Minister’s Message

My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest shall have the same opportunities as the strongest... True democracy cannot be worked by twenty men sitting at the center. It has to be worked from below, by the people of every village.

MAHATMA GANDHI

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NATIONAL PANCHAYATI RAJ DAY 2013

PANCHAYATI RAJ DAY was celebrated on April 24, 2013, marking 20 glorious years of the inclusion of Panchayats in the Indian constitution as institutions of self-governance. Panchayat representatives from across the country, gathered in the national capital to participate in the celebrations with great vim and vigour. Inaugurating the national conference at New Delhi’s Vigyan Bhavan, the Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh described Panchayati Raj as the common thread that runs through the entire nation and allows every individual and every area to claim an equal share in the development of the country. The PM expressed happiness at the magnificent contribution of women in the strengthening of Panchayati Raj institutions and programmes.

In his address, Shri V. Kishore Chandra Deo, Minister of Panchayati Raj and Tribal Affairs said that the Gram Sabha is central as well as integral to local self-governance and essential for the transparent and accountable functioning of Gram Panchayats. It is a forum that ensures direct and participative democracy offering all citizens the equal opportunity to discuss issues. He said that the flagship programme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj for the 12th five year Plan period is the “Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan.” This is a uniquely designed programme which emphasizes the collaborative effort of State and Union Governments to strengthen the capacity and effective functioning of Panchayats and Gram Sabhas.

Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh inaugurating the National Conference on National Panchayati Raj day, 24th April 2013. Union Minister TA & PR Shri V. Kishore Chandra Deo and Secretary Panchayati Raj Smt. L. M. Vas are also seen in the picture.
Through Five Year State Perspective Plan and State Annual Plans, States will identify the priorities and targeted achievements for strengthening Panchayats, keeping in mind the local context. The Central Government will support these efforts in the ratio of 75:25 for all states and 90:10 for NE States, subject to the adherence of other conditions as prescribed in the guidelines.

The Minister further said that Ministry of Panchayati Raj had seen a quantum leap in the allocation of resources to support its activities during the 12th Plan period - the outlay for the District component of the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) scheme that puts Panchayats & Municipalities at the centre stage of Planning and implementation is Rs. 29,306 crore as compared to the 11th Plan outlay of Rs. 24,110 cr. the outlay for the Central Plan scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj during the 12th Five Year Plan period is Rs. 6,437 crore as compared to Rs. 876 crore in 11th Plan. He said that the Ministry is also promoting e-governance in Panchayats through the implementation of the e-panchayat project that addresses all aspect of Panchayats’ functioning including planning, monitoring, implementation, budgeting, accounting, social audit and delivery of citizen services. While four applications are already in use for the past two years, six new applications namely Area Profiler, Service Plus, Asset Directory, Action Soft, Social Audit and Training Management were released last year on national Panchayat Day. Annual awards under the “Panchayat Empowerment and Accountability Incentive Scheme” (PEAIS) and the “Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar” (RGGSP) were conferred upon the best performing States and Panchayats. Eighteen top ranking Gram Panchayats were awarded the “Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar.

As many as 193 Panchayats also received PEAIS awards for best performance. The Panchayat Strengthening Index Awards (PSI) were given to the States this year. Under the cumulative PSI awards Maharashtra won the 1st Prize, Karnataka the 2nd, Kerala the 3rd and Tripura the 4th Prize. Under the incremental PSI awards Karnataka secured the 1st Prize, Rajasthan the 2nd, Maharashtra the 3rd and Odisha the 4th Prize. The prize money for “Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar” award is Rs. 10 lakh. The award money will be utilized by the Panchayats for public purposes such as augmentation of civic services like primary education, primary health care, safe drinking water, public utilities and provision of rural infrastructure within the Panchayat jurisdiction.

**“We could, to some measure realise Gandhi’s vision by recognising local self-government as a third level of Governance through enactment of Constitution 73rd Amendment Act. It is now upon us to strive for actualising Gram Swaraj in its pristine form as envisaged by the Mahatma”**

V Kishore Chandra Deo

Panchayat jurisdiction. Various reports and publications were released by Union Minister for Tribal Affairs and Panchayati Raj on the occasion, viz., (i) The expert committee report by Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar (ii) A booklet on best practices – awardees of Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar (iii) A booklet on Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Awardees (iv) The release of the Devolution Index.

Group discussions on the Role of Panchayats in centrally sponsored schemes, strengthening of Gram Sabhas and their role in Panchayati Raj Institutions, Devolution of 3Fs – Funds, Functions & Functionaries, Role of Panchayats in tackling issues of women and children were also conducted. These group discussions were chaired by the PRI representative, chosen by the group member themselves. The officials of the Ministry did not interfere in the discussions thus giving discussants full liberty to express their views.

A huge increase in the number of participating delegates was observed this year. Approximately 3000 delegates consisting of State Panchayati Raj Ministers, senior officials from the State Government Panchayati Raj Departments, representatives of elected members from the three tiers of Panchayati Raj institutions and national award winning Panchayats attended the National Conference. Apart from the commemorative celebrations, the PRIs discussed and took stock of what had been achieved and what still needs to be done. People belonging to various states with their distinct dresses and different dialects and languages displayed unity in diversity in this festival of Panchayati Raj. Women and members of the weaker sections have been equal shareholders in all of this. It was indeed a sight to behold when a tribal Sarpanch from a far-flung Gram Panchayat of Madhya Pradesh proudly received the cash prize for her outstanding contribution in the holding of meaningful Gram Sabhas.

At the end of the main ceremony the Secretary of the Union Panchayati Raj Ministry, L.M. Vas proposed a vote of thanks.
Social audit by Gram Sabhas

THIS YEAR PANCHAYATI completed 20 years as a constitutionally mandated institution of local self-governance. In these years, Panchayats have given a new direction to rural development. Women, people belonging to Scheduled Castes and Tribes and other marginalized sections of society have become actors in the socio-economic development of their communities through representation in local bodies.

On the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day 2013, the Union Panchayati Raj Minister, Shri Kishore Chandra Deo has urged Panchayats to hold social audits through Gram Sabhas in every ward for all ongoing development works. Recently the Ministry issued revised guidelines to State Governments to hold Gram Sabha meetings in April/May focused on the approved plan, budget, expenditure, selection of work and beneficiaries and social audit; in July/August on nutrition, PDS, MDM, Anganwadi Centres (AWC), agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, animal resources; in October/November on health, sanitation, drinking water, women’s issues, and Mahila Gram Sabha; and in January/February on crop planning, irrigation, horticulture, watershed management, land improvement, credit, dairy and rural industries. The Gram Sabha must meet at least once in each quarter to decide developmental work to be undertaken by the Panchayats based on an assessment of needs, suggest remedial measures for economy and efficiency in the functioning of the Panchayats, scrutinise the decisions of Panchayats and discuss the annual financial statement of Gram Panchayats.

The 73rd Amendment of the Constitution has empowered the Gram Sabhas to conduct social audits. Social audits allow people to enforce accountability and transparency, providing the ultimate users an opportunity to scrutinise development initiatives. The Gram Sabha has been given ‘watchdog’ powers and responsibilities by the Panchayati Raj Acts in most States to supervise and monitor the functioning of elected representatives of the Panchayat and government functionaries and examine the annual statement of accounts and audit reports. The Panchayat and the Gram Sabha are the appropriate forums for a social audit. A social audit means an assessment by the intended beneficiaries of a scheme. The Gram Sabha has to approve a scheme to be implemented by the Gram Panchayat. The line department concerned needs to inform intended beneficiaries in schemes that are not being implemented by the Gram Panchayat. These stipulations ensure that people can access the benefits of various schemes meant for them. The Gram Sabha can undertake the selection of beneficiaries in some schemes involving pensions, housing, biogas plants, the electrification program etc. People need to be informed about details of certain other schemes, like scholarships or construction of roads under PMGSY. The Gram Sabha should be involved in matters like crop planning and irrigation. Economic activities like dairy, horticulture or schemes for artisans need to be discussed in the Gram Sabha to create interest and demand. All these stipulations should be included in the Annual Plan and will require special Gram Sabha meetings.

The Gram Sabha is responsible for the approval of works. The Gram Panchayat is required to place details of all the programs, accounts of the previous year and the works executed before the Gram Sabha. The Gram Sabha should be given all the required information to enable it to make fair and conscious decisions. Officials of the various departments concerned need to be present to provide the relevant information. Some schemes like the MGNREGS also requires work in particular villages though they are not executed by the Gram Panchayat. In the Fifth Schedule areas, Gram Sabhas have been given additional responsibilities like management of minor water and forest bodies, right to consultation in intended land acquisition plans and to remain in charge of social sector schemes.
Role of PRIs in implementation of National Rural Drinking Water Programme

(Rajiv Gandhi Drinking Water Mission)

Extracts from NRDWP Framework for Implementation Guidelines- (updated 2013)

IN 2009, THE Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme was modified as the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) with major emphasis on ensuring sustainability of water availability in terms of potability, adequacy, convenience, affordability and equity, on a sustainable basis, while also adopting decentralized approach involving PRIs and community organizations. With the approval of the “National Rural Drinking Water Programme” by the Government of India there is a paradigm shift from ‘just providing a water supply system in the habitation’ to ‘ensuring water supply security at the house hold level’. The emphasis is partnership between Gram Panchayat and PHED for in-village distribution of drinking water. The program intends to provide safe and adequate drinking water for all, at all times, in rural India; to enable all households to have access to and use safe and adequate drinking water and within reasonable distance; to enable communities to monitor and keep surveillance on their drinking water sources; to ensure potability, reliability, sustainability, convenience, equity and consumers preference; to provide drinking water facility, especially piped water supply, to Gram Panchayats that have achieved open defecation free status on priority basis; to ensure all government schools and Anganwadis have access to safe drinking water; to provide enabling support and environment for Panchayat Raj Institutions and local communities to manage their own drinking water sources and systems in their villages; to provide access to information through online reporting mechanism with information placed in public domain to bring in transparency and informed decision making.

Role of Gram Panchayat, Gram Sabha and GP/ Village Water & Sanitation Committee (p.85–86; National Policy Framework)

The Gram Panchayats should be empowered with functions, funds and functionaries and capacity building to plan, monitor, implement and manage rural drinking water supply or schemes within their jurisdiction.

"The Gram Panchayats should be empowered with functions, funds and functionaries and capacity building to plan, monitor, implement and manage rural drinking water supply or schemes within their jurisdiction."

A village under National Rural Drinking Water Programme

(For further details please refer to NRDWP Framework for Implementation (Guidelines) (updated 2013) of Ministry of Drinking water and Sanitation, Government of India. Soft copy available on the Ministry’s website: www.mdws.gov.in)
Shri Manik Dey, Minister of Rural Development (Panchayat), Tripura, receiving award from the Prime Minister

Shri Jayant Patil, Minister of Home (Urban), Home (Rural), Rural Development and Food and Drugs Administration, Maharashtra, receiving award from the Prime Minister

Shri K. S. Eswarappa, Deputy Chief Minister, Karnataka, receiving award from the Prime Minister

Shri M. K. Muneer, Minister for Panchayat and Social Justice, Kerala, receiving award from the Prime Minister

Shri Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya, Minister Panchayati Raj, Rajasthan, receiving award from the Prime Minister

Shri Kalptaru Das, Minister Panchayati Raj & Parliamentary Affairs, Odisha, receiving award from the Prime Minister
Release of booklet on “Good Practices – Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar 2013” by Union Minister TA & PR, Shri K. C. Deo

Release of Twentieth Anniversary Report of the Expert Committee on leveraging Panchayats for Efficiency Delivery of Public goods and Services

Release of Devolution Index report

Release of Booklet on “Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar 2013”

Union Minister of TA & PR Shri K. C. Deo addressing the Press on NPD 2013. Additional Secretary PR, Dr. Hrusikesh Panda is also seen

Participants of the National Conference held on Panchayati Raj Divas 24th April 2013
AWARDEES OF THE RASHTRIYA GAURAV GRAM SABHA PURASKAR 2013

S. NO.  STATE  DISTRICT  BLOCK  GRAM PANCHAYAT  NAME OF THE SARPANCH
1  Bihar  Muijafarpur  Sakra  Paigambarpur  Sh. Aindra Bhushan Singh
2  Chattisgarh  Sarguja  Lundra  Gagoli  Sh. Jugna Ram
3  Gujarat  Navsari  Vansada  Jamaliya  Smt. Jamnaben Parabhubhai Deshmukh
4  Himachal Pradesh  Solan  Solan  Haktot  Sh. Rajiender Singh Thakur
5  Karnataka  Dharwad  Gummagola  Smt. Mahadevi Takkirappa Vali
6  Madhya Pradesh  Jhabua  Petlavad  Sarangi  Smt. Fundi Bai Maida
7  Odisha  Balasore  Bhograi  Dehurga  Sh. Ramakanta Karan
8  Punjab  Fatehgarh Sahib  Khamanon  Barwali Kalan  Sh. Hardhir Singh
9  Sikkim  South Sikkim  6 - Yangang Rangang  Smt. Leela Kumari Rai
10  Tamil Nadu  Thiruvannamalai  Periana Mallar  Nedungunam  Sh. Elumalai.M
11  Uttarkhand  Barakot  Champawat  Chhulapayn  Sh. Ramesh Chandra Pant
12  Haryana  Ambala  Saha  Mehmoopdour  Smt. Balwant Kaur
13  Kerala  Mallapuram  Pulamanthole  Mrs. Rafeekha M.K.
14  Arunachal Pradesh  Upper Subhansari  Taliha  Label Iv  Sh. Tapak Dagam
15  Maharashtra  Pune  Junnar  Thikerkarwadi  Sh. Santosh Dagadu Thikkekar
16  Daman & Diu  Moti Daman  Daman  Pariyari  Sh. Satishbhai Halpati
17  Uttar Pradesh  Baghat  Baraut  Gunga Khedi  Sh. Bhupender Singh
18  Haryana  Jind  Jind  Bibipur  Sh. Sunil Kumar

SPECIAL CATEGORY

FEEDBACK

Any response or suggestions regarding this newsletter would be welcome. You can contact us with your feedback on the following address:

- PO Box: #2, Noida, UP
- Email: newsletter-mopr@nic.in
- SMS: <MOPR> <your comments> to +91-92200-92200

CONTEST

Contest Question:

What is the full form of “RGPSA”?

You can send us your answers at:

- PO Box: #2, Noida, UP
- Email: newsletter-mopr@nic.in
- SMS: <MOPR> <30/50/25> to +91-92200-92200

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