

Proceedings of the Virtual Meeting on PRI via Video Conference

– 31st January 2025

A virtual meeting was held on 31st January 2025, from 11:00 AM to 6:00 PM, led by Shri A. P. Singh, IAS (Rtd) and Chairman, 5th State Finance Commission, Jharkhand, with representatives from Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI) from 24 districts of Jharkhand. NIC Video Conferencing at yojna bhawan meeting hall which focused on key challenges faced by PRI members, administrative issues, financial constraints, and recommendations for improving governance at the local level, in reference to letter number 25 dated 22.01.2015.

(ii) Attendees:

- Dr. Harishwar Dayal, Associate Professor Member, State Finance Commission, Jharkhand
- Representatives from various Gram Panchayats (GPs) Mukhiya, Panchayat Samitis (PSs) Pramukh, Zila Parishads (ZPs) Adhyaksha, and CEOs of ZPs etc.
- Shri Sailesh Kumar and Shri Saurav, representatives from the Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Jharkhand.

(iii) Report Received :

Out of 24 districts in Jharkhand, reports were submitted from 14 districts. The **Zila Parishads** of 10 districts have **not submitted** their reports yet. Key districts like Ranchi, Dhanbad, and Jamshedpur have reported, while many from western and northern Jharkhand are pending.

Jharkhand Districts – Report Submission Status			
sno:	Report Submitted	sno:	Report Not Submitted
1	Jamtara	1	Bokaro
2	Chatra	2	Deoghar
3	Godda	3	Garhwa
4	Latehar	4	Giridih
5	East Singhbhum (Jamshedpur)	5	Gumla
6	Koderma	6	Lohardaga
7	Hazaribagh	7	Sahebganj
8	Pakur	8	West Singhbhum (Chaibasa)
9	Ramgarh	9	Khuti
10	Palamu		
11	Ranchi		
12	Dhanbad		
13	Dumka		
14	Kharsawan Saraikela		
15	Simdega		

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Out of **264 Panchayat Samitis** in Jharkhand, the above **23 Samitis** have submitted their reports. These submissions are essential for rural governance, planning, and resource allocation. However, a **large number of Panchayat Samitis** are yet to submit their reports, delaying developmental work.

Jharkhand Panchayat Samiti – Report Submitted	
sno:	Panchayat Samiti
1	Jamtara
2	Godda
3	East Singhbhum (JSR)
4	Koderma
5	Hazaribagh
6	Pakur
7	Palamu
8	Ranchi
9	Aahatu
10	Chaibasa
11	Sahebganj
12	Dhanbad
13	Lohardagga
14	Kharsawa
15	Khunti
16	Kersai
17	Kolebira
18	Bolba
19	Kurdega
20	Jaldega
21	Bansjor
22	Bano
23	Thataitanagar

Out of **4,345 Gram Panchayats** in Jharkhand, the above **26 Panchayats** have submitted their reports. These Panchayats are from different districts, covering various regions of the state. Many areas are yet to submit their reports. The submission process is crucial for development planning and governance in rural Jharkhand.

Jharkhand Gram Panchayats – Report Submitted	
sno:	Gram Panchayats
1	Jamtara
2	Chatra
3	Godda
4	Simdega
5	East Singhbhum (JSR)
6	Koderma

7	Hazaribagh
8	Pakur
9	Ramgarh
10	Palamu
11	Ranchi
12	Aahatu
13	Chaibasa
14	Sahebganj
15	Dhanbad
16	Lohardagga
17	Kharsawa
18	Khunti
19	Kersai
20	Kolebira
21	Bolba
22	Jaldega
23	Bansjor
24	Bano
25	Kurdega
26	Thataitanagar

2. KEY ISSUES DISCUSSED

(i) Lack of Engagement with Higher Authorities

PRI members have expressed concerns about their limited opportunities to engage with higher authorities of the PRD. They strongly believed that **this meeting was significant, as it was the first of its kind**. They emphasized that if such meetings were organized regularly by the Department of Panchayati Raj, which would help in resolving the pending issues more efficiently.

(ii) Need for Training of Functionaries

- (a) Most members pointed out that **even after two years, functionaries at the GP, PS, and ZP levels** remained untrained. They urged that all functionaries should receive adequate and frequent training. Issue-based training sessions should be organized quarterly or every six months for up skilling the elected

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member and government servants with newer developments in the field of PRI.

(b) Members noted that Mukhiyas received only a single five-day training session, which was insufficient. The executive committee members of the GP were never trained, and other office bearers and members also did not receive any training, despite the availability of adequate training infrastructure.

(iii) **Low Honorarium and Unpaid TA/DA :**

(a) Many members expressed concerns over the low honorarium and the non-payment of travel and daily allowances (TA/DA) as mentioned under rule. Regular monthly payments are not feasible, and there are better schemes that provide greater financial support to poor and women members than the current honorarium. Additionally, members highlighted that ward members are listed in the socio-economic survey as deserving poor but are being deprived of benefits under such schemes.

(b) **Pending Honorariums and Lack of Training for Ward Members:** Ward members of Gram Panchayats (GPs) are not receiving adequate support in terms of training or timely payment of their monthly honorarium of ₹500, which remained pending for several months. Ward members are not trained yet, they lack the necessary knowledge to perform their duties effectively.

(c) This was also flagged that many sahiyas, MDM workers and individual beneficiaries are getting more than Rs 2000 and above monthly honorarium. This is few among compiling the ward members to resign from such elected posts.

(iv) **Office Space Shortage in Zila Parishads :**

(a) **Space Constraints Due to DRDA Merger:** Most Zila Parishads (ZPs) are facing an acute shortage of office space following the merger of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) employees. The situation is expected to worsen as sanctioned vacancies are filled. This issue needs **urgent attention**, with priority given to constructing new buildings in newly established ZPs

and renovating or expanding existing offices. **Each ZP should have designated office space for its office bearers and a well-equipped meeting hall.** Additionally, common areas should be provided for visiting ZP members to sit and work with necessary facilities.

(b) Provision of Offices for ZPs: ZPs without proper office facilities should be provided with fully functional office spaces at the earliest.

(c) Incomplete Merger of DRDA into ZPs: Several ZP Chairpersons raised concerns that the merger of DRDA into ZPs remains incomplete. Many functions that should have fallen under PRIs have been separated and placed under the jurisdiction of the Deputy Commissioner, while manpower and financial responsibilities will remain with the ZPs. This contradicts the situation prevailing in most other states. This concern should be legally examined in view of JPRA 2011 and 73rd Constitutional amendment.

(v) Vacant and Non-Sanctioned Posts in ZPs

(a) Large-Scale Vacancies: A significant number of vacancies exist across ZPs, with **some ZPs still suffering with zero sanctioned posts.** This need to be addressed on the priority. The Department of Panchayati Raj should consider the requirement of the manpower in line with current workloads and challenges of the 21st century. More digitally aware and capable of working on such platform may be recognized **as need at hour** by relevant policy initiative.

(b) Unfilled Positions: Dhanbad highlighted the **issue of numerous unfilled sanctioned posts,** particularly for Ayurveda and Homeopathy doctors and their associated staff. This matter should be taken up with the Directorate of Ayush to ensure that these responsibilities are fulfilled by the health department. A review of staffing needs is necessary as mentioned above.

(c) Need for Revised Staffing Patterns in ZPs: The Department of Panchayati Raj should reassess the staffing structure of ZPs and establish a revised pattern of sanctioned posts which is suited to present-day requirements. The number of sanctioned posts should vary to different ZP based on the workload and

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size of each ZP. A model Sanction post for different type of ZP be notified. So, that sanctioning of post to any ZP can be done in 30 days of its creation.

- (d) **Lack of Essential Facilities for ZP Chairpersons:** Several ZP Chairpersons have raised concerns over the absence of basic facilities, such as residential accommodations and vehicles with adequate fuel provisions, given the vast areas they oversee.
- (e) **No Waiting Areas for ZP Members:** ZP members, especially those traveling from remote areas, face difficulties due to the lack of designated waiting areas in the ZP office. A proper space should be allocated for them to rest and work while visiting the ZP offices.
- (f) **Demand for a Dedicated Chief Executive Officer in Ranchi ZP:** The Chairperson of Ranchi ZP demanded that the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the ZP should not also serve as the Deputy Development Commissioner (DDC), as the DDC, Ranchi has multiple responsibilities and cannot dedicate sufficient time to ZP affairs. The relevant provision under JPRA 90(3) provides for the CEO, additional CEO and Dy. CEO & EO etc. The PRD may like to consider the sanctioning of post along necessary role and function for such officials.
- (vi) **Financial Constraints Affecting Salary Payments:** Many ZPs reported that they are currently able to pay only 50% to 70% of their salary commitments due to financial constraints. **If all vacant posts are filled, they will struggle to manage salary payments. Until ZPs can generate sufficient revenue, the state government must provide financial support to cover establishment costs.**
- (vii) **Need for Dedicated Staff and Resources in Panchayat Samitis**
- (a) **Staffing Shortages in Panchayat Samitis:** Pramukhs of Panchayat Samitis highlighted the absence of dedicated staff for administrative tasks in his/her office. The Block Development Officer (BDO) is already overburdened with departmental responsibilities. They requested the appointment of at least one

dedicated and knowledgeable clerk for documentation, computer work, and communication, as well as one fourth-class employee to assist with office operations.

- (b) **Need for Contingency Funds for Panchayat Samitis:** While Gram Panchayats (GPs) receive ₹15,000 per month to meet their administrative cost. Panchayat Samitis also require a dedicated contingency fund to cover necessary office expenses. This can be decided by the PRD.
- (c) **Request for Vehicles for Inspections and Field Visits:** Pramukhs requested the provision of vehicles to be made to facilitate inspections and field visits, which are necessary for effective governance under three tier PRI.
- (viii) **Appreciation of Government Efforts by GP Representatives and request for more urgent needs :**
- (a) **Recognition of Government Initiatives:** Most GP members and Mukhiyas appreciated the efforts of the Department of Panchayati Raj in providing a monthly contingency grant of ₹15,000, establishing **Gyaan Kendras**, improving facilities at Panchayat Bhavans, and **organizing exposure visits** of PEI members to other states.
- (b) **Insufficient Space in Gyan Kendras:** Members raised concerns about the inadequate space allocated for Gyaan Kendras, which limits their usability for learners. They requested additional space to be created for sitting and reading areas to accommodate those accessing Gyaan Kendra facilities.
- (c) **Lack of Office Space in Panchayat Bhavans:** Panchayat Bhavans do not have sufficient space to accommodate all dedicated panchayat-level employees on any fixed days. Members requested for creation of additional office space for Halka Karamcharis, Jan Sevaks, and visiting Block officials etc.
- (d) **Officials Not Visiting Gram Panchayats Regularly:** Despite government directives, no office bearer, except the Panchayat Secretary, visits the GP regularly. There were serious complaints about the **absence of Halka**

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Karamcharis and Revenue authorities, which hampers local governance and service delivery.

- (e) Jansevek of RD and agriculture are networking properly. This need to be synchronized to ensure better out come.

(ix) Absence of Officers in Monthly PRI Meetings

- (a) 'The Chairpersons of ZPs and Pramukhs pointed out that officers from different departments fail to attend monthly meetings. As a result, decisions made by these bodies are often not implemented, reflecting a casual approach by district and block-level government officers.
- (b) This issue arises due to a lack of accountability within the concerned departments. While the 3Fs (Functions, Functionaries, and Funds) have been devolved to PRIs on paper, their actual implementation has never been reviewed by the concern department.
- (c) Except PRD, non other departments have allocated any funds to PRIs, these had further weekend the operational capacity of PRI.
- (d) The indifferent attitude of authorities has contributed to the weakening of these institutions.
- (e) The Department of Panchayati Raj has **not institutionalized any mechanism for coordination** between PRIs and related government departments, leading to ineffective governance at PRI and non compliances of the provision mentioned in the devolution of power.

(x) Lack of Coordination Among Departments

- (a) The powers and functions were devolved by 13 government departments to PRIs but this was not properly implemented. Over time, this lack of enforcement has worsened the situation, leaving PRIs with little actual power and function.

- (b) Due to this lack of coordination, PRI representatives are unaware of sanctioned and implemented schemes of other departments. This leads to duplication of efforts, misuse of funds, and inefficient governance at local level.
- (c) PRI representatives are unable to effectively supervise development programs of area beyond 15th CFC works because they do not receive timely and/or complete information from the relevant departments.
- (d) The Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) is not made comprehensive and effective due to the challenges mentioned above.

(xi) **Need for New Revenue Sources for PRIs**

- (a) Most PRI representatives expressed concerns about the **difficulty in generating** Own Source Revenue (OSR). They suggested measures such as **auctioning Balughats** (sand mining areas), and constructing marriage halls, community centers, and market complexes to generate funds.
- (b) Some PRI had informed that PRI had already submitted proposals for revenue-generating projects and are awaiting government approval and funding.
- (c) The Panchayati Raj Department could explore multiple funding models, including Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and other sustainable financial strategies for similar projects.
- (d) **Utilization of GM Lands and Water Bodies:** Many members highlighted the availability of government-managed (GM) lands and water bodies that remain underutilized. They suggested that these assets could be leveraged for employment generation and revenue collection through coordinated efforts with the Departments of **Revenue, Fisheries**, and other relevant authorities.

(xii) **Issues in Water Supply Management**

- (a) Members raised serious concerns about the inefficiency of water supply management. They noted that the Drinking Water and Sanitation Department

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(DWSD) and its local personnel eg: EE/AE/JF/etc. often neglect issues flagged by PRI representatives.

- (b) Many members demanded that Gram Panchayats (GPs) should receive dedicated funds to handle the operation and maintenance (O&M) of hand pumps during summer and to complete pending water supply schemes in coordination with DWSD (Drinking Water and Sanitation Department).
- (c) **ICDS centers** and schools lack proper toilets, drinking water, and handwashing facilities. The 15th Finance Commission funds are generally used for these purposes, but their implementation needs improvement.
- (d) A joint training program involving PRI representatives, the district administration, and relevant government departments (including DMFT – District Mineral Foundation Trust) should be conducted to ensure effective use of funds and avoid duplication of efforts.
- (e) Many **Single Village Schemes (SVS)** created by PRIs are not properly mapped in the DWSD portal, raising concerns about transparency and duplication of funds and schemes.
- (f) Water conservation measures should be integrated into SVS and hand pump projects to ensure long-term sustainability of such water supply schemes.
- (g) Several **Hand pumps installed in FY 2020-21 onwards** by DWSD were set up without consulting PRIs. Members reported that many of these pumps were placed for individual benefit rather than community needs and benefits.
- (h) **Lack of skilled manpower for repairs of handpump & SVS:** There is a shortage of trained personnel to repair hand pumps and solar water facilities at the local level. A specialized skill development program should be introduced to train local workers in water supply maintenance.
- (i) PRD & DWSD need better coordination to ensure access to potable drinking water with composite GIS mapping of all water sources and creating a digital public grievances redressal system. This will be monitored by dedicated PMU.

- (j) The PRD, DWSD, and the Department of Labour & Skill Development should collaborate to address the shortage of trained technical manpower.

(xiii) Other Important Issues

- (a) **Lack of Emergency Response Resources:** Most Mukhiyas raised concerns about the lack of resources to handle **natural disasters**, human-animal conflicts, and other emergencies. They suggested that a set of emergency response resources should be made readily available at their disposal under JPra Section 73(B) and 73(C) – Pramukh & ZP can do it to some extent by using Rs 25000 to 100000 permissible annually under the act.
- (b) **Demand for Ambulances in Rural Areas:** Some Mukhiyas and Pramukhs highlighted the unavailability of ambulances at the local level is creating problem. One Mukhiya mentioned that he had used his **national award money to purchase an ambulance**, emphasizing the urgent need for government intervention. This issue should be addressed in coordination with the Departments of Panchayati Raj and Health, FW&ME.
- (c) **Optimal Utilization of Amrit Vatika:** A Mukhiya from **Godda** mentioned that an Amrit Vatika (a green plantation project) was developed, but despite significant plant growth over the last two years, it is not being utilized effectively. The department should create a comprehensive plan for the optimal use of Amrit Vatika projects across the state.
- (d) **Enhancing Tourism Potential:** Many members pointed out that **several districts** have significant tourism potential but lack development. The Department of Panchayati Raj should collaborate with the Department of Tourism to explore employment and revenue-generating opportunities in the tourism sector.
- Established tourism sites need repair and maintenance.
 - PRI representatives emphasized **their exclusion from tourism-related** planning and decision-making and demanded greater involvement in such initiatives.

(xiv) Need for Clear Role Definition

- (a) Members raised concerns about the lack of regular visits by Assistant Engineers (AEs) to Panchayats.

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- (b) They requested a clear policy defining the roles and responsibilities of EEs and AEs/JEs to ensure effective infrastructure development at the Panchayat level.
- (c) The issue should be addressed in alignment with the challenges mentioned in paragraphs IX and X.

(xv) Increasing MGNREGA Work days and Fund Devolution

- (a) Many members demanded an increase in MGNREGA work days to curb migration.
- (b) They also requested the devolution of MGNREGA **contingency funds** to the Gram Panchayat (GP) level, as most work is carried out at GP.
- (c) Concerns were raised about integrating Finance Commission (FC) funds with MGNREGA. The 60:40 fund-sharing ratio under MGNREGA as labour & material is seen as restrictive, and members suggested that dovetailing FC resources could help create more durable assets.
- (d) This has come to notice that GOI is even not releasing proportionate 40% material component in any year. Only 10-15 % are being released. This need high level intervention.

(xvi) Inauguration of Schemes in PRI Jurisdiction

- (a) PRI representatives expressed concerns that **their names are not included** on inauguration plaques, even when projects are initiated and implemented by PRI functionaries. They demanded formal recognition in all government projects within their jurisdiction.
- (b) Members suggested that the names of implementing agencies, contractors, and engineers should also be displayed on plaques to enhance transparency and accountability.
- (c) This is a policy decision of the state government, PRD may take-up the issue at appropriate level for final decision.

(xvii) Drought-Proofing and Solar Irrigation Initiatives

- (a) Representatives from **Palamu** and other regions raised concerns about **drought-proofing** and the need to promote solar-based irrigation facilities.
- (b) They suggested a collaborative approach involving the Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Rural Development, Water Resources, Energy and Panchayati Raj to identify affected districts and blocks and prepare a comprehensive action plan with proper monitoring mechanism through a Project Management Unit (PMU).

(xviii) **Direct Control Over DMFT Funds**

- (a) Most members demanded direct control over District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) funds for the department of PRI –GP/Block of most affected with mining activities.
- (b) They suggested that infrastructure, irrigation, public health, and education schemes should be taken up in a **saturation mode** to ensure comprehensive development GP/Block.
- (c) The legal aspects of direct PRI control over DMFT funds should be examined by PRD in view of new notification about area coverage etc. A state level inter departmental coordination need to be set up to achieve maximum benefits of DMFT.

(xix) **Need for Cold Storage and Food Processing Units :**

- (a) Some members raised concerns about the **lack of small cold storage** facilities and **food processing** units, particularly in areas where potatoes, tomatoes, and other perishable crops are grown in abundance and not paying remunerative price.
- (b) The government should consider setting up small-scale cold storage units and food processing plants to reduce **post-harvest** losses and enhance farmers' income.

(xx) **Unresponsive Revenue Officials and Engineers :**

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(a) There were widespread complaints that **Revenue Officers**, Circle Officers (COs), and other officials are unresponsive to genuine concerns, do not attend meetings, and fail to respond to queries from PRI members.

(b) Executive Engineers do not inform Zila Parishads (ZPs) about departmental activities, leading to a lack of coordination and do not take leave form ZP.

(xxi) **Financial Pressure Due to Electricity Bills :**

(a) Electricity bills are causing huge financial strain on PRIs resources.

(b) Members suggested that **solar energy** should be promoted as a sustainable solution.

(c) A solar energy model should be developed for public spaces, Panchayat Bhawans, Anganwadi centers, schools, and street lights under the National Solar Renewable Energy (NSRE) framework. PRD may take an coordinated efforts with Energy departments to address these issues.

(xxii) **Flooding and Housing Scheme Issues**

(a) The Mukhiya of Gangaprasad East (Sahebganj) raised concerns about **flooding** in the area.

(b) Members also discussed the role of Mukhiyas in various central and state **housing schemes**, urging better coordination and support.

(xxiii) **Disparity in Scheme Implementation Powers Between PS and GP**

Members of Panchayat Samitis (PS) raised concerns about funding disparity in scheme implementation:

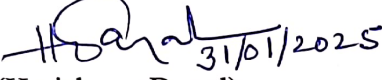
- GPs can implement individual schemes worth ₹5 lakh through beneficiary committees.
- PSs, being a higher-level institution, are restricted to only ₹2.5 lakh per scheme.
- They urged a review of this disparity to ensure equitable financial powers for PSs.

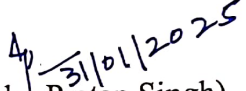
(xxiv) **Loss to the State Exchequer Due to Poor TDS and GST Compliance**

(a) It was observed that due to a lack of training and competence among PRI functionaries, crucial financial deductions like TDS (Tax Deducted at Source)

asGST (Goods & Services Tax),VAT, Mine royalty, labour cess, IT for contractors and supplies, excess carriage and other payment due to negligence and etc. are not done which is causing huge loss to the government exchequer.

- (b) The Department of Panchayati Raj, Department of Mines & Geology, Commercial Tax Department, and Department of Labour & Skill Development should jointly address this issue and conduct training sessions for PRI representatives on financial compliance.

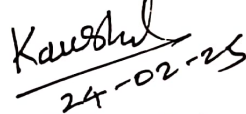

(Harishwar Dayal)
Member


(Amrendra Pratap Singh)
Chairman

Memo No : 56/190/2110

Ranchi, Dated : 24/02/2025

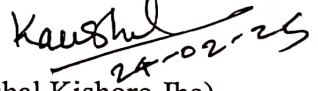
Copy To : Principal Secretary, Department of Panchayati Raj, Govt. of Jharkhand for information and necessary action.


(Kaushal Kishore Jha)
Dy. Secretary,

Memo No : 56/190/2110

Ranchi, Dated : 24/02/2025

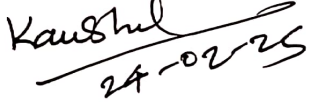
Copy To : Secretary, Department of Finance, Govt. of Jharkhand for information.


(Kaushal Kishore Jha)
Dy. Secretary,

Memo No : 56/190/2110

Ranchi, Dated : 24/02/2025

Copy To : All DC/DDC, Govt. of Jharkhand for information & necessary action & forwarding copy to all ZPs & Participating GPs & Panchayat Samiti .


(Kaushal Kishore Jha)
Dy. Secretary.