



CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING PROGRAMMES FOR LOCAL BODIES' REPRESENTATIVES IN TAMILNADU

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Introduction

The experience of the panchayat representatives in the panchayat raj institutions has transformed their outlook and status. They have recorded regular attendance at panchayat meeting; they have used their elected authority to address critical issues of their own region. They facilitate the basic amenities also. For that extensive training will be given to the elected representatives through the Tamil Nadu Institute of Urban Studies. They cover a wide range of topics covering Municipal laws, Human development, e governance, finances, financing of infrastructure etc., with special emphasis on Women Empowerment and Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribes welfare.¹

Orientation Programme

Tamilnadu Government is keen in giving training to the elected representatives. A series of sensitization and training programmes have been organized for the Village Panchayat Presidents and implementing officials.² Usually, training for the newly elected Village Panchayat Presidents would be started from an orientation programme. It would be a minimum of 2 days to a maximum of 7 days. Two days' orientation training was conducted for the newly elected Village Panchayat Presidents in 2006 at 125 venues across the 29 districts in the State. Since more than 80% of the Village Panchayat Presidents are first-timers, they were sensitised on their roles and responsibilities, maintenance of accounts, conduct of meetings and implementation of schemes³.

It is proposed to impart periodic training to the elected representatives of Local

Bodies in various schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam (AGAMT) etc. through the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and the five Regional Institutes of Rural Development (RIRDs).⁴ It is also proposed to create a corpus fund for training the elected representatives of the 3 tiers of Panchayats on a regular basis. A conference of Chairpersons of District Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and heads of urban Local Bodies was also conducted in 2007 at Chennai. Various issues pertaining to effective functioning and empowerment of Local Bodies were deliberated upon and discussed in this conference.⁵

Under Mahalir Thittam, a federation of SHGs is formed at the Village Panchayat Level called the Panchayat Level Federation (PLF) comprising of two representatives from each SHG in the Panchayat. The PLF provides a common platform for the SHGs to share their experiences and to voice their problems. The PLFs can help achieve what individual SHGs cannot, by pooling in talent and resources and exploiting economies of scale both in production and marketing. They can also guide and monitor the functioning of SHGs in a Village Panchayat and also form and train new SHGs. Strengthening PLFs is the key to achieving sustainability in the long run⁶.

Group activities will be organised and infrastructure for community activities and community oriented programmes for sanitation and literacy will be implemented. Under the

wage employment programme various training were given for implementing various schemes like construction of small drains, retaining walls, Noon Meal centres, ICDS centres, laying of roads, path ways, Low Cost Latrines, community toilets, parks, rain water harvesting structures etc. The State Level Urban Development Agency would be given training to the elected representatives.. The Tamil Nadu Institute of Urban Studies which has identified model training for all. They receive funds from central government and state government.

Infrastructure Development training

Regional Institute for Rural development used to provide all sorts of training to the elected Panchayat representatives. In 2008 the Tamilnadu government upgraded the regional institutes with various facilities. The government insisted to impart quality training,⁷. The Government have sanctioned Rs.25 lakhs to five RIRDs, at the rate of Rs. 5 lakhs each for replacement of training and hostel accessories under Part II scheme 2008-09

Expose visits

. Tamlnadu Government allocates an amount of Rs.1 crore for imparting training programmes to the elected representatives of the rural Local Bodies and undertaking exposure visits within and outside State in order to acquire first-hand knowledge about the good practices elsewhere.⁸ During the year 2009-10 also, exposure visits were conducted for the elected representatives of rural Local Bodies in 22 batches consisting of 5 days package to Madurai (11 batches) and Coimbatore (11 batches) Districts. The Madurai visit covers Madurai, Kodaikanal and Rameswaram. The Village Panchayat Presidents visit Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Othakadai, Chekkanoorani Precision Farming, Tamil Nadu Horticulture College, Periyakulam and Dhan Foundation, Madurai. The Coimbatore visit covers Odanthurai Village Panchayat Tamil Nadu Agriculture University, Solid Waste Management and Siruthuzhi in Coimbatore District and Horticulture Research Centre in Nilgiris District. A total number of 1,143 Village Panchayat Presidents participated in the Exposure Visits in 22 batches (8 batches for women and 14 batches for men).⁹

Publications

The Government have, among the publications, brought out valuable publications for the benefit of Panchayat Raj Institutions and Officials such as Compendium of Amendment to Acts and Rules and Government Orders, Guidelines and Instructions issued by the Government on Rural Development and Panchayat Raj . Annual Report on the Functioning of Panchayats in Tamil Nadu also published in order to appreciate and create knowledge in that fields for the representatives.

The Ministry supports the training activities of States for effective implementation of rural development programmes by providing financial support to State Institutes of Rural Development (SIRDs) and Extension Training Centres (ETCs). The SIRDs and ETCs are State Government institutes for imparting training in the field of rural development to rural development functionaries, elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions and members of Village Monitoring Committees at State level and at District or Block level respectively.

Human Development and social development training

These institutes aim at improving the knowledge, skill and attitude of rural development functionaries and elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions at State and District level. At present, there are 28 SIRDs, one in each State. 100% Central assistance is being provided to SIRDs for non-recurring expenditure while recurring expenditure is shared equally between the Central and State governments. The courses conducted by SIRDs include Training Skills and Methodology for ETCs, Planning and implementation of RD schemes, Rural Credit, Computer Information System for RD, Courses for BDOs, Voluntary Organisations, Management Development Programmes, Integrated Watershed Development, etc.¹⁰

In one year 204 batches of training were conducted covering 10,588 participants which include the elected representatives of rural Local Bodies, Joint Directors, Assistant Directors, Assistant Project Officers, Assistant Executive Engineers, Project Economists, Block Development Officers, Ministerial staff, members of Self Help Groups, N.G.Os and Panchayat Assistants.¹¹

The participants will be able to understand the multi-dimensional group dynamics in democratic functioning of Gram Panchayat (GP) with reference to the here-and-now experience and also to their own experiences of functioning as members of GP, family, club etc. The participants will be able to better understand the application of the concepts of participation, communication, facilitation, leadership, conflict resolution, decision-making, problem solution, issues and stages of group development and other related issues in the context of their own region. Understanding of application of these concepts through an intense practice session in the orientation session itself, based on lessons from behavioural science and followed by feedback from their peers and trainers, are expected to leave a strong impact on them to behave appropriately in the democratic functioning of Gram Panchayat. In the long term, they are expected to resolve many issues of conflict by applying their experience earned through the exercise. There will be a more conducive environment for participatory training through the approach of 'learning by doing'¹²

Role of SIRD and RIRDs in Capacity Building Training programmes

Training Programmes are conducted by the State Institute of Rural Development, Maraimalai Nagar and the five Regional Institutes of Rural Development to the elected representatives of the rural Local Bodies and Officers and Staff of the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department on various aspects. While the SIRD is functioning at Maraimalai Nagar as the apex training institute, the five Regional Institutes of Rural Development are functioning at S.V.Nagaram, Krishnagiri, Pattukottai, T.Kallupatti and Bhavanisagar and cater to the training needs of the districts earmarked to them.¹³

E-enablement of GPs through proficient application

The participants will be able to better understand the efficacy of e-governance through Application of the Panchayat Enterprise Suites for more effective management of the functions of Gram Panchayats.

The participants will be able to better understand how to solve the problems in implementation of the major Rural

Development Programmes or Schemes viz. MGNREGS ,NSAP FEC The participants will be able to understand the importance of their roles and responsibilities in functioning of Panchayat as an institution of self-government. There will be a more comfortable environment for learning achieved through Adult Learning Principle¹⁴

Conclusion

After fresh Panchayat General Elections every five years, almost all the States organise Induction Level Orientation for the new Elected Representatives (ER) of Gram Panchayats (GP). Having been fresh entrants to the Panchayati Raj system Many TNA (Training Needs Assessment) exercises corroborate the increasing need for their learning.. Gaps in attainment of capacity are more particularly noticed among those ERs who represent the backward sections including SC, ST, BC and women.

ENDNOTES

¹ *Policy Notes 2008-09, Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj*

¹ , *Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Annual Report,2009-10*

¹ *Policy Notes 2008-09*

¹ , *Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Annual Report,2006-07*

¹ *Idem*

¹ *G.O.Ms. No.116 SW & NMP Department dated 31.7.2002*

¹ *G.O.(D) No.722, RD & PR (PR.3) Department, dated 30.09.2008.*

¹ *G.O.(D) No.460, Rural Development & Panchayat Raj (PR.3) Department, Dated, 21.07.2009.*

¹ *Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Annual Report,2009-10*

¹ *Report of State Institute of Rural Development, 2011.*

¹ *G.O. Ms.No. 161 RD & PR (CGS-1) Department, dated 13.10.2008*

¹ *Module of Training to Gram Panchayats*

¹ *National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj ,Model Training Module,p.30*

¹ *ibid,p32*