to engage all trainees.” (DLMT, Karnataka)* Additionally, language barriers in multilingual regions hindered communication. One participant observed,

"In some blocks, like Veppanapalli, Soolagiri, and Thally, people speak Telugu and Kannada. We will send a multi-language resource person." (DLMT, Tamil Nadu)

A possible way forward is to develop training materials in multiple languages and incorporate more inclusive teaching practices.

What could be done to ensure that training translates into real-world governance improvements? Many participants felt that there was a gap between what was taught in training and the realities of governance at the grassroots level. One trainer noted, *"There is a difference between what we teach and what is reality. Sometimes we cannot do it because of the teaching envelope."* (SIRD Faculty, Karnataka) A participant suggested that more field visits and practical exposure be integrated into the training curriculum to bridge this gap.

"Field visits are essential for creating a real-world understanding of the concepts being taught. Instead of solely relying on theoretical knowledge, spending 3-4 days in the field observing practices and challenges will provide trainees with a platform to apply what they learn and gain firsthand experience." (SIRD Faculty, Karnataka)

The process and importance of such training was highlighted by one respondent,

"To further improve at the Panchayat and Gram Panchayat levels, we arrange for the Sarpanch, Pradhan, and Gram Panchayat Pradhan to go on exposure visits. Additionally, in states where Panchayats have excelled and received awards from the Government of India, we send representatives and employees from other Panchayats to learn from their best practices. Our goal is to understand the work that led to their recognition by the Panchayati Raj Ministry, so that our Panchayat can also develop and be recognized for its achievements." (SIRD Faculty, Chhattisgarh)

What can be done to improve collaboration between various departments so that governance training is effectively applied in the field? Trainers often noted that government officials worked in silos, making it difficult to implement training-based governance improvements. A proposed solution is to create integrated planning mechanisms that involve all key stakeholders in training design and implementation.

"The comprehensive plan requires involvement and association of all stakeholders to ensure that activities are not just parallel but integrated". (SIRD Faculty, Odisha)

"They have the problems. They have the lack of coordination with the other departments. Because many times it has been noticed that most of the time while preparing the GPDP, other departments think that it is the total work of the panchayat department. And they have nothing to do with the GPDP. But in the process of the GPDP, all the departments have to come here. Like under the 11th schedule, they have to." (SIRD Faculty, Madhya Pradesh)

Finally, ***what could be done to evaluate training effectiveness on an ongoing basis?*** Without proper follow-up mechanisms, it is difficult to measure whether training is leading to long-term improvements. One trainer emphasized, *"Ongoing evaluation of*

training programs is crucial for understanding their impact and effectiveness.” (SIRD Faculty, Uttar Pradesh). Participants recommended strengthening feedback mechanisms and conducting mutual visits for shared learning experiences, ensuring that best practices are continuously refined and adapted.

“Implementing robust feedback mechanisms is necessary to assess the effectiveness of our training programs. Regular follow-ups can help us identify areas for improvement and ensure that we are meeting the needs of our trainees effectively,” (SIRD Faculty, Kerala)

“The quality of training largely depends on the infrastructure and capabilities of trainers. We evaluate training effectiveness through participant engagement, infrastructure assessment, and post-training implementation at the Gram Panchayat level.” (DLMT, HP)

6.7 Key Discussion

Our qualitative findings reveal a mix of progress and persistent challenges in the RGSA training programs. While the program has taken steps toward interactive, participant-centered learning, the implementation of these methods remains uneven across states and training centers. Some faculty and trainers have experimented with participatory teaching strategies—such as case studies and role-playing—to make governance training more engaging. However, the transition away from rigid, lecture-heavy sessions is far from uniform. For interactive learning to be effective, trainers themselves need proper pedagogical training and facilitation skills, which are currently lacking in many cases.

A significant strength of the RGSA framework is its attempt to build structured training pathways, offering orientation sessions, refresher courses, and field-based learning. When implemented well, this approach has the potential to make training more relevant and applicable to real-world governance challenges. Field visits, for example, have been well received where they were successfully conducted, as they allow trainees to observe best practices in action. However, financial constraints and logistical challenges have limited their reach, leaving many trainees without these practical experiences.

Inclusivity efforts have also been promising, but inconsistent. Some training centres have made commendable efforts to accommodate linguistic diversity, ensuring that non-Hindi-speaking participants can engage meaningfully in sessions. Gender-inclusive training, particularly initiatives focused on women in governance, has helped participants develop leadership skills. However, such efforts remain limited in scope and often lack institutional backing to translate learning into action. Similarly, while one respondent reported sexual-minority-inclusive training, such initiatives are yet to be widely adopted. For inclusivity to move beyond symbolic representation, trainers must receive proper sensitization and structured content to address diverse governance realities.

Despite these challenges, some solutions could improve the long-term effectiveness and accessibility of RGSA training. Based on our qualitative findings, the following practical solutions/adaptations could help strengthen the program:

- An emphasis on consistency in trainer’s training and capacity-building workshops to stay updated on governance policies, digital literacy, and interactive teaching methods. These programs should be mandatory and structured, ensuring trainers feel confident in delivering complex topics.
- Instead of standardized, one-size-fits-all content, training should be adapted to different levels of prior knowledge among elected representatives. More advanced training should be offered to those who already have basic governance knowledge, while foundational modules should be created for first-time trainees. The states can be directed to form their own groups to discuss and implement this at the local level.
- To ensure the continuity and quality of training programs, funding should be allocated efficiently and in fixed timeline for disbursing payments to trainers and trainees.
- Feedback from trainees should be systematically collected and used to update training content. There should be a structured process to ensure that feedback is not just collected, but acted upon, leading to continuous improvements in training materials and delivery methods.
- Training materials should be available in multiple languages, especially in states where Hindi is not widely spoken. Whenever possible, multilingual facilitators or translators should be provided to ensure better comprehension and engagement.
- To improve real-world applicability, the training should involve multiple governance bodies and departments, encouraging collaborative decision-making rather than working in silos. This could make it easier for trainees to apply their learning in real governance settings.

Chapter 7: Innovative Projects and ED&IE Projects

As part of the Revamped RGSA initiative, various innovative and economic development projects are sanctioned to address local needs and unlock the potential of rural communities. This section provides an overview of the types of projects approved under RGSA, categorized under two main project heads: Innovative Projects and Economic Development and Income Enhancement (ED&IE) Projects. By examining the thematic distribution of these projects, we attempt to highlight the strategic priorities and trends in rural development efforts supported by the RGSA.

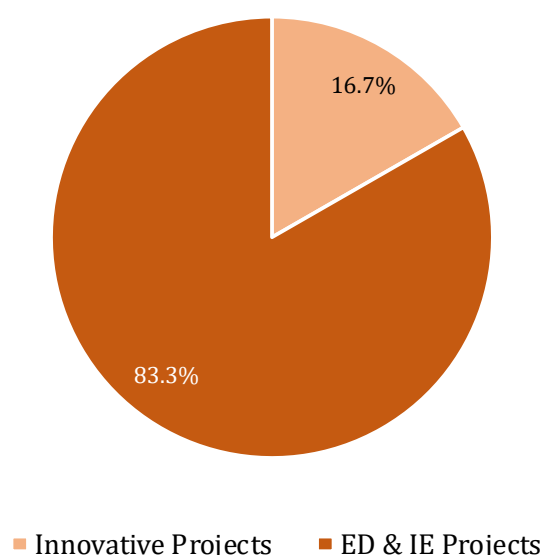
7.1 Summary of Projects

The projects sanctioned under revamped RGSA are strategically aligned with the goals of promoting holistic rural development, with a focus on economic empowerment, digital inclusion, environmental sustainability, and community participation. This section provides a summary of the various projects sanctioned and undertaken under the scheme.

7.1.1 Project Types and State-wise Distribution

While Table 7.1 summarizes various projects undertaken under the Innovative Projects scheme, Table 7.2 outlines those undertaken under the Economic Development and Income Enhancement scheme.

Figure 7.1: Distribution of Projects



Source: Calculated using data obtained from the MoPR.

Table 7.1: Summary of Innovative Projects

Project Type/Theme	States	Budget Specific Theme (INR in Crore)	Brief Description
Digital Initiatives	Tamil Nadu, West Bengal	2.205	Using technology for traceability, water quality monitoring, and digitization of local development indices.
Community Development	Kerala	2.1	Establishing a Panchayat youth center for career guidance and awareness.
Waste Management	Chhattisgarh	0.035	Implementation of android-based notice board
Revitalizing Traditional Craft	Jharkhand	2	Revitalizing the Traditional Craft Cottage Industry
Counselling Centres	Sikkim	0.75	Establishing Counselling Centers at GP level with focus on Beacon GPs
Solar Power Installation	Sikkim	0.62	Solar Power Installation at DPRC
Child Counselling Centres	Sikkim	1.5	Establishment of Child Counselling Centers
Learning Management System	Sikkim	1	Learning Management System (LMS)
Grievance Redressal	Gujarat	0.72	Panchayat Information and Grievance Redressal System (PGRS) App
Ecotourism	Rajasthan	1.205	Ecotourism for Gram Panchayat

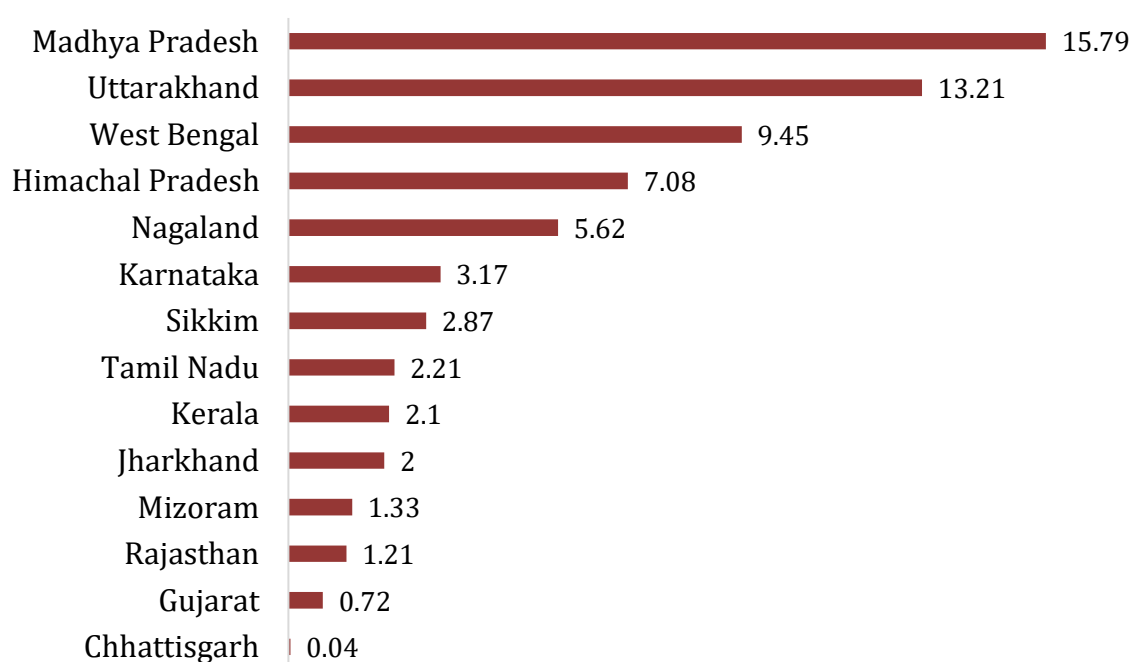
Source: Calculated using data obtained from the MoPR.

Table 7.2: Summary of ED&IE Projects

Project Type/Theme	States	Budget for Specific Theme (INR in Crore)	Brief Description
Support for SHGs	Karnataka, Mizoram	4.501	Providing support for SHGs through production, marketing, and access to resources.
Tourism	West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh	8.55	Developing tourist spots, creating eco-friendly hubs, and promoting rural tourism to generate income.
Local Industry Support	West Bengal, Assam	1.72	Supporting local industries such as handlooms, food processing, and cottage industries through training, marketing, and infrastructure.
Infrastructure Development	West Bengal, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand	9.32	Improving infrastructure like health clinics, waste management facilities, and digital infrastructure to support economic activities.
Agriculture Improvement	West Bengal	2.05	Augmentation in the Cropping Pattern with the help of River Lifting Irrigation (RLI)
Community Resource Management	Nagaland	3.62	Community Resource Management
Milk Producers	Madhya Pradesh	5.2	Enhance Income and Livelihoods of SHG Women Milk Producers
Souvenir Development	Madhya Pradesh	2	Development of a Responsible Souvenir through Art & Craft Promotion
RuralWIFI Centres	Maharashtra	0.6	Innovative Socio-Economic Solution for up liftment of the Rural People - RuralWIFI Centres at 12 Village/Panchayat of Zilla Parishad
Road Building	Maharashtra	2	K31 Road Building Technology for Construction of Road
Solar Drying Project	Maharashtra	3.08	Set-up of Community-based Solar Drying Project for Agricultural Produce
Mother e-Library	Maharashtra	2	Establishment of Mother e-Library in a village at Tal. Bhiwandi, Thane District of Maharashtra
Solarization Project	Maharashtra	2	Solarization of two villages namely Dudhani (135 kWp) and Vapae (100 kWp)
Parking Space	Uttarakhand	4	Parking with Cafeteria and waiting lounge with tollee
Portable Vacuum Picker	Uttarakhand	11.74	Portable Vacuum based Automatic Waste Picker Machine
Ecotourism Based Livelihood	Himachal Pradesh	7	Ecotourism Based Livelihood Generation

Source: Calculated using data obtained from the MoPR.

Figure 7.2: State-wise Distribution of Total Funding



Source: Calculated using data obtained from the MoPR.

7.1.2 Summary of Project Coverage

An analysis of project approvals during the first two years of the Revamped RGSA reveals the limited outreach of these strategic interventions across states (Table 7.3). In 2022–23, only eight projects were approved nationwide—three under *Innovative Projects* amounting to ₹5.62 crores and five under the *ED&IE* projects totaling ₹34.7 crores. Despite the significance of these interventions, only six states took advantage of these funding (two under *Innovative Projects* and four under *ED&IE* projects).

Table 7.3: Coverage of Projects during 2022-24

ED&IE Projects				Innovative Projects		
Sl. No	State	No. of Approved Projects	Approved Amount (Rs Cr)	State	No. of Approved Projects	Approved Amount (Rs Cr)
1	Assam	1	1.5	Bihar	1	3.24
2	Bihar	1	9.53	Gujarat	1	0.72
3	Chhattisgarh	1	2	Maharashtra	2	4
4	Himachal Pradesh	2	4	Nagaland	2	2.12
5	Jharkhand	1	2	Rajasthan	1	1.265
6	Karnataka	1	3.17	Sikkim	2	2.5
7	Madhya Pradesh	4	20	Telangana	1	2
8	Maharashtra	1	3.08	Tripura	1	0.2
9	Sikkim	1	0.62	Uttarakhand	1	3.5
10	Uttarakhand	1	15.74	West Bengal	6	12.885
	Total	14	61.64		18	32.43

Source: Calculated using data obtained from the MoPR.

In 2023–24, the number of approved projects increased, with 15 Innovative Projects sanctioned at ₹26.81 crores and nine ED&IE projects at ₹26.94 crores. In terms of state-wise coverage, only 14 states accessed projects that year—eight under ED&IE and eight under Innovative Projects, suggesting some expansion in outreach.

A closer look, however, reveals that while more states participated in ED&IE projects in 2023–24, the total funding declined from ₹34.7 crores to ₹26.94 crores. On the other hand, Innovative Projects witnessed a sharp rise in both scale and investment—from ₹5.62 crores in 2022–23 to ₹32.43 crores in 2023–24—indicating a shift in emphasis towards more experimental or adaptive initiatives.

Over the two-year period, only 16 states accessed either of the two strategic project types—ten through ED&IE and ten through Innovative Projects. Notably, states like Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and West Bengal emerged as more consistent beneficiaries, suggesting varying levels of institutional capacity and responsiveness across states.

Despite the strategic intent and potential of these interventions, their uptake has been limited to a handful of states. This reflects persistent challenges in state-level planning, proposal development, and institutional readiness—highlighting the need for stronger handholding mechanisms, capacity-building support, and streamlined approval processes to ensure more equitable and effective utilisation of RGSA’s strategic components.

7.1.3 Orientation in Projects Sanctioned

- **Economic Development and Income Enhancement:** A primary focus is on projects aimed at improving livelihoods, increasing income, and fostering economic growth in rural areas. This includes support for SHGs, tourism development, agricultural improvements, and cottage industries.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Several projects focus on building or improving infrastructure such as libraries, community resource centers, waste management facilities, and digital infrastructure.
- **Digital Empowerment:** There's a noticeable emphasis on using technology for governance, service delivery, and information dissemination, including projects for digitization of records, online grievance redressal, and digital literacy.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Projects promoting eco-tourism, waste management, and renewable energy indicate a focus on environmental sustainability.

7.1.4 Summary of Finished Projects

Many projects involved digitization of primary data for better governance and planning at the Panchayat level. Several projects focused on tourism development, creating eco-friendly hubs, and enhancing tourist spots. A number of projects supported the establishment or improvement of community facilities like health clinics, resource centres, and training centres. There were projects focused on supporting specific industries such as handlooms, food processing, and cottage industries. Some projects

aimed at improving grievance redressal mechanisms and making government services more accessible to citizens.

While the Innovative Projects and ED&IE Projects under the revamped RGSA were conceived to encourage locally grounded, need-based initiatives, their implementation has faced several challenges.

Table 7.4: Summary of Completed Projects and Fund Used

Year	Innovative Projects (₹ crore)	ED&IE Projects (₹ crore)
2019-20	1.31	6.011
2021-22	1.2	13.61
2022-23	4.12	19.17
2023-24	1.905	13.74
Total	8.635	52.531

Source: Calculated using data obtained from the MoPR.

This is reflected in the data presented in **Table 7.4**, which shows a modest level of project completion compared to the funds approved. Between 2019-20 and 2023-24, a total of ₹61.17 crore was utilised under completed projects, with ₹8.64 crore spent on Innovative Projects and ₹52.53 crore on ED&IE Projects. However, the completion figures remain modest in comparison to approvals. For instance, in 2023-24, only ₹1.9 crore worth of Innovative Projects were completed against approvals of ₹26.81 crore—just 7.1% of the sanctioned amount. Similarly, ED&IE Projects saw a 51% utilisation rate, with ₹13.74 crore completed out of ₹26.94 crore approved. These figures suggest significant gaps in project execution, highlighting the need for stronger implementation and monitoring mechanisms.

7.1.5 Summary of On-Going Projects

Ongoing projects include initiatives related to environmental pollution management, eco-tourism, agricultural improvements, and infrastructure development. Several projects focus on livelihood enhancement through tourism and support for local enterprises. Some projects are aimed at establishing e-libraries and improving digital infrastructure in rural areas.

7.1.6 Common Trends in Types of Projects Sanctioned

- **Emphasis on Technology:** A significant number of projects involve the use of technology to improve governance, service delivery, and economic opportunities.
- **Focus on Local Resources and Skills:** Many projects aim to leverage local resources, skills, and traditional industries to create employment and income-generating opportunities.
- **Community Participation:** There's an emphasis on community involvement and empowerment, with projects supporting SHGs, local communities, and participatory planning processes.

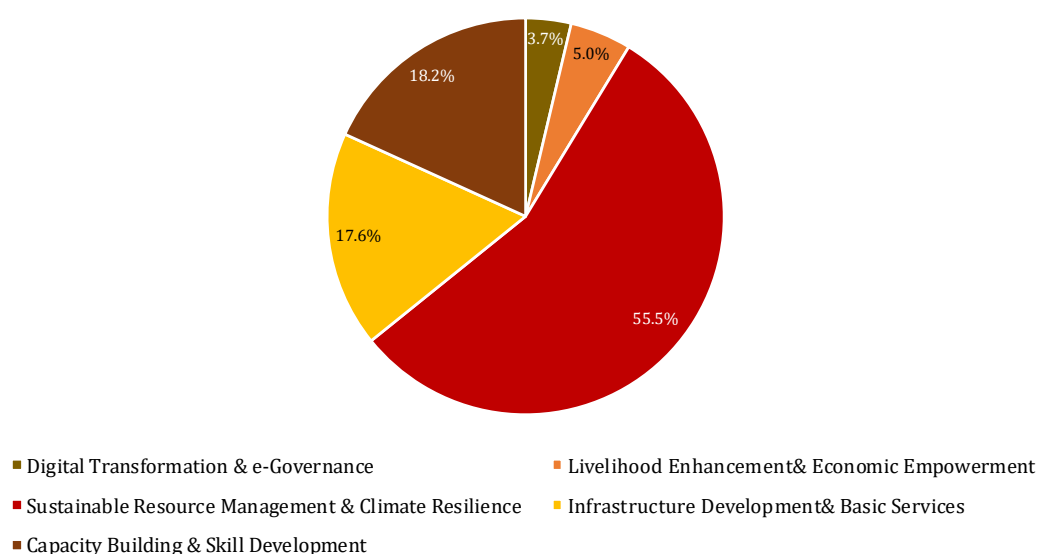
- **Sustainable Development:** A growing number of projects reflect a commitment to environmental sustainability and responsible resource management.

7.1.7 Thematic Analysis of Innovative Projects and ED&IE Projects

The projects sanctioned under the Revamped RGSA reflects emphasis on strengthening PRIs and fostering sustainable growth. Several key themes emerge from an analysis of these projects:

Figure 7.3: Distribution of Projects Funding across Themes

Distribution of Funding Across Themes

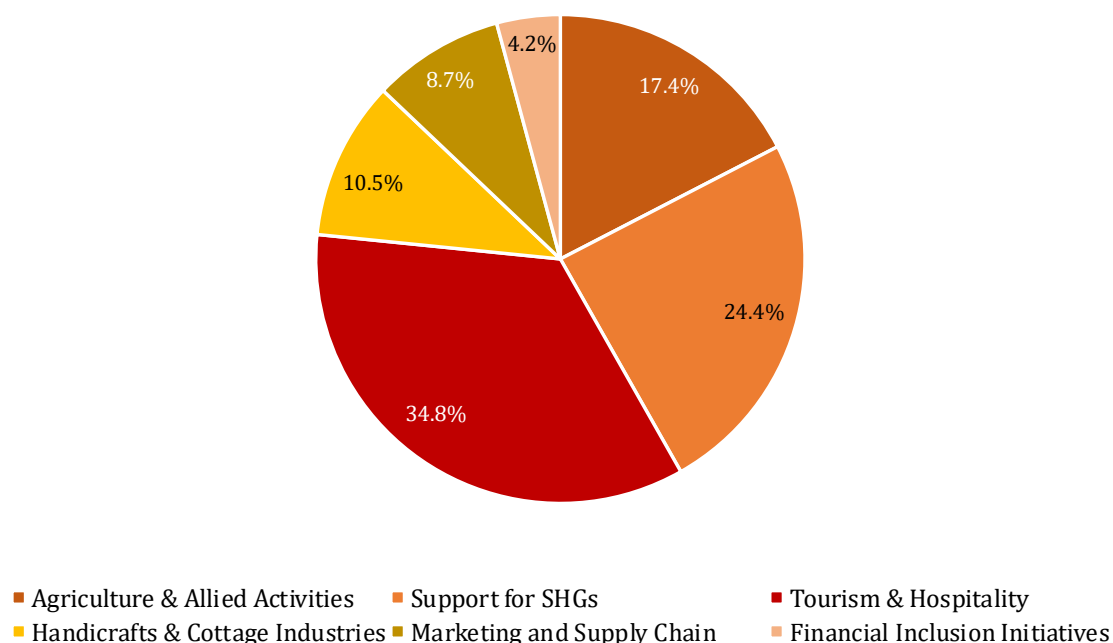


Source: Calculated using data obtained from the MoPR.

1. **Digital Transformation and e-Governance:** A prominent theme is the focus on digital transformation and e-governance at the grassroots level. Projects under this theme aim to leverage technology for improved service delivery, transparency, and citizen engagement. Initiatives like digitization of local development indices, implementation of online grievance redressal systems, and provision of digital literacy programs contribute to creating more efficient, accountable, and citizen-centric PRIs. This focus aligns with the Ministry's vision of empowering PRIs through technology and promoting data-driven decision-making.
2. **Livelihood Enhancement and Economic Empowerment:** A significant number of projects target livelihood enhancement and economic empowerment of rural communities. These initiatives encompass a wide range of activities, including support for SHGs, promotion of local industries, development of tourism circuits, and value addition to agricultural products. By investing in these sectors, RGSA aims to create sustainable income-generating opportunities, reduce poverty, and improve the overall economic well-being of rural households. This focus reflects the program's commitment to promoting inclusive growth and ensuring that the benefits of development reach the most marginalized sections of society.

Figure 7.4: Funding for Livelihood Enhancement & Economic Empowerment

Funding for Livelihood Enhancement & Economic Empowerment



Source: Calculated using data obtained from the MoPR.

3. **Sustainable Resource Management and Climate Resilience:** With increasing concerns about climate change and environmental degradation, several projects under RGSA prioritize sustainable resource management and climate resilience. These initiatives include promotion of eco-tourism, development of waste management systems, adoption of renewable energy technologies, and conservation of natural resources. By promoting environmentally responsible practices, RGSA aims to build more resilient rural communities and ensure the long-term sustainability of development efforts. This focus aligns with the national agenda of promoting green growth and mitigating the impacts of climate change.
4. **Infrastructure Development and Basic Services:** Investments in infrastructure development and basic services remain a crucial component of RGSA projects. These initiatives include construction of community centres, improvement of rural roads, provision of clean drinking water, and sanitation facilities. By addressing these basic needs, RGSA aims to improve the quality of life in rural areas, enhance access to essential services, and create a more conducive environment for economic growth. This focus reflects the program's commitment to ensuring that all citizens have access to basic amenities and opportunities for a better life.
5. **Capacity Building and Skill Development:** Recognizing the importance of human capital in driving development, RGSA also supports projects focused on capacity building and skill development. These initiatives include training programs for PRI members, skill development courses for rural youth, and promotion of entrepreneurship. By equipping individuals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes

necessary to succeed, RGSA aims to empower them to actively participate in the development process and contribute to the growth of their communities. This focus reflects the program's commitment to investing in human capital and creating a skilled workforce that can drive economic growth and social progress.

7.2 Success Stories

In this section, we capture success stories of various innovative projects and economic development projects in various states, facilitated by the revamped RGSA scheme.

Caselet 1: GP Smart Health Clinic: Revolutionizing Rural Healthcare through Digital Empowerment in WB

The GP Smart Health Clinic initiative in West Bengal is transforming rural healthcare delivery through digital empowerment. By implementing a comprehensive portal and mobile application across 1240 Gram Panchayats, this RGSA project aims to digitize existing Homeopathy, Ayurvedic, and Unani dispensaries. The portal facilitates online appointment booking, electronic prescriptions, and efficient medicine stock management. The impact has been significant, with all relevant clinics across the state registered on the platform, enabling rural citizens to easily book appointments online. Doctors can now issue e-prescriptions, streamlining the consultation process. As of now 108491 Patients visits, 128418 total appointments are made online. This project is revolutionizing healthcare access and efficiency for rural communities in West Bengal by streamlining clinic operations and offering modern telemedicine capabilities.

Caselet 2: Eco-Tourism Hub: Driving Economic Development and Sustainability in Jalpaiguri, WB

The establishment of "Ananda Math" as an Eco-Tourism Hub near Bodaganj Forest in Jalpaiguri showcases the potential of RGSA projects to drive economic development and sustainability. With the core objective of creating a sustainable income-generating asset for the Gram Panchayat, this initiative fosters economic development for SHG members and the local community. Key components of the project include the construction of cottages, a kitchen/dining hall, a solar water reservoir, and solar street lights, along with the clearing and dressing of the embankment to enhance the natural setting. With the major components completed, the project is not only creating a valuable asset for the local government but also increasing direct and indirect employment opportunities for SHG groups and local people. By developing a tourist attraction with sustainable infrastructure, the project empowers the local community through income generation and promoting economic sustainability.

Caselet 3: Energizing Rural Communities in Chhattisgarh with Solar Power

In Chhattisgarh, the RGSA initiative has focused on harnessing renewable energy through the installation of a 280-kilowatt solar power plant. The goal is to provide clean electricity, lower energy costs, and stimulate economic development for rural communities. This initiative connects excess energy generated back to the grid, reducing dependence on fossil fuels. With the project on track for completion in May 2025, it promises to benefit approximately 890 households across nine villages. By involving SHGs and promoting a sustainable energy source, this solar power plant is poised to

improve both the economic and environmental well-being of the region, setting a precedent for future projects.

Caselet 4: Cultivating Livelihoods in Himachal Pradesh through Eco-Tourism

Himachal Pradesh's RGSA project centres on developing eco-tourism in Bangana, Una. This initiative will harness the natural beauty and heritage of the Kutlehar region. The eco-tourism circuit will include water sports on the lake, as well as heritage cities. It would enhance employment opportunities and revenue for unemployed youth. This holistic approach will support local communities and foster sustainable economic growth, turning a serene location into a thriving tourist destination.

Caselet 5: Empowering Women in Madhya Pradesh through Dairy Production

In Madhya Pradesh, the RGSA has supported the establishment of a milk processing plant in District Sagar, aimed at empowering SHG women in dairy production. The project builds capacity of the rural poor. Training programs, have equipped women with the skills needed to create various value-added milk products. With production already underway since August 2023. This initiative is not only enhancing income generation but also ensuring the sustainability and scalability of dairy farming, offering a path towards a brighter economic future for rural families.

Caselet 6: Preserving Craft, Empowering Women, and Enhancing livelihoods in Mizoram through Handloom Design

Mizoram is bolstering its handloom industry by establishing a Handloom Design Training cum Production Centre. By offering SHGs, especially women, the project seeks to promote entrepreneurship for socially and economically disadvantaged groups and empower them through improved designs. This integrated approach aims to transform lives and boost the rural economy. This will produce local handloom products of better quality.

Caselet 7: Creating Sustainable Opportunities in Nagaland through Rural Resource and Training

The Rural Resource & Training Centre at Thipuzu Village, Nagaland, aims to be a model for sustainable rural development. This is to be done by Promoting appropriate technologies that are eco-friendly, cost effective and culture sensitive. It provides support and enables access to farmers and entrepreneurs to resources related to their activities. By providing the framework needed for various activities the project hopes to enhance better opportunities.

7.3 Challenges Experienced in Implementation

The success stories summarized above are testimony to the usefulness of the initiative. However, discussions with faculty members of various SIRDs reveal that the current structure and implementation of both Innovative Projects and ED&IE Projects face several critical limitations. These concerns are substantiated by completion data presented in **Table 7.4**, which reflects modest fund utilisation relative to approved allocations. This underperformance is further evident in the high dropout rate of projects. Between 2019–20 and 2023–24, projects worth ₹13.77 crore under the Innovative Projects and ₹8.62 crore under the ED&IE Projects were dropped after approval,

highlighting implementation gaps and lack of sustained support. Key challenges emerging from both field insights and data analysis are outlined below.

7.3.1 Lack of Awareness among ERs and PFs in PRIs

Limited awareness among ERs and PFs about the scope, objectives, and funding opportunities under the Innovative and ED&IE components has significantly restricted the number of project applications. Without targeted orientation or capacity-building efforts, many remain unaware of how to conceptualize or access these funds, resulting in low participation and uptake across states.

7.3.2 Absence of Elected PRIs due to Delayed Elections

Delays in PRI elections in several states have left local bodies without elected representatives. This institutional vacuum directly affects the ability of states to plan, prioritize, and submit proposals under the Innovative Projects and Economic Development & Income Enhancement components of the revamped RGSA. Without elected representatives to steer decision-making or articulate local development needs, the formulation and approval of project applications remain stalled, resulting in underutilization of funds and missed opportunities for grassroots innovation and economic advancement.

7.3.3 Inadequate Handholding Support for Project Formulation

The absence of sustained technical and advisory support has significantly hampered the ability of states to conceptualize, develop, and submit quality proposals for funding under these schemes. This gap not only limits access to available funds but also contributes to a high rate of project discontinuation. Between 2019–20 and 2023–24, projects worth ₹13.77 crore—nearly one-third (33.3%) of the total approved ₹41.39 crore—were ultimately dropped, reflecting both a systemic bottleneck and underutilization of strategic opportunities.

7.3.4 Delayed Fund Disbursement

Several reports mentioned delays in the timely release of funds from various sources (RGSA and convergence schemes) as a significant impediment to project completion and smooth operations. This disrupts project timelines and affects the ability to meet planned objectives.

7.3.5 Convergence Coordination Issues

While convergence with other schemes (MGNREGA, NRLM, etc.) is a key strategy, coordinating with multiple departments and agencies poses a challenge. Different procedures, timelines, and priorities across departments can lead to delays and difficulties in integrating resources effectively.

7.3.6 Skills Gap and Capacity Building

Some field reports highlighted a lack of entrepreneurship and management skills among community members involved in project implementation (e.g., SHG members running processing units). This necessitates a greater emphasis on targeted capacity building and

training programs. The present revamped RGSA could be extended appropriately to address this gap.

7.3.7 Procurement Delays and Complexities

The reports mention some instances of delays due to "complicated procurement processes". Meeting the requirements of various regulatory bodies like for instance local communities needs more support at different levels. These could be mitigated through training the authorities on procurement processes.

7.3.8 Identifying Suitable Locations

Certain projects, particularly those involving infrastructure development like solar power installations or Environmental Management require careful location-scouting. This may require changes to original projects (as seen in the Environmental Pollution Management Project for Kolkata in WB), and may further require external support and further processes.

7.3.9 Oversight in proper management and coordination of projects

In some instances, particularly rural tourism and natural infrastructure sites, there is mention of lack of adequate maintenance and visitor footfall and so this has to be integrated at project conception to have strong oversight and engagement from a group of core members and be led by the respective VDB.

7.3.10 Challenges of remote locations/inaccessibility

For example, it was challenging for a project to identify a good central location in the hills for a good unit, and difficult for them to get skilled individuals to help lead efforts there. These challenges need to be strategically addressed to ensure the effective and timely implementation of RGSA-funded projects and to maximize their impact on local governance.

7.4 Case for Continuation of Both Projects

Strategic investments under *innovative projects* and *economic development projects* of the Revamped RGSA have contributed to the socio-economic upliftment of rural communities. The evidence gathered from project reviews, state-wise reports, and thematic analyses presented herein strongly supports the argument for the continuation and enhancement of funding for these critical interventions.

7.4.1 Demonstrated Impact on Livelihoods and Economic Empowerment

The projects analyzed consistently demonstrate positive impacts on rural livelihoods. Economic development initiatives have fostered entrepreneurship, skill development, and access to resources, resulting in increased income for SHGs and individual households. The success of projects such as the establishment of milk processing plants in Madhya Pradesh has not only boosted local dairy production but has also created a market for local goods. Also, there are examples of eco-tourism initiatives in Himachal Pradesh has transformed untapped locations into vibrant tourist destinations, providing employment and spurring community growth.

7.4.2 Advancement of Digital Inclusion and Enhanced Governance

The funding has facilitated a significant shift towards digital inclusion in rural governance and service delivery. The projects analyzed reveal an increased reliance on technology for planning, monitoring, and citizen engagement. States like West Bengal have pioneered digital platforms for grievance redressal, healthcare delivery, and dissemination of information, enabling enhanced transparency, responsiveness, and accessibility of government services. The implementation of Smart Health Clinics and Public Grievance Redressal Systems testifies to role of support in modernizing rural governance. The use of digital technologies has facilitated improved resource management and information accessibility, vital for informed decision-making at the Panchayat level.

7.4.3 Promotion of Sustainable Development and Environmental Stewardship

The RGSA-funded projects reflect a growing commitment to environmental sustainability and climate resilience. Initiatives such as solar power installations in Chhattisgarh, solid waste management facilities in Uttarakhand, and eco-tourism projects in Himachal Pradesh are promoting responsible resource management and green growth strategies.

7.4.4 Strengthening Community Capacity and Social Inclusion

A core tenet of RGSA is the emphasis on community participation and capacity building. The projects have not only empowered SHGs as key drivers of local development but have also fostered a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for project outcomes. This participatory approach ensures that development initiatives are aligned with local needs, promoting social cohesion and self-reliance. The success is reflected in successful projects undertaken with women's SHGs.

7.4.5 Strategic Alignment with National Development Goals

The projects sanctioned under the schemes are demonstrably aligned with key national development goals, including poverty reduction, employment generation, digital empowerment, environmental sustainability, and social inclusion. By investing in these transformative initiatives, RGSA is contributing to the realization of the SDGs and fostering a more equitable and prosperous rural India.

7.4.6 Building on Success, Addressing Challenges, and Scaling Up Impact

While the achievements of RGSA-funded projects are significant, it is crucial to acknowledge the challenges encountered during implementation. The project reviews reveal issues related to fund disbursement, inter-departmental coordination, and skill gaps in certain areas. The continuation of funding for innovative and economic development projects under RGSA is, therefore, not merely a matter of maintaining progress but rather a strategic imperative for accelerating and scaling up the positive impacts achieved thus far. Continued investment will enable the program to strengthen its monitoring mechanisms, address implementation bottlenecks, and foster greater collaboration among stakeholders. It will also allow for the exploration of new and emerging opportunities in rural development, such as agro-processing, rural entrepreneurship, and climate-smart agriculture.

Thus, the evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates that the funding under the heads “Innovative Projects” and “Economic Development & Income Enhancement Projects” has proven to be a valuable instrument for achieving holistic and sustainable rural development. Based on the successes achieved in the various states and themes, it is essential to continue funding under innovative and economic development projects under revamped RGSA. We recommend that the ministry make appropriate revisions to promote innovation, effective implementation and oversight of each project to overcome the challenges highlighted. It is a crucial imperative for realizing the vision of empowered and self-reliant rural communities and to the broader national development agenda.

7.5 Suggestions for Strengthening these Interventions

- 1) **Strengthen DPR Preparation through Professional Support:** Preparing comprehensive Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) requires specialized technical expertise. Moreover, faculty at SIRDs are already overburdened with training responsibilities and other institutional duties. To address this:
 - a. SIRD&PRs should be empowered to engage competent local agencies or consultants to prepare DPRs. These external agencies shall be paid *only if* their project is accepted by the MoPR. If not, a minimum fee can be paid.
 - b. A panel of empaneled experts should be developed, possibly including collaborations with academic institutions like IITs/IIMs or their graduates working in the development sector.
 - c. Dedicated funding support for DPR preparation should be considered.
 - d. Further, other agencies may also be engaged for project conceptualization, technical support, monitoring, and implementation in collaboration with the SIRD and local PRIs.
- 2) **Simplify Procedures and Evolve Context-Specific Guidelines:** The existing formats and guidelines are often rigid and not tailored to local contexts. There is a need to:
 - a. Simplify the application and approval procedures for DPRs.
 - b. Develop flexible, user-friendly guidelines that offer room for local innovation.
 - c. Frame special guidelines to accommodate different stakeholder needs, institutional capacities, and the dynamic nature of local governance.
- 3) **Promote Stakeholder Convergence and Collaboration:** Effective implementation requires multi-stakeholder engagement:
 - a. Ensure structured involvement of all relevant stakeholders—from district and block officials to GP members—in DPR design and implementation.
 - b. Foster convergence with other schemes by developing clear models and frameworks that integrate departmental resources.
 - c. Involve NGOs, CBOs, and local organizations in planning, capacity building, and ongoing project handholding.
- 4) **Build Community Capacity and Support Gram Panchayats:**
 - a. Engage local organizations/CBOs for community mobilization, awareness generation, and capacity building.

- b. These bodies can also provide handholding support to GPs throughout the project cycle, from planning to execution and monitoring.
- 5) **Allow Longer Project Duration for Deeper Impact:** Projects under this component often require deeper engagement and time to show results. Therefore, the implementation timeline should be extended to 3–4 years, allowing for iterative learning, community participation, and sustainable outcomes.
- 6) **Absence of Monitoring Mechanism and Institutional Architecture:** Unlike established employment and income-generating programs like DAY-NRLM or MGNREGA, these projects lack a dedicated institutional framework and structured monitoring mechanism. The absence of clear accountability systems, reporting formats, and performance metrics hampers both implementation quality and learning from ongoing projects. There is an urgent need to:
 - a. Develop an institutional architecture within SIRD&PR to coordinate, support, and monitor these projects, similar to the support structures in NRLM and NREGA.
 - b. Establish a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework with periodic reviews, feedback loops, and documentation of outcomes.
 - c. Designate nodal officers at state and district levels to oversee project performance.

Chapter 8: Incentivization of Panchayat Scheme

The National Panchayat Awards (NPA), conferred annually by the MoPR under the *Incentivization of Panchayats* (IoP) scheme, have become one of the most significant instruments to motivate and reward high-performing PRIs across the country. These awards recognize Panchayats that excel in delivering development outcomes, strengthening governance systems, and demonstrating innovation at the grassroots.

The awards aim to foster a spirit of healthy competition among Panchayats, encouraging them to strive for excellence in areas directly linked to local development. In doing so, the scheme also plays a significant role in enabling India's commitment to the United Nations Agenda 2030 for SDGs, by ensuring that the localization of these global goals becomes an integral part of village-level governance.

Each year, the awards are conferred on 24 April⁶, celebrated nationwide as National Panchayati Raj Day (NPRD). The occasion commemorates the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, which institutionalized Panchayati Raj as the third tier of governance in India. The ceremony, often graced by the Hon'ble President or Hon'ble Prime Minister of India, serves both as a celebration of democratic decentralization and as an opportunity to showcase exemplary Panchayats that can serve as role models for others.

Since their institutionalization in 2010 and first conferment in 2011, the National Panchayat Awards have undergone a steady process of reform to ensure they remain relevant to evolving developmental priorities. Over time, the themes and evaluation frameworks have shifted—from early focus areas such as sanitation and natural resource management to a comprehensive, SDG-aligned thematic framework introduced in 2023. This transformation reflects the Ministry's proactive approach to making the awards an integral part of India's SDG localization strategy.

The current framework assesses performance under nine LSDG themes. These themes are: (1) Poverty-free and enhanced livelihoods Village; (2) Healthy Village; (3) Child-friendly Village; (4) Water-sufficient Village; (5) Clean and Green Village; (6) Self-sufficient Infrastructure in Village; (7) Socially Just and Socially Secured Village; (8) Village with Good Governance; (9) Women-friendly Village

These themes enable Panchayats to directly connect their activities with both national development priorities and global commitments, while also making performance assessment more structured, transparent, and comparable.

⁶ The origins of NPRD celebrations lie in April 2008, when a national convention was held to mark the 15th anniversary of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. The adoption of the 15th Anniversary Charter on Panchayati Raj, with its focus on "Inclusive Growth through Inclusive Governance", set the precedent for an annual national event. Today, 24 April serves both as a day of recognition and as a knowledge-sharing platform. The award ceremony showcases the achievements of Panchayats, disseminates their best practices, and motivates others to follow suit.

8.1 Evolution of the Scheme

The IoP scheme is the product of nearly two decades of institutional learning on how to link decentralization reforms with measurable outcomes. The journey began in 2005–06 with the launch of the Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme (PEAIS). Initially, PEAIS assessed and incentivized States and Union Territories based on the extent of devolution they had carried out. It was a centralized intervention aimed at nudging States towards more substantial decentralization of powers, functions, and resources to PRIs. By 2011–12, the Ministry recognized that the drive for better governance could not rely solely on incentivizing higher tiers of government. Despite varying levels of capacity and resources, there were numerous Panchayats across India demonstrating remarkable leadership and innovation. To harness this potential, a second component of PEAIS was introduced, directly incentivizing Panchayats themselves and putting in place a robust accountability and performance assessment system at the local level.

In March 2013, the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan (RGPSA) was approved and launched during 2013–14. Its objective was to provide Panchayats with technical, administrative, and infrastructural support, promote e-enablement, and improve functioning through better planning and service delivery. The PEAIS was subsumed under RGPSA, including the incentivization component.

Recognizing the value of focused investment in performance-based rewards, the Incentivization of Panchayats was allocated a separate budget head in 2016–17. The restructuring of RGPSA into the RGSA in April 2018 further cemented its role. Within RGSA, incentivization became one of the four central components, to be implemented until March 2022, with the aim of developing and strengthening the capacities of PRIs for effective functioning.

8.2 Rationalization and Alignment with SDGs

Until 2022, the NPA recognized performance across multiple standalone categories for Gram, Block, and District Panchayats, ranging from public service delivery to social mobilization. However, the acceptance of the Expert Group's report on *"Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) through PRIs"*, released in December 2021, prompted a fundamental redesign. From 2022 onwards, the awards were restructured to align directly with the nine LSDG themes, which collectively integrate all 17 SDGs. This reform aimed to:

- Assess Panchayats' role in achieving SDGs through targeted LSDG themes.
- Encourage healthy competition among Panchayats to improve performance.
- Sensitize and equip PRIs to localize SDG targets by 2030.

The rationalization aims to ensure that every award directly promotes thematic areas of development critical to both local needs and India's global commitments.

8.3 Structure and Categories of Awards

The NPA now operate through a well-defined framework comprising three main categories and a set of special awards.

1. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (DDUPSVP)

The DDUPSVP honors the top three Gram Panchayats in each LSDG theme. Performance is assessed through the Panchayat Advancement Index, which consolidates quantitative indicators and qualitative inputs to provide a holistic picture of governance outcomes. The evaluation parameters range from economic indicators like SHG access to bank credit, housing quality, and MGNREGS participation, to social and environmental indicators such as institutional deliveries, school dropout rates, renewable energy use, waste segregation, and rainwater harvesting. Governance measures like Gram Sabha functioning, asset geotagging, and girl child enrolment are also included.

Award Amounts:

- 1st rank: ₹1 crore
- 2nd rank: ₹0.75 crore
- 3rd rank: ₹0.50 crore

The multi-tiered selection process begins with block-level verification, moves to district and state-level committees, and culminates at the national level, where National Panchayat Performance Assessment Committees (NPPACs) comprising representatives from 14 central ministries who scrutinize nominations using both quantitative data and supporting materials like videos and best practice write-ups⁷.

2. Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar (NDSPSVP)

This award recognizes the top three Gram, Block, and District Panchayats based on aggregate performance across all nine LSDG themes.

Award amounts:

- Gram Panchayat: ₹1.50 crore, ₹1.25 crore, ₹1 crore
- Block Panchayat: ₹2 crore, ₹1.75 crore, ₹1.50 crore
- District Panchayat: ₹5 crore, ₹3 crore, ₹2 crore

The same national screening structure used for DDUPSVP ensures a consistent evaluation process.

3. Special Category Awards

These awards acknowledge targeted achievements in specific thematic areas:

- **Climate Action Special Panchayat Award (CASPA):** Recognizes adoption of renewable energy, carbon neutrality efforts, and sustainable practices.
- **Atma Nirbhar Panchayat Special Award (ANPSA):** Instituted in 2025, this award rewards GPs for mobilizing OSR, strengthening fiscal autonomy, and implementing self-funded development initiatives.
- **Panchayat Kshamta Nirman Sarvottam Sansthan Puraskar (PKNSSP):** Given to institutions supporting GPs in achieving LSDGs through training, capacity building, and thematic planning.

⁷ The National Panchayat Awards Portal (www.panchayataward.gov.in) provides end-to-end digital management of the awards process, from application submission to progress tracking, and also serves as a repository of Panchayat-level data.

For all special category awards, the prize amounts are ₹1 crore, ₹0.75 crore, and ₹0.50 crore for the first, second, and third ranks respectively.

The financial incentives are intended exclusively for public purposes in the relevant thematic area. This includes livelihood support, asset creation, civic amenity development, and bridging funding gaps in ongoing projects. The release of funds is monitored through the submission of Utilization Certificates (UC) by the respective State or UT governments.

8.4 Achievements of the Scheme

Over the years, the IoP scheme has evolved from a promising idea into a mature, high-impact instrument of governance reform. Its design, reach, and execution have continually improved, enabling the scheme to serve as both a recognition platform and a powerful developmental driver. Several milestones stand out as markers of this evolution.

- One of the most transformative achievements has been the alignment of the awards with the SDGs. Until 2022, the award categories, while relevant, were largely standalone recognitions of sectoral achievements. In 2023, this approach was replaced with a thematic structure based on nine LSDG themes, each aggregating indicators from across the 17 SDGs. This reform fundamentally changed the awards from being an incentive for discrete areas of performance to a comprehensive framework that integrates local governance into India's global development commitments⁸. Panchayats now directly see how their work on livelihoods, health, education, infrastructure, environment, and governance feeds into the national SDG dashboard. This shift has made the awards not just a recognition tool but a policy lever for SDG localization.
- The scheme has also set new benchmarks for transparency and process integrity. A major reform in 2015 moved the entire nomination and recommendation process to an online platform. The creation of the NPA Portal allowed for standardized applications, real-time status tracking, and data verification at multiple levels. By digitizing the process, the Ministry eliminated the inconsistencies and delays often associated with manual nominations, while also creating a rich repository of Panchayat-level performance data. This online system ensures that every nomination is processed in a uniform, accountable, and verifiable manner, with a clear audit trail⁹.

⁸ For example, Hansudi Ausanpur was honored with the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sustainable Development Award under the Child-Friendly Panchayat category. This award aligned with the LSDG framework—specifically the theme focused on promoting child welfare and well-being. Although specific strategies or statistics from the Panchayat are not detailed in public summaries, this recognition implies that Hansudi Ausanpur showcased significant improvements in areas such as school transition rates, child health indicators, or inclusive practices in governance—key parameters under the DDUPSVP evaluation system.

⁹ The Ministry compiles best practices from awardee Panchayats into annual e-books, available on its website. These compilations, covering 2023, 2024, and 2025, include case studies, photographs, and videos, serving as a reference for other Panchayats to replicate successful models.

- Equally significant has been the substantial enhancement of award amounts over time. Initially, the financial incentive for a Gram Panchayat stood at ₹5 lakh, and for a District Panchayat at ₹50 lakh. Recognizing the need for greater developmental impact, these amounts were progressively increased and now stand at a minimum of ₹50 lakh for GPs and ₹5 crore for DPs in the highest categories. This escalation has transformed the awards from symbolic recognition into a substantial source of gap funding for local priorities. Panchayats can now take up projects, such as building critical infrastructure, improving public service delivery, or introducing innovative livelihood initiatives, that would otherwise have been out of reach within their regular budgets.
- As an initiative w.e.f. award year 2021, award money was directly transferred electronically to awardee Panchayats with the intent of eliminating any delays hitherto. This initiative was graced and effected by Hon'ble Prime Minister with the click of a button for winners of National Panchayat Awards 2021 on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day 2021 celebrated on 24th April, 2021.
- One of the most visible indicators of the scheme's success is the dramatic expansion in participation. In 2022, around 20,000 Panchayats participated in the awards process. By 2023, following reforms in thematic alignment, outreach, and state-level mobilization, participation surged to over 2.41 lakh Panchayats, nearly the entire universe of Gram Panchayats and equivalent bodies in the country. This massive increase reflects not only the improved accessibility and transparency of the awards but also the growing prestige attached to winning. It is also evidence of the awareness created among Panchayats about the LSDG themes, and the motivation to benchmark their performance nationally.

8.5 Rationale for Continuation Beyond 2025–26

The IoP scheme has, over the years, demonstrated a clear and measurable impact on grassroots governance, capacity building, and development outcomes. As India approaches the midway point of its commitment to achieving the SDGs by 2030, the continuation of this scheme becomes not just desirable but essential. Its value lies not only in recognizing achievement but in setting the direction for the nation's PRIs, creating a competitive, transparent, and development-oriented environment that strengthens decentralization and accelerates rural transformation. The rationale for extending the scheme beyond 2025–26 rests on several interlinked pillars.

Catalyst for SDG Achievement

The restructuring of the awards in 2023 to align with the nine LSDG themes has transformed them into a direct instrument for advancing national and global development targets. Each award theme corresponds to critical development areas such as poverty eradication, health, education, gender equality, clean water, and climate action, creating a tangible bridge between village-level performance and India's national SDG dashboard. By incentivizing Panchayats to compete and excel in these thematic areas, the scheme drives targeted, measurable progress towards the 2030 Agenda, ensuring no community is left behind.

Strengthened Grassroots Governance

The awards have institutionalized performance-based governance at the Panchayat level. Through a rigorous, criteria-driven evaluation process, Panchayats are assessed not only on outcomes but also on the quality of governance including transparency, inclusiveness, citizen engagement, and financial management. This has fostered greater accountability among elected representatives and encouraged evidence-based decision-making, both of which are essential to deepening democratic decentralization.

Inclusive Framework for Recognition

With multiple categories, from the DDUPSVP to the NDSPSVP and Special Category Awards, the scheme accommodates diverse pathways to excellence. It recognizes both thematic strengths (e.g., child-friendly governance, climate action) and holistic achievements (overall performance across nine LSDG themes). This inclusivity often makes sure that Panchayats of varying contexts, capacities, and priorities have an opportunity to be recognized, whether they are leading in a specialized area or demonstrating comprehensive development progress.

Widening Reach and Engagement

Participation levels have grown dramatically, from around 20,000 Panchayats in 2022 to over 2.41 lakh Panchayats in 2023, nearly the entire universe of Gram Panchayats and equivalent bodies in the country. This surge is evidence of the growing awareness, credibility, and motivational pull of the awards. The broad participation also creates a ripple effect, where even non-awardee Panchayats strive to improve their performance in anticipation of future recognition.

Significant Development Funding at the Local Level

The enhanced award amounts, now up to ₹1 crore for Gram Panchayats, ₹2 crore for Block Panchayats, and ₹5 crore for District Panchayats have transformed these recognitions into substantial development grants. Unlike many earmarked funds, award money is flexible within the thematic area, enabling Panchayats to address their most pressing needs. This flexibility empowers local governments to priorities investments in infrastructure, services, and livelihoods in ways that are both context-specific and impactful.

Transparent and Credible Selection

Since 2015, the awards have been underpinned by a fully digitized, end-to-end process through the National Panchayat Awards Portal. This ensures uniform application formats, multi-tier verification (block, district, state, and national), and a traceable record of decision-making. The reliance on quantifiable indicators, combined with qualitative assessments like video documentation and best practice write-ups, strengthens credibility and public trust in the process.

Knowledge Sharing and Peer Learning

One of the most powerful yet often understated impacts of the scheme lie in the documentation and dissemination of best practices. Awardee Panchayats' achievements are compiled into e-books, videos, and case studies, which serve as a reference and

inspiration for other Panchayats. This facilitates peer-to-peer learning, enabling replication of successful models across states and fostering a culture of innovation at the grassroots.

Bridging Funding Gaps in Local Development

While Panchayats receive funds from State and Central schemes, these are often tied to specific programmes. The award money acts as gap funding, allowing Panchayats to finance priority projects that may not be covered by existing schemes. This could mean repairing a crucial rural road, setting up solar street lighting, improving a water supply network, or funding livelihood training, all directly benefiting the community and addressing service delivery bottlenecks.

Prestige, Motivation, and National Visibility

The high-level nature of the awards ceremony, with the Hon'ble President or Prime Minister personally conferring awards on National Panchayati Raj Day, imbues the recognition with exceptional prestige. For Panchayat leaders, the award is not just a financial incentive but a public endorsement of their governance. This visibility motivates leaders and communities to maintain high standards and fuels aspirations among neighboring Panchayats to follow suit.

8.6 Recommendations for Strengthening the Scheme beyond 2025–26

Building on the demonstrated impact and strategic importance of the Incentivization of Panchayats scheme, the following five recommendations are proposed to enhance its reach, effectiveness, and sustainability in the years ahead. These recommendations aim to deepen developmental outcomes, strengthen accountability, and make the awards an even more powerful driver of grassroots transformation.

A) Increase Award Amounts and Introduce Tiered Funding for Sustained Impact

While recent enhancements to award amounts have significantly boosted developmental impact, a further upward revision is warranted to keep pace with inflation, sectoral costs, and rising community aspirations.

- **Raise Award Amount:** For Gram Panchayats, raise the first-rank award from ₹1 crore to ₹1.5 crore; for Block Panchayats, from ₹2 crore to ₹3 crore; for District Panchayats, from ₹5 crore to ₹6–7 crore. For this, the budget provision under the Incentivization of Panchayats scheme may be enhanced. Further, it is recommended to link award amounts to inflation and average project costs, reviewing every three years to ensure the financial incentive remains proportionate to developmental needs.
- **Transparent Award Utilization:** While the full award amount should continue to be disbursed upfront to reflect trust in the merit-based selection of panchayats, it is recommended that robust monitoring mechanisms be instituted to track utilization ensuring transparency, alignment with developmental priorities, demonstration of impact, and documentation of good practices for wider learning.

B) Introduce New Awards Categories at the National Level

- **Awarding Individuals:** In addition to recognizing the best-performing GPs, it is important to also acknowledge and incentivize the Sarpanch. A “Best-Performing Sarpanch Award” can be introduced to honor the Sarpanch of the top-performing GPs, based on the three NPA categories. Similarly, awards can be established for the best-performing Chairmen at the Block Panchayat and District Panchayat levels.
- **Best Panchayat in Fifth Schedule Area:** It is recommended to introduce a special award category to recognize and incentivize best-performing Panchayats located in Fifth Schedule Areas. These Panchayats often operate under conditions of geographical isolation, socio-economic marginalization, weaker infrastructure, and unique governance challenges linked to tribal populations. A separate recognition will (i) acknowledge their efforts in overcoming structural disadvantages, (ii) ensure equitable visibility alongside mainstream Panchayats, and (iii) encourage innovation and inclusive development tailored to the needs of tribal communities. Such an award would also strengthen the spirit of the Constitution’s provisions for safeguarding the rights and aspirations of Scheduled Tribes.

C) Introduce State Panchayat Awards

- In line with the NPA, States should introduce State Panchayat Awards (SPA) at the district, block, and Gram Panchayat levels to recognize and incentivize local governance.
- To foster healthy competition and further motivate performance, awards should be given to the top-performing GPs and BPs at the district level by the SPA.

D) Strengthen Capacity-Building Linkages for Awardees and Aspirant Panchayats

Recognition should be coupled with targeted capacity building so that award-winning practices can be scaled and replicated.

- Launch an “**Awardee Mentorship Programme**”, which can include a group of low-performing GPs of the state/district to be mentored by each award-winning Panchayat for guided knowledge transfer over one year.
- Institutionalize annual workshops for awardee and shortlisted Panchayats to provide structured capacity-building in project design, revenue mobilization, SDG-based planning, and digital governance. Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) should guide the implementation of these workshops. To reinforce motivation and peer learning, top-ranking Panchayats up to the State/UT level may be extended additional mentoring and exposure opportunities as part of this initiative.
- Partner with SIRDs, NGOs, and thematic experts to deliver practical, field-oriented training aligned with the nine LSDG themes.

E) Deepen Evaluation Metrics with Citizen Feedback and Outcome Tracking

Adding citizen perspectives and tracking post-award performance will reinforce transparency and ensure that awards translate into lasting improvements.

- Integrate **community feedback surveys** into the evaluation framework, measuring satisfaction with service delivery, inclusiveness, and transparency.
- Conduct **post-award impact assessments** 12–18 months after disbursement to evaluate fund utilization, achieved outcomes, and replicable practices.
- Publish impact findings alongside best practice case studies in the Ministry’s annual e-book, creating a continuous learning loop for all Panchayats.

F) Expand Participation Through Digital Outreach and State-Level “Pre-Award” Competitions

The rise in participation from 20,000 Panchayats in 2022 to over 2.41 lakh in 2023 should be leveraged further to ensure equitable representation from all regions, including low-capacity areas.

- Run **multi-platform digital campaigns** in local languages through WhatsApp, community radio, and Panchayat IT platforms to promote the awards and guide applications.
- Organize **state-level Panchayat Excellence Weeks**, where mock competitions based on award criteria help Panchayats understand the process and improve their submissions.
- Provide **application facilitation kits** with model responses, indicator explanations, and submission checklists to assist resource-poor Panchayats in competing effectively.

G) Institutionalize Knowledge-Sharing Platforms for Award Replication

To convert recognition into sector-wide transformation, award-winning models must be shared in ways that are accessible, practical, and interactive.

- Establish an **“Awardee Panchayat Digital Knowledge Hub”** as a comprehensive post-award platform that extends the value of the National Panchayat Awards beyond recognition and ceremonies, to creating a culture of continuous learning and replication. While pre-award consultations and draft questionnaires are already institutionalized under the NPA, this Hub would additionally serve as a dynamic, evolving repository where awardee and shortlisted Panchayats can document and showcase their innovations through detailed case studies, project blueprints, multimedia stories, and model documents. It would function not only as a library but also as a networking and peer-learning space, enabling Panchayat leaders across States and Districts to directly connect, mentor, and exchange practical solutions to shared challenges. The Hub would also create thematic clusters, for example, Panchayats in tribal areas, women-led Panchayats, or climate-smart Panchayats, allowing for targeted discussions and replication of context-specific strategies. To build sustained momentum, the platform could host

regular webinars, digital exhibitions, and masterclasses with practitioners and experts, while annual showcases of top innovations would provide recognition and visibility beyond the award ceremony. Anchored and updated by MoPR with contributions from State and District nodal officers, this initiative would institutionalize award-linked learning and position the Panchayat Awards as a driver of systemic change by ensuring transparency, cross-pollination of ideas, and the scaling of successful governance models nationwide. The BPRCs and DPRCs should be encouraged to integrate these case studies and success stories into their teaching materials and curricula, fostering a practical, hands-on learning approach that bridges the gap between theory and real-world governance solutions

- Host ***quarterly thematic webinars/Podcasts*** featuring awardee Panchayats, allowing them to present their initiatives and respond to questions from other PRIs.
- Create a dedicated ***exposure visit fund*** enabling officials and elected representatives from aspiring Panchayats to spend time in award-winning villages and observe solutions first-hand.
- Launch a ***new journal*** that will publish select case studies and research articles focused on Panchayat development, covering various aspects, including the LSDGs and other success stories. Contributions will be welcome from faculty, trainers at all levels of instruction, elected Panchayat members, and their staff. To ensure balanced representation and prevent over-representation by academia, a dedicated section for Panchayats should be included. These periodicals should be distributed in both digital and print formats to all training institutions and Panchayats in their regional languages.

H) Introduce Non-Financial Incentives for Near-Awardee Panchayats

- To sustain motivation among Panchayats that demonstrate strong performance but *narrowly miss qualifying for awards*, it is recommended to extend structured non-financial incentives such as targeted technical assistance, mentoring support, and priority access to capacity-building programs. These *close-to-winning-award* Panchayats could be offered handholding in areas like project design, resource mobilization, SDG-based planning, and digital governance, as well as exposure visits to awardee Panchayats for peer learning. Such incentives would create a “second tier of recognition” that acknowledges effort, builds capacity for future competition, and ensures that the benefits of the award process reach a wider set of Panchayats beyond the immediate winners.

Chapter 9: Action Research & Publicity Scheme

This report, based on interactions with officials from the MoPR and on data provided by the Ministry, highlights the centrality of the Action Research & Publicity (AR&P) Scheme in advancing democratic decentralisation. While the 73rd Constitutional Amendment institutionalised PRIs as the foundation of rural governance, their effectiveness remains contingent on the capacities of elected representatives, citizen awareness, and the flow of knowledge between different levels of government. In this context, communication and research are not peripheral activities but foundational supports for deepening democracy.

Restructured in 2022 under the RGSA, the AR&P Scheme consolidated two earlier initiatives, 'Media & Publicity' and 'Action Research & Research Studies', to address, in an integrated manner, the twin objectives of information dissemination and evidence-based policymaking. Publicity, in this framework, moves beyond conventional promotion to play a pedagogic role: educating citizens and PRIs about their rights, responsibilities, and entitlements; fostering behavioural change; and nurturing civic participation. This approach aligns with the paradigm of Communication for Development (C4D), which emphasises strategic, participatory, and culturally embedded communication as a driver of inclusive development (UNICEF, 2019). In India's highly diverse governance landscape, effective outreach demands a mix of traditional media and digital platforms, tailored to linguistic, cultural, and infrastructural contexts.

The Action Research & Research Studies (AR&RS) component complements this by producing rigorous, commissioned studies to address structural, operational, and policy challenges in Panchayati Raj. In India's federal structure, where the devolution of powers, financial management systems, and capacity-building arrangements vary widely, such studies are vital for calibrating centrally driven support strategies. The scheme institutionalises these research processes through mechanisms for theme identification, selection of credible research agencies, and oversight by bodies such as the Screening Committee and Research Advisory Committee (RAC). This ensures that outputs are credible, relevant, and linked directly to policy uptake, reflecting the global move towards iterative, evidence-based policymaking (Cartwright & Hardie, 2012).

By integrating communication and research functions, the AR&P Scheme creates a mutually reinforcing cycle: research insights shape targeted outreach, while communication campaigns generate feedback and behavioural data for further study. This synergy also supports the localisation of SDGs by ensuring that both messages and policies are responsive to field realities. As Gaventa and Cornwall (2006) note, information and evidence can serve as tools of empowerment when used to challenge institutional silences and address structural inequities. In bringing these elements together, the AR&P Scheme offers an institutionalised pathway for more transparent, inclusive, and responsive local governance across over two lakh Gram Panchayats in India.

9.1 Scheme Objectives

Based on the rationale outlined above, this evaluation of the AR&P Scheme is guided by the following objectives:

1. To document MoPR's efforts under the scheme using Ministry provided data to capture the design, implementation, and thematic coverage of media campaigns and commissioned research studies.
2. To identify the government's promotional strategies for the dissemination.
3. To identify the intended and emerging outcomes of these efforts in terms of enhanced awareness, citizen participation, policy responsiveness, and institutional learning among PRIs.
4. To develop a conceptual and policy framework for the continuation and scaling of the scheme, particularly focusing on improving its reach, relevance, and impact across India's rural governance ecosystem.

9.2 Key Observations

9.2.1 Strategic Publicity for Participatory Governance

In the architecture of decentralized governance, communication serves not merely as an auxiliary function, but as a core pillar of democratic legitimacy, inclusion, and responsiveness. The Publicity component of the AR&P Scheme, under the MoPR, is a practical realization of this ethos. Aligned with the theoretical commitments of participatory governance, Communication for Development, and multimodal inclusion, the Publicity component is conceptualized as a structured effort to bridge the information and engagement gaps that hinder rural democratic participation and institutional accountability.

Rooted in the Communication for Development paradigm, the scheme is designed around the principle that meaningful participation begins with awareness. As articulated by UNICEF (2019), C4D strategies must be dialogic, culturally relevant, and multi-channel to succeed—especially in regions with diverse media access and literacy levels. The Ministry's implementation reflects this understanding, establishing a media architecture that is simultaneously national in scale and local in tone.

At its core, the publicity initiative is structured around a strategic, multipronged media plan developed for each IEC (Information, Education, and Communication) campaign. These media plans leverage a mix of broadcast (television and radio), print (newspapers and magazines), outdoor media (wall paintings, hoardings, exhibitions), traditional media (folk performances, drama, music), digital platforms (web portals, social media, mobile apps), and emerging technologies like OTT (Over-The-Top) platforms. This layered approach is not incidental but reflects the theory of "media hybridity" (Chadwick, 2013), where legacy and new media operate together to enhance reach, resonance, and feedback loops.

9.2.2 Publicity Innovations

In the fiscal year 2024–25, a landmark innovation was introduced in the form of a three-part OTT film series titled "Phulera Ka Panchayati Raj", developed in collaboration with The Viral Fever (TVF). Building upon the cultural universe of the acclaimed web series "Panchayat," the Ministry employed entertainment-education to deliver key messages on

women's leadership, digital governance, and local revenue generation. The films, "Asli Pradhan Kaun?", "Phulera Mein Chori," and "Alhua Vikas", collectively *garnered over 3.3 crore views as of June 2025*. The strategic use of popular culture to embed public values into storytelling aligns with global findings that narrative-based edutainment can change attitudes and behaviours more effectively than traditional messaging (Green & Brock, 2000; Singhal & Rogers, 1999). This approach illustrates how the Ministry has moved beyond instructive dissemination toward affective, immersive communication that resonates with diverse audiences.

The films were not only digitally disseminated but also embedded in key events for symbolic and pedagogical effect. *"Asli Pradhan Kaun?" was screened at Vigyan Bhavan before over 1,200 women elected representatives as part of the Sashakt Panchayat Netri Abhiyan, further validating the importance of storytelling in political empowerment.* Likewise, *"Alhua Vikas" was released on National Panchayati Raj Day 2025*, linking symbolic recognition with mass outreach.

This high-visibility digital intervention was complemented by a robust physical engagement strategy. For instance, the Ministry's Pavilion at the 43rd India International Trade Fair (IITF) 2024, themed "Panchayats@Viksit Bharat2047," served as a visual and participatory space for citizens to engage with Panchayati Raj innovations. *With an average daily footfall of 15,000–20,000 and a Bronze Medal under the "Empowering India" category, the Pavilion provided an experiential format for public engagement.* Such public exhibitions embody the principles of "epistemic access" (Sen, 1999), making state systems intelligible and approachable to ordinary citizens.

9.2.3 Audio-Visual Campaigns

The Ministry's strategy has also consistently included audio-visual campaigns, which constitute a significant thrust of the publicity efforts. In 2024–25 alone, *21 short films (and in 2025, 13 more films) were produced covering themes such as the Panchayat Development Index, the SVAMITVA scheme, digital initiatives, the PESA Act, and climate action.* These films, accessible via YouTube, are not only thematic in nature but designed for modular use during training, orientation, and public screenings. They extend the life cycle of IEC materials beyond one-time campaigns, enabling periodic reinforcement and layered learning.

Another important medium in the Ministry's toolkit is community radio. During the same fiscal year, *a pilot was conducted with 14 community radio stations across Bihar, Maharashtra, and Karnataka, focusing on themes such as healthy villages, gender roles in leadership, and water sufficiency.* Community radio, with its vernacular reach and hyperlocal intimacy, plays a significant role in achieving the last-mile objectives of decentralised communication. According to Bosch (2003), community radio has been found to be especially effective in empowering marginalised voices and fostering local civic cultures.

9.2.4 Event-based Publicity Interventions

The Ministry has also orchestrated event-based publicity interventions, which operate at the intersection of symbolic statecraft and communication. On occasions such as Republic Day and Independence Day 2024–25, *hundreds of elected PRI representatives, including a*

significant number of women, were invited as special guests to the Red Fort and Kartavya Path. These events not only elevated the visibility of grassroots leaders in national consciousness but also contributed to a feedback loop where local narratives are brought to national platforms.

Further, the Ministry ensured that its communication strategy was not isolated but coordinated through institutional media partnerships. Through the Press Information Bureau (PIB), coverage of Panchayat-related events was expanded across television, print, and digital media. For instance, the *“11 Years of Government Achievement” press tour in Maharashtra was covered extensively, disseminating replicable models of own-source revenue generation and digital governance.* Such coordination strengthens institutional visibility and embeds Panchayat narratives into mainstream policy discourse.

9.2.5 Digital and Social Media Interventions

Digital and social media platforms serve as the Ministry’s fastest-growing outreach frontier. As of mid-2025, the Ministry’s official handles had expanded their reach significantly: *X (formerly Twitter) – 2,35,599 followers; Facebook – 86,822; Instagram – 46,786; YouTube – 37,200 subscribers; and the Public App – 20,882.* These platforms serve not only as announcement boards but as archives, dialogue spaces, and training repositories. *With over 1,700 videos uploaded on YouTube covering every major scheme and innovation,* the Ministry has cultivated an online knowledge base that is both accessible and evolving.

Moreover, the use of Bulk SMS services, WhatsApp groups, and dedicated digital dashboards reflects a commitment to real-time and non-platform-dependent communication. *These tools ensure that essential updates, circulars, campaign messages, and best practices reach functionaries across the 2.69 lakh Panchayats in India.* The adoption of Service Plus, the integration of digital IEC with mobile-first delivery, and the shift toward multilingual platforms like Bhashini amplify the scheme’s inclusivity and responsiveness.

In an important alignment with the “whole-of-government” communication approach, the Ministry’s platforms are used not only to promote its own schemes, initiatives, achievements and such other activities but also to amplify initiatives of other departments, whether related to sanitation, water, health, or digital finance. The extensive PRI network thus functions as an inter-ministerial communication strategy, reflecting institutional convergence and last-mile service delivery synergy.

The scheme has also incorporated print and periodical media, including flagship publications like *Gramoday Sankalp Patrika*, now in its 16th e-edition, and *special editions of Kurukshetra magazine.* These publications serve a dual function: preserving institutional memory and extending learning and are distributed digitally to PRI stakeholders.

The timeline from 2021–22 through 2024–25 therefore already reflected a consistent scaling up of outreach. The number of followers across social media has grown exponentially, *X (from 1.28 lakh in 2021 to 2.35 lakh in 2025), YouTube subscribers (from 7,800 to 37,200), and corresponding growth on Instagram, Facebook, and newer platforms*

like the Public App and LinkedIn. These metrics represent more than vanity, they signal an expanding digital constituency for grassroots governance, one that is better informed, more connected, and increasingly responsive.

It is worth noting that the Publicity component of the AR&P Scheme is not a standalone media strategy but an institutional mechanism for reinforcing democratic decentralisation. It is pedagogic, participatory, symbolic, and strategic. It ties the epistemic goals of policy learning to the communicative demands of an informed citizenry. As India aspires to localise the SDGs, improve ease of living in rural areas, and create *Atmanirbhar Panchayats*, the continued evolution and strengthening of this component will be essential.

9.2.6 Action Research as Institutional Learning for Decentralised Governance

In the context of democratic decentralisation, learning is not incidental, it is essential. If the first mandate of participatory governance is inclusion, the second is feedback. The AR&RS component of the AR&P Scheme stands as an institutional mechanism through which the MoPR facilitates continuous learning, empirical correction, and long-term strategizing. It recognizes that PRIs do not operate in a vacuum of policy, but within highly diverse, evolving, and often contested local realities. In such a landscape, periodic, theme-specific, and context-sensitive research becomes the bedrock of responsive governance.

Integrated into the broader RGSA since 2022–23, the AR&RS component brings conceptual coherence to what were earlier disjointed initiatives of policy analysis and field studies. The merging of ‘Media & Publicity’ with ‘Action Research & Research Studies’ reflects a paradigmatic shift in administrative thinking, from delivering schemes to co-constructing knowledge with academic, civil society, and institutional partners. The AR&RS component is thus not merely about commissioning research but about *institutionalising epistemic governance*, where data, evidence, and narrative are central to programme design and course correction.

At its foundation, this component *supports academic institutions, NGOs, research organisations, societies, and training institutes such as SIRDs to undertake focused studies on Panchayati Raj.* Unlike ad hoc research contracting, the process is structured and consultative. Themes are identified through Ministry divisions, stakeholder suggestions, and open calls on the Ministry website. These are then shortlisted by a Screening Committee, further refined, and finalised under the authority of the Secretary, MoPR. This thematic governance ensures that research investments are aligned with strategic priorities—be it devolution tracking, Gram Sabha engagement, financial viability, or capacity building.

Once themes are finalised, a structured Request for Proposals (RFP) process follows. Proposals are invited either from empanelled institutions or through open tender as per General Financial Rules (GFR-2017). The Screening Committee vets the technical and policy relevance of the submissions, while the final approval is vested in the RAC, a high-level body including representatives from the MoPR, NITI Aayog, and independent domain experts. This two-tier system upholds both academic rigor and policy alignment,

ensuring that studies are not only methodologically sound but also strategically actionable.

In terms of structure, AR&RS encompasses five categories of studies, namely, a) Baseline assessments of PRIs, b) Evaluation of policy impacts, c) Concurrent or real-time evaluations, d) Action research to validate pilot models, and e) Meta-assessments of publicity campaigns. These form a full-spectrum knowledge ecosystem that supports policy design, diagnostics, innovation testing, and outcome evaluation.

Between 2022–23 and 2024–25, a total of *eight major studies* were commissioned across a range of themes that directly map onto MoPR's priorities. The 2022–23 cycle saw the completion of three important studies:

1. **Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA)** undertook a study on the *Development of Human Resources in Panchayats*. It focused on the evolving skill and knowledge demands of PRI functionaries in the wake of digital transitions, new revenue mandates, and the localisation of SDGs.
2. **Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)** completed a *Field Assessment of Devolution of Powers and Resources to PRIs*. This study produced the first indicative evidence-based ranking across States/UTs on decentralisation. By operationalising devolution metrics, it provided a diagnostic tool for inter-state comparisons, nudging States towards meaningful reforms.
3. **Centre for Good Governance (CGG), Hyderabad** investigated *Strengthening Interface between PRIs and Elected Legislators*. This addressed the institutional coordination gap between local bodies and higher levels of democratic representation, an issue critical for planning convergence and fund allocations.

In 2023–24, three additional studies further advanced this line of inquiry:

1. **National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP)** delivered a landmark study on a *Viable Financial Model for Own Source Revenue (OSR)*. This tackled the long-standing challenge of financial dependency among Panchayats and proposed pathways to unlock local revenue generation, blending fiscal policy with behavioural economics.
2. **NIRD&PR** conducted a study on *Low Participation in Gram Sabhas*. The study mapped participation gaps across States, unpacked sociocultural and institutional drivers of apathy, and suggested innovative reforms such as participatory budgeting and gender-responsive formats.
3. **IRMA** evaluated the *implementation of RGSA and Grama Sachivalayams in Andhra Pradesh*. The study examined vertical integration, capacity utilization, and citizen engagement metrics, producing state-level insights relevant to broader national reforms.

In 2024–25, two forward-looking studies were initiated:

1. **Seeking Modern Applications for Real Transformation (SMART), New Delhi** explored a unique proposition: *whether physical games can deepen SDG localisation and People's Plan Campaign (PPC) participation*. This study tested behavioural learning tools and gamification to translate complex planning processes into intuitive civic exercises.

2. **National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER)** undertook an *Impact Assessment of Central Finance Commission (CFC) Grants*. The study quantified the developmental footprint of fiscal transfers on PRI-level infrastructure, service delivery, and administrative responsiveness.

Box 9.1: Ensuring Transparency in Research: Process and Implementation

All action research studies commissioned under the AR&P Scheme follow a clearly defined process, from theme selection to final acceptance, ensuring quality, policy relevance, and accountability. Based on the Ministry's account, themes are first identified through multiple channels, inputs from different divisions of the Ministry, State PR Departments, public suggestions via the Ministry's website, and other outreach mechanisms such as newsletters. These suggestions are shortlisted by the Screening Committee and finalised by the Secretary, MoPR. Once themes are approved, proposals are invited from empanelled or identified institutions, through open tendering as per GFR norms or on a suo moto basis from credible organisations with relevant expertise. The Screening Committee assesses the feasibility, utility, and institutional capacity for each proposal, making recommendations to the Research Advisory Committee (RAC) chaired by the Secretary, MoPR, which is the final approving authority.

The implementation stage is anchored in a tripartite funding model: 30% of the sanctioned amount is released after proposal approval and design validation, 30% upon completion of fieldwork and submission of the draft report, and the remaining 40% on acceptance of the final report. In exceptional cases, disbursement may occur in two instalments, subject to RAC's decision. Government organisations must provide a bond, while private agencies furnish a performance security as per GFR provisions.

Throughout the study, reports undergo rigorous internal review, with periodic presentations to Ministry officials and experts for mid-course corrections. Fieldwork completion is followed by a draft submission, which must be presented to the Ministry, discussed extensively, and revised based on feedback. These discussions aim to sharpen findings and refine policy recommendations. The Screening Committee is the competent authority for accepting final reports, which are considered public goods owned by the Ministry.

The process mandates at least one and up to two formal presentations of findings, ensuring that the evidence is debated before finalisation. Final deliverables include ten hard copies and a digital version of the report, along with supporting data and tools used in the study. Importantly, agencies are required to suggest practical applications of their findings and pathways for implementing their recommendations. The Screening Committee also monitors the adoption of approved recommendations from past studies and organises dissemination events to share learnings more widely.

Beyond individual outputs, the AR&RS component's strength lies in its *institutional embeddedness*. The Screening Committee and RAC act not only as gatekeepers but as *knowledge custodians*, ensuring that insights are not lost in filing cabinets but are systematically disseminated and absorbed. Periodic reviews track adoption of past recommendations, and follow-up events (e.g., workshops, colloquia) foster feedback loops between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

From a governance theory perspective, this design resonates with the "*learning organisation*" model (Senge, 1990), wherein government departments do not merely execute policies but evolve through strategic reflection, peer learning, and data-driven

adaptation. This becomes particularly relevant in India's federal context where Panchayat performance is uneven, legal mandates differ, and one-size-fits-all strategies are often ineffective.

Thematically, the studies also demonstrate an expanding focus, from structure to process to behaviour. Earlier studies concentrated on structural issues such as devolution or HR capacity. More recent ones explore behavioural engagement (e.g., Gram Sabha participation) and cultural tools (e.g., gamified planning), indicating a maturing policy discourse that integrates hard data with soft interventions.

Financially, the scheme has demonstrated remarkable execution efficiency. The total sanctioned budget under AR&P for the past three years stood at ₹13.00 crore (2022–23), ₹8.68 crore (2023–24), and ₹10.00 crore (2024–25), with actual utilisation at ₹12.99 crore, ₹8.64 crore, and ₹9.64 crore respectively. This reflects both fiscal prudence and timely execution—essential in a research ecosystem where delays often derail utility.

Importantly, the AR&RS component also serves a normative function: it democratizes knowledge production. By inviting research proposals from a diverse pool of public and private institutions, it decentralises the very process of studying decentralisation. In doing so, it opens up space for non-state actors to shape policy debates, introduces methodological pluralism, and fosters a knowledge democracy. According to Cornwall and Coelho (2007), such pluralistic engagement is essential to disrupt “expert capture” and ensure that research reflects diverse voices and lived realities.

The AR&RS component of the AR&P Scheme exemplifies deliberative governance in action. It recognizes that in a federal, plural, and rapidly changing society, democratic governance must be reflexive, data-informed, and intellectually open. The Ministry's commitment to evidence production, peer review, and policy translation through this component signals a mature approach to public administration.

9.3 Rationale for Continuation

Continued Action Research supports evidence-based policymaking by providing in-depth, region-specific and issue-specific insights on PRI performance and challenges. Findings from research studies help in course correction, scaling best practices, and customizing interventions to diverse socio-economic contexts.

Action research can be used to evaluate the impact and efficiency of the initiatives taken by the government, thereby improving transparency and accountability. It helps in assessing scheme relevance, utility and potential redesign needs.

Recommendation: *The component of “Action Research & Research Studies” has been found to be highly useful for the MoPR's decision making process pertaining to policy matters. These studies are significant from the point of view of devising various strategies and micro plans. Therefore, it is recommended to continue the component with a higher budget allocation.*

Chapter 10: Digital Governance Interventions

This report focuses on the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project, a key initiative led by the MoPR aimed at transforming digital governance in rural India between 2022 and 2025. Between 2022 and 2025, this initiative has grown into a central pillar of the country's grassroots governance, enhancing transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in local decision-making. By building a comprehensive digital ecosystem for PRIs, the project has not only aligned with the objectives of the revamped RGSA but has also expanded the scope and effectiveness of rural development efforts. Its approach lies in a robust suite of platforms and tools, each designed to solve a particular problem faced by rural local bodies. These include platforms for planning and accounting, procurement, citizen interface, training, auditing, geo-spatial mapping, and AI-driven data monitoring. Collectively, they aim to enable a new ecosystem of rural governance where data, inclusion, and speed are key.

This report draws on various documents and data shared by the MoPR and incorporates insights from interactions with key stakeholders within the ministry. It highlights the integration of digital tools, platforms, and AI technologies that have significantly improved the planning, financial management, auditing, and citizen engagement processes within PRIs. Through these efforts, the e-Panchayat initiative has fostered a more inclusive and data-driven governance ecosystem, aligning local actions with national development goals.

10.1 Digital Planning and Financial Management Tools

The e-Gram Swaraj platform has introduced a significant level of flexibility for states and Gram Panchayats, allowing them to add new items or activities to their development plans as needed. This flexibility is crucial as it enables local governance to adapt and respond to emerging challenges or changing priorities at the community level. Moreover, once these development plans are prepared, they are made publicly available through the platform, which greatly enhances transparency. This public accessibility ensures that the community, as well as other stakeholders, can track the progress of the plans, fostering a sense of accountability.

The platform goes beyond just enabling the creation of plans; it also allows for tracking the implementation of activities, providing details on whether a project has begun, its expenditures, and even geo-tagged photographs of the project's progress. This level of transparency not only helps in ensuring that funds are being used properly but also builds public trust in the process. The platform enables easy access to critical financial documents like payments, vouchers, and vendor lists, making financial management much more disciplined and transparent. Additionally, it provides a centralized repository where all these documents can be accessed directly by auditors, streamlining the auditing process. Before the platform, auditing was a slow process that could take up to five years, and in some cases, audits of all Gram Panchayats were never completed. Today, with the online audit system, audits can be completed annually, and more importantly, all Panchayats are now fully audited, ensuring a level of accountability that was previously lacking.

The success of these advancements can be attributed largely to the support from the revamped RGSA. It was through RGSA's funding that these platforms were developed, and their continuous support has been vital in refining and expanding the reach of these digital governance tools. This support has been essential in improving financial management practices, bringing discipline, and enhancing the efficiency of local governance.

This centralization of functions has simplified governance processes and made them more efficient. In FY 2024–25, over 2.55 lakh GPDs were created using this portal. These plans are not dictated from the top down but are crafted through active consultations with Gram Sabhas and community stakeholders, ensuring that the development priorities reflect the real needs of the people. This bottom-up approach helps to align local actions with national SDG goals, ensuring that community needs are adequately addressed in the larger framework of national development.

The platform is also integrated with the PFMS through the e-Gram SWARAJ-PFMS Interface, which enables real-time, secure, and transparent fund disbursements from the Panchayats directly to vendors and service providers. This integration further strengthens the financial transparency and efficiency of the system, ensuring that funds are being used effectively and are reaching the intended recipients without delays.

As of 2025, more than 2.63 lakh PRIs were onboarded and processed payments totaling ₹2.67 lakh crore cumulatively. The average processing time for payments has dropped to just three days, with a success rate of over 95%. These numbers are not merely technical achievements but represent a shift in how grassroots institutions handle money, moving from manual bottlenecks to real-time digital flows.

The total value of payments processed digitally through e-Gram SWARAJ crossed ₹46,604 crore in 2024–25 alone, compared to ₹43,232 crore in 2023–24 and ₹38,021 crore in 2022–23, showing a steady annual growth in digital fiscal operations.

Cumulatively over three years (2022–2025), the total volume of digital payments processed by Panchayats across India through eGS exceeded ₹127,858 crore. This increasing adoption reflects not only the effectiveness of the system but also the growing trust of Panchayats, vendors, and service providers in transparent, time-bound payments.

Analysis of state-level trends reveals several important insights:

- *Uttar Pradesh* is one of the top performers, with ₹14,336 crore in 2024–25, representing over 30% of the national total for that year. The state maintained 100% onboarding (57,691 PRIs) with almost every Panchayat actively making online payments.
- Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh also demonstrated consistently high performance:
 - Bihar: ₹2,851 crore in 2024–25 (8046 PRIs)
 - Tamil Nadu: ₹2,840 crore (12525 PRIs)
 - Maharashtra: ₹4,217 crore (27941 PRIs)
 - Madhya Pradesh: ₹2,570 crore (23011 PRIs)

These states not only processed high payment volumes but also achieved high plan uploads and functional use of GPDPs.

- Odisha, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Karnataka, and Gujarat formed the second tier of performers with annual digital transactions ranging between ₹1,400–₹2,800 crore in FY 2024–25. Their high onboarding and plan-upload rates reflect institutional maturity.

On the other hand, several states reflect low digital transaction volumes, indicating challenges in adoption or infrastructure:

- Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Nagaland, and Meghalaya reported zero transactions in 2024–25, even though onboarding had occurred.
- Manipur showed extremely low engagement—only ₹8.4 crore worth of payments through just 125 PRIs, despite having over 3,800 PRIs.
- Arunachal Pradesh, and Goa also reported very low transaction volumes (less than ₹20 crore in 2024–25).

In terms of planning, e-Gram SWARAJ has effectively institutionalized the GPDP preparation process. In FY 2024–25, over 2.55 lakh Panchayats uploaded their development plans through the portal. Several states had near 100% plan uploads:

- Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, and Himachal Pradesh consistently uploaded plans for every or nearly every Panchayat over the years.
- Even states with lower payment transactions, like Sikkim, Tripura, and Punjab, maintained strong plan submission performance.

The integration of Gram Panchayats with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) was intended to instill transparency, efficiency, and competitiveness in procurement processes at the grassroots. The available data up to 2025 provides a detailed picture of progress—and points to both momentum and persisting challenges.

By 2025, out of approximately 2.68 lakh Gram Panchayats, 1.01 lakh PRIs (37.8%) were registered on the GeM platform. Among these, 16,218 Panchayats (16% of registered ones) had initiated procurement, placing 1,16,477 orders worth a total of ₹1,021.31 crore. While this marks a significant milestone in decentralizing procurement and boosting local economies, the distribution and usage remain highly skewed.

A few states dominate the GeM landscape in terms of adoption, transaction volumes, and value:

- Maharashtra is far ahead of all others, with 8,694 Panchayats placing 88,041 orders worth ₹593.38 crore. Maharashtra alone accounts for over 58% of total procurement value by all PRIs in the country.
- Bihar ranks second with 1,254 Panchayats procuring goods worth ₹185.78 crore through 11,392 orders (18.2% of total procurement value), showing a solid adoption of GeM and a high average procurement value.
- Haryana, Chhattisgarh, and Madhya Pradesh follow:
 - Haryana: ₹105.08 crore (699 GPs)

- Chhattisgarh: ₹45.64 crore (1,825 GPs)
- Madhya Pradesh: ₹38.75 crore (1,589 GPs)

In these states, the average value of procurement per participating Panchayat ranges from ₹25,000 to ₹65,000, suggesting that PRIs are using GeM for meaningful, mid-size purchases.

States like Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Punjab, Odisha, and Jharkhand show moderate levels of engagement:

- Tamil Nadu: 1,523 Panchayats placed 2,152 orders worth ₹5.79 crore.
- Telangana, despite having 6,893 registered Panchayats, had only 75 using GeM—an underutilization trend similar to Uttar Pradesh (114 GPs out of 6,354 registered).
- Jharkhand did well in onboarding (91.8% activation), with 169 Panchayats making 2,408 orders worth ₹7.09 crore.
- Punjab: 54 GPs placed 55 orders worth ₹0.02 crore, pointing to extremely low per-GP engagement.

At the same time, a large number of states have shown either minimal or no procurement activity on GeM, despite registering Panchayats:

- Zero registered or procuring Panchayats: Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, and Manipur—all reported no activity on GeM.
- Very low procurement figures despite some registrations:
 - Andhra Pradesh: Only 2 out of 6,071 registered GPs made purchases.
 - Gujarat: 38 out of 4,881 registered GPs placed 82 orders worth ₹3.3 crore.
 - West Bengal: 44 GPs (out of 264 registered) placed 406 orders worth ₹7.39 crore.

These states represent the “last mile” challenge in India’s Panchayat digitization, where technical platforms exist, but usage is still nascent or symbolic.

While the top five performing states account for the bulk of GeM procurement, more than 80% of India's Gram Panchayats are either not using or underutilizing the system. This highlights both the success and limits of the current rollout.

- *Success may lie in proving that rural procurement can be digital, competitive, and transparent.*
- *Limitations may stem from uneven training, local procurement habits, limited internet literacy, and procedural fears.*

10.2 Linguistic Inclusion and Accessibility

Recognizing the linguistic diversity of India, the integration of e-Gram SWARAJ with the BHASHINI platform has been another significant step. The platform now offers real-time multilingual access in all 22 scheduled Indian languages. Within just six months of launch, over 86 million hits were recorded. This is an encouraging sign that language is no longer

a barrier to digital engagement. A MoU signed in June 2025 ensures deeper AI-enabled integration for voice and text translation, a significant enabler for last-mile access, especially for elderly or less-educated Panchayat members.

10.3 Data and Decision-Making

India's Panchayati Raj system is massive and managing it efficiently requires more than just data entry; it needs analytics. The Data and Insights Unit (DIU) set up within MoPR uses AI/ML and big data tools to monitor crucial indicators. It tracks issues like:

- Vendor payment concentration,
- Expenditure compliance for tied/untied grants,
- Delays or anomalies in asset completion,
- Irregularities in Fund Transfer Order (FTO) signing, and
- Panchayats with zero expenditure.

This shift towards evidence-based governance has improved fiscal discipline and promoted timely corrective actions.

10.4 Panchayat Advancement Index

Additionally, Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) launched in August 2023 has institutionalized performance benchmarking at the Panchayat level. The PAI was developed by the MoPR to provide a systematic, evidence-based approach for monitoring and evaluating the progress of Gram Panchayats in achieving Localized SDGs. These parameters are also used to identify Panchayats with better performances and incentivize them through the National Panchayat Awards. This initiative aligns with India's broader effort to localize the SDGs by breaking them down into more specific, actionable themes that can be directly linked to the responsibilities of Panchayats. The localization process is grounded in a thematic approach that aggregates the 17 global SDGs into nine distinct themes relevant to the context of rural governance. These include Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihoods, Clean and Green Panchayats, Socially Just Panchayats, Healthy Panchayats, and others. By embedding the SDGs in local governance structures, MoPR aims to create a framework where Panchayats can relate to national targets while tailoring their efforts to meet the specific developmental needs of their communities.

The PAI provides a comprehensive, data-driven tool to track and evaluate the incremental progress of each of India's 2.69 lakh Gram Panchayats across these nine themes. The index serves not only as a metric for assessing progress but also as a tool for targeted intervention and planning. Through the PAI, each Panchayat can gauge its development status, compare itself against peers at the block, district, or state levels, and use this data to inform future planning. This evidence-based mechanism is critical for ensuring that local development aligns with broader national objectives, and it facilitates focused, data-driven actions to achieve the SDGs by 2030.

One of the core objectives of the PAI is to foster evidence-based planning, where Panchayats can use their performance data to create more tailored, outcome-oriented development plans. By tracking incremental progress over time, the PAI enables the

identification of developmental gaps, which can then be addressed with specific interventions. Furthermore, the PAI promotes a competitive spirit among Panchayats, motivating them to strive towards better governance and improved service delivery. The graded performance system, ranging from Achiever (A+) to Beginner (D), encourages healthy competition at the grassroots level, rewarding high-performing Panchayats with incentives that further their developmental progress.

PAI 1.0 is grounded in a robust framework of 435 local indicators drawn from the National Indicator Framework (NIF), ensuring its alignment with national priorities while maintaining relevance at the local level. These indicators, which cover various sectors like poverty, health, sanitation, education, and governance, provide Panchayats with concrete metrics to track their progress. The PAI scores are calculated on a scale of 0 to 100 for each thematic area, with Panchayats being assigned a composite PAI score reflecting their overall development. By categorizing Panchayats into different performance tiers, the PAI helps policymakers, local officials, and development experts identify areas for improvement and allocate resources more effectively.

10.4.1 Report of PAI Version 1.0 and Key Achievements

The release of PAI Version 1.0 for FY 2022-23 was a significant milestone in the journey towards localized development in rural India. A total of 29 states/UTs contributed validated data covering 2.16 lakh Gram Panchayats. The index not only provides a baseline for the current state of development but also serves as a foundation for future planning. With PAI Version 1.0, Panchayats were graded into categories such as Achiever (A+), Performer (B), Aspirant (C), and Beginner (D), helping policymakers and administrators gauge the relative progress of different regions.

Sl. No	A+	A	B	C	D	Total GP
Gram Panchayats	0	699	77298	132392	5896	2,16,285

Analysis of the PAI data reveals that most South Indian states are lagging in terms of higher-grade performance for their Gram Panchayats. In states such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana, the proportion of GPs in the top A+ and A grades is relatively low compared to their total numbers. For example, Andhra Pradesh, with 13,310 GPs, has only 4 in the A+ grade and 5,372 in the A grade, leaving a substantial majority (7,830) in the B grade and 104 in lower grades. Tamil Nadu has no A+ grade Panchayats and only 0 in A, with most (5557) falling in B grade and 6880 in C. Kerala, despite a smaller total of 941 Panchayats, has just 8 in A+ and 902 in A, with some in C and D grades as well. Telangana, too, shows no A+ grade Panchayats, 270 in A, and a majority (10099) in B grade and 2390 in C grade. These figures indicate that while South Indian states may have stronger institutional structures in other governance indicators, their Gram Panchayats have not yet translated these strengths into top-tier performance under the PAI framework. The concentration in B and C grades points to the need for targeted interventions, both in governance processes and in capacity-building measures, to move more Panchayats into the A+ and A categories. Without such focused efforts, the performance gap between the top grades and the bulk of Panchayats in these states is likely to persist.

10.4.2 PAI Version 2.0 Launched

Looking ahead, PAI Version 2.0 for FY 2023-24, launched in May 2025, has introduced several key improvements, including the rationalization of local indicators, the auto-reporting of data from national portals, and the introduction of a more user-friendly dashboard. These upgrades aim to enhance the accuracy of data collection, reduce manual reporting burdens, and provide Panchayats with a more intuitive and accessible tool for monitoring their progress.

By streamlining the data entry process and ensuring that it is automatically integrated from relevant national portals, the PAI Version 2.0 aims to improve data quality and ease of use, while also making it a valuable resource for Union Ministries, State Governments, and local legislators in planning and decision-making. This version reduces the number of indicators by 70.93%, from 516 to 150, and the data points by 71%, from 794 to 230. The PAI, thus, has the potential to transform how rural India approaches development. By providing Panchayats with a clear, data-driven way to assess their progress, it aims to empower local governance bodies to make informed decisions, improve service delivery, and work towards sustainable development goals that are grounded in local realities. As the PAI evolves with future versions, it will continue to serve as a powerful tool for monitoring, evaluating, and optimizing the developmental efforts of Panchayats, driving the country closer to achieving the SDGs at the grassroots level.

10.5 Capacity Building and Human Resource Development

Digital transformation is only effective when people know how to use the systems. To this end, the TMP has become a cornerstone of capacity-building. It streamlines planning, nominations, evaluations, and certification for training programs.

In FY 2024–25 alone, over 35.5 lakh participants were trained through TMP. Aadhaar-based authentication ensures verified participation, and the platform issues digital certificates, tracks progress and collects participant feedback for continuous improvement. This has created a consistent and scalable training model across all states.

10.6 Spatial Planning with Gram Manchitra

Another major innovation has been Gram Manchitra, a geo-spatial planning platform that integrates datasets from flagship schemes like MGNREGA, National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), education, and health. Tools like the Property Tax Calculator, Solar Potential Estimator, and Streetlight Planning Tool have enabled better infrastructure and tax planning.

The integration of Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) drone maps at 1:500 scale has revolutionized land use planning in Abadi areas. Panchayats now have access to high-accuracy maps that help in planning new infrastructure, avoiding encroachments, and improving tax collections.

10.7 Weather-Based Risk Planning

Through integration with the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Panchayats now have access to hyperlocal weather data on their dashboards. This enables timely planning

for agriculture, water management, and disaster preparedness, especially in flood- and drought-prone regions.

10.8 Accountability through Digital Audits

Launched in April 2020, *AuditOnline* is a digital platform for auditing Panchayat accounts, especially those under Central Finance Commission (CFC) grants. Between 2021–22 and 2023–24, more than 7.68 lakh audit reports were generated, with audit observations crossing 27 lakhs annually. Each year, over 2.6 lakh Panchayats were registered on the platform, making *AuditOnline* one of the most widely used audit systems in public finance. Real-time access to reports allows timely corrections and ensures compliance with guidelines for fund disbursement.

10.9 Strengthening Citizen Interface and Trust

To improve citizen engagement, MoPR initiated a Citizen Charter Campaign in 2021. Panchayats were encouraged to declare the services they would provide and the timelines for each. This was followed by the introduction of a new award category under the National Awards for e-Governance 2025: “Grassroots Level Initiatives for Deepening Service Delivery.” Award-winning Panchayats like Rohini (Maharashtra), West Majlishpur (Tripura), Palsana (Gujarat), and Suakati (Odisha) have become role models for others. They showed how digital tools can enhance service delivery and build citizen trust.

In addition to the core e-Governance initiatives, two important developments under the digital transformation of Gram Panchayats are the *Samarth platform* for OSR mapping and *Sabha Saar*, both of which aim to streamline governance processes and enhance transparency at the grassroots level. The *Samarth* platform offers a solution by allowing Panchayats to map all of their OSR sources digitally. In its initial stages, *Samarth* has been piloted in Himachal Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, with promising results. The platform allows Panchayats to register various OSR sources, such as property taxes, and maintain records of property holders, including the amounts owed. If a property tax is imposed in a particular state, the list of property holders can be integrated into the system, along with the details of how much tax they need to pay.

This system also enables citizens to directly access the portal to make payments, increasing efficiency and reducing delays in revenue collection. Notices and reminders for payments can also be automatically issued through the portal, ensuring timely collection and promoting better compliance. By digitizing the administration of OSR, the platform reduces administrative burdens, increases accountability, and ensures that Panchayats have a clear picture of their revenue sources. Recognizing that each state may have specific requirements, the e-Panchayat team has offered customization options to state governments, allowing them to tailor the *Samarth* platform to meet local needs. This flexibility is key to ensuring the platform’s relevance and scalability across different regions.

Another major innovation is the introduction of *Sabha Saar*, a platform that leverages artificial intelligence (AI) to digitize the proceedings of Gram Sabha meetings. One of the major challenges of Gram Sabha meetings has been the manual recording of minutes,

which is often a cumbersome process that can lead to delays or inaccuracies in documenting discussions. Sabha Saar addresses this issue by using AI tools to automatically record the audio and video of these meetings and convert them into text. This conversion makes it much easier to generate accurate minutes, as the AI system captures the entire conversation and converts it into editable text.

The benefits of this system are multifaceted. *First*, it significantly reduces the time and effort required to document meetings, allowing Gram Panchayats to focus more on the substance of their discussions and less on administrative tasks. *Additionally*, the automated transcription ensures that all proceedings are captured accurately, reducing the likelihood of human error. Once the text is generated, it can be edited according to the requirements of the meeting, ensuring that the final record reflects the true essence of the discussions. This tool was launched by the Hon'ble Union Minister, Panchayati Raj on 14th August, 2025. It is expected to be an invaluable asset for Gram Panchayats, further enhancing transparency, improving documentation practices, and ultimately contributing to better governance.

10.10 Recommendations for Strengthening the e-Panchayat Ecosystem

1. Bridge Regional Gaps through Targeted State Support and Inclusion

Despite the wide rollout of platforms like e-Gram SWARAJ and GeM, significant disparities remain across states and regions, especially in PESA regions. North-Eastern and hilly states, such as Nagaland, Meghalaya, Ladakh, Mizoram, Manipur, and parts of Jammu & Kashmir, consistently report lower adoption of digital tools. These areas require tailored state-level support strategies, which could include:

- Dedicated handholding teams based in regional PRI training institutes or district headquarters to provide last-mile digital facilitation.
- On-ground workshops and refresher training for Panchayat Secretaries, technical assistants, and vendors who are not digitally literate.
- Provision of basic and enhanced digital infrastructure (e.g., computers, tablets, mobile connectivity) and uninterrupted power supply in remote Gram Panchayats.
- Development of vernacular resource kits with visual walkthroughs to cater to language and literacy needs.
- Deployment of a “regional implementation cadre” trained in tribal languages, working with local institutions and CSOs to tailor the rollout.
- The trainings on these platforms should be continuous and involve practical hands-on and demo sessions.

2. Build Last-mile Capacity through Digital Fellows, Offline Access, and Microlearning

The success of digital platforms ultimately depends on the capacities of those using them. Many Panchayat functionaries, particularly in remote areas, struggle with routine tasks such as uploading GPDPs, managing digital payments, or placing GeM orders. To address this:

- Deploy *Panchayat Digital Fellows* or Champions, local youth trained in digital systems, who can be embedded in Panchayats for 6–12 months. These fellows would help with real-time troubleshooting, data entry, documentation, and training.
- Ensure offline functionality or mobile-based alternatives for key operations like planning and budgeting. For example, enabling offline GPDP drafts that sync automatically when internet access is restored.
- Introduce Microlearning Modules via the TMP. These should include:
 - Short (2–5 minute) videos on specific topics (e.g., uploading asset photos, initiating GeM procurement)
 - Delivered in local languages using relatable examples
 - Accessible on mobile phones with minimal data usage
 - Accompanied by digital certification or incentive badges

3. Use Performance and Data Intelligently for Targeting and Transparency

India's Panchayat system generates rich data, on payments, planning, service delivery, and audits. However, this data is often underutilized. To unlock its value, there is a need to move from monitoring to predictive governance and transparent performance management:

- Leverage the PAI to:
 - Reward high-performing Panchayats with performance-linked grants/incentives
 - Identify lagging Panchayats for focused mentoring, training, and additional resources
 - Monitor progress over time across themes such as water, sanitation, education, and financial performance
- Use AI/ML tools (through the Data and Insights Unit) to:
 - Forecast risks such as underspending, fund stagnation, and unapproved GPDPs
 - Flag Panchayats likely to miss financial deadlines or planning cycles
 - Generate nudges or alerts for timely action by block or district officials

4. Strengthen Citizen Engagement and Local Transparency Mechanisms

Digital governance should not stop at administrators. For true grassroots transformation, citizens must be continuously informed, empowered, and involved. However, awareness of platforms like e-Gram SWARAJ, TMP, and GeM may remain low among rural populations.

Key actions to improve citizen participation could include:

- Citizen Awareness Campaigns at village and block levels:
 - Use community radio, wall paintings, and WhatsApp groups to explain GPDPs, Panchayat budgets, available schemes, and complaint mechanisms.
 - Encourage local schools and SHGs to participate in “Know Your Panchayat” weeks with open data sessions.
- Promote participatory audits and budget days, where Panchayats publicly present digital audit findings (e.g., from AuditOnline) and financial statements.

- Expand the Citizen Charter Campaign by encouraging every GP to publicly display information on key services, their respective targets and achievements, performance indicators aligned with PAI and LSDG, delivery timelines, and contact details for grievance redressal.
- Integrate citizen feedback mechanisms into e-Gram SWARAJ or TMP, allowing village residents to submit grievances, compliments, or suggestions.

5. Ensure Long-Term Financial and Institutional Sustainability

To ensure the longevity of the e-Panchayat ecosystem, sustainability must be built into state budgets, institutional structures, and rural development plans.

This requires:

- Institutionalizing Panchayat IT Infrastructure:
 - States should allocate specific budgets under State Finance Commission or Panchayat Bhawans for maintaining digital hardware, internet connectivity, and IT support.
 - In addition to state contribution, the MoPR, through the revamped RGSA or its successor, should allocate more funding to support these initiatives.
 - Converge e-Panchayat needs with broader infrastructure schemes such as BharatNet, rural electrification, or Digital India.
- Standardize and integrate training under TMP across State training institutions (SIRDs/ETCs/DPRC), ensuring that e-governance modules are a core component of PRI training calendars.
- Encourage CSR and philanthropic partnerships to fund innovation pilots in underperforming districts, like tele-assistance helplines for Panchayat workers or drone-based planning demonstrations.
- Build partnerships with academic institutions and civil society for periodic evaluations, technical audits, and innovations. For example:
 - Universities can conduct random performance assessments or social audits of e-planning
 - NGOs can support women's collectives or SHGs to monitor service delivery metrics

6. Technological Advancements for Better Governance and Usability

a) Modernization of eGramSwaraj

It is recommended that the eGramSwaraj platform be modernized to address persistent challenges such as a less intuitive user interface, slow performance during peak loads, limited integration with other systems, outdated code architecture, and lack of in-built tools for feedback and grievance redressal. The modernization should include migration to a secure, scalable cloud environment to improve uptime and accessibility; a complete code refresh to replace the current monolithic design with a modular, future-ready architecture; and enhanced data management practices for faster processing. Dynamic, on-the-fly reporting capabilities should be built in, enabling stakeholders to generate customised dashboards and reports instantly based on their needs. Combined with multilingual support, mobile-first design, and seamless interoperability with platforms like PFMS, GeM, and Bhashini, these

upgrades will make the system more inclusive, efficient, and responsive to the needs of PRIs and rural citizens.

b) **Adoption of Frontier Technologies**

To strengthen governance, service delivery, and monitoring at both state and central levels, the e-Panchayat ecosystem should leverage frontier technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP), deep data analytics, and predictive modelling. Specific use cases include:

- **Language Inclusivity:** Expanded integration with the Bhashini platform for real-time voice and text translation in 22 scheduled languages, ensuring accessibility for all Panchayat stakeholders.
- **Better Planning:** Use of predictive analytics to assist in the preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GDPs) by analysing historical trends, local needs, and resource availability.
- **Improved Monitoring:** AI/ML-based anomaly detection for fund utilisation, early warning alerts for project delays, and automated performance dashboards for Panchayats.
- **Citizen Engagement:** Intelligent chatbots for grievance redressal, FAQs, and scheme information in local languages, improving responsiveness and participatory governance.

7. Integration and Oversight of Digital Portals

It is recommended to constitute a **dedicated sub-committee under the scheme** to streamline and strengthen the digital governance ecosystem of Panchayats. The committee's mandate should extend beyond portal integration to include grievance redressal, monitoring, and continuous technological upgrades. Key functions would include:

- **Portal Integration and Upgradation**
 - Facilitate the integration of multiple existing platforms (such as e-GramSwaraj, TMP) into a unified, user-friendly interface for field officers and Panchayat functionaries.
 - Ensure interoperability and data exchange across platforms to reduce duplication of efforts and improve efficiency.
 - Incorporate the latest technological features such as mobile-friendly dashboards, offline access in low-connectivity areas, and AI-enabled analytics for planning and monitoring.
- **Grievance Redressal and Support**
 - Act as a centralized mechanism to register and resolve Panchayat-level grievances related to digital platforms, including login/access issues, data entry errors, and technical malfunctions.
 - Provide a helpdesk facility (toll-free number, chatbots, email support) to assist Panchayat staff in real time.
 - Conduct periodic consultations with Panchayat representatives to capture user experiences and suggestions for improvement.

- **Monitoring and Continuous Improvement**
 - Regularly review portal functionality, user adoption, and data quality through monthly/quarterly monitoring reports.
 - Oversee timely updates and upgrades of applications, ensuring backward compatibility and smooth transition during changes.
 - Develop performance indicators (e.g., number of active users, frequency of updates, resolution time of grievances) to measure effectiveness.
- **Capacity Building and Awareness**
 - Organize training sessions and refresher courses for Panchayat officials to enhance digital literacy and ensure effective use of integrated platforms.
 - Disseminate simple user manuals, FAQs, and video tutorials in local languages to build confidence in digital tools.
 - Encourage peer learning by showcasing Panchayats that have effectively adopted digital platforms.

Chapter 11: Recommendations and Conclusion

Our discussion so far focussed on covering various aspects of revamped RGSA, including its implementation, execution, barriers, challenges, and impact on enhancing the capabilities of Panchayats. In this chapter, we draw upon our field observations and provide specific recommendations to alleviate individual pain points in the system and suggest improvements to enhance the capabilities, considering the major objectives of strengthening local self-governance, enhancing stakeholder capabilities and skills, improving resource utilization, promoting responsive and inclusive governance, and building accountability in local administration.

11.1 Improving the Training Attendance of the Stakeholders

The study findings highlight considerable gaps in training attendance among ERs, particularly in thematic training and exposure visits, which we observed was much lower than general orientation and GPDP training. Notably, only 53 percent of ERs reported attending their mandatory orientation training, while only 41.4 percent completed refresher training, under the revamped RGSA¹⁰. The biggest barriers reportedly include the lack of communication, last-minute notifications, and logistical challenges, with many ERs, especially those in rural areas, struggling to balance governance responsibilities with their livelihoods. Additionally, travel distance and inadequate training infrastructure might also deter participation, particularly among women ERs and ERs from remote locations facing mobility constraints.

To maximize the impact of the revamped RGSA, it is essential *to ensure that training participation is timely, transparent, and accessible without creating additional financial burden to the program*. A key challenge, it was observed, was the risk of ERs fudging attendance records of training sessions coinciding with the cropping season to claim sitting fees, while logistical constraints further hindered their participation, particularly for marginalized ERs and women representatives. Given these observations, we recommend that training reforms should be strategically designed to improve engagement without imposing excessive administrative overheads.

We recommend a QR-based or biometric attendance system and geo-tagged mobile check-ins to ensure accountability without additional administrative burden. Training should also be localized to BPRCs and supplemented with Mobile Training Units (MTUs) at the DPR level to ease travel constraints. Sitting fees should be tied to verified completion of orientation training, while *hybrid models like WhatsApp-based microlearning can offer cost-effective continuous learning*. Targeted support, including travel allowances for marginalized ERs in low-participation states and childcare facilities at training venues, can further enhance accessibility without straining resources.

Moreover, a major challenge with *refresher trainings*, as repeatedly emphasized by stakeholders, is that they tend to become too repetitive and disengaging, leaving participants feeling like they are “*going through the motions*” rather than acquiring useful

¹⁰ This could be partly due to non-completion of their two-year period during the specific period of revamped RGSA.

skills. The literature on adult learning highlights this problem: when refresher programs are perceived as simple reiterations of orientation content, motivation drops and knowledge retention declines (Salas *et al.*, 2012; Baldwin *et al.*, 2017). To overcome this, refresher trainings should shift from rote duplication to adaptive reinforcement. Approximately 50–60% of foundational Orientation Training (OT) material should be retained but delivered through modified formats, such as applied scenarios, simulations, and peer-led case discussions, rather than long lectures or identical slides. Research shows that “spaced repetition” (Cepeda *et al.*, 2006) and contextual application help learners better consolidate critical concepts.

At the same time, evidence strongly supports that introducing 30–40% new or updated content is critical to maintaining learner engagement and ensuring continued relevance (Arthur *et al.*, 2003). This content should draw on regulatory updates, evolving best practices, or new organizational tools and technologies. Studies of workplace training show that adding new scenarios and examples significantly improves transfer of learning to the job setting (Blume *et al.*, 2010). A blended structure works well: online or self-paced modules can deliver refreshed core material efficiently, while interactive workshops and group activities can focus on the new content, promoting dialogue and application. In doing so, refresher trainings become dynamic “learning updates” rather than stale repeats. They acknowledge the stakeholder-identified challenge of repetitiveness but transform it into an opportunity for sustained learning, skill renewal, and professional growth.

Table 11.1: Recommendations for Improving Training Attendance/Outreach

Sl. No.	Findings	Recommendations
1	Orientation training: Only 53 percent of ERs reported attending mandatory Orientation Training (OT), despite its requirement within six months of election.	▪ Advance Calendar: Publish an annual calendar of training dates at the beginning of the fiscal year (April). ▪ The TMP must mandate the publication of Annual Training Calendars before the commencement of any training programme, ensuring alignment and transparency in planning. ▪ Each training programme should be linked with the Annual Training Calendar in the TMP as its robust database allows for monitoring, planning, and evaluation. ▪ Institutionalize robust attendance monitoring mechanisms through mandatory QR code or biometric check-ins, integrated with geo-tagged verification via a dedicated mobile application.

		▪ Biometric attendance of participants should be made compulsory in all training programmes conducted by DPRCs, BPRCs, SPRCs, SIRDs, and other training institutes under RGSA to ensure accuracy and accountability. ▪ Reliance on Aadhaar registration alone is insufficient to capture real-time, accurate attendance of participants; biometric verification provides a more reliable mechanism. ▪ The expense of procuring and maintaining biometric machines can be met from the DPRC/BPRC/SPRC cost norms under the administrative cost provisions of the revamped RGSA Phase III. ▪ A specific provision should be made under the CB&T category to include sitting fees and travel allowances within the total training cost. An advisory may be issued to States/UTs to ensure ERs receive these payments after completion of training, recognizing that participation often coincides with the farming season and disrupts their regular occupations. ▪ The cost ceilings for training at different levels should be revised to reflect current needs and expenses—State level: from ₹2,500 to ₹3,000; District level: from ₹1,500 to ₹2,000; Block level: from ₹1,000 to ₹1,500. ▪ Wherever needed, it is recommended that WhatsApp-based pre-training modules be implemented to introduce key concepts before in-person training. ▪ All training modules for each programme should be mandatorily uploaded to the TMP. In addition, a separate WhatsApp group may be created for each training batch, where the modules can be shared to support participants' basic understanding and pre-training preparation.
--	--	---

		▪ A separate note on the training database, highlighting these provisions and the role of TMP in strengthening accessibility, monitoring, and transparency, should be included. ▪ Incentivize districts: For instance, if over 95% of ERs in a district complete their mandated training, verified through QR code or biometric verification, the district Panchayat may be eligible for additional governance support funds. This approach promotes training as a collective institutional responsibility rather than a mere individual compliance requirement. ▪ Develop separate KPIs to assess district-level training performance, share these with States, and include a special category under the National Panchayat Awards (NPA) to reward DPRCs for outstanding performance in training PRIs. ▪ Provision of Travel Stipends: Ensure disbursement of travel stipends to all ERs attending training programs, with enhanced stipend rates for ERs from marginalized communities and those residing in geographically difficult areas, to address equity and accessibility challenges. ▪ Training count data should be fetched directly from the TMP and displayed on the websites of SIRDPRs and SPRCs, ensuring real-time transparency and accessibility of training progress.
2	Refresher training: Only 41.4 percent of ERs completed mandatory Refresher Training (RT) within the required timeframe ¹¹ .	▪ Schedule follow-up training sessions at short intervals to reinforce learning and address new challenges. For example, scheduling follow-up training for the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) to reinforce sanitation practices and address emerging challenges.

¹¹ This could be partly due to non-completion of their two-year period during the specific period of Revamped RGSA.

		▪ Introduce short, modular online RT options to provide flexibility learning pathways for ERs unable to attend in-person sessions. As with Orientation Trainings (OTs), link completion of RTs—verified through digital platforms—to the continued disbursement of honorariums or eligibility for governance-related incentives, thereby reinforcing the critical importance of sustained capacity building. ▪ Scheduling of Refresher Trainings (RTs): Align the timing of RT sessions with the peak availability periods of Elected Representatives (ERs), explicitly avoiding key agricultural seasons, to maximise participation and minimise opportunity costs. ▪ Public Recognition Mechanism: Recognize and reward Panchayats with high RT completion rates, thereby fostering a culture of collective achievement and incentivising sustained engagement. ▪ Short films and Learning Management System (LMS) modules on specific training topics should be uploaded to the TMP and respective State training online systems. This can be leveraged under the <i>Development of Training Materials (Electronic Media)</i> component of the scheme. ▪ Accordingly cost norms should be increased.
3	Thematic training and exposure visits experience low participation.	▪ Encourage trainers to design interactive, learner-centric training modules by providing them with the necessary skills and resources. This approach will foster engagement and enhance the effectiveness of training delivery. ▪ Districts with high thematic training exposures could also be incentivized with additional governance funds. For this, a strict monitoring surveillance system as proposed in Sl. no 1 could be in place.

		▪ Podcasts featuring ERs who have successfully completed the training should be circulated across panchayats. This will not only enhance visibility but also facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experience. Additionally, it will instil a sense of pride and incentivize ERs to participate in training and have their own podcast episodes. ▪ The ERs benefitting from training programs could be deployed as influencers and sponsored to visit other panchayats. They would share their success stories and motivate peers, and advocate for the importance of training ▪ Success Stories and Case Studies: Highlight successful examples of Panchayats that have effectively addressed similar challenges through thematic training and exposure visits along with informative videos of ERs sharing their experiences that could be circulated for better reach. ▪ Case studies of Beacon Panchayats should be integrated into the Training Needs Assessment (TNA) exercise, and Beacon Leaders may be invited as resource persons to share practical experiences during training programmes. ▪ Exposure visits should be institutionalised both as part of training programmes and as standalone initiatives. These visits provide hands-on learning and peer-to-peer exchange, which are critical for strengthening PRI capacities. ▪ The per day per head cost norms for exposure visits, both within and outside the State, should be revised in line with actual market rates. A special recommendation is required for revising norms in remote States/UTs such as Jammu & Kashmir and the Northeastern
--	--	---

		region, where travel and logistical costs are significantly higher.
	Reasons for Low Participation in Trainings	
5	Many ERs reported not receiving training notifications in a timely manner, which made it difficult to adjust their schedules.	▪ Notifications should be sent at least 14 days in advance, with reminders at 10, 5, and 2-day intervals via phone calls, WhatsApp, SMS, and email. It would help to block their calendars with automated reminders.
6	Travel distance is a major barrier, particularly in states lacking last-mile training infrastructure (e.g., Chhattisgarh, Haryana, Karnataka).	▪ Expansion of BPRCs and PLCs to ensure that training opportunities are accessible closer to the locations of ER. It is imperative that each block is equipped with at least one fully functional training centre to facilitate regular, localized training sessions. ▪ Further, training centres need not follow a uniform structure. Some districts may have the capacity to offer differentiated training sessions at various levels. However, when necessary, all training programs can be conducted locally at BPRCs to minimize accessibility challenges for ERs and WERs in remote or underserved areas. ▪ Approve BPRCs with enhanced cost norms under the Institutional Infrastructure component of the revised RGSA. PLCs at the GP level should be upgraded into <i>Learning Centres of Panchayats</i>. The existing cost norm of ₹7 lakh per PLC should be revised to include construction of a training hall and installation of requisite equipment. ▪ PLCs should be transformed into fully equipped training hubs capable of delivering structured programmes at the GP level. This will decentralize training opportunities, reduce dependence on district/state institutes, and promote local capacity building.

		▪ A separate <i>Mobile Training</i> provision should be included in the revamped scheme of RGSA, designed as demand-based or voucher-based. Mobile units, equipped with digital learning kits and ICT tools, will ensure last-mile coverage in remote and hard-to-reach areas.
7	Women ERs face challenges in attending training due to a lack of safe residential facilities and childcare support.	▪ Upgrade the training centres with safe and separate accommodations for women, child-friendly spaces, and access to basic amenities. ▪ Partner with local Anganwadi Centers to provide childcare support, where required. ▪ Introduce crèche facilities in DPRCs for residential training programmes, with “Crèche Mothers” deployed through local SHGs. The cost norm of DPRCs should be enhanced accordingly, with these expenses covered under the administrative cost component of RGSA.
8	Training sessions often coincide with peak agricultural harvesting periods, leading to low attendance.	▪ Training schedules need to be aligned with local agricultural cycles to ensure that major training sessions are conducted during lean farming periods. ▪ SIRDs and DPRCs should incorporate regional cropping calendars while planning training schedules to enhance participation. ▪ Additionally, the Ministry could explore the feasibility of deploying mobile training vans to remote areas, offering training opportunities to ERs who miss sessions due to agricultural commitments, thereby improving accessibility without disrupting livelihoods.
9	Many States’ Nodal Officers and SIRDs have pointed out that there were delays in fund disbursement from the Ministry to State Governments that have likely resulted in training funds reaching institutes late (July-August), compressing the training	▪ To ensure a smoother training calendar, the funds could be disbursed in two instalments—the first tranche at the start of the financial year (April-May), and the second in October-November—allowing SIRDs to plan and execute training sessions in a structured manner while

	calendar into the last 4-5 months of the financial year.	considering the respective states' agricultural cycles.
10	Line Department Functionaries (LDFs) have the lowest training attendance (28.4 percent).	▪ Ensure and monitor mandatory LDF training attendance. Compliance may be reinforced by linking participation to career progression, such as eligibility for promotions or the release of annual increments, thereby embedding training within the professional growth pathway. ▪ Conducting joint training sessions with ERs and LDFs may also enhance coordination and promote collaborative learning. It is essential for each stakeholder to understand the others' resources, capabilities, job descriptions, and requirements, thereby fostering more effective partnership and coordination in local governance. ▪ If the lower training rate is due to work-related commitments, their trainings should be strategically scheduled during periods of relatively lower workload to improve attendance and reduce conflicts with official responsibilities. ▪ Recognize LDFs who successfully complete training, fostering a culture of learning, motivation, and professional development within the cadre. Further, these trained LDFs should be actively involved in future training activities—as resource persons, facilitators, or mentors—to leverage their knowledge and strengthen the overall training ecosystem
11	Marginalized representatives still face economic and social barriers in some states such as Haryana and Tripura, hindering their attendance.	▪ Provide targeted financial assistance (travel/accommodation stipends) for marginalized representatives in states with low participation. ▪ Strengthening more localized training infrastructure at the BPRC and grassroots can minimize travel constraints.

12	It was found that there was a lack of cohesion between SIRD&PR, SPRC, and DPRCs.	▪ The administrative control of SPRC and DPRC could be placed under SIRD&PR or the designated Nodal Agency for training in the state to ensure better coordination and oversight. ▪ Additionally, appropriate State notifications to be issued to clearly define the roles and responsibilities of SPRC, establishing accountability and fostering institutional cohesion.
13	Refresher trainings often become overly repetitive, leading to disengagement and reduced learning effectiveness, as participants feel they are simply re-hearing orientation content rather than gaining new or applied skills.	▪ Retain 50–60% of essential OT material but present it through applied case studies and problem-solving exercises. Introduce 30–40% new content covering updated guidelines, digital tools, and emerging governance practices. ▪ Customize refresher modules for different stakeholder groups (e.g., Sarpanches, Panchayat Secretaries, frontline staff) so that each participant revisits only the most relevant content and gains new insights aligned with their functions. ▪ Use a mix of short online modules for repeated content and in-person/group workshops for new content. Incorporate quizzes, peer exchange sessions, and scenario-based discussions to ensure engagement and practical learning.

11.2 Improving the Knowledge Levels of ERs and WERs

In this study, we assessed the basic knowledge levels of the ERs and WERs about governance, focusing on four key aspects: (1) whether respondents know their responsibilities and powers, (2) awareness of the objective of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment, (3) knowledge about GPDP Portal (E-Gram Swaraj), and (4) knowledge of maintaining Gram Sabha records. Our assessment revealed some disparities across caste and education levels, with gender differences being relatively minor. While General and OBC ERs showed higher awareness of governance processes, ERs from the marginalized communities lagged, particularly in understanding the 73rd Constitutional Amendment and Gram Sabha record-keeping. We also found that education played a key role, as graduates and postgraduates reported higher knowledge levels. Among WERs, awareness of women’s reservation policies is high, especially among OBC and SC women, but decision-making independence remains constrained, with ST women reporting the highest influence from husbands and political parties.

The orientation training still sees low attendance, despite it being mandatory. The variation in knowledge levels among Elected Representatives (ERs) can largely be attributed to lower participation in training programs. Firstly, we state that the completion of these orientation trainings should be strictly monitored to ensure that the first-time elected representatives are given more focused training, revisiting the content and slightly longer programs for this group could address this. Further, *a stronger focus on the refresher training is required*. In fact, such capacity-building should be an ongoing process, mostly integrating practical learning, mentoring, and digital literacy to enable informed decision-making. We also suggest extending the orientation training to at least 5 days for first-time ERs, focusing on key governance principles, roles, and responsibilities. We also recommend ensuring that the content is simple, practical, and delivered in local languages to enhance understanding. This could be complemented with offering online refresher training or may be send videos every 3-6 months to keep ERs updated on new policies and legislation. Additionally, publishing an interactive E-book which includes basic modules could be beneficial.

Moreover, for WERs to exercise independent leadership, interventions must go beyond basic governance training. Gender-sensitive leadership programs that include mentoring by experienced women leaders, peer networking, and hands-on deliberation exercises can help reduce male dominance in decision-making. Therefore, here, we recommend leveraging Self-help groups and Mahila Mandals to emphasize a collective learning approach, given that it has shown to have a positive effect according to earlier research. Additionally, legal awareness campaigns are necessary to enable WERs to navigate governance responsibilities without undue external influence.

Moreover, digital literacy remains a critical gap, particularly among SC/ST representatives. To ensure equitable access to governance tools, *Gram Panchayat-level digital literacy programs should be introduced and complemented by partnerships with NGOs and academic institutions to facilitate continuous learning and capacity enhancement*.

We outline below a detailed set of recommendations pertaining to the findings on the knowledge levels of the ERs and WERs related to governance systems.

Table 11.2: Recommendations for Improving Governance-related Knowledge

Sl. No.	Findings	Recommendations
1	Knowledge disparities exist among ERs and WERs, particularly among SC/ST representatives, in understanding governance processes (e.g., 73rd Constitutional Amendment, Gram Sabha record-keeping). For instance, there was a 14-percentage point gap in	▪ In addition to OT, have mandatory governance-focussed refresher training for all newly elected ERs and WERs within six months of the election. This should be supplemented by: (1) peer-led mentorship programs pairing experienced ERs/WERs with new members; (2) short, interactive WhatsApp-based learning modules to facilitate continuous learning and reinforcement; and (3) field-based exposure visits to high-performing panchayats to foster practical learning and adoption of best practice.

	GPDP Portal knowledge between General (83.0 percent) and ST (69.1 percent) ERs. Similarly, awareness of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment was 73.0 percent among graduates but below 50 percent for Literate but no formal education respondents.	▪ This can be operationalised through the use of automated scheduling software systems, integrated with nudging systems and commitment devices. ▪ A dedicated Digital Literacy Programme for Elected Representatives should be made mandatory under the specialized training component. To support this, computer labs must be established in SPRCs and DPRCs, with cost norms explicitly included in the revamped RGSA.
2	Graduate ERs reported higher awareness of governance, while less-educated representatives struggle with fund management, scheme implementation, and panchayat planning.	▪ Design and implement more practical training modules on Gram Sabha procedures, effective use of the GPDP Portal, and Panchayat-related budgetary processes. These modules should be tailored to be accessible to ERs across all educational backgrounds, with state-level monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure consistency, quality, and effective delivery. ▪ Supplement the training sessions with small doses of video demonstrations created in interesting ways to grab the interest of less-educated ERs.
3	WERs have reported high awareness of reservation policies but face significant decision-making constraints, particularly women from marginalized communities, who report the highest influence from husbands and political parties.	▪ Leadership training focusing on building agency of WERs with mock Gram Sabha deliberations, peer networking, and role-playing exercises could help strengthen WERs' decision-making skills. ▪ Successful and knowledgeable WERs could be sponsored as influencers to campaign in women-led Panchayats, sharing their governance journeys and success stories to inspire peer learning and wider community engagement. ▪ Podcasts or short videos featuring knowledgeable and experienced WERs should be created and circulated across panchayats on various platforms such as WhatsApp, YouTube, Facebook. This will not only enhance visibility of WERs' contributions while promoting peer learning and the exchange of practical governance experiences.
4	Current training programs are inadequate in many states, particularly in	▪ Design targeted capacity-building programs for marginalized ERs and WERs, focusing on states with low training attendance

	Arunachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, where knowledge levels remain low.	and PESA regions. These interventions should be context-specific and aim to improve participation, knowledge level, inclusivity, and effectiveness of training delivery.
5	WERs in many states still lack independent decision-making capacity, with many relying on external influences for governance matters, especially their family kin or political parties.	▪ Institutionalize mentoring programs, pairing experienced women Sarpanches with newly elected WERs to encourage leadership development and confidence. ▪ A specialized training programme for WERs should be made mandatory in the revamped RGSA. ▪ Leverage SHG networks for women for more collaborative efforts and collective learning initiatives. Integrating SHG platforms with capacity-building efforts can foster peer support, increase grassroots participation, and enhance local governance outcomes.
6	Limited legal awareness among WERs may restrict their ability to navigate governance responsibilities independently.	▪ To improve the legal awareness of WERs and ensure their independent decision-making, structured legal awareness campaigns need to be conducted, led by District Development Officers (DDOs) and other senior administrative authorities. These sessions should be conducted at district offices rather than grassroots settings, which can ensure a formal environment that minimizes external influences. Further, family members and political affiliates should be mandatorily excluded from these sessions to create a space where WERs can engage freely with legal frameworks, governance protocols, and grievance redressal mechanisms without external pressure.
7	Marginalized and less educated ERs face barriers in accessing and effectively utilizing digital governance tools. Only 69.1 percent of ST ERs were aware of the GPDP Portal, significantly lower than 83.0 percent among General category ERs and 82.1 percent among SC ERs. Similarly, only 72.2 percent of ERs with less than matric-level	▪ Both Orientation and Refresher training should involve experienced and knowledgeable ERs from marginalized communities as instructors for select modules. This will enhance the training's visibility, outreach, and peer motivation among participants from similar backgrounds. ▪ Additionally, short videos featuring experienced and knowledgeable ERs from marginalized communities on governance-related topics should be created and circulated among ERs in the district.

	education aware of the portal, compared to 83.1 percent of postgraduates.	▪ They should be promoted as influencers within their communities and across other panchayats. Short video clips can be created where they explain the importance of participating in training programmes and their impact on effective Panchayat governance—should be developed and circulated through digital platforms such as WhatsApp and YouTube. These videos should be circulated before each training session begins to encourage attendance and engagement. ▪ Gram Panchayat-level digital literacy programs should be redesigned to equip representatives with the skills to use e-governance platforms and digital tools effectively. ▪ Establish continuous learning initiatives through NGOs, academic institutions, and digital platforms to ensure training remains an ongoing process rather than a one-time intervention. ▪ Modularized video demonstration in easy-to-understand and attractive formats could accelerate learning and improve retention.
8	Faculty members, trainers at various levels, and RGSA officials at both the state and district levels, across different states, unanimously agree that ERs are not serious about attending training and engaging in learning. While this consensus may suggest a tendency to shift responsibility onto the participants, it cannot be entirely dismissed.	▪ Given these observations, it is crucial to rethink the training approach to make it more engaging and impactful. Based on our interactions with faculty and officials, incorporating experienced, senior, and successful ERs as instructors for select modules would significantly enhance participant engagement and foster a sense of relatability and motivation among ERs. ▪ Moreover, these seasoned ERs should actively participate in mobile training units and be featured in modularized video demonstrations. Their first-hand experience and success stories can serve as powerful learning tools, making the training more practical, aspirational, and effective. This approach will not only improve attendance but also instil a stronger commitment to learning and governance among ERs.

11.3 Improving Trainer Performance

Trainer quality influences the effectiveness of ER training. We found that trainers face multiple challenges related to the design of modules and logistics. It was observed that there was an over-reliance on lecture-heavy methods, with 84 percent of sessions being predominantly lecture-based, while only 31 percent included role-playing exercises and fewer used simulations. Trainers often lacked experience in advanced pedagogical approaches and participatory learning methods, making engagement difficult, particularly for ERs with limited formal education.

Additionally, trainer preparedness also varied, with some struggling with digital literacy, yet they are expected to train ERs in e-Governance tools. Trainer evaluation mechanisms were also inconsistent across states—while some states actively monitor performance, others have no structured assessment, likely leading to unaccountable and ineffective trainers. Furthermore, contractual trainers are often underpaid, which impacts their motivation and commitment. Many are also overburdened with administrative responsibilities, such as managing session logistics and meal arrangements, and other operational details, leaving little time to focus on enhancing the quality of training content.

To enhance effectiveness, we recommend that trainer placement should be based on district-specific needs and pairing experienced governance experts with dynamic facilitators to balance content depth and engagement. Additionally, a Trainers' Network and regular refresher meetings would allow knowledge sharing and motivation. Structured assessment systems and continuous professional development opportunities could also benefit long-term improvements.

Finally, it was found that master trainers trained by the NIRD&PR have not been keeping pace with the growing need for training. Thus, it is recommended that NIRD&PR should expand faculty capacity in SDG and specialized governance themes while increasing the Training of Trainers (ToTs).

Below we provide specific recommendations to enhance trainers' quality and effectiveness.

Table 11.3: Recommendations for Improving Trainer Performance

Sl. No.	Findings	Recommendations
1	84 percent of training sessions rely on lecture-based teaching, while only 31 percent include role-playing or simulations.	▪ More participatory and experiential learning methods need to be integrated into training, such as case studies, field exposure, and interactive problem-solving exercises, to enhance engagement, retention, and practical application of knowledge. ▪ Trainers should receive specialized ToT sessions on more effective and participatory pedagogical methodologies. This will enhance the

		quality of training delivery and ensure greater engagement and learning outcomes among ERs.
2	Trainers often reported struggling with digital literacy, affecting the effectiveness of content delivery.	▪ Trainers should undergo mandatory digital literacy training before conducting e-Governance sessions. Digital resources, such as step-by-step tutorials and refresher courses, should be made available and easily accessible for trainers. ▪ Introduce a new component under CB&T in the revamped RGSA mandating annual assessment of faculty/trainers. Grading should be integrated into the TMP, ensuring accountability and quality enhancement. ▪ Each training institute (SIRD, SPRC, DPRC, BPRC) should establish a resource pool of master trainers with identified domain expertise. This will ensure continuity, specialization, and availability of high-quality trainers for various thematic areas. ▪ Trainers should be deputed periodically to technical institutes for exposure visits and skill enhancement in areas such as training methodology, adult learning principles, and managerial skills. Assessments and grading may be conducted in collaboration with these technical institutes to maintain external credibility and academic rigor. ▪ A district-based needs assessment model for trainer placement, ensuring that trainers with strong facilitation skills may be placed in low-literacy areas while governance experts support policy-heavy districts could be established. ▪ Trainers should be paired with experienced mentors for hands-on learning, ensuring balanced delivery and continuous professional development ▪ Notwithstanding the fact that 29.5% of ERs and 63.1% of PFs have attended training on PFMS, our interactions with them during the scoping visits to various states revealed that many still struggle to navigate the system effectively—particularly for tasks such as component-wise

		reporting, voucher creation, and payment tracking. Additionally, they noted that frequent updates to the software interface make it difficult to keep up and learn. This points to the need for a more structured approach to assess and enhance users' familiarity with the PFMS interface. Regular training and sustained handholding support could significantly improve their ability to use the system efficiently.
4	Trainer assessment mechanisms are inconsistent across states; some states actively monitor trainers, while others lack structured evaluations.	▪ A Trainer Assessment and Mentorship Program should be institutionalized at the state-level, where trainers are regularly evaluated, provided feedback, and given mentorship opportunities. Underperforming trainers should undergo retraining before leading future sessions.
5	There is no clearly defined policy under the revamped RGSA for hiring faculty at the SIRD, DPRC, or BPRC levels.	▪ A well-defined recruitment policy with clear career growth opportunities should be established to attract and retain qualified faculty at the SIRD, DPRC, and BPRC levels.
6	It was observed that not all trainers received formal ToT upon joining a training institute. Instead, they were asked to sit in senior trainers' or professors' classes alongside the participants, which undermines the consistency and quality of training delivery.	▪ While attending senior trainers' classes can be valuable, all newly appointed trainers and contractual consultants must undergo formal ToT to ensure consistency and quality in training delivery.
7	Trainers are contractually hired and often underpaid, leading to low motivation and high turnover. Further, it was also observed that trainers at the DPRC and BPRC levels receive low salaries, forcing them to take up part-time work to support their livelihood and families. This significantly affects the quality of training, as it becomes merely a side engagement for them to	▪ We recommend a minimum compensation benchmark for trainers to ensure competitive and timely honorarium payments, improving retention and commitment. ▪ It is recommended that the remuneration of each training staff should be released on time. ▪ Additionally, incentives such as certifications, career progression opportunities, and recognition awards should be introduced. ▪ The Ministry, in consultation with the PRRD, must prioritize the recruitment of <i>adequate</i> permanent training staff. A stable and committed pool of trainers is essential to ensure

	earn extra income. As a result, they have little incentive to learn new modules, adopt innovative teaching methods, or stay updated on panchayat-related knowledge. Additionally, we observed that DPRC and BPRC trainers do not receive their salaries or remuneration on time. This not only affects their morale but also impacts the quality of training. As a result, many are compelled to take up part-time work to sustain themselves. Both state and district-level RGSA officials highlighted the job uncertainty faced by trainers at the DPRC and BPRC levels after the expiration of the revamped RGSA tenure. This job uncertainty leads to divided attention and reduced commitment among trainers, ultimately impacting the quality of training and limiting its effectiveness. As a result, many trainers seek alternative engagements, knowing that their positions are temporary.	consistency, enhance the quality of training, and foster long-term capacity building. Without job security, trainers remain disengaged, affecting both training effectiveness and overall program impact.
8	Trainers are overburdened with administrative work (e.g., session logistics, food arrangements), reducing focus on improving training delivery and content enhancement.	▪ Training institutes should designate support staff for logistics, freeing trainers to focus on content delivery and participant engagement. ▪ Trainers should also have dedicated time for documentation and reflection to improve session quality and pedagogy.

9	There is no structured mechanism for trainers to share best practices and experiences, which hinders peer learning and limits professional development. Trainers across states expressed concerns about the limited opportunities for professional development.	▪ As recommended earlier, a trainers' network should be established to facilitate regular peer learning, exchange of best practices, and collective problem-solving through periodic meetings and knowledge-sharing sessions. ▪ Trainers across various institutions should be provided frequent refresher training at premier national-level institutions with expertise in Panchayati raj and rural development, such as NIRD&PR, IRMA, or KILA to ensure continuous capacity enhancement and alignment with evolving training needs. ▪ Additionally, they should be actively encouraged to participate in Faculty Development Programs to enhance their skills and stay updated with evolving training methodologies.
10	Senior faculty members expressed concern over the lack of time, research funding, and institutional support for conducting research. They emphasized that research not only strengthens learning but also enhances the quality of training.	▪ To enhance the quality of training and learning, dedicated research opportunities must be institutionalized for senior faculty members. The Ministry, in collaboration with relevant institutions, should allocate specific time, funding, and resources for research initiatives. This will not only enrich training content but also ensure continuous knowledge advancement, ultimately improving governance at the grassroots level.

11.4 Improving the Infrastructure of Training Resources

Our evaluation of RGSA training infrastructure demonstrates that while most training centers are adequately equipped with basic audiovisual tools, advanced digital infrastructure remains uneven and inadequate. For example, LCD projectors are widely used (80.8% of ERs and 84.4% of PFs), and whiteboards are present in more than 75% of training sessions. However, access to video conferencing tools is limited (30.5% for ERs and 54.3% for PFs), and opportunities for hands-on digital learning are constrained by poor access to computers (15.1% for ERs and 36.3% for PFs). Similarly, the adequacy of residential training infrastructure varies significantly across states, while West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Andhra Pradesh provide high-quality facilities, states like Haryana and Arunachal Pradesh lag far behind. This unevenness constrains the reach, quality, and inclusivity of capacity-building programs.

At the same time, the MoPR has undertaken many important e-Governance initiatives, including the rollout of portals and digital applications under the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project. These platforms, such as e-Gram Swaraj and AuditOnline, are critical for enhancing transparency, accountability, and efficiency in PRIs. Yet, their effective adoption depends on the availability of updated ICT infrastructure at the grassroots. Without access to upgraded computers that meet technical requirements, Gram

Panchayats risk being left behind in digital service delivery, weakening the Ministry's digital governance efforts. The dual challenge of inadequate training infrastructure and weak digital readiness underscores the urgent need for a dedicated sub-scheme to systematically strengthen BPRCs.

Specific Recommendations

A dedicated sub-scheme under RGSA should be launched to re-position BPRCs as *decentralized, block-level hubs* for continuous capacity building, digital literacy, and technical handholding. This would address the infrastructure and human resource gaps documented in the RGSA evaluation and directly support the Ministry's digital governance agenda. The sub-scheme should focus on:

1. Investment in training halls, digital classrooms, and ICT facilities, including mandatory provision of computers, video conferencing tools, and high-speed internet.
2. Deployment of block-level coordinators and subject experts in finance, planning, and digital governance, supported through regular ToT initiatives by SIRDs.
3. Ensuring safe and accessible hostels, mess facilities, and amenities for women and marginalized trainees, drawing lessons from states like Tripura and Tamil Nadu where inclusive design has improved participation.
4. Equipping all Gram Panchayats under the BPRC's jurisdiction with upgraded computers compatible with MoPR's digital platforms, ensuring seamless adoption of e-governance applications.

The sub-scheme for strengthening BPRCs should be structured around three core pillars:

- Each BPRC should be developed as a fully functional training and resource hub with upgraded computers, video conferencing facilities, and digital repositories of learning materials. These investments should be norm-based, with allocations linked to the number of Gram Panchayats served per block.
- Every BPRC should have a minimum staffing package, including one coordinator, subject experts (finance, digital governance, participatory planning), and technical assistants. Provision for shared or contractual staff may be included to maintain flexibility. Staff should be continuously trained to keep pace with new governance priorities.
- To promote innovation and efficiency, performance-based incentives should be built into the scheme, rewarding BPRCs that demonstrate effective digital adoption, inclusive participation, or innovative training practices. The scheme should also mandate convergence with existing state-level and central digital initiatives, avoiding duplication and maximizing resource use.
- Regular (annual) quality checks of the equipment and digital infrastructure in the BPRCs and recommending upgrades wherever necessary.

11.5 Strengthening Digital Governance

The e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (2022–2025) has emerged as a key pillar of rural digital governance in India, transforming transparency, accountability, and citizen

engagement at the grassroots. Supported by the revamped RGSA, platforms such as e-Gram Swaraj, AuditOnline, GeM, Gram Manchitra, and the Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI) have significantly improved planning, financial management, auditing, and service delivery. By FY 2024–25, over 2.55 lakh GGPDPs were prepared on e-Gram Swaraj, INR 6,604 crore in payments were processed digitally, and 2.6 lakh Panchayats underwent real-time audits. These innovations have streamlined governance and built citizen trust. However, adoption remains uneven: while states such as Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Bihar have demonstrated high volumes of digital transactions and procurement, others, including several North-Eastern and hilly states, lag behind, often due to weak infrastructure, limited digital literacy, and low awareness of emerging platforms. Similarly, while tools like Gram Manchitra offer advanced geo-spatial planning capabilities, their practical uptake has been modest. These gaps highlight that the next phase of digital transformation should not only expand platforms but also strengthen last-mile capacity, inclusivity, and sustained digital literacy among Panchayat stakeholders.

1. Bridge Regional Gaps through Targeted State Support and Inclusion

Digital adoption gaps across states demonstrate the need for *differentiated strategies*, especially for low-performing regions (e.g., North-Eastern states, Ladakh, J&K, and PESA areas).

- Establish dedicated state-level facilitation teams, housed in SIRDs or District Headquarters, tasked with last-mile digital troubleshooting and platform onboarding. These should be staffed with IT trainers fluent in local and tribal languages (wherever necessary).
- Ensure *minimum digital hardware standards* where every Gram Panchayat should have at least one upgraded desktop computer/laptop, functional printer-scanner, video conferencing kit, and a reliable broadband or 4G/5G dongle.
- Guarantee uninterrupted power supply through solar backups in regions with unstable electricity.
- Develop vernacular visual training kits (infographics, comics, animations) explaining step-by-step use of e-Gram Swaraj, GeM, AuditOnline, and Gram Manchitra.
- Organize quarterly district-level roadshows where live demos are conducted, and Panchayat Secretaries can troubleshoot directly with technical teams.

2. Build Last-Mile Capacity with Digital Fellows, Offline Access, and Microlearning

Infrastructure alone is insufficient; Panchayat-level functionaries often lack confidence in digital platforms.

- It is recommended to deploy Panchayat Digital Fellows/Champions, trained local youth embedded in Panchayats for 6–12 months to provide daily assistance with GPDP uploads, initiating GeM orders, using AuditOnline, or resolving software errors. Fellows can be incentivized with modest stipends under RGSA.
- Introduce *offline functionalities* (wherever possible) for critical tasks (e.g., GPDP preparation, asset tracking), so Panchayats with weak connectivity can still work and later sync data when online.
- Develop microlearning modules hosted on TMP:

- 2–5-minute explainer videos in regional languages, covering single tasks (e.g., “How to upload geo-tagged photos on e-Gram Swaraj”).
- Optimized for mobile phones, requiring low data.
- Linked with digital badges/certificates that can count towards performance recognition for Panchayat Secretaries.

3. Use Performance and Data Intelligently for Targeting and Transparency

India’s Panchayat ecosystem now generates vast digital data, but much of it remains underutilized.

- Use PAI scoring actively (and regularly) to:
 - Provide performance-linked grants to Panchayats graded A+ or A.
 - Identify and prioritize B, C, and D category Panchayats for mentoring, additional funds, and intensive training.
 - Encourage states to publish district- and block-level PAI dashboards for transparent comparison.
- AI/ML Analytics through the Data & Insights Unit:
 - Predict risks such as underspending of tied grants, fund stagnation, or irregular vendor payments.
 - Flag Panchayats failing to finalize GPDPs on time or with anomalies in fund flow.
 - Generate nudges/alerts for Block Development Officers to intervene early.

4. Strengthen Citizen Engagement and Local Transparency Mechanisms

Digital governance cannot succeed without citizen participation and trust.

- Launch village-level awareness campaigns:
 - Use community radio, WhatsApp groups, and wall paintings to disseminate GPDP priorities, Panchayat budgets, and available services.
 - Encourage SHGs and schools to organize “Know Your Panchayat” Weeks showcasing digital dashboards.
- Institutionalize Participatory Audit Days: Panchayats publicly present their AuditOnline findings and expenditure data annually.
- Expand Citizen Charters: every Panchayat could display services offered, expected delivery timelines, and contact points for grievances, aligned with LSDG indicators. These services should be listed out in a banner/poster in Panchayat Bhavan premises.
- Build citizen feedback modules into e-Gram Swaraj and TMP, where villagers can log suggestions, complaints, or compliments via mobile.

5. Ensure Long-Term Financial and Institutional Sustainability

For digital systems to last, sustainability must be embedded.

- Mandate dedicated Panchayat IT budgets through State Finance Commissions to cover recurring costs (hardware maintenance, internet bills, IT support staff).
- Converge e-Panchayat needs with BharatNet, Digital India, and Saubhagya electrification schemes, ensuring seamless connectivity.
- Institutionalize e-governance training as a compulsory module in SIRDs/ETCs, embedded within the TMP training calendar.

- Mobilize CSR and philanthropic partnerships to fund innovation pilots, e.g., drone-based planning, helplines for Panchayat staff, or AI transcription pilots like Sabha Saar.
- Collaborate with academic institutions for independent digital audits, and with CSOs to monitor service delivery and promote inclusivity.

6. Develop an Integrated Digital Literacy Module for Elected Representatives

Elected representatives often lag functionaries in digital adoption. A tailored literacy module is needed:

- Focus on practical, hands-on use rather than theory, e.g., creating GPDPs, checking fund disbursement, viewing PAI dashboards.
- Include role-specific tutorials (Sarpanch vs Ward Member vs Women ER).
- Delivered in local languages with simplified user interfaces.
- Linked with digital certification that recognizes ERs as “*digitally empowered representatives*.”

7. Increase Awareness of Newly Launched Applications

Awareness of platforms such as Panchayat Nirnay (for resolution tracking) and Meri Panchayat (citizen engagement) remains low.

- Launch state-wide induction workshops and orientation booklets for ERs and functionaries.
- Integrate live demos of these apps into all RGSA refresher trainings.
- Promote them through SMS campaigns, WhatsApp groups, and local media to build recognition among both officials and citizens.

8. Focused Training on Gram Manchitra for Evidence-Based Planning

Gram Manchitra is a powerful geo-spatial tool but underused.

- Organize block-level “planning clinics” where Panchayat Secretaries practice using Gram Manchitra datasets (MGNREGA works, school mapping, water supply).
- Link Gram Manchitra usage directly to GPDP approvals, e.g., requiring geo-tagged planning inputs for sanction.
- Provide interactive maps and guided templates so even digitally less-confident users can learn step-by-step.
- Demonstrate applications in disaster preparedness (flood-prone mapping), land-use zoning, and tax assessment to show practical utility.

9. Technological Advancements for Better Governance and Usability

a) Modernization of eGramSwaraj

It is recommended that the eGramSwaraj platform be modernized to address persistent challenges such as a less intuitive user interface, slow performance during peak loads, limited integration with other systems, outdated code architecture, and lack of in-built tools for feedback and grievance redressal. The modernization should include migration to a secure, scalable cloud environment to improve uptime and accessibility; a complete code refresh to replace the current monolithic design with a modular, future-ready architecture; and enhanced data management practices for faster processing. Dynamic, on-the-fly reporting capabilities should be built in,

enabling stakeholders to generate customised dashboards and reports instantly based on their needs. Combined with multilingual support, mobile-first design, and seamless interoperability with platforms like PFMS, GeM, and Bhashini, these upgrades will make the system more inclusive, efficient, and responsive to the needs of PRIs and rural citizens.

b) Adoption of Frontier Technologies

To strengthen governance, service delivery, and monitoring at both state and central levels, the e-Panchayat ecosystem should leverage frontier technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), Natural Language Processing (NLP), deep data analytics, and predictive modelling. Specific use cases include:

- **Language Inclusivity:** Expanded integration with the Bhashini platform for real-time voice and text translation in 22 scheduled languages, ensuring accessibility for all Panchayat stakeholders.
- **Better Planning:** Use of predictive analytics to assist in the preparation of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDs) by analysing historical trends, local needs, and resource availability.
- **Improved Monitoring:** AI/ML-based anomaly detection for fund utilisation, early warning alerts for project delays, and automated performance dashboards for Panchayats.
- **Citizen Engagement:** Intelligent chatbots for grievance redressal, FAQs, and scheme information in local languages, improving responsiveness and participatory governance.

11.6 Improving Physical Infrastructure of the Gram Panchayats

We found that 93.6 percent of Panchayats have a Panchayat Bhavan. Infrastructure gaps remain, particularly in sanitation, digital access, and public amenities. While 79.9 percent of Panchayats have computers, only 70.1 percent have internet connectivity. Public amenities also vary widely, with 66.4 percent of Panchayats providing sitting arrangements for villagers but only 38.5 percent having baby-feeding corners. Washrooms are present in 71 percent of Panchayats, but sanitation services and housekeeping remain inconsistent across regions. The maintenance and housekeeping of such services have been found to suffer primarily due to a lack of adequate funds and manpower.

Infrastructure development under RGSA funding has primarily focused on CSCs (52.6 percent), washrooms (53.3 percent), and basic amenities like lighting (49.6 percent), while investment in training facilities (30.8 percent) and guest accommodations (18.9 percent) remain low. Moreover, RGSA Nodal Officers and faculty from Northeastern and Western Himalayan regions highlighted significant cost disabilities in infrastructure development due to geographical constraints such as mountainous terrain and difficult accessibility. They estimated that infrastructure costs in these areas are 1.5 to 2 times higher than in plain regions, while a report by Prof. Purnamita Dasgupta to the 14th Finance Commission indicated that costs could be as high as 2.5 times (250 percent) more (Dasgupta, 2014). Given these disparities, *it is essential that RGSA fund allocations account for the cost disabilities of hilly and mountainous states to ensure equitable infrastructure development.* Further, to enhance Panchayat infrastructure, RGSA fund disbursement

should be expedited, and funding allocations should consider cost disabilities in hilly areas.

Digital infrastructure must be strengthened with affordable internet solutions. Investments in training facilities, sanitation, and public amenities should be prioritized to create inclusive, functional governance spaces at the local level.

Below, we present some specific recommendations for improving Panchayat infrastructure under the revamped RGSA scheme, along with the findings resulting from such recommendations.

Table 11.4: Recommendations for Improving Panchayats Infrastructure

Sl. No.	Findings	Recommendations
1	93.6 percent of Panchayats own a Panchayat Bhavan, while others lack requisite infrastructure.	▪ The RGSA funding should prioritize Panchayats without adequate infrastructure by creating a need-based funding mechanism instead of uniform allocations. ▪ A co-financing model with state governments could improve fund availability without increasing central expenditure. ▪ The cost norm for construction of Panchayat Bhavans should be revised from ₹20 lakh to ₹30 lakh, with a separate cost norm for hilly and difficult areas to reflect higher construction expenses and differing DPR requirements compared to plain regions. As discussed in Chapter 11 (Section 11.6), we recommend that the cost be set at 1.5 to 2 times that of plain areas. ▪ Further, the current status of PB construction over the last five years should also be assessed. ▪ Finally, a clear roadmap towards saturation of PB construction should be planned.
2	Only 70.1 percent of Panchayats have internet connectivity, limiting e-Governance adoption.	▪ Low-cost, government-subsidized internet solutions should be rolled out in Panchayats with poor connectivity. This could be facilitated through prioritizing accelerating massive programme such as DESH programme in such regions. ▪ Additionally, training ERs on digital literacy will enhance utilization of e-Governance tools.

		States should be directed to ensure and take responsibility of this.
3	A few Panchayats have PLCs.	- Under RGSA, 669 GPs were approved as Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs) in line with NCBF 2022. Implementation was limited due to the absence of SOPs. With guidelines now in place, efforts must focus on operationalising these PLCs and identifying additional model Panchayats. - As recommended earlier, introduce mobile training units to serve remote Panchayats efficiently.
4	Only 38.5 percent of Panchayats have baby feeding corners, limiting inclusivity for women ERs.	Panchayats could coordinate with Anganwadi centers to provide temporary facilities during governance meetings.
5	Infrastructure costs in hilly areas are 1.5 to 2.5 times higher than in plain regions.	- The Ministry should revise RGSA fund allocations for hilly states by adopting a cost-adjusted model, with funding set at 1.5 times that of plain areas to account for higher operational expenses. - Usage of robust modular kiosks could be considered as options to accelerate facilities and infrastructure development efficiently.
6	Streamlining convergence	- Institutionalise Programme Management Units (PMUs) at national, state, and district levels under RGSA to provide the technical, managerial, and human resource support needed for Panchayats. These PMUs would enable convergence of multiple schemes being implemented through PRIs, streamline planning and reporting, and strengthen digital governance capacities. - Ensure effective grassroots implementation and sustainability of reforms by using PMUs as linkages between PRIs and higher tiers of government. This will help identify and resolve bottlenecks quickly, reduce administrative overload on local functionaries, and anchor long-term, coordinated development at the village level.
7	More PLCs to be constructed	PLCs should be developed as constructed-cum-training centres at the GP level, with cost norms revised from ₹7 lakh to ₹10 lakh to enable adequate infrastructure. To complement this, the concept of Mobile Training should be introduced

		under the CB&T component of the revamped RGSA, with a separate cost norm of ₹500 per participant per day.
--	--	---

11.7 Improving Implementation of Innovative Projects and Strengthening OSR

This study assessed the implementation of innovative projects under the RGSA and the status of OSR generation across Gram Panchayats. We observed that the ERs, Panchayat Secretaries, and even the Officials at the district block levels in most states had no or limited information about the provision of obtaining specialised funds to undertake projects under the components of Economic Development and Support for Innovation under the RGSA scheme (study objective vii.). Resultantly, we could not find any specific project undertaken under this component as part of our investigated sample. Our general findings indicate that while governance and technology-driven innovations were widely proposed, capacity-building innovations remain underdeveloped, mostly attributed to lower awareness among the stakeholders. The stakeholder interviews highlighted significant roadblocks in project funding approvals and implementation delays, which reportedly hindered the adoption of local innovations.

We also observed that OSR generation remains low in most states, with many Panchayats overly reliant on central grants to the tune of 95-99%. States like Maharashtra and West Bengal reportedly have shown stronger revenue generation, while hilly and economically weaker states struggled with OSR sufficiency. While the major pain points relating to the local governments' inability to source OSRs is *prima-facie* attributed to specific hurdles observed in terms of restrictions on local tax collection by the upper governments, a general trend point towards either lack of awareness of various avenues or the entrepreneurial mindset required for the same.

We outline some specific recommendations to address these challenges, as follows:

- A significant proportion of Panchayat representatives remain unaware of funding opportunities under RGSA, limiting their ability to apply for and utilize available financial support. Targeted awareness campaigns should be conducted using digital platforms, in-person workshops, and training modules to improve understanding of funding options and ensure wider participation in innovative project proposals. The training modules should incorporate this with much stronger emphasis.
- Elected representatives from Panchayats with high OSR performance should be integrated into OSR training modules. Their success stories and strategies should be captured in short videos and widely disseminated to inspire and guide other Panchayats. Additionally, ERs from other GPs should undertake exposure visits to these Panchayats to observe and learn effective OSR practices firsthand.
- Limited digital skills among Panchayat members also hinder their ability to manage projects, track finances, and implement e-Governance solutions. The implementation of the digital literacy training programs should be strictly monitored to enhance their ability to utilize technology for financial management, revenue collection, and service delivery. This training should be incorporated into

regular governance capacity-building programs to ensure sustained learning and adaptation.

- Many Panchayats have identified promising projects but face significant delays in receiving funds, preventing timely implementation. We suggest that establishing a structured and time-bound approval process will help mitigate these delays. A digital project tracking system should also be introduced to improve transparency, monitor pending proposals, and ensure that projects move forward without unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.
- While governance and technology-driven innovations have seen strong uptake, capacity-building efforts for Panchayat representatives remain inadequate. A structured training framework should be implemented, integrating mentorship, peer learning, and digital learning tools. Priority should be given to leadership development programs under RGSA to ensure that local governance representatives are equipped with essential skills for effective decision-making.
- The financial sustainability of Gram Panchayats is crucial for effective local governance, yet only 34.4% of Panchayats generate sufficient revenue. To address this, states may be encouraged to relax tax restrictions that may hinder local revenue collection. Additionally, Panchayats should diversify their revenue streams by leveraging opportunities such as tourism taxation, market complex fees, and user charges on essential services like water supply and sanitation.

Further, the Innovative Projects and ED&IE Projects under the revamped RGSA are designed to promote locally grounded, need-based interventions that strengthen PRIs, improve livelihoods, and foster inclusive rural development.

Across 2019–24, projects have been sanctioned across themes of digital transformation, livelihood generation, environmental sustainability, infrastructure development, and capacity building. Notable successes include Smart Health Clinics in West Bengal, eco-tourism initiatives in Himachal Pradesh and Jalpaiguri (WB), renewable energy projects in Chhattisgarh, and women-led dairy production in Madhya Pradesh. These demonstrate the scheme's potential to modernize governance, create employment, and advance climate resilience.

However, uptake has been limited with only 16 states accessed funds over two years. Project completion rates are also modest: in 2023–24, just 7% of sanctioned Innovative Project funds and about half of ED&IE allocations were utilized. Implementation challenges include lack of awareness among ERs and Panchayat functionaries, delays in PRI elections, insufficient handholding for project design, delayed fund release, weak convergence mechanisms, procurement complexities, and skills gaps among implementing communities.

Despite these challenges, the program has clearly aligned with national development goals (poverty reduction, digital empowerment, climate resilience, women's empowerment) and demonstrated tangible socio-economic impact. Strengthening DPR support, simplifying guidelines, building institutional architecture for monitoring, and fostering convergence are critical for scaling its successes and ensuring more equitable participation across states. Therefore, based on these findings and achievements, it is recommended to

- Equip states and PRIs with professional support for DPR preparation through empaneled experts, academic collaborations, and dedicated funding. Provide sustained technical and advisory handholding from SIRDs, NGOs, and local organizations to ensure quality proposals and effective implementation.
- Streamline DPR approval procedures with flexible, context-specific guidelines that enable local innovation. Promote structured involvement of stakeholders at all levels and build robust convergence frameworks with schemes like NRLM, MGNREGA, and line departments, ensuring coordination and resource integration.
- Establish dedicated institutional architecture within SIRD&PR for coordination, monitoring, and evaluation, supported by nodal officers at state and district levels. Introduce clear accountability systems and feedback loops, while extending project duration to 3–4 years for deeper impact, sustainability, and community ownership.

11.8 Incentivization of Panchayats and the National Panchayat Awards

The Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP) scheme, anchored through the National Panchayat Awards (NPA), has become one of the most visible and transformative tools for motivating local self-governments in India. By recognizing Panchayats that demonstrate innovation, effective service delivery, and alignment with the LSDGs, the awards have created a virtuous cycle of competition, learning, and governance reform.

The redesign of the scheme in 2023 to align with the nine LSDG themes marked a turning point. Panchayats are now evaluated not only on sectoral outputs but on comprehensive development outcomes tied directly to India's Agenda 2030 commitments. At the same time, award amounts were scaled up dramatically, from ₹5 lakh in the early years to as high as ₹5 crore today, transforming them from symbolic recognition into substantial sources of gap funding for local priorities.

Participation has surged from just 20,000 Panchayats in 2022 to over 2.41 lakh in 2023, reflecting both the scheme's credibility and its motivational pull. Yet, challenges remain: how to sustain post-award performance, ensure citizen voices are part of the evaluation, and broaden recognition to include individuals, states, and PESA regions. As India approaches the mid-point of the SDGs in 2030, strengthening the IoP scheme beyond 2025–26 is essential to keep Panchayats motivated and to deepen grassroots transformation.

Building on the demonstrated impact and strategic importance of the Incentivization of Panchayats scheme, the following five recommendations are proposed to enhance its reach, effectiveness, and sustainability in the years ahead. These recommendations (detailed in **Chapter 8**) aim to deepen developmental outcomes, strengthen accountability, and make the awards an even more powerful driver of grassroots transformation.

While the National Panchayat Awards continue to serve as a key motivator for PRIs, offering thematic recognition with cash prizes up to ₹1 crore for top-performing Panchayats, concerns have been raised about the reduction in the number of national awards from over 300 to just 45. This sharp contraction has generated dissatisfaction among Panchayats and reduced the breadth of recognition. To address this, it was

recommended that States be actively encouraged to institute their own Panchayat Awards to complement national recognition and widen the pool of acknowledged achievers. At the same time, the Ministry may also explore alternative formats such as multi-year functional grants and non-financial incentives—mentorship opportunities, exposure visits, or priority access to capacity-building programmes—in place of or alongside one-time cash awards. Such a blended approach would sustain motivation, create broader ownership of the award system, and ensure developmental impact beyond symbolic recognition.

Recognition must also become more inclusive and diversified. Alongside Panchayats, there is a strong case for introducing individual awards for Sarpanches and Panchayat Chairpersons, as well as for acknowledging training attendance and performance under PESA. Participation should be widened further through digital campaigns in local languages, pre-award state-level competitions, and facilitation kits that simplify the application process. These steps would help ensure that even resource-poor and low-capacity Panchayats can compete on equal footing, building a culture of healthy competition and aspiration.

Awards should not stand alone but be directly linked to building institutional and community capacity. This can be done by launching mentorship programmes where high-performing Panchayats support low-performing ones, organizing annual performance clinics focused on practical governance skills, and partnering with SIRDs, NGOs, and thematic experts for hands-on training. Equally critical is the creation of knowledge-sharing platforms—digital hubs of best practices, thematic webinars, podcasts, and exposure visits—which allow Panchayats to learn from each other and replicate successful models in their own contexts.

Finally, the credibility and developmental value of the awards depend on robust evaluation and accountability. Citizen feedback surveys, outcome tracking after disbursement, and independent post-award assessments should be integrated into the evaluation process. Publishing these findings, along with best practice case studies, in an annual Ministry e-book will reinforce transparency and create a continuous learning loop across Panchayats.

11.9 Action Research and Media Outreach

The Action Research & Publicity (AR&P) Scheme was restructured in 2022 under the RGSA to consolidate two previously independent initiatives—Media & Publicity and Action Research & Research Studies (AR&RS). The scheme addresses two interconnected objectives: communication for awareness and research for evidence-based policymaking.

The publicity component has moved beyond one-way promotion to act as pedagogic communication, aimed at educating citizens and PRIs about rights, entitlements, responsibilities, and local governance processes. By blending traditional media (folk art, community radio, print) with digital and emerging formats (OTT films, social media, interactive platforms), the MoPR has institutionalised a strategic and culturally embedded approach to Information, Education, and Communication (IEC).

Complementing this, the AR&RS component commissions credible, thematic studies on structural and operational issues in Panchayati Raj. These studies—ranging from fiscal viability and devolution to Gram Sabha participation and human resource capacities—provide empirical evidence for course correction, policy design, and programme innovation. The governance mechanisms built into AR&RS, including oversight by the Research Advisory Committee, ensure methodological rigour, policy alignment, and credible uptake.

Together, the two components form a mutually reinforcing cycle: research insights guide targeted communication, while outreach generates behavioural and feedback data that inform future studies. This integrated design strengthens democratic decentralisation, institutional responsiveness, and the localisation of SDGs. Based on the data received from the Ministry and our regular interactions, we provide the following recommendations.

In this regard, we recommend for a more strategic and sustained approach to communication and research under RGSA (Detailed in **Chapter 9**). A dedicated budget line for IEC and Action Research should be created, with joint guidelines ensuring that campaigns are directly informed by evidence and insights from the field. This would avoid fragmentation, prevent one-off campaigns, and instead build a continuous cycle of outreach and behavioral change. Strengthening community media is equally critical for inclusion—expanding community radio into a nationwide PRI-focused network, supported by vernacular content pools, and training local youth and SHGs as correspondents to anchor ownership at the grassroots.

Knowledge-sharing also needs to be institutionalized through a Panchayat Knowledge Hub, a digital repository consolidating communication outputs, IEC materials, case studies, and research studies. Designed with thematic search functions aligned to LSDGs, such a hub would make best practices, award-winning campaigns, and replicable models easily accessible to PRIs, SIRDs, and CSOs across states. To ensure effectiveness, monitoring should move beyond counting campaigns and studies to measuring outcomes, such as citizen participation in Gram Sabhas, women’s leadership visibility, and digital portal usage. Regular independent evaluations would help track behavioral change and strengthen accountability.

Finally, scaling quality and relevance will require formal collaborations. Universities and think tanks can anchor long-term thematic studies, while regional media houses and OTT platforms can help design locally resonant campaigns. A network of empaneled institutions for both research and communication would allow for quicker deployment of studies and campaigns, ensuring that Panchayats benefit from timely, evidence-based, and impactful outreach.

Chapter 12: The Revamped RGSA: Gains, Gaps, and Road Ahead

12.1 Overall Impact Assessment

The revamped RGSA has evidently enhanced the ability of PRIs to govern effectively and deliver on the Localisation of SDGs. The scheme comprises of structured and well-designed capacity building programs, which empowers a significant proportion of the ERs by enhancing their knowledge, skills, and digital tools to improve governance at the grassroots level. One of the key successes of the revamped RGSA has been its multi-layered training approach, which blends traditional classroom learning with thematic training, exposure visits, and digital modules. The structured training has helped over half of ERs complete their orientation training within six months of getting elected, ensuring they start their roles with a clear understanding of governance processes. Additionally, more than 57% of ERs have received GPDP training, enabling them to take a structured approach to planning and decision-making. The shift towards digital governance is a major achievement. About 91% of ERs have been trained on the e-GramSwaraj portal, which simplifies record-keeping, financial tracking, and service delivery at the Panchayat level.

The revamped RGSA did not just make cosmetic interventions in trainings, but the post-training assessments of the stakeholders highlighted significant improvements in their understanding of Panchayat operations, planning and implementation, digital governance, citizen engagement, and financial sustainability. Yet, these gains in knowledge and confidence must be seen against the deeper structural bottlenecks that shape Panchayat performance. While the 73rd Constitutional Amendment envisaged the devolution of Funds, Functions, and Functionaries (3Fs), in practice this remains incomplete. A crucial fourth pillar—Flexibility—is lacking, which restricts Panchayats from exercising genuine autonomy in planning and delivery. Most critically, the acute shortage of functionaries directly accountable to Panchayats undermines their ability to act on devolved responsibilities. Core services like health, agriculture, and water supply often operate through line departments whose staff are neither paid by nor answerable to elected Panchayats. This disconnect creates a structural mismatch: Panchayats are trained and expected to plan, but the functionaries who implement these plans remain outside their control. Kerala's experience—where Panchayats exercise control over all three Fs along with flexibility in allocating resources—illustrates how true decentralisation can translate training inputs into meaningful local governance outcomes. Unless Panchayats are empowered on all four Fs, training alone will not be sufficient to unlock their full potential.

It is also worth acknowledging that, on a five-point scale, respondents rated their comprehension of Panchayat functions and responsibilities at 4.2, highlighting a greater degree of confidence in their ability to manage local governance within the revamped RGSA framework. Similarly, their understanding of planning processes, including the GPDP and financial management strategies, scored highest, demonstrating a substantial increase in administrative efficiency.

Despite evident progress, significant disparities persist in ensuring access to all ERs, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds and remote areas. The attendance rates exacerbate these challenges, with only 53% of ERs completing mandatory orientation training on time and 41% attending refresher sessions within two years from the date of election. Many Stakeholders attribute these low participation rates to ERs' struggles in balancing governance responsibilities with daily livelihoods, compounded by logistical barriers such as extensive travel distances and inadequate notification systems.

To address these gaps, further investment and strategic improvements in training delivery are necessary, which are recommended in **Chapter 11**. For instance, to improve training participation and completion, a QR-based or biometric attendance system, geo-tagged mobile check-ins, and a structured annual training calendar can be introduced. Moreover, localized training at BPRCs, mobile training units, and hybrid learning models using digital platforms like WhatsApp-based microlearning could help overcome these barriers. Additional incentives, such as travel stipends for marginalized ERs and governance-linked financial incentives for districts with high training completion rates, would further encourage participation. However, the complex challenge lies in translating training into improved governance outcomes. A mentorship-based framework, where experienced ERs guide newer representatives, can foster peer learning and skill development. Aligning training with regional agricultural calendars and expanding digital literacy programs will ensure that training efforts enhance Panchayat leadership and governance capabilities effectively.

12.1.1 Panchayat Infrastructure under Revamped RGSA

The focus of our survey was not only to capture the capacity building efforts of the Revamped RGSA program, but also to understand Panchayat infrastructure availability and quality. Around this, our study findings revealed that the revamped RGSA has significantly enhanced Gram Panchayat infrastructure development, though challenges prevail.

Currently, 93.6 percent of Gram Panchayats possess dedicated Panchayat Bhavans, which are crucial for fostering independent administrative efficiency¹². While Panchayat Bhavans remain key hub for local governance, the quality and availability of other essential infrastructure varied widely across states. Our survey captured responses from elected representatives and panchayat functionaries, who rated on the improvements they observed in panchayat infrastructure after the implementation of the revamped RGSA.

The findings reveal that while basic office spaces and sanitation facilities are fairly adequate, considerable gaps persist in digital infrastructure, public amenities, and some accessibility features. For instance, community halls, where Gram Sabha meetings and public engagement often take place, showed moderate improvement in most states. However, digital infrastructure continues to face significant challenges, primarily because many systems operate on outdated configurations that are not compatible with

¹² However, it is noteworthy that only 14 percent of these buildings have been funded under RGSA, with states such as Tamil Nadu and West Bengal receiving greater financial support, while Odisha has lagged.

newly designed e-governance applications introduced by MoPR. This incompatibility constrains the effective use of digital platforms and hinders the seamless implementation of governance reforms. However, in states like Arunachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, significant portions of respondents reported little to no change in their infrastructure.

Similarly, while separate rooms for elected representatives and functionaries were available in a majority of GPs, dedicated PLCs were present in only about half of the surveyed Panchayats. Public amenities, such as seating arrangements for villagers and baby feeding corners, also varied in demonstrating considerable progress. However, improving the digital infrastructure remains a work in progress. While most Gram Panchayats now have computers and printers, a significant proportion still lacks reliable internet connectivity, limiting their ability to fully leverage e-Governance initiatives. This digital divide is particularly noticeable in states with weaker infrastructure investment.

Both residential and non-residential training centres have also received moderate to high satisfaction ratings, with well-equipped classrooms and audiovisual tools performing well, though gaps remain in digital infrastructure and accommodation facilities. These disparities highlight a stronger emphasis on certain states (refer to **Table 4.35** and **Table 4.36** in **Chapter 4**) and a need for more equitable distribution of resources to ensure that all regions benefit from the program's initiatives.

12.1.2 Financial Sustainability of Gram Panchayats

The revamped RGSA scheme places significant emphasis on enhancing the financial sustainability of Gram Panchayats, yielding mixed results across various states. Currently, as stated by the ERs, only about one-third of Panchayats generate sufficient revenue to sustain themselves, largely relying largely on Finance Commission grants and central funding. Some states, such as Maharashtra and West Bengal, have strengthened their financial independence through better tax collection, local economic development, and innovative revenue strategies. However, many hilly and economically weaker states struggle due to limited taxable resources and lower economic activity, making it difficult for them to generate their own revenue.

Interactions with stakeholders highlight several challenges, including low awareness of funding opportunities, restrictions on taxation, and inadequate financial training for Panchayat representatives. Many local bodies do not fully explore grants and revenue-generation options, while some state-imposed limitations on property taxes, user charges such as water tariffs, and market fees prevent Panchayats from independently raising funds. Therefore, the state should compensate local bodies for the revenue losses resulting from exemptions granted by the state itself. More importantly, to improve financial sustainability, the revamped RGSA guidelines should emphasize that states consider easing taxation restrictions and granting Panchayats more control over their revenue sources.

Diversifying revenue streams is also essential; some Panchayats have already started levying fees on marriage halls, unauthorized constructions, and certificate issuances, which in certain states contribute up to 70% of OSR generation. Additionally, opportunities such as tourism taxes, market complex fees, and CSR funding remain largely untapped.

For these efforts to be successful, financial training for Panchayat representatives should be prioritized. Digital financial tools and e-Governance solutions can help in transparent revenue collection and efficient fiscal management, but limited digital literacy among the ERs still could pose a barrier. Further, strengthening digital literacy and financial management training will be key to helping panchayats manage their own revenues, reduce dependence on central funding, and build long-term financial stability.

12.2 The Case for Continuing the Revamped RGSA

India's three-tiered Panchayati Raj system, which comprises 2.56 lakh Panchayats and over 31 lakh ERs, with women accounting for 44.37% of these positions (MoPR, 2023–24), represents the foundation of decentralized governance in the country. However, widespread deficits in technical capacity, financial management, and strategic planning continued to undermine the effectiveness of these Panchayats. To this end, the Revamped RGSA was introduced to systematically address these gaps through an institutionalized capacity-building framework. Delivered through a network of 28 SIRDs/RIRDs, 261 ETCs, 2,739 BPRCs, and 690 DPRCs, the program aimed to provide structured, tiered training focused on governance, SDG alignment, and leadership development. These initiatives aim to equip ERs with the requisite skills to manage increasingly complex local governance challenges. Additionally, a judicious utilization of more than Rs. 1000 crores of funds given under Union Finance Commission and State finance commissions is primarily because of the capacity building initiatives taken up under RGSA.

The evidence from program implementation indicates that these interventions have yielded noticeable impact. Over 2.40 lakh Gram Panchayats have adopted participatory planning through the GPDP framework, enhancing alignment between local needs and national development priorities (Srivastava, 2024). Notably, this has also contributed to the localization of the SDGs, with progress observed in areas such as poverty alleviation, healthcare access, and climate resilience. However, these gains often remain fragile and contingent on continued investment. Without sustained support, there is a risk that PRIs will regress to fragmented and inefficient governance, undermining progress towards the 2030 SDG targets. Below we present some cases on a few aspects of the implementation, and argue why the continuation of the program beyond its current term is necessary.

12.2.1 Capacity Building Needs Sustained Investment

The Revamped RGSA should be understood not as a time-bound intervention, but as a necessary, long-term investment in the institutional capacity of local governance structures. Early program data indicate positive trends in improved revenue mobilization, enhanced participatory processes, and strengthened institutional functioning. However, there are considerable gaps that require attention. Sustained investment is essential to consolidate progress and close these implementation gaps.

The findings from our study highlight some differential impact of RGSA across social groups. Capacity building of ERs is a continuous process and needs to be linked with re-election data, as the majority of ERs are replaced every five years. Among Scheduled Tribe (ST) ERs, digital literacy improved significantly from 42% to 69.1%, likely facilitated by targeted digital training and vernacular e-learning modules. Nonetheless, in several places, digital exclusion persists: 30.9% of ST ERs in PESA areas reported unfamiliarity

with digital governance tools, which likely limits their capacity to engage with platforms such as e-GramSwaraj and Panchayat financial management systems. Similarly, structured mentorship programs have demonstrated some potential, particularly in supporting leadership among historically underrepresented groups. In Tamil Nadu, Scheduled Caste (SC) women ERs now constitute 21.4% of chairperson roles, reflecting the impact of focused leadership development efforts. However, these gains are uneven. Educational attainment remains low among ERs, with only 43% having completed intermediate education and just 20% holding graduate degrees. Limited educational backgrounds constrain ERs' capacity to engage effectively with governance tasks, including budget preparation and scheme implementation.

Moreover, such disparities also persist across caste groups. Awareness of key governance processes such as the GPDP Portal was found to be lowest among ST ERs (69.1%), compared to 83% among general category ERs. Similarly, SC and ST ERs reported lower familiarity with maintaining Gram Sabha records (49.5% and 51.9%, respectively). Political inexperience further compounds these challenges. Our findings also indicate that 82% of ERs have fewer than five years of experience in office, and 60% are first-time representatives, making them heavily reliant on external training and mentoring.

The current training modalities also warrant critical examination. A predominant reliance on lecture-based methods (83.6%) limits interactive learning opportunities. More participatory formats, such as case studies (used in only 48.4% of trainings) and role-playing exercises (33.9%), remain underutilized. Post-training support is similarly insufficient, with only 51.7% of ERs reporting any follow-up assistance. Without systematic, continuous support, ERs are left to navigate complex governance responsibilities with limited guidance.

Therefore, while the Revamped RGSA has generated positive momentum, it still has untapped potential for fully achieving its goals. *Consolidating and extending its achievements will require sustained financial commitment, iterative program design, and stronger post-training support systems.* Apart from this, *many Ministries and Departments implement their schemes through convergence with PRIs, which further underscores the critical importance of strengthening the capacity of PRI functionaries.* Only through such sustained investment and focused capacity building can PRIs evolve into capable, self-reliant institutions that anchor participatory and accountable governance at the grassroots level.

12.2.2 Strengthening Panchayat Financial Autonomy

A challenge faced by the PRIs is their persistent dependence on transfers from central and state governments, with OSR contributing as little as 1–2% of total revenues in most states. This fiscal dependency may limit the autonomy of PRIs and constrains their capacity to respond effectively to local priorities. The Revamped RGSA has, in this line, sought to directly address this structural deficit by prioritizing financial capacity-building, particularly in the areas of tax administration, property mapping, and the adoption of digital tools for revenue collection. These targeted interventions were designed to enhance the ability of PRIs to mobilize local resources, thereby strengthening their fiscal base and reducing over-reliance on external funding.

In this regard, the integration of the e-GramSwaraj platform has been a significant enabler, improving efficiency in property tax assessment and collection, as well as providing real-time tracking of expenditures. By enhancing financial transparency and reducing the scope for revenue leakages, these digital interventions contribute to building trust in local governance processes. In states such as Kerala and Karnataka, our survey shows the effectiveness of these measures showed much potential: both states recorded a 15–20% increase in OSR collections following the implementation of RGSA-supported initiatives. These improvements illustrate the potential of the scheme to catalyse broader fiscal empowerment at the grassroots level.

However, the success observed in these states also highlights the importance of sustained technical support and context-specific adaptation. Effective property mapping and revenue mobilisation require not only digital tools but also the capacity of local officials to use them effectively. In regions with lower levels of digital literacy or limited administrative experience, ongoing training and support remain essential to replicate and sustain these gains. Furthermore, integrating financial literacy into broader capacity-building initiatives can enable ERs to make informed decisions about local budgeting, resource allocation, and long-term financial planning.

Our findings therefore argue that while these early results are promising, scaling the impact of RGSA on PRI financial self-reliance will depend on the sustained reinforcement of technical capacities, continuous digital infrastructure support, and the institutionalisation of financial management as a core competency within local governance systems. Strengthening these aspects will be essential to ensure that PRIs evolve from passive recipients of funds to active managers of local development resources, capable of advancing fiscal decentralisation in a meaningful and durable way.

12.2.3 Leveraging Technology for Governance and Accountability

The expansion of the digital governance ecosystem under the Revamped RGSA through platforms such as e-GramSwaraj, AuditOnline, and geo-tagged asset management systems has laid important groundwork for more efficient and transparent Panchayat-level governance. As of 2024, over 2.47 lakh Gram Panchayats actively use e-GramSwaraj for real-time monitoring of SDG-linked projects, improving the alignment of local development with national priorities. Likewise, the rollout of AuditOnline has improved financial compliance by 35% in states such as Maharashtra and Odisha, enhancing oversight and reducing risks of fund mismanagement. Beyond these, other digital applications are also strengthening the Panchayat ecosystem. Gram Manchitra, for instance, integrates spatial planning and geo-tagging of assets, enabling Panchayats to prepare evidence-based GPDP with a stronger spatial perspective. Meri Panchayat serves as a citizen-centric platform, enhancing transparency by providing the public with access to Panchayat-level information on finances, schemes, and development works, thus deepening accountability. Panchayat Nirnay, on the other hand, supports decision-making and resolution tracking within Gram Sabha and Panchayat meetings, ensuring follow-up and reducing the problem of unimplemented resolutions. Together, these applications create a more integrated digital architecture for PRIs, where planning, monitoring, transparency, and accountability are mutually reinforcing.

However, while the infrastructure is in place, its sustained effectiveness often hinges on continuous capacity-building for ERs and PFs. Survey findings indicate that while initial training efforts have been substantial, they remain uneven and incomplete. Participation in e-GramSwaraj training is high overall (91.2% of ERs, 88.4% of PFs), but state-level disparities persist, especially in states like Arunachal Pradesh, for example, only 22.6% of ERs were trained. The situation is more concerning with financial management tools. While PFs, who are typically tasked with technical administration, had better training coverage on PFMS (63.1%), only 29.5% of ERs received training. This brings to our notice a critical gap: without adequate familiarity in financial management tools, elected leaders are less equipped to exercise informed oversight over budgets and expenditures, which can potentially undermine accountability mechanisms.

The trainings on asset management tools also remains insufficient, with fewer than one-fifth of ERs and PFs trained in the National Asset Directory and geo-tagging systems. These gaps likely limit the ability of Panchayats to make data-driven decisions about infrastructure and resource management.

The uneven training uptake highlights a deeper structural issue. Currently, digital competencies tend to be siloed: ERs engage primarily with governance platforms, while PFs manage financial and technical systems. Without integrated training approaches that build mutual understanding across roles, this division risks entrenching operational silos and dependency on technical functionaries, rather than building shared ownership of governance processes. Moreover, the strong performance in states like Maharashtra and West Bengal demonstrates what is possible with sustained, coordinated efforts. Yet, these cases remain exceptions rather than the norm. In states like Madhya Pradesh, while PF training on PFMS was comprehensive (100%), ER exposure remained negligible (3.5%).

These findings on leveraging technology in governance presents a compelling case for the need for RGSA to continue and evolve beyond its current phase. Short-term training cycles could be insufficient for building the enduring capacity in the face of rapid digitalization and evolving governance responsibilities. Ongoing, adaptive training programs, complemented by post-training support and practical application, are essential for embedding digital tools into daily Panchayat functioning. This is particularly important for ensuring inclusion of marginalized groups and lagging regions, where digital literacy remains uneven. At the same time, the continuation of RGSA will also be critical for upkeeping the digital infrastructure itself, from maintaining servers and applications to ensuring periodic upgrades and troubleshooting. To ensure systematic oversight, it has already been suggested that a dedicated sub-committee be formed to monitor, review, and guide the upkeep of digital systems at the Panchayat level. Such a mechanism would prevent technological backsliding and sustain the gains already made under RGSA.

12.2.4 Sustaining Training Infrastructure for Effective Capacity Building

The sustainability of PRIs' capacity is inseparable from the future of the training ecosystem built under the Revamped RGSA. Far beyond being a set of workshops, this ecosystem represents an institutional commitment to nurturing local governance leadership at scale, and across India's diverse contexts, including remote, under-served, and PESA-designated areas. However, our survey data and stakeholder interviews

consistently highlighted a critical dependence: as state-level financial support from PRRDs has declined, RGSA funding has become the primary, and in many places sole, driver of training centre operations. Without continued investment, the risk is not just stagnation but deterioration of both infrastructure and the program's institutional reach.

The scale of effort so far is notable. The RGSA-supported infrastructure has ensured that most training centres are reasonably equipped with basic audiovisual tools and adequate classroom facilities. Yet, the status of such infrastructure remains uneven: advanced digital equipment, reliable internet access, and residential facilities continue to fall short in many states. While high-performing states such as West Bengal and Maharashtra have demonstrated the positive impact of well-equipped, inclusive, and well-managed training environments, other states like Arunachal Pradesh and Haryana lag, often citing inadequate residential capacity, poor connectivity, and subpar training environments that discourage participation, particularly for women and marginalized groups.

Moreover, training methodology is as crucial as infrastructure. In this context, we found that training remains heavily lecture-based, limiting skill development. States like West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Karnataka saw better outcomes using interactive methods, yet such practices are rare. Experiential learning, though widely valued, reached less than a third of participants across states. Moreover, learning does not end at the close of a session; rather, it requires reinforcement through ongoing handholding and mentorship. Yet, our survey reveals that while over half of ERs recognised the need for post-training support, only about 51.7% reported receiving it. Importantly, where this support was structured and sustained, as in West Bengal, Maharashtra, and Sikkim, satisfaction scores by the ERs/PFs exceeded 90.

These critical findings make another compelling case for the continuation and deepening of the Revamped RGSA. What has been built so far is a foundational architecture: an extensive network of training institutions, early advances in diversified pedagogies, and nascent models of post-training support. Continued support for RGSA is not simply about preserving infrastructure; it is about institutionalising a culture of continuous learning within PRIs. It is about ensuring that elected representatives and functionaries are not only trained but are supported in applying their knowledge, adapting to new digital systems, and responding effectively to the evolving demands of local governance. By sustaining and strengthening the training ecosystem, RGSA can further enable PRIs to function not as passive implementers of centrally designed schemes, but as capable, autonomous institutions driving grassroots development with confidence and accountability.

12.3 Conclusion

Our study's findings, complemented by stakeholder insights, emphasize the imperative to extend the Revamped RGSA beyond March 2026. This extension is crucial for consolidating progress in enhancing the governance capacity, financial independence, and localization of SDGs within PRIs. Discontinuation of the scheme at this stage risks undermining years of decentralization efforts as PRIs remain in a transitional phase, navigating digital governance, diversifying revenue streams, and building institutional capacity. If government support is withdrawn, it would stall these advancements, potentially causing weaker Panchayats to revert to dependency on external funding and

outdated governance practices. The existing gaps in training attendance, revenue generation, and devolution of powers can be addressed through strategic interventions detailed in the recommendations section (**Chapter 11**). Hence, we recommend that the Revamped RGSA be extended for one more term, spanning four years, allowing sufficient time for these initiatives to materialize and become fully embedded within local governance structures. This extension should not merely perpetuate existing structures but must incorporate critical amendments and refinements, as detailed in **Chapter 11**, to effectively address capacity-building deficits, funding bottlenecks, and governance inefficiencies.

To optimize the impact of extending the scheme, we recommend the allocation of additional resources and the establishment of a more structured monitoring framework. This should involve regular updates of state and district-level reports, incorporating real-time tracking of training progress, fund utilization, and governance outcomes for more effective monitoring and decision-making. Prioritizing greater financial autonomy for Panchayats is essential, with state governments providing clear guidelines on tax collection, revenue diversification, and economic development initiatives. Furthermore, the implementation of digital financial tools should be enhanced to enable Panchayats to manage their resources efficiently. States demonstrating strong progress in OSR generation and digital governance adoption should serve as exemplary models for replication in underperforming regions. The focus should also shift toward long-term sustainability, ensuring that PRIs become self-reliant beyond the extension period. Achieving this requires the development of a collaborative network among PRI stakeholders, facilitating a platform where elected representatives, trainers, and governance experts can share experiences, best practices, and innovative solutions. Encouraging peer-learning and mentorship will help newly elected representatives, especially ERs from marginalized and vulnerable sections integrate more smoothly into local governance roles.

The next term, spanning four years, should prioritize embedding LSDG within capacity-building strategies, ensuring that training evolves from a singular intervention into an ongoing process. Another thrust area could be imparting training and achieving OSR sufficiency, both in training and field implementation. A permanent institutional framework should be established, wherein Panchayat Resource Centers—such as BPRCs, DPRCs, and SIRDs—continue to facilitate training, mentorship, and knowledge-sharing even after direct funding from the RGSA scheme is phased out. This can be achieved through strategic partnerships with civil society organizations, and institutions of national level, thereby leveraging expertise and resources beyond government support. Furthermore, Panchayats should be incentivized to institutionalize knowledge-sharing sessions at the block and district levels, ensuring that each successive cohort of elected representatives builds upon the insights of their predecessors. By developing a self-sustaining ecosystem of governance learning and capacity-building, the impact of Revamped RGSA can extend well beyond its formal tenure, securing India's long-term democratic and developmental goals. Hence, PLCs may further be expanded in structured manner.

As we have discussed before in **Chapters 4 and 11**, the persistent shortage of trained faculty at SIRDs, DPRCs and BPRCs is a critical gap that undermines the effectiveness of training and capacity-building initiatives for PRI functionaries. Despite the increasing

demand for high-quality, context-specific training, many DPRCs and BPRCs operate with bare minimum staff or rely heavily on contractual or part-time trainers who often lack adequate pedagogical grounding. This shortage not only limits the frequency and depth of trainings but also hampers the continuity and follow-up support essential for sustained learning. Addressing this gap by recruiting a dedicated pool of well-trained faculty is imperative for ensuring that training translates into meaningful grassroots governance improvements. This also calls for offering competitive remuneration and extending necessary support facilities to trainers, as outlined in **Chapter 11**.

Alongside strengthening training infrastructure, it is equally vital to address the growing need for additional manpower at the PRIs themselves. With the expansion of roles and responsibilities under various centrally sponsored schemes and state initiatives, PRIs are increasingly burdened with administrative, planning, implementation, and reporting duties. However, many of them continue to struggle with limited human resources, often with a single secretary or Gram Sevak managing multiple functions across several gram panchayats. This not only affects the quality and timeliness of service delivery but also limits the PRIs' ability to engage meaningfully with citizens and developmental partners. Provisioning for adequate technical and administrative support staff—especially at the Gram Panchayat level—will be essential to realize the full potential of decentralization and ensure effective last-mile governance. Thus, states may be actively encouraged to recruit additional staff at the PRI level to bridge existing gaps and strengthen institutional capacity.

Finally, more than a scheme, it is a reform instrument that strengthens both the capacities of PRIs and the credibility of grassroots governance. Evidence from across components of the programme – from Action Research & Publicity (AR&P) to the Incentivization of Panchayats (IoP) – clearly demonstrates that RGSA has created a foundation that must not only be preserved but expanded in the years ahead.

The results are visible in tangible outcomes. Digital governance, although long hampered by outdated systems and weak infrastructure, has been energised through platforms like e-GramSwaraj, AuditOnline, Gram Manchitra, Meri Panchayat, and Panchayat Nirnay. Together, these tools have streamlined project monitoring, financial auditing, geo-tagging, and resolution tracking. By 2024, already more than 1.2 lakh Panchayats were actively using e-GramSwaraj, and states like Maharashtra and Odisha reported a 35% improvement in financial compliance through AuditOnline. These are not abstract gains—they translate into fewer delays, greater accountability, and improved delivery of development outcomes at the village level.

Equally important are the shifts in representation and leadership. Among Scheduled Tribe elected representatives, digital literacy rose from 42% to 69.1%, driven by vernacular training and e-learning modules. Scheduled Caste women leaders in Tamil Nadu now account for 21.4% of chairperson roles, underscoring how mentorship and targeted leadership programmes can break entrenched barriers. Yet these advances also highlight why RGSA must continue. With most ERs replaced every five years, capacity building is not a one-time exercise but a continuous cycle, and only a sustained institutional framework can ensure that each new cohort of leaders is prepared to govern effectively.

The scheme has also created powerful incentives for Panchayats to aim higher. The National Panchayat Awards, restructured in 2023 to align with the nine Localized SDG themes, have transformed recognition into a driver of measurable progress. Participation surged to nearly the entire universe of Gram Panchayats in 2023, demonstrating the motivational impact of transparent, performance-based rewards. The accompanying Action Research component further ensures that policies are evidence-based, context-sensitive, and continuously refined.

RGSA's strength therefore lies in this integration—training that empowers, technology that enables, research that informs, and incentives that motivate. Ending the programme in 2026 would risk dismantling this hard-won architecture. Continuation, on the other hand, would mean consolidating gains, modernising digital infrastructure, and embedding PRIs as capable, self-reliant institutions at the heart of India's democratic future.

References

- Arthur, W. Jr., Bennett, W., Stanush, P. L., & McNelly, T. L. (2003). Factors that influence skill decay and retention: A quantitative review and analysis. *Human Performance*, 15(1-2), 57–101.
- Baldwin, T. T., Ford, J. K., & Blume, B. D. (2017). The state of transfer of training research: Moving toward more consumer-centric inquiry. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 28(1), 17–28.
- Blume, B. D., Ford, J. K., Baldwin, T. T., & Huang, J. L. (2010). Transfer of training: A meta-analytic review. *Journal of Management*, 36(4), 1065–1105.
- Bosch, T. (2014). Community radio. In K. G. Wilkins, T. Tufte, & R. Obregon (Eds.), *The handbook of development communication and social change* (pp. 320–336). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118505328.ch25>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp0630a>.
- Cartwright, N., & Hardie, J. (2015). *Evidence-based policy: A practical guide to doing it better*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:osobl/9780199841608.001.0001>
- Cepeda, N. J., Pashler, H., Vul, E., Wixted, J. T., & Rohrer, D. (2006). Distributed practice in verbal recall tasks: A review and quantitative synthesis. *Psychological Bulletin*, 132(3), 354–380.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Dasgupta, P. (2014). *Cost-disabilities of hill states in India* [Study report]. Submitted to the Fourteenth Finance Commission, Government of India.
- Gaventa, J., & Cornwall, A. (2009). Challenging the boundaries of the possible: Participation, knowledge and power. *IDS Bulletin*, 37(6), 122–128. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1759-5436.2006.tb00329.x>
- Green, M. C., & Brock, T. C. (2000). The role of transportation in the persuasiveness of public narratives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 79(5), 701–721. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.79.5.701>
- Salas, E., Tannenbaum, S. I., Kraiger, K., & Smith-Jentsch, K. A. (2012). The science of training and development in organizations: What matters in practice. *Psychological Science in the Public Interest*, 13(2), 74–101.
- Sen, A. (1999). *Development as freedom*. Oxford University Press.
- Singhal, A., & Rogers, E. M. (1999). *Entertainment-education: A communication strategy for social change*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates Publishers.
- Srivastava, V. N. (2024). *Local Governance in India: The Panchayati Raj*. Taylor & Francis.
- UNICEF. (2019). *Global annual results report 2019: Communication for development*. <https://www.unicef.org/media/73836/file/Global-annual-results-report-2019-communication-for-development-accessible.pdf>

Appendix A1

List of Sampled States, Districts, Blocks and GPs

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
1	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Bhattu Kalan	Bhattu Mandi
2	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Bhattu Kalan	Dhabi Kalan
3	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Bhattu Kalan	Gadli
4	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Bhattu Kalan	Sarwarpur
5	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Bhattu Kalan	Sirdhan
6	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Tohana	Dangra
7	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Tohana	Hansawala
8	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Tohana	Jamalpur Shaikhan
9	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Tohana	Nangla
10	Northern	Haryana	Fatehabad	Tohana	Simbalwala
11	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Kalanaur	Ballab
12	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Kalanaur	Bhali Anandpur
13	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Kalanaur	Lahli
14	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Kalanaur	Nigana
15	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Kalanaur	Pilana
16	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Meham	Bedwa
17	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Meham	Bhaini Maharajpur
18	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Meham	Farmana Badshahpur
19	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Meham	Krishangarh
20	Northern	Haryana	Rohtak	Meham	Nindana Khas
21	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Saha	Chhapra
22	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Saha	Hamidpur
23	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Saha	Nahoni
24	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Saha	Pilkhani
25	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Saha	Tharwa
26	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Naraingarh	Ambli
27	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Naraingarh	Bakhtua
28	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Naraingarh	Berkheri
29	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Naraingarh	Lakhnoura
30	Northern	Haryana	Ambala	Naraingarh	Sakarpura
31	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Tauru	Bhangoh
32	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Tauru	Goyla
33	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Tauru	Nizampur
34	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Tauru	Rangala
35	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Tauru	Sundh
36	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Ferozepur Jhirka	Bhakroji
37	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Ferozepur Jhirka	Dhamala

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
38	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Ferozepur Jhirka	Hasanpur Bilonda
39	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Ferozepur Jhirka	Mahun
40	Northern	Haryana	Mawat (Nuh)	Ferozepur Jhirka	Reegarh
41	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Lahul	Goushal
42	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Lahul	Mooling
43	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Lahul	Ranika
44	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Lahul	Triloknath
45	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Lahul	Warpa
46	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Spiti	Gue
47	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Spiti	Kaza
48	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Spiti	Kungri
49	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Spiti	Sagnam
50	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Lahaul and Spiti	Spiti	Tabo
51	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Sunder Nagar	Bhor
52	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Sunder Nagar	Dumat Behali
53	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Sunder Nagar	Jeral (Ksg)
54	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Sunder Nagar	Kangu
55	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Sunder Nagar	Mahadev
56	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Gopalpur	Dhalwan
57	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Gopalpur	Gehra
58	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Gopalpur	Gumhu
59	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Gopalpur	Parasada Hawani
60	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Mandi	Gopalpur	Thana
61	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Salooni	Bhadela
62	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Salooni	Kandhwara
63	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Salooni	Ligga
64	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Salooni	Pichhla Diur
65	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Salooni	Sundla
66	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Tissa	Bhawala
67	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Tissa	Donri
68	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Tissa	Kalhel
69	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Tissa	Leswin
70	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Chamba	Tissa	Seikothi
71	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bhoranj	Bhagetu
72	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bhoranj	Jahu
73	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bhoranj	Manwin
74	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bhoranj	Nandhan
75	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bhoranj	Tikkari-Minhasan
76	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bijhari	Balh-Bihal
77	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bijhari	Dhabriana
78	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bijhari	Kalwal

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
79	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bijhari	Karer
80	Northern	Himachal Pradesh	Hamirpur	Bijhari	Morsu-Sultani
81	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Chahaniya	Agastipur
82	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Chahaniya	Husepur
83	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Chahaniya	Khonpur
84	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Chahaniya	Ramgarh
85	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Chahaniya	Tanda Kalan
86	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Shahabganj	Amarasipur
87	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Shahabganj	Bhorsar
88	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Shahabganj	Khas
89	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Shahabganj	Parariya
90	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chandauli	Shahabganj	Semara
91	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Machara	Alipur Alampur
92	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Machara	Chandlawar Urf Mahalwala
93	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Machara	Kithor Rural
94	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Machara	Mavi
95	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Machara	Rachhoti
96	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Rajpura	Bahchaula
97	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Rajpura	Mamipur
98	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Rajpura	Muzaffarnagar Saini
99	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Rajpura	Rajpura
100	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Meerut	Rajpura	Sial
101	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Shikohabad	Angadpur
102	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Shikohabad	Chamrauli
103	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Shikohabad	Indumai
104	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Shikohabad	Nizampur Garhuma
105	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Shikohabad	Rudhau
106	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Eka	Farida Pedat
107	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Eka	Jahanpur
108	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Eka	Milavali
109	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Eka	Navalpur
110	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Firozabad	Eka	Patara
111	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Ramnagar	Balhaura
112	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Ramnagar	Chhibon
113	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Ramnagar	Dhadhawar
114	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Ramnagar	Lodhaura Barethi
115	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Ramnagar	Rampur
116	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Mau	Bhitari
117	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Mau	Dondiya Mafi
118	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Mau	Haradi Kalan

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
119	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Mau	Mawai Kalan Mustkil
120	Northern	Uttar Pradesh	Chitrakoot	Mau	Tenduwa Mafi
121	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Chintakomma Dinne	Busireddi Palli
122	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Chintakomma Dinne	Kammavari Palli
123	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Chintakomma Dinne	Kopparthi
124	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Chintakomma Dinne	Papasaheb Pet
125	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Chintakomma Dinne	Tadigotla
126	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Jammalamadugu	Dharmapuram
127	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Jammalamadugu	Moragudi
128	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Jammalamadugu	P.Bommepalli
129	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Jammalamadugu	Ponnathota
130	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	YSR	Jammalamadugu	Sunnapurallapalli
131	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Gantyada	Godiyada
132	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Gantyada	Lakkidam
133	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Gantyada	Madupada
134	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Gantyada	Pedavemali
135	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Gantyada	Vasanth
136	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Komarada	Gangireguvalasa
137	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Komarada	Gunadatesu
138	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Komarada	Kottu
139	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Komarada	Masimanda
140	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Vizianagaram	Komarada	Pudesu
141	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Korukonda	Burugupudi
142	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Korukonda	Garagalampalem
143	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Korukonda	Kanupuru
144	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Korukonda	Raghavapuram
145	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Korukonda	West Gonagudem
146	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Maredumilli	Chavidikota
147	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Maredumilli	D.V.Kota
148	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Maredumilli	Pamuleru
149	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Maredumilli	Sunnampadu
150	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	East Godavari	Maredumilli	Tadepalli
151	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Ramachandrapuram	Chittathur Kale Pale
152	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Ramachandrapuram	Kammapalle
153	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Ramachandrapuram	Kuppambadur
154	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Ramachandrapuram	Ravillavaripalle
155	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Ramachandrapuram	Sevoikalva
156	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Sullurpeta	Damaraya
157	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Sullurpeta	Kadapatra
158	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Sullurpeta	Nookalapalem

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
159	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Sullurpeta	Suddamadugu Thagelu
160	Southern	Andhra Pradesh	Tirupati	Sullurpeta	Uggumudi
161	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shahpura	Doranhalli
162	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shahpura	Hattigudur
163	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shahpura	Hotpet
164	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shahpura	Kollur
165	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shahpura	Sagar
166	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shorapura	Devapur
167	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shorapura	Devatkal
168	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shorapura	Khanapur.S.H.
169	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shorapura	Peth Ammapur
170	Southern	Karnataka	Yadagir	Shorapura	Yevoor
171	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Navalgund	Hebbal
172	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Navalgund	Kalawad
173	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Navalgund	Nayakanur
174	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Navalgund	Tadahala
175	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Navalgund	Yemanur
176	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Kundagol	Guruvinahalli
177	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Kundagol	Harlapur
178	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Kundagol	Kubihal
179	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Kundagol	Rottigawad
180	Southern	Karnataka	Dharwad	Kundagol	Yeraguppi
181	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Pavagada	Kodamadagu
182	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Pavagada	Mangasavada
183	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Pavagada	Palavalli
184	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Pavagada	Potaganahalli
185	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Pavagada	Virupasamudra
186	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Madhugiri	Bedathuru
187	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Madhugiri	Doddayalkuru
188	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Madhugiri	I.D.Halli
189	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Madhugiri	Kondavaadi
190	Southern	Karnataka	Tumkur	Madhugiri	Rantavalalu
191	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Bhramavara	Aroor
192	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Bhramavara	Barkur
193	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Bhramavara	Hanehalli
194	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Bhramavara	Kadur
195	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Bhramavara	Pandeshwara
196	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Katkala	Bola
197	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Katkala	Erlapadi
198	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Katkala	Mala

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
199	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Katkala	Mudaru
200	Southern	Karnataka	Udupi	Katkala	Sanoor
201	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Kalpetta	Meppadi
202	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Kalpetta	Padinharethara
203	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Kalpetta	Pozhuthana
204	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Kalpetta	Vengappally
205	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Kalpetta	Vythiri
206	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Mananthavady	Edavaka
207	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Mananthavady	Thavinhal
208	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Mananthavady	Thirunelly
209	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Mananthavady	Thondernad
210	Southern	Kerala	Wayanad	Mananthavady	Vellamunda
211	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Kuthuparamba	Chittariparamba
212	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Kuthuparamba	Kottayam
213	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Kuthuparamba	Kunnathuparamba
214	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Kuthuparamba	Pattiam
215	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Kuthuparamba	Trippangottur
216	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Iritty	Ayyankunnu
217	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Iritty	Keezhallur
218	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Iritty	Koodali
219	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Iritty	Payam
220	Southern	Kerala	Kannur	Iritty	Thillankeri
221	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Vengara	Edarikode
222	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Vengara	Kannamangalam
223	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Vengara	Parappur
224	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Vengara	Urakam
225	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Vengara	Vengara
226	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Tanur	Niramaruthoor
227	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Tanur	Ozhur
228	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Tanur	Perumannaklari
229	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Tanur	Tanalur
230	Southern	Kerala	Malappuram	Tanur	Valavannur
231	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Chambakkulam	Champakkulam
232	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Chambakkulam	Kainakary
233	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Chambakkulam	Nedumudi
234	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Chambakkulam	Thakazhi
235	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Chambakkulam	Thalavadi
236	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Kanjikuzhy	Cherthala South
237	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Kanjikuzhy	Kadakkarappally
238	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Kanjikuzhy	Kanjikuzhi
239	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Kanjikuzhy	Mararikkulam North

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
240	Southern	Kerala	Alappuzha	Kanjikuzhy	Thanneermukkam
241	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Veppanapalli	Bathimadugu
242	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Veppanapalli	Ennegollu
243	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Veppanapalli	Kodipalli
244	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Veppanapalli	Marasandiram
245	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Veppanapalli	P.K. Peddanapalli
246	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Uthangarai	Kallavi
247	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Uthangarai	Keelmathur
248	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Uthangarai	Maganoorpatti
249	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Uthangarai	Moongileri
250	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Krishnagiri	Uthangarai	Thiruvanapatti
251	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Tiruchuli	K.Karisalkulam(East)
252	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Tiruchuli	K.Vagaikulam
253	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Tiruchuli	Paralachi
254	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Tiruchuli	Salukkuvarpatti
255	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Tiruchuli	Savvaspuram
256	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Vembakottai	Kallamanaickenpatti
257	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Vembakottai	Kongankulam
258	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Vembakottai	Soorarpatti
259	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Vembakottai	Thayilpatti
260	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Virudhunagar	Vembakottai	Valayapatti
261	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Nannilam	Alanagudi
262	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Nannilam	Moolangudi
263	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Nannilam	Nadakudi
264	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Nannilam	Thirukandiswaram
265	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Nannilam	Ubyavedhanthapuram
266	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Valangaiman	Avalivanallur
267	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Valangaiman	Manickamangalam
268	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Valangaiman	Mathur
269	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Valangaiman	Perungudi
270	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Tenkasi	Valangaiman	Uthukkadu
271	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Thondamuthur	Ikkarai Boluvampatti
272	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Thondamuthur	Madampatti
273	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Thondamuthur	Madvarayapuram
274	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Thondamuthur	Perurchettipalayam
275	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Thondamuthur	Thennamanallur
276	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Sultanpet	Jallipatti
277	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Sultanpet	Pachapalayam
278	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Sultanpet	Selakkarichal
279	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Sultanpet	Senjeriputhur
280	Southern	Tamil Nadu	Coimbatore	Sultanpet	Vadavedampatti

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
281	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Geedam	Bangapal
282	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Geedam	Bodli
283	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Geedam	Hitameta
284	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Geedam	Samlur
285	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Geedam	Upet
286	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Kuakonda	Arbe
287	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Kuakonda	Jabeli
288	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Kuakonda	Neelavaya
289	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Kuakonda	Revali
290	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Dantewada	Kuakonda	Shyamgiri
291	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Charama	Jaisakarra
292	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Charama	Khairkheda
293	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Charama	Kurrutola
294	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Charama	Sirsida
295	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Charama	Telgara
296	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Durgukondal	Chihro
297	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Durgukondal	Hamatwahi
298	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Durgukondal	Otekatta
299	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Durgukondal	Perrekodo
300	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Kanker	Durgukondal	Taraighotiya
301	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Katghora	Batari
302	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Katghora	Chhurikhurd
303	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Katghora	Dhelwadiah
304	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Katghora	Malgaon
305	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Katghora	Ranjna
306	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Podi-Uproda	Khodri(Pasan)
307	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Podi-Uproda	Morga
308	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Podi-Uproda	Saila
309	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Podi-Uproda	Sindhiya
310	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Korba	Podi-Uproda	Tuman
311	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Bhatapara	Borsi (B)
312	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Bhatapara	Dhurbandha
313	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Bhatapara	Kesla
314	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Bhatapara	Semradih
315	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Bhatapara	Tehka
316	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Simga	Hirmi
317	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Simga	Kirvai
318	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Simga	Mudpar
319	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Simga	Raweli
320	Eastern	Chhattisgarh	Baloda Bazar	Simga	Udela
321	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Lamtaput	Badigada

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
322	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Lamtaput	Banamaliput
323	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Lamtaput	Dabuguda
324	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Lamtaput	Lamtaput
325	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Lamtaput	Thusuba
326	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Boipariguda	Ch Erka
327	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Boipariguda	Doraguda
328	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Boipariguda	Kathapada
329	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Boipariguda	P Endapada
330	Eastern	Odisha	Koraput	Boipariguda	Ramagiri
331	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Balisankara	Bandhabahal
332	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Balisankara	Dhubendand
333	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Balisankara	Kurei
334	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Balisankara	Sagbahal
335	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Balisankara	Tumlia
336	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Lathikata	Birkera
337	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Lathikata	Garjan
338	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Lathikata	Jalda
339	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Lathikata	Lungei
340	Eastern	Odisha	Sundargarh	Lathikata	Mundajore
341	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Bonth	Basantia
342	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Bonth	Charigan
343	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Bonth	Purusandha
344	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Bonth	Rampur
345	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Bonth	Tillo
346	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Dhamnagar	Arjunnpur
347	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Dhamnagar	Dalanga
348	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Dhamnagar	Kalyani
349	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Dhamnagar	Palasahi
350	Eastern	Odisha	Bhadrak	Dhamnagar	Rayangdini
351	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Ullunda	Jaloe
352	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Ullunda	Kalapathar
353	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Ullunda	Kotsamalai
354	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Ullunda	Mundoghat
355	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Ullunda	Sindhol
356	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Binika	Babupali
357	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Binika	Charda
358	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Binika	Kaintara
359	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Binika	Maghala
360	Eastern	Odisha	Sonepur	Binika	Seledi
361	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Balarampur	Baraurma
362	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Balarampur	Bela

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
363	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Balarampur	Genruea
364	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Balarampur	Ghatbera-Kerowa
365	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Balarampur	Tentlow
366	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Neturia	Bhamuria
367	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Neturia	Guniara
368	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Neturia	Janardandih
369	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Neturia	Saltore
370	Eastern	West Bengal	Purulia	Neturia	Sarbari
371	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Basirhat-I	Gochha Akharapur
372	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Basirhat-I	Gotra
373	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Basirhat-I	Nimdaria Kodalia
374	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Basirhat-I	Pifa
375	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Basirhat-I	Sangrampur Shibhati
376	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Bagda	Asharu
377	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Bagda	Bayra
378	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Bagda	Helencha
379	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Bagda	Koniara-Ii
380	Eastern	West Bengal	North 24 Parganas	Bagda	Sindrani
381	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Matigara	Atharakhai
382	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Matigara	Champasari
383	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Matigara	Matigara-I
384	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Matigara	Matigara-Ii
385	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Matigara	Patharghata
386	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Phansidewa	Bidhannagar-I
387	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Phansidewa	Chathat-Bansgaon
388	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Phansidewa	Hetmuri Singhijhora
389	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Phansidewa	Jalas-Nijamtara
390	Eastern	West Bengal	Darjeeling	Phansidewa	Phansidewa Bansgaon Kismat
391	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Bamongola	Bamongola
392	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Bamongola	Chandpur
393	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Bamongola	Jagdala
394	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Bamongola	Madnabati
395	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Bamongola	Pakuahat
396	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Harishchandrapur-Ii	Daulatpur
397	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Harishchandrapur-Ii	Islampur
398	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Harishchandrapur-Ii	Malior-Ii
399	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Harishchandrapur-Ii	Sadlichak
400	Eastern	West Bengal	Maldah	Harishchandrapur-Ii	Sultannagar

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
401	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Bajag	Gannagurha
402	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Bajag	Khargahana
403	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Bajag	Lalpur Mal
404	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Bajag	Sarangpur Mal
405	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Bajag	Sukulpura
406	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Shahpura	Dhodha Ryt
407	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Shahpura	Jhagrehata Dungariya
408	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Shahpura	Malpur
409	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Shahpura	Marwari
410	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Dindori	Shahpura	Raiypura Mal
411	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Guna	Bilonia
412	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Guna	Mahukhan
413	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Guna	Mavan
414	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Guna	Singpur
415	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Guna	Udaypuri
416	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Bamori	Bhindara
417	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Bamori	Bitthalpur
418	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Bamori	Dhanankhedhi
419	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Bamori	Narvada
420	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Guna	Bamori	Sujakhedi
421	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Rajpur	Devnali
422	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Rajpur	Khajuri
423	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Rajpur	Morgun
424	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Rajpur	Sangvi Than
425	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Rajpur	Upala
426	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Newali	Bhaisdad
427	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Newali	Ghodlyapani
428	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Newali	Jogwada
429	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Newali	Morgun
430	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Barwani	Newali	Sidadi
431	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Datia	Dagrai
432	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Datia	Garera
433	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Datia	Hinotiya
434	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Datia	Lakhnpur
435	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Datia	Sanai
436	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Seondha	Dohar
437	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Seondha	Kanjouli
438	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Seondha	Lodhipura
439	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Seondha	Ramgada
440	Western	Madhya Pradesh	Datia	Seondha	Vilaspur
441	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Jiwati	Asapur

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
442	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Jiwati	Dampur Mohada
443	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Jiwati	Khadki Raipur
444	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Jiwati	Marai Pathan
445	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Jiwati	Shengaon
446	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Brahmapuri	Ekara
447	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Brahmapuri	Khini
448	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Brahmapuri	Kitadi
449	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Brahmapuri	Maldongari
450	Western	Maharashtra	Chandrapur	Brahmapuri	Udapur
451	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shindkheda	Ajande Bk
452	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shindkheda	Hatnur
453	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shindkheda	Kanchanpur
454	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shindkheda	Parsole
455	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shindkheda	Sarve
456	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shirpur	Balde
457	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shirpur	Gadhaddeo
458	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shirpur	Ghodasgaon
459	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shirpur	Higaon
460	Western	Maharashtra	Dhule	Shirpur	Upperpind
461	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Purna	Degaon
462	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Purna	Kanadkheda
463	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Purna	Kanhegaon
464	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Purna	Mamadapur
465	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Purna	Sarangi
466	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Sailu	Bramhawakadi
467	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Sailu	Dasala
468	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Sailu	Khadgaon
469	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Sailu	Mhalsapur
470	Western	Maharashtra	Parbhani	Sailu	Sonwati
471	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Panhala	Asagaon
472	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Panhala	Japhale
473	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Panhala	Panore
474	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Panhala	Satave
475	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Panhala	Tandulwadi
476	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Radhanagari	Amjai Varavade
477	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Radhanagari	Baragewadi
478	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Radhanagari	Kapileshwar
479	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Radhanagari	Palakarwadi
480	Western	Maharashtra	Kolhapur	Radhanagari	Shirase
481	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Garhi	Asan
482	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Garhi	Bhimsour

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
483	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Garhi	Karanpur
484	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Garhi	Madalda
485	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Garhi	Saredi Chhoti
486	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Sajjangarh	Bhoora Kua
487	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Sajjangarh	Himmatgarh
488	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Sajjangarh	Maska Mahudi
489	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Sajjangarh	Rath Dhan Raj
490	Western	Rajasthan	Banswara	Sajjangarh	Satsera Khurd
491	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Mohangarh	Bahla
492	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Mohangarh	Dewa
493	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Mohangarh	Kathodi(G)
494	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Mohangarh	Mandau
495	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Mohangarh	Tadana
496	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Fathegarh	Bhambhara
497	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Fathegarh	Jhijhaniyali
498	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Fathegarh	Kunda
499	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Fathegarh	Moolana
500	Western	Rajasthan	Jaisalmer	Fathegarh	Uttam Nagar Mukhyalaya Karada
501	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Kotkasim	Bhojrajka
502	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Kotkasim	Chowki
503	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Kotkasim	Jalaka
504	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Kotkasim	Maswasi @ Madhopuri
505	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Kotkasim	Roneeja
506	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Mandawar	Cheeruni
507	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Mandawar	Choodla
508	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Mandawar	Ikrotiya
509	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Mandawar	Shyopur
510	Western	Rajasthan	Khairthal-Tijara	Mandawar	Vijay Nagar
511	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Sirohi	Amli
512	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Sirohi	Gura
513	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Sirohi	Mandwara
514	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Sirohi	Nimbora
515	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Sirohi	Vadeli
516	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Abu Road	Akarabhata
517	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Abu Road	Chandrawati
518	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Abu Road	Dananav (Og)
519	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Abu Road	Mahi Khera
520	Western	Rajasthan	Sirohi	Abu Road	Sangna
521	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Ganganagar	Chakmapara
522	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Ganganagar	Karmapara

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
523	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Ganganagar	Karnamanipara
524	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Ganganagar	Siddhapara
525	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Ganganagar	Tetuiya
526	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Manu	West Masli
527	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Manu	West Kathalcherra
528	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Manu	Demcherra
529	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Manu	Gainama
530	North Eastern	Tripura	Dhalai	Manu	Battala
531	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Nalchar	Bordwal (Bordowali)
532	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Nalchar	East Nalchar (Porba Nalchar)
533	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Nalchar	Khedabari
534	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Nalchar	Poangbari
535	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Nalchar	Shibnagar (Shivnagar)
536	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Boxanagar	Anandanagar
537	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Boxanagar	Bagber
538	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Boxanagar	Kulubari
539	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Boxanagar	Manikyanagar
540	North Eastern	Tripura	Sepahijala	Boxanagar	North Kalamchoura (Uttar Kalamchowra)
541	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Amarpur	Birganj
542	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Amarpur	Debbari
543	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Amarpur	Rangamati
544	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Amarpur	Thakchara
545	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Amarpur	West Malbasa
546	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Kakraban	Dudhpushkarini
547	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Kakraban	Hurijala
548	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Kakraban	Kakraban
549	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Kakraban	Murapara
550	North Eastern	Tripura	Gomati	Kakraban	Shilghati
551	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Mohanpur	Brahmakunda
552	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Mohanpur	Gajaria
553	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Mohanpur	Rangachara
554	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Mohanpur	Satdubia
555	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Mohanpur	South Taranagar
556	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Jirania	Barjala Binapani
557	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Jirania	East Barjala
558	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Jirania	Harijoy Chowdhury
559	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Jirania	Krishnanagar
560	North Eastern	Tripura	West Tripura	Jirania	West Majlishpur
561	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Siyum	
562	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Siyum	

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
563	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Siyum	
564	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Siyum	
565	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Siyum	
566	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Giba	
567	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Giba	
568	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Giba	
569	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Giba	
570	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Upper Subansiri	Giba	
571	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Namsai	
572	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Namsai	
573	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Namsai	
574	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Namsai	
575	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Namsai	
576	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Chowkham	
577	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Chowkham	
578	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Chowkham	
579	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Chowkham	
580	North Eastern	Arunachal Pradesh	Namsai	Chowkham	
581	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Arithang Chongrang	
582	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Arithang Chongrang	
583	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Arithang Chongrang	
584	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Arithang Chongrang	
585	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Arithang Chongrang	
586	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Yuksam	
587	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Yuksam	
588	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Yuksam	
589	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Yuksam	
590	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gyalshing (West Sikkim)	Yuksam	
591	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Martam	
592	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Martam	
593	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Martam	
594	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Martam	
595	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Martam	

S. No.	Region	State	District	Block	Gram Panchayat
596	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Rakdong Tintek	
597	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Rakdong Tintek	
598	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Rakdong Tintek	
599	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Rakdong Tintek	
600	North Eastern	Sikkim	Gangtok (East Sikkim)	Rakdong Tintek	