

West Bengal State Rural Development Agency

(An Agency of the Panchayats & Rural Development Department, Government of West Bengal:
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Institutional Strengthening of Gram Panchayats (ISGP) Project Cell

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No.1126(9)-I.S.G.P.P./21P-1/(P.M)/2

Dated: 23.08.2012

From: Soumya Purkait, WBCS(Exe)
Project Manager, ISGPP and
OSD & Ex-Officio Deputy Secretary
Panchayats & Rural Development Department
Government of West Bengal.

To : The District Coordinator, ISGPP
Cooch Behar/Dakshin Dinajpur/Birbhum/Bankura/Burdwan/Paschim Medinipur/ Purba Medinipur/
Howrah/ Nadia

Subject : Vulnerable Group Development Framework Index and inclusion in Integrated Plan

Madam / Sir,

As a local Self Government it is the responsibility of Gram Panchayats to ensure equitable social justice and economic development of the area. On the other hand, for ensuring sustainable development, Gram Panchayat has to give special thrust for (a) environment-friendly development; and (b) development of vulnerable groups.

People's participation in the development and planning process plays an important role in institutional strengthening of Gram Panchayats. To ensure active participation of the community, Gram Panchayats have to take special initiative for capacity building of marginalised section and vulnerable groups like ST, SC, OBC, minority families and women in particular, so that they themselves can raise their voice and demand social development. It has been observed that inspite of being the target group for majority of developmental initiatives, most of the benefits do not percolate down the level and reach the vulnerable groups. Because of this, the disparities still exist in developmental activities inspite of so much efforts. So it becomes imperative that the Gram Panchayats take special initiative at the grassroot level for focussed development of vulnerable groups and for ensuring sustainable development.

Intensive support is being provided to selected 1000 Gram Panchayats of 9 selected districts including yours' under ISGP Project for institutional strengthening of selected GPs. Within this project, a special training and handholding support on ESMF is also provided to the Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, general members and employees of the selected Gram Panchayats, so that they can follow this up during the plan preparation, implementation and monitoring phases. Roles and responsibilities of Gram Panchayat functionaries, specially on ESMF is detailed in the ESMF guideline itself, which has also been repeatedly discussed with them by the mentors. But role of Gram Panchayat functionaries in identification and inclusion of vulnerable groups in planning process has been clarified in this guideline on VGDF along with the steps for preparation of vulnerable index [Annexure 1]. For ensuring active participation of

vulnerable groups in all stages of development and planning process, you are requested to provide special support so that following initiatives are taken by the selected Gram Panchayats.

- To create enabling environment and take special initiatives so that representatives from vulnerable groups including women should participate and raise their demands in the Gram Sansad Sabha and Gram Sabha meetings. Gram Panchayat may send an invitation letter along with the annual budget summary to each and every HH along with a request for participation in such meetings. The demands and felt needs as perceived by the marginalised section must be reflected in the integrated Gram Panchayat Plan and it is the responsibility of concerned Gram Panchayat to ensure its inclusion.
- It has been observed that in many cases they are not even aware about their rights and therefore failed to access many benefits earmarked for them. In such a scenario, Gram Panchayat has to take special initiative for proper identification of their needs in one hand and awareness generation and capacity building of the vulnerable groups on the other hand.
- To identify the areas where the concentration of ST, SC, Minority and other vulnerable groups is maximum within a Gram Panchayat area the Gram Panchayat has to fill up **Table A** of Annexure-1. From Table A Gram Sansad wise data on percentage of SC, ST, Minority and other vulnerable families (Sahay-destitute families, women-headed HH, Senior citizen living alone etc.) residing in that area can be deduced and on that basis total percentage of vulnerable families in each Gram Sansad has to be written in the last column. This will give an idea on maximum percentage of vulnerable families/hamlets residing/concentrated in a Gram Sansad.
- **Table B** of Annexure 1 will give an information as static data on existing status of four basic public services (drinking water, roads, drainage system and social infrastructure like Sishu Shiksha Kendro, AWC) in each Gram Sansad. For that purpose, the name and number of Gram Sansads has to be written in descending order on the basis of presence of vulnerable families in the area (i.e. Gram Sansad having maximum percentage of vulnerable families will be in the 1st row of the table). Based on this table, Gram Panchayat will have to find out the activities they have earmarked for each Gram Sansads, specially the vulnerable ones on the four basic public services in their Integrated Annual Plan for 2012-13 in **Table C** of Annexure 1. This whole exercise must be completed by 30th October 2012 and source of information must be mentioned in all cases.
- From these tables, inter Gram Sansads' gaps in development sectors can be identified using objective criteria. Based on the compiled database, Gram Panchayat has to prioritise the development need for coming years, specially for 2013-14. During preparation of Sub-Committee Plan based Integrated Gram Panchayat Plan for 2013-14, concerned Gram Panchayat has to consult these tables and priorities must be done on that basis and necessary inclusion done in the AAP for 2013-2014. Priority must be give to those Gram Sansads where maximum number of vulnerable families are residing for ensuring equitable and sustainable development by comparing with the existing infrastructure and appropriately getting reflected in the Integrated Action Plan.
- Gram Panchayat has to identify different centrally sponsored and state government schemes which can be used for development of vulnerable groups. There are many social assistance schemes like, NSAP, NFBS, IAY, SAHAY implemented by Panchayats. Gram Panchayat has to take special effort to make people aware about those schemes and also to ensure the proper identification of beneficiary and implementation. Gram Panchayat also needs to aware villagers about other schemes implemented by various line departments (for e.g. pension schemes of Agriculture / Fishery/ Social Welfare Deptt.). For ensuring the quality of works and peoples participation, Gram Panchayat must ensure

transparency in all works and activities and use the approach of voluntary disclosure which is already a mandate upon the GPs.

The Vulnerable Group Development Framework Index would definitely play an important role in overall and inclusive development process and effective implementation of Institutional Strengthening of Gram Panchayats (ISGP) Project. From this Index it will be easy to understand the steps taken by Gram Panchayat for development of vulnerable groups in its Annual Plan for 2012-13. For 2013-14 onwards prioritization of schemes must be done using this Index. Primarily this Index will be used by selected 1000 Gram Panchayats of the Project, but in near future it will be rolled out and replicated in all Gram Panchayats of the state. You are requested to inform all concerned and take necessary action to ensure that selected Gram Panchayats must start working on this immediately. The District and Block level authorities are being instructed to lead the process.

This guideline cum order is issued with the approval of the Principal Secretary of Panchayats & Rural Development Department.

Yours faithfully,
Sd/-
(Soumya Purkait)

No.1126(9)-I.S.G.P.P./21P-1/(P.M)/2

Dated: 23.08.2012

Copy forwarded for information & necessary action to:

1. The Sabhadhipati, Cooch Behar/Dakshin Dinajpur/Birbhum/Bankura/Burdwan/ Paschim Medinipur/Purba Medinipur/Howrah/Nadia Zilla Parishad.
2. The District Magistrate, Cooch Behar/Dakshin Dinajpur /Birbhum/Bankura/Burdwan/ Paschim Medinipur/Purba Medinipur/Howrah/Nadia district.
3. The Additional Executive Officer, Cooch Behar/Dakshin Dinajpur/ Birbhum/Bankura /Burdwan/ Purba Medinipur/Howrah/ Nadia Zilla Parishad and Additional District Magistrate (Panchayat), Paschim Medinipur.
4. The District Panchayats & Rural Development Officer, Cooch Behar/Dakshin Dinajpur /Birbhum/Bankura/Burdwan /Paschim Medinipur/Purba Medinipur/Howrah/ Nadia district.
5. The Sabhapati..... Panchayat Samiti.
6. The B.D.O.Block.
7. The Personal Assistant to the Principal Secretary, Panchayats & Rural Development Department, Government. of West Bengal.
8. The Pradhan.....Gram Panchayat.
9. Guard File.

Sd/-
(Soumya Purkait)

