

The Ratnagiri Case Study

In July 2023, the GPF initiated its operations in Ratnagiri district, focusing on five key blocks: Ratnagiri, Chiplun, Mandangad, Sangameshwar, and Dapoli. During the initial phase, there was a notable absence of block-quality cells dedicated to handling block-level planning and a lack of data-driven planning. The Shikshan parishads were irregular and lacked quality due to the absence of the CRG. Additionally, there were deviations in the SMC reconstitution process.

To address these issues, the primary objective was to align the entire system for streamlined processes. GPF actively engaged in KP collectives and SPs, conducting school visits as part of this alignment. A concerning trend was identified – a consistent decline in the enrolment of children in ZP schools. Recognising the need for essential infrastructure in these schools to enhance both student numbers and educational quality, it became evident that community involvement was crucial.

The Education Gram Sabha (EGS) is a pivotal process to garner support from villages in establishing necessary facilities within schools. The active participation of the community is a crucial factor in fostering the development of children's competencies. Acknowledging the Gram Panchayat's pivotal role in ensuring qualitative education, a decision was made to conduct a comprehensive workshop on effective EGS throughout the entire district. This workshop, orchestrated by the Zilla Parishad Ratnagiri in collaboration with GPF, aimed to address these challenges.

In December 2023, led by BDOs and guided by BEOs, block-level workshops were conducted, drawing the participation of Sarpanches, Headteachers, KPs, development officers, ICDS supervisors, and other stakeholders. The agenda of these workshops encompassed vital aspects such as formulating school development plans, identifying and prioritising school needs, and delineating essential processes like SMC meetings. The discussions also delved into the preparation of Gram Sabha, outlining the necessary steps to be undertaken during and after the meeting. Facilitated by GPF, these workshops provided a structured platform to address these crucial topics.



These workshops ignited significant momentum, leading to the issuance of directives for SMC meetings, children councils, and EGS planning at the district level in January 2024. Notably, the district had not witnessed regular EGS meetings before this initiative. SMC meetings and children councils were executed under the guidance of SMC presidents and headteachers, during which requirements were gathered. The subsequent EGS meetings became forums to discuss and strategise steps to address these identified concerns.



Gram panchayats assumed responsibility for addressing the needs of each school within their jurisdiction. The formulation of school development plans aligned with district-level planning, and the Gram Sabha approved these plans. By the end of January, a total of 508 EGS meetings have been conducted across various blocks, including Lanja, Rajapur, Ratnagiri, Sangameshwar, Chiplun, Khed, Dapoli, Mandangad, and Guhagar, marking a significant milestone in district-wide educational development.

From the 11th to the 13th of January, a significant milestone was achieved as 482 Gram Panchayats hosted EGS sessions, drawing the active participation of stakeholders like Sarpanches, deputy Sarpanches, Gram Sevaks, SMC Presidents, SMC members, Headteachers, teachers, parents, and GPF coordinators. The agenda of these sessions encompassed crucial topics such as skill development for children, enhancing school infrastructure, ensuring access to learning materials, addressing school repairs, promoting plantation and cleanliness initiatives, implementing E-learning, establishing libraries, and fostering study groups. This comprehensive engagement undeniably fostered increased community participation in schools and the learning process.

The upcoming steps involve scheduling a follow-up Gram Sabha after four months. Meanwhile, the primary emphasis will be on planning and reviewing the effective implementation of decisions made during the EGS. This comprehensive review will span all levels, including district coordination meetings, district and block quality cell meetings, Panchayat Samiti meetings, and Gram Panchayat monthly meetings. Additionally, concerted efforts will be made to closely monitor and follow up on the execution of decisions, collaborating with various departments. Including the entire system in this follow-up process is imperative, ensuring the sustainability of these initiatives over time.

