

Minutes of the 2nd meeting of Central Executive Committee of Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan held on 17.09.2015

The second meeting of Central Executive Committee (CEC) of RGPSA was held under the chairmanship of Shri S.M Vijayanand, Secretary, MoPR at 10:00 AM onwards in the conference room of MoPR, 11th Floor, JP building, KG marg New Delhi. The list of Participants is at annexure-1.

At the outset, the chair person welcome the members of the CEC in the meeting. Thereafter, Smt. Sarada Muraleedharan, JS, MoPR informed the member that there were two general agenda items and Annual Plan proposals in respect of six states namely Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan to be considered in the meeting.

General Agenda

Item-1 E- Governance under NPTA

As regards, the first general agenda item regarding e- governance under NPTA, Shri A.K. Goyal, AS, MoPR informed the committee that in the RGPSA CEC meeting held on 22 June 2015, the CEC had approved an amount of Rs. 18.76 crore for taking up 'priority activities' under e-Panchayat during 2015-16 for continuing the on-going scheme. Since the minutes of the meeting indicated by mistake that the funds were sanctioned to NIC (instead of NICS), IFD had not given its concurrence for release of funds to NICS. It was clarified by AS, AKG that since the project was being conducted through NICS for the last 5-6 years with NIC being the technical partner, the amount of Rs. 18.76 crore had to be released to NICS. He further clarified that NICS being a section 25 company under the DeitY which followed GFR provisions for all procurements (of technical manpower, hardware and software support), the rates of NICS were considered competitive and the e-Panchayat project should continue to be implemented through NICS. Anyhow it was only a clerical error which resulted in "NIC" being written instead of NICS.

In view of the clarification above, the CEC agreed to the proposal of E-Panchayat Division for release of Rs 18.76 crore to NICS for implementation of e-Panchayat project by MoPR.

Item-2 Proposal for DSS :

JS(SM) brought out that the Development Support Services Modality, agreed by the Ministry of Finance, allowed UNDP to provide critical implementation support and to address budget execution challenges. Several ministries like the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and DOPT have availed the DSS of UNDP.

It was pointed out that the Fourteenth Finance Commission award and the revised work priorities of the Ministry had created the need for strong professional support for supporting fast track enhancement of capabilities of PRIs in local

planning and governance. In this connection it was proposed that the DSS may be taken for obtaining top quality professionals with domain expertise and practical experience in relevant areas. The areas identified by MoPR for support were as under:

- Decentralised planning processes especially in the context of the gram panchayat development plans being rolled out in States. This was necessitated because of FFC awards.
- Institutional capability development and faculty competency enhancement in SIRDs and training centres for Panchayati Raj. The quality of training was extremely important in building the capability and competence of PRIs. Faculty development was also a priority activity in the NPTA and Ministry needed an expert who can bring the best pedagogic practices of high quality institutions to improve the quality of faculty for panchayati raj based trainings.
- Research work and codification of practices for PESA : It was pointed out that the implementation of PESA in the V schedule area was being driven by the MoPR and states were found to be bereft of quality faculty and resource persons at SIRD and at department level. As Ministry needed to push the agenda of PESA, which required lot of ground work as well as coordination with sister ministries of Government of India a person with higher professional qualification was required with MoPR to exclusively drive this agenda
- Human resource assessment and provisioning for PRIs: It was brought out that devolution of functionaries to PRIs across the states was inadequate and there was no scientific assessment of human resources required by PRIs to undertake the functions assigned to them. So Ministry proposes to make an assessment of state specific human resource requirement of PRIs so that this could form the basis of persuading States to take up devolution of functionaries to PRIs on normative basis as per State Panchayati Raj Act. Hence, for this assessment and thereafter, suggesting strategies which state can adopt to procure human resources, an expert who could anchor this intervention was needed.
- Benchmarking of services and development of performance frameworks: Many States have passed Service Delivery Acts . Under FFC too, service delivery in term of basic services have been insisted upon. FFC has laid emphasis on performance criteria and framework for assessing the functioning of Panchayats. Benchmarking service standards, customising these benchmarks to state specific scenarios, identifying gaps in service delivery, helping the Panchayats to achieve those standards prescribed for them require constant iterative study and handholding. To accomplish this work high quality professional input is required.
- Knowledge hub: One more area had been identified for taking up on priority, which was creating a knowledge hub . The ministry was trying to collate the best practices on local goernance both indigenous and international and make available to the states as knowledge packages for policy formulation as well as capacity support, that could be provisioned with States and SIRDs. For collecting the best practices, codification, developing process guidelines etc. and making them available in public

domain, high-end professional expertise was required to be located with the Ministry on full time basis.

It was further discussed in the CEC that since the above tasks were very demanding, requiring professionals of highest order, appropriate remuneration would have to be given. Supplementing the above, SPR informed the committee that the DSS framework would be advantageous for this ministry on the ground that it will be make available bright professionals for these tasks. The approval of Minister would be sought for the same.

The CEC, in view of the position brought out before the committee agreed to initiating the process for hiring professionals through the DSS route. The scope for negotiating the overhead costs charged by UNDP was to be examined.

Item 3 Other items

Before taking up the next agenda i.e. Annual Plan proposals of six states, Secretary informed the committee that with the receipt of Rs 300 crore as supplementary grants, the funds available for RGPSA was to the tune of Rs. 360 Crore and additional Rs. 300 Crore was expected from MoF. Since more than five months have already been elapsed, the release of funds was utmost priority of this Ministry. He further informed that although the guidelines of Ministry of Finance for FFC release were yet to issued, it was expected that Gram Panchayat Development Plan would be insisted upon. Hence, this Ministry has been pursuing with State Governments since April 2015 for GPDP and most States were in the process of issuing guidelines, or had already issued them and had gone ahead. In view of this, for RGPSA the focus of training would be GPDP.

Thereafter JS(SM) informed that since in the current year the State component of RGPSA has been delinked from the budgetary support, the additional funds had not been brought into the Head of Account for State support for RGPSA. They were received as part of the central component and would be 100% funded from Centre, as a Central Sector Scheme. Also, the funds would be provided to the SIRDs/NIRDPR and would not be routed to State treasuries, since the support under the head gives priority to addressing capacity building requirements for GPDP in the context of the FFC award. Since RGPSA in its original shape was not restored, it was not possible to fund certain regular components of the scheme viz. Administrative and Technical Support to Gram Panchayats, GP constructions, State Election Commissions, low resource Panchayats etc. The Ministry intends to provide financial assistance for training, training infrastructure, e-governance and for strengthening the SPRC, DPRC etc. It will also provide support for enabling GPDP in PESA areas, and retain PMU and IEC funding, as these were necessary to carry the capacity building interventions forward. Innovations that targeted improvement of functional capability of the PRIs in respect of the FFC award would also be supported.

CEC was informed that the Ministry had organised a Writeshop on Participatory planning at KILA, Kerala, in July 2015, where framework for GPDP guidelines were discussed. The training plans of States were expected to cover what type of structures would be in place for implementation of GPDP and how the above structures would be capacitated as per the training strategy of the States. Hence a

GPDP checklist had been prepared to see the training strategy in the context of GPDP and gaps therein so that states may be impressed upon to improve their participatory planning process.

The CEC decided that in States where elections were held recently or were due in the next two to three months, the GPDP should necessarily form part of basic orientation training. In view of the enormous volume of training to be conducted and the paucity of funds, CEC decided to approve mass trainings at GP level at Rs. 350, at block level at Rs. 500 and at district level at Rs. 750, which was below the rates prescribed under RGPSA. Exemptions would be made in special circumstances, where a specific case was made out. States could also propose a per GP rate for capacity building, in lieu of unit costs, which could include handholding support, capacity building support and environment generation, provided the number of people capacitated was equal to or more than what could be covered as per the prescribed unit cost.

In the course of the State wise discussions, the following general decisions were also taken:

- CEC members may visit States to review the action under GPDP and RGPSA. State wise brief should be made available to the CEC members for the same.
- The e governance units in the States that would be anchoring the Plan Plus and other PES applications would henceforth be known as the e governance Resource Group.
- SPR would be delegated the power to approve the Capacity building and Training Plans of the States, where modifications were proposed by CEC, under intimation to the next CEC.
- The need for engaging with the devolution and strengthening of the Intermediate and District Panchayats was discussed and the CEC urged the Ministry to discuss the issue on priority.
- The NIRDPR budget under the NPTA should encompass capacity building support through provisioning of experts for the North East to aid in their GPDP processes.
- All States would be required to converge the human resources (both formal and community based) of NRLM and MGNREGS with GPDP.