

# Nation-wide training programme launched for Elected Women representatives (EWRs) of Panchayats

## Trained EWRs will help connect people at the grassroots to the benefits of Government programmes: Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi

### Trained women representatives will ensure greater accountability, honesty and transparency in the execution of the developmental projects: Panchayati Raj Minister

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A comprehensive module for capacity building of Elected Women Representatives (EWRs) of Panchayats and a training program for Trainers of women panchayat leaders across the country was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj today. The training program was launched at Ranchi, Jharkhand through a video conference, by the Minister of Women & Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in the presence of Minister of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar in New Delhi today. The training program seeks to empower EWRs of panchayats by enhancing their capacity, capability and skill in governance and administration of villages.

Addressing the select women trainers/women sarpanches of Jharkhand at the video conference today, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi said that inspite of 33% reservation for women in the panchayat bodies, the EWRs continue to remain ineffective since they do not have appropriate knowledge and skill to administer the village, and the show continues to be run by their husbands.

These women representatives will have to be trained in order to ensure that they take up the responsibility of all the tasks entrusted upon them on being elected, Smt Maneka Gandhi said. The Minister explained that it is due to this reason, the WCD Ministry has initiated this countrywide program of training the women sarpanches and other women representatives at the grassroots level in various areas like engineering (building of roads, drains, latrines etc.), finance, social development, education, health, and environment among others. Similarly, several new schemes have been launched by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi which bring benefit to the common man especially those in distress and the under privileged. The women sarpanches can be helpful in taking these schemes to the people at the grassroots level, the Minister said. These schemes include Fasal Beema Yojana, Pradhanmantri Awas Yojana, Suraksha Bima Yojana, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, maternity benefits schemes among others. Apart from this, the training programme will help to raise these women to the next level of leadership, said Smt Maneka Gandhi.

The WCD Minister said that safety of women, education of the girl child, health of women, creation of assets under MGNREGA, immunization and ensuring nutrition through lakhs of Anganwadis of the country have become important issues at the grassroots level in which the women sarpanches can play a pivotal role in effective delivery. The Minister suggested that the women sarpanches should form a whatsapp group and share their good practices as well as assist one another in finding solutions to common problems.

Speaking on the occasion, the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj, Rural Development and Drinking Water and Sanitation, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar said that under the 14<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission, the Panchayats will get Rs 2 Lakh crore in 5 years as against the earlier amount of Rs 30,000 crore for the overall development of the villages. He underlined the need for greater accountability, honesty and transparency in the execution of the developmental projects like building of roads, drainage system, toilets, farm ponds and dwelling units which he hoped will be ensured by the newly trained women representatives.

Shri Tomar laid stress on advance planning by the Gram Panchayats to free their villages from scourges of poverty and malnutrition. He said that women Sarpanches can form groups in the villages to spread social awareness on schemes like Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, Immunisation, school enrolment, various insurance schemes for farmers and common man, benefits for pregnant women and BHIM App for cashless transaction. The training programme will lead to the empowerment of Women Sarpanches for the overall development of their villages and the country, explained the Panchayati Raj Minister.

The Chairperson, National Commission for Women, Smt Lalitha Kumaramangalam said that the training program will be closely monitored to ensure proper learning by the sarpanches and EWRs. Smt Lalitha Kumaramangalam also expressed hope that the EWRs will emerge as future leaders of the country.

In the first phase, 40 master trainers of Jharkhand will be trained at the State institute of Rural Development, Ranchi. In the second phase, approximately 3000 EWRs will be trained by these master trainers in the three districts of Simdega, Pakur and Chatra of Jharkhand.

Starting with Jharkhand, similar training programs will be organised in different states throughout the country with the help of National Institute of Rural Development, State Institutes of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Departments of the States to train EWRs throughout the county. There are currently around 13 lakhs EWRs in panchayats across the nation.

The module has been prepared by the National Commission for Women of the WCD Ministry in collaboration with TISS. The module contains training guidelines, timeline, implementation guidelines, training schedules and monitoring and evaluation. The training will be participatory with group discussions, brainstorming lectures, demonstrations, field visits, case studies, games, exercise, role play, small workshops and individual assignments. The module discusses various topics like 'What is an ideal Panchayat', composition of the Gram Panchayat, development schemes and programmes, resources of panchayats and their utilization, laws for protection of the vulnerable sections among others.

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