

Three-day' National Workshop on Sustainable Development Goals in Gram Panchayats inaugurated at Kochi, Kerala

Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj, Shri Kapil Moreshwar Patil called for a concerted effort by all stakeholders to realize the sustainable development goals in Gram Panchayats. He was speaking at the inaugural session of three-days National Workshop on Localization of Sustainable Development Goals in Gram Panchayats through Adopting Thematic Approaches: Theme 1: Poverty Free and Enhanced Livelihood Gram Panchayats in Kochi today (14th November, 2022). The workshop from 14 to 16 November, 2022 has been organized in close collaboration with Local Self Government Department (LSGD), Government of Kerala and Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA), Thrissur, Kerala.

Delivering his keynote address, the Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj Shri Patil stressed on the need to work in unison and join hands to fulfil the dream of our Prime Minister to develop the villages as envisioned by the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi. He added that such workshops are organized with the aim of finding ways through discussion among stakeholders to meet the challenges we face while endeavoring towards achieving a shared goal.

Calling upon the heads of the Panchayats to take up the responsibility of the overall development of each Gram Panchayat, Shri Kapil Moreshwar Patil said they should aim high, set goals and yearn to achieve them in the best possible ways. Stressing the importance of income generation by Panchayats, he said it is essential to become self sufficient and less dependent on the government's funds for development.

On choosing Kerala as the venue for the workshop, he lauded the State for earmarking a good portion of its budgetary allocation to the Local Self-Government Institutions, and added that this should be emulated by other States / UTs. Urging the participants from various States to learn from the best practices being shared and discussed and field visits undertaken in the three-day workshop, he pinpointed the need in implementing those in their respective States/ UTs.

Speaking on the occasion, Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs Shri V. Muraleedharan said Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has advocated for *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas and Sabka Prayas* to fulfill the dream of Gram Swaraj or self-sufficiency of villages, as envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi. He urged the heads of the Gram Panchayats to formulate plans to achieve Sustainable Development Goals by according due importance to the voice of the people.

Minister of Local Self Government Department (LSGD), Government of Kerala Shri M. B. Rajesh while delivering the keynote address, said the intervention of the three-tier Panchayati

Raj systems is essential for the eradication of poverty through sustainable development in rural areas.

During the inaugural session Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development said various schemes by the Union Government to uplift the lives of people have helped immensely, yet there is more to be done since about 5 % of rural households are still destitute.

Shri Sunil Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj while addressing the gathering said if we all work together, the villages will get renewed vigour and prosperity, will open new avenues of employments which will in turn help to go ahead to make new India. In this endeavor SHGs/Village organisation can play pivotal roles. Shri Sunil Kumar added that collective efforts are needed to guide the Panchayats to help achieve the goals in less time.

The Book 'Participatory Extreme Poverty Assessment: Experiences from Kerala' was released during the inaugural session of the National Workshop. One compendium of more than 350 videos was also released today by the dignitaries. These videos are prepared by Local Self Governments / Panchayati Raj Institutions in Kerala. These videos are available at the link: sdgkerala.kila.ac.in

Shri Kapil Moreshwar Patil, Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj, Shri V. Muraleedharan, Union Minister of State for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs, Shri M. B. Rajesh, Minister of Local Self Government Department (LSGD), Government of Kerala jointly inaugurated an exhibition and also visited different thematic stalls showcasing various developmental/ livelihood/ skill development schemes and initiatives and achievements of Panchayati Raj Institutions in the thematic areas.

On the first day of three-day National Workshop, different panel discussions were chaired by Secretaries to the Government of India including Shri Sunil Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, and other senior officers of Government of India and State Governments.

Panel Discussion 1 on Addressing Marginalisation - Inclusion and Multi-dimensional Poverty was chaired by Shri Nagendra Nath Sinha, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Panel Discussion 2 on Realizing the potential of SHGs for Income Enhancement and Community Development was chaired by Smt. Sarada G. Muraleedharan, Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Local Self-Government, Government of Kerala. Panel Discussion 3 on Livelihoods – The Role of Panchayats in Addressing Income Poverty was chaired by Shri Sunil Kumar, Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India. Video presentations were made by well-performing Gram Panchayats and institutions/ organizations

working in thematic areas, and question-answer sessions were also organized to make the panel discussion more interactive, engaging and participatory.

More about the Workshop

Elected representatives and functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions from across the country and across the State of Kerala are attending the National Workshop. Approximately 3000 delegates including more than 350 delegates from 21 States/ UTs and remaining from Local Self-Government Institutions / Panchayati Raj Institutions and Kudumbashree SHGs in Kerala are participating in the National Workshop.

This well-structured workshop aims to create awareness on the national level importance of addressing (1) marginalisation – inclusion and access to basic services, social safety nets and protection systems – leveraging National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) through Panchayats, and (2) livelihoods – the role of Panchayats in addressing income inequality & poverty, eradicating extreme poverty and improving employment opportunities for poor, vulnerable and marginalized sections and (3) building resilience of vulnerable communities against the sudden shocks brought about by disasters and extreme climate events.

A well-designed ‘Experience Sharing and Learning from the Field’ exercise in the form of field visits will be the major attraction for the participants / delegates on the third day of the National Workshop. The concluding day of the National Workshop is fully dedicated to field visits where the participants will be taken to Gram Panchayats to gain insight into the policy and operational dimensions of poverty reduction and livelihood augmentation within Kerala as evidenced at the local level, and to experience first-hand the roles played by various stakeholders – Elected Representatives, officials, participatory planning structures, community organisations and SHG collectives, volunteers, and CSOs – in shaping a pro-poor development narrative.

The National Workshop endeavours to achieve following objectives:

- a. Creating a space for peer-learning for Gram Panchayats by exchange ideas and experience sharing with other States
- b. Facilitating dialogue between elected representatives of Panchayats and policy makers, Civil Society Organisations, NGOs, Domain Experts
- c. Strengthening implementation strategy on Theme 1: Poverty Free and Enhanced Livelihood Gram Panchayats
- d. Releasing Kerala State Roadmap on SDG localisation in Panchayats
- e. Disseminating and deliberating innovative ideas around Theme 1 (Poverty Free and Enhanced Livelihood Gram Panchayats).

The National Workshop will serve as an appropriate platform for deliberative action and experiential learning for the Gram Panchayats. It will be participatory and exploratory which will adopt three-fold process:

1. **Video presentations:** Presentations will be made by Panchayats and domain experts by showing the video prepared on the exemplary work they have been doing for last few years. They will showcase the process they had adopted, and impact created in their respective Gram Panchayats or area of intervention.
2. **Group / Panel discussions:** Panels consisting of Panchayat representatives, domain experts, NGOs along with senior officials of line Departments have been formed which will be chaired by respective Secretary of the concerned Department of Government of India and State Government. Based on the video presentations, panel will discuss the topic shown in the video to be facilitated by senior officials. Representative questions from participants will be taken and addressed by participating Gram Panchayats and experts.
3. **Field Visit:** Deliberations and discussions will not happen in four walls of the workshop venue but it will take participants from other States to the Gram Panchayats of Kerala to showcase the work Gram Panchayats in Kerala have undertaken. State representatives will travel to assigned Gram Panchayats and have first-hand experience of the work done and impact it has created. This will help participants to understand the process the Gram Panchayats in Kerala adopted. Field visit will be coordinated and facilitated by Local Self Government Department (LSGD), Government of Kerala and Kerala institute of Local Administration (KILA) along with Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Government of India.

Vision of the Theme 1 stated “A poverty free Panchayat, that ensures there is social protection so that none slip back to poverty. A village where there is growth and prosperity with enhanced livelihoods for all.” Poverty is multi-dimensional and multi causal which has its impact on different aspects of life. Opportunities for employment, access of basic services including social protection, housing, health, education, enabling environment for thrift and credit, improving land productivity and build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable from various disaster are focused area of the theme.

To address this vision, Gram Panchayat has a significant role in setting local goals & targets and preparation of a comprehensive plan with convergence of human resources and various flagship schemes like MGNREGS, NRLM, NSAP, e-Shram and other resources available to the Panchayat.

Background

Sustainable Development Goals adopted by United Nations came into effect from January 1, 2016. Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Government of India has adopted thematic approach to SDGs – It is approach to ensure ‘local action’ for achieving ‘global plan’. The approach aims to localise SDGs in rural areas through PRIs, especially Gram Panchayats by clubbing 17 ‘Goals’ into ‘9 Themes’. Appropriate policy decisions and revisions have followed resulting into revamping of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) and Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP)

Guidelines which smoothens the process of Localisation of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) in Gram Panchayats.

In pursuance to the agenda of localising Sustainable Development Goals in Panchayats, Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Government of India is organising a series of Thematic Workshops/ Conferences on Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (LSDGs) based on the nine themes to be saturated by the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), at different locations in close collaboration with State/ UT Departments of Panchayati Raj, State Institutes of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (SIRD&PRs), line Ministries/ Departments and other stakeholders. The effective and impactful implementation of LSDGs can occur only when the concept and its process are properly understood, imbibed and implemented by the three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in order to ensure no one is left behind.
