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Government of India
Ministry of Panchayati Raj

Jeevan Prakash Building, 11th Floor,
25 Kasturba Gandhi Marg,
New Delhi - 110001

Dated 21st September, 2021

Subject: Circulation of the Minutes of the meeting with States/UTs on 'Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant' held under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj on 8th September 2021.

Madam/Sir,

Please find enclosed herewith the Minutes of the meeting(MoM) held with States/UTs on the aforementioned subject, for necessary action on the part of the States/UTs under intimation to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

Receipt of the MoM may please be acknowledged through return e-mail.



(Tara Chandar)

Under Secretary to Government of India
Tel. No. 011-23753812

Encl: MoM.

To

Addl Chief Secretary/Principal Secretary/Secretary,
Panchayati Raj Departments in States/UTs

Copy for information to:

- i. PPS to SPR
- ii. PPS to AS, MoPR
- iii. All Joint Secretaries/Economic Advisor, MoPR

Minutes of Meeting with States on 'Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant' held under the chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj on 8th September 2021

A Video Conference (VC) meeting with the senior officers of the Panchayati Raj Department of the States on 'Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant' was held on 8th September 2021 under the Chairmanship of Additional Secretary, Panchayati Raj. The list of participants is at Annexure-I.

2. At the outset, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj welcomed the Chair and the Senior Officers of the Panchayati Raj Departments of the States present in the meeting. He also briefed the participants about the previous meetings and the progress so far. He then invited the Chair to make his opening remarks.

3. In his opening remarks, Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar, Additional Secretary, MoPR, stated that the initiative of the Ministry is particularly important, and the Standing Committees have a major role to play in making Gram Sabhas Vibrant. As the country is entering the 75th year of independence, it is important that the Gram Sabhas make an impact on the lives of the rural people and contribute in planning, monitoring and implementation of various schemes/programmes of the Government targeted towards welfare and sustainable development.

The Advisory of the Ministry dated 16th August 2021, clearly states the necessary policy interventions to enable the Gram Sabhas to become more vibrant. There is also a need to empower the Standing Committees and enable them to be functional in right earnest to serve their purpose meaningfully. In addition, there is an immediate need for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of flagship programmes such as SBM, MGNREGS, Jan Dhan Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, PMKVY, PMAY, PMKVY, PMKSY, SSYetc, to name a few. There is no dearth of Schemes and Programmes for rural areas and the objectives of all these are targeted towards the benefits and wellbeing of the people.

The Gram Sabhas and the relevant Standing Committees of the Panchayats should discuss, evaluate and document the functioning, implementation and impact of these Schemes/Programmes and see how all these Schemes/Programmes are being implemented and people at large are being benefited by them. These flagship programmes are linked to the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) and by evaluating/documenting impact of those Flagship Programmes, the Gram Sabhas and Standing committees would contribute in progressing and achieving the SDGs of

the country. He also impressed upon the States for documenting success stories comprising the roles of RLBs/Gram Sabhas /Government Schemes & Programmes and the overall benefits / impact on the common masses/beneficiaries/society residing in rural areas as also how these institutions/schemes & programmes positively affect the livelihood of the people.

4. Shri K.S. Sethi, Joint Secretary, MoPR made a brief presentation on 'Making Gram Sabha Vibrant'. His presentation covered the measures needed to revitalise Gram Sabhas. Recapitulating various points elaborated in the previous presentation on the subject during July 2021 as well as the Advisory of the Ministry, his presentation covered various ways and means of strengthening the Gram Sabhas, Standing Committees of the Gram Panchayats and the roles of its Elected Representatives (ERs) as well as members of the Gram Sabhas. His presentation also highlighted the steps to be taken in the States towards operationalising the various suggestions made in the MoPR advisory towards making Gram Sabhas Vibrant. He further emphasized that 1/3rd representation of women in Rural Local Bodies have been mandated by the Constitution and all may ensure the same.

For making Gram Sabha vibrant States should take all preparatory and necessary steps. The need for quorum for active and full-fledged participation of the people in Gram Sabha meeting was underlined by him. He also brought into the attention of the participants, that the Ministry is developing a platform in the form of Dashboard to enable Panchayats in effective scheduling and functioning of the Gram Sabha. Regarding the issue concerning Fifteenth Finance Commission (XV FC) Grants, he, inter alia, requested all the participants from States to ensure reconstitution of State Finance Commission (SFC) well in time, as per Constitutional provisions, act upon their recommendations and lay the explanatory memorandum regarding action taken before the State legislator on or before March, 2024 as one of the pre-conditions for continuance of XV FC Grants to the States beyond March, 2024.

The RLBs in the States are also required to utilise atleast 50% of the XV FC grants released by the Ministry of Finance to States during the previous Financial Year 2020-21 and reflect the same in the GTC for the Financial Year 2021-22 and so on during XV FC award period 2021-26, as one of the pre-conditions for release of XV FC grants to the States for the subsequent Financial Year, mentioned in the Operational Guidelines. The States shall furnish to Ministry of Panchayati Raj/Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation (DDWS) Grants Transfer Certificate (GTC) in the revised format for 1st instalments of Untied (Basic) and Tied Grants respectively for F.Y. 2021-21 by 25th September, 2021 so that MoPR/DDWS

may recommend to Ministry of Finance for release of Grants. After his presentation, he invited the Economic Adviser- MoPR to make a presentation.

5. Dr. Bijaya Kumar Behera, Economic Adviser, Ministry of Panchayati Raj made a brief presentation on 'Mera Gaonmeri Dharohar- Azadika Amrit Mahotsav'. During his presentation he indicated that a portal for promoting the Azadika Amrit Mohatsav is being developed and all the States' Panchayati Raj Departments may actively participate in this programme. The presentation also included a detailed questionnaire which is to be filled by the Gram Panchayats. Additional Secretary MoPR suggested that the States may enable the Gram Panchayats by facilitating them to complete the job in a week's time as most of these information are already readily available. An advisory would also be sent by the Ministry in this regard shortly.

6. Followed by the presentation of Economic Adviser, MoPR, a brief presentation on Gram Sabhas portal being developed by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj by Shri Aadesh Gupta, Senior Technical Director, NIC. The presentation included various forms and functionalities included in the portal such as scheduling of Gram Sabhas, SMS/email alerts, proceeding of meetings, attendance, decisions taken in the Gram Sabha meetings etc.

7. DDG, NIC, suggested that all States/UTs must ensure that the details of Elected Representatives in eGramSwaraj is updated to ensure appropriate reflection in the proposed Gram Sabhas Portal.

8. The representatives of States, while supporting broadly the initiatives of the Ministry towards making Gram Sabha vibrant, productive and more meaningful, provided various feedback and suggestions on the subject and these are listed in the Annexure-II.

9. While appreciating the suggestions given by the participants from the States, Additional Secretary, Panchayati Raj, made the following observations/suggestions in closing remarks: -

- a. All the flagship programmes of the Central Government (such as SBM, MGNREGS, Jan Dhan Yojana, Ujjwala Yojana, PMKVY, PMAY etc.) and State Government may be discussed in the relevant Standing Committee meetings of the Gram Panchayats as well as Gram Sabha meetings. The outcomes/findings of the discussions may be duly communicated and taken into account by the implementing agencies at planning & monitoring level.

- b. Despite any provision/act/notification by the State with regard to the devolution of 29 subjects to the Panchayats, the Panchayats and the Gram Sabhas have the mandate to discuss/plan/monitor the different schemes of the Government, even if they are not the implementing agency. Even if there is variation in the number of subjects devolved to the Panchayats, it is appropriate to enable Gram Sabhas to deliberate upon the implementation of flagship schemes of the Government. These discussions may also be carried in the Standing Committee meetings of the Panchayat. The findings/minutes of the Gram Sabha or Standing Committee meeting may be suitably conveyed to the implementing agency.
- c. The impact of the work done by the Panchayati Raj Institutions has not been highly visible and thus, there is a need for proactive dissemination of the contribution of Panchayats in the rural communities. Thus, conscious efforts may be taken by all States/UTs to highlight the work done by PRIs through Social Media, Print, Television etc., alongwith the local community awareness activities. The overall role of also Panchayati Raj Departments in States in this regard is significant besides at District, Block and local/rural level.
- d. States must enable broadband connectivity through BharatNet in the upcoming months, as a national level event is being considered to be held in upcoming months, where Gram Panchayats from States would be able to share their experiences.
- e. All the suggestions may be reviewed thoroughly by the State Government for appropriate adoption by State/UTs. The States/UTs are free to make minor modifications to adequately empower the Gram Sabhas, but the suggestions of the Ministry may be upheld in letter & spirit.
- f. All out efforts should be made at all levels in the State for making the Gram Sabha vibrant, productive and meaningful as per mandates in true spirit to fulfil the needs and aspirations of common masses residing in the vast rural landscape of the country.
- g. The details of Elected Members of Gram Panchayats may be frequently updated in the eGramSwaraj portal to ensure appropriate reflection in the Gram Sabhas Portal.
- h. Necessary documents including Election Notifications, action taken report may be shared by the States/UTs with the Ministry, periodically.

The meeting ended with a Vote of Thanks to the Chair.

List of Participants

Sl No.	Name, Designation& Organisation of the Officers/participants
1.	Dr. Chandra Shekhar Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
2.	Shri K S Sethi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
3.	Shri Vijay Kumar, Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
4.	Shri Tara Chandar Under Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
5.	Shri G S Krishnan, Consultant, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
6.	Shri S. Mohit Rao, Consultant, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
7.	Shri Vaibhav Bhargav, Consultant, Ministry of Panchayati Raj
8.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Andhra Pradesh
9.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Arunachal Pradesh
10.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Assam
11.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
12.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Bihar
13.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Chhattisgarh
14.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Goa
15.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Gujarat
16.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Haryana
17.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Himachal Pradesh
18.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Jharkhand
19.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Madhya Pradesh
20.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Maharashtra
21.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Nagaland
22.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Karnataka
23.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Rajasthan
24.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Sikkim
25.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, West Bengal
26.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Punjab
27.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Tamil Nadu
28.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Jammu & Kashmir
29.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Mizoram
30.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Tripura
31.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Uttarakhand
32.	Representative, State Panchayati Raj Department, Uttar Pradesh
33.	Representative, Panchayati Raj Department, Puducherry

Suggestions/feedback from States

- i. **Arunachal Pradesh:** The representative from the State indicated that the Panchayat elections were held in the month of December 2020 and the new Panchayats were formed in the month January 2021. The PRIs are now also started providing trainings to the newly elected representatives of the Panchayats. The importance of Gram Sabhas and Standing Committees have been impressed upon the newly elected representatives during those trainings. It was also brought into the attention that all subjects listed in the 11th Schedule of the Constitution are yet to devolved to the Panchayats due to which Panchayats are not able to deliberate upon some schemes of the Government. An Empowered Committee has been formed to suggest ways to transfer the necessary subjects to the Panchayats. The Gram Sabhas, are playing a key a role in identifying the beneficiaries of the different schemes.
- ii. **Andhra Pradesh:** The suggestions made by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj regarding Standing Committees are very pertinent as it is often observed that the Sarpanch holds significant powers in a Gram Panchayat. The State will take necessary actions to ensure that the views of the Gram Sabhas are reflected in the implementation of the schemes by implementing agencies. The platform developed by the Ministry is easy to understand and the State will make efforts to disseminate instructions to all the relevant officials. The State will try to implement the advisory in letter and spirit.
- iii. **Assam:** The representative of the State appreciated the efforts of the Ministry towards making Gram Sabhas vibrant. As per the State Panchayati Raj Act, only 3 Standing Committee were required to be formed by the Panchayats and amendments in the State Constitution would be required, in this regard. The Portal developed by the Ministry would be very useful, going forward. At present, if postponed meeting is held again, no quorum is required for organising a Gram Sabha. Thus, this provision also has to be changed in order to align the State regulations with reference to the suggestions of the Ministry. The State welcomes this step of the Ministry and assured its collaboration with the Ministry, in making Gram Sabhas vibrant.
- iv. **Bihar:** The representative from Bihar welcomed the efforts of the Ministry and appreciated the suggestions relating to thematic Gram Sabhas. In addition, it was suggested that 'Adolescent Gram Sabhas' may also be organised to increase the participation of the youth in the Gram Sabhas. The State has

already piloted this in a few Gram Panchayats. Currently, Bihar has made provisions for constitution of 6 Standing Committees which may have some difference in their nomenclature. The election process is currently, underway and all suggestions provided by the Ministry would be actively adopted by the new Panchayats.

- v. **Chhattisgarh:** Followed by the advisory issued by the Ministry, the State has already started taking actions on several suggestions of the Ministry. Recently, an amendment has been made, for taking action against the Sarpanch, if the quorum requirements are not met thrice for holding a Gram Sabha. In an effort to empower the role of women in Gram Sabhas, the state has mandated 1/3rd participation by women. Currently, organising six Gram Sabhas every year is compulsory and special Gram Sabhas are organised at the Block/District level, as per requirements. Thus, approximately 10 Gram Sabhas are organised, every year, by the Panchayats. The State has constituted 5 Standing committees and the 29 subjects have been mapped against those committees. All the flagship Schemes of the Government are already being discussed by the Standing Committees of the Gram Panchayats. The dashboard being developed by the Ministry is a welcome step and it would be helpful to ensure proper scheduling and decision making in Panchayats.
- vi. **Goa:** The State has already been working on the suggestions given by the Ministry. Currently, 8 Gram Sabhas are held regularly every year. The quorum mandated by the State for Gram Sabhas is 1/10th of people. The recording of entire Gram Sabhas is made mandatory in Goa. Currently, 30% women participation is not mandatory in the Gram Sabhas and necessary amendments will be made, in this regard.
- vii. **Gujarat:** Currently, on an average over 6 Gram Sabhas are held in the State every year. Moreover, a portal has also been made in the State to enable effective scheduling and updation of key agendas discussed in the Gram Sabhas. Any issues pertaining to the Block Panchayat or District Panchayats are being addressed periodically. In addition, all Gram Sabhas have a regular agenda item pertaining to the selection and review of beneficiaries of all the Government schemes. Currently, 5 Sub Committees are constituted in all Gram Sabhas. The suggestion to prepare annual calendar of Gram Sabhas has been sanctioned by the State Government and the same is being prepared.

- viii. **Haryana:** Currently, 3 Gram Sabhas are mandated in the State. Efforts would be made to implement the suggestions made by the Ministry.
- ix. **Himachal Pradesh:** Currently, 4 Gram Sabhas are mandated in the State, every year. In addition, 2 Special Mahila Gram Sabhas are also held in the State every year. In the current State provisions, only 2 Standing Committees are mandated in Himachal Pradesh, however, the matter is being pursued with the State Government to ensure compliance to the Ministry's advisory. The unit of quorum in Himachal Pradesh is family unit and the minimum quorum mandated is 1/4th of total families with one or more members present. The representation of women is not yet defined in the regulations and necessary measures to comply with suggestions of the Ministry are being taken up
- x. **Jharkhand:** Under the PESA act, 2 Gram Sabhas are mandated and 8 Standing Committees are constituted in the State. The participation of 1/3rd women is mandated in the State and in Schedule areas, presence of 1/3rd population is also compulsory. Currently, around 8-10 Gram Sabhas are organised in the State every year. Annual Calendar is being prepared and amendment in the current provisions to include SHGs and volunteers was also under consideration.
- xi. **Karnataka:** Karnataka has three Standing Committees and also there are sub-committees. All the suggestions of the Ministry would be considered for adoption to empower the Gram Sabhas.
- xii. **Madhya Pradesh:** All the suggestions made by the Ministry are already being pursued in the State and would be suitably adopted.
- xiii. **Maharashtra:** 4 Gram Sabhas are mandatory in Maharashtra, however, due to Covid Pandemic, the mandated frequency of Gram Sabhas could not be maintained. In this scenario, the State has directed the GPs to conduct online Gram Sabhas. The necessary amendments would be made to enable the constitution of Sub Committees.
- xiv. **Puducherry:** Election are about to be notified and necessary steps would be taken after the elections.
- xv. **Punjab:** In Punjab, 4 Gram Sabhas are mandatory, however, more than 4 Gram Sabhas are being organised in the State. The quorum for Gram Sabha meeting is set as 1/5th(first meeting) and 1/10th(2nd meeting). 3 Standing

Committees are mandatorily constituted in the State. The suggestions made by the Ministry are being considered for suitable adoption in State. Annual Calendar has already been prepared in Punjab.

- xvi. **Sikkim:** As per Sikkim Panchayat Act, 2 Gram Sabhas are mandatory, however, around 4-5 Gram Sabhas are organised in the State. After consultation with Gram Panchayats it was indicated that organising 4 Gram Sabhas would be appropriate. The work executed by PRIs are being actively discussed in the Gram Sabhas, and being disseminated by the State Government. Currently, 6 Standing Committees exists in the State and the Members of the Committees are also participants of the Gram Sabhas.
- xvii. **Tamil Nadu:** In Tamil Nadu, 50% participation of women in Gram Sabhas are mandated and around 60% Gram Sabhas are attended by Women. Currently, 5 Standing Committees are constituted in the Gram Panchayats and necessary changes would be made to add the Social Justice Committee, which is yet to be mandated. The State is also considering to double the honorarium for Panchayat President. The presence of Group A/Group B is being ensured in the Gram Sabhas. The State also proposes to create a uniform sign board system for Gram Panchayats highlighting the heritage sites and other key attractions of the Gram Panchayat, to promote the celebration of 75th year of India's independence. 4 Gram Sabhas are currently mandated in the States and necessary amendments would also be explored. Other suggestions of the Ministry would also be complied.
- xviii. **Tripura:** Suggestions of the Ministry has been placed under the consideration of the State Government. The State will implement the suggestion of the Ministry.
- xix. **Uttarakhand:** 6 Standing Committees are currently mandated to be constituted in the State and 4 Gram Sabhas are also mandated in the State. An eligibility criteria of preventing candidates having more than two children was set in the last elections. Annual Calendar is also being prepared in the State. The presence of Group A/Group B officers and Line Departments are also being proposed to be mandated in the State. Regular training programmes are being provided to the elected representatives and other members of the PRIs for its effective functioning. Other suggestions of the Ministry would also be considered for adoption by the State.

- xx. **Uttar Pradesh:** Although, 2 Gram Sabhas are mandated in the State, however, 6 Gram Sabhas are being proposed to the State Government. In addition, 6 Standing Committee are being constituted in the State. Annual Calendar would also be prepared, shortly. We are making efforts for making the Gram Sabhas in the State vibrant.
- xxi. **West Bengal:** The State has another platform for deliberation which is below the Gram Sabhas, which are called Gram Sansads. 1 Gram Sabha and 2 Gram Sansads are currently mandated in the State, however, efforts to mandate monthly Gram Sabhas and Gram Sansads is being explored. Currently 5 Standing Committees are mandated in the State, where participation of women representatives form SHGs is made compulsory. Effort to showcase best practices of the State are also being taken and 'Jan Sansar Centres' are built under MGNREGA, to showcase the work done by the PRIs in the Gram Panchayats. Other suggestions of the Ministry would also be considered for adoption by the State.
- xxii. **Andaman & Nicobar Islands:** 2 Gram Sabhas and 4 Sub committees are currently mandated in the provisions of State, however, necessary amendments would be made to adopt the suggestions of the Ministry. IN addition, directions for presence of Group A/Group B officers in Gram Sabhas has also been issued to the Gram Panchayats. Other suggestions of the Ministry would also be considered for adoption by the State.
- xxiii. **Nagaland:** Suggestions of the Ministry would be explored for adoption by the State. The Village Councils are reconstituted in the April -May 2021. Village Development Boards meet regularly to monitor the functioning of the Village Councils.
- xxiv. **Rajasthan:** 4 Gram Sabhas are currently being organised and proposal to increase the frequency of the Gram Sabhas has also been accepted by the State Government. 5 Standing Committees are currently functioning in the State. The dashboard being developed by the Ministry is a welcome step and suggestions of the Ministry would be explored for adoption.
