

Guidelines for setting up of Block Resource Centres (BRCs) for National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) and Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)

1. **Introduction:** With the coming into effect of the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP), there has been a shift in focus from mere coverage of habitations to drinking water security at household level and a shift from a supply-driven approach to a demand-managed approach. The Total Sanitation Campaign aims at ensuring total sanitation coverage by motivating village communities and the Gram Panchayat to lead the campaign and make their village open-defecation free. In ensuring adequate safe drinking water and sanitation to all households in rural areas on a long-term basis, Gram Panchayats and their Standing committee, viz. Village Water & Sanitation Committees (VWSCs) and Gram Sabhas have to play a critical role. NRDWP also aims at fully empowered, aware and skilled Gram Panchayats capable of planning, implementation, operation, maintenance and management of water supply at village levels.

In order to ensure that GPs/ VWSCs develop understanding of the rural drinking water supply and sanitation programmes, and are empowered to shoulder their responsibilities, they need to be provided with continuous support in terms of creating awareness, training and handholding on various aspects of drinking water supply and sanitation.

2. **Strategy – Block Resource Centres:** The role of Block Panchayats in rural drinking water and sanitation sector needs to be strengthened to provide guidance, support and monitor water supply and sanitation status in villages. Block Panchayat is the ideal unit for providing support as it is nearer to the Gram Panchayats than the Zilla Panchayat. To achieve this objective, Block Resource Centres (BRC) shall be the institutional set up at the block level to provide continuous support in terms of awareness generation, motivation, mobilisation, training and handholding to village communities, GPs and VWSCs. The BRC will serve as an extended delivery arm of the District Water & Sanitation Mission in terms of software support and act as a link between it and the GPs/ VWSCs/ village communities.

Capacity building and generating awareness among the village community on various aspects of safe drinking water by BRCs will be the first step in improving their understanding to achieve drinking water security in terms of quantity and quality. It will also help the villages in achieving Nirmal Gram status, sustaining and building on it with effective and low cost management of solid and liquid wastes.

3. **Functions of BRCs:** The BRC shall be responsible for following functions:

- i.) Helping the village community in formation of VWSCs in all villages;
- ii.) Taking up awareness generation and development communication activities among GP and VWSC members and the village community

- iii.) Conducting training courses at block and village level for members of VWSCs and GPs and other grassroots level workers in the village (ASHA worker, Anganwadi worker, schoolteachers, self-help groups, Mahila and Yuvak mandals etc.) on various aspects of water and sanitation. This can be through classroom training, hands on support in villages and exposure visits.
- iv.) Preparing an Annual Activities Calendar mainly focusing on IEC and training activities and will be responsible for its implementation.
- v.) Helping the GPs/ VWSCs in baseline surveys, sanitary survey of drinking water sources and systems falling within their jurisdiction;
- vi.) Helping the village community/ VWSCs/ GPs in preparation of their Village Action Plan and its approval by the Gram Sabha;
- vii.) Guiding VWSCs in implementing and monitoring the works relating to water supply schemes and sanitation as envisaged in the Village Action Plan;
- viii.) Coordination and follow up with grassroots level workers trained in water quality monitoring and surveillance and ensuring that they take up water quality testing and surveillance activities;
- ix.) Interacting regularly with Panchayats, ASHA workers, anganwadi workers, Self help groups, Mahila and Yuvak mandals to ensure that issues relating to water supply, quality and sanitation get regular attention;
- x.) Visiting schools to deliver talks to sensitize teachers and students to adopt improved hygiene practices, improved sanitation and safe handling of water to keep it potable.
- xi.) Helping in conducting social audits
- xii.) Coordinating with water quality testing laboratories for water quality testing, reporting to villages, cautioning the GPs/ VWSCs/ PHEDs to take effective steps for maintaining potability and guiding on remedial steps.
- xiii.) Assisting in gathering information for updating habitation status on the IMIS.

4. Role of Block Panchayats in BRCs: The BRCs will be under the administrative control and supervision of Block Panchayats. In case, BRC is run by an NGO, similar reporting arrangements will be followed. BRC shall be supervised by the DWSM at the district level. It shall function according to the Plan approved by the DWSM. The Block Panchayat will supervise the BRCs to ensure that the functionaries carry out their activities in accordance with the Plan formulated by the Block Panchayat and approved by the DWSM.

5. Location of BRC: The BRC shall be located in the office of the Block Panchayat. However, the Cluster Coordinators shall, as far as possible, be located in their respective clusters.

6. Staffing of BRCs: All functionaries of BRC will be hired by the DWSM through an NGO or an outsourcing agency to provide specific services on contract basis, renewable on a yearly basis, following the process laid down by the DWSM and will

be paid a consolidated remuneration. The running of BRCs can also be outsourced by the SWSM to reputed NGOs. To achieve economy of scale, it will be desirable that in a district, all BRCs are managed by a single NGO/out-sourcing agency that can be given upto 12% of the total expenditure as service remuneration or overhead (including service tax).

The BRC functionaries engaged will have the following educational qualifications, experience, age limit and remuneration:

6.1 Qualifications, experience and remuneration of BRC functionaries

S. No.	BRC functionary	Minimum Educational qualification experience	Age limit	Monthly remuneration	Mobility Allowance
1.	Block Coordinator	Graduate in mass communication/ social sciences/ rural studies with two years experience of working on VWSC/ WQM&S/ Sanitation, etc.	Between 25-35 years. Upper age limit relaxable in case of ex-servicemen to 45 years.	Rs. 5,000 /-	Rs. 125 per full day of village visit*
2.	Cluster Coordinator	Graduate in mass communication/ social sciences/ rural studies with one year experience of working on VWSC/ WQM&S/ Sanitation, etc.	Between 25-30 years. Upper age limit relaxable in case of ex-servicemen to 45 years.	Rs. 4,500 /-	Rs. 100 per full day of village visit*

*Number of days of village visit should be between 10-15 days in a month. They should attend evening meetings in the villages, preferably with night stay. Field visit of less than 8 hours will be counted as half a day and 50% of the mobility allowance will be paid.

6.2 Number of functionaries:

There shall be 2-4 functionaries in the BRC depending on the population of the block as per the following scale. The Gram Panchayats in the Block should be formed into 2, 3 or 4 clusters as the case may be and distributed among the BRC functionaries for handholding.

- i.) Population of block as per 2001 Census (70,000 or less) – 2 functionaries viz. Block Coordinator and Cluster Coordinator.
- ii.) Population of block as per 2001 Census (between 70,000 to 1.5 lakh) – 3 functionaries viz. Block Coordinator and two Cluster Coordinators.
- iii.) Population of block as per 2001 Census (more than 1.5 lakh) - 4 functionaries viz. Block Coordinator and three Cluster Coordinators.

- iv.) In case of Andhra Pradesh since the number of blocks are 1099 out of 6442 blocks in the entire country, one Coordinator per block will be allowed.

Based on the need and the State's plan to converge other activities at the BRC level, States can enhance the qualifications, experience or remuneration of the BRC functionaries. However, the additional expenses will be borne by the State Government out of their own resources. SWSM shall fix financial outlays for functionaries, contingencies and other activities for each BRC within the overall Support activities fund. The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Government of India shall not bear any liability insofar as the service conditions or tenure of the BRC functionaries is concerned. The decisions regarding selection, service conditions, continuation are the sole responsibility of the respective State Government.

7. Selection process: The SWSM should decide the specific qualification and evaluation criteria, mode of selection, etc. In the case of selection of NGOs, those who have been registered for at least 3 years; already working in water & sanitation / health/ rural development/ water resource development/ forest management, etc.; having sufficient domain knowledge and expertise of the sector, may be given preference. In case, it is decided to run the BRCs with functionaries engaged from outsourcing agencies, the SWSM may lay down a transparent and objective process for the selection of the outsourcing agency and functionaries at the district level.

The selection of the NGO or the Outsourcing agency should be through a State level Selection Committee, preferably, headed by the Secretary of the State in-charge of the Rural Water Supply and Sanitation with representation from Government of India. Similarly, after the selection of the NGO and the outsourcing agency, in the selection of the functionaries by the NGOs or the outsourcing agency at the district or block levels, proper representation of the State/ District administration may be kept.

8. Roles & responsibilities: Each BRC shall be headed by a Block Coordinator. Other members of the team shall report to the Block Coordinator. The following role and responsibilities shall be assigned to the members of the BRC.

8.1 Block Coordinator:

- i.) Carrying out all functions of the BRC listed in para 3.
- ii.) Doing fieldwork in the Gram Panchayats assigned.
- iii.) Handling matters relating to community mobilization in drinking water and sanitation;
- iv.) Helping the Gram Sabhas in selecting/electing VWSCs in all villages in the block, opening of the Bank account, etc. coordinating with PHED officers in-charge of rural water supply and sanitation;
- v.) Training VWSC/ GP members about planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of water supply systems, keeping water quality surveillance, maintaining sanitation facilities, etc.;
- vi.) Assisting GPs/ VWSCs to operate and maintain their water supply systems;

- vii.) Getting water samples tested in the water quality testing laboratory and reporting the results to village community/ GPs, VWSCs;
- viii.) Distribution of chlorine tablets if so decided by the Public Health authorities;
- ix.) Coordinating and exchange of information to and from the block level engineer to the block-level health officer for taking corrective action in cases of incidence of water and sanitation related diseases.
- x.) Documenting case studies and success stories from villages
- xi.) Handling day-to-day accounting of BRC expenditure

8.2 Cluster Coordinator

- i.) Carrying out all roles and responsibilities listed out for the Block Coordinator except handling accounting of BRC expenditure.

9. Training: After selection a 4- week induction-training programme should be provided to BRC functionaries to orient and update their knowledge, build capacity and improve skills. The focus should be given on developing their communication skills for dealing with the village community. The training should be so conducted that they become sensitized about the conjunctive use of water which includes quality monitoring and surveillance. They should also have a pro-Panchayat bias and should get proper exposure to the PRIs. After the training, they should be able to explain the basic features of linkages between health, illness, personal and community hygiene practices, safe drinking water, sanitation, safe handling of water, protection of drinking water sources, etc. BRC functionaries should also be informed about the approaches followed in the sector so that they can transfer this knowledge to GPs/ VWSCS/ village community. A generic module will be prepared by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation and shared with the States. The State Key Resource Centers (KRCs) should prepare the region specific training modules based on the generic module and the Training Needs Assessment. The Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation will provide guidance to the KRCs in preparing these modules. The State KRCs should organise the induction training at the district level. Atleast two weeks of the induction training should consist of village stay and on-the-field training. The tenure of the selected BRC functionaries shall commence on the first day of the induction training. Only those trainees who successfully complete the induction training should be engaged on duty. Every month, a one-day review cum refresher training meet should be held at the district level by the DWSM to acquaint them with new developments and to foster attitudinal changes among them.

10. Financing BRCs: Expenditure on the functionaries, contingencies and activities of the BRC are to be met out of 5% NRDWP allocation for Support activities. BRC shall work in collaboration with block level staff of other programmes like NRHM, Block Resource Centre of SSA, MNREGS, ICDS, etc. and not as a standalone entity. Training and IEC activities under programmes like TSC, NRHM, ICDS, etc. shall be dovetailed with BRC activities and convergence of efforts achieved. State Government may also provide additional resources from their own funds to the BRCs.

The officer in-charge of rural water supply and/or CEO, ZP shall ensure that sufficient funds are available at the appropriate level for payment to the NGOs or outsourcing agencies for payment of remuneration and allowances to the BRC functionaries and that these are actually paid to them before 7th day of every month without fail.

A suitable reporting software will be developed and provided by Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation for keeping the BRC accounts and for reporting on their physical and financial performance on the Integrated Management Information System of the Department.

11. Outputs of BRCs: The SWSM shall quantify the targeted outputs from each DWSM in terms of the following success indicators at the beginning of every year for the year. In turn the DWSM shall quantify the targeted outputs for each BRC against the same indicators. The DWSM is advised to converge IEC and training activities under NRDWP, TSC, NRHM, SSA, ICDS etc. at the district level so that the messages given under these different programmes cover the aspects of safe water, safe sanitation, hygiene, health and nutrition and the activities in the villages are spread out over the targeted villages. :

- i.) Number of village visits done
- ii.) Number of VWSCs formed – all villages
- iii.) Number of VWSCs A/c opened – for all VWSCs
- iv.) Number of Gram Sabhas in which BRC functionaries participated and talked about water, sanitation and hygiene issues
- v.) Number of schools visited and sensitization/ awareness talks given
- vi.) Number of anganwadis visited and workers sensitized
- vii.) Number of trainings conducted at a) village level b) block level for i) VWSC members ii) GP members iii) other grassroots level workers
- viii.) Number of mandays of training provided at a) village level b) block level to i) VWSC members ii) GP members iii) other grassroots level workers
- ix.) Number of villages where water quality testing is done by using kits and number of times such tests carried out for all drinking water sources –each drinking water source to be tested minimum 2 times in a year

12. Role of DWSM: The DWSM shall monitor the overall functioning and activities of the BRCs and provide necessary guidance to them. It shall ensure training of BRC functionaries, training materials, IEC materials, etc. As per the Annual Action Plan approved by the Block Panchayat and then by the DWSM, the BRC shall prepare a monthly activity plan and put it in the public domain, especially outside the BRC on a notice board. The same shall be approved by the Block Panchayat and monitored on a monthly basis in the Block Panchayat and DWSM meetings. The DWSM shall release funds from the NRDWP Support component to the Block Panchayats for funding the staff expenses, administrative expenses and activities of the BRCs. It shall ensure that the BRC functionaries are paid before 7th day of every month without fail.

13. Role of SWSM: The SWSM shall decide on the nature of the BRCs i.e. whether they are to be run by NGOs or the services of functionaries are to be obtained through outsourcing agencies. The role of Block Panchayats and DWSM may vary from State to State depending upon the functions devolved on them. The SWSM shall have powers to appropriately modify the administrative arrangements detailed in these Guidelines, except for the financial limits indicated in para 6, keeping in mind the spirit of the NRDWP Guidelines viz. strengthening the role of Panchayats in rural water supply and sanitation. It will lay down the detailed selection procedure for the NGOs/ outsourcing agencies/BRC functionaries and select the NGOs/agencies. It will entrust development of training modules for induction training and refresher courses for BRC functionaries to Key Resource Centres. It will approve the induction-training calendar for training of BRC functionaries to start within 15 days of their selection. The SWSM will transfer funds from the NRDWP Support component to the DWSM for funding the BRCs and will give detailed instructions on their utilisation. It will fix financial outlays for functionaries, contingencies and other activities for each BRC within the Support fund. SWSM shall prescribe/issue detailed instructions about submission of physical and financial progress reports, statement of expenditure, Utilisation Certificate (U.C.) etc. by BRCs so that UC/Audited Statement of Accounts and activity reports for Support activity funds can be finalized by SWSM for onward submission to the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Govt. of India, in time.
