

HUMAN RESOURCES SUPPORT TO GRAM PANCHAYATS: STUDY OF PANCHAYAT VOLUNTEERS IN JHARKHAND

Dr. Rajesh Kumar Sinha*

Abstract

Panchayati Raj Institutions in India has key role in the governance and development of rural areas. However, these institutions are not able to perform effectively due to inadequate devolution of functions, finances and functionaries. To overcome the inadequate number of human resource at the Gram Panchayat level, the Government of Jharkhand took a decision in the year 2016 to deploy four local Panchayat Volunteers in every GP. They are not paid salary but incentives for carrying out assigned work. With a purpose to document and also to examine the efficacy of this initiative, the NIRDPR has conducted a study. This paper shared the key findings of that study and also recommends measures to improve performance of these Panchayat volunteers.

Keywords: *Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Volunteers, Human Resources, Jharkhand*

1. Introduction

Performances of Gram Panchayats (GPs) vary across the country mainly because devolution of functions has not been suitably supported by devolution of funds and functionaries. Sinha (2018) writes that sanctioned posts of secretary or equivalent officer for GPs in the country are only approximately 65 per cent of the total number of GPs. Jharkhand Panchayati Raj Act (JPR Act) 2001 established a three tier PRI system i.e., Zila Parishad (ZP) at District level, Panchayat Samiti (PS) at intermediate

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(Block) level and Gram Panchayat (GP) at village level in the State (Government of Jharkhand, 2001). There are total 4367 GPs, 263 PSs and 24 ZPs in Jharkhand with total 54,807 elected representatives at GP level. There are approximately 2700 GP Secretaries or equivalent functionaries in the State which means approximately 39% GPs do not have a dedicated Secretary (Chaudhary, 2018). The Sumit Bose Committee Report too has highlighted the need for adequate functionaries at GP level (Ministry of Rural Development, 2018). In order to overcome the challenge of inadequate human resources at GP level, Government of Jharkhand has issued a notification in the year 2016 to constitute "Gram Panchayat Sachivalaya (GP Secretariat)" with four (04) educated Volunteers per GP, with approval of the State Cabinet. Government's vision was to strengthen GP and make them work as Secretariat. Apart from Panchayat Secretary, there is no other functionaries at the GP level, hence to technically support the GP Secretariat, Panchayat Volunteers were identified. To operationalise this decision, the Department of Panchayati Raj of the Government of Jharkhand issued a Government Order (GO) with details of their responsibilities, process of selection and remuneration etc. These Panchayat Volunteers function under the administrative control of GP. They are not given any monthly remuneration but are given incentives for carrying out specified assignments and recognized by State government. Their work is purely on incentive basis and their services have been utilised by any department. They are supposed to carry out following functions:

(i) Disseminate information: There are various developmental schemes being implemented at the GP level in the State. But the villagers are not having adequate information about these schemes. The Panchayat Volunteers has to disseminate information on these developmental schemes/programmes and on other related matters of GP functions to villagers.

(ii) Create awareness among rural population: The Panchayat Volunteers have to make villagers aware on various programs of development and social security schemes by conducting group discussions

with community based organizations and beneficiary members. Such awareness makes people conscious of their rights and entitlements and they make efforts to access benefits from such schemes.

(iii) Providing support to rural population in self-governance: In villages, the disadvantaged people face difficulties in availing the benefits of government schemes and in participating in the process of local self-governance. These Panchayat Volunteers mobilize them to participate in the process of planning, monitoring and evaluation of implementation of schemes and in accessing benefits.

(iv) Prepare data base for all government schemes: Various schemes such as MGNREGA / PMAY-G / National and State Pensions / Toilet Construction / Drinking Water / ICDS etc. are being implemented at the GP level. In these schemes, some villagers get excluded due to improper maintenance of data at the GP level. Panchayat Volunteers have been made responsible to gather and maintain necessary information related to these schemes. They are also expected to prepare database of the deprived families and of the families enrolled under various schemes.

(v) Evaluation of development and welfare schemes of government: There are many shortcomings in the implementation of developmental and welfare schemes in rural areas. Sometimes they do not get rolled out in time and sometimes developmental works remain incomplete. Many a times, quality of completed works is of poor standard. The Panchayat Volunteers undertake evaluation of the ongoing schemes and assist the beneficiaries and also concerned department officials at GP and Block level for completion of those schemes effectively and with quality on time.

(vi) To help GP in development and implementation of annual action plan: In preparation of the annual plans under Yojana Banao Abhiyan/ Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas (GPDP), the Panchayat Volunteers are expected to play an important role as they maintain database of households. Using consolidated data the annual action plan of the GP can

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be prepared effectively with inclusion of local needs and with active participation of Elected Representatives and villagers.

Following the GO issued by the Government of Jharkhand, all the Districts of Jharkhand selected and deployed Panchayat Volunteers with the approval of the State Government. Of the total 17592 volunteers required for total 4398 GPs in Jharkhand, as reported on 20th November 2018, total 17258 volunteers were deployed.

Jharkhand is the first State in the country which has deployed Panchayat Volunteers at the GP level for assisting GPs in providing public goods and services to villagers. In order to understand the socio-economic and demographic profiles of Panchayat Volunteers, process of their selection, their contribution to the GP in delivering public goods and services to villagers the present research has been conducted. The major objectives of the study are first to document the deployment of GP volunteers as HR support to GPs and second to assess functioning of these volunteers and recommend measures to improve their performance.

2. Research Methodology:

2.1 Data Collection: The case study has documented the process of deployment of these volunteers and also studied their performance. Qualitative and quantitative research techniques have been used to collect secondary and primary data for the study. Primary data has been collected with the help of two interview schedules: first one administered to Panchayat Volunteers, and second one administered to GP President (Mukhia)/ GP Secretary (Sachiv). Questionnaire for Panchayat Volunteers is having questions on their qualifications, capacity building, activities carried out, achievements and challenges faced by them etc. Their achievements in assisting GP residents in accessing public services and benefits are also assessed with the help of Focused Group Discussions (FGDs) with villagers.

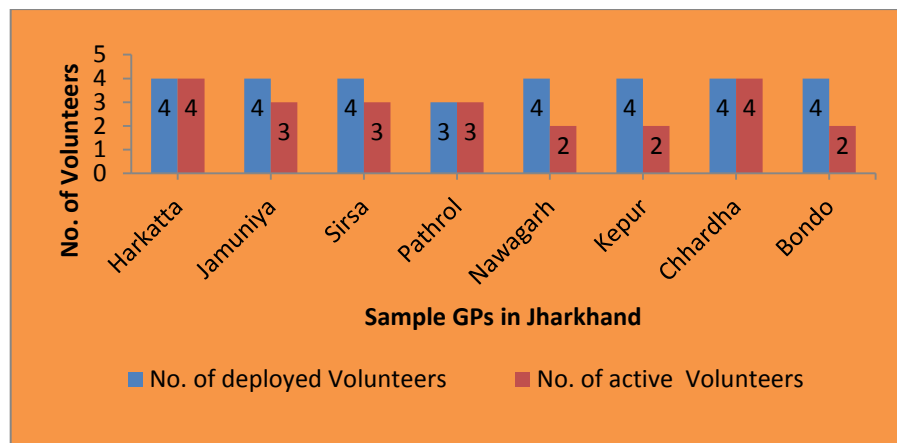
In addition, interviews with District Panchayat Raj Officers (DPRO) of selected districts have been conducted to understand how this initiative of State government is functioning in terms of providing human resource support to GPs. Primary data from the sample GPs and secondary data from District administrations and State Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Jharkhand have been collected during the period from 18th January, 2020 to 31st January, 2020.

2.2 Sampling: Since the objectives of the case study are to document the deployment process of Panchayat Volunteers as HR support to the GPs and to assess their functioning, GP has been taken as unit of sample. Two districts namely Gumla (South Chotanagpur Division) and Deoghar (Santhal Pargana Division) from two different Divisions of the State have been selected for the study. Thereafter two stage simple random sampling was done. First, two blocks per district were selected randomly from the list of all Blocks in these two districts. Then, two GPs from each selected Blocks have been selected from the list of GPs on simple random basis. All the volunteers who are deployed in these GPs have been studied.

3. Findings

3.1 Current Deployment Status of Panchayat Volunteers:

Graph 1: Current deployment Status of GP Volunteers in sample GPs



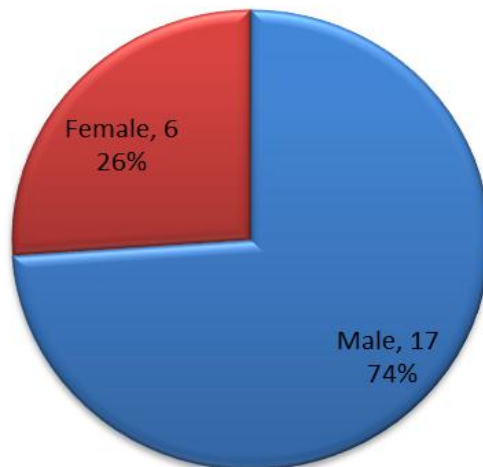
In the year 2016, in seven out of eight sample GPs, four Panchayat Volunteers were deployed and in Pathrol GP only three Panchayat Volunteers were deployed. Out of total 31 Volunteers, the research team found that only 23 of them are actively working at the GP level at present. Among eight sample GPs, only two GPs namely Harakatta and Sirsa are having all the four Panchayat Volunteers who are working actively. The inactive Volunteers are not removed by State Government and are not replaced by new Volunteers because they have not formally resigned and there is no direction to the GP from State or District with regard to actions on non-active Panchayat Volunteers. Some of the Panchayat Volunteers have become inactive because they find the incentives paid to them low and the payment of incentives is also delayed. Hence, volunteers are looking for other occupations with better and regular remuneration.

3.2 Socio-economic Profile of Panchayat Volunteers in Sample GPs:

Socio-economic profile such as age, gender, education, economic status, residence etc. of active Panchayat Volunteers in sample GPs is as follows:

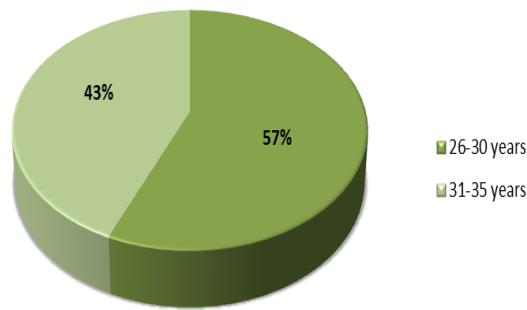
3.2.1 Gender and age-wise classification of Panchayat Volunteers:

Graph 2: Gender-wise classification of Panchayat Volunteers



From the above graph, out of 23 Panchayat Volunteers, majority i.e. 74% (17 members) are Male and only 26% (six) of them are female. As mentioned in the selection criteria there should be one female candidate from every GP. This criterion was followed during selection, but in two sample GPs, the selected female Panchayat Volunteers have become inactive.

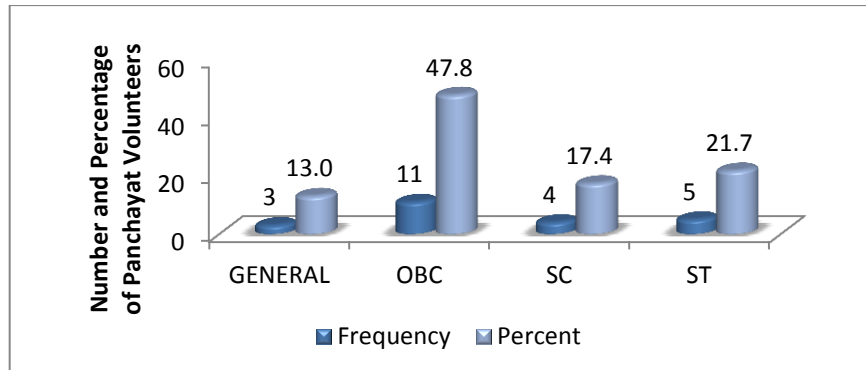
Graph 3: Age-wise classification of Panchayat Volunteers



As per the State Government guidelines Panchayat Volunteers are to be selected from the age group of 18 to 35 years. Majority of the Panchayat Volunteers in the sample GPs i.e., about 57% are in the age group of 26-30 years and 43% were in the age group of 31-35 years. It shows that young people have shown interest to work as Volunteers in the GP.

3.2.2 Caste-wise Classification of Panchayat Volunteers in Sample GPs:

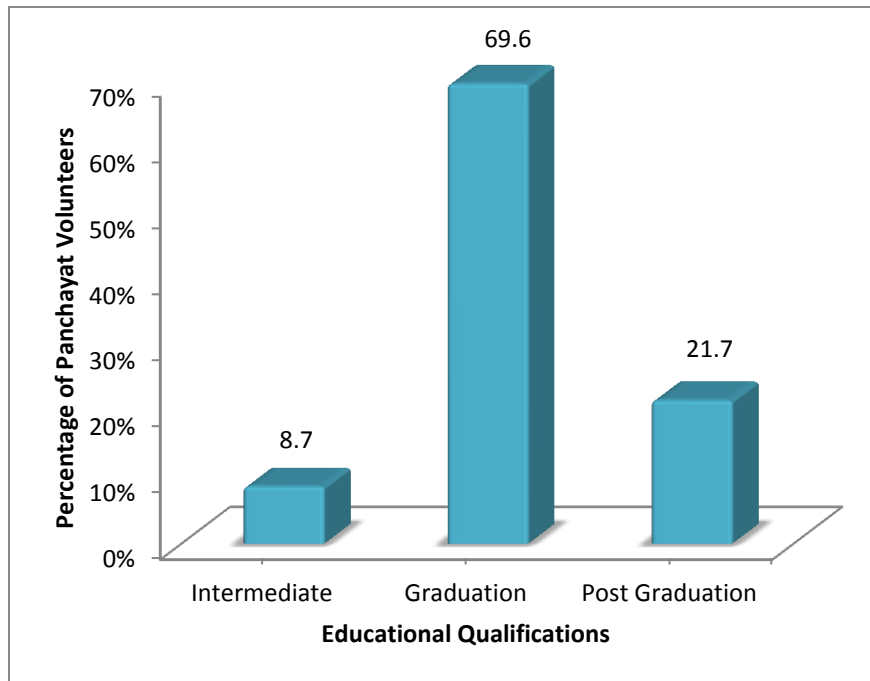
Graph 4: Caste-wise data of Panchayat Volunteers in sample GPs



Graph 4 above indicates that all the caste categories of the people are given opportunity to work as Panchayat Volunteers at the GP level. Of the total 23 Panchayat Volunteers in sample eight GPs nearly 48% belong to Other Backward Castes (OBC), 22% belong to Scheduled Tribe community, 17% belong to the Scheduled Caste. Remaining 13% Panchayat Volunteers belong to General category.

3.2.3 Educational Profile of Panchayat Volunteers:

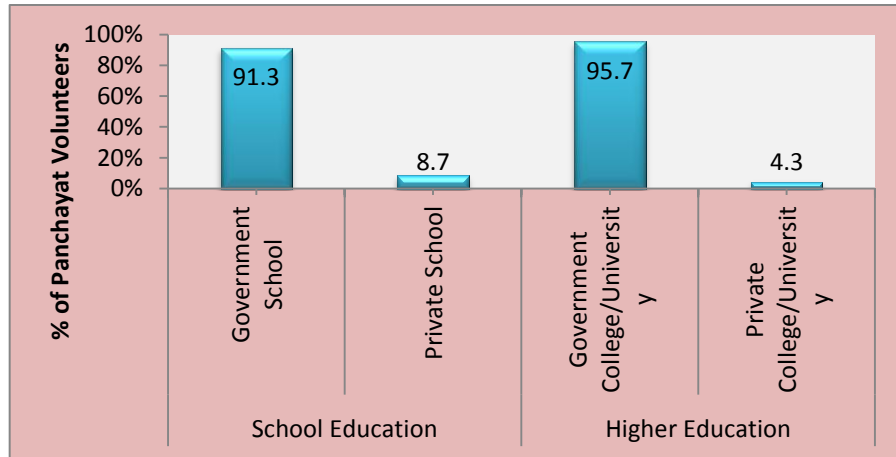
Graph 5: Educational qualifications of Panchayat Volunteers in sample GPs



Matriculation is the minimum qualification for selection as Panchayat Volunteers. Of total 23 sample Panchayat Volunteers, about 70% of them have completed their graduation and nearly 22% are having Post Graduate qualification. And the remaining nine percent of the Panchayat Volunteers have intermediate or 10+2 degree. It shows that, young and educated persons have shown interest to work as Volunteers at GP level to deliver the services to their villages.

3.2.4 Place of Education of Panchayat Volunteers:

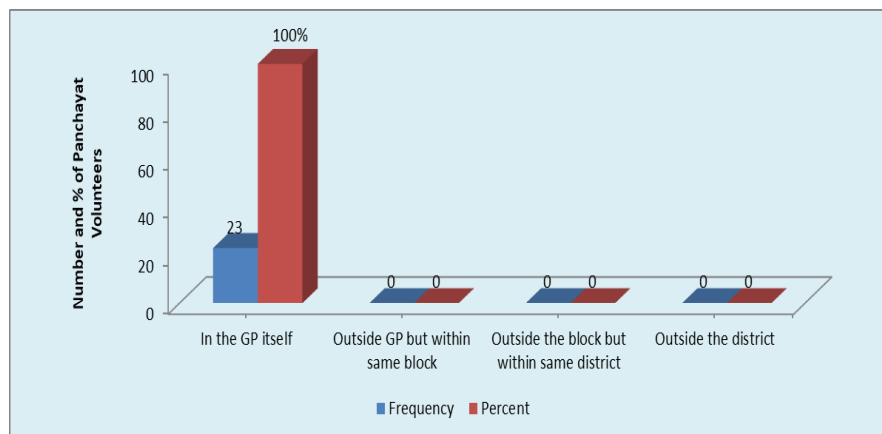
Graph 6: Place of education of Panchayat Volunteers in sample GPs



Only two Panchayat Volunteers studied in private schools and only one Volunteer has studied in a private college. More than 91% of the Volunteers have completed their school education and 95% of the Volunteers have completed higher education in the Government institutions. This shows that most of these Volunteers are beneficiaries of government educational programmes and facilities.

3.2.5 Residence of Panchayat Volunteers:

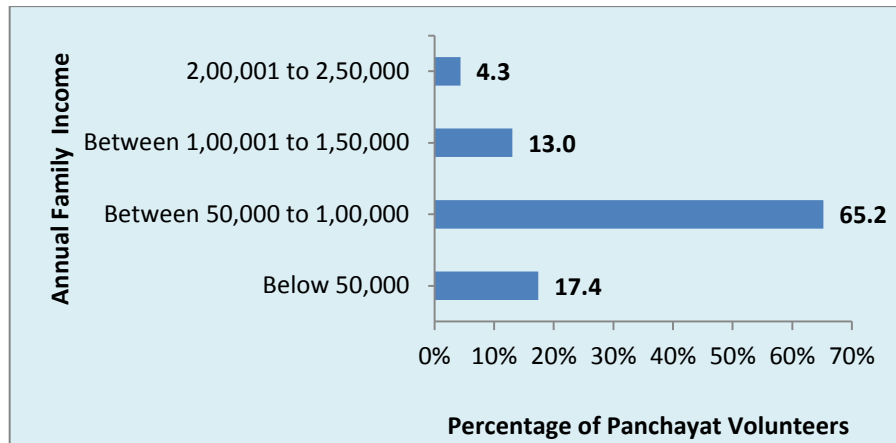
Graph 7: Residence of Panchayat Volunteers in sample GPs



As per the guidelines issued by the State Government, Panchayat Volunteers are to be selected from among the residents of the GP. This criterion was followed in the selection process. The above Graph 7 shows that all the 23 Volunteers are from the same GP where they are deployed and are also staying within the GP area. That's why during field survey, it was observed that villagers easily remembered the names of these Volunteers. Villagers also observed that these Volunteers are having good rapport with them. For effective implementation of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Grameen (PMAY-G), these Volunteers have been meeting the villagers frequently and motivating them to construct the sanctioned houses within specified time period.

3.2.6 Annual Family Income of Panchayat Volunteers:

Graph 8: Annual Family income levels of panchayat volunteers in sample GPs



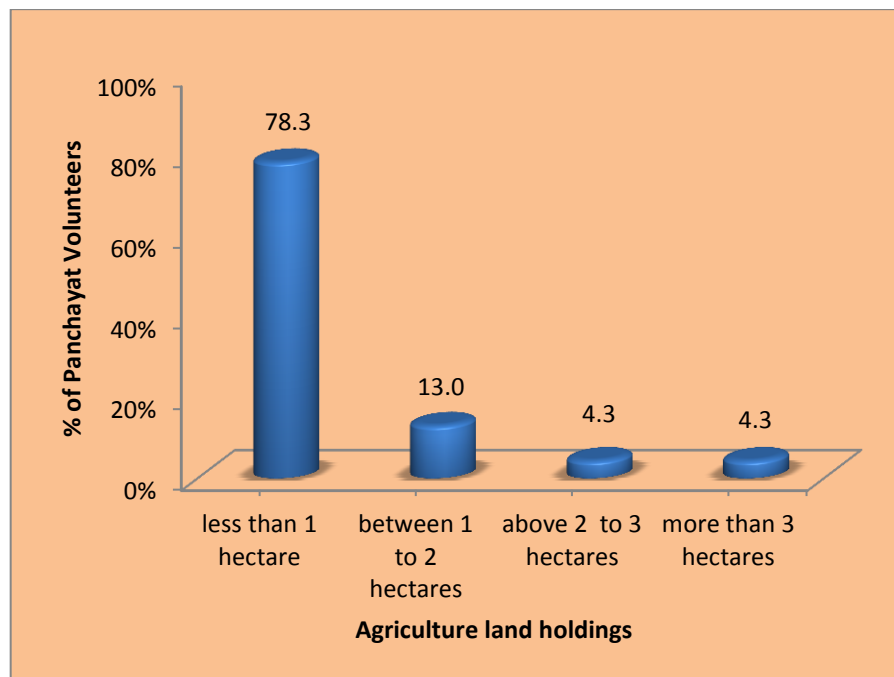
The above graph 8 shows that majority of the Panchayat Volunteers are from low income family groups. More than 80% of them are having annual income levels below Rs. one lakh in which 17% of them are having annual family income below Rs.50,000 and 65% were in the range of Rs. 50,000 to Rs. one lakh. Annual family incomes of 13% of the Volunteers are more than Rs. one lakh to Rs. 1.5 lakh. Only 4.3% of them are in the range between Rs. 2,00,001 to Rs. 2,50,000 annual family income level. This

data also shows that young persons from poor economic background have got opportunity to serve villagers and in the process earn additional income.

3.2.7 Family Landholdings of Panchayat Volunteers:

All the Panchayat Volunteer families were from the farming community, as all of their families are having agricultural land.

Graph 9: Family landholdings of panchayat volunteers in sample GPs



Above graph 9 shows that majority of these Volunteers are from marginal landholding families. Approximately 78% of the Volunteer families are having less than one hectare of agriculture land. About 13% volunteers were having the land between one to two hectares and nearly 8.6% of volunteers were having more than two hectares.

3.3 Selection Process of Panchayat Volunteers:

The Panchayati Raj Division of the Department of Rural Development, Government of Jharkhand issued notification to appoint four educated

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volunteers (Panchayat Svayam Sevak) for 'Panchayat Sachivalay' in the year 2016. Advertisement was given by the State Government in the newspapers for requirement of Panchayat Volunteers and invited applications from the interested candidates.

Criteria for the selection of Panchayat Volunteers at GP level was mentioned as follows:

1. At least one among the four Volunteers in one GP should be a female.
2. In the notified Fifth Schedule areas, at least one person should belong to ST community.
3. Other two members can be from any other community or gender.
4. These members should have minimum educational qualification of Matriculation.
5. Candidates should be in the age group between 18 – 35 years.
6. Candidate should be resident of the respective GP where he/she would like to work.

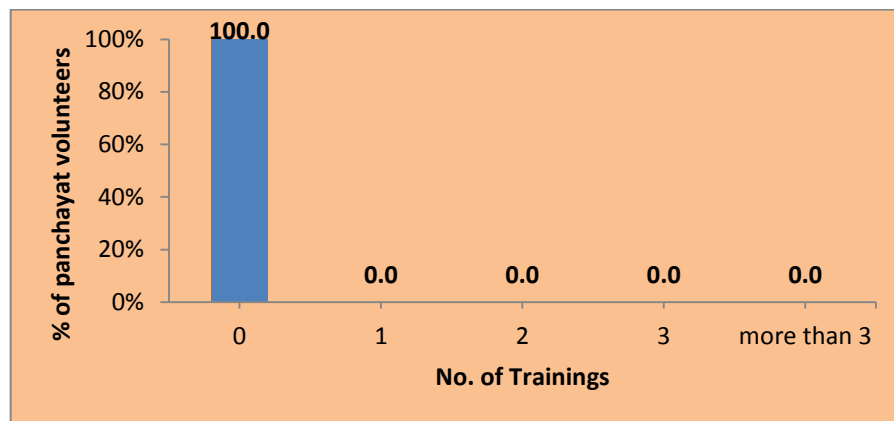
Applicants were asked to write an essay on any three questions out of five mentioned in the notification. Along with these, applicants were asked to send their personal information, photo copies of certificates of age, residence and educational qualifications to the DPRO concerned. The offices of DPROs scrutinized all applications and sorted those applications GP-wise in a prescribed format.

Deputy Commissioners of every District constituted a Block level Selection Committee for every Block for selection of the candidates from the list of candidates provided by the District administration. These Selection Committees prepared a panel of eight qualified candidates against the four for every GP. Out of this panel of eight candidates, State Government approved appointment of four candidates and communicated to respective

Districts. Thereafter, GP-wise list of selected candidates was published by the Deputy Commissioner and respective GPs were informed.

3.4 Training and Capacity Building of Panchayat Volunteers:

Graph 10: Trainings undergone by Panchayat Volunteers in sample GPs

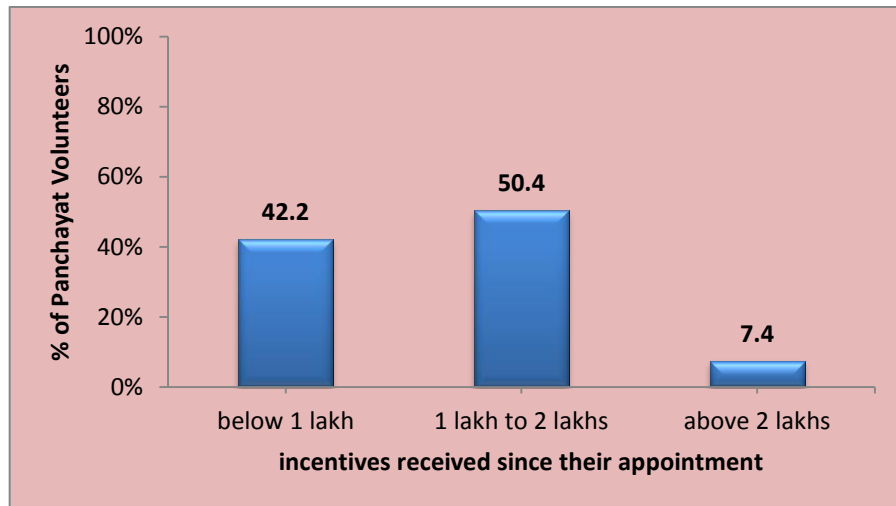


The graph 10 above illustrates that Panchayat Volunteers have not received any formal training so far since their appointment in the year 2016. But few volunteers of Raidih Block in Gumla district said that half-day orientation has been given to them at the Block office on the works relating to filling survey forms of Parivarik Sarvekshan (household survey), Swachh Bharat Mission (construction of Individual Household Latrines under SBM), Pensions etc. As the Volunteers have not yet received any trainings, during the field visits for this study it has been observed that they are not aware of the Panchayati Raj system, details of schemes being implemented in rural areas and other matters of rural development and panchayati raj. Due to inadequate knowledge of roles and responsibilities of GPs, people's entitlements and process of accessing those entitlements, these Panchayat Volunteers are not able to contribute to their full potential. This poor capacity coupled with inadequate motivation is reducing interest of these Panchayat Volunteers in carrying out their duties with passion and enthusiasm.

However, Department of Panchayati Raj, Government of Jharkhand claimed that three days induction orientation was given to Panchayat Volunteers on core issues in the year 2017-18. In the year 2016-17 they were part of GP facilitation team which facilitated GPDP. As per State Govt. they were given three days training at Divisional Training Centres on GPDP.

3.5 Remuneration/Incentives to Panchayat Volunteers:

Graph 11: Incentives received by volunteers since their appointment in sample GPs

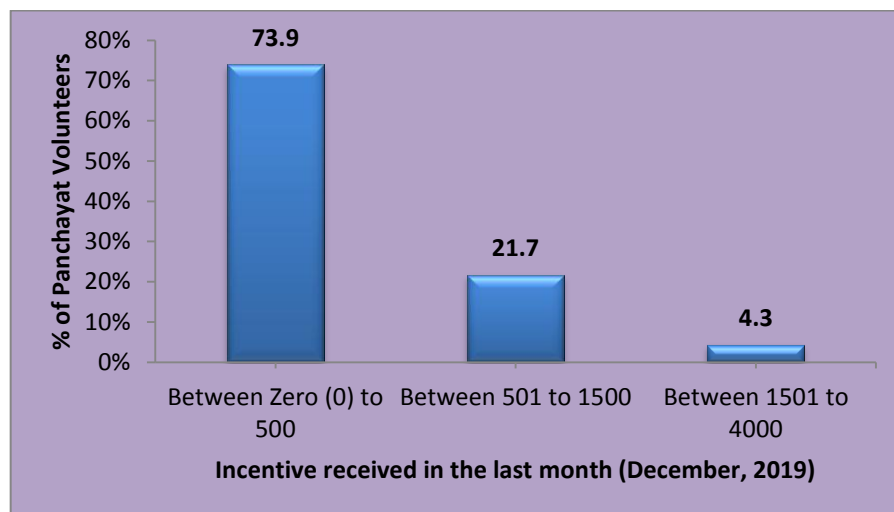


The Graph 11 above shows that 50% of the Panchayat Volunteers have received Rs. one lakh to Rs. two lakh incentives since their appointment in the year 2016 till the time of field visit in January 2020. Nearly 42% have received below Rs. one lakh incentives and only 7.4% of them have received more than Rs. two lakh incentives. On an average these Panchayat Volunteers have received remuneration in the range from Rs. 4000 to 5000 per month. The incentives received are not equal to all the Panchayat Volunteers as the payments are based on assignment and performance. For example, under PMAY-G scheme, Volunteers are paid incentive of Rs. 1200/- per house when the beneficiary has completed

construction before 6 months; Rs. 1000/- per house when the beneficiary has completed construction before 9 months and Rs. 900/- per house when the beneficiary has completed construction before 11 months. If any beneficiary has constructed the sanctioned house more than the 11 months then no incentive is paid to the Panchayat Volunteer. For filling one form of household survey, Panchayat Volunteers are paid Rs. 20. For identification of persons eligible to receive pension and getting their application duly filled, Panchayat Volunteers are paid Rs.11 per such application. As the number of beneficiaries and eligible persons varies across GPs, incentives given to these Panchayat Volunteers also vary.

As mentioned earlier, the incentive given to the Panchayat Volunteers is based on the basis of completion of works assigned to them and paid to them as and when it is processed by District administration based on forwarding of their work completion reports by the GP and Block administration.

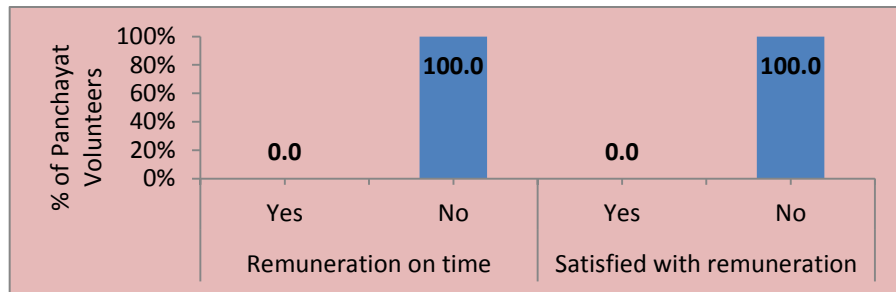
Graph 12: Incentive received by Volunteers during December 2019 month in sample GPs



As earlier discussed, Panchayat Volunteers are not receiving their incentives every month. The graph 12, indicates that of the total 23 sample Panchayat Volunteers, nearly three-fourth (74%) had only received an

incentive ranging between Rs. 0 to Rs. 500 in December, 2019. Approximately 22 % of Panchayat Volunteers reported that they have received an amount ranging between Rs. 501 to Rs. 1500. Only 4.3% of Volunteers have received an amount between Rs. 1501 to Rs. 4000 during the month of December 2019.

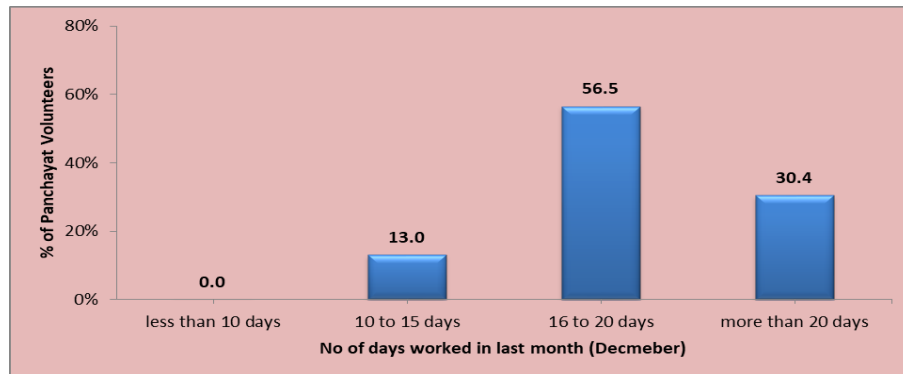
Graph 13: Panchayat Volunteers opinion towards incentives



As shown in the above graph 13, all the Volunteers said that they are not receiving the incentives on time. Further they said they don't know the reasons for delay in getting the incentives. They have given representation to the officials at block and district level regarding this but officials have not responded. Further, all the volunteers have said that they are not satisfied with remuneration. They feel that they are not paid in proportion to the work carried out by them.

3.6 Work Accomplished by Panchayat Volunteers:

Graph 14: No. of days' work done by the Panchayat Volunteers during December month



The graph 14 above shows that nearly 86% of Volunteers have been working more than 16 days in a month. About 57% of Panchayat Volunteers have worked for 16 to 20 days and 30% of Panchayat Volunteers have worked for more than 20 days during the month of December, 2019. Only 13% of them said they have worked for 10 to 15 days in the last month (December).

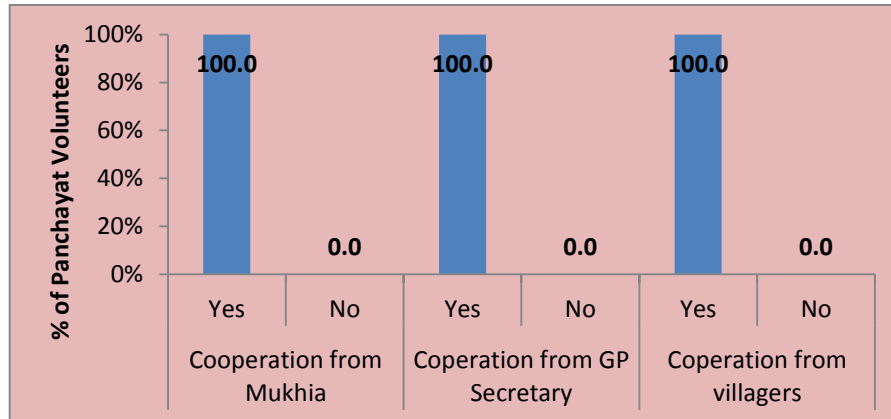
During the field visits for this study, it has been found that although these Panchayat Volunteers don't come to office regularly but they go for field work and meet the villagers/ beneficiaries. Though, majority of the volunteers are working more than 16 days in a month but working hours are between 2-4 hours in a day only.

During the month of December 2019, these Volunteers have been assigned the work under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Grameen (PMAY-G) scheme. Under the PMAY-G, the Volunteers have to sensitize and motivate the beneficiaries to complete the construction of sanctioned houses within the stipulated period. Only Department of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development were assigning the works to the Volunteers to make villagers aware on various schemes being implemented by the Government.

These Panchayat Volunteers are not aware of Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) and have not been involved in the preparation of the GPDP in any of the sample eight GPs. However, as claimed by the Department of Panchayati Raj, in the year 2016-17 these Panchayat Volunteers were involved in the preparation of GPDP as part of GP Facilitation Team.

3.7 Cooperation from GPs to Panchayat Volunteers:

Graph 15: Cooperation from Mukhia, GP Secretaries and villagers to Panchayat Volunteers



All the 23 Panchayat Volunteers of eight sample GPs said that they are getting cooperation from their Mukhia, GP Secretary and villagers. They are having good rapport with all the GP members and staff. Similarly, all the Mukhias and GP Secretaries said that they are satisfied with the work carried out by Panchayat Volunteers as they are assisting the GP in delivering the services and entitlements to the villagers.

3.8 Opinion of Mukhias and Panchayat Secretaries on Contribution of Panchayat Volunteers to GPs:

All the Mukhias and GP Secretaries of eight sample GPs expressed that they are satisfied with the work carried out by the Panchayat Volunteers. GP ERs and functionaries are appreciating the assistance the GP has received in sensitizing the beneficiaries on successful completion of the PMAY-G sanctioned houses. Panchayat Secretaries of these GPs have observed that earlier they were finding it difficult to meet the villagers and beneficiaries frequently as they are in-charge of multiple GPs. After deployment of these Panchayat Volunteers, GP has been able to reach out to villagers and provide benefits of various schemes to them. These Panchayat Volunteers are also assisting the GP in disseminating information relating to Gram Sabha meetings and information on various

development schemes. To improve the functioning of Panchayat Volunteers, Mukhias and GP Secretaries suggested that they should be given proper training and their remuneration be paid timely and regularly.

3.9 Opinion of Villagers on Contribution of Panchayat Volunteers to GPs:

During FGDs with villagers of eight sample GPs, most of the villagers have said that they have benefited from the work done by Panchayat Volunteers. These Volunteers have helped villagers apply and enroll their names as beneficiaries for different schemes. However, few others have observed that they have not got any benefit from deployment of these volunteers. Villagers observed that during initial few months of their deployment, Panchayat Volunteers have interacted with them more frequently but later on they are not so regular. This may be due to irregular payments of honorarium to Panchayat Volunteers. Further, villagers feel that these Panchayat Volunteers have limited role and powers and for any work these Volunteers are directing villagers to GP and Block offices. Volunteers are not having any authority to take decisions relating to developmental works and are not authorized to issue certificates on behalf of GP. When asked about improvement in the functioning of GPs after deployment of these Panchayat Volunteers, most of the villagers have said that there is some improvement in functioning of GPs whereas few others have expressed that there is no improvement. Overall, it can be said that the villagers are satisfied with the functioning of Panchayat Volunteers to a large extent. However, they feel that these Panchayat Volunteers need to be empowered and their remuneration be paid regularly to motivate them to do their work enthusiastically.

3.10 Opinion of District/Block officials of Panchayati Raj on Contribution of Panchayat Volunteers to GPs:

The two DPROs and Block officials of two Districts have opined that in identifying the beneficiaries and disseminating the information of Gram

Sabha and schemes to villagers, the Panchayat Volunteers are helpful. The Block Development Officer (BDO) of Sirsa Block has said that Panchayat Volunteers are treated as an important agent and are invited to meetings relating to schemes held at the Block level. Panchayat Volunteers are reporting on the progress of PMAY-G scheme by visiting the Block office twice a week. With regard to payments of incentives to Panchayat Volunteers, the District and Block administration has observed that there is no fund allocated under any scheme except PMAY-G to pay such incentives. In case of SBM-G, the State has Jal Sahiyas who do the community work and are paid incentives. Administration also feels that timely payment of incentives will improve functioning of Panchayat Volunteers. There is a change in Government in Jharkhand after assembly elections in 2019 and the new Government has not yet taken any decision on the issues of Panchayat Volunteers.

4. Recommendations

On the basis of findings of this study and observations during the field visit, study team makes following recommendation for strengthening GP level human resources and efficacy of Panchayat Volunteers in the State of Jharkhand:

- (i) To make the GPs to function effectively in delivering public goods and services to villagers, all the vacant positions of GP Secretaries may be filled in time-bound manner so that every GP has a full time Panchayat Secretary exclusively responsible for that GP. Filling up of vacancies may be taken up at regular intervals.
- (ii) As the population size of most of the GPs in Jharkhand is above 5000, in addition to GP Secretary, an Accountant and a Data Entry Operator may be provided to every GP instead of the existing system of having them for a cluster of 04 GPs.
- (iii) Till the time above suggested personnel are placed at every GP, the ad-hoc arrangement of deploying Panchayat Volunteers can be

continued to assist the Secretaries and Mukhias for smooth functioning and delivery of services and benefits to the citizens of GP.

- (iv) The Panchayat Volunteers who are not active for more than a year may be identified and be replaced by the new Volunteers through open advertisement. State Government may provide appropriate directions to district, blocks and GPs in this regard.
- (v) HR policy of Gram Panchayats should be prepared with clear guidelines and a framework for engagement of Panchayat Volunteers detailing their job chart, frequency of visits, certification of performance, accountability, incentives etc.
- (vi) To overcome the challenge of inadequate and irregular payment of incentives, a budgetary support in addition to provisions in the scheme guidelines may be considered.
- (vii) All the existing Panchayat Volunteers of GPs may be given adequate induction training through State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) and Central Training Institute (CTI) enabling them to acquire the competencies required for discharging their responsibilities effectively. Such trainings may be imparted on structure and functions of GP, role of GP in various schemes, community mobilization, participatory rural appraisal (PRA), participatory planning, conducting FGDs, household surveys, documentation and report-writing etc.
- (viii) Induction training should be followed by periodic refresher trainings of shorter duration to orient them on new schemes, and changes brought in existing schemes.
- (ix) A robust monitoring mechanism may be set up at the cluster/block level to monitor and evaluate performance of these Panchayat Volunteers. These Panchayat Volunteers may also be made aware of key performance indicators.
- (x) These Volunteers, after necessary trainings, may be involved in the preparation of GPDP. They can be useful in community mobilization, situation analysis and needs identification as part of preparation of GPDP.

5. Conclusion:

The available of human resources at the GP level is highly inadequate in most of the States of India. In the State of Jharkhand nearly 40% positions of GP Secretary are vacant. To overcome this, the deployment of four Panchayat Volunteers in every GP for identifying beneficiaries, disseminating the information, creating awareness among villagers, etc. is of great help to GP. Villagers and GPs are largely satisfied with their functioning. However, some of them have become inactive due to inadequate and irregular payments of incentives. Lack of proper training and absence of monitoring is also affecting their performance. There is a need to strengthen GPs in the State by providing one GP Secretary for every GP and also an Accountant and Data Entry Operator. By the time that happens, Panchayat Volunteers need to be provided training, regular payments of incentives and used efficiently so as to assist the GP in performing its roles and responsibilities effectively.

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