

Dated, Agartala, the 2/11/ 2022

**MEMORANDUM**

**Subject: Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for conducting Mahila(Women) Sabha.**

A platform is always required to represent a community or a section of a community to address the issues of the respective community or a section of the community before the larger society. In this context, Mahila (Women) Sabha may be a great platform for the Women of a Gram Panchayat/Village Committee, through which they can voice their issues/demands; which will be key weapon in order to attain the Theme No.9 of LSDGs i.e. "Women Friendly Village". In this regard, a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is here under for conducting Mahila (Women) Sabha in all Gram Panchayats/Village Committees across the State of Tripura.

**Introduction:-**

- The Gram Sabha is the broad fulcrum (event) of the Panchayati Raj and village development. People use the forum of the Gram Sabha to discuss local governance and development, and make need- based plans for the village. The Panchayat implements development programs under the overarching mandate, supervision and monitoring of the Gram Sabha. All decisions of the Panchayat are taken through the Gram Sabha and no decision is official and valid without the consent of the Gram Sabha.
- Apart from that, whereas India is a signatory of SDGs 2030 and Ministry of Panchayat Raj (MoPR) is committed to the achievement of SDGs will require localization at the grass root level is at Panchayat level. The MoPR has adopted a thematic approach for attainment of SDGs through 9 (nine) themes and the Theme No.9 is "Women Friendly Village".
- In Tripura, in order to attain Women Friendly Village, it is urgent to organize "Women Sabhas" and the concept requires to be popularized.

**Mahila Sabha - Meaning-**

- Mahila Sabha is a village level meeting of women of gram sabha.
- The platform of the Mahila Sabha can be used to promote women's participation and leadership. Mahila Sabhas are one of the ways to initiate

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discussion and generate interest among women, regarding women's issues.

- Finding their voices in an environment such as theirs, is challenging but an important step in making them confident to voice their issues, not just among themselves but in public settings (such as a Gram Sabha meeting) as well.

Are women in India able to utilise their constitutional rights to engage in political and governance processes?

- 49% of India's population comprises of women.
- The Constitution of India guarantees women rights for equal participation in political and governance processes under Articles 14 and 15 of the Indian Constitution prohibits discrimination on any ground (race, caste, gender etc.) with regards to employment and political participation.
- The 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts make it mandatory for one-third of the seats in all local bodies to be reserved for women.
- In Tripura also The Tripura Panchayat Act, 1993 came into force by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act and made the same reservation for women.
- At the global level, Article 7 of the Convention for Elimination of Discrimination against Women (to which India is a signatory) ensures a woman's 'right to participate in contributing to government policy and implementing gender justice. The Article asks states to take appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in political and public life and to ensure that women are as eligible as men to contest elections to all public bodies.

❖ People's participation is one of the fundamental pillars of democratic government. A democratic form of government can be successful only when all people, irrespective of gender, class, and caste participate in the governance process.

Increasing participation of women in local governance processes needed action related to:

- Giving women confidence to voice their issues ;
- Improving participation of women in the Gram Sabha ;
- Sensitising government officials to the needs of women ;
- The platform of the Mahila Sabha can be used to promote women's participation and leadership.

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### What are the works of Mahila Sabha?

It works as a social group that operates on various issues, for example- motivating parents to give equal treatment to their girl children, sending them to school, working towards sanitation and maternal health of women, establishing self-sustaining self-help groups for women entrepreneurs, etc.

### Is organising Mahila Sabha a mandatory process?

- Organising Mahila Sabhas is not a constitutional mandate in many of the states in India like Rajasthan, Odisha, Karnataka, etc. However, such Sabhas can be organised based on circulars issued by the State/District/Departments.
- In Tripura among the 9 themes one of the most important themes is Women Friendly Village i.e. Theme No.9. The theme is so important to promote women's participation and leadership not just among themselves but in public settings. So, in Tripura, organising of Mahila Sabha is a most important issue and it can be a constitutional mandate.

### How to organise Mahila Sabha?

- There shall be a Mahila Gram Sabha in every Gram Panchayat. Though there is no fixed date for organising Mahila Sabha, it can be organised as and when the women in the village feel its requirement.
- The Mahila Gram Sabha shall hold at least three meetings in every 4 (Four) months within a year, first on 8th March i.e. on International Women's Day and the other 2 (two) meetings may be organised as and when possible by the village women preferably on any holiday in each year which can be convened preferably by the Mahila Pradhan or in her absence by the Mahila Up-Pradhan and in the absence of both, by the senior Mahila Member of the Gram Panchayat.
- The meeting of Mahila Gram Sabha shall be presided over preferably by the Mahila Pradhan or in her absence by the Mahila Up-Pradhan and in the absence of both, by the senior Mahila Member of the Gram Panchayat.
- Along with the Pradhan, other members, Panchayat secretary and representatives from other line departments like ASHA/Anganwadi, SHG groups, etc. will be present in the meeting.

### How to spread information about the date/time/agenda of Mahila Sabha?

- The notice of holding Gram Sabha/Mahila Sabha should be issued in advance, ideally 15 days prior to the date of the meeting.

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**Reporting Format**

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Name of Gram Panchayat/ Village Committee                            |        |
| Name of Block  |        |
| Name of District   |        |
| Date of Mahila Sabha   |        |
| Place of Mahila Sabha  |        |
| Total Number of Children in the GP/VC                                |        |
| Total Number of Women Present  |        |
| Name of the President of Women Sabha                                 |        |
| Whether Pradhan participated in the Women Sabha                      | Yes/No |
| Whether the followings are present in Women Sabha:-                  |        |
| Women Protection Committee Members                                   |        |
| VHSNC Members  |        |
| MPW  |        |
| ASHA Workers   |        |
| AWC Workers  |        |
| No. of Representative from Line Department participated with details |        |
| Whether any special activities carried out                           | Yes/No |
| If yes, what type of activity  |        |
| Number of Women raised demands                                       |        |
| What are the issues discussed during the Women Sabha                 |        |
| Activities identified that may be included in the GPDP               |        |

- Issuing letter to every house in the village to remain present in the meeting.
- Such information can also be shared by Miking or by singing local songs.
  - ❖ The concerned ward member will remain present with them while spreading such information in the village.
  - ❖ Local social worker/ NGO/CSO will also remain present to help for creation awareness among the villagers.

What is the best time to hold the meeting?

The time of the meeting is important so that the maximum number of women can attend. Women are burdened with household responsibilities, childcare, livelihood and other activities. Hence, a time during the day preferably on any holiday that is convenient for most women should be considered.

Who can attend a Mahila Sabha?

- All women of the village;
- Representative of every Educational Institution of the village particularly School Headmaster;
- Representatives of Health Institutions;
- Representative of local Police Station, if possible Local Women Police Officer;
- SHG president along members;
- ASHA;
- AWC/MPW;
- NGOs;
- Women related concerned Department/Block Administration/Education/Health/Social Welfare/Police.

What is the required quorum for a Mahila Gram Sabha?

The quorum for a Mahila Gram Sabha can be 10% (proposed) of the total women voters of the respective Gram Panchayat.

What happens if the quorum is not met?

If the quorum is not met, the Mahila Sabha must be cancelled and a new date for the Mahila Sabha must be decided.

What issues can be discussed in a Mahila Gram Sabha?

- In the meeting, the issues relating to women and children and issues pertaining to the overall development of Gram Panchayat shall be discussed

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- Any issue specific to the area and context, that concerns women and which they want the Panchayat to action can be discussed.
- Apart from maternal health, women-centric issues like domestic violence, sexual and reproductive health, child marriage, livelihood opportunities can be discussed in the Mahila Sabha. These are subject to specific indicators, such as -
  - If there is any girl below 18 years got married;
  - If there is any incident of Dowry in the village;
  - If there is any incident of domestic violence;
  - If there any girl below 18 years is pregnant;
  - If the children in the village face any problem regarding education;
  - If villagers face any problem for getting loan from SHGs;
  - If the women are provided sewing machine from gram Panchayat for becoming self-sufficient;
  - If the Villagers face any difficulties regarding getting ration card;
  - If any health issues are facing by any pregnant women in the village;
  - If any income related problem is faced by the husband of any pregnant woman in the village;
  - If there is necessary maternity arrangements for adult women;
  - Creation of awareness among the couple not to carry more baby if they have already carrying 2 (two) babies;
  - Creation of awareness regarding family planning to newly-wedded couple;
  - If there are any difficulties faced by the parents regarding the perspectives of new-born baby's vaccination such as- ASHA worker does not go time to time at Anganwadi Centre.
  - Total number of women enrolled in AWC;
  - Creation of awareness regarding health and hygiene among the villagers etc.
- The Status of the Gram Panchayat will be studied based on specific demand so collected in the Mahila Sabha. The specific demand will be collected as on the basis of ward-demand. There should be maximum two demands from each ward. The demands to be included in the GPDP action plan.

Procedure to conduct Mahila Sabha-

- Discussion of all the concerned Department has to be completed within first one hour.

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- Discussion will be done on the basis of specific information and suggestions given by the women present in the Sabha based on key performance indicators (KPIs).
- Demand orientation issues to be discussed.
- GP will send a resolution draft to the Block regarding the demands evolved in the Sabha. There after that Block will take the corrective measures.
- If there found any issues in connection with Line Departments, in that case the help of the concerned Department may be sought.
- Panchayat will issue a common advisory to Panchayat Pradhan and Panchayat In-Charge regarding the demands evolved in the Sabha and those demands to be included in GPDP and over the merit of concerned demands a proposal is to be made for inclusion of such demands in BPDP/DPDP.
- After the demand discussion, a cultural programme/activity is to be held.
- The Panchayat will organise a small award function for giving award to the best AWW/ASHA workers/ Social workers etc. during last one year.
- The Panchayat will organise free distribution of health kits for the pregnant Mothers, for the 3/6 months babies etc.

Who is responsible to record the proceedings of the meetings?

The minutes of the meetings are recorded by the Panchayat secretary. It is necessary to take signature/thumb impressions of women who have attended the meeting.

How can the resolutions/decisions taken in Mahila Sabha processed?

The resolutions/decisions can be taken collectively in the meetings are further to be presented in Gram Sabha. These issues can be included in the village level planning process i.e. Gram Panchayat Development Plans.

  
2, 11, 2022  
(D. Reang)


Addl. Secretary to the  
Government of Tripura

**Copy to :-**

1. PS to the Chief Secretary, Government of Tripura for kind information to the Chief Secretary.
2. PS to the Principal Secretary, RD(Panchayat) Department for kind information to the Principal Secretary.
3. PS to the all Principal Secretary/Secretary, ..... Department, Government of Tripura, for kind information.
4. PA to the Special Secretary, RD(Panchayat) Department for kind information.
5. The CEO, TTAADC, Khumulwng, Tripura for kind information.
6. The Executive Officer, (DM & Collector) ..... District for information.
7. All Director,.....Department, Government of Tripura, for information.
8. The District Panchayat Officer, ..... District for information.
9. The Block Development Officer, ..... RD Block for information.

**Copy also forwarded to :-**

1. PS to the Hon'ble Chief Minister Tripura for kind information to the Chief Minister Tripura.
2. PS to the Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister Tripura for kind information to the Deputy Chief Minister Tripura.
3. The Sabhadhipati,..... Zilla Parishad for kind information.
4. The Chairman, .....Panchayat Samiti/ BAC, for kind information.

  
2.11.2022  
Addl. Secretary to the  
Government of Tripura.



**ANNEXURE -1**

**Attendance Sheet**

1. Name of Gram Panchayat / Village Committee:-
2. Date of Meeting:-
3. Place of Meeting:-
4. Time of Meeting:-
5. Total No. of Participants:-

| <b>Sl. No.</b> | <b>Name of the Participant</b> | <b>Signature or LTI of the Participant</b> | <b>Time of Arrival</b> | <b>Attested by (In Case of LTI only)</b> |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--|------------------------|--|
|                |                                |  |                        |  |
|                |                                |  |                        |  |
|                |                                |  |                        |  |

MINUTES REGISTER

1. Name of Gram Panchayat / Village Committee:-
2. Date of Meeting:-
3. Place of Meeting:-
4. Time of Meeting:-
5. Total No. of Participants:-
6. Issues Discussed:-

| <b>Sl. No</b> | <b>Particulars</b>   | <b>Yes/ No</b> |
|---------------|--|----------------|
| 1             | Is there any girl below 18 years got married?  |                |
| 2             | Is there any incident of Dowry in the village?   |                |
| 3             | Is there any incident of domestic violence?  |                |
| 4             | Is there any girl below 18 years pregnant?   |                |
| 5             | Are the children in the village facing any problem regarding education?  |                |
| 6             | Are villagers facing any problem for getting loan from SHGs?   |                |
| 7             | Are the women provided sewing machine from gram Panchayat for becoming self-sufficient?  |                |
| 8             | Is the Villagers face any difficulties regarding getting ration cards?   |                |
| 9             | Is any health issues are facing by any pregnant women in the village?  |                |
| 10            | Is any income related problem faced by the husband of any pregnant woman in the village?   |                |
| 11            | Are there necessary maternity arrangements available for adult women?  |                |
| 12            | Is there any couple carrying more than 2 (two) babies?   |                |
| 13            | Whether any awareness generated regarding family planning to newly-wedded couple ?   |                |
| 14            | Is there any difficulties faced by the parents regarding the perspectives of new-born baby's vaccination?(Such as- Asha worker does not go time to time at Anganwadi Centre) |                |
| 15            | Whether women are enrolled in AWC? If yes, mention the total number of women enrolled in AWC;  |                |