

BACKWARD REGION GRANTS FUND CAPABILITY BUILDING PLAN OF TAMIL NADU

Introduction and background

The Development of rural areas and improvement in the quality of life of the rural people has been the primary concern in economic planning and development process. There is a growing realization that economic development and commendable progress made in diverse fields would be meaningless, if they fail to achieve better and dignified life for the majority living in rural areas. In order to correct the developmental imbalances and accord due priority to rural areas, the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, of Government Tamil Nadu, is implementing a number of centrally and state sponsored programmes aimed at sustainable development of rural areas with a focus on weaker and vulnerable sections. The Rural Development Programmes have been streamlined and strengthened to meet the growing challenges. A number of initiatives have been taken for the creation of social and economic infrastructure in rural areas to bridge the urban rural divide as well as to provide food security and fulfill other basic needs of the rural poor.

Rural Development

Rural development is the key to India's economic transformation as a majority of its population lives in the rural areas. Villages in Tamil Nadu have relatively better facilities and services in terms of electrification, drinking water supply, road connectivity, transportation, education and health infrastructure when compared to most other States. Yet, improving these amenities further so as to bridge the urban-rural divide has been a principal policy focus of the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department is responsible for the implementation of various Centrally sponsored and State schemes for poverty alleviation, employment generation, sanitation, capacity building, womens' social and economic empowerment, apart from provision of basic amenities and services. The department is also entrusted with the responsibility of enabling the various Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) to function as effective units of Local Self-Government. There are 12,618 Village Panchayats, 385 Panchayat Unions (co-terminous with Blocks) and 29 District Panchayats under the purview of the department.

Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs)

Local Self Government in Tamil Nadu has a long history as is evident from the Uthiramerur stone inscriptions in Kancheepuram district. Tamil Nadu, in those days, was a land of village republics, with community groups undertaking many activities for their area development. This tradition reached its peak during the 10th-11th centuries under the reign of Cholas when Village Councils used to levy taxes, improve community life and administer justice in their limited area.

These Village Councils had effective links with the Chola rulers. "Kuda Olai Murai" was the name of the secret ballot method exercised to elect members to the Village Councils. With the downfall of Cholas, the State experienced a decline of the Village autonomy and rise of the centralized feudal administrative system. This continued till British rulers introduced local self-governance primarily as an administrative convenience for the imperial Government. In the post independence era, the first enactment in democratic decentralization in the State was the Madras Village Panchayat Act 1950. Pursuant to the White Paper on the "Reform of Local Administration" in 1957, the Madras Panchayat Act 1958 and Madras District Development Council Act 1958 were enacted with the following salient features:

- a) A two tier system of Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions.
- b) Creation of Panchayat Unions co-terminus with the Community Development Blocks.
- c) Village Panchayat Presidents to become ex-officio members of the Panchayat Union Councils with the Chairperson of the Panchayat Union Council directly/indirectly elected.
- d) Entrusting the Panchayat Unions and Village Panchayats with a large number of developmental and welfare functions.
- e) Abolition of District Boards.
- f) Creation of District Development Council as an advisory body.

This two tier system operated very well till 1975 and elections were held regularly. Subsequently, the tenures of the Panchayat Unions and Village Panchayats were extended up to 1.2.1977 and 12.9.1979 respectively. Thereafter, Special Officers (Block Development Officer for all the Village Panchayats in a Block and Divisional Development Officer for all the Panchayat Unions in a Division) managed the rural Local Bodies till the next elections in 1986. The elected rural Local Bodies continued in office till March 1991. Again, no elections were held till October 1996 and the Special Officers managed the rural Local Bodies.

In 1992, the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution was enacted and it brought about a number of fundamental changes in the Panchayat Raj system. Consequently, the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994 came into force with effect from 22.4.1994. Some of the important changes brought about by the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution and the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994 are listed below:

- a) Introduction of a three tier system – at the Village, Intermediate (Block) and District level.
- b) Mandatory conduct of Local Body elections every five years.
- c) Introduction of reservation of seats (i.e ward members) and offices (i.e Chairpersons/ Presidents) for Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population in every Local Body with provision for rotation of the reserved seats and offices.
- d) Introduction of reservation of one third of total number of seats and offices for women with provision for rotation.
- e) Constitution of a State Election Commission as an independent body to conduct elections to both rural and urban Local Bodies regularly.
- f) Establishment of a quinquennial State Finance Commission to recommend devolution of resources from the State Government to the rural and urban Local Bodies.
- g) Constitution of a District Planning Committee to consolidate the plans prepared by the rural and urban Local Bodies in the district with a view of preparing a comprehensive development plan for the district.
- h) Introduction of the concept of 'Grama Sabha' comprising all registered voters in a Village Panchayat

Elections to Rural Local Bodies

Though the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act was enacted in April 1994, only after the change of Government in May 1996, the first ordinary elections were held to all the rural and urban Local Bodies in October 1996. The second ordinary elections to the Local Bodies were conducted during October 2001. The third ordinary elections to the Local Bodies were conducted in October 2006. As the Village Panchayat-wise 2001 Census figures were received only in May 2006, there wasn't enough time for fresh delimitation of wards of the three tiers of Panchayats. It was also considered appropriate to take up the delimitation of Panchayat wards after the delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly Constituencies is over. Hence the elections were held based on the existing Panchayat wards by the introduction of a new section 28A in the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994.

There was high participation of voters in the rural areas with a record turnout of 76%. The elections to the posts of ward members of Village Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and District Panchayats and for Presidents of Village Panchayats were *direct* and held in two phases on 13.10.2006 and 15.10.2006. The elections to the posts of Vice Presidents of Village Panchayats, and Chairpersons and Vice-Chairpersons of Panchayat Unions and District Panchayats were *indirect* and held on 28.10.2006. While the elections to the seats (i.e. ward members) and offices (i.e. heads) of District Panchayats and Panchayat Unions were held on party basis, the elections to the seats and offices of Village Panchayats were held on non-party basis. In Tamil Nadu, Panchayat Unions and the District Panchayats have single member wards while the Village Panchayats have both single member and multi-member wards.

The Table 1 furnishes the number of seats and offices in the three tiers of Panchayats for which the elections were held.

Table – 1

1	Village Panchayat Wards	40,879
2	Village Panchayat Ward Members	97,458
3	Panchayat Union Wards	6,570
4	District Panchayat Wards	656
5	Village Panchayat Presidents	12,618
6	Panchayat Union Chairpersons	385
7	District Panchayat Chairpersons	29

Reservation of Seats and Offices and Rotation

Article 243 D of the Constitution relates to reservation and rotation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Women in rural Local Bodies. The relevant provisions of Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1994 are Sections 11, 20, 32 & 57. These are supplemented by the Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Reservation of Seats and Rotation of Reserved Seats) Rules, 1995. The Rules provide for the reservation of seats by adopting a list of wards or Panchayats arranged in the descending order of the percentage of SCs, STs and Women and applying a 'cut off' at the point where the number of reserved seats and offices is equal to the prescribed ratio. The periodicity of rotation is also fixed under the Rules.

The Government amended Rule 7 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Reservation of Seats and Rotation of Reserved Seats) Rules, 1995 vide G.O.Ms, No. 105, RD & PR (C4) Department, dated 1.9.2006 by virtue of which the posts of Presidents of Village Panchayats and Chairpersons of Panchayat Unions and District Panchayats reserved for SCs, STs and Women were rotated - after 10 years - for the October 2006 elections. While the posts of ward members of all the 3 tiers reserved for Women were rotated - after 10 years - those reserved for SCs and STs were not rotated; in other words, they would continue to be reserved as such until the Government direct otherwise.

However, the Government took a conscious decision *not* to rotate the posts of Presidents of Pappapatti, Keeripatti and Nattarmangalam Village Panchayats in Madurai district and Kottakachiyendal Village Panchayat in Virudhunagar district reserved for SCs where elections could not take place for a prolonged period due to local opposition to reservation. Table 2 shows the details of reservation of seats and offices to Women, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in rural Local Bodies:

Table – 2
Tamil Nadu - Rural Local Bodies

Category of Reservation	Total No. of seats	Seats reserved for women	Women %	Seats reserved for SCs	SCs %	Seats reserved for STs	STs %
District Panchayats							
District Panchayat Chairpersons	29	10	34	7	24	0	0
District Panchayat Ward Members	656	226	34	154	23	8	1
Block Panchayats							
Panchayat Union Council Chairpersons	385	140	36	87	23	4	1
Panchayat Union Ward Members	6,570	2,302	35	1,534	23	64	1
Village Panchayats							
Village Panchayat Presidents	12,618	4,275	34	3,143	25	156	1
Village Panchayat Ward Members	97,458	32,638	33	24,630	25	983	1

Training for the Newly Elected Village Panchayat Presidents

Two days' orientation training was conducted for the newly elected Village Panchayat Presidents between 15.11.2006 and 30.11.2006 at 125 venues across the 29 districts in the State. Since more than 80% of the Village Panchayat Presidents are first-timers, they were sensitized on their roles and responsibilities, maintenance of accounts, conduct of meetings and implementation of schemes. It is proposed to impart periodic training to the elected representatives of Local Bodies in various schemes like National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam (AGAMT) etc. through the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and the five Regional Institutes of Rural Development (RIRDs). In order to ensure quality training to the elected representatives and the officials of Rural Development department, it is now proposed to improve the facilities in the five Regional Institutes of Rural Development in terms of better class rooms and teaching equipment, seminar halls, hostels, kitchens among others. It is also proposed to create a corpus fund for training the elected representatives of the 3 tiers of Panchayats on a regular basis.

Conference of Heads of Local Bodies

A conference of Chairpersons of District Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and heads of urban Local Bodies was conducted on 18.03.2007 at Chennai in the presence of the Honourable Chief Minister. Various issues pertaining to the effective functioning and empowerment of Local Bodies were deliberated upon and discussed in this conference.

Functional Devolution

The Government is committed to ensuring that the PRIs function as effective institutions of local self Government. In 1996, soon after the conclusion of first ordinary elections to the three tiers of Panchayats, the Government constituted a Committee under the Chairmanship of Thiru L.C. Jain, the then full-time Member of the State Planning Commission to give recommendations on the entrustment of powers to the three tiers of Panchayats. The Committee submitted its report to the Government in April, 1997. Many of the recommendations of the L.C. Jain Committee have been crystallized into action towards empowering the Panchayats. Apart from the Rural Development Department, various sectoral departments such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Forests, Social Welfare, Revenue, Khadi and Village Industries, Education, Health and Family Welfare, Adi-Dravidar Welfare, Co-operation, Food and Consumer Protection, have issued Government Orders for devolution of functions in their respective spheres to the three tiers of Panchayats.

Again, Government constituted a High Level Committee in November, 1997 under the Chairmanship of Thiru.Ko.Si.Mani, the then Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration with experienced persons including sitting MLAs of various political parties as members of the Committee to recommend additional devolution of powers to the Panchayats. This High Level Committee submitted its report on 11.1.1999 with 1209 recommendations to the Government. The Government accepted 718 recommendations and issued orders for implementation.

No such Committee was constituted during the period 2001-06. But the Government, in continuance of its commitment to give further powers and responsibilities to rural and urban Local Bodies, constituted a High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of the Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration, Thiru.M.K.Stalin vide G.O.Ms no.6 RD & PR (C1) Department dated 22.1.2007. This Committee met on 07.03.2007 at Chennai to have the first round of deliberations and will give its recommendations in due course. The decentralization and delegation of powers and functions to Panchayats is a continuous and dynamic process.

The Government is always open to the idea of delegating even more powers and functions to the rural Local Bodies, especially the Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions. In this connection, it is worth pointing out that Tamil Nadu has always pressed for a two tier Panchayat Raj system with strong and vibrant Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions as they existed under the old Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act, 1958. This Government is of the opinion that the reasons which led to the abolition of old District Boards, are still valid and applicable to the third tier of District Panchayat. The Government will press the Union Government to bring in Constitutional amendments to give States the necessary leeway to have Panchayats either at the Block level or at the District level or both, as deemed fit, while making the lowest tier of Village Panchayats mandatory for all the States.

Delimitation of Local Bodies

A large number of requests for upgradation, downgradation, bifurcation and amalgamation of rural and urban Local Bodies have been received by Government. Government have issued orders vide G.O.Ms No. 131, RD & PR (C1) Department, dated 16.3.2007 prescribing the procedure for the conduct of public hearings by Collectors / Heads of Departments before making their final recommendations to Government in response to such requests. It has been clarified to all the rural and urban Local Bodies that the terms of office of the present office bearers will not in anyway be affected. It has also been clarified that while Collectors may initiate the public hearing exercise and make their draft recommendations, Government will pass final orders only after the Delimitation Commission of India completes its work of delimitation of Parliamentary and Assembly constituencies.

Grama Sabha

The Grama Sabha is the grass root level democratic institution in each Village Panchayat. A vibrant Grama Sabha is essential for the effective functioning of Village Panchayats by promoting transparency and accountability in administration, enhancing public participation in the planning and implementation of schemes and in the choice of beneficiaries, and paving the way for social audit. The Government have ordered the conduct of Grama Sabha meetings a minimum of four times a year i.e. on 26th January, 1st May, 15th August and 2nd October.

In order to streamline the procedure for the conduct of Grama Sabha, this Government brought out suitable amendments to the Tamil Nadu Grama Sabha (Quorum and Procedure for convening and conducting of meetings) Rules, 1998 vide G.O.Ms No. 130 RD & PR (C4) Department dated 25.9.2006 and specified that the Grama Sabha shall meet in each of the Village Panchayat wards by rotation. Since a quorum of 10% of the voters was unattainable and unwieldy for the bigger Village Panchayats, a reduced quorum based on the population of Village Panchayats has been prescribed as shown in Table 3.

Table -3
Revised Quorum for Grama Sabhas

Sl. No.	Population of a Village Panchayat	Quorum for the Meeting
1	Upto 500	50
2	501-3,000	100
3	3,001-10,000	200
4	Above 10,000	300

It has also been specified that out of the quorum, at least 1/3rd shall be women and the number of SC/ST participants shall bear the same proportion to the quorum as the population of SCs / STs bears to the total population of the Village Panchayat. Recording of Grama Sabha attendance and proceedings through proper registers and keeping photographic record have been made mandatory for the conduct of Grama Sabhas.

Village Panchayats

There are 12,618 Village Panchayats in the State spread across the 29 districts and the 385 Blocks. The average number of Village Panchayats per district is 435 and per Block is 32. The Nilgiris (35), Kanniyakumari (99), Theni (130) and Karur (158) are some of the districts with fewer Village Panchayats while Villupuram (1104), Tiruvannamalai (860), Vellore (753), Cuddalore (681) and Kancheepuram (648) are some of the districts with a large number of Village Panchayats. As can be seen from Table 4, the populations of Village Panchayats in Tamil Nadu are widely varying with some Village Panchayats having populations even below 500 while others have populations exceeding 25,000.

Table -4

Classification of Village Panchayats on the basis of population

Sl. No.	Population	No. of Village Panchayat
1	Below 500	66
2	501-3,000	8,418
3	3,001-10,000	3,948
4	10,001- 25,000	174
5	Above 25,000	12
	Total	12,618

Similarly, wide variations are also noticed in the income levels of the various Village Panchayats as can be seen from Table 5.

Table -5

Income-wise Classification of Village Panchayats

(Average income of 3 years from 2003-04 to 2005-06)

Sl. No.	Income Range	No. of Village Panchayat
1	Upto Rs.50,000	10
2	Rs.50,000 to Rs.1 lakh	178
3	Rs.1 lakh to Rs.5 lakhs	7,422
4	Rs.5 lakhs to 10 lakhs	3,181
5	Rs.10 lakhs to 25 lakhs	1,489
6	Rs.25 lakhs to 50 lakhs	252
7	Rs.50 lakhs to 1 crore	60
8	Rs.1 crore to 3 crores	24
9	Above Rs.3 crores	2
	Total	12,618

At present, 3.48% (6% of 58%) of the Second State Finance Commission grant is earmarked as 'Equalisation Fund' to weaker Village Panchayats. There is need to develop a mechanism superior to the Equalisation Fund. It is therefore proposed to allocate a minimum of Rs. 3 lakhs to each Village Panchayat, irrespective of its size and population, out of the Village Panchayat share of the Third State Finance Commission grant and allocate the balance according to the population. This way, it will be ensured that even the weaker Village Panchayats have sufficient income to enable them to discharge their functions satisfactorily. It is also to be noted that under the Anaithu Grama Anna Marumalarchi Thittam, financially weaker Village Panchayats get priority in the implementation of the scheme.

Functions

Some of the important functions of a Village Panchayat are:

- a) construction, repair and maintenance of all village roads.
- b) extension of village sites and the regulation of buildings.
- c) lighting of public roads and public places in built-up areas.
- d) construction of drains.
- e) cleaning of streets and improvement of the sanitary condition of the village.
- f) construction and maintenance of public latrines.
- g) sinking and repairing of wells, the excavation, repair and maintenance of ponds or tanks and the construction and maintenance of water-works for the supply of water.
- h) maintenance of burial and burning grounds.
- i) maintenance of parks and reading rooms,
- j) implementation of schemes such as Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Central Finance Commission grant.
- k) such other duties as the Government may, by notification, impose.

Resources

The important sources of revenue for the Village Panchayat are:

a) Tax revenue

Among the three tiers, the Village Panchayat alone has the power to levy taxes. House tax, Profession tax and Advertisement tax are the commonly levied taxes.

b) Non Tax revenue

Licensing fees for building plan and layout approval, fees and charges on Dangerous & Offensive trades, water charges, fees on cart-stands, fishery rentals, 2C patta fees, income from markets and fairs, ferries, fines and penalties and so on.

c) Assigned and shared revenues

Local cess, surcharge on stamp duty, entertainment tax (70% share), seigniorage charges (100%) and lease amount (50% share) on minor minerals, social forestry auctions.

d) Grants

Central Finance Commission Grant, State Finance Commission Grant, development grants under Centrally-sponsored and State schemes.

Administrative powers

The Village Panchayat President himself has been designated as the Executive Authority. Cheques for payment have to be signed jointly by the President and Vice-President. Where the relationship between the two is not cordial, the Collector, in his capacity as Inspector of Panchayats, can designate any other member of the Village Panchayat as joint cheque signing authority along with the President.

The Village Panchayats do not need external approvals for administrative sanction for taking up works up to Rs. 1 lakh from their General fund. However, the Collector's prior administrative sanction is necessary in respect of all Centrally sponsored and State schemes. Village Panchayats have also been given freedom to execute urgent works up to Rs. 2,000 at a time and up to Rs. 5,000 for a year without any technical approval. The President can draw self cheque up to Rs. 500 to meet contingent expenditures.

The Village Panchayats have been given necessary delegation of powers to enable them to attend to repairs and maintenance of hand pumps, power pumps and street lights promptly. They can spend Rs.600 per hand pump per year and upto Rs.7,500 per power pump per year without reference to engineers for preparation of estimates or passing of bills. They can buy street light materials meeting the prescribed quality norms on their own.

Uthamar Gandhi Village Panchayat Award

Uthamar Gandhi Village Panchayat Award has been instituted vide G.O.Ms no. 111 RD & PR (C2) Depttment dated 5.9.2006. This award will be given each year from 2006-07 onwards for those Village Panchayats which have undertaken outstanding works, special initiatives and innovative efforts during the preceding 5 years. The chosen Panchayats will be given a certificate, shield

and a cash prize of Rs.5 lakhs each while their Presidents will be given a certificate and a medal. Awards can also be given posthumously. For 2006-07, 124 proposals were received from Collectors out of which 45 proposals were short-listed for field verification by a team headed by an IAS Officer. Amongst these, 15 Village Panchayats shall be conferred with Uthamar Gandhi Village Panchayat Award. For 2007-08, Rs.75 lakhs will be provided for giving this award.

Panchayat Union Council

At the intermediate level, there are 385 Panchayat Unions (Blocks) in the State. The average number of Panchayat Unions per district is 13. The Nilgiris (4) has the lowest number of Panchayat Unions while Villupuram (22) has the highest.

Functions and Powers

Some of the important functions of a Panchayat Union Council are:

- a) construction, repair and maintenance of all Panchayat union roads.
- b) construction of water works for the supply of water for drinking, washing and bathing purposes.
- c) construction and maintenance of elementary and middle schools.
- d) control of fairs and festivals under the control of the Panchayat Union.
- e) opening and maintenance of Panchayat Union public markets.
- f) implementing various Centrally sponsored and State schemes.
- g) preventive and remedial measures connected with any epidemic or with malaria.

Resources

Panchayat Unions cannot levy any tax. The revenues of a Panchayat Union consist of the following:

a) Non tax revenues

License fees, market fees, receipt from rentals and properties, fines and penalties.

b) Assigned and shared revenues

Local cess surcharge, entertainment tax (30% share), lease amount of minor minerals (50% share).

c) Grants

State Finance Commission Grants, development grants under Centrally sponsored schemes and State schemes, grants for maternity centres, rural dispensaries. The Panchayat

Union Councils can sanction and execute works up to Rs.5 lakhs from their General funds without any external approvals. However for Centrally sponsored and State schemes, prior administrative sanction of the District Collector is necessary.

District Panchayats

There are 29 district Panchayats in the State.

Functions

The functions of the District Panchayats are mainly advisory in nature such as:

- a) preparation of development plan for the district.
- b) compilation of administration reports of Village Panchayat and Panchayat Union Councils of the district and preparation of Annual Report for the District.
- c) planning and review of Agriculture, Land Development, Animal Husbandry, Dairy, Poultry, Fisheries Sector and Rural Industries etc.
- d) planning and review of rural housing programmes particularly housing for SC/STs.
- e) identification of major water supply schemes.

Resources

The District Panchayat has no taxation powers. Its only source of revenue is from statutory grants like State Finance Commission Grants and development grants under Centrally sponsored schemes. District Panchayats can sanction and execute works up to Rs.10 lakhs from their General funds without any external approvals. However in the case of Centrally sponsored schemes, prior administrative sanction of the District Collector is necessary.

State Finance Commission Grant

To augment the resources of the Local Bodies, financial devolution to the Local Bodies is made on the basis of recommendations of the State Finance Commission (SFC). Currently 8% of the State's total own net tax revenues (other than entertainment tax) is devolved to the rural and urban Local Bodies in the ratio of 58:42 respectively. 87% of the allocation for rural Local Bodies is being shared among the three tiers in the ratio of 47:45:8 among Village Panchayats, Panchayat Union Councils and District Panchayats respectively.

Based on the recommendations of Third State Finance Commission a higher share of State's own tax revenues for the rural and urban Local Bodies in the next five years, beginning with 9% for the year 2007- 08. The percentage of devolution will be progressively increased to 10% within the award period of the Third State Finance Commission. The ratio of the shares of rural and urban Local Bodies will continue to be 58:42.

Since Village Panchayats are entrusted with most of the basic functions such as maintenance of village roads and streets, drinking water supply, street lights, sanitation and solid waste Management and they are also the largest in number (12,618), the allocation for the rural Local Bodies is proposed to be shared in the ratio 60:32:8 among Village Panchayats, Panchayat Union Councils and the District Panchayats from the year 2007-08 onwards. These policy changes are expected to greatly improve the delivery of services at the grass roots level. In 2006-07, Government had allocated Rs.1,224.76 crores as the State Finance Commission grant for the rural Local Bodies. For 2007-08, the allocation is likely to be Rs.1585.72 crores – an increase of nearly 30%.

Central Finance Commission Grant

On the basis of the recommendations of the Twelfth Finance Commission (TFC), the Government of India has allotted a sum of Rs. 870 crores for the 5- year period from 2005-06 to 2009-10.

For 2007-08, this Government has decided vide its G.O.Ms.No.19 RD & PR Department dated 26.02.2007 that the entire Twelfth Finance Commission Grant will be allocated only to Village Panchayats on the basis of population. The grants should be utilised by the Village Panchayats entirely for the operation and maintenance cost of water supply, street lighting and sanitation. A sum of Rs. 174 crores will be provided for the year 2007-08.

Assigned/Shared Revenues

The major sources of assigned/shared revenues to the rural Local Bodies are Local cess, Local cess surcharge, surcharge on stamp duty, entertainment tax, seigniorage fee and lease amount of mines and minerals, and sale proceeds of social forestry plantations. The total receipts to rural Local Bodies under these heads in a year is about Rs.250-300 crores. The Local cess is equal to the land revenue collected and is credited to the Village Panchayats. The Local cess surcharge is between five and ten times the land revenue collected and is credited to the Panchayat Unions. The surcharge on stamp duty is pooled at the Block level and apportioned among the Village Panchayats in the Block in proportion to their land revenue collection. The entertainment tax is shared between the Village Panchayats and Panchayat Union in the ratio 70:30, after deducting 10% towards collection expenses. The seigniorage fee on minor minerals is credited to the Village Panchayats concerned while in the case of the lease amount, 50% is credited to the

Panchayat Union and 50% to the Village Panchayats concerned. In the case of social forestry auction amounts, 60% of the gross proceeds will go to the Village Panchayats concerned and 40% will be retained by Forest department.

It has been observed that there is considerable delay in adjusting the various assigned/shared revenues to the Village Panchayats and Panchayat Unions and the paper work involved is disproportionate to the amounts involved. There is also considerable inequity in the distribution of what are essentially Government revenues. Hence, the Government is considering the development of an alternative sharing formula for assigned/shared revenues that facilitates quick and easy disbursement and is also equitable.

Functionaries

The posts of Makkal Nala Paniyalar were abolished by the previous Government on 31-5-2001. After this Government assumed office, 13,100 posts were revived and 12,774 Makkal Nala Paniyalars have joined duty till 31.3.2007. Makkal Nala Paniyalars assist the Village Panchayat Presidents in the collection of taxes, maintenance of assets, implementation of schemes, etc. They have also been asked to prepare the muster rolls of labourers working under Tamil Nadu Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme works in the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act districts of the State.

Since the Puratchi Thalaivar MGR Noon Meal Scheme is dealt with by the Department of Social Welfare and Nutritious Meal Programme at the Secretariat level, the control of the scheme hitherto vested with the Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department has been transferred to the Directorate of Social Welfare vide G.O.Ms.no.80 (SGS-3) RD & PR Department with effect from 20.7.2006.

The control of Tamil Nadu Bhoodan Board was transferred from the Directorate of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj to the Commissionerate of Land Reforms vide G.O. Ms.No.144 (SGS-3) Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department dated 20.07.2006 since the Bhoodan Board also deals with the distribution of land to the landless .

The Government relaxed the special rules pertaining to the service qualifications for promotion of Extension Officers to the post of Deputy Block Development Officer vide G.O.Ms.No.154 Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (C4) Department dated 20.10.2006. It is now stipulated that working as an Extension Officer (Panchayats) for a period of not less than one year is sufficient for promotion as a Deputy Block Development Officer. The Part-Time Clerks/Panchayat Assistants working in the Village Panchayats who were on consolidated pay have been brought under time scale of pay with effect from 1.9.2006.

Accordingly, the Full-Time Panchayat Assistants have been designated as Panchayat Assistants Grade I and given the time scale of pay of Rs.1,300-20-1,500-25-2,000. The Part-Time Clerks have been designated as Panchayat Assistants Grade II and they have been given a time scale of pay of Rs.625-10-725-20-925. Large numbers of vacancies in all categories of staff, which affected the implementation of schemes adversely, was a problem this Government had to face when it assumed office in May 2006. Taking expeditious action, orders have been passed permitting the filling up of vacancies in all categories from the Assistant Director downwards.

The Government has passed orders enabling the upgradation of the posts of Project Officers, DRDAs to Additional Directors whenever required vide G.O.Ms.No.17 RD & PR Department dated 21.02.2007, subject to condition that the total number of sanctioned posts of Additional Directors is not exceeded. The Government also proposes to restructure the District Rural Development Agencies, whose staffing pattern is not attuned to the current schemes and priorities. A similar restructuring is contemplated with regard to the Project Implementation Units of Mahalir Thittam project. The Block Development Officer (Village Panchayats) will be made responsible for liaising with the non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) and financial institutions for the implementation of Mahalir Thittam and Swarna Jayanti Gram SwarozgarYojana (SGSY).

Initiatives in devolution

The Rural Development Department, Government of Tamil Nadu requested the State Planning Commission for constituting a Working Group of Members of the Commission which should consider and make recommendations on the responsibilities to be entrusted to the Panchayats at different levels and the roles, duties and functions to be discharged by them. Accordingly, after the conduct of local body elections in October 1996, two Committees one headed by Thiru L.C. Jain, the then Member of State Planning Commission in 1996, and another headed by Thiru Ko.Si. Mani, the then Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration in 1997 had gone into the issue of devolution of powers and responsibilities to the Panchayats and had given their recommendations. The terms of reference of the Working Group headed by Thiru L.C. Jain, then member, State Planning Commission on the entrustment of powers to Panchayats as listed below :

- a) The responsibilities to be entrusted to the Panchayats at different levels
- b) The roles, duties and functions of the Panchayats in respect of these responsibilities being entrusted to them.

1. Thiru. L.C.Jain Committee

The L.C. Jain Committee submitted its report to the Government in April 1997. Many of its recommendations towards empowering the Panchayats were acted upon. Apart from Rural Development Department, various sectoral departments such as Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Forests, Social Welfare, Revenue, Khadi and Village Industries, Education, Health and Family Welfare,

Adi-Dravidar Welfare, Co-Operation, Food and Consumer Protection, have issued Government orders in their respective spheres to the three tiers of Panchayats.

2. Thiru. Ko.Si.Mani Committee

The terms of the reference of the High Level Committee headed by Thiru Ko.Si. Mani, the then Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration in 1997 to recommend to the Government what additional changes could be made in the powers and responsibilities entrusted to the District Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and Village Panchayats, the power entrusted to monitor various schemes and what rights, powers and responsibilities could be devolved to them. The High Level Committee submitted its report on 11.1.1999 with 1209 recommendations to the Government. The Government accepted 718 recommendations and issued orders for their implementation

3.Thiru. M.K.Stalin Committee

The Government constituted a High Level Committee under the Chairmanship of Thiru.M.K.Stalin, Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration in G.O (Ms) No. 6 RD&PR (C1) Department, Dated: 22.01.2007, for examining further devolution of powers and responsibilities to the rural and urban Local Bodies and give recommendations to the Government.

State level Conference of Heads of Local Bodies

A conference of Chairpersons of District Panchayats, Panchayat Unions and heads of urban Local Bodies was conducted on 18.03.2007 at Chennai in the presence of the Honorable Chief Minister. Various issues pertaining to effective functioning and empowerment of Local Bodies were deliberated upon and discussed in this conference

Regional conferences of Village Panchayat Presidents

The Govt. of Tamil Nadu have initiated a one day 'Regional Conference on Panchayat Raj' in the four regions for the newly elected Panchayat Presidents at four venues as mentioned below.

- o The first Regional Conference was organized on 24.07.2007, at Erode District inviting all the Village Panchayat Presidents from Erode, Salem, Namakkal, Dharmapuri, Coimbatore and Nilgiris districts.
- o The second Regional Conference was conducted on 25.07.07, at Tiruchirapalli in which panchayat presidents of Thanjavur, Nagapattinam, Tiruvarur, Tiruchirapalli, Karur, Perambalur and Pudukottai districts were participated.

- o The third was on 03.08.07, organized at Tiruvannamalai in which panchayat presidents of Kancheepuram, Tiruvellore, Cuddalore, Villupuram, Vellore, Tiruvannamalai and Krishnagiri were participated.
- o The fourth was organized on 23.08.07 at Virudhunagar in which panchayat presidents of Madurai, Theni, Dindigul, Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar, Sivagangai, Tirunelveli, Toothukudi and Kanniyakumari were participated.

High Level Committee

Following the above Conferences, Consultative meetings were held by the Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Local Administration with the secretaries to the Government of various departments on 11.10.2007 and 12.10.2007 and the High Level Committee submitted its recommendations to Government on 10.12.2007.

District Planning Committee

Tamil Nadu is one among the few States, constituted the District Planning Committee. Provision was made in Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994 for the constitution of District Planning Committee under Section 241. As per sec.257 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994 the District Planning Committee shall consolidate the plans prepared by the District Panchayat, Panchayat Unions, village Panchayats, Town Panchayats, Municipal councils and Municipal Corporations in the District to prepare a draft development plan for the district as a whole.

Constitution of DPC

The Government have issued orders constituting District Planning Committee in all the districts in Tamil Nadu vide G.O. Ms. No. 327 Rural Development Department (C1) department dated 14.11.1997.

Composition of DPC

As per Sec.241 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994 the District Planning Committee shall consists of the following.

1. The Chairman of the District Panchayat is the Chairman of the Committee.
2. The District Collector is the Vice-Chairman of the Committee.
3. The Mayor of the City Municipal Corporation in the District.
4. Such number of persons, not less than four fifth of the total number of members of the Committee as may be specified by the Government elected from among the members of the District Panchayats, town Panchayats and Councilors of the Municipal Corporations and the Municipal councils in the District in proportion to the ratio between the population of the rural areas and of the Urban areas in the District.

The following persons shall be the permanent special invitees of the Committee.

- i. Members of Parliament (both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha)
- ii. Members of Legislative Assembly.
- iii. All the Chairmen of Panchayat Union Councils in the District.
- iv. All the Chairmen of the Municipal Councils.
- v. All the Chairmen of the Town Panchayats in the District.

Election of Members to the District Planning Committee

After the ordinary elections to the rural local bodies, the Government have issued orders and notified vide. G.O (Ms) No. 12, RD & PR Department, Dated: 9th Feb.2007 (copy enclosed) specifying district wise number of persons to be elected as members of District Planning Committee from among the members of the District Panchayats , Town Panchayats and Councilors of the Municipal Corporations and Municipal Councils.

In exercise of powers conferred by sub-rule(3) of the rule 32 of the Tamil Nadu Local Bodies (Election of Members to the District Planning Committee) Rules, 1999, the Ordinary Election to the district Planning committee was conducted on 11.4.2007 by the State Election Commission. The list of elected candidates to the office of Members of District Planning committee for each District was also notified by the State Election Commission vide S.O No: 207/2007/TNSEC/PE-1, Dated: 27thJuly2007.

Notifications and Government Orders issued on District Planning Committee

Sl.No.	Government Gazette Orders issued	Subject
1	Tamil Nadu Govt. Gazettee No.379 dt.22.7.93. An act to amend the Constitution of India (74 th amendment)	There shall be constituted in every State at the district level a District Planning Committee to consolidate plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities in the district and to prepare draft development plan for the district as a whole.
2	A Bill further to amend the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994.	Fifth amendment.
3	Tamil Nadu Govt. Gazettee 14.11.1997	Constitution of District Planning Committee.

Sl.No.	Government Gazette Orders issued	Subject
4	G.O.Ms.No. 100 RD(C4) Dept.dt.8.6.99	Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994- The Tamil Nadu District Planning Committee-Conduct of meetings – Rules-1999- orders issued.
5	G.O.Ms.No. 113 P & D (SP) Dept., Dated 2.7.99	Planning – Planning for three tier Panchayats –
6	G.O.Ms.No.21 RD(C4) Dept. dt.1.2.2000	DPC - Election of members to the DPC –specifying 4/5th total No.of members under clause (b) of Sub-section (2) of Section 241 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994.
7	Act No: 24 of 2000 Government Gazette 12 th June 2000	The Chairman of the District Panchayat shall be the Chair person of the Committee and the Collector of the District should be the Vice-Chairman of the Committee.
8	G.O.Ms.No. 278 RD(C4) Dept. dt. 24.10.2000	District Planning Committee-Election to members to the DPC 4/5 of the total No.of members of the Committee under Sub-clause (iv) of clause (a) of Sub-section(2) of section 21 of the Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994. (Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994) as amended by the Tamil Nadu Panchayats (Sixth Amendment) ordinance-2000-Notified.
9	Act No: 30 of 2000 GG 28 th November 2000	Composition of District Planning Committee.
10	G.O.Ms.No. 4 P & D (SP) Department, Dated 18.01.2001	Multi level planning – Draft guidelines for preparation of District Development Plan – Orders issued
11	G.O.Ms.No. 66 RD(C4) Dept. dt.12.3.2001	Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994- (Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994) The Tamil Nadu District Planning Committee conduct of meetings, Quorum and procedure in regard to Transaction of business- Rules-1999- Amendments-issued.
12	G.O.Ms.No. 65 RD(C4) Dept. dt. 21.3.2001	The Tamil Nadu Panchayat Union Councils and District Panchayats (Transfer of charge of the office of Chairman) Rules.
13	G.O.Ms.No. 172 RD(C4) Dept. dt. 19.7.2001.	Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994-Specifying No.of members of the District Planning Committee in Perambalur and Ariyalur Districts- Amendments-Issued.
14	G.O.Ms.No. 296 RD(C4) Dept. dt.19.12.2001	District Planning Committee-Election of members to the DPC 4/5 of the total No.of the Committee under Sub-clause (iv) of clause (a) of Sub-section(2) of Section 241 of Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994. (Tamil Nadu Act 21 of 1994) Notified- Amendment- Issued.
15	G.O.Ms.No. 19 RD&PR (C4) Dept. dt. 15.9.2006.	R.D. Department-DPC- functions- orders issued.

Sl.No.	Government Gazette Orders issued	Subject
16	Government Order No.13, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (C4) Department, Dated:9.02. 2007.	Specification of number of Members of the District Planning Committee.
17	S.O No: 207/2007/ TNSEC / PE-1, Dt:24 th July 2007,State Election Commission, Tamil Nadu	State Election Commission notified the list of all elected candidates to the office of Members of District Planning committee for each District.

Capacity Building

The people of Tamil Nadu have been empowered to select their representatives; thereby share the power in the decision-making, which brings positive changes in their standard of living through effective delivery systems in place. This could be possible, only when the people's elected representatives are properly oriented in all the latest trends like participatory planning, collective decision-making, and convergence of resources from line department schemes and access to various acts, rules, Government Orders and other executive guidelines.

Similarly, the critical functionaries/officials of Rural Development & Panchayat Raj Department and other line departments are to be trained. The State Institute of Rural Development, five RIRDs and Nodal Institutions identified will cater to the training needs of the elected representatives and functionaries of the State.

The Rashtriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY) was implemented in 6 Districts of the State namely 1.Cuddalore, 2.Tiruvanamalai, 3.Dindigul, 4.Nagapattinam, 5. Sivagangai and 6.Villupuram and only 3 districts have received their full allocation of Rs.45 crores each, over a period of 3 years as per the norms of RSVY and the remaining 3 Districts are yet to get Rs. 1.50 crores each.

With the advent of BRGF (Backward Region Grant Fund), the erstwhile RSVY Districts have to shift to the BRGF mode of funding as RSVY has been subsumed in the BRFGF Programme.

Backward Regions Grant Fund

The Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) is designed to redress regional imbalances in development. The fund will provide financial resources for supplementing and converging existing developmental inflows into identified districts, so as to:

- bridge critical gaps in local infrastructure and other development requirements that are not being adequately met through existing inflows,
- strengthen Panchayat Raj Institutions(PRIs) level governance with more appropriate capacity building and to facilitate participatory planning, decision making, implementation and monitoring, to reflect local felt needs,

- provide professional support to local bodies for planning, implementation and monitoring their plans,
- improve the performance and delivery of critical functions assigned to Panchayats, and counter possible efficiency and equity losses on account of inadequate local capacity.

Funding windows of BRGF

BRGF consists of two funding windows, as follows:

- a. Capability Building Fund
- b. Untied Grant

(a) A Capability Building Fund of Rs.250 crore per annum

These funds will be used primarily to build capacity in planning, implementation, monitoring, accounting and improving accountability and transparency. This could include arrangements for contracting and outsourcing.

(b) A substantially untied grant of Rs.3500 crore for 2006-07(out lay during 11th Plan period will be intimated in due course)

The allocation of these funds to Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies will be guided by transparent norms and they will use these funds to address critical gaps in integrated development, identified through the participative planning processes cited in BRGF Guidelines.

Capacity Building framework of BRGF

The Capacity Building framework aims to break through the deadlock of whether capacity building should precede devolution of functions, funds and functionaries.

Objectives of the National Framework for CB of BRGF Plan

The basic objectives of CB framework under BRGF are:

- enabling Panchayat elected representatives to upgrade their knowledge and skills to better perform their responsibilities
- orienting key officials associated with the devolved functions and learn from the ground level experience of elected Panchayat representatives.
- improving the Gram Sabha functioning

- sensitizing the media, political parties, representatives in the legislatures, civil society organizations and citizens to accepting and promoting Panchayati Raj as an effective level of local Government.

Basic principles underlying the National CB Framework under BRGF

The Framework is grounded on the following basic principles:

- An all round continuous and sustained process aimed at long-term transformation and development.
- Inter-learning between trainers and participants.
- Provide space and time for trainees to reflect on and analyze their situation and seek solutions to their problems.
- Mutual learning, assimilation and retention happens best in a multimodal and non-hierarchical training environment.
- SCs, STs and Women should be given special attention in training and ensure participation of all members
- The training team should be objective and non-judgmental
- The training must be convenient and relevant to the ground reality of elected representatives.
- Maximum initial coverage within a limited period of time all stakeholders enabling them to play their roles and commence their work.
- Develop and evolve on the basis of regular impact assessment.

BRGF Districts

District	Block	Village Panchayat
Cuddalore	13	681
Tiruvanamalai	18	860
Dindigul	14	306
Nagapattinam	11	434
Sivagangai	12	445
Villupuram	22	1,104
Total	90	3,830

Components of Capability Building as per the BRGF Guidelines

- Provision of adequate functionaries at the GP level for planning and implementation
- Provision of technical assistance.
- Providing sufficient office infrastructure for Gram Panchayats
- Providing adequate Training
- Conduct of surveys/ studies for BRGF Districts
- Capacity building of District Planning Committee (DPCs) for preparing and consolidating plans

Theme / Item

Foundation Course : Overview of Panchayat Raj and Basic Functional Course for Master Trainers

1 (a) Induction Course for PRIs : Overview of Panchayat Raj

1 (b) Basic Functional Course for PRIs

1 (c) Functional Literacy Course

II a) Sectorally Focused Thematic Training Programme

II b) Building ICT Skills

II c) Formation of Networks of PRIs for Experience Sharing

II d) Film and Electronic Material

Help lines (16 Hours a day every working day)

Panchayat Raj T.V. Channel / Radio Programmes for awareness creation

Panchayat Raj Newsletter

Intermediate Panchayat Resource Centers

Training Programme Management

Strategy

Part – I

- Basic Foundation Course
- Basic Functional Course
- Functional Literacy

Part-II

- Sectoral matters including disaster management
- ICT skills

Part – III

- Peoples campaign
- Media
- Net working of PRIs
- Use of IT
- Refresher courses
- Visits to best practices
- Establishing Block level Extension Centres
- Help lines
- Certificate Courses

Training input proposed

Based on the functional and operational aspects of PRIs and the ongoing schemes, the identified areas of training are listed below. Necessary modification and improvement will be made wherever necessary:

Knowledge Aspects

- 73rd Amendment
- Tamil Nadu Panchayats Act 1994
- Acts, Rules, Government Orders, guidelines
- Role of PRIs in social issues
- Powers, functions and responsibilities of Rural Local Bodies
- Planning – Participatory Planning
- Convergence
- Resource Mobilization / Financial Management
- Developmental Schemes / Engineering aspects
- Environment
- Identification and maintenance of Community Assets
- Social problems / issues

Skill Up gradation Aspects

- Conduct of Meetings
- Participatory Planning through PRA methods
- Budgeting / Accounting
- Bookkeeping
- Leadership skills
- Social mobilization
- Communication and inter personal relations
- Disaster Management

Attitude Aspects

- Collective decision making
- People centered approach
- Positive attitude towards participatory development
- Transparency in Administration
- Social Auditing
- Gender sensitization
- Cordial relations with sectoral departments
- To cope with Right to Information Act
- People/poor centered approach

Reference materials

Matters relating to Village Panchayats

- Funds and Functions of Village Panchayats
- Village Panchayat Administration
- Conduct of Village Panchayat meetings
- Village Panchayats works
- Village Panchayats Assets
- Role of Committees in Village Panchayats administration
- Grama Sabha – Grass root level democracy
- Accounts and Records maintenance
- Planning – Participatory Planning
- Convergence
- Central and State Schemes
- Water and Sanitation
- Right to Information Act

Matters relating to Panchayat Unions

- Duties and responsibilities of Block Panchayats
- Panchayat Union Administration
- Administration of funds, accounts and audit of Panchayat Unions
- Rural Works – Panchayat Unions
- Central and State Government Schemes
- Right to Information Act

Matters relating to District Panchayats

- Duties and responsibilities of District Panchayats
- Role of District Planning Committees
- Planning – Participatory Planning
- Convergence
- Role of Standing Committees

Common materials for all the three tiers

- Right to Information / Computer Applications / Child Labour
- Empowerment of Women / Sanitation / Protected Drinking water
- Technical know how for better implementation, Planning
- Environment / Education / Waste Land Development
- Maintenance of Basic Amenities, Leadership and Leaders
- Rural Development Schemes / Rural Technologies

State Institute of Rural Development

The mission of the State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) is to focus on the qualitative development in the ongoing rural development schemes and sensitize the elected representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) to be proactive through capacity building activities. Capacity building is considered to be fundamental part in the development efforts through which the delivery system can be made effective. At the state level this endeavor is well taken by SIRD.

The State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) is the state apex body for Training, Research and Consultancy functions in the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department. It works as an autonomous organization under the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department of Government of Tamil Nadu. SIRD was established in 1961 and attained autonomous status in 1990 and started functioning in Maraimalai Nagar campus since 1991.

Objectives of SIRD-TN

Constant upgradation of the skills, knowledge base and attitudes of rural development functionaries are indispensable in the overall strategy for poverty reduction. Information dissemination through capacity building and research studies into various aspects of rural development are imperative tools in this regard. SIRD renders these services to assist the development functionaries. The Institute is thus engaged in the following activities:

- Organize training programmes, conferences, seminars and workshops

- Undertake, aid, promote and coordinate research on its own or other agencies including universities
- Analyze and propose solutions to problems in planning and implementation of the programmes for rural development, Panchayat Raj and similar programme
- Disseminate information through periodicals, reports, booklets and other publications

The Clientele

The clientele of SIRD includes a large number of elected representatives at the village, block and district levels, rural development functionaries, NGOs, bankers, SHG representatives. Apart from SIRD, five Regional Institutes of Rural Development (RIRD) accommodate the clientele in the capacity building activities. Training for rural development has in fact become an imperative part of the rural development process as it is realized that it is essential to help the development personnel to improve their managerial skills as well as to keep them abreast of the latest changes in government policies, strategies and programme objectives to enable them to augment their working efficiency.

SIRD has been playing its own modest but credible role in Tamil Nadu by facilitating qualitative changes in programme implementation through a process of training, research, consultancy and information dissemination. This has enabled the Institute to emerge as the State Apex Institute for training, research and consultancy in the area of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj.

Training

SIRD-TN offers training programmes in several thrust areas of rural development and decentralized governance for the elected representatives of PRIs, functionaries of rural development and sectoral (line) departments, NGOs, bankers and rural micro credit institutions. The institute provides intensive training in face to face mode, using contemporary methodologies and technologies to suit different programme requirements. The form, content and delivery mechanisms of the programmes are developed with the assistance of panel of experts in the field. A right mixture of presentations, panel discussions, demonstrations, lectures, case-studies, role-playing, experience sharing, brain storming and field exposures is effectively used in the training process with emphasis on participatory and interactive learning components.

Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) and Ministry of Panchayat Raj (MoPR), Government of India have suggested that SIRDs organize training programmes on specific topics. These programmes are incorporated in the training calendar. Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department, Government of Tamil Nadu has initiated many efforts for the training of functionaries on the state

sponsored and special schemes and these training programmes are given priority in the training activity of SIRD. A few significant titles of training programmes are listed below:

- Foundation Course for Block Development Officers
- ToT for SIRD and RIRD faculties
- Workshop on Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme
- Course on Managerial Skills
- Course on National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme-TN
- Course on Computer Applications in Rural Development and PR
- Course on Implementation of Rural Development Programmes
- Course on Rural Development Schemes and Guidelines for PRIs
- Course on Financial Management and Audit in PRIs
- ToT on SGSY
- Course on Leadership and Organizational Development
- Course on Panchayat Raj Finances
- Course on Management of Micro Credit and Micro Enterprises in SGSY
- Course on Marketing Management of Micro enterprises in SGSY
- Course on Rural Engineering

Research

The research conducted by this Institute is field-based in character. It becomes an important ingredient in policy formulations relating to rural development. SIRD undertakes research studies of impact assessment of Rural Development Schemes. On the basis of their specializations, the individual faculty members contribute to the research. The research proposals of the Institute have been examined and funded by NIRD. A few titles of research projects completed are listed below.

- Action Research Project on Integrated Approach for Village Development
- Entrepreneurship, Employment and Efficiency of Micro Enterprises with special reference to SGSY
- Role of NGOs in Social Mobilization

Consultancy

The vast expertise available in the field of rural development at the Institute has been tapped by several agencies, regional, national and international for conducting consultancy activities. Consultancy activities were collaborated with the following agencies / institutions in the field of capacity building/research:

- DANIDA Water and Sanitation Project
- CAPART
- M.S. Swaminathan Foundation
- UNICEF Sanitation Project
- UNDP
- Tamil Nadu Empowerment and Poverty Reduction Project funded by the World Bank
- DHAN Foundation
- Gandhigram Rural University
- Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Govt. of India
- National Institute of Rural Development
- Ministry of Food Processing, Govt. of India
- Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Govt. of India
- State Planning Commission, Tamil Nadu

Information Dissemination

The Institute continued to take the lead in the country in publishing Rural Development Literature. Some of the important publications of the Institute are:

Books

- Compendium of Amendment to Act & Rules and Government Orders – English
- Compendium of Amendment to Act & Rules and Government Orders – English (Supplement)
- Compendium of Amendment to Act & Rules and Government Orders – Tamil
- Compendium of Amendment to Act & Rules and Government Orders – Tamil (Supplement)
- Hand Book for Village Panchayat on Panchayat Raj and Rural Development
- Hand Book for Block Panchayat on Panchayat Raj and Rural Development
- Hand Book for District Panchayat on Panchayat Raj and Rural Development
- Right to Information Act
- National Rural Employment Guarantee Act and Scheme – TN

Directory

- Address Book – Directory of a elected representatives of PRIs of Tamil Nadu

Posters and Calendar

- Posters on NREGS – TN
- Posters on AGAMT

Management and Administration

The varied activities of SIRD are well supported by the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department of Government of Tamil Nadu. The management committees of SIRD consist of Governing Body and Executive Committee.

Governing Body: It consists of heads of various departments of Government of Tamil Nadu as members, representatives from NIRD, RIRDs, Bankers Training Institutes and NGOs.

Executive Committee: This committee is the supreme body which meets once in three months to review and guide the activities of SIRD. The members of executive committee are:

- Secretary to Government, Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department , Government of Tamil Nadu : Chair Person
- Director of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj : Vice-Chair Person
- Secretary to Government, Finance Department : Member
- Secretary to Government, Planning, Development and Special Initiatives : Member
- Executive Director, TNCDW Ltd. : Member
- Joint Secretary, Rural Development and PR Dept. : Member
- Director, SIRD : Member Secretary

The Director - SIRD, as prime officer of the Institute is responsible for administration of the institute and exercises powers under the direction and guidance of the Executive Committee. Director is assisted by Joint Director/ Lecturer (Area Planning), Financial Advisor and Faculty members.

Faculty

SIRD has faculty in the following areas of specialization:

- Area Planning – Decentralized planning and Governance
- Financial Management – Accounts and Audit
- Panchayat Raj (3 Nos.) – Finance, Schemes, Administration
- Rural Engineering – Rural Infrastructure Development
- Agriculture – Water Shed Management
- Behavioural Sciences – PRA, Disaster Management
- Cooperation – Rural Credit and Marketing
- Extension – Training Skills and Methodologies
- Livelihood – Enterprises Development and Poverty Reduction
- Management – Rural Management
- System Analyst - Computer Application for RD and PR
- Water and Sanitation – Sanitation and Rain Water Harvesting
- Social Mobilization – Programmes for poor and vulnerable

Apart from the expertise of above SIRD Faculty members, SIRD is also utilizing the services of guest faculties, such as:

- Retired officers of Rural Development and Sectoral Departments
- Serving officers of Rural Development and Sectoral Departments
- Bank officers from NABARD and Nationalized Banks
- University Professors / experts from particular area of expertise
- Trainers from MSSRF, UNICEF, NIRD, TNCDW, TNEPRP, etc.,
- Elected Representatives of three-tiers
- SHG micro entrepreneurs

Infrastructure

SIRD is located in a campus of 24 acres in Maraimalai Nagar. The Institute has ample infrastructure and all amenities as listed below:

- Four Conference Halls (out of which 2 A/C Halls)
- Air Conditioned Faculty Rooms
- Audio visual aids like Multi-Media Projectors
- Video Conferencing
- Computer Centre
- Copier facilities
- Library
- Guest House (Hostel) and Canteen
- Sanitation Park
- Herbal Garden
- Rain Water Harvesting Structures
- Transportation Vehicles – Mini Bus, Jeep, Cars

Regional Institutes of Rural Development (RIRDS)

The ETCs are known as Regional Institutes of Rural Development (RIRD) in Tamil Nadu. There are five RIRDS in the State located in Bhavanisagar, Krishnagiri, Pattukottai, T.Kallupatti and S.V.Nagaram. RIRDS are the channel partners of SIRD in conducting specialized courses on PRI, TNREGS etc, apart from their mandatory programmes. Each RIRD has faculties in the fields of Panchayat Raj, Rural Development, Accounts, etc headed by joint Director of Rural Development as Principal.

Sectoral Department Training Institutes

Sectoral departments have their own training institutes for catering the training needs of their department employees. Those training institutes are exclusively conduct the training programmes for their department officials only or fulfill the training requirements of related departments. The following table shows the details of sectoral department training institutes in the state.

Details of Training Institutes of Sectoral Departments

Sl.No. Departments-Institutes

- 1 Revenue-Civil Service Training Institute, Bhavanisagar
- 2 Personnel and Training-Anna Institute of Management, Chennai
- 3 Agricultural Engineering-Agricultural Engineering Training Centre, Tiruchirapalli
- 4 Agriculture-State Agricultural Extension Management Institute(STAMIN)
Kudimiyamalai, Pudukottai
- 5 Horticulture-Horticulture Training Institute Madhavaram, Chennai
- 6 Fisheries-Fisheries Training Institute, Chennai
- 7 Irrigation-Irrigation Management Training Institute,
- 8 Water Supply-TWAD Training Center, Tiruchirapalli
- 9 Health- Institute of Public Health, Chennai
- 10 Cooperation-Natesan Institute of Cooperative Management, Chennai
- 11 Urban Local Bodies-Tamil Nadu Institute of Urban Studies, Coimbatore

Net working with other institutions

In addition to SIRD, RIRDs, Tamil Nadu Institute of Urban Studies and the institutes of sectoral/line departments, the institutions which have good record and expertise in terms of trainers and adequate infrastructure are to be identified for imparting training programmes like Gandhi Gram Rural University, Didugul. Some more Institutions are to be identified in consultation with the District Collectors of respective Districts for taking up the CB Assignment.

