

CAPACITY BUILDING OF ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND FUNCTIONARIES OF PANCHAYATS

Activity mapping has been prepared for 23 subjects demarcating responsibilities of each tier of panchayats. Functions have been distributed among three tiers according to the capacity of each level of panchayat. Panchayati Raj Institutions will now be in the position to know about their specific powers and responsibilities. Development of a sector have a sequence with responsibilities distributed among different tiers at different levels. Every sector has got different functions. Each function can be conveniently and realistically discharge at the appropriate level.

23 subjects covered under activity mapping are Agriculture including Agriculture Extension, Land Improvement & Soil Conservation, Minor Irrigation, Water Management & Watershed Development, Animal Husbandry, Dairy & Poultry, Fisheries, Social Forestry & Farm Forestry, Minor Forest Products, Small Scale Industries

including Food Processing, Handloom, Sericulture, Khadi, Village & Cottage Industries, Drinking Water & Sanitation, Fuel & Fodder, Roads, Culverts, Bridges, Ferries, Waterways & Other means of Communication, Rural Electrification including Distribution of Electricity, Poverty Alleviation Programme, Primary Education, Secondary Education, Adult & Non Formal Education, Sports & Youth Affairs, Health Sanitation including Hospitals, Health Centres & Dispensaries, Family Welfare, Women & Child Development, Social Welfare, including Welfare of the Handicapped and Mentally Retarded, Public Distribution System.

In the light of activity mapping, the SIRD, Assam has been started the process for organizing Training Programmes for the newly elected representatives of panchayats as per the comprehensive plan submitted by the institute and approved by the Ministry to be elected to be elected in the next year. As per the approved plan, the Institute is supposed to organize training programmes for all the elected representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions in three subject specific rounds. Each programme will be of 3 (three) days duration as per the plan.

Subjects to be covered during the training programmes:

- ▶ General overview of Panchayati Raj and its evolution.
- ▶ Main features of Assam Panchayati Raj Act' 1994.
- ▶ Various aspects relating to management of PRIs.
- ▶ Devolution - Activity Mapping.
- ▶ Resource mobilisation, management including budget preparation in PRIs.
- ▶ Participatory development through Gram Sabha.
- ▶ Decentralised planning, role of DPC.
- ▶ Planning and management of flagship programmes.
- ▶ Social mobilisation and social audit.

Decentralized approach in organizing the courses: The SIRD, Assam has adopted a decentralized approach in organising the training programmes through its 12 Extension centers situated in different zones of the State. The Chairpersons and members of Zilla Parishads and Anchalik Panchayats (Intermediate Panchayat)

will be undergoing training in SIRD's Head Quarters at Khanapara, Guwahati. Chairpersons and members of G.P.s are to be undergoing training at the Extension centers.

For certain specific subjects, Chairpersons of Gram Panchayats are also to be invited to participate in training programmes organized at SIRD's HQs at Khanapara, Guwahati. Simultaneous training programmes in all the Extension Centres will help the Institute in covering maximum participants in a short span of time.

ToT for the Resource Persons: The Institute has built a team of 70 (seventy) Resource Persons besides its Faculty Members for imparting training to Elected Representatives in different extension centres of the Institute. Around 45 selected Lecturers of Colleges, Retired officials have undergone ToT courses in KILA (Kerala Institute of Local Administration) on various aspects of Panchayati Raj system and Decentralised Planning. SIRD has engaged these trained up people in taking sessions in the Extension Centres of the Institute.

Training for Officials on Panchayati Raj system: Besides organizing training programmes for the Elected Representatives, the Institute has been conducting training Programmes for Officials also on Strengthening of Panchayati Raj System through Devolutions of Functions, Functionaries, Fund, Preparation of District Plan and role of District Planning Committee.

The Government of Assam notified the Activity Map on 25th June' 2007. Soon thereafter, the SIRD started training programmes for the officials of Line Departments with the help of the state share allocated for the training of PRIs before the elections. Broad subjects covered during the courses were various aspects relating to PR system, devolution, decentralized planning, preparation of district plan, role of DPC etc. Objective was to get the officials belonging to Line Departments acquainted with various aspects relating to the Panchayati Raj System in the light of the activity mapping. 6740 officials were covered in 146 courses organized in a decentralized manner during 2007 - 08. Process is still continuing.

Training on computerization of accounting system in Panchayats: The Institute has also been organizing training

programmes on streamlining and computerizing Accounting system in Panchgayati Raj Intuitions.

Special focus: The SIRD proposes to organize social mobilization programmes on Panchayati Raj at Gram Sabha level. With the devolution of functions, functionaries and funds, participatory planning process will have to be strengthened. It is indeed very much essential to make rural masses aware about participatory planning through Gram Sabhas, implementation of the programmes in a participatory manner and also about social audit. The institute will require resources for organizing such social mobilization camps in an extensive manner.

The institute has also given emphasis on strengthening the District Planning Committees by imparting training on decentralized planning process to officials and non officials.

The SIRD has also given special thrust on organizing special courses on streamlining accounting system of the PRIs. Courses are being organized in association with office of Principal Accountant General, Guwahati.

The SIRD has already taken up the matter of organizing training cum exposure visits for elected representatives with Kerala Institute of Local Administration and other specialized institutes situated in different parts of the country.

Reading materials: Reading materials in local languages i.e. Assamese, Bodo, Bengali has been prepared for easy understanding of the participants.

CAPACITY BUILDING UNDER BRGF

Backward Region Grant Fund is being implemented in 11 districts of Assam. Capacity building of the elected representatives and other functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions is a critical component under BRGF. The training programmes are to be organized primarily to build the capacity in planning, implementation, monitoring, accounting and improving accountability and transparency etc. The fund is not only for organizing the training programmes for capacity building. It covers other components like providing computer facility to Gram Panchayats, setting up of State Level Satellite Studio for Satellite based training programmes, setting up of Block Level Resource Centres, taking up studies on backwardness of the district etc.

The SIRD has been organizing the training programmes as per the provisions of the guidelines under BRGF.

- 1. Training programmes for officials:** As the elected representatives have only recently assumed charges at all the

three tiers, the SIRD started the capacity building process by imparting training to officials of different sectors belonging to the BRGF districts. A series of training programmes for all the officials of line Departments has been organized from May' 2007 to December' 2007. Around 5000 functionaries of the district, Sub Division and Block level have undergone training on strengthening of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Various subjects on BRGF, devolution of funds, functions and functionaries, preparation of district plan, integration and consolidation of plan have been covered during these programmes.

2. **Workshop on preparation of district plan in association with NIRD, Hyderabad:** The SIRD in association with NIRD, Hyderabad organized workshop on preparation of district plan under BRGF. All the matters relating to the preparation of an integrated district plan were discussed. Matters relating to formation of District Planning Team, role of TSI also came up for discussion. CEOs of Zilla Parishads and sectoral officials from State and District HQs were participated in the workshop.

- 3. Training programmes for district planning team:** SIRD has been organizing training programmes for District Planning Team on preparation of district plan under BRGF in association with NIRD, NERC. District Planning Team from Cachar, Hailakandi, Goalpara & Morigaon have participated in the programme. Training process is continuing. District Planning Team constituted by sectoral officials have been participating in these programmes.

- 4. TOT in Kerala Institute of Local Administration:** To make the training programmes for the elected representatives and grass root level functionaries more meaningful in the BRGF districts, SIRD has selected Resource Persons and deputed them to undergone TOT courses in Kerala Institute of Local Administration. They have started imparting training to the newly elected representatives of panchayats. The Resource Persons include college teachers, selected representatives of NGOs, social workers, Faculty Members from different institutes etc.

5. **Training for elected representatives of panchayats:** The process for imparting training to the elected representatives of panchayats belonging to BRGF districts will be started from the first week of April' 2008.
6. **Training in subject specific rounds:** Training programmes will be organized in different rounds covering foundation courses, basic functional courses, courses on sectorally focused programmes etc. Elected representatives, Chairpersons of VCDCs 25647 and 25554 officials will be trained up. There will be total 51201 participants covering both elected representatives, Chairpersons of VCDCs and officials to be trained in different rounds by SIRD.
7. **Upgradation of training facilities:** Training facilities in the districts of Hailakandi, Cachar and Chirang are being upgraded for organizing training programmes at locally.
8. **Reading materials in local language:** Reading material has also been prepared in local languages for easy understanding by the elected representatives as well as village level officials.

BRGF guidelines has also been translated into Assamese and process for translating into Bengali and Boro language is continuing.

Booklet on important features under BRGF has been prepared in Assamese, Boro and Bengali for easy understanding of elected representatives of panchayats and members of Gram Sabhas in their own language.

9. **Awareness generation:** Awareness generation programmes at district, block and village level are being organized for social mobilization.
10. **Training ICT:** Necessary arrangements are being made for organizing ICT programmes for the panchayati raj functionaries. Training will be organized in the Extension Centres falling in BRGF districts.
11. **State level satellite studio and receiving stations:** The SIRD has already held three rounds of discussion with Director, North Eastern Space Application Centre, Borapani, Meghalaya under ISRO for setting up the satellite studio at state level. The organization will extend all necessary support in

establishing the satellite studio at state level as well as the receiving stations at the block level.

12. **Study on backwardness of the districts:** The SIRD proposes to take up the study on backwardness of the districts in association with selected organizations and institutes.
13. **Training on village level extension workers:** The SIRD has also decided to organize training programmes for village level agriculture extension workers, gender empowerment community volunteer, barefoot engineers etc.