

Training and Capacity Building Program for newly elected PRI representative in Mewat District

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INTRODUCTION

Concluding the various steps towards decentralization, the Indian state in 1999 approved the 73rd constitutional amendment and accorded Constitutional status to Panchayati Raj Institutions in India. This assured permanence of local government and created a three tier governance structure for rural areas. The main features of 73rd amendment included recognition of Gram Sabha as a general body of electors at the village level and conduct of regular election at 5 year intervals.

Following the 4th Panchayat General elections, Government of Haryana, organized a program on Training and Capacity Building for newly elected PRI representatives, under Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Yojna (RGSY) and BRGF. HIRD, Nilokheri was the nodal agency for this program. To undertake the training of Sarpanches and Panches in Mewat District, Sehgal Foundation was selected as an NGO partner.

CONTENT OF THE TRAINING

The training program was a foundation course for two days having the following training contents:

- 73rd Amendment and Panchayati Raj Act
- Haryana Panchayati Raj Act, 1994
- Gram Sabha; introduction and its roles and responsibilities
- Gram Panchayat; powers and roles & responsibilities
- Roles and responsibilities of Sarpanch and Gram Sachiv
- Revenue generation for Gram Panchayat
- Village Common land
- Rural development Programs; MNREGA

According to the schedule provided by HIRD, a total of 3258 members were to be trained in a period of about 3 months starting from 23rd August, 2010 till 13th November, 2010. District Mewat comprises of 5 blocks and to conduct the training program, two teams were formed. Trainings were simultaneously conducted in two blocks. One batch of trainees included 55 to 60 participants.

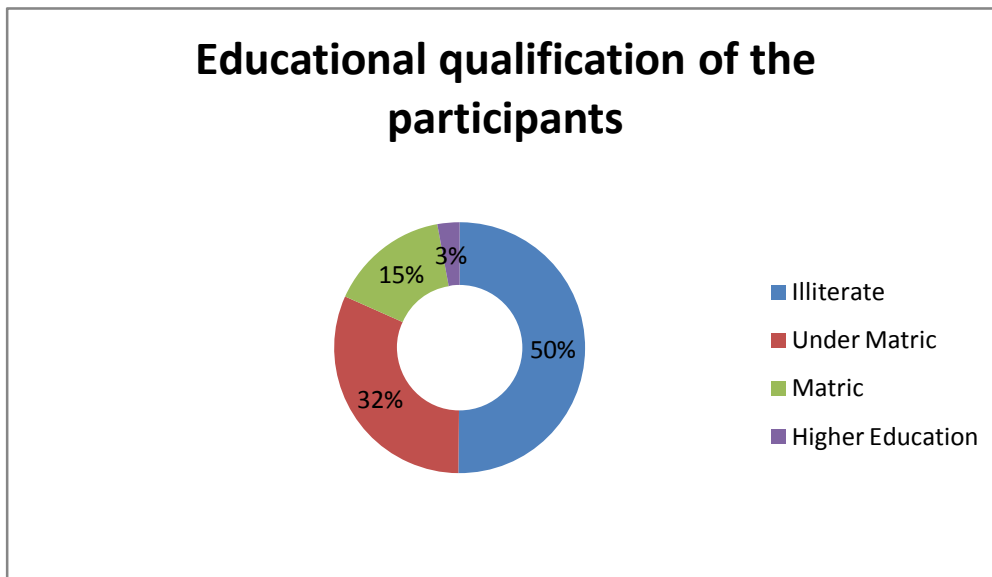
PARTICIPATION IN THE TRAINING PROGRAM

Block	Total number of Participants who attended training program			Total number of participants to be trained	Attendance Rate
	Male	Female	Total		
Taoru	261	133	394	534	74%
Punhana	262	147	409	738	55%
Firozpur Zhirkha	232	125	357	593	60%
Nagina	171	89	260	522	49%
Nuh	277	144	421	871	48%

Training and Capacity Building Program for newly elected PRI representative in Mewat District

According to the training program guidelines, District Administration was entrusted with the task of ensuring participation of Sarpanches and Panches and the NGO partner was to undertake trainings. The average attendance rate in Mewat District during the training program was 57% i.e about 1850 participants. A comparative analysis across blocks revealed that Taoru Block had the highest attendance rate of 74% while Nuh Block had the lowest rate of 48%.

EDUCATIONAL QUALIFICATION OF THE PARTICIPANTS



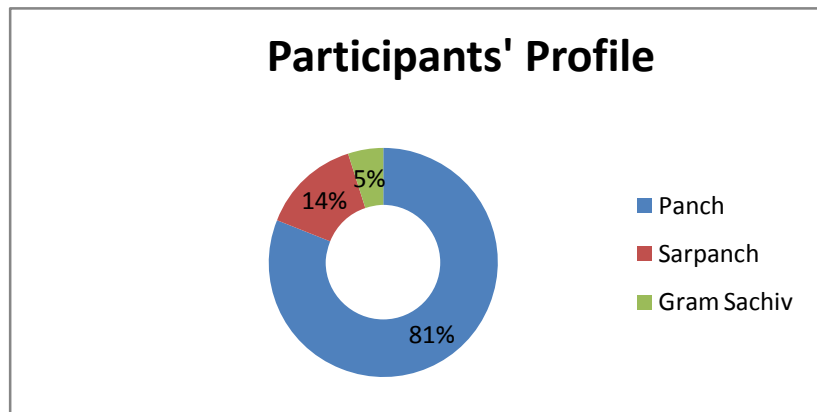
The literacy rate in Mewat is low as compared to the National and State indices. Literacy rate is 44.07% against State average of 67.91%, while female literacy rate is 24.26 against State average of 55.73%. This state of low literacy levels was reflected among the participants as well

Graph 1: Educational Qualification of Participants

with 50% of the participants being illiterate. Only 3% of the total participants had completed their higher education (Graph 1).

PARTICIPANTS' PROFILE

Considering the participants profile, it was observed that majority of the respondents, who attended the training program were Panch (81%). 14 % of the participants were village Sarpanch (Graph 2).

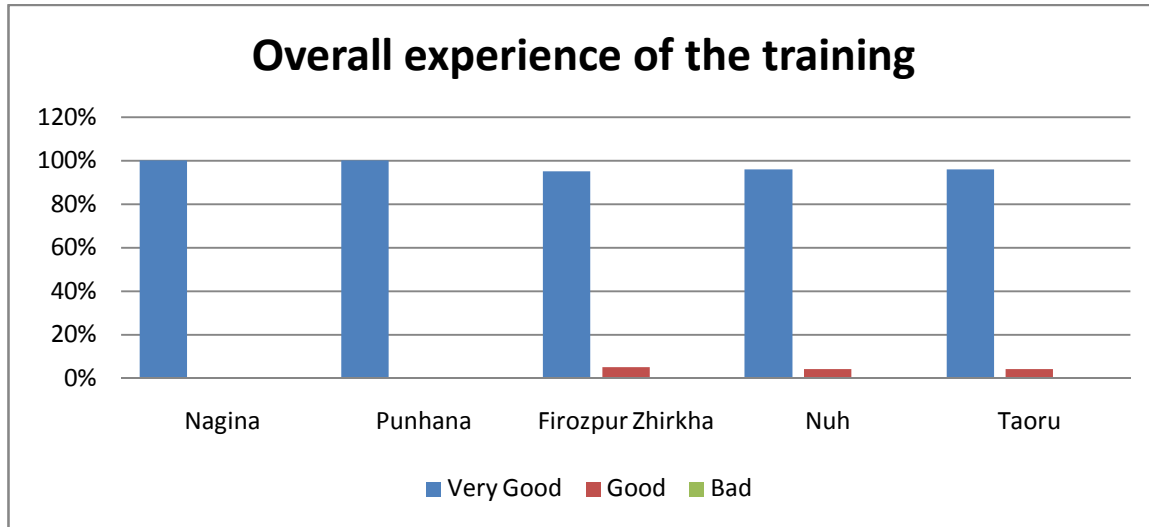


Graph 2: Participants' Profile

Training and Capacity Building Program for newly elected PRI representative in Mewat District

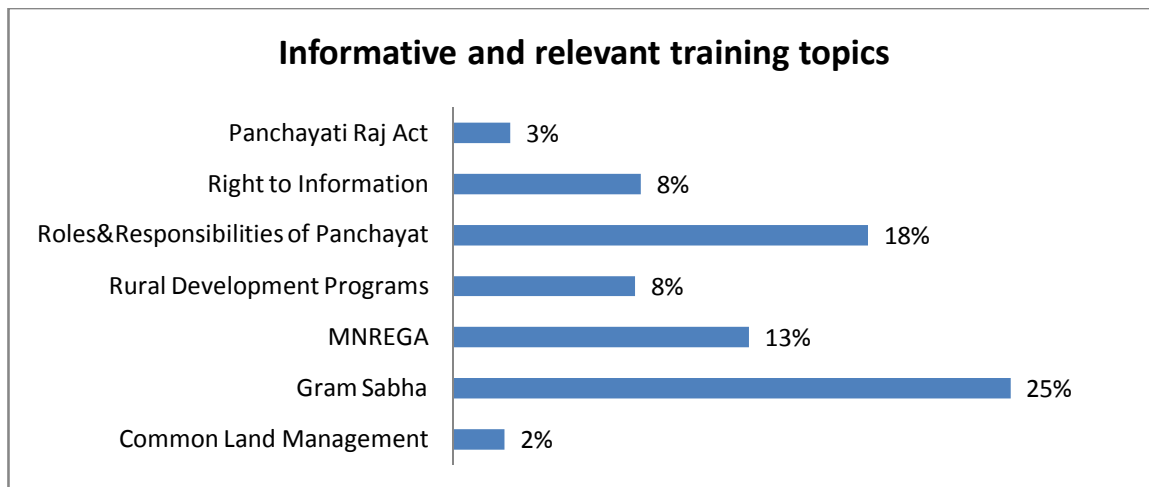
TRAINING PROGRAM EVALUATION

At the end of each training program, participants were requested to evaluate the training program. An analysis of participants' evaluation was conducted with results discussed underneath.



Graph 3: Overall experience of Participants

In all the five blocks, majority of the participants rated their training experience to be very good. The participants shared that this training provided them with an opportunity to understand the Panchayati Raj system and become aware of their roles and responsibilities as elected representatives. They further appreciated the timing of the training program; being held just after the election. The elected representatives who have been elected for the first time found the training program to be extremely useful.

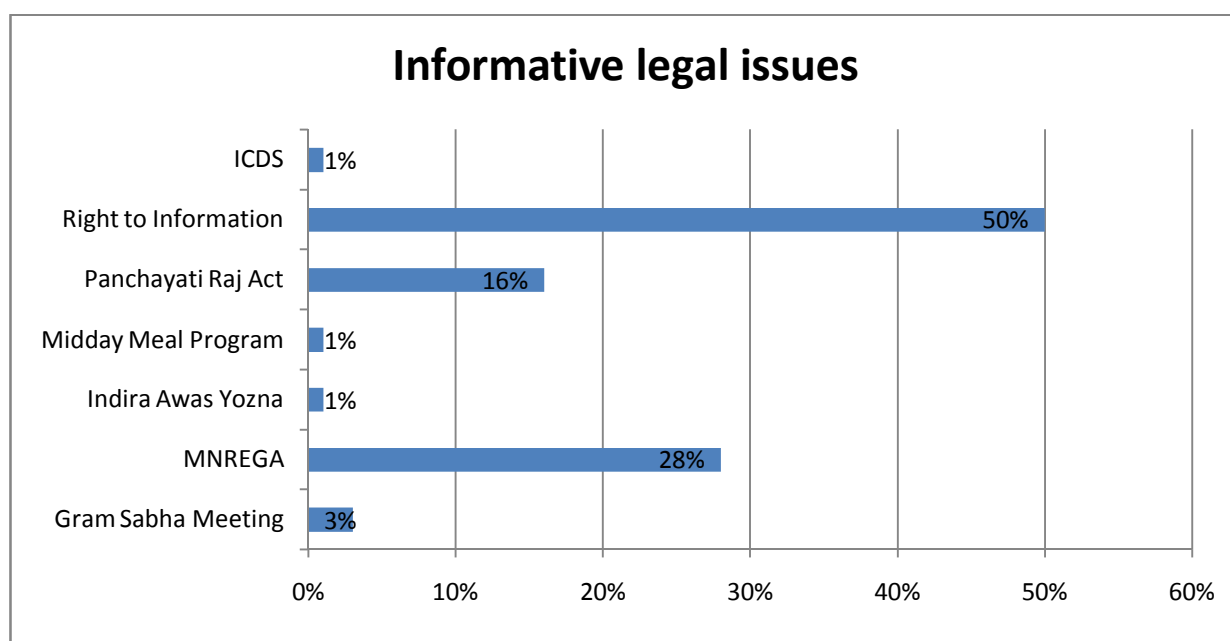


Graph 4: Informative and relevant training topics

Training and Capacity Building Program for newly elected PRI representative in Mewat District

The training topics for this program were carefully deliberated upon and finally the topics which would have a direct bearing on the functioning of Panchayats were selected. The emphasis was to choose the most relevant topics which could be covered in a two days program.

To assess the effectiveness of the training topics, the participants were requested to select the topics which they considered to be most relevant and informative. One fourth of the total participants rated the session on Gram Sabha to be very informative and relevant, followed closely by the session on roles & responsibilities of Gram Panchayat and MNREGA with 18% and 13 % of participants voting for it, respectively (Graph 4). Other session considered significant by the participants included Panchayati Raj Act, Right to Information etc.

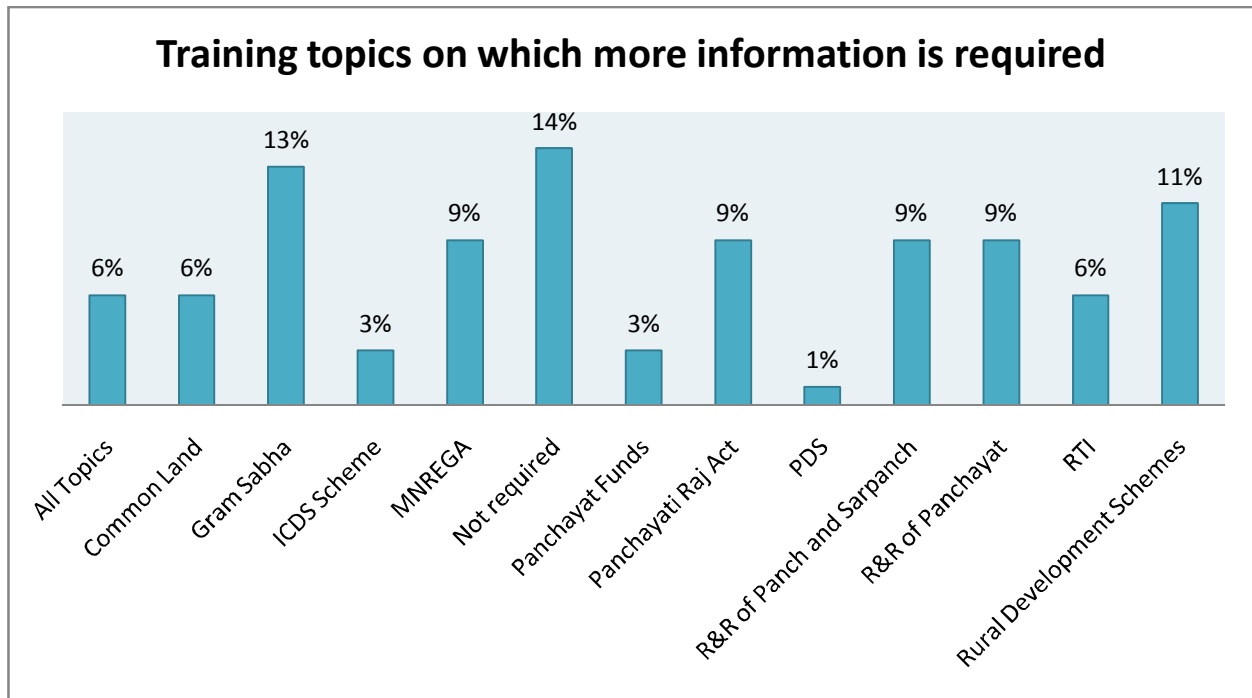


Graph 5: Informative legal issues

For the realization of local self governance at the village level, it is imperative for the elected representatives to be knowledgeable about the constitutional Acts and government programs concerning to their scope of work. During the training program, lot of emphasis was laid upon making the participants aware of the legal provisions involved in some of the important Acts and government programs.

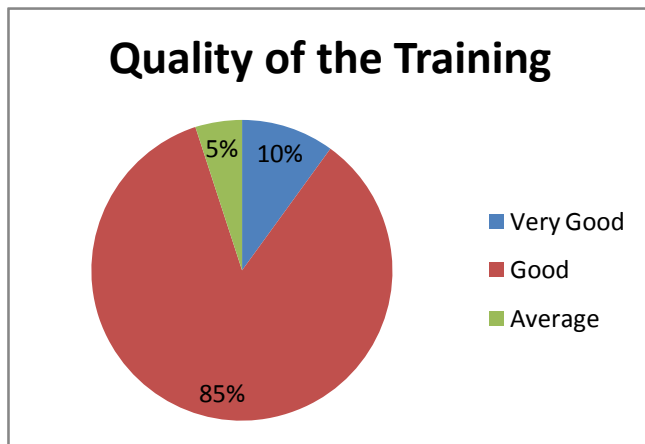
Analysis of participants' evaluation revealed that 50% of the respondents found the information about legal issues pertaining to Right to Information Act (RTI) to be very informative and enlightening. Information on MNREGA was also taken up very well by the respondents with nearly 30% of them considering it to be very instructive and helpful. The respondents shared that they felt empowered with this knowledge as this would enable to carry out their responsibilities more effectively and would also help them to demand for their entitlements.

Training and Capacity Building Program for newly elected PRI representative in Mewat District

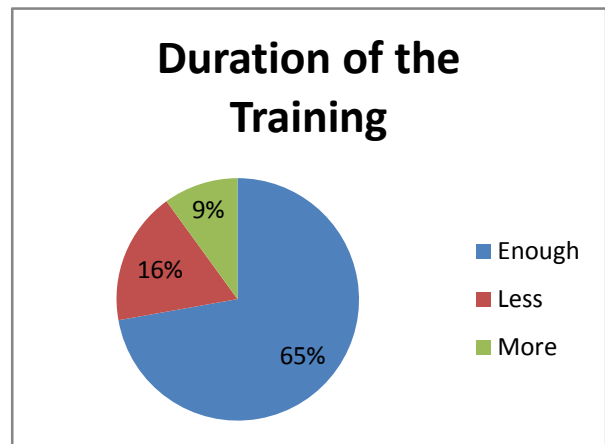


Graph 6: Training topics on which more information is required

During the evaluation, the participants were asked if they require more information on any training topic covered during the program. Different participants mentioned different topics with 13% expressing the need to know more about Gram Sabha and 11% about various rural development schemes. 14% of the participants expressed that they did not require any further information (Graph 6).



Graph 7: Quality of the training

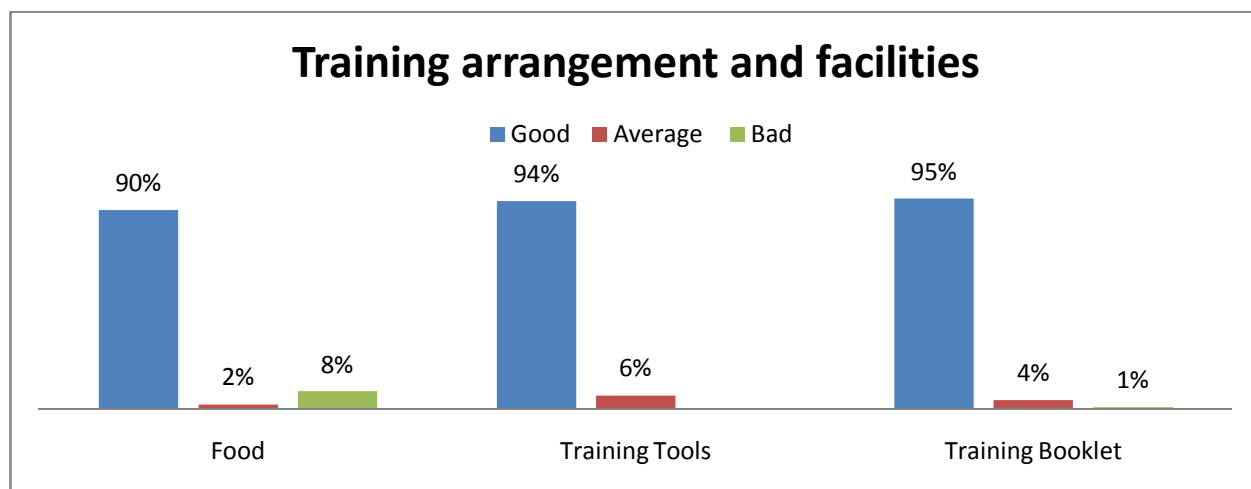


Graph 8: Duration of the training

Upon being asked about the quality of the training, 85% of the respondents found the quality of the training to be good and nearly 70% of the respondents felt that the duration of the training was

Training and Capacity Building Program for newly elected PRI representative in Mewat District

optimum (Graph 7 and Graph 8). The participants further acknowledged that their level of awareness has certainly increased after attending the training, which will help them carry out their responsibilities more effectively.



Graph 9: Training arrangement and facilities

Around 93% of the respondents found the training arrangement and facilities like food, training tools and training booklet to be good (Graph 9).

SUCCESS STORIES

MNREGA Projects

- In Raaniyaaki village in Taoru Block, the Panchayat undertook implementation of 2 projects under MNREGA
 - Plantation of 5000 trees.
 - Digging of pond20 new Job-Cards were made for these projects.
- In Padheni village in Taoru Block, the Panchayat designed and implemented a project under MNREGA for earth-filling and leveling of village road. The total cost of the project was Rs. 1.5 Lakh. 20 new Job-cards were made for this project and all the payments have been made.

Gram Sabha Held

- In **Haazipur village** in Punhana block, a Gram Sabha was held. During the Gram Sabha, it was decided that Rs 5 Lakh lying with the Gram Panchayat will be utilized in constructing a lane. Furthermore, a resolution for a new road was approved by Gram Sabha and submitted to

Training and Capacity Building Program for newly elected PRI representative in Mewat District

authorities for necessary action. Last year's income and expenditure of the Gram Panchayat was also explained to Gram Sabha.

- In a Gram Sabha meeting held in **Doha village** in Firozpur Zhirkha block, SDM and BDPO, Firozpur Zhirkha (Block Development and Panchayat Officer) were also present. BDPO, Mr. Rajinder Singh informed Gram Sabha about MNREGA in detail and also explained how villagers can benefit from it. He also informed about the PDS and mid-day meal scheme of the government.

Resolution for new road construction within and outside the village periphery was approved by Gram Sabha.

During the Gram Sabha meeting, the villagers complained to the SDO about the irregularities in the distribution of electricity connection for the BPL families and requested him to take corrective action.

- In Gram Sabha meeting held in **Saakras Village** in Firozpur Zhirkha block, Panchayat assessed the functioning of PDS and pension scheme in the village. Both the schemes are running smoothly in the village and the beneficiaries are happy and content in availing the schemes. It was also decided to connect the water supply with the 10 bore wells, which were constructed on Panchayat land. This will make water available even in parts in the village, where water does not reach on time.
- In Rangala Rajpur village, the Sarpanch called for the Gram Sabha meeting but, on the day of the meeting, cancelled it without giving any reason. One of the panches who had also attended the training program, mobilized some villagers and went to DDPO to ask him to intervene in the matter and ensure that the Gram Sabha meeting be held. Initially DDPO resisted them and told that if the Sarpanch does not want it, the meeting cannot be held. The Panch then informed him about the PRI act which clearly states that a Gram Sabha meeting cannot be cancelled without any reason and threatened the DDPO that he will complain to the DC about the DDPO's misconduct. Succumbing to the pressure, the DDPO instructed the Gram Secretary to ensure that Gram Sabha meeting is held in that village. Finally, for the first time in the village history, the meeting was held and many development issues were discussed. The villagers participated actively and were satisfied with the fact that they are being heard and are directly contributing in their development.

CHALLENGES FACED DURING THE TRAINING PROGRAM

- No prior intimation of training dates to the Panches and Sarpanches by the District and Block administration. At times the intimation was made just before the training date and hence, some of the elected representatives could not attend the training program owing to their prior commitments.
- To some of the participants the concept of "local self governance" was new and they were doubtful about its effectiveness at the grass root level. The participants were skeptical about

Training and Capacity Building Program for newly elected PRI representative in Mewat District

using their powers as local representatives and were uncertain about the support from government administration.

- Some of the participants were reluctant to devote 2 full days for the training program.
- The training kit to be provided to the participants included a bag. This bag was to be provided by the District Administration which was not provided.
- Incessant rainfall during the training period adversely affected the attendance rate. In Nuh block, the training hall had knee deep water for a week, as a result of which trainings could not be held.
- The budget sanctioned by the Haryana Panchayat Department for the training program was not adequate. Training tools like computer and projector which were essential for conducting the trainings were not budgeted for.