

Chapter VI: Human resources in Panchayati Raj Institutions

Availability of adequate human resources was a necessary condition for effective implementation of their mandate by the local bodies. Absence of dedicated cadres as well as the role of other organizations in the implementation of functions, left the PRIs with a small number of functionaries vis-à-vis the manpower at the disposal of the Block Development Offices (BDOs) and District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs). Lack of a concerted and systematic approach to capacity building of PRI functionaries impaired their capacity to effectively perform the functions devolved.

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act required the State Governments to devolve functions enumerated in the Eleventh Schedule to the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), as well as endow them with the necessary powers and authority to carry out their functions. As per their mandate, broad categorization of the functions performed by PRIs is as mentioned in **Table 6.1** below.

Table 6.1: Functional framework in PRIs

Category	Function
Administration	General administration, including meetings of panchayats and committees (Both Zilla Panchayat (ZP) and Village Panchayats (VPs))
Engineering	Construction of roads and bridges, other repair and maintenance of public amenities and community assets (Both ZPs and VPs)
Revenue	Imposition of taxes and fees and their collection (only VPs)
Finance & Accounts	Preparation of plans, budgets and accounts and expenditure monitoring (Both ZPs and VPs)
Regulation	Regulation of constructions and trade through licensing (only VPs)

(Source: Goa Panchayat Raj Act, 1994 (GPRA))

Availability of adequate and qualified manpower is a pre-requisite for any organization to discharge their functions in an efficient and effective manner. Adequacy of manpower and their capacity building were scrutinized in audit and the following were observed.

6.1 Adequacy of manpower

The requirement of manpower in a PRI would *inter alia* depend on the geographical area, size of the population, functions to be executed, *etc.* and adequacy of manpower is to be assessed accordingly.

6.1.1 Manpower of Zilla Panchayats

Section 150 of GPRA provided for the appointment of Chief Executive Officers (CEO) and Chief Accounts Officer (CAO) and constitution of services for ZPs. ZPs were sanctioned manpower for administrative functions *vide* orders of Government (1999 and 2000) upon the formation of ZPs in the State. The posts of CEO, Chief Finance Officers, Accountants and other administrative staff was sanctioned. The status of manpower in ZPs was as shown in **Table 6.2**.

Table 6.2: Manpower of Zilla Panchayats

Category	Function	Sanction for manpower	Persons-in-Position
Administration	General administration including meetings of panchayats and committees.	CEO were to be posted for every ZP.	CEO was posted by Government from the State administration cadre.
Engineering	Execution of public works.	Manpower was not assessed.	Manpower was provided from DoP's cadre of technical manpower on working arrangement basis.
Planning	Preparation of plans and execution.		
Finance & Accounts	Preparation of budgets and accounts and expenditure monitoring.	One CAO and one Accountant each was sanctioned for ZP.	Sanctioned manpower was appointed by State Government from cadre of the Directorate of Accounts.
Other subordinate manpower	Subordinate manpower for administration and other functions.	22 Group C and D posts were sanctioned.	21 contractual staff were appointed against 14 vacancies.

(Source: Information provided by the ZPs)

The DoP created (2008) a cadre of technical manpower for execution of works of PRIs. The ZPs were supported by the DoP's technical cadres in the preparation of plans and execution of public works. However, no plans were prepared by the technical manpower provided and only the execution of works was carried out.

The DoP sent a proposal¹ (2008) to the Government for constitution of administrative services, technical services and district rural development services for carrying out the functions of the PRIs. The draft rule for constitution of these services was also sent (January 2009) to ZPs for comments but they were pending consideration for over 14 years (August 2023). The ZPs thus depended upon the manpower controlled by the DoP for the execution of all public works. Further, as the ZPs did not have the necessary technical manpower, the DoP, through the BDOs retained effective administrative and technical control over the functions executed by the VPs under their jurisdiction.

The absence of cadres in ZPs and the resulting constraints were acknowledged (June 2022) by the Secretary, Panchayats during the Exit Conference. The DoP further informed (August 2023) that the proposal was under consideration of the Government.

Execution of functions devolved to the ZPs as well as their supervisory responsibilities *vis-à-vis* VPs were impacted by the lack of adequate and specialised manpower with them.

¹ The Goa Zilla Panchayat (Constitution of services, recruitment, and other conditions of service) Rules, 2008.

6.1.2 Manpower of Village Panchayats

Section 113 of the GPRA provided for the appointment of Secretary of VPs. Section 114 of GPRA provided that the Government may, by order, specify the staffing pattern, the scales of pay and mode of recruitment of staff of panchayats. Accordingly, manpower for VPs was sanctioned by the Government, *vide* 'Goa Panchayat (staffing pattern, scales of pay and mode of recruitment of staff of Panchayats) Order, 2003, revised in 2007 and 2010. The order prescribed the number of clerks and peons to be appointed² according to their category. Amendment to order (2007) enabled the VPs to appoint one Pound keeper, one Driver for garbage vehicle, one Librarian and one Library Attendant. The order also enabled the financially capable VPs to appoint any additional staff temporarily for a specific purpose (with the approval of the Gram Sabha and the DoP). Such personnel could be recruited through a Departmental Selection Committee comprising the Sarpanch of the VP, BDO and representative of the CEO of ZP.

The staff position in 16 test-checked VPs is shown in **Table 6.3** below.

Table 6.3: Staff position of 16 test-checked VPs

Post	Sanctioned strength	Person-in - position	Vacant post	Contractual staff
VP Secretary	16	16	00	00
Clerks and peons	45	31	14	38
Total	61	47	14	38

(Source: Information provided by the 16 VPs)

The Village Secretaries who were Government employees were appointed by the DoP. There were 31 persons posted as clerks and peons against the 45 posts sanctioned in test-checked VPs. The vacancies were operated through the appointment of contractual staff. The VPs depended upon the BDO for technical support and approvals of public works due to non-availability of technical manpower in the PRI system.

6.2 Role of other organizations implementing PRI functions

The DoP had not transferred the administrative and functional control of VPs to ZPs and instead exercised this control over VPs through the BDOs. Further, the DRDAs working under the administrative control of the Department of Rural Development executed certain functions which overlapped with PRI functions. As a result, the BDOs and DRDAs possessed the manpower which should ideally have been available to the PRIs.

6.2.1 Block Development Offices

Block level panchayats, an intermediate tier of the PRI system is absent in Goa, unlike in majority of the states due to its small size. However, there existed an administrative tier at the level of Blocks under the DoP. The Block Development Offices had a total

² A class VPs - three clerks and one peon; B class VPs - two clerks and one peon; C and D class VPs - one clerk and one peon.

sanctioned strength of 516³ with 15 BDOs and 501 subordinate staff, against which all except 19 subordinate staff positions were filled.

As pointed out in **Paragraph 4.2**, the effective functional and administrative linkage is not developed between VPs and ZPs. The VPs reported to the BDOs for administrative and functional purposes, who were then reporting to Administrative Department. The requirements of functioning of both the tiers of PRIs for effective planning, financial control and execution of function can be addressed only if there exists a middle tier of functionaries too forming a link. Consideration of full or part transfer of functionaries at BDO level to the PRI system may help to establish the missing link and also fulfil the requirement of manpower for the PRI system.

6.2.2 District Rural Development Agency

The DRDAs which implemented State and Central rural development schemes, recruited manpower for their administrative and technical functions (as against sanctioned strength of 98 in two DRDAs⁴, 67 were in position). Additionally, the DRDAs also engaged manpower in accordance with the guidelines of the schemes for implementation of schemes (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)). For implementation of MGNREGS, the DRDAs deployed a total manpower of 230 persons (15 Programme Officers, 20 Assistant Engineers, 19 Accountants and 176 *Gram Rozgar Sahayaks*) at the District, Block and VP levels.

Audit noticed that the DRDA either fully or partially carried out activities under 10 functions⁵ devolved to ZPs (**Table 4.2**). DRDAs utilised their own manpower and executed schemes in association with VPs/BDOs.

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India (GoI) decided (November 2021) the discontinuation of 'DRDA Administration Scheme' and suggested the merger of DRDAs with ZPs. It was further suggested that staff on deputation may be repatriated and other staff may be absorbed by line departments or continue to work on schemes. However, the State Government has not initiated any steps for the same and implementation of schemes continued to remain with DRDAs. Pending merger of DRDAs with ZPs, the manpower of 230 persons in MGNREGS and 67 in DRDAs continued to remain outside the system of PRIs.

The DoP replied (August 2023) that there was no proposal for merger of DRDAs and they were under a separate Department.

PRIs required adequate and competent manpower to execute the various development and civic functions in an efficient and accountable manner. However, due to the absence of dedicated cadres as well as the role of other organizations in the

³ BDOs, Secretaries of VPs, Gram Sevaks and subordinate staff.

⁴ Two DRDAs – one each in North Goa and South Goa

⁵ 1. Agriculture including agricultural extension; 2. Minor forest produce; 3. Rural housing; 4. Social forestry and Farm forestry; 5. Minor forest produce; 6. Rural housing; 7. Fuel and fodder; 8. Non-conventional energy sources; 9. Poverty alleviation programme; and 10. Health and sanitation including hospitals, primary health centres and dispensaries.

implementation of functions meant to be performed by PRIs, they were left with insufficient number of functionaries to carry out the designated tasks.

Recommendation 12: Rationalization of manpower requirements of PRIs may be considered including the transfer/creation of appropriate cadres for the specialized functions of the PRIs.

6.3 Capacity building

The Goa Institute of Public Administration & Rural Development (GIPARD), a registered society, is the apex institute for training State Government employees and those of autonomous bodies.

GIPARD conducted training programmes for PRIs on various subjects such as preparation of development plans, conduct of Gram Sabha, preparation of plans for utilisation of finance commission grants, operation of village development committees, implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission, malnutrition, office procedures, management information systems and social audits. ‘Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)’⁶ a Government of India scheme, was an important scheme having components of trainings and capacity building. The said component under the program was implemented by GIPARD, meant for elected representatives and officials of PRIs, the focus of the scheme *inter alia* was to ensure basic orientation training for the elected representatives of PRIs, within six months of their election and refresher trainings within two years. Under the RGSA scheme, the GIPARD had to prepare Annual Action Plan (AAP) to impart training which was approved by the Central Executive Committee (CEC), Ministry of Panchayati Raj (MoPR), GoI. The number of trainings proposed, approved and conducted under RGSA is shown in the **Table 6.4** below.

Table 6.4: Number of trainings under RGSA to PRI officials and non-officials

Year	No of trainings proposed in Annual Action Plan	No. of trainings approved by CEC	Total trainings	
			No.	Trainees
2016-17	376	376	101	3905
2017-18	152	152	63	3179
2018-19	91	91	45	2071
2019-20	34	34	119	3098
2020-21	120	120	57	2033
Total	773	773	385	14286

(Source: Information provided by GIPARD)

Audit observed that:

- Total trainings showed a reducing trend from 2016-17 to 2020-21 (except 2019-20). The CEC had approved 773 trainings to be conducted under the scheme for the period 2016-21 but the GIPARD conducted only 385 trainings.

⁶ ‘Rajiv Gandhi Panchayat Sashaktikaran Abhiyan’ was implemented with effect from 2013-14. The scheme was restructured as ‘Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan’ (RGSA) for implementation with effect from April 2018.

- Twenty-one trainings were conducted (2017-18) for orientation of newly elected representatives of VPs which was attended by 1,119 elected representatives out of 1,555. A similar training programme (2017-18) for newly elected representatives of ZPs was attended only by 16 out of 50 elected representatives.
- There were 624 elected women representatives in the PRIs of Goa. Three separate trainings were conducted by the GIPARD for elected women representatives which was however, attended by 45 and 11 in 2016-17 and 45 elected representatives in 2018-19.

Audit noticed that though the trainings were not mandatory for elected representatives, the State Government otherwise insisted the members to attend the courses but there was still a lot of shortfall in attendance.

- Sharing pattern of the scheme was in the ratio of 60:40 between Centre and State. The Central Government contributed ₹ 2.65 crore of its share under RGSA during the years from 2015-16 to 2017-18, while the State Government contributed ₹ one crore for the year 2020-21. The GIPARD did not receive Central grants for the period 2018-19 to 2020-21 as the State Government did not release its contribution in time. Hence, the number of trainings conducted for PRIs by GIPARD fell way short of the planned number.

Audit observed that the trainings and capacity building programmes were conducted on areas like administration, planning, execution of functions, implementation of schemes, maintenance of accounts, social audits, *etc.* Attending the same could help elected representative and officials to have better capacity to attend administrative and functional requirements effectively. However, the benefits of trainings/programmes could not be availed by the functionaries who did not attend the same. Further, audit also noticed that neither GIPARD nor the DoP/PRI's conducted any training needs analysis for the staff of PRIs during the audit period.

The GIPARD accepted (March 2022) that trainings were not carried out according to plan and informed that the number of training programmes was reduced due to fund constraints. At the instance of Audit, the DoP further requested (August 2023) the GIPARD to ensure that training need analysis is carried out and required number of trainings are conducted.

Recommendation 13: Training Need Assessment may be carried out and systematic capacity building of PRI functionaries may be taken up to strengthen their competencies, skills and knowledge.

**Panaji
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