

# Panches Head to IIMA to Learn Financial Management

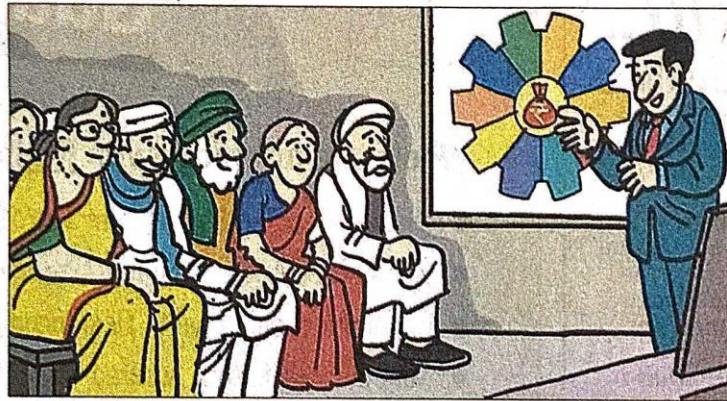
Anubhuti Vishnoi

**New Delhi:** With most Panchayats today drawing in robust funding from the Centre and States, some with coffers worth hundreds of crores, a new challenge has risen at the Zila Parishad — of effective and targeted financial management in the third tier of governance.

The Centre is looking to no other than IIM Ahmedabad to help.

Starting this month, the first batch of 60 office holders across Zila Parishads from Kishtwar to Udayagiri- and nearly half of them women- will head to IIM Ahmedabad to be trained on financial management, Public Private Partnerships, Plan development, Leadership ethics, Digital governance and conflict resolution to boot.

The Leadership/Management Development Programme for the



Elected Leaders as well as Functionaries of Panchayati Raj Institutions is part of the revamped Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj.

The first such residential course will be conducted by the Centre in collaboration with IIM A from Ja-

nuary 15 and it will be followed by similar and more elaborate training modules across IIMs, other business schools like ISB and the IITs, senior officials told ET. States will also be encouraged to plan such courses on their own.

Great care has also been taken in the selection of candidates, keep-

ing in mind course requirements and rigour. A key factor is that the chosen Elected Representatives of PRIs must have at least one-year period left in their current term, officials said.

With a greater focus on the younger candidates, those below 40 years of age are the preferred category and with nearly 40% elected panchayat heads now women, their representation is imperative. Educational criteria and working knowledge on English is also desirable.

Accordingly, the postgraduate lady Chairperson of the District Development Council of Kishtwar in Jammu & Kashmir is part of the first cohort headed to IIMA.

She is joined by the Chairperson Zila Parishad Chamba- also a woman, and a PhD holder. The President Zilla Parishad, Nandurbar, is a lady with a MBBS degree while Chhotaudepur's President holds a Mas-

ter's degree.

The introductory IIMA training program has multiple modules with primary focus on Financial Management and Panchayat Finances, Project Management and Monitoring, Digital Transformation and ICT use. However, it will also dwell considerably on Effective Communication, Leadership Ethics and Self-Awareness, among others. A special session is also planned on 'Being a Change Agent and Overcoming Self-Limiting Beliefs'. While the Leadership and Teamwork module will underline the importance of these in ensuring effective communication, conflict resolution, community engagement and decision-making at the Gram Panchayat, the sessions on Finance will look at the basics of financial management, including budgeting, accounting, and financial reporting.