

Brief Note on Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs)

1. It has been observed that exposure visits to well performing Panchayats is one of the most effective ways of learning for Elected Representatives and functionaries of PRIs. During these visits they themselves get to see the good work done by other Panchayats, challenges faced by them and avenues explored to overcome those challenges. In order to scale up and streamline such exposure visits, MoPR developed guidelines for organising exposure visits for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and shared it with the States in 2017.

There is potential to maximize the gains from such exposure visits by systematically developing such well performing Panchayats (award winning and other beacon Panchayats) as Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs), where exposure visits of elected representatives and Panchayat functionaries can be facilitated in a systematic manner. This can essentially become an integral part of capacity building strategy to develop functional demonstration/immersion sites for excellence in Panchayat functioning. PLCs can be sites where elected representatives can see best practices, interact with leaders who have facilitated them, understand the strategies and get inspired to do something in their area.

2. Selection of PLCs:

Identification of PLCs may be done from the pool of:

- Existing Panchayats that have been awarded **Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Sashaktikaran Puraskar** (DDUPSP) or **Nanaji Deshmukh Rashtriya Gaurav Gram Sabha Puraskar** (NDRGGSP) or **E-Panchayat Puraskar**
- In addition, States may also identify Panchayats that have done outstanding work but have been left out of the award process for some reason.

3. Parameters for Selection:

- Selection of PLCs will be done based on core institutional functioning like regular meetings, functioning of Standing Committees, Gram Sabha meetings, development plan preparation, high percentage of revenue collection, up-dated accounts and maintenance of records, voluntary disclosure as mandated, Provision of basic civic services such as drinking water, sanitation etc.

- In addition, thematic excellence across a gamut of sectors linked to SDGs such as natural resource management, education, health, child development, inclusion of vulnerable groups, disaster management, community engagement etc. may also be considered.

4. Institutional Arrangements

- Each PLC would be mentored/supported by the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) or other nodal training institute of the State in which it is located. Notably, the Ministry provides funds for the establishment of State Panchayat Resource Centres (SPRCs) within SIRDs. The SPRCs can actively manage the PLCs and their programmes. The SIRD/ SPRC will be responsible for:
 - ✓ Strengthening the identified model Panchayats to become an inspiring knowledge centre, i.e. a PLC.
 - ✓ Identifying champions (people who played key role in helping the Panchayat to do exemplary work) and utilise them in training of PRIs.
 - ✓ Developing appropriate field visit programmes/protocols.
 - ✓ Coordinating exposure visits for the visiting teams of trainees from within and outside the State.
- Further, as it may not be possible for existing elected representatives and employees of the PLCs to be available for trainees all the time, PLCs may be allowed to identify 'Field Visit Coordinators/volunteers', who would coordinate the field visits of trainees. Such Field Visit Coordinators may be retired officials, ex-Panchayat members or other resource persons.

The main role of field visit coordinators would be to:

- ✓ Coordinate the field visits, and provide inputs on various processes and projects taken up by the respective Panchayats
- ✓ Help the trainees with logistics related to exposure visit to the PLC

In addition, selected Panchayats may be supported in developing their areas of strength further. In fact, the selected Panchayats can be encouraged to continuously expand their areas of excellence and become richer learning sites. This would require special training programmes and hand-holding support to these Panchayats.

Monitoring and Supervision

A system for monitoring the PLCs may be put in place through SIRDs/SPRCs. PLCs will be expected to maintain records of visits made by trainees. To some extent, the quality of the PLCs will be evident from their popularity. The PLCs that offer rich insights will be in demand. MoPR may also send a team to assess such PLCs every year and provide inputs for improvement.

Funding:

PLCs will be supported as per RGSA cost norms to host such exposure visits.

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