

PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTION

INTRODUCTION

On promulgation of the A & N Islands (Panchayat) Regulation, 1994, by the President of India, in the light of 73rd Constitutional Amendment, the three-tier Panchayat System was introduced for PRIs. There are 67 Gram Panchayats, 7 Panchayat Samitis and 1 Zilla Parishad. The Administration releases grant-in-aid for general and sectoral scheme and Matching Grants to the PRIs from time to time. The functions of the PRIs include preparation and implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice in relation to 29 subjects given in the 11th schedule of the Constitution.

Devolution of Powers

Orders have been issued in January 2002 regarding transfer to PRIs of activities pertaining to 6 departments viz Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Roads, Rural Water Supply, Electricity and Rural Development. Most procedural issues impacting the devolution have been sorted out.

Activities

In the Annual Plan 2003-2004 an amount of Rs.54.55 crores have been projected under various sub-sectors for creation of infrastructure and strengthening of PRIs including Panchayats. Presently the thrust of development is in road and water sector financed with grants obtained from the Administration.

Rural Roads

Out of interior rural roads measuring about 182 kms, about 60 kms and 35 kms of rural roads of south Andaman and Rangat area respectively have been transferred to PRIs by APWD and the remaining are likely to be transferred soon. A provision Rs. 15.55 crores has been reflected in the Annual Plan 2003-04 for providing rural roads. Apart from this, the Ministry of Rural Development has cleared a project proposal under PMGSY for construction of 11 roads in 2001-02 to the tune of Rs. 22.38 Crores. Technical Sanction for the project was done by

CRRI, New Delhi for Rs. 1895.53 Lakhs in Packages I to IV. Tenders are being invited.

Rural Water

The PRIs are in the process of integrating local priorities with national goals of covering PC villages. A provision of Rs. 8 crores has been reflected in the Annual Plan 2003-04 for water supply (including PMGY). Detailed project report is under preparation for the holistic Krishna Nallah project under PMGY (Rural Water) in Little Andaman area. Apart from this, ALHW has been requested to revise the estimate and to formulate the scheme for Improvement of Water Supply at Tugapur whereas on the other hand preparation of detailed project reports for Improvement of Water Supply at Diglipur is consultation with APWD is in progress.

Education

To foster quality education in rural areas, and amount of Rs. 5 Crores was sanctioned in December 2001 for construction for 5 Vivekananda Kendra Zilla Parishad Vidyalayas. The works at Kadamtala, Diglipur, Basantipur and Pahalgaoon are almost completed whereas the school at Chouldari has recently been inaugurated by the Hon'ble LG on 28.7.2003 and started functioning.

Apart from the above 5 Schools, the Zilla Parishad is constructing 4 more new Vivekananda Kendra Zilla Parishad Vidyalaya at Garacharma, Wimberlygunj, Shore Point (Bambooflat) and Campbell Bay for which a sum of Rs. 3 crores has also been released by the Administration.

A provision of Rs. 2 crores has been kept in the Annual Plan 2003-04 for completion / up-gradation of existing schools of 2001-02 & 2002-03 as well as construction of 4 more new schools one each at Burmanallah, Tusnabad, Baratang and Karmatang (Webi).

Minor Irrigation

There are 504 villages in A&N Islands as per 1991 Census and most of them do not have irrigation facilities. Estimates for 31 MI Projects to an estimated

cost of Rs. 98.95 Lakhs have been prepared for its implementation during 2002-03. A provision of Rs. 100 lakhs has been kept in the Annual Plan 20-03-04 for taking up more MI Projects in rural areas.

Salient Features

- The Parishad has considerably strengthened its financial systems and work account procedures. Transparency has been enhanced with release of monthly data pertaining to estimates prepared / sanctioned for each PRI.
- To ensure participation and decision making at the grassroots level the Panchayats have been asked to **prioritize** work from the financial Year 2003-04.
- Computers are being provided to those Panchayats, which could not be covered in the last year.
- Since October 2002 the Zilla Parishad has started functioning from the newly constructed PRI building. To take decision making closer to the people, action is being taken to establish SE's Office, 3 Divisional and 11 Sub-Divisional Officers in various places. Sufficient engineering equipment is being purchased to expedite works.
- While the Engineering wing has been strengthened partly in the last year, there is need to strengthen the delivery mechanism in administrative and Planning wings by creation / filling up of vacant posts.
- Recently the Govt. has launched a total sanitation campaign. The total Sanitation Scheme is now replacing all the earlier sanitation schemes. Proposals have been called for from all PRIs for its implementation.

It is the endeavor of the basic minimum needs to the villagers in the rural areas for the up-liftment of the living standard of the people and to ensure rapid progress of this Union Territory.