



Transforming India

**through Strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions
by continuous Training and e-Enablement**



Background

India's experience with local governments across the country for more than two decades of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) functioning has definitely proved that it is the best available service delivery system more so for basic services. The PRIs by design has many positive features viz social inclusion, participatory governance, accountability and responsiveness, due to its proximity to voters, and functional transparency. These positive parameters can be collectively channelled to enable the PRIs to overcome functional limitations and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals with an incremental leap. What is important in the whole process is the empowerment of these grassroots level democratic institutions through building capacities of elected representatives who are at the seats of decision making and their functionaries who act as the backbone of PRIs.

Earlier Initiatives on Capacity Building



Some of the states had way back evolved training through Satellite Communication (SATCOM) which was able to reach to all Talukas and gram panchayats by organising training sessions, with lesser thematic emphasis in terms of content. Few other States opted to have video conferencing facilities, which did not sustain. The existing training framework of elected representatives of PRIs and its functionaries

also suffer from several shortcomings, of which the most important ones are given below:

Non-standardisation of content

There is a wide variation across the States in terms of coverage in numbers and quality of training of the PRI functionaries. It is mainly because of the fact that the content is not standardised to achieve an optimum level of coverage and varying competency levels of trainers. Many a times the states are able to cover the PRI functionaries with just induction level training, with limited focus on functional and thematic areas.



Un-certified Resource Persons

The quality of resource persons also vary across states, and very often the institutions resort to invite who is available at that point of time resulting in sub-optimal delivery and failure to use appropriate pedagogy and training techniques. It is also to be acknowledged that there is no concerted effort for upgrading the capacity of the resource persons on a systematic and continuing basis. The system does not also provide for enrolment of new resource persons who have interest in training and association with the PRIs.



Issues with e-Enablement of Panchayat



National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed very comprehensive and user friendly IT platform for enablement of most of the services and functions of the Panchayats. However, due to innumerable reasons and constraints inter-alia, i.e. inadequate training and capacity building, lack of continued hand holding of the Panchayat functionaries, trouble shoot-

ing, and inadequacy of IT hands. The IT applications are not put to full use by majority of the Panchayats across the states. Some states have come up with their own IT applications and attempting to roll out or use them for improving the functioning of the Panchayats. Therefore, there is a need for launching a campaign for e-enablement of PRIs.

Challenges of Capacity Building

The positive feature of Panchayati Raj system is the presence of a large number of Elected Representatives (ERs) across three levels, to the tune of 2.9 million and another 3 million functionaries who assist the ERs to manage the PRIs. After every election cycle, the existing ERs are largely replaced by a new set of ERs. Hence, continuous capacity development of ERs and functionaries remain as a challenge for the MoPR.



Significance of the Project

The quality of local governance is directly related to the performance of grassroots level Panchayat functionaries. Increased flow of funds, need to prepare GPDP, achieving SDG 2030 necessitates improved capacity of PRIs. In order to address the issues of Capacity Development of PR functionaries, a multi-pronged, comprehensive and innovative strategy is required. The National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad has a mandate to work out innovative strategies to achieve the task. To lend dynamism, to the national efforts of “Transforming India”, the NIRD&PR in association with Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), has launched this significant project titled **“Transforming India through Strengthening PRIs by continuous Training and e-Enablement”**.



Project Components

The following are the components of the Projects:

Standardization of learning material



The content being used by various states have variation in terms of content and quality. It is proposed to compile the content being used by various states and standardise and customise to the respective states without losing the local flavour. This will cover for induction programs and all functional areas. The modular content will be made available to the

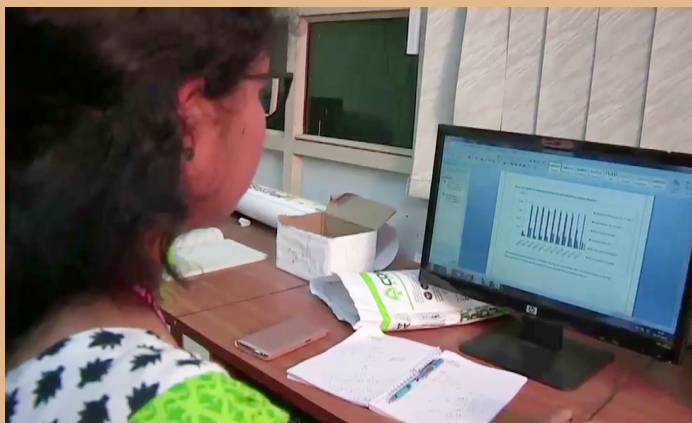
state SIRDs, ETCs and other partner institutions in local language and the same will be updated from time to time. The same content modules will be used for online delivery with abundant case studies and success stories that are locally relevant.

Certification of existing Master Trainers / Resource persons

A large number of Training of Trainers (ToT) programmes is organised over the years and in different states to create a pool of master trainers. However, there is a huge gap in terms of quality, coverage and content delivery and lack of data regarding master trainees. There is a need to certify the already trained Master Trainers. Creating certified ERs who can act as Master Resource Persons to motivate and inspire leadership development of other newly elected ERs will be also be the best way forward for the capacity building and training framework.



Enrollment of new Resource Persons



Training is a continuous process. Even a trained trainer needs upgradation of his/her skills and knowledge. The changing government initiatives and introduction of new programs would also require refresher training. The number of resource persons that are now available with the SIRDs/States, howsoever poor in their quality of delivery, the total number is highly

inadequate to cater to the 6 million functionaries repeatedly. Therefore, it is essential to enroll or encourage all interested persons, including retired or youth with a flair for training and voluntary workers with keen interest to contribute to the strengthening of the PRIs – to acquire knowledge, skills and appropriate attitude relevant to PRIs.

Launching of Certificate / Diploma / Advance Diploma Programmes in PR Governance

Launching of Certificate / Diploma / Advance Diploma programme to cover both the ERs and other officials. NIRD&PR is in the process of designing and offering the **‘Certificate Programme on Panchayati Raj Governance and Rural Development’** through online mode, with the following objectives:

1. Bridging the capacity building gaps of PR functionaries in a time bound manner and facilitate any-time-anywhere learning.
2. Offering opportunity for any individual to engage themselves with the society and pay back through the medium of Panchayati Raj.
3. Enabling the Elected Representatives to acquire additional skills, to help them to enhance their own reputation and political career
4. Providing opportunity for the former Elected Representatives to acquire a certificate based on their experience
5. Creating a competitive ecosystem in the ERs and PR officials for better performance

6. Creating certified ERs who can act as Master Resource Persons

This certificate programme comprises of 3 courses with 4 credits each. Each course consists of 40 hours of learning. Of this, 20 hours of content is in the form of video lecture, animation, graphics and multimedia. Remaining 20 hours will be of text materials. The course content can be accessed free of cost for self-learning purpose. A question-bank with multiple choice questions will be provided for each module for self-evaluation of the learner. For those



who want to get the certificate, they need to register separately by paying the prescribed a nominal fee. This certificate programme is being offered through SWAYAM platform of Ministry of Human Resource Development.

A campaign will be launched to attract large number of people for the diploma courses who have flare for training and those who would like to be involved in the National building activity through PRIs. It is assessed that there are large number of voluntary force, who, would like to work for the rural development purely for their passion and



interest. Similarly, there are number of ERs who had done good job in their previous term and now are willing to contribute to the process of rural development through PRI strengthening. All of them can undergo Certificate Program “Online” and once they acquire the Certificate they will be put on the IT portal with contact and their areas of expertise so that any agency can engage them for the training and capacity building.

Promoting documentation of Success stories

SIRDs, ETCs and trainees do share their success stories but documentation is generally not taken up. The innovative measures are not shared even within a state. The innovative practices merely remain without transmission of the content, sharing of experiences is not possible due to lack of networking across institutions. A system should be put in place for networking with institutions, and compile success stories and share it across in its training programmes, publish it for larger circulation.

E-enablement of Panchayat functioning

Number of initiatives are under implementation for enabling effective functioning of Panchayats by leveraging Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) over the years. National Informatics Centre (NIC) has developed very comprehensive and user friendly IT platform for enablement of most of the services and functions of the Panchayats.

A mission mode campaign is proposed to be launched to build the capacity of the Panchayat functionaries on use of Panchayat Enterprise Suite (PES) tools. This intervention would involve capacity building, specialised hands on training and hand-holding. The states that are using their own products will also be migrated to different platforms developed under PES to establish seamless flow of data across the platforms. In the process, 5 Gram Panchayats will be adopted by NIRD&PR to build their capabilities to evolve as digital panchayats. Special efforts will be made to equip these panchayats with required capacities by providing them with hand-holding services.



Way forward

In the long-run, the project intends to contribute towards larger societal transformation of rural India by building effective and empowered democratic political institutions at the grassroots level, which would spearhead rural development programmes with able leadership and enhanced skills. The outcomes of this project would create an enabling environment for the decentralised institutions of India with equipped personnel, augmented skills, and appropriate technological support.

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