



सुनील कुमार
सचिव
भारत सरकार
पंचायती राज मंत्रालय

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SECRETARY
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Ministry of Panchayati Raj
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नागेंद्र नाथ सिन्हा
सचिव
भारत सरकार
ग्रामीण विकास मंत्रालय

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D. O. No. G-39011/2/2017-FD

10th June, 2020

Dear Chief Secretary,

In the last two months, the country has been faced with an unprecedented situation arising out of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent lockdown. While the country has gained time during the lockdown to ramp up health facilities, prevent a rapid surge in COVID-19 cases and keep the mortality rate in check, the biggest challenge before Central and State Authorities in rural areas at this juncture is to provide employment opportunities to returning migrant labourers and rural labourers which is commensurate with their skill sets. However, at the same time there can be no let up in community vigil and strict adherence to guidelines issued by the Health Authorities to check spread of COVID-19.

2. A sample of skill mapping data of migrant labourers undertaken by some States in the past few days/weeks reveals that majority of workers have skills relating to construction industry. It is understood that these skilled workers may not be willing to work as unskilled labourer on Mahatma Gandhi NREGS work sites. Further, as per available information, in several States, a large number of isolation /quarantine centres in rural areas have been set up in Primary/Upper Primary School buildings. These will need to be vacated once the schools reopen. As per available information, it appears that the effect of COVID-19 pandemic is likely to continue for some time at least. Hence, the requirement for continued establishment of isolation / quarantine centers in rural areas is likely to persist in the near foreseeable future.

3. With a view to provide employment to persons in rural areas as per their skill sets and also to strengthen community infrastructure to enable Gram Panchayats (GPs) to effectively meet the challenges, it has been decided by Government of India to permit utilization of 14th Finance Commission (FC) grants available with Gram Panchayats as well the ensuing 15th FC untied grants (which they will be receiving shortly) during 2020-21 towards construction of specific community assets like Gram Panchayat Bhawans apart from undertaking repair and maintenance of other Public Buildings/Assets located in the Gram Panchayat by engaging and utilizing the services of the skilled/unskilled workers for the same.

4. According to available information, there are about 60,346 Gram Panchayats which do not have Panchayat Bhawans. A statement showing State wise availability of unspent 14th FC Funds (as per information available in PRIASoft), likely allocation under 15th FC, deficit GP Bhawans is enclosed.

5. The maximum approved unit cost for Gram Panchayat Bhawan by Ministry of Panchayati Raj is Rs. 20 lakh. It has been decided to meet 50% cost of Panchayat Bhawan through Finance Commission Funds and 50% of the cost from Mahatma Gandhi NREGS funds. In case the available unspent balance under 14th FC available with GP is insufficient to meet the 50% cost of Panchayat Bhawan, the deficit may be met by utilizing the 'untied funds' likely to be made available to GPs under 15th FC or State Finance Commission (SFC) Grants or Own Sources of Revenue(OSR).

6. Further, GPs may also undertake repair and maintenance of other Public Buildings/Assets located in the Gram Panchayat such as Primary/Upper Primary Schools, Health Sub Centres, Cooperative Stores selling seed and fertilizers etc., wherever necessary by utilizing the Finance Commission funds.

8. It is reiterated that the aforesaid decision has been taken to meet the key infrastructure deficit in rural areas and to provide immediate employment opportunities to skilled and unskilled manpower currently available in rural areas through convergence of Central Finance Commission and Mahatma Gandhi NREGS funds. **These works need to be initiated immediately and completed within this financial year in a mission mode.** Further, this decision is valid ONLY for the current financial year.

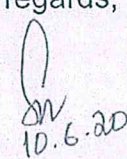
9. We believe that if the State Authorities also decide to permit utilization of funds made available under State Finance Commission recommendations, Own Sources of Revenue (OSR) of the Panchayats and/or State schemes to meet any deficit, it should be possible to fully wipe out the key infrastructure deficit in rural areas for Gram Panchayat Bhawans.

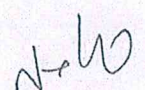
10. Efforts may also be made by Gram Panchayat to converge Finance Commission funds with Mahatma Gandhi NREGA for taking up other works which are permissible under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA and Finance Commission guidelines, including those for the SHG Collectives at village levels(Maximum Cost Limit-Rs15 lakh), esp. in villages not having Panchayat Bhavan or any other community infrastructure. It is suggested that the same may be made available for community events at a charge decided by the Collective. The cost of such works should be shared between the Mahatma Gandhi NREGA funds and FC funds & other Panchayat Funds equally.

11. In light of the above, we request that suitable instructions may forthwith be issued to officers of concerned Departments to immediately work out their strategy for each District and communicate the same to Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Rural Development the number of GP Bhawans proposed to be constructed during current financial year under this special dispensation at the earliest. All the provisions and guidelines of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA should be adhered to during implementation of works taken under convergence with Mahatma Gandhi NREGS.

With warm regards,

Yours sincerely,


(Sunil Kumar)


(Nagendra Nath Sinha)

Encl. a/a

All Chief Secretaries, States. (As per list attached)

State	No. of RLBs/TLBs as per LGD	FFC Unspent Balance (Rs. In crore) As on 01.04.20	XV FC Fund allocation		Panchayat Bhawans
			Tied	Un-Tied	Estimated deficit
Andhra Pradesh	13,371	715	1,313	1,313	1,615
Arunachal Pradesh*	1,785	-	116	116	1,233
Assam	2,197	2,398	802	802	292
Bihar*	8,387	-	2,509	2,509	1,055
Chhattisgarh	11,655	780	727	727	692
Goa	191	55	38	38	90
Gujarat*	14,292	-	1,598	1,598	227
Haryana	6,197	570	632	632	3,827
Himachal Pradesh	3,226	658	215	215	9
Jammu & Kashmir**	4,290	768			1,257
Jharkhand	4,353	958	845	845	279
Karnataka	6,021	1,967	1,609	1,609	460
Kerala*	941	-	814	814	3
Ladakh**	192	14			-
Madhya Pradesh	22,812	979	1,992	1,992	0
Maharashtra	27,877	3,673	2,914	2,914	3,794
Manipur	161	19	89	89	57
Meghalaya #	8,998		91	91	-
Mizoram #	823		47	47	114
Nagaland #	1,270		63	63	633
Odisha	6,798	2,889	1,129	1,129	0
Punjab	13,261	216	694	694	7,618
Rajasthan	11,341	3,258	1,931	1,931	1,928
Sikkim	185	52	21	21	43
Tamil Nadu	12,523	3,908	1,804	1,804	2,650
Telangana	12,769	915	924	924	4,390
Tripura	591	58	96	96	56
Uttar Pradesh	58,762	4,314	4,876	4,876	26,318
Uttarakhand	7,791	258	287	287	1,601
West Bengal*	3,340	-	2,206	2,206	38
Total	2,66,400	29,422	30,375	30,375	60,279

Source:

14th FC = PRIASoft

15th FC = XV FC recommendation

Note:

* States not on-board PRIASoft-PFMS Interface; so unconfirmed.

** J&K and Ladakh UTs as on 31.10.2019

FFC funds not allocated under 14th FC