

Minutes of Meeting of the 5th State Finance Commission, Jharkhand, with the faculty member of Centre for Local Democracy, Azim Premji University on 12.08.2024 in the Chamber of the Chairman of the 5th SFC (Room No.141, Yojna Bhawan)

1. The meeting was chaired by Shri. A.P. Singh, Chairman, 5th State Finance Commission, Jharkhand, and attended by Dr. Harishwar Dayal, Member, 5th State Finance Commission, Jharkhand, Sri Balram, Right to Food Campaign, Sri Gurjeet, Mr. Binju Abraham and Mr. Ranjan Panda from the Azim Premji Foundation.
2. They discussed the current status of the PRIs and opportunities which can be availed of by them.
3. Elections for PRIs are held at regular intervals, but fresh area demarcation of Panchayat is due as the population of many panchayats has exceeded the 5000 (population) norms as prescribed in the Jharkhand Panchayat Raj Act. Already more than one Panchayat Samiti members is being elected in many GPs due to the population exceeding 5000.
4. Power devolution by respective departments (14) till now is focused more on responsibilities than powers. It needs to be revised and reformed so that the PRIs not the departments have full control over these subjects. The regular platforms for review are still being used by the concerned departments with only token presence of PRI members. It needs to be reversed.
5. Services of key functionaries and frontline workers related to the constitutionally recommended 29 subjects have not been handed over to the GPs. This has resulted in almost no control over service delivery through these staff in the respective PRIs. The Panchayat service rules need to be notified in this regard.
6. GPEC meetings, comprising of Mukhiya and ward members, which are supposed to be happening every month (the gap between the two meetings should not be more than three months), are quite irregular in most of the cases. Regular meetings of GPEC are highly desired. Ward members, otherwise, feel left out and unwanted. All GP recommendations should have mandatory reference to the minutes of the meeting for any work being undertaken, any items to be procured, any schemes to be selected, any beneficiaries to be identified, and any certificate to be issued. The minutes of the meetings GPEC should be sent to the block office and DPRO for regular review in panchayat samiti meetings.
7. Transparency and accountability mechanisms, which are highly desired, are not in place. The display boards and complaint boards should be made mandatory. The monthly income and expenditure statements should be read out in Gram Sabha and GPEC meetings and should be kept in public domain. Social audits, as mentioned in the recommendations of the fifteen finance commission, should be initiated.

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8. **The Structural disconnects** in the composition of GPEC and Panchayat Samiti are leading to virtually no linkage between different tiers of PRI. Gram Pradhans, Panchayat Samiti members, and ZP members are not invited in their respective panchayat tier bodies. Therefore, Gram Pradhans should be made permanent invitees to GPEC meetings in scheduled areas along with the concerned Panchayat Samiti members. Similarly, Zila parishad members elected from the same block should be made permanent invitees in the Panchayat Samiti meetings.
9. Own source revenue (OSR) to be promoted in ULBs and GPs for taking up development work and also for meeting the recurring expenses related to cleaning and maintenance of public service facilities.
10. **Standing committee's role**, functions and protocols to be notified and mandated for all tiers. The capacity building of these committees needs to be done and also financial allocation for their travel and meetings should be earmarked. The first item on the agenda in all types of meetings from Gram Sabha to ZP should be the reporting by standing committees and their recommendations should be mentioned and considered in the meeting minutes.
11. **Gram Sabha secretariat** to be established physically and administratively. *Gram Sachivalay* can help keep records of Gram Sabha and help follow up on the decisions taken up by the Gram Sabha through the voluntary support of the village youth/retired persons. Gram Sabha meetings should to be held every month and should be widely publicized for increased participation, especially of women and persons of vulnerable groups. The GP staff should ensure their presence.
12. **Annual Aam Sabha** at Panchayat level for information dissemination regarding sanctioned plans and expenditure incurred to be mandated. The dates can be announced from the state level itself in the month of April.
13. **Capacity building** infrastructure should be developed in all districts. **District training centres to be established** for regular training of PRI representatives, standing committees and frontline workers for various themes and subjects. The funds available with various departments can be pooled in to run these centres with a pre-decided curriculum and sufficient faculties.
14. Justifiable distribution of funds directly to Gram Sabha (village level) in scheduled areas to be thought off based on the population and area. GPs to provide administrative and technical support only.
15. Integration of scheme related village level committees with corresponding standing committees needs to be done to avoid duplicity and maintain the sanctity of standing committees.

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Memo No. — वित्त (SFC)—31/01/24-154/वि0आ0

Ranchi, Dated: 03-09-24

Cc:- Secretary, Finance Department, Jharkhand, Ranchi for kind information and necessary information please.

Kaushal
03-09-24

Dy. Secretary
State Finance Commission,
Jharkhand, Ranchi