

Guidelines for Organising Exposure Visits for Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

Exposure visits are recognised as one of the most effective and inspirational ways of learning for Panchayat representatives. During these visits they themselves get an opportunity to get first-hand experience of the good work done by other Panchayats, learn regarding the challenges faced by those Panchayats in the process and how those challenges were overcome. This process of learning through exchange of experiences creates an excellent practical peer learning opportunity for both the host and the visiting participants. Thus, visit to Panchayats with best practices within and outside the State provides hands on practical exposure and promotes experiential learning in a 'seeing is believing' mode.

The National Capacity Building Framework (NCBF) developed by Ministry of Panchayati Raj, has highlighted exposure visits as an important mode of capacity building of PRIs. The Committee constituted under the Chairmanship of Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog to restructure the existing scheme of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj as Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) has also recommended exposure visits by PRI members to be radically scaled up.

Exposure visits are resource intensive. Hence, it is important to ensure that exposure visits are properly planned and executed to achieve the desired outcomes. A follow up mechanism is consequently important to ensure that learnings are assimilated during the visit, and utilised by the participants upon their return to address local problems in an innovative way. Accordingly, below is a framework for organising exposure visits for PRIs:

1. Preparatory Phase:

i. Identification of exposure visit sites or Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs)

- In order to maximize the gains from exposure visits, it is important to identify well performing Panchayats or Panchayats with good practices on various thematic areas where visits would be organised. Panchayats both within and outside the States may be identified. The areas of work may cover:
 - ☛ **Core institutional functioning** like regular Panchayat meetings, functioning of Standing Committees, preparation of participatory Gram Panchayat Development Plan, effective Gram Sabha meetings, high percentage of revenue collection, up-dated accounts and maintenance of records, provision and maintenance of basic civic services such as drinking water, sanitation etc.
 - ☛ **Thematic excellence across sectors/programmes** linked with priority areas of the State/Panchayats and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) such as water conservation, sanitation & solid and liquid waste management, livelihood promotion, Panchayat-Self-Help group (SGH) convergence, poverty reduction, e-governance or smart Panchayats,

natural resource management, education, health, child development, inclusion of vulnerable groups, disaster management, community engagement etc. so as also to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

- ☛ While identifying Panchayats with good practices, following issues may be considered:
 - **Panchayat should have played a key role in implementing the initiative.**
 - Positive impact made in effective functioning or delivery of services (system, reach, quality, affordability etc.)
 - How the Panchayat mobilised/managed resources to finance the best practices/innovation.
 - Sustainability aspects.
- Existing awarded Panchayats may be identified as sites for exposure visit subject to verification on current status by the State. In addition, States may also identify other Panchayats that have done exemplary work under various development schemes of government and less cash/no cash initiatives. States may also develop relevant indicators/parameters for identifying such Panchayats. States may like to see short video clips on Panchayats with good practices from different states uploaded in MoPR's YouTube channel as tool to identify possible Panchayats for exposure visits.
- States should conduct field verification of the primarily shortlisted Panchayats to corroborate replicable good practices before finalising them as sites for exposure visit or immersion site.
- **Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs):** Inventory of such Panchayats with success stories/good practices spread across the State may be created. These Panchayats may be facilitated and developed further to function as Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs) or immersion sites for learning in the district/block. Such exposure visit sites or PLCs should be developed in each district of the State so that intra-district exposure visits can also be arranged. Regular exposure visits for other Panchayats can be organised in these PLCs.
- Detailed documentation of the work done by these Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs) (profile, report, short films etc.) should be made available online and shared with visiting Panchayats. Short films on these good practices should also be prepared and shown to other Panchayats of the States using small hand held projectors. These may also be shared with MoPR for uploading on MoPR's YouTube channel so that other States can opt for visiting these Panchayats.
- While selecting sites for exposure visits, similarities related to geographic location, size and population of Panchayats, status of devolution, focus on thematic area etc. may be considered which would result in better replicability

of learnings. For example, while selecting other States for exposure visits, hilly States should first consider Panchayats from States having similar challenges of hilly terrain, geographical and demographic conditions.

ii. Selection of Panchayats/ participants for exposure visits:

Considering the large number of Elected Representatives (ERs) and functionaries of Panchayats, certain principles may be evolved to ensure maximum coverage and maximum impact of exposure visits. Hence, States may develop their criteria for selecting ERs, functionaries for exposure visits. For this purpose, following issues may be considered:

- Incentivizing well performing aspirational Panchayats through exposure visits within and outside their district/State.
- Motivating Panchayats with potential to perform well through exposure visits in well performing Panchayats within the State/district/Block.
- Selecting ERs and functionaries of Gram Panchayats identified under Mission Antyodaya.
- Selecting ERs and functionaries of Gram Panchayats from the 100 most backward districts of the country.
- Exposure visits within Panchayats that are doing excellent work (thematic champions) to promote cross learning.
- Panchayats doing excellent work may also be sent to not so well performing Panchayats within the district/State and outside the State to share their learning and mentoring.
- Demand lead exposure visits may be adopted as a means to incentivize aspirational and well performing Panchayats. These Panchayats may be asked to provide their choice of thematic areas and time periods in which they would like to do exposure visits. Accordingly, State may identify exposure visit sites on those thematic areas and organize exposure visits.
- GP President (Sarpanch), Vice-President (Up-Sarpanch), Chairman of the Standing/Sub-Committees, Women, SC, and ST members may be prioritized.
- Opportunity for exposure visits should be given to newly elected ERs within 6 months of their election.
- Selecting same set of people repeatedly for exposure visits should be avoided.
- Information regarding exposure visits should be circulated to PRIs and their willingness and time period opted may be considered for prioritizing PRIs. PRIs demonstrating enthusiasm may be accommodated in another schedule if they miss out for valid reasons.

iii. Duration of Exposure visits

Depending on the extent and location (within/outside the State/district), an exposure visit may be of:

- Three to five days 'standalone' exposure visit programme (outside the State/district)
- One to two day's field visit programme within the district/block
- One day-half day exposure visit as part of formal institutional training programme (during induction/orientation and follow-up refresher training)

iv. Preparation of Guidelines/dos and don'ts

State may prepare detailed guidelines on conduct of exposure visits including dos and don'ts for ERs and functionaries.

v. Calendar of planned exposure visits as part of PRI Training calendar

- The exposure visits planned should be an integral part of the State capacity building plan for PRIs under RGSA.
- The training calendars prepared for PRIs by the State (SIRDs) should also include tentative schedules for exposure visits. The timing of visits may be well spread out throughout the year and planned keeping in mind seasonal factors (monsoon, extreme weather conditions).

vi. Logistic arrangements, communication with visiting State/district/Panchayat etc.

- Organising an exposure visit for a team requires careful preparation. Logistics arrangement may include travel, boarding, lodging, communication with destination State/District/Panchayat nodal person. All these need to be planned in advance and responsibility may be given to a nodal official/officer of the Panchayati Raj Department/SIRD/Panchayat Training Institute (PTI)/Central Training Institute (CTI)/ State Panchayat Resource Centre (SPRC)/District Panchayat Resource Centre (DPRC) or any such institute identified by the State. Arrangements should be communicated well in advance to all the participants.
- A proper briefing may be organized for participants before initiation of the visit. Profiles of the Panchayats to be visited including details of good practices done by the Panchayat should be shared with the participants. Participants should be given orientation on the places to be visited, things/issues to be seen/observed etc. for a better learning outcome.
- Effort should be made to keep travel time as less as possible to increase time for learning. Selection of sites and travel plan should be made accordingly.

2. Activities during exposure visit

i. The exposure visit programme may include:

- Formal briefing/presentation on the status of Panchayats in the State profile of the Panchayat, work done by the Panchayat on institutional functioning/service delivery/specialised thematic area, innovations made etc.
- Interaction with PRI members, functionaries, beneficiaries, etc. who can share experiences, elaborate regarding changes that took place, and explain how they addressed challenges.
- Field/site visit
- Experience sharing by the visiting team so that the hosts can also benefit from peer learning.
- Structured lectures.

ii. Visiting team may be encouraged to observe following issues with respect to good practices/innovations during exposure visit for better learning outcomes:

- Improvements made in the delivery of services (system, reach, quality, affordability etc.).
- How the Panchayat pooled resources to operationalize the innovation.
- Sustainability aspects.
- Replicability with respect to their local context.
- Interaction with key player/s (ER, functionaries, CBOs etc.) who have played catalytic role in this initiative.

iii. It would not be possible for existing ERs and functionaries of the host sites or Panchayat Learning Centres (PLCs) to be available for trainees all the time on a regular basis. SIRDs or Panchayats/PLCs may nominate concerned functionary or GP ERs to coordinate the field visits. Each team for exposure visit must have a coordinator from the Government. The main role of these coordinators would be to:

- ☛ Coordinate the field visits, presentations, and provide inputs during discussions.
- ☛ Help the trainees with logistics.

3. Post exposure visit follow-up and monitoring measures

- i. Feedback:** Formal feedback should be taken from the visiting participants with focus on key takeaways and replicability of the learnings in their own areas. These feedbacks should be uploaded on the website of the State, SIRD&PR and MoPR.
- ii. Follow-up and monitoring:** Once the field visit programme is concluded, a debriefing may be done by SIRD&PR/Panchayat Training Centre for critical assessment of learnings from the field visit. A preliminary action plan for applying the key learnings may be developed by the Panchayats that participated in the field visit. Panchayats that have undergone field visits should be further supported through training and handholding to develop their own models inspired by the good practices. Regular monitoring should also be done to track progress of work in these Panchayats.
- iii.** Exposure visit sites or PLCs are expected to maintain records of visits made by trainee Panchayats. Quality of PLCs or exposure visit sites need to be monitored from time to time.
- iv.** Details of the exposure visits should be uploaded on website of the States and MoPR. Pictures, videos and key learnings of exposure visits may also be shared on WhatsApp groups for wider dissemination. Videos of the exposure visit may be shown to other Panchayats using portable inexpensive hand held projectors.

4. Institutional Arrangements

- i. Role of States/SIRD&PR/Panchayat Training Centres or concerned State training institute:**
 - Identification of exposure visit sites. States may mutually coordinate with MoPR and other States to identify PLCs for exposure visits in other states and share the list with the MoPR.
 - Creation of inventory of good practices and exposure visit sites and detailed documentation of such sites. Handholding support for further development of exposure visit sites as Panchayat Learning Centres.
 - Preparation of exposure visit calendar as part of State CB Plan for PRIs.
 - Identification of Panchayats/participants for exposure visits.
 - Preparation of guidelines/dos and don'ts.
 - Developing field visit programmes, coordination and execution of field visits.
 - Documentation and follow-up measures.
- ii. Resources for exposure visit:**
 - The State may explore resources available from various centrally and State sponsored schemes to finance exposure visits.
 - States should submit proposals for exposure visit as part of State CB Plan to MoPR following RGSA cost norms.

- iii.** Periodic review of performance of Panchayats and sharing of good practices at the District and Block level may be institutionalised for promoting horizontal learning.

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Brief Framework for Organising Exposure Visits for PRIs

Preparatory phase	During exposure visits	Follow up measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Identification of exposure visit sites (For within and outside the State). ✚ Creation of inventory of good practices and exposure visit sites and share with MoPR. ✚ Identification of Panchayats/participants for exposure visits. ✚ Preparation of guidelines/dos and don'ts. ✚ Preparation of Calendars or schedule and mobilizing resources for exposure visit. ✚ Developing field visit programmes, coordination and execution of field visits. ✚ Development of exposure visit sites as Panchayat Learning Centres. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Formal briefing/ presentation on institutional functioning/ service delivery/specialised thematic area, innovations made etc. ✚ Interaction with PRI members, functionaries, beneficiaries etc. who can share experiences ✚ Field/site visit ✚ Experience sharing by the visiting team so that the hosts can also benefit from peer learning. ✚ Closing interactions. ✚ Visiting team may be encouraged to observe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact made on the delivery of services (system, reach, quality, affordability etc.). • How the Panchayat has managed resources to finance the innovation. • Sustainability aspects. • Replicability with respect to their local context. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Feedback should be taken from the visiting participants with focus on key takeaways and replicability of the learnings in their own areas. ✚ Follow-up and monitoring: A de-briefing may be done by SIRD&PR for critical assessment of learning from the field visit. <p>A preliminary action plan for applying the key learnings may be developed by the Panchayats that participated in the field visit.</p> <p>Panchayats that have undergone field visits should be further supported through training and handholding to develop their own models inspired by the good practices.</p> <p>Regular monitoring should also be done to track progress of work in these Panchayats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Exposure visit sites are expected to maintain records of visits made by trainee Panchayats. ✚ Quality of PLCs or exposure visit sites need to be monitored from time to time.