

## The School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR) Beginning of a New Era in the History of Capacity Building of Panchayats

### Rationale for the SoEPR at NIRDPR, Hyderabad

As many as 30 years have passed from the time of the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution of India. Still, low to very low capacity of a majority of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), coupled with lack of effective devolution on PRIs by the States and Union Territories, lead to sub-optimal development of rural areas and poor delivery of services resulting in low level equilibrium trap. While creation of a strong body of knowledge and dissemination of the same for rural development are taking place through capacity building efforts by NIRDPR & State Institutes of Rural Developments (SIRDs), this has not happened to the functioning of PRIs resulting in poor performance on their part. In order to create a body of knowledge on various domains of Panchayati Raj system and to provide professional support for effective management and administration of PRIs, the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) felt the necessity to establish a School of Excellence in Panchayati Raj (SoEPR) at NIRDPR, with the expectation that the SoEPR will intensify the Capacity Building & Training (CB&T) efforts, currently under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA), to develop Capacity of the State Panchayati Raj Departments, SIRDs and the three-tier PRIs.

### The Goal of the SoEPR

The goal of the SoEPR at NIRDPR is to develop itself as a National as well as a Global Centre of Excellence and as an overarching institution to create a strong body of knowledge on various domains of Panchayati Raj system and to provide specialised professional support to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), Panchayati Raj Departments of the States and Union Territories (UT), the SIRDs and the PRIs in an extensive and intensive manner to help achieve holistic and sustainable development through better management of

PRIs. Another goal is to strengthen the SIRDs with additional Human Resources and augment their capacity to engage in properly planned CB&T interventions for greater outreach to the PRIs with quality outcomes to be achieved by them through their institutional strengthening and appropriate planning for economic development and social justice, as envisaged in article 243G of the Constitution.

### The 9 Centres to be Set up under the SoEPR

So long there are 7 Schools with 25 Centres under NIRDPR, just one of them being the Centre for Panchayati Raj, Decentralised Planning & Social Service Delivery, attempting to cater to the needs of the other Centres of NIRDPR, Panchayati Raj Departments of the States & UTs, SIRDs and PRIs. But after the SoEPR is well established, the following 9 (nine) Centres will work intensively to achieve the goal:

1. Centre for Panchayat Governance, e-Governance and Service Delivery
2. Centre for Panchayat Finance, Accounts & Audit
3. Centre for Localization of SDGs, Integrated Panchayat Planning and Convergence
4. Centre for Public Health, Sanitation and Infrastructure Development through Panchayats
5. Centre for Biodiversity, Environmental Upgradation and Built Environment through Panchayats
6. Centre for Skilling & Economic Development through Panchayats
7. Centre for Social Development (Health, Education, Women & Children) through Panchayats
8. Centre for Conflict Management & Dispute Resolution through Panchayats
9. Centre for Panchayat Statistics, Panchayat Policy Reforms and Advocacy

The corresponding Centres of NIRDPR have started mentoring the inception of the new Centres to pave the transition path for establishment of the 9 Centres.

## **Broad-based Functions of the SoEPR**

*The broad-based functions of the SoEPR will be:*

- a) To function as 'Think Tank' of the MoPR, other Ministries of Government of India and States and UTs to provide specialised professional support to them on issues related to rural local governance
- b) To create and disseminate knowledge in various domains of Panchayati Raj (PR) system
- c) To provide support to States/UTs on Panchayat Policy Reforms and Advocacy, preparation of appropriate Plans for CB&T under RGSA and monitor the performance of RGSA
- d) To orient SIRDs for need-based Research/Action Research, development of Learning Materials for quality CB&T through conduct of Research-based ToT for State & District Level Trainers on various domains of PR system and to guide them in outreach to PRIs on saturation basis
- e) CB&T for ERs and functionaries of District Panchayats on various domains of PR system
- f) Mentoring and CB&T support to PRIs through SIRDs, other training institutions and Consultants for improving their performance and sustained growth as institutions of self-government

## **Human Resources in the School Component of the SoEPR**

The new Human Resources to be available to the SoEPR will be as follows:

### ***At the School level at NIRDPR:***

- 1 Deputy Director General to be in exclusive charge of the SoEPR
- 1 Director, SoEPR
- 2 Associate Professors (in Centres No.1 and 9)
- 9 Assistant Professors for the 9 Centres
- 20 experienced Consultants (@ 2 per Centre and 2 for IT & MIS support to all the Centres)
- 5 Training, Accounts & Administrative Coordinators for support to all The Centres
- 3 Multi-Tasking Staff for support to all The Centres

The major tasks to be accomplished by the Human Resources at the School level will include Research, Action

Research, Creation and Dissemination of strong Knowledge in the given domains, Mentoring, CB&T and support for Monitoring & Evaluation of the activities of the respective Centres, SIRDs and PRIs.

### ***At the level of State Units located at SIRDs:***

- 24 Senior Capacity Building Consultant & State Quality Monitors to be stationed at and working with the SIRDs of the major States and leading the State Team of Consultants
- 148 Capacity Building Consultant & State Quality Monitors to be stationed at and working with the SIRDs/SPRCs

The major tasks to be accomplished by the above-mentioned Consultants will include handholding support to SIRDs and other training institutes in matters related to CB&T, support to PRIs and their support institutions in a cluster of 4 to 6 Districts in the assigned State/UT for institutional strengthening of the PRIs as institutions of self-government, LSDG-focused Theme-based and evidence-based Panchayat Planning and to monitor the progress in implementation of CB&T interventions under RGSA. State/UT-wise distribution of the above-mentioned 24+148=172 posts may be noted at *Annexure-1*.

## **Approval of the SoEPR for Implementation in Project Mode**

The proposal for establishment of the SoEPR was approved by the Executive Council of NIRDPR in its 136<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 09.01.2023 for its implementation in Project Mode, subject to circumstances prevailing under the ongoing proposal for NIRDPR's autonomy. The SoEPR was further approved by the Central Empowered Committee of the MoPR for RGSA for 2023-24 on 17.03.2023 for its implementation by NIRDPR in Project Mode. A Project Cost of Rs.18.42 Crore has been approved for the SoEPR by the MoPR for 2023-24.

## **Funding Arrangements for the SoEPR and Plan for Self-Sustenance**

It is expected that the MoPR will provide financial support for the SoEPR for three years – from 2023-24 to 2025-26. Meanwhile, the SoEPR will make all-out attempts to run it on self-sustained basis through value-added support for several measures including:

- Preparation of model administrative manuals on various aspects of Panchayat governance
- Development of blueprint for economic strengthening of rural economy through PRIs
- Achievement of critical mass of models for improved Panchayat administration and OSR – to earn revenue from PRIs as part of OSR increase
- Improvement in the built environment regulations and enable PRIs to increase OSR – to earn revenue from Revenue as part of OSR increase
- PPP-based initiative for improved service delivery and charging both Private sector and PRIs
- Advisories to Private sector industries on where to locate their units based on better Panchayat management practices and ways in which they can better engage with PRIs
- Engaging with Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Health and other Ministries for CB&T of PRIs for better interface with the agenda of the Ministries at the field level
- CB&T interventions on local governance for other countries
- Selling Knowledge/Products on local governance in the international market for revenue
- To conduct Research/Action Research for

international organisations for revenue

- To lend the expertise of the Human Resources of the SoEPR for revenue
- Contributions from CSR, Foundations, Banks, RBI, Donors (Charitable Trust) etc. for creation of Endowment Fund.

### Management and Monitoring of the SoEPR

The SoEPR will be governed by the same General Council and Executive Council and the same administration of NIRDPR. It will be administered by the same rules and norms of the NIRDPR. There will be a separate Project Steering Committee, headed by the Director General of NIRDPR as Chairman, to monitor the performance of the SoEPR.

### The SoEPR – a Significant Milestone in the History of Capacity Building of Panchayats

The National Institute of Community Development was established at Mussoorie in 1958 and shifted to Hyderabad in 1965, renaming it as National Institute of Rural Development. It was further renamed as National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) in 2013-14. Now the SoEPR is going to add value to the 'PR' component of NIRDPR in real terms with effect from September 2023 to address the critical issues faced by the State Panchayati Raj Departments, SIRDs and PRIs.



## Annexure-1

Sl. No.	Name of State/ Union Territory	Total No. of Districts (changing frequently)	Senior Capacity Building Consultant & State Quality Monitor	Capacity Building Consultant & State Quality Monitor	Remarks
1	Andhra Pradesh	26	1	5	
2	Arunachal Pradesh	25	1	4	
3	Assam	35	1	7	
4	Bihar	38	1	7	
5	Chhattisgarh	33	1	6	
6	Goa	2	0	1	Team Leader of Maharashtra will lead the Goa Team also
7	Gujarat	33	1	6	
8	Haryana	22	1	4	
9	Himachal Pradesh	12	1	3	
10	Jharkhand	24	1	4	
11	Karnataka	31	1	4	
12	Kerala	14	1	2	
13	Madhya Pradesh	55	1	10	
14	Maharashtra	36	1	6	
15	Manipur	16	0	4	Team Leader of Meghalaya will lead the Manipur Team also
16	Meghalaya	12	1	2	
17	Mizoram	11	0	3	Team Leader of Meghalaya will lead the Mizoram Team also
18	Nagaland	16	1	3	
19	Odisha	30	1	5	
20	Punjab	23	1	4	
21	Rajasthan	33	1	6	
22	Sikkim	6	0	2	Team Leader of West Bengal will lead the Sikkim Team also
23	Tamil Nadu	38	1	7	
24	Telangana	33	1	6	
25	Tripura	8	0	2	Team Leader of Assam will lead the Tripura Team
26	Uttar Pradesh	75	1	14	
27	Uttarakhand	13	1	2	
28	West Bengal	23	1	6	
29	Andaman and Nicobar Islands	3	0	1	Team Leader of West Bengal will lead the A&N Team also
30	Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu	3	0	1	Team Leader of Gujarat will lead the DNH&DD Team also
31	Jammu & Kashmir	20	1	4	
32	Ladakh	2	0	1	Team Leader of J&K will lead the Ladakh Team also
33	Puducherry	4	0	1	Team Leader of Tamil Nadu will lead the Puducherry Team also
<b>Total</b>		<b>755</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>143</b>	
<b>Reserve at NIRDPR and other locations for need-specific deployment</b>				<b>5</b>	
<b>Grand Total</b>				<b>172</b>	(24+143+5= 172)