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सुनील कुमार, आई.ए.एस.

SUNIL KUMAR, IAS



सचिव
भारत सरकार
पंचायती राज मंत्रालय
SECRETARY
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

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

Dated: 16th August, 2021

Dear

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

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

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

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- The suggested tagline **“Gram Sabha hamari shaan, Gaon ki yeh pehchaan”** or its similar version in the regional language may be popularized and displayed in the Gram Sabha meetings to facilitate the citizens to get involved intensely with the campaign. Towards incentivizing the citizens' participation in the GS meetings, various mechanisms like health camps, demonstrations of rural technology projects, inspection visits to schools/ health centres, awards for exemplary performance of citizens etc., may also be considered for being tagged along with the Gram Sabha meetings.
- Towards grievance redressal of the citizens, a separate facility to register the complaints and a predictable resolution mechanism at the GP level may be introduced.
- An integrated real time **online monitoring system**, where all the major performance parameters of key focus areas at the GP/ Village levels are tracked and displayed in the public domain is proposed to be established. The Gram Sabha meetings may be encouraged to deliberate upon the results displayed in the form of a dashboard in such portal. The portal, proposed to be developed and launched by MoPR shortly, would also have facility to schedule meetings, upload the photos/video recordings of the Gram Sabha / Standing Sub Committee meetings as well as their record of proceedings.
- In order to revitalize their functioning, GPs should invariably have **six standing sub-committees**, namely,
 - General Standing Committee;
 - Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition Committee (VHSNC);
 - Planning & Development Committee;
 - Education Committee (School Management Committee);
 - Social Justice Standing Committee, and
 - Water Supply, Water & Environmental Conservation Committee.

Additional sub-committees may also be constituted to oversee other sectors as required locally. Project / Scheme specific Committees at GP level under the Scheme Guidelines may be subsumed under the relevant afore-mentioned Standing Sub-Committees of the Gram Panchayat. Apart from Ward Members and Sarpanch, other expert Government and Non-Government members could be included as Special Invitees.

- All the ward members/elected representatives of the GPs should invariably be made members of these sub-committees, with each ward member not occupying the position in more than two sub-committees. Ward members, who have been identified and trained as a **‘Sector enabler’**, should be made part of the sub-committee dealing with the concerned sector. Suitable remuneration to the ward members/elected representatives for their services to the sub-committees may be provided from State Government funds / Own Source of Revenues (OSRs) of the GPs, which may be up to Rs.1000/- per month per Sub Committee meeting to ward members and up to Rs. 5000/- per month to Sarpanches or as deemed fit by the State Government.

contd..3/-

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- GPs may consider nominating one Ward Member, by rotation in every month, as **'Day Officer'** of the GP who will be responsible for ensuring opening of the GP office, supervision of the cleanliness of the premises, organizing meetings etc to provide the much-needed morale boost to them and also contribute to the well-being of the constituency.

3. The detailed descriptions of the above requirements are provided in the enclosure. It is requested that suitable instructions may be issued towards operationalizing the above action points in your State/UT **w.e.f. October 2021** to the concerned departments, which may also include making appropriate changes in the relevant Act /Rules /instructions, towards making the Gram Sabhas vibrant. The Ministry proposes to launch the portal in the last week of September, 2021.

4. We believe that through our joint efforts we will succeed in strengthening the Panchayati Raj Institutions and making them an effective and responsive institution of local governance working towards realization of Sustainable Development Goals with full support of concerned Departments and Government functionaries.

Yours sincerely,

Encl.: As above.


16.8.21
o/c (Sunil Kumar)

The Chief Secretary,
All States/UTs.

Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant-

“Gram Sabha hamari shaan, Gaon ki yeh pehchaan”

The Gram Panchayats have been envisioned to provide opportunity to the rural population to participate in self-governing process. To strengthen the democratic process at grassroots level, Gram Sabhas are the forum for citizens to meet and deliberate upon development and governance related issues, discuss their common problems for finding solutions, with an aim to enable transparency and accountability in the functioning of Gram Panchayats. In the Constitution, Article 243 defines Gram Sabha as comprising of persons registered in the electoral rolls relating to the village, Article 243A defines its powers and functions as those assigned by the legislature of the State and Article 243 G provides the basis for the Panchayats to be endowed with powers and authority necessary to function as institutions of self-governance to allow them prepare and implement plans for economic development and social justice. **‘Making Gram Sabhas Vibrant’** is an effort towards strengthening the rural local self- governance by adopting a radical approach for strengthening rural economy through intensive implementation of developmental schemes for saturation. The Vibrant Gram Sabha, as the basic unit of rural local self-governance, will also ensure transparency, efficiency and equity.

- **Increasing the frequency of Gram Sabhas:** The Gram Panchayats (GPs) in the States / UTs may be facilitated to hold their Gram Sabha (GS) meetings at such a frequency, to have a minimum of six (bimonthly) meetings and a maximum of twelve (monthly) meetings in a year. The frequency may be decided after consideration of factors like presence of large number of GPs with relatively smaller populations; administrative difficulties in organizing large number of GS meetings etc. The requirements to hold regular/mandatory meetings (as per provisions of State PR Act / Rules), meetings to be convened on national days of importance (Republic Day, Ambedkar Jayanti/ May Day, Independence Day and Gandhi Jayanti) and special meetings for discussion on thematic issues on certain campaigns, may be accommodated within the broad framework of the suggested frequency of the GS meetings. The suggestion regarding GS meetings to be chaired by a person other than the Sarpanch of the GP and holding the meeting in a place other than the Gram Panchayat Bhawan may also be considered based on the local situations and the public response to such proposals. Holding the GS meetings in various places like the school premises, PHC Centres, Aanganwadi Centres etc would help in focusing attention on proper upkeep of these important public places as well as involvement and evincing of interest in the affairs of these institutions by the local populace.
- **Formalizing Agenda of Gram Sabhas:** The agenda for the GS meetings may be prepared to contain regular standing agenda items followed by focused agenda on themes of National priority / focus areas of Health, Water, Sanitation, Nutrition & Education etc. The regular standing agenda may include inter alia the confirmation of minutes of previous meeting, ATR on previous minutes, review of receipt & expenditure, consideration of Audit and social audit reports, review of implementation of citizen's charter with special focus on service delivery, proper selection/ sanction/ monitoring of progress of infrastructure works and identification of the correct beneficiaries for the various welfare schemes of the Government in the priority areas. The discussions on the themes of National priority/ focus areas may be facilitated by a standard presentation (PPT or short video Film etc) prepared by the concerned State Department which should be uniformly used by the respective District/Block official in all the GS meetings to enable focused deliberations in the meetings. Such presentations in the GS may also be followed by a discussion on the subject. It may also be ensured that the resolutions of the GS are binding on the GP Committees and implemented in right earnest.

- **Preparation of Annual Calendar:** An annual calendar may be drawn up for all the GPs in the States for the GS meetings, considering the requirements as above. The preparation of such a calendar would facilitate prior information about the nature of deliberations that would take place in the various GS meetings to all the stakeholders, thus enabling effective utilization of the meeting time towards achievement of intended outcomes. A Sample Calendar indicating the indicative month-wise topics to be covered in the GS agenda is attached as **Annexure 1**. In States where only six GS meetings are scheduled, the topics may be clubbed together.
- **Effective Scheduling of Gram Sabhas:** The GS meetings may be staggered so that only Gram Panchayats in selected clusters go in for GS meetings on a particular day. This would enable the limited resources of District/Block administration to be committed to the conduct of Gram Sabhas, which would optimize efforts and develop monitoring mechanisms for all Departments. The meetings may be pre-scheduled in such a way that a few days of the week, say, 3 days in a week only, is utilized for GS meetings in every District/Block. This would enable predictable days on which the administrative officials will be present in their headquarters. The repetition of GS meetings for a cluster of GPs in the District/Block may be so fixed on a specific day (like First Wednesday of the month). Other clusters in the District/Block would have other days of the month as their GS meeting day. Thus, the timetable formulated at the District/Block level would repeat itself every month or as per frequency determined otherwise. A sample schedule indicative of the pattern of such scheduling within a District is attached as **Annexure 2**. The timings of the GS meetings may be so scheduled to be the most convenient for the village population to attend these meetings in large numbers. In States where there is provision for Ward Sabha Meetings, these may be suitably considered there. Special Mahila Sabhas & Bal Sabhas may continue to be organized in addition to these Gram Sabha meetings as required or as provided for in the respective statutes/rules/instructions of State Government. There should be a fixed routine of the Gram Sabha meetings that is established so that citizens have prior information about the timing of the next Gram Sabha which they are expected to attend.
- **Ensuring presence of Group A and Group B Officers:** The District administration under the leadership of the District Collector may be mobilised to take initiative and ensure attendance of Group A and B officers in all the GS meetings. These officials may be imparted training towards making them effective communicators, especially considering the large gatherings of local citizens expected in Gram Sabha meetings. The training could be oriented towards realizing the vision of ensuring attendance of citizens progressing into participation, involvement, leadership and ownership in the Governance system at the grassroots levels. With administrative presence in Gram Sabhas, grievance redressal is bound to become a part of the effort. A separate facility to register the complaints and a predictable resolution mechanism would help the Gram Sabha to focus on its core functions.
- **Augmenting people participation in Gram Sabhas:** Efforts to be made to ensure maximum attendance of all eligible citizens in the GS meetings. The minimum quorum for the meeting should be 10 % of the members out of which at least 30 % should be women members. This quorum requirement would need to be enforced even for the subsequently held meetings if a scheduled meeting is postponed for want of minimum quorum. Towards this end, various awareness generation and communication tools may be resorted to.
- The suggested tagline - "**Gram Sabha hamari shaan, Gaon ki yeh pehchaan**" - may be popularized and invariably displayed in the GS meetings to facilitate the citizens to get involved intensely with the campaign. The formats of IEC materials provided herewith may also be used to create publicity. Digital/virtual means of citizens' participation like video-conferencing systems through mobile applications etc, wherever possible and permissible, may also be considered. The services of elected representatives, voluntary/ youth organizations, SHGs,

ASHA workers, Rozgar Sahayaks etc., may also be utilized to create awareness generation towards participation in the GS meetings. Towards incentivizing the citizens' participation in the GS meetings, various mechanisms like medical checkups, demonstrations of rural technology projects, inspection visits to schools/ health centres, awards for exemplary performance of citizens etc., may also be considered for being tagged with the GS meetings.

- **Monitoring of KPIs at State level:** MoPR will shortly launch an integrated, real time online based monitoring system, where all the key performance parameters of major focus areas at the Gram Panchayat/ Village levels are tracked and displayed in the public domain, and the GS meetings may be encouraged to deliberate upon the results displayed in the form of a dashboard in such portal with respect to their GPs. The portal will also have facility to schedule meetings of GS and GP Sub-Committees and upload the video recordings of the Gram Sabha meetings as well as the records of proceedings.
- **Activating Standing / Sub-Committees of GPs:** All GPs in States/UTs should invariably have the following six standing sub-committees.
 - **General Standing Committee:** to look after all administrative, establishment, maintenance of assets, disaster management and other miscellaneous matters
 - **Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition Committee (VHSNC):** to look after issues related to Health, Sanitation and Nutrition matters
 - **Planning and Development Committee:** for Planning, Finance, Auditing and Anti-poverty programmes.
 - **Education (School Management) Committee:** to look after issues relating to pre-school and school education and Mid-Day Meal programme
 - **Social Justice Committee:** for empowerment of vulnerable sections including women, children, SC/ST, disabled & elderly
 - **Water Supply, Water & Environmental Conservation Committee:** to look after issues relating to water supply, water conservation measures, Rain water harvesting, sustainable irrigation for agriculture, environmental issues, afforestation / social forestry, tree plantation, clean/renewable energy, etc.

The tenure of the sub-committee should be made same as that of the elected Panchayat, namely, five years. The broad subjects to be dealt by these six sub-committees and their link with the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is listed at **Annexure 3**.

In addition to the above six sub-committees, States / UTs may also constitute additional sub-committees to look after other sectors/functions as required locally. The exact number, nomenclature of these committees and their roles and responsibilities may be suitably described based on the local requirements in the States/UTs. In order to enable the sub-committee members to discharge their functions effectively, the State/UT may consider making necessary amendments in the concerned Act/Rules/Instructions, if required.

- All the ward members of the GPs should be invariably be made as the members of at least one of these sub-committees, with each ward member not occupying the position in more than two sub-committees. Ward members who have been identified and trained as a '**Sector enabler**' should be made part of the sub-committee dealing with the concerned sector. The meetings of the sub-committees are to be held at monthly frequency. In order to incentivize active participation of the ward members in the sub-committees, honorarium/ sitting fees of upto Rs.1000 per month may be considered to be provided to them from the Own Source of Revenues (OSR) of the Panchayats, or from State Government assistance to the GPs. In case of services provided by the Gram Pradhan/ Sarpanch to these sub-committees, the honorarium/ sitting fees for such services should be restricted to maximum of Rs.5000 per month which should also be from the Own Source of Revenues (OSR) of the Panchayats or from State

Government assistance to the GPs. The Central Finance Commission Grants are however not to be used for payments of such honorarium/ sitting fees. In view of the popularization of smart phones, and the common use of virtual technology for attending meetings through VC, provision for allowing the sub committee members to attend meetings through virtual means may be allowed. **Attendance in the GS / sub-committee meetings through proxy by the so-called 'Pradhan Pati' or 'GP Ward Member Pati' of the women Sarpanches/ Ward Members should not be allowed.**

- **Designating Ward Member as 'Day Officer':** GPs should nominate one ward member/elected representative, by rotation in every month, as 'Day Officer' of the GP who will be responsible for ensuring opening of the GP office, supervision of the cleanliness of the premises, organizing meetings etc. This would provide the much-needed morale boost to the ward members of the GPs to feel important and also contribute to the well-being of their constituency.

Annexure 1

Sample Calendar indicating the month-wise topics to be covered in the Gram Sabha agenda

Month	Review and beneficiary selection under Scheme/ Programs / Deliberation on National Campaign	Thematic Area& Department/Agency responsible*
January	i. Skill India ii. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) iii. Recognition of Prior Learning iv. Skill Mapping v. Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maan-dhan vi. Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana vii. Working of Self Help Groups viii. Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana	Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (Dept. of Skill Development / Skill Development Mission, District Skill Committee) State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLM); Rural Development Department
February	i. Consideration of Panchayat Annual Budget for the successive year ii. Service Delivery at Panchayat level iii. Digital India – Electronic delivery of services	Citizens' Charter & Service Delivery (Panchayati Raj Department)
March	i. Poshan Abhiyan campaign ii. Women Rights & Gender Sensitivity iii. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana iv. Beti Bachao Beti Padhao v. Sukanya Samridhi Yojana vi. Jal Shakti Campaign (National Water Day) vii. Ground Water level Monitoring	Women Issues, Nutrition (Women & Child Development Department) Water Conservation (Water Supply, Irrigation, Minor Irrigation Department)
April	i. Ayushman Bharat (Health & Wellness Centre Day (1st April) ii. Ambedkar Jayanti iv. Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan v. Mission Indradhanush vi. Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana	Maternal & Child Health, Immunization, Public Health (Health Department)
May	i. May Day ii. Atal Pension Yojana iii. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana iv. Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana v. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana	Social Welfare Schemes & Consumer Awareness (Department of Social Welfare, Dept. of ST Welfare, Labour Department, Consumer

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> vi. Old Age, Widow, Disability Pension vii. Fair Price Shops -Public Distribution system viii. Prevention of Manual Scavenging Act 	Protection Dept)
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. School Chalo campaign ii. Pre-School, Primary & Secondary School Education – Samagra Shiksha scheme iii. Various Scholarship & Mid Day Meal schemes of Government iv. International Yoga Day v. Fit India Campaign vi. Khelo India vii. Development & maintenance of Parks & Sports fields 	Education (School Education Department, Social Welfare, OBC Welfare, Minority Welfare Departments) Youth Development, Fitness and Sports (Sports & Youth Welfare Department)
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Tree Plantation ii. Climate Change iii. Soil Conservation iv. Issue related to Forest Right Act 2006, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Protection of wild life, forest and biodiversity b) Protection of catchment areas, water sources, ecologically sensitive areas v. Van Bandhu Kalyan Yojana vi. Preparation of Bio-Diversity Registers 	Environment Protection (Forest Department, Environment Department, Horticulture Department, Soil Conservation Department)
August	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Independence Day ii. Monetisation of Assets iii. Property Tax / Professions Tax iv. Lease of Common Property Assets v. Utility / Service Charges vi. Leveraging Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds 	Panchayat's Own Sources of Revenue (OSR) (Finance / Industries /Revenue Department and Panchayati Raj Departments)
September	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Agriculture ii. Animal Husbandry- Poultry and Dairy Development iii. e-NAM (National Agricultural Market) iv. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana v. Soil Health Card vi. Fisheries Development 	Aatmanirbhar Bharat (Agriculture Department, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries Department, Mandi Parishad)
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Peoples' Plan Campaign ii. Swachh Bharat Abhiyaan iii. Jal Jeevan Mission iv. Solid & Liquid Waste Management 	Drinking Water, Sanitation and Waste management (Panchayati Raj Department, PHED /Jal Nigam)

November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Constitution Day ii. Peoples' Plan Campaign iii. MGNREGA iv. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana(PMAY) v. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana(PMGSY) vi. Swamitva Scheme vii. Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) 	Rural Development & Capacity Development of Panchayati Raj functionaries (Rural Development Department & Panchayati Raj Department)
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Peoples' Plan Campaign ii. Disaster Management Plan iii. Gram Nyayalayas / Alternative Justice systems like Lok Adalats 	Disaster Management & Disputes Resolution (Panchayati Raj Department, Home Affairs Department and Legal Affairs Department)

*Concerned Departments to prepare standard presentations / short videos on the schemes/ campaigns/ themes, which would be presented / screened by the District/ Block officials during the Gram Sabha meetings to enable awareness creation and focused discussions on the subject, identification and verification of beneficiaries etc.

Annexure 2

Indicative Weekly Scheduling of Gram Sabhas within a District

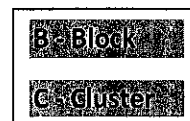
Name of District:

State:

Number of GP Clusters:

Month: Week:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
B1 C -1, 2,	HQ Day	B2, C-1,2	HQ Day	B2 C-6
B1 C-3,4	HQ Day	B2, C-3	HQ Day	B2, C-7 B3, C-2,3
B1 C-5,6	HQ Day	B2, C-4 B3, C-8	HQ Day	B2, C-8 B3, C-4,5
B1 C-7,8	HQ Day	B2,C-5	HQ Day	B3,C-6,7



* All Gram Panchayats in Cluster 1 to 8 of Block1 (B1) will have their Gram Sabha Meetings on Monday staggered in timings to facilitate participation of concerned district officials.

* Similarly Other blocks and clusters can be scheduled to accommodate the Gram Sabha Meetings on other week days, namely, Wednesday, Friday as indicated.

* The pattern to repeat similarly for other Blocks and Clusters, taking into consideration the frequency determined for the Gram Sabha Meetings

HQ Day- For district Administration officials to be present at their HQ, hence no Gram Sabha Meetings to be scheduled.

Annexure 3

Roles of Sub-Committees of Gram Panchayats linked to UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Sl.No.	Name of Sub-Committee	Subjects to be dealt by the Committee	Link to UN Sustainable Development Goals
1	General Standing Committee	Administration, Establishment, Public Distribution System, Disaster management, Maintenance of assets, Consumer Awareness PDS – Fair Price Shops Consumer Protection Capacity Development of Panchayat ERs and functionaries and other miscellaneous matters	1. No Poverty 2. Zero Hunger 8. Decent work and Economic Growth
2	Village Health, Sanitation, Nutrition Committee (VHSNC)	Health, Sanitation and Nutrition matters	3. Good Health and Well being 6. Clean Water and Sanitation
3	Planning and Development Committee	Planning, Finance, Auditing and Anti-poverty programmes.	1. No Poverty 2. Zero Hunger 8. Decent work and Economic Growth
4	Education (School Management) Committee	Pre- School and School education; Mid- Day Meal programme	2. Zero Hunger 4. Quality Education
5	Social Justice Committee	Empowerment of vulnerable sections including women, children, SC/ST, disabled & elderly	1. No Poverty 5. Gender Equality 8. Decent work and Economic Growth 10. Reduced inequalities 16. Peace and Justice Strong Institutions
6	Water Supply, Water & Environmental Conservation Committee	Water supply, Water conservation measures, Rain water harvesting, sustainable irrigation for agriculture, Environmental issues, Afforestation / social forestry, tree plantation, Soil Conservation, Clean/renewable energy	1. No Poverty 3. Good Health and well being 6. Clean Water and Sanitation 7. Affordable Clean Energy 11. Sustainable Communities 12. Responsible Consumption and Production 13. Climate Action 14. Life below water 15. Life on Land