



# Kurukshetra

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

### PM on Rural Development & Farmers' Welfare



#### Agriculture and Farmers' welfare:

- Congratulated farmers for their unrelenting efforts to fill the country's food basket despite the drought in the past two years.
- Ninety five per cent of arrears of dues of cane farmers worth thousands of crores of rupees cleared.
- Maximum support price fixed for pulses; Well-managed arrangement for purchase of pulses put in place.
- For the first time succeeded in ensuring maximum guarantee with minimum premium for Fasal Bima Yojana.
- e-NAM for farmers launched enabling farmers to sell their produce online to any market in the country.
- Soil Health card introduced.
- Emphasis on per drop more crop and micro irrigation. Resolved to complete over 90 irrigation projects that were in limbo.
- Built warehouses to store 15 lakh tons food grains. Scientists have developed more than 131 new varieties of seeds that can enhance per hectare productivity of lands.

#### Rural Development:

- More than two crore toilets constructed in villages. Over 70 thousand villages made free from open defecation.
- Rural roads being built at a speed of 100 kilo metre per day.
- Distributing the bulb for Rs. 50 which was earlier being sold for Rs. 350. 13 crore bulbs already distributed; determined to distribute 77 crore bulbs.



The Monthly Journal

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CHIEF EDITOR  
**DEEPIKA KACHHAL**

EDITOR  
**KUNAL V. SHINDE**

JOINT DIRECTOR (PRODUCTION)  
**VINOD KUMAR MEENA**

COVER DESIGN  
**ASHA SAXENA**

#### EDITORIAL OFFICE

ROOM NO. 686,  
Publications Division,  
Soochna Bhawan,  
C.G.O. Complex, Lodhi Road,  
NEW DELHI-110003  
Phone : 011-24362859  
E-MAIL : kurupage@yahoo.co.in

FOR SUBSCRIPTION ENQUIRIES,  
RENEWALS AND AGENCY  
INFORMATION  
PLEASE CONTACT:

JOURNAL UNIT, PUBLICATIONS DIVISION  
MINISTRY OF I & B, ROOM NO. 48-53,  
SOOCHNA BHAWAN, CGO COMPLEX,  
LODHI ROAD, NEW DELHI-110 003  
TELE : 24367453  
FAX: 24365610  
E-MAIL : pdjucir@gmail.com  
WEBSITE : publicationsdivision.nic.in

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# Editorial

India's growth story since its Independence has been both fascinating and intriguing at the same time, attracting not only research scholars and economists, but also political leaders world over to take note. Understanding the dynamics of the Indian society - mostly of those residing in rural India, successive governments have made efforts in reaching out to the people to make them aware about the programmes and schemes for their upliftment.

The growth trajectory with which India has made its mark on the global scenario is truly laudable but at the same time it has also posed challenges in maintaining the upward shift to keep the economy steady. It is a known phenomenon that a country which has a consistent economic growth can keep a check on the rate of inflation, thereby assuring its people all necessary services at their doorstep without much hiccups.

Agriculture and Farmer Welfare has been in the priority list of Government as was also evident with this year's budget being termed as Pro-farmer, Pro-poor and Pro-growth. With an allocation of Rs 45,000 crores, for agriculture and farmers' welfare, nearly double the last year, the budget definitely aimed to give back a sense of income security to the farmers. Prime Minister in his speech on Independence Day, also emphasised upon Government's focus on the wellness of this soil, wellness of land and welfare of farmers. Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Soil Health Card, E-NAM are all aimed in this direction. While Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act guarantees daily wages for the subsistence of people, programmes such as the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) are benefitting common man as well as farmers by providing them easy access to market, Education & healthcare facilities and better livelihood opportunities.

Technological penetration, coupled with electrification under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY), has brought the people in rural areas to enjoy semi-urban facilities in their own surroundings.

Programmes of the Government focused on hygiene and sanitation like the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) have helped rural masses immensely. The sanitation programmes like making villages free from open defecation have yielded good results. The concept of Smart Village has always been a topic of great debate and discussion. The core of smartness of a village lies in its population through education, skill development, sanitation, choice of fuels for consumption and their subsistence. In short, we can say that a smart village is the one that can sustain its resources in an efficient manner. Rural –Urban Mission, often called as Rurban Mission, like SPMRM, PURA, etc are the initiatives that were launched to revamp the urban clusters. If their planning and implementation is carried out properly, these missions can prove to be a game changer.

Giving equal importance to role of rural women Government introduced programmes like Ujjawala, Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Janani Suraksha Yojana etc. Understanding the need for education for better living, people in rural areas have now been encouraging their children to take education and live a respectable life by becoming self-reliant. The Skill India Mission is an example which is showing the intent of the Government to provide employment to its youth, which is among the highest in the world today.

Lastly, it can be said that ensuring that every person at the lowest strata of the society gets benefitted from the Government schemes, will put nation on the path of faster economic growth. No country can progress on the path of development unless its last man comes into the mainstream. Development is never holistic without the inclusion of rural population. □

## ROAD TO RURAL PROSPERITY: SOME PRACTICAL TIPS

Naresh Chandra Saxena

**H**igh economic growth in India has certainly reduced the number of rural poor from 50 percent of the total rural population in 1993-94 to 28 per cent in 2011-12, yet it has not been able to reduce the gap between the rural and urban areas. Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) for rural India in 2011-12 was only Rs 1,281 as compared to Rs 2,402 for urban India (both at 2011 prices). Thus per capita urban expenditure was 87 per cent higher than rural consumption. This article suggests some practical measures that need to be taken in order to move rural India at a faster pace.

**Revamp Agriculture** - The policy approach to agriculture since the 1990s has been to secure increased production through subsidies on inputs such as power, water, and fertilizer, and by increasing the minimum support price, rather than through building new capital assets in surface irrigation, rainwater harvesting, improving credit for small land holders, and evolving new drought resistant technologies. The equity, efficiency, and sustainability of the current approach are questionable. Permitting and even encouraging water hungry crops like paddy in Punjab and sugarcane in semi-arid areas has led to excessive withdrawal of groundwater, and more than 30 per cent of the blocks in the country have become over-exploited, as groundwater use exceeds the rate of groundwater recharge.

Over the years, Government policies have made agriculture capital intensive which makes agriculturists less attractive to banks and insurance companies. As there is no effective control over digging of tube wells in water-scarce regions, farmers are borrowing money from moneylenders at high interest rates to dig tube wells, but many such borings fail which hugely affects the farmers.

We need to build efficient irrigation systems and water conservation strategies in rain-fed regions, through conjunctive use of surface and groundwater. The main thrust of the programmes to combat the impact of climate change in rain-fed areas should be on activities relating to rainwater

harvesting, soil conservation, land shaping, pasture development, vegetative bunding, and water resources conservation on the basis of the entire compact micro-watershed which would include both cultivated and uncultivated lands. Agriculture in semi-arid regions has to move away from traditional crop centric farming to agri-pastoral-farm forestry systems (fruit trees, shrubs, perennial grasses and small ruminants).

**Promote Value Chain in Agriculture** - As fruits and vegetables give 4-10 times more returns than from other crops, India needs better mechanisms to increase the communication and direct linkage between small-holders producing fruits and vegetables and large buyers. Mechanisms to reduce transactions costs, more efficient procurement markets, quality standards and electronic exchanges enforcing compulsory delivery can address this need. Further, government should take fruits and vegetables out of the Mandi Committee Acts and make their sale and purchase completely free. This will also encourage private sector to go for contract farming and having assured supply of suitable material for processing. Producer Companies, Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVK) and Self Help Groups (SHG) can function as aggregators, who would be involved in supplying packaging material; weighing, loading and unloading freight; depositing goods at accredited warehouses; and crediting farmers for their produce. As farmers cannot perform these functions, there is a great opportunity for aggregators and private companies to develop a good business model around performing these functions, and thus bridge the gap between supply and demand for fruits and vegetables.

**Change the Design of NREGA** - Despite the fact that NREGA mandates that 80 per cent of works must be related to local water conservation and drought proofing, the sustainability and productivity of assets created is never monitored, with the result that the programme is reduced to creating short-term unproductive employment with no focus on asset creation or soil and water conservation. Its impact on agriculture may

even be negative, as alleged by the Ministry of Agriculture.

Moreover, better governed states receive most of the funds irrespective of low incidence of poverty in those states. For instance, the total expenditure on NREGA in Bihar in 2015-16 was Rs 1,025 crores, in Tamil Nadu it was more than four times at Rs 4,633 crores, whereas the number of rural poor in Bihar is more than six times the number in Tamil Nadu. This leads to a bizarre situation where in 2015-16 government spent Rs 9,045 under NREGA on each rural poor in Kerala - the least poor state in India - against a paltry Rs 320 in Bihar! Luckily, since April 2016 Government of India has informally changed the allocation rules, so that more funds are spent in poorer states.

Most importantly, collective capability is required for management of commons and for new structures created with NREGA funds. Unfortunately, most projects have failed to generate sustainability because of the failure of various agencies to involve the people and build their social capital.

**Improve Rural Infrastructure** – As opposed to lack of durable assets in NREGA, PMGSY focuses on construction of all-weather roads that has contributed to improvements in connectivity, transportation, government services, livelihood, commerce, education, health, land value, infrastructure, social interactions, and gender empowerment. Roads are a lifeline for rural communities, linking them to markets, education, health and other facilities.

Perishable commodities like fruits and vegetables require faster road access to markets and shift to such crops due to good road communication leads to major increase in both productivity and employment as these crops are more labour intensive than cereals. In many cases it was seen that road construction attracted complementary investments made by people in tempos, shops, and real estate. Many new income opportunities and small enterprises have thus flourished simply due to the rural roads. Roads also facilitate labour movement to better paid jobs in nearby semi-urban regions. PMGSY roads allow government workers—including health workers, teachers, and agriculture extension workers—to have easier access to the habitations to provide

services and information to rural communities. These changes ultimately create more prosperity and sustainable employment than NREGA.

Similarly providing continuous and stable power in rural India would lead to faster industrialisation and better capacity utilisation of the existing MSMEs. According to Census, 2011, only ten percent rural households in Bihar had access to electricity, thus keeping most households and school going children in complete darkness!

**Simplify Laws and Procedures to Promote non-farm enterprises** - The maze of laws, organizations, and practices that confront the ordinary citizen in his or her dealings with government encourage corruption and harassment. De-regulation has made almost no impact in rural India. It is easier to set up an industry worth billions of Rupees in India without any license today, but a farmer can neither set up a brick kiln unit, nor a rice shelling plant, and not even cut a tree standing on his own private field. A simple operation of converting prosopis (a wild shrub occurring mostly on wastelands, the more you cut it the more it grows) into charcoal in Tamil Nadu, which can give employment to thousands of people requires permission from the Forest Department! Women were prosecuted in Orissa in 1995 for keeping brooms in their homes! It is a sad commentary on our laws that the informal sector which provides maximum employment is mostly declared as illegal and subject to the whims of law enforcing agencies.

Regulated markets were supposed to improve efficiency, but many official market committees such as in UP, Punjab, and Haryana make it illegal for farmers to sell through alternative channels (i.e. selling directly to millers). The markets have thus emerged as taxing mechanisms, rather than facilitating farmers to get the best price.

The present extraction rates for both wheat and rice are about 10 to 30 percent below the international standards due to reservation of agro-processing units for small sector which uses inefficient technologies. Therefore, licensing controls on Roller Flour Mills and other food processing industries must be removed. One should de-reserve food processing units, especially rapeseed and groundnut processing units, from the SSI list. On the whole,

laws and controls have repressed private foodgrain marketing, undercutting its potential contribution to long-term food security.

As employment generation per unit of land is higher in non-agricultural uses than in agriculture one should free from all controls conversion of land-use for industrial purposes. In almost all states except Punjab, Haryana, Assam, Andhra and Tamil Nadu, there are tenancy laws that do not permit leasing of land. Maharashtra goes a step further and bans even sale of agricultural land to a non-agriculturist. Second, in almost all states, there are provisions that agricultural land cannot be used for industrial purposes, unless written permission is taken from a designated authority, which is time-consuming and encourages corruption. Often politicians and land mafia operate as middlemen to facilitate getting the required permission from government for the change in land use. Therefore land laws should be changed to facilitate industrialisation in rural India. It is important to do away with unnecessary controls, reduce the powers of government, as well as reduce their discretion and increase transparency at every level.

**Empower Women Through Land Ownership and Employment** - Of all the disadvantaged people in rural India, interests of women have been least articulated, even by civil society. Ownership of land is concentrated mostly in male hands in our patriarchal society. Not more than two per cent land is exclusively in women's names. Although Hindu Succession Act has been amended in 2005 giving equal rights to women in inheritance, yet none of the state governments have taken the new law seriously. Neither the Department of Land Resources in GOI nor the Ministry of Women & Child Development (MWCD) have issued a circular asking states to implement the law. The result is that anti-women laws and practices merrily continue in the states.

The Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development should launch a campaign to correct revenue records and ensure that women's land ownership rights are properly recorded by the states with intimation to women. Monitorable targets should be set for the district collectors to ensure timely implementation of law. Further, civil society should prepare and circulate pamphlets to Members of Parliament that enable

them raising concerns about women's rights to land and property in Parliament.

According to National Sample Survey, Work Participation Rate for rural women in the age group 15-59 years has fallen from 34 per cent in 1983 to only 26 per cent in 2011-12. Rural women are being displaced by growing mechanization. Farmers are switching to mechanical rice transplanters, and combine harvesters are spreading even in Bihar. Then, minor forest products that women used to collect are disappearing, as the preferred forest policy is becoming now more timber oriented. And lastly, non-farm jobs such as in construction, retail trade, and hospitality sector are largely male oriented. These are generated some distance away from the village where men can go on a bike, but most rural women do not know how to ride a cycle. Prosperity in India has thus made women more disempowered and dependent on men. Special efforts are therefore needed to push women's productive employment.

**Reduce Leakages in PDS through Direct Benefits Transfer (DBT)** - Government should abolish the dual pricing system in PDS and sell stocks to the fair price shop dealer at the market price, say Rs 20 for wheat. The consumer would go to him with only two rupees in cash as before and her/his UID card to buy a kg of wheat but the rest Rs 18 would get transferred to the shop keeper through the card. This will vastly reduce leakages and subsidy as well as improve the dealer's attitude towards the buyer. As of now the dealer avoids the consumer as his main interest is in selling the grain in the open market. Once he is given grain at the market price he would be forced to welcome the card holder and persuade her/him to come to his shop at the earliest so that the transfer of subsidy could take place.

This would not only ensure that the right person gets their rations, but would also free entitlement holders to buy their rations from any FPS and not be tied to a single vendor. In other words, it would ensure 'entitlement portability' that will allow PDS entitlements to be accessed anywhere in the country and greatly help the poor migrant workers, who are unable to access their entitlements now. This would revolutionise the PDS by providing genuine choices to entitlement holders. It would also cut down significantly on corruption.

**Improve governance** - The design of many programmes prepared for the rural people is flawed. There are large-scale irregularities in the supply of Supplementary Nutrition by the engagement of contractors in ICDS in many states such as, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. A study by the National Human Rights Commission showed that despite Supreme Court orders to provide hot cooked meals, all centres supplied packaged ready-to-eat food, containing only 100 calories, as against a norm of 500 calories, and 63 per cent of food and funds were misappropriated.

There are too many government servants in the support positions, such as clerks, orderlies, and drivers, who are now not needed in this era of advanced technology, and too few people in the line positions, such as teachers, nurses, and policemen, who are meant to deliver public services. Key public services – education, healthcare, police and judiciary are starved of regular employees, whereas many wings are overstaffed with Group C & D support staff that has become mostly irrelevant in view of computerisation and changing techniques of information management. Efforts should therefore be made to identify surplus support staff, set up an effective re-deployment plan and devise a liberal system for exit. There should be incentives for clerks and Group D staff to become teachers and constables.

**Control absenteeism** - All ministries/ departments should collect quantitative data on absenteeism of both service providers and service receivers (students in classrooms, or women turning up for institutional deliveries) as it throws a great deal of light on the quality of service. Through a carefully designed methodology backed by technology, it is quite possible to measure the performance of all service providing agencies, such as police stations, health and anganwadi centres, panchayats, etc, and to what extent they are responsive, efficient and participative.

A World Bank study showed that the bulk of expenditures in education and health typically flow to the salaries of teachers and health workers, yet rampant absenteeism and shirking by these service providers means that no services are effectively provided in many cases. That is, governments use these resources to provide (targetable) jobs

rather than (less targetable) high quality services. System exists for the service providers but not for service provision. Field investigations in rural areas of Indian states, particularly in the north, reveal that teacher absenteeism is endemic, with almost two-thirds of the teachers employed in the sample schools absent or not teaching at the time of the investigators' unannounced visits. A study found that the average rate of teacher attendance was 65 per cent in UP but the average rate of teacher activity (i.e., active engagement in teaching-related activities) was only 27 per cent in the state.

Similarly rural health care in most states is marked by absenteeism of doctors/health providers, inadequate supervision/monitoring and callous attitudes. A study by the Planning Commission in 2009 described the physical availability of doctors at the Community Health Centres (CHCs) at the sub-district or block level was less than 30 per cent in Bihar and Rajasthan. Technology should be used to monitor not only attendance but performance of field staff.

**Improve flow of funds** - Many state governments, especially the poor ones, are neither able to draw their entitled funds from Government of India (GOI), nor are able to release these to the districts/villages in time, with the result that GOI is often constrained to divert the unclaimed funds to better performing states. The reason for poor performance by Bihar, Orissa, UP, and Assam is often due to the widespread shortage of staff at all levels that adversely affects implementation and supervision of programmes. Among the states, the record of Bihar is not upto the mark in using central funds. In the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme alone, it lost about Rs 540 crores of Central assistance during 1994-2005. An evaluation of ICDS in Bihar in 2007 by Unicef showed that only less than 10 per cent of Anganwadi Workers (AWWS) received honorarium regularly, most receive it only twice in a year rather than every month. Another study by UNICEF showed that only 18 per cent of officials in Jharkhand working at the grassroots level are paid their salaries in time.

Empirical studies are needed to suggest what changes are needed in financial procedures at the state level so that utilization of funds improves, timely payments are made to the staff, and utilization reports are sent to GOI in time without delay. GOI's



own studies show that even electronic transfer takes months with the result that in Mid Day Meals programme ground staff such as cooks and helpers are not paid for months, FCI withholds supply of grain, and mid-day meals are served only for 60-70 per cent working days in some states. Similar delays take place in supply of text books in (Sarv Shiksha Abhiyan SSA), filling up of vacancies, especially in the remote and tribal areas, capital works, funds for maintenance, etc.

The need to reform financial procedures is more urgent now because of the changes in the pattern of fund flow from GOI, as central funds are no longer passed on to state societies and agencies as before.

**Evaluate flagship programmes** - Although some Ministries do concurrent evaluation and engage professional organizations in preparing impact studies no corrective action follows from the examination done in the reports. Ultimately the process of hiring a professional for impact study degenerates into another patronage activity, where favourites are chosen, and the quality of the report is a secondary consideration.

It is not enough that the Central Government departments and the state governments use professional and academic organisations to undertake impact studies from time to time. Their findings must be publicised and discussed

with key stakeholders so that improvements in design and delivery can be effected at the earliest. Governments should also put on its website findings of the impact studies, and distribute these in the workshops it organizes. Dissemination of results is critical for use.

Lastly, the above described policy reforms would however require strong political support. In some states political pressures for distribution of patronage are so intense that there is no time or inclination for the ministers and bureaucrats to do conceptual thinking, design good programmes, weed out those that are not functioning well, and monitor the programmes with a view to improve the effectiveness of delivery. One can only hope that these states would learn from the positive example of other states which have overcome the anti-incumbency factor by improving governance and thereby achieving inclusive growth.

*(The author was Secretary, Planning Commission as also Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development and Secretary, Minorities Commission. On behalf of the Supreme Court of India, Dr Saxena monitors hunger based programmes in India and he has chaired several government committees such as on 'Women's Land Rights', 'Identification of poor families', 'Implementation of Forest Rights Act', Joint Review Mission on Elementary Education' and 'Bauxite Mining in Orissa'. Author of several books and articles, he advises UNDP on development issues.*

### **Centre Assures States of no Discrimination in Award of Rural Roads**

The Centre has said that it will not discriminate against any state in allocation of funds for construction of rural roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, PMGSY. So far, 65 per cent of the rural habitations have been connected with all-weather roads and remaining 35 per cent will be completed by March, 2019. Out of 1,83,599 habitations, 151,098 had already been sanctioned with 82 per cent of the total for rural road connectivity.

While the budgetary provision for the PMGSY was around Rs 9,000 crore in 2012-13, it had been enhanced to Rs 19,000 crore in 2015-16. After the 14th Finance Commission, the states are now getting 42 per cent funds, while earlier they used to get only 32 per cent. So, there is no dearth of funds for this project. From 2011 to 2014, 73 kilometers of roads was built per day, while at present 100 kilometers of roads is being built each day and the target of the Ministry is to take it to 133 kilometers in near future.

In the second phase of PMGSY upgradation, roads measuring 50,000 kilometers road will be built at a cost of Rs 33,000 crore. Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana will complete the second phase by March next year. Referring to the use of "Green Technologies" and non-conventional materials for construction of PMGSY roads like waste plastic, cold mix, cell filled concrete, geo-textiles etc. more than 2,500 kilometers of roads have been constructed.

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## WAY TO MAKE INDIAN VILLAGES 'SMART'

Sharmila Dhankher & Jasbir Singh

In 1975, Ralegan Siddhi, a village in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra, was one of the many villages of India plagued by acute poverty, deprivation, a degraded ecosystem and unemployment. Then one of its resident - Anna Hazare, retired from army and returned to his native place. Hazare inspired the villagers to come together and improve the watershed management. He campaigned against alcoholism and casteism prevalent in the village. Today Ralegan Siddhi is a rich and prosperous village. The unique thing is that this prosperity was achieved through community efforts only with little or no external support. Ralegan Siddhi has become a role model for all villages in India. It's a clear example of how a community can make its life better through cooperative and collective efforts.

This example illustrates the role of people's participation in development. Governments alone cannot do everything. Community also needs to take responsibility and initiatives. This thinking is behind Government's model village scheme 'Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana' (SAGY). This article is an effort to study various aspects of this scheme and evaluate its performance so far.

### Idea Behind Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY)

As mentioned in case of Ralegan Siddhi, some Gram Panchayats have shown exceptional achievement in integrated local development, mainly due to inspiring leadership and collective action. However many difficulties and challenges were faced by these people in the process. So it was thought to create an institutional mechanism where this collective action by community be nurtured and promoted. Government aspires to achieve this through SAGY.

India has around six lakh villages and 23,8,617 Gram Panchayats'. It would take huge amount of resources if government were to develop all these villages. Instead a strategy is devised in which some villages should be developed as model villages through community participation and remaining villages should be encouraged to emulate them in a competitive spirit.

Launching the scheme on October 11, 2014, the Prime Minister of India said-

"One of the biggest problems for us has been that our development model has been supply-driven. A scheme has been prepared in Lucknow, Gandhinagar, or Delhi. The same is attempted to be injected. We want to shift this model from supply-driven to demand driven through Adarsh Gram. There should be an urge developed in the village itself."

The Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, unlike other Schemes, does not look at the beneficiaries as receivers and the Government as the doer. The *Yojana* aims to empower the villagers to make choices and provide them with opportunities to exercise those choices.

The scheme is inspired by ideals of Mahatma Gandhi whose concept of rural development revolves around creating model villages for transforming 'swaraj' (self rule) into 'su-raj' (good governance). As part of the scheme, the villagers will prepare their own development plan, activities and fix targets for achievement. It seeks to not only provide physical infrastructure and access to basic amenities but also improve the standard of living, enrich social capital and build community spirit.

### Mahatma Gandhi's Vision of A Model Village

An ideal Indian village will be so constructed as to lend itself to perfect sanitation. It will have cottages with sufficient light and ventilation built of a material obtainable within a radius of five miles of it. The village lanes and streets will be free of all avoidable dust. It will have wells according to its needs and accessible to all. It will have houses of worship for all, also a common meeting place, a village common for grazing its cattle, a co-operative dairy, primary and secondary schools in which industrial education will be the central fact, and it will have panchayats for settling disputes. It will produce its own grains, vegetables and fruit, and its own khadi. This is roughly my idea of a model village. (Harijan, 9-1-1937)

## What SAGY will do?

Under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY), each Member of Parliament (MP) would adopt a village (Gram Panchayat) and develop it as an Adarsh Gram (Model Village) by 2016. Two more such villages would be developed by 2019, and after that one village every year till 2014.

Gram Panchayat would be the basic unit for development. It will have a population of 3,000-5,000 in plain areas and 1,000-3,000 in hilly, tribal and difficult areas. Lok Sabha MP has to choose a Gram Panchayat from within his/her constituency and Rajya Sabha MP, a Gram Panchayat from the rural area of a district of his/her choice in the state from which he/she is elected. Nominated MPs may choose a Gram Panchayat from the rural area of any district in the country. In the case of urban constituencies (where there are no Gram Panchayats such as Delhi), the MP will identify a Gram Panchayat from a nearby rural constituency.

Total number of MPs is 793 (Lok Sabha 543+ Rajya Sabha 250, 12 of which are nominated). So, if each MP adopts three villages, the scheme will be able to develop 2,379, Gram Panchayats by 2019. Thus, we would be able to create some model villages, which other villages can admire and implement in their own village (Peer pressure and competition are the best way to achieve results).

It is to be noted here that SAGY does not have any separate funding. Instead funding for model village projects has to be ensured through the convergence of existing Central and state government schemes, e.g. Indira Awas Yojana, PM

Sadak Yojana etc. Also, funds from MPLAD (Member of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) and CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) can be used to this end.

## Village Development Plan

To achieve the goal of model village, a Village Development Plan is prepared under the leadership of Member of Parliament. This is done by involving villagers and leveraging scientific tools with special focus on enabling every poor household to come out of poverty. This includes personal development, human development, social development economic development and environmental development, in line with Gandhi's vision of a model village as depicted in following diagram -

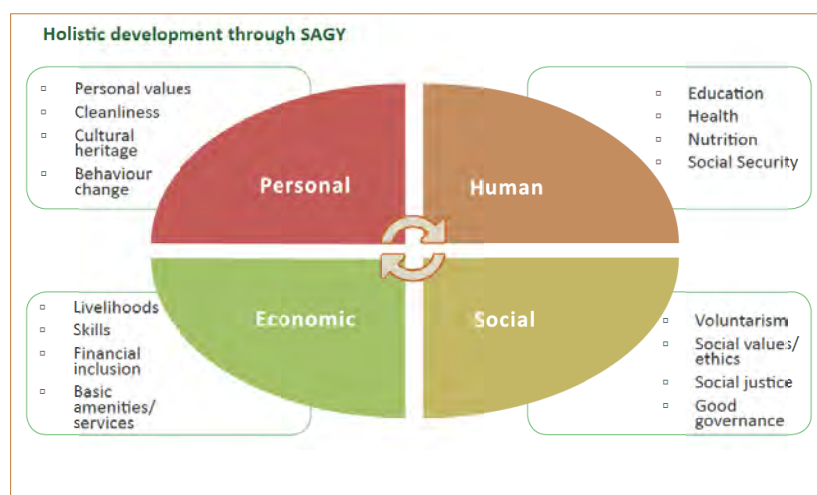
The planning process in each village will be a participatory exercise coordinated by the District Collector. The MP will play an active facilitating role in this exercise.

## Model village

If we draw a mental picture of how a 'model village' under Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) would look like.... then we see that the village will have it all — 'smart schools', universal access to basic health facilities, *pucca* houses for the homeless, universal PDS for eligible families, e-governance and Aadhaar cards for all.

Pulling every household out of poverty would be the main thrust area of the scheme. Other than *pucca* houses for all, ensuring toilets in each household, supply of piped drinking water, all weather connectivity to the main road, electricity connection to all households, village libraries, telecom and broadband connectivity as well as CCTVs in public places would be the focus area.

The MPs will also directly support activities at village level like health camps, organising grievance redressal camps, community mobilisation etc. Unlike in other schemes, attention would be given to social issues as well. For instance, reducing risk behaviours like alcoholism, smoking, substance abuse (drugs/tobacco/gutka etc) among all age groups of population. Grassroot democracy



## Skill Development Initiatives

### Charting a new future for Youth with Skill Development

- Placement-linked skill training initiative aiming for rural poverty alleviation
- Government support for skilling courses ranging from Rs. 25,696 per candidate to Rs 1,22,362—DDUGKY BPL, residential, post-placement support of Rs. 2-2.25 lakh
- 724 on-going skill training projects in nearly 1,100 approved training centers across 21 states impacting youth from 568 districts
- Over 3.56 lakh youth trained, and over 1.88 lakh placed in jobs through Deen Dayal Gramin Kaushal Yojna
- Over 19.65 lakh youth trained for various skill development courses under PM Kaushal Vikas Yojna
- Loans ranging from Rs. 5,000-1.5 lakhs will be made available to 34 lakh youth

would be strengthened through strong and transparent Gram Panchayats and active Gram Sabhas. Women participation in the decision-making process will be encouraged. This would be done by holding Mahila Sabhas and Bal Sabhas to discuss women and children specific issues respectively. E-governance and e-literacy will also be given a push. Smart schools and e-libraries would be created.

Values such as respect for women, martyrs and elders, good hygiene, respect for the environment, good reading habits etc would be inculcated in our young generation. Quality health care would be ensured in these villages with an aim of 100 per cent immunization, 100 per cent institutional delivery, and reduction in Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and reduced malnutrition among children.

Cultural life of the village would also be under the purview of SAGY. Folk art festivals, having a village song etc. will be promoted. Sports would be promoted for overall development of youth and they would be encouraged to exercise regularly, take balanced nutrition and ensure personal hygiene.

Technology would be leveraged effectively to make this programme successful, e.g. use of space application and remote sensing for planning, mobile based technology for monitoring, agriculture technology for increasing productivity etc.

### Implementation and Monitoring

As seen above, activities under SAGY are so diverse that close coordination and convergence will be required across different ministries, departments, schemes of the Government of India, MPLADS, state government and the private sector to implement the scheme successfully. Ministry of Rural Development will be nodal ministry for coordinating and monitoring the scheme. As no separate funds are allotted for the scheme, funds would be generated from the Gram Panchayats' own revenue, Central and state finance commission grants, MPLAD, CSR and funds for various central and state schemes. Hence, the central sector and centrally sponsored schemes along with the state schemes will have to be implemented in a convergent and integrated manner to generate maximum synergy and suitable changes would be made to these schemes to make them more useful from SAGY perspective. Ministry of Rural Development will be nodal Ministry for coordinating and monitoring the scheme.

At the national level, there would be a real time web based monitoring system. Capacity building programme for all right from Gram Panchayat functionaries to Member of Parliaments would be undertaken by the Ministry. At the state level there will be an Empowered Committee headed by the Chief Secretary consisting of the relevant departments and including experts with at least two civil society representatives. The district collector will be the nodal officer for implementing the SAGY. He will conduct a monthly review meeting which would be chaired by the Members of Parliament concerned. Each District Collector will nominate a Charge Officer of sufficient seniority for coordination the implementation of the scheme at the local level.

To encourage good performance, four kinds of awards have also been instituted in the following categories-

1. Best practices

2. Best Charge Officers
3. Best District Collectors
4. Best Adarsh Grams

### Performance of SAGY so far

So far two phases of SAGY have been launched. Phase –I was launched in 2014 and seemed quite successful with 702 MPs identifying villages for development. But this momentum seems to have fizzled out in second phase of SAGY with only 117 MPs identifying the villages so far (as on 11 August, 2016).

Below, we have tried to explain the reasons for this lukewarm response to phase –II of SAGY -

1. MPs have complained about scarcity of funds to carry out the development. Because there is no separate funding for SAGY and funds from existing schemes like Indira Awas Yojana, MGNREGS, PM Sadak Yojana etc., are to be used efficiently for development activities. Further, MPs have to use their MPLAD funds for developing model village which again serves as a disincentive.
2. Government had expected that funds from corporate, voluntary and private sectors would also be available for SAGY, but situation has not been very encouraging on this front.
3. SAGY envisages synergy and convergence of various development schemes. This is a tough task.
4. Another problem is related to the selection of the village. Guidelines provide that an MP can select any village except his own village or his spouse's village. This puts MPs in dilemma. If they select a village, then voters from other villages may question the move. But this can be sorted out by establishing effective communication with the masses and explaining the need and importance of the move.
5. Some MPs whose constituency is in urban area (e.g. Delhi) have to select a village from some other rural constituency. They are often unwilling to do so because, then they will have to spend their MPLAD funds outside their constituency which won't bring any political benefits for them.

## Swachh Bharat Abhiyan

### Creating a clean India to pay the perfect tribute to Mahatma Gandhi

- Since the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission on 2nd October 2014, a change in mindsets is happening across the country
- 1.92 crore toilets have already been constructed & 14 districts, 190 blocks, 23,790 Gram Panchayats and 56,206 villages have declared themselves as Open Defecation Free
- Rural Sanitation coverage has increased from 42% to 52% in 2 years
- Swachh Bharat Swachh Vidyalaya aimed to provide separate toilets for girls and boys in all schools of the country within one year; achieved remarkable success. Targets were fully achieved with 4.17 lakh toilets added to 2.61 lakh government elementary and secondary schools during the year from 15.8.2014 to 15.8.2015

6. Making few villages "Adarsh Gram" is rather easy. Real challenge would be to ensure that such schemes do not remain demonstrative projects, and are replicated on a mass scale. This has not happened yet.
7. In the end comes the question of sustainability. To make this scheme sustainable in long term, we would need committed local leaders, like Anna Hazare, who can take this movement forward and make it a truly people's movement. But such people are not easy to find.

### Conclusion

Aim of Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY), was clear from the beginning- 'do-it-yourself rather than rely excessively on the government.' In doing so, current government has attempted to break away from the past tradition of seeing the government's role as benefactor and public as mute beneficiary. Rather, this model is based on the development with community participation. Hence everything needs to be done to make this scheme a success.

*(Sharmila Dhankher writes on social and rural issues. She has also worked in rural areas of Haryana. Jasbir Singh is a technical expert and writes on the issues related to governance.)*

## CONNECTING INDIA, BUILDING ROADS FOR THE POOR

Rajendra B. Aklekar

**T**he Moon, the closest solar system body to us, is about 400,000 km (4 lakh km) away from the Earth. This number rings a bell with a recent announcement in the Lok Sabha by India's Minister of State for Rural Development Ram Kripal Yadav. He told the Parliament that more than 4.81 lakh km of roads, connecting 1.192 lakh habitations across the country were constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) till June 30, 2016.

So this popular road scheme has indeed achieved the moon!

"Earlier, the scheme used to complete just about 70 to 75 kms of rural roads per day. Today our government has taken the figure to 100 kms per day," said the Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech on August 15.

In fact, the scheme has been a hit since Day 1. Since the inception (of the scheme), the Ministry has released Rs 1.39 lakh crore and states have reported expenditure to the tune of Rs 1.5 lakh crore till June 30 (latest available figures). The programme envisages connecting all eligible unconnected habitations with a population of 500 persons and above as per 2001 census in plain areas and 250 persons and above as per 2001 census in special category states like Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand.



Besides this, the habitations having population of 100 and above, identified by Home Ministry as crucial are also covered under this scheme.

Out of 1.83 lakh eligible habitations, the Ministry of Rural Development has given clearance for connecting 1.51 lakh habitations and states have reported that 1.19 lakh habitations have been connected by constructing or upgrading 4.813 lakh km road as on June 30.

Rural roads have been a state subject and the PMGSY is a one-time special intervention of the government to provide rural connectivity, by way of single an all-weather road to the eligible unconnected habitations in the core network.

### How does it work ?

The preparation of the District Rural Roads Plan (DRRP) as well as the Core Network helps in the identification of the roads required to connect the unconnected habitations as well as the network of roads to assure basic access (single all-weather road connectivity) to all the habitations. These plans are to be placed before the Panchayati Raj Institutions for approval.

The road works proposed each year are identified and are executed in a time bound manner as per the standards laid down by the Indian Roads Congress.

The road works are tendered in packages of Rs. one to five crore, to attract competent contractors with requisite equipment.

### Monitoring:

A three-tier Quality Control System has been designed to ensure the quality of the road works. While the concerned Executive Engineer is the first tier, all the states have been requested to enlist the services of a State level independent Agency to verify the quality of the roads. On its part, the National Rural Roads Development Agency, an agency set up by the Ministry of Rural development, engages senior technical personnel as National Quality Monitors to inspect the road

### Mobile APP for Feedback

A Google Play Android App “Meri Sadak” enables users to give their feedback regarding pace of works, quality of works etc. of PMGSY roads to the Nodal Departments in the State Governments / National Rural Roads Development Agency (NRRDA). The user can take photographs at the site and submit along with feedback.

works. The roads constructed under the PMGSY are to be maintained by the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

### An Assessment:

The Ministry of Rural Development commissioned a quick independent assessment of the socio-economic impact of this scheme on the lives of rural people in the states of Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Besides the socio-economic impact, the study also helped document the changes brought about by PMGSY roads in the daily lives of the rural poor at the household level and village level.

### Sector-wise Findings:

#### Agriculture:

Prior to the construction of PMGSY roads, farmers found it difficult to sell agricultural goods in the bigger markets that are located at a distance from their villages. Due to lack of transport, farmers had to often physically carry their goods and could thus, transport only a small amount of agricultural produce to the market. Also, a lot of travel time was lost. PMGSY roads have resulted in increased and easier movement of farmers and their produce and has thus increased agricultural profit.

#### Employment generation:

After the construction of PMGSY roads, an improvement in the employment situation in terms of more job opportunities, more avenues for self-employment, etc. were observed. A lot of housewives mentioned that they have started small scale industries like making, pickles, papads, badi (lentil cakes) murir moa (puffed rice balls) etc. On-farm employment opportunities have increased due to shift from grains to cash crops and also multiple cropping particularly in the states of

Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Mizoram. More people are going to nearby towns and villages for odd jobs like selling woods, vegetables, dairy products and locally made items like pickles, papad etc.



### Impact on Health:

There has been an overall improvement in access to the health facilities like Public Health Centre's, sub-centres and district hospitals in the States of West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. Positive impact was observed with regard to increase in accessibility to preventive and curative health care facilities; better management of infectious diseases and attending to emergencies due to faster access to health facilities and increase in frequency of visits by health workers and also an improvement in antenatal and post-natal care thereby decreasing obstetrics emergencies was observed by beneficiaries in the states of Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal.

### Impact on Education Sector:

With PMGSY roads, there has been an improvement in the access to education facilities. Beneficiaries reported that the PMGSY road connectivity had led to an increase in the number of girls going to schools in the states of Assam, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal. Most parents mentioned that they were now more confident about sending their daughters to schools unescorted. Another noteworthy impact has been in terms of regular attendance of the teachers throughout the year.

### Impact on Social Aspects:

Better roads have also led to an increase in frequency of visits by Government officials. This





is likely to result in better implementation of various Government schemes and programmes. Beneficiaries also mentioned that with better road connectivity there has been an improvement in accessibility to the banks and improvement of the Post and Telegraph facilities in all the states. Road connectivity has also enabled a quicker access to police services, ensuring an improved law and order situation in some areas. A notable change as observed was that social network of villagers has widened in all the states. Marriage alliance radius has also increased substantially.

#### Impact on Urbanization:

Trend towards urbanization of an area as an immediate and direct impact of providing rural road connectivity was observed in course of the study. The study areas have seen some rapid changes from traditional to modern ways of life. For instance, the phenomenon of neon light attraction has drawn the villagers to the town entertainments; there has been increased use and ownership of television and other electrical gadgets. The states of Mizoram, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal reported conversion of *kuchcha* houses to *pucca* houses. Beneficiaries in all the States mentioned that the most visible change was in term of sudden escalation of prices of land adjacent to the PMGSY roads. This has led to an increase in the sale of land for commercial purposes.

#### Case studies

- The sale of medicines of Doniram Boro's chemist shop (Simla Bazaar, Barpeta district, Assam) has increased after PMGSY road construction. Villagers of Odalguri and other villages come

to purchase medicines from his shop. After the road was upgraded, he also delivers the medicines to other neighbouring villagers as accessibility has increased. There has been a considerable increase in his income.

- Kalyan Chandra of Tarhed village (Panchrukhi block, Kangra District, Himachal Pradesh) used to sell vegetables to earn a living. After road construction under PMGSY, he started a new business of furniture making. With easy availability of wood, his business started thriving. He installed new cutting machines and kept 2-3 helpers. His income level has gone up and his life style has also changed. He is now able to send his children to a private school for better education.
- In Madhya Pradesh (Manawar Semalda Langoor Ajandokoti road in Dhar district) Rajinder of Neshupur Mohalla of Langoor village registered an increase in his annual income from Rs. 8,000 to Rs. 15,000 due to marketing of his agricultural produce and milk outside his village. He changed his agricultural cropping pattern from food crops to cash crops and started selling in the nearby wholesale market.
- K. Thangkunga of Sihfa village (Phullen block, Aizawal district, Mizoram) was working as a chaukidar in a health sub center drawing a monthly salary of Rs 4000 only. He bought a TATA 407 with finance from the bank and is now engaged as a wholesale transporter of ginger and agricultural products. His earning is close to Rs 20,000 per month.
- Meena, an embroidery maker of Bidla village (Arain block, Ajmer district, Rajasthan) makes beautiful embroideries on dupattas and charges Rs.18 per piece. Her monthly income ranges between Rs. 800-1000. She now goes outside the village to sell her craft and can procure raw material easily from Nasirabad at reasonable rates. Her family income has gone up and so has her social status.

Once the roads are taken up for construction, all of them are required to have information sign board giving the particulars of the road work as well as the name of the contractor etc. These all are of specific dimension and standard.



#### A few examples:

**Technology Development** The Highway Research Board of the IRC undertook an exercise sometime back to identify major thrust areas in the highway sector covering road pavements, bridges, geotechnical engineering, traffic engineering and safety related schemes. Huge investments are being made for rural roads under the PMGSY and other state level programmes and schemes. Some of the thrust areas considered useful and relevant for rural roads are as under:

- (i) Evolving low cost cross drainage structure designs.
- (ii) Evolving bio-engineering measures for improving slope stability in hilly areas.
- (iii) Promoting recycling of pavements for up-gradation/rehabilitation projects—evolving guidelines and warrants for recycling.
- (iv) Evolving simple models for Asset Management System of rural roads.
- (v) Evolving pavement performance prediction models for determining rate of deterioration of pavements with time, traffic and weather.
- (vi) Evolving simple methods/ technologies for maintenance of rural roads.
- (vii) Evolving low cost erosion control and drainage measures.
- (viii) Bridge construction technologies to achieve faster construction – pre-casting technologies, steel superstructures. Also evolve standard designs for bridges on rural roads.
- (ix) Pre-cast technologies for small structures (culverts), and similarly pre-cast side drain system.

### Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

#### Connecting every village

- Allocation increased from Rs. 14,200 crore in 2014-15 to Rs. 18,291 crore during 2015-16 and Rs. 19,000 crore during 2016-17
- 65,000 eligible habitations to be connected by constructing 2.23 lakh km of roads by 2019. Program completion target advanced from 2022 to 2019
- 100 km of roads were constructed per day in 2014-2016, as compared to 73.5 km per day in 2011-14

- (x) Scope for composite construction technology in rural roads.

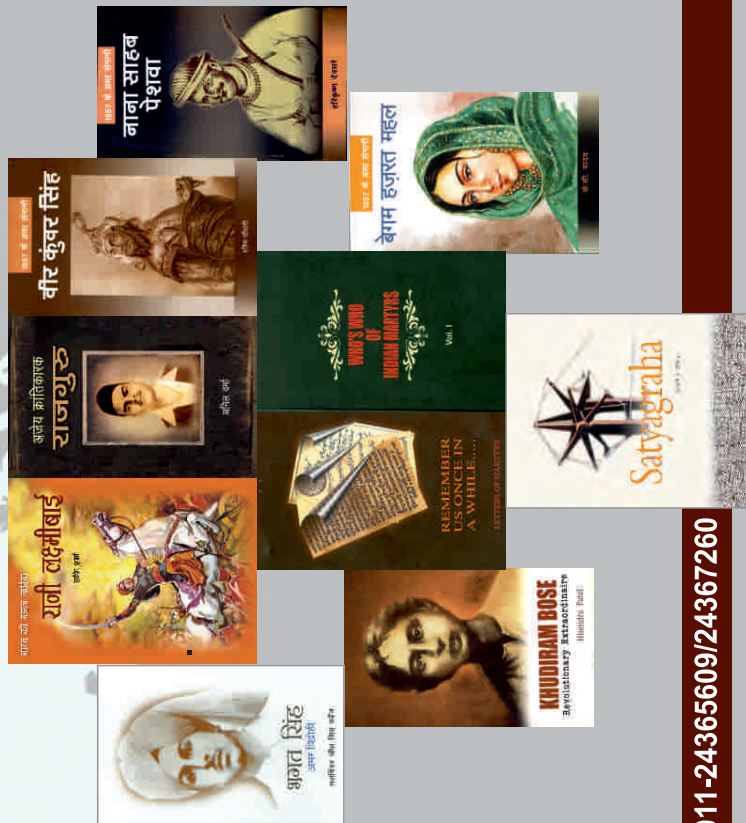
**Post construction maintenance** PMGSY roads are designed for a 10-year life. If quality of construction, proper maintenance and periodic renewal is ensured, subject to traffic considerations, PMGSY roads can give continued service during the period. That's why under the PMGSY guidelines, the cost estimation of routine maintenance is required to be done at the time of preparation of DPRs, as such the estimates of every work shall be prepared in two parts. The first part of the estimate covers construction of road, and related works and the second part covers the estimates of routine maintenance for five years calculated separately for each year after the completion of work. Based on annual estimation of work to be carried out every year, a lump-sum amount is provided every year.

#### Conclusion:

Rural roads are a key component of rural development since they provide access to economic and social infrastructure and services, thereby generating increased agricultural income and productive employment opportunities in rural areas. Rural connectivity is not an end in itself. It is a means. And as expected the connectivity has been improving indicators of education, health, rural incomes etc.

*(Author is a Mumbai-based Senior Journalist. He has worked in leading English dailies like The Times of India, Hindustan Times, DNA and Mumbai Mirror)*

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# GST – A GAME-CHANGER FOR INDIA

Prakash Chawla

The 122nd Amendment to the Constitution will go down in India's political-economic history as a watershed, as it is about to give the country the most progressive tax reforms till date in the form of Goods and Services Tax (GST) which should make life easier for the trade and industry and more importantly reduce the cost of goods and services for the consumer, without compromising on the revenues of either the Centre or the States. In fact, the GST should lead to a tax buoyancy and push to the Gross Domestic Product between 1-1.5 per cent with clearance of the cob web of taxes.

The excitement among the industry, trade and investors is justified. By a single measure, India would move up the World Bank ranking of ease of doing business by several notches. It is true the GST Bill has been pending for over a decade but the fact that the NDA Government has been able to build a wide political consensus on, what has been the most contentious issue, has conveyed a huge positive signal to the rest of the world that India enjoys a broad political support for the economic reforms, crucial for over a billion people.

## What is GST?

It is a plethora indirect taxes which contribute to bulk of revenues of the states and just about half of the tax kitty of about Rs 16 lakh crore of the Central Government. While direct taxes like the personal income tax concern a small fraction of the population, the indirect taxes affect every Indian. Since the indirect taxes are on consumption, rich and poor, both have to pay the same amount.

Presently, the Constitution gives mandate to the Centre and the States to levy indirect taxes ranging from excise duty, customs, service tax, Valued Added Tax or sales tax, entertainment tax, octroi, entry tax, purchase tax, luxury tax and different surcharges. Both the Centre and the States have their own official machineries to collect these taxes. But for Central excise and VAT, most of the taxes get calculated on a base which itself has been subjected to taxation at some or the other stage of manufacturing value chain. So, it is a tax on tax making goods and services rather expensive for the ultimate consumer while

making life hard for the trade and industry. The most visible example of inefficiencies of the system can be seen at inter-state borders with long queues of trucks being subjected to different kind of tax inspection and payment of octroi and entry tax, blocking traffic on the highways for hours together.



With the roll out of the GST, expected from April 1, 2017, all these taxes would be subsumed into a single tax for the consumer. The Centre would levy and collect Central Goods and Services Tax (CGST), and States would levy and collect the State Goods and Services Tax (SGST) on all transactions within a State. The input tax credit of CGST would be available for discharging the CGST liability on the output at each stage. Similarly, the credit of SGST paid on inputs would be allowed for paying the SGST on output. Services and goods would be subjected to taxes only on value addition at each stage, thus bringing down the overall tax burden for the consumers.

## From manufacturing to destination

As against the present system where the taxes like excise and Central sales tax are levied on manufacturing at the factory gate or on inter-state movement of goods, the GST involves taxation at the destination level. This could mean gains for the consuming state and loss for the manufacturing state. This is why the state with a good manufacturing base like Tamil Nadu was opposed to the GST and consuming states like Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha favoured the same. But, the GST Bill provides for fully

compensating the losses to the states for five years. The earlier provision of additional one per cent levy for the losing states has now been done away with.

### Impact on inflation

Analysts feel that in the short term, there could be some impact on prices of services which now attract an average service tax of around 14 per cent only at the Central level. However, in the case of manufactured products like automobile, the standard GST could be much lower than the combined present effect of excise and state levies. However, in the medium to long term, this should play out. On the whole, GST should be anti-dote to inflation and would thus be people-friendly along with trade /industry friendly. It would also bring in a lot of unorganized sector of the economy within the mainstream.

### GST Rate

There would be about three rates – Standard rate in the form of X which will cover bulk of the items, X-minus for the items of mass consumption and X-plus for the luxury goods or the so-called “sin goods”. In the Constitutional Amendment, there is no mention of the GST rates, which would be decided by the GST Council comprising of Union Finance Minister as the Chairman and Finance ministers of the states. Any decision of the GST Council would require three-fourth approval of the Council. The states would have two-third of the voting powers and the Centre one-third. The Congress Party has

demanded a ceiling of 18 per cent on GST standard rate while the government is called upon to ensure the revenue neutral rate (RNR). Any major deviation from RNR could be counter-productive either for inflation or for fiscal prudence. Getting the right RNR both for the Centre and the states would be a major challenge.

### Left out

Petroleum products and alcoholic beverages have been left out of the GST, for now, on concerns of the states which feared these major revenue heads could not be bargained for. For the sake of wider political consensus, these heads have been left for the future reforms.

### What Next?

After approval of Parliament, the GST Bill would go for ratification by at least half the states. The process is expected to be completed very soon. Afterwards, Parliament will have to again pass two enabling bills – one for the Central GST and the other for the Integrated GST. Besides, the state legislatures will have to pass the enabling law of State GST. In the meantime, work on the central IT backbone being prepared by a non-profit organisation is being done on a war-footing for the possible roll out from the next financial year.

*(Author is a senior journalist and commentator. He mostly writes on political-economy and global economic issues)*

*(Source- PIB)*

### India becomes world's clean energy capital

- Increasing overall renewable capacity by more than 5 times to 175 GW by 2022
- Largest ever wind power capacity addition of 3,300 MW in 2015-16 exceeding target by 38%
- Biggest ever solar power capacity addition of 3,019 MW in 2015-16 exceeding target by 116%
- Solar projects of capacity 20,904 MW were tendered in 2015-16. Of these 11,209 MW are already awarded and 9,695 MW are in process
- International Solar Alliance of 121 tropical countries to develop and promote solar energy, to be headquartered in India
- First Renewable Energy Global Investors Meet (ReInvest) held. Received total commitments of 266 GW by Power Producers in the solar, wind small hydro and bio energy sectors and 41 Gw by Manufacturers in the solar and wind energy sectors
- Sanctioned 32 Solar Parks of capacity 19,400 MW in 20 states
- Rs. 38,000 crore Green energy corridor being set up to ensure evacuation of renewable energy
- 31,472 Solar Pumps installed in 2015-16, higher than total number of pumps installed during last 24 years i.e since beginning of the programme in 1991

# SHYAMA PRASAD MUKHERJI RURBAN MISSION : DRIVE TO ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Dr. Mahi Pal

The efforts of the Governments in the past were toward sectoral schemes/programmes for socio-economic development and infrastructural development. The lack of spatial planning and convergence of various schemes /programmes have unfortunately led to not achieving the desired impact of various initiatives and hence failing short to remedy the maladies like poor standard of living, issue of rural-urban divide and check migration.

Consultations with various stakeholders and the experience of pilot initiatives like Provision of Urban Facilities in Rural Area (PURA) have demonstrated that provision of socio-economic development and infrastructure in an integrated fashion and time-bound manner is a basic premise for holistic development of villages in the countryside.

In view of above, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission (SPMRM) was introduced, which aims at development of 300 rural growth clusters called 'Rurban Clusters'. These clusters have latent potential for growth in all the states and union territories (UTs) which would trigger holistic development in the region where they are located. These clusters would be developed by provisioning economic activities, developing skills and local entrepreneurship and providing infrastructure facilities. Required amenities would



be provided in these clusters through the mode of convergence of various programmes and schemes of the Centre, states and panchayats and deficit would be filled through the mechanism of critical gap funding (CGF) under the Mission for focused development.

## Vision

The vision of the SPMRM is to “develop a cluster of villages that preserve and nurture the essence of rural community life with focuses perceived to be essentially urban in nature, thus creating a cluster on equity and inclusiveness without compromising with the facilities perceived to be essentially urban in nature, thus creating a cluster of Rurban Villages”. In other words, it would be like a body which has a soul and structure of flesh and bone to cover the soul. Here, soul is village culture /community life and flesh and bones are various infrastructure.

## Selection of the Cluster

A Rurban cluster, would be a cluster of geographically contiguous villages with a population of about 25,000 to 50,000 in plain and coastal areas and a population of 5,000 to 15,000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas. As far as practicable, clusters of village would follow administrative convergence units of Gram Panchayats and shall be within a single block/ tehsil for administrative convenience.

## Mission Components

Under SPNRM, the state government shall identify existing Centrally-sponsored schemes, Central sector or state government schemes relevant for the development of the cluster and converge their implementation in an integrated and time bound manner. Fourteen components as given under A column of Table-1 have been suggested as

desirable components for inclusion in the holistic development of the cluster. These components are: (i) Skill development training linked to economic activities (ii) Agri-services and process (iii) Digital Literacy (iv) 24x7 Piped water supply (v) Sanitation (vi) Solid and liquid waste management (vii) Access to village streets with drains (viii) Village street lights (ix) Health (x) Upgradation of primary, secondary and higher education (xi) Inter village roads connectivity (xii) Citizen service centres (xiii) Public transport (xiv) LPG Gas Connection. It is at the discretion of the state government to include other components consider appropriate for the development of the cluster. These would be finalised after due consultation with the gram panchayats' and should aim at addressing the unique needs of the 'Rurban Cluster' to leverage its full economic potential.

### Cluster Profile:

The existing profile of the cluster would be detailed out at two levels namely general profiling which includes demography, socio-economic and administrative and component profiling of 14 components mentioned above which are envisaged under SPMRM.

### Project Funding:

The cost of a cluster, will be based on the requirements identified by the Integrated Cluster Action Plan (ICAP), prepared by the states, for the cluster and approved by the empowered committee of the Ministry of Rural Development. A maximum

of 30 per cent of the project cost will be provided as the CGF to supplement the funds mobilised through convergence of various Centrally-sponsored schemes, Central sector schemes, state sponsored schemes and panchayat schemes. Further, for plain areas, the CGF will be capped at 30 per cent of the project capital expenditure or Rs 30 crores, whichever is less. In desert, hilly and tribal areas the CGF will be capped at 30 per cent of the project capital expenditure or Rs. 15 crores, whichever is less.

### Integrated Cluster Action Plan:

Integrated Cluster Action Plan (ICAP) which will be an important document covering base line studies outlining the requirements of the cluster and the main interventions needed to address identified needs and to leverage its potential. It is expected that the state governments shall prepare the ICAPs in close consultation with the district collectors, zilla parishads, Panchayati Raj Institutions and to ensure participation and ownership from all concerned stakeholders. The ICAP would be based on five pronged action plan namely:-

- A strategy for the cluster integrating the vision for each Gram Sabha, identified in the cluster;
- The desired outcomes for the cluster under the Rurban Mission;
- The resources under different Central, State and Panchayat Schemes;
- CGF required for the cluster;
- A detailed spatial plan for the entire cluster;

**Table -1 Deficiency Analysis and Identification of Needs for the Cluster**

A		B	C	D
	Desirable Component	Existing Situation	Desired Levels	Gaps/Need
1	Skill Development training Linked to Economic Activities	Existing skills in the Village (Handicraft/Handloom/Industrial etc.) No. of skilled members at the HH level.	At-least 70 per cent household with one beneficiary in each household.	Identification of training needs in terms of sector and no. of people to be trained with age profiling.
2	Agri-services Processing	Detail the existing Agri service and processing industries present in the cluster. (Including storage infrastructure)		Identification of support to any agri based service/ industry/ storage infrastructure.
3	Digital Literacy	Details the existing levels in terms of core IT infrastructure as well as general digital literacy levels at the HH and Village level.	At least one e-literate person in every household.	Identification of no. people to be digitally literate in the cluster.

A		B	C	D
	Desirable Component	Existing Situation	Desired Levels	Gaps/Need
4	24x7 piped water supply	Existing levels of water supply at the household level.	70 litres per capita per day (lpcd) of safe drinking water for every household throughout the year.	Identification for augmentation needs at the household level and type of augmentation-source/transmission/distribution.
5	Sanitation	Coverage of Individual Toilets in the village at the household level.	100% HH with Individual Household Latrines.	Identification of no of household to be covered with individual latrines.
6	Solid and Liquid waste Management	Existing coverage of village streets and drains.	All village streets to be covered with drains.	Identification of SWM facilities at collection/transportation /treatment.
7	Access to village	Existing coverage of village streets and drains.	All village streets to be covered with drains.	Identification of length of streets yet to be covered with drains.
8	Village street Lights	Covered of village streets with lights.	All village streets to be covered with streets lights as per norms.	Identification of no. of streets lights to be provided.
9.	Health	Access to clinics and health centers at the household and village level.	Access to Health infrastructure as per norms.	Identification of need for mobile Health Units.
10	Upgradation of primary, secondary and higher secondary schools	Existing nos of primary, secondary and higher secondary schools in the cluster and existing conditions.	Ensuring primary and secondary school within a reasonable distance from all households along with facilities of Drinking water provisions, Toilet blocks (separate for boys and girls and adequate class rooms.)	Identification of up gradation needs/new facilities in the primary and secondary schools.
11	Inter village roads connectivity	Connectivity between village within the cluster with roads and public transport	Ensure connectivity between all village	Identification of need for new connectivity between village.
12	Citizen service centres	Existing no. of citizen service centres at the village level.	One ICT enabled front end common service Centre (CSC) per 2 to 3 villages.	Identification of no of CSCs required for the cluster.
13	Public transport	Existing levels of availability w.r.t public Transport facilities both intra and inter village.	Public transport to block from each village.	Need for additional facilities to improve public transport access to each village.
14	LPG Gas Connections	Access to LPG connections at the household level	One LPG retail outlet for a village or per 1800 households.	Need for additional retail outlets in the cluster.

Table-1 which presents the deficiency analysis and identification of needs of the cluster contains four important aspects namely desirable components, existing situation with regard to these components, desirable levels expected to be achieved as the outcome of the implementation of ICAP and gaps or

needs would be worked out on the basis of C minus B column of the table with respect to the identified cluster. Based on this exercise, the convergence of different schemes, consultation with different stakeholders, CGF and finally Detailed Project Report would be prepared, approved and implemented.



Let us throw some light on the column C of the table in order to know about the expectation of the SPMRM after implementation with respect to each component of the Mission. Under skill component, it is expected that at least 70 per cent household with one beneficiary in each household be skilled and lined with economic activity. In case of digital literacy, it is desired that at least one e-literate person in every household would be trained. At least 70 litres per capita per day (lpcd) of safe drinking water for every household throughout the year would be provided. There should be 100 per cent individual household latrines and collection of waste at household as well as cluster levels. It is also expected that all village streets are to be covered with drains, provision of street lights as per norm and ensuring inter-village connectivity. One ICT enabled and Common Service Centre per two to three villages would be provided, provision is to be made for public transport to the Block from each village and provision for one LPG retail outlet per village or per 1,800 households.

### Preparation of Detailed Project Report

After the preparation of ICAP and identification of components of the cluster, Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) shall be prepared for the project components identified for the implementation under the Rurban cluster. The DPRs, which would be 'good for execution' documents, shall contain the detailed design and costing of the project components with the norms and requirements of relevant schemes guidelines for the components chosen for the cluster in the ICAP.

### Empowered Committee:

Under the Rurban Mission, empowered committees have been constituted at central, state, district levels. At the central level, the committee is chaired by the Secretary, Rural Development. This Committee will approve the ICAP submitted by the state governments and approve the CGF for the cluster and take other necessary decisions and steps to ensure cooperation with other Central Ministries and state governments.

State level empowered committee is chaired by the Chief Secretary, which would recommend

### Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

#### A home for every Indian

- 2 crore houses to be constructed for urban poor by 2022
- 95% of the beneficiaries would be from Economically Weaker Sections
- Construction of over 6.8 lakhs house commissioned in a short time

#### Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna (Rural)

- 1 crore houses to be constructed for rural poor by 2019 at a unit cost of Rs. 1.20 lakh
- House size increased from 20 sq. mtr to 25 sq. mtr while unit assistance increased from Rs. 70, 000 to Rs. 1, 20, 000
- Every such house would have a toilet
- Selection of beneficiaries using the SECC data

the ICAP and DPRs will also be responsible for other key decisions for effective coordination and implementation of the schemes. At district level Committee would be constituted with Officers of the concerned Line Departments and President of the concerned gram panchayats' of the cluster.

### Challenges Ahead

It may be seen from above discussion that Rurbanization Mission would be able to create organically inter-linked economic and infrastructural drivers which would trigger fast, viable and inclusive development of a cluster of villages. In fact, SPMRM has been designed to create a new socio-economic system for sustainable development in a spatial planning mode which would result in a viable and pulsating growth centres across India. It is expected that the cluster of contiguous villages would access good quality of physical, social, economic, technical, knowledge, financial and social capital connectivities which would enable the cluster to optimise its growth potential.

However, there are some challenges before the SPMRM which should be addressed immediately to materialise the intended benefits of the programme lest it may not prove the third version of the PURA. Although, there has been

some of improvement in the SPMRM as compared to PURA.

The desired institutional set up at state, district and cluster levels should be constituted immediately as without the support of this set up, it would be difficult to get support of different stakeholders in conceiving desired projects, preparation of DPRs and implementation in time bound manner. The programme is innovative in nature and it has to be implemented by dedicated team in mission mode. Depending of line department officials who are already short to their regular work requirement is like putting the cart before the horse.

The awareness and capacity building of the officials and elected representatives of Panchayats about the Mission must be organised by the competent institutions so that Mission should not be treated as an additional cog in the wheel and their focus might be on *khadanza* and *padanza* (lying vertical and horizontal bricks in the streets or roads). The mindset of different stakeholders have to be changed so that they should become catalysts and facilitators of the Mission.

The terra firma of the programme is convergence. No doubt, convergence of programmes, planning, processes and outcomes may add to the efficiency in the implementation and end results from it. It is suggested that a framework of convergence, implementation mechanism and areas of convergence at macro and micro levels has to be worked out. The successful model of convergence should be shared with others. Suggestions offered by the Report of the First Common Review Mission on convergence may be implemented in letter and spirit for better outcomes.

Gram Panchayats are the main players in the implementation of the SPMRM. Hence, these institutions have to be empowered functionally, financially and administratively so that they function as local government in defacto sense. But here, the situation is pathetic which is evident from the fact that as per the Devolution Report 2015-16 of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj as many as in 28 states/UTs out of 32 States/UTs aggregate policy Index is less than 0.50. In nine states, the

district planning committee is not functional. Problem is so serious that across the tiers of the panchayats, 14 per cent of gram panchayats (GPs), 10 per cent of Panchayat Samit is and 5 per cent of district panchayats do not have buildings to run their offices. As many as 31 per cent of GPs do not have telephones and 58 per cent of GPs do not have internet facilities. In such as predicament of the GPs one may imagine what type of role they can play in materialising the vision and objectives of the Mission. In such a situation, the Panchayati Raj is either in the personal safe of the Panchayat President or bag of Panchayat Secretary. Hence, these institutions have to be made competent at their levels.

Rurban Cluster area has to be notify as planning area under the Town and Country Planning Act or other similar legal provision at the State level. As Mission is an important initiative towards putting in practice the spatial planning in these clusters, relevant changes/amendments may be carried out either in the existing state panchayat Acts or Town and Country Planning Acts so that the spatial planning will become integral part of decentralised planning, which would not only bring about proper spacing of the assets/facilities but also bring out inclusive growth and facilitate rural urban continuum. The suggestion of Professor N Sridharan in his recent article on 'How Rurban Mission will change face of India' published in BW Smart Cities World in its May-June, 2016 Issue is worth considering where he had suggested a separate Spatial Planning and Spatial data Management Ministry that can come out with rural as well as urban development policy and strategy presently lacking in India.

To conclude, SPMRM is aimed to inclusive development with active participation of every stakeholder through local institutions like Gram Sabhas and Panchayats. The challenges listed out may be addressed urgently so that soul of village and amenities of urban areas may be realised under the Mission.

***(Author is a retired officer of the Indian Economic Services. Presently, Visiting Faculty, School of Planning and Architecture, New Delhi)***

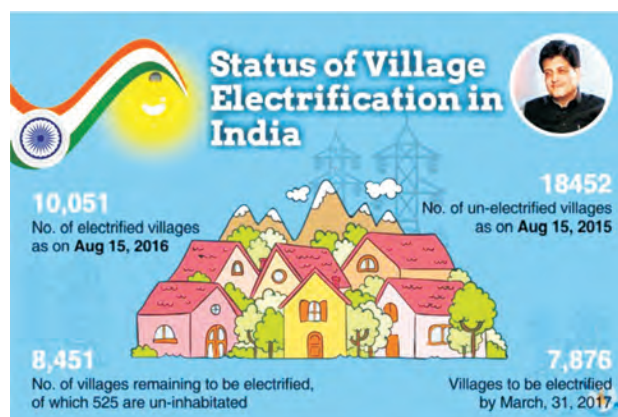
## ELECTRIFICATION OF VILLAGES IN INDIA, NO LONGER A DISTANT DREAM

Anupama Airy

Even after 69 years of independence as on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015, as many as 18,452 villages were kept aloof of a very basic amenity--- that of electricity. The Prime Minister of India in his address to the nation on Independence Day last year made a statement of taking electricity to each of these 18,452 un-electrified villages in 1,000 days or by 1 May 2018.

“Brothers and sisters, in the coming days I wish to concentrate on an issue. Even today, there are about eighteen thousand, five hundred such villages in our country where electric wires and poles are yet to reach. Eighteen thousand five hundred villages are deprived of the sun of independence, deprived of the light of independence, they are deprived of the rays of development of independence. But it is now the solemn pledge of the “Team India” of 1.25 billion countrymen that the target of providing electric poles, electric wires and electricity to these 18,500 villages would be achieved within the next 1000 days,” the Prime Minister had said in his last year’s Independence Day speech.

Many thought that with passing months, these words will also be forgotten but the story turned out to be different. Exactly a year later, on August 15, 2016, **10,051** villages have been electrified.



Significantly, a total of 1,654 villages were electrified during April 2015 to 14<sup>th</sup> Aug 2015 and after taking the rural electrification process on a mission mode, a total of 7,999 additional villages have been electrified from 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015 to 7<sup>th</sup> August, 2016.

This shows that there has been a quantum jump of 75 per cent in the number of villages which have been electrified in the period of April – August 2016 as compared to same period last year.

“I had earlier announced from the ramparts of the Red Fort that we would electrify those 18 thousand villages, which are still without electricity. We are going to complete 70 years of independence, but they had not seen electricity.

They were forced to live in the 18th century. We undertook this task of making possible the impossible and today I am glad to say that, out of the 18 thousand, electricity has reached ten thousand villages,” the Prime Ministers aid in his this year’s Independence Day speech.

According to the official figure, about 8,400 villages are anticipating electrification of their houses by May 2017. Out of these remaining 8,400 odd villages, about 525 villages are uninhabited, leaving the number of villages to be electrified at 7,886.

A question, however, that would come to anyone's mind is that if 10,000 plus villages could be electrified in a year, what took the country so long to provide this basic amenity to the people in villages.

Let us take a closer look at this flagship programme of the Government at Centre that is moving at a breakneck speed.

The project on electrification of villages has been taken on mission mode and strategy for electrification consists of squeezing the implementation schedule to 12 months and also dividing village electrification process in 12 stage milestones with defined time lines for monitoring.

At 10,051 close to 55 per cent of the RE target set by the Prime Minister has been achieved. As on July 31, 2016, a sum of Rs. 42,392 crore has already been sanctioned for projects on rural electrification across the country under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY). In order to expedite the progress further, a close monitoring is being done through Gram Vidyut Abhiyanta (GVA)—young qualified engineers who are responsible for various other actions like reviewing the progress on monthly basis, sharing of list of villages which are at the stage of under energization with the state DISCOM, identifying the villages where milestone progress is delayed.

REC officials say that the process of village electrification being carried out under the present regime is of villages that come with immense challenges of inaccessibility, remoteness and left wing extremism during the early years of 2005-06, when the most accessible villages were electrified first. As per REC, despite these challenges, the 7,108 villages electrified under the present government in 2015-16 was the highest achievement of the past three financial years.

Today, out of these 10,051 electrified villages, Bihar tops the chart with electricity having reached in 1,937 out of the 2,747 un-electrified villages. This is followed by Assam at 1,699 (out of 2,892), Odisha at 1,532 (out of 3,474), Uttar Pradesh at 1,436 (out of 1,529) and Jharkhand at 1,212 (out of 2,525).



In Uttarakhand, the government's mobile app *Garv* shows that only two villages have been electrified out of the 76 un-electrified villages. This slow pace, according to REC, is due to the tough terrain posing challenges of remoteness, inaccessibility in the thickly forested and mountainous regions of the state. Various other challenges have prevented the pace of work in states like Nagaland, West Bengal, Karnataka, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.

Out of the 18,452 villages as many as 6,932 villages come in Naxal affected areas. However, 3,473 have been electrified and the remaining 3,459 villages in Naxal affected and other such inaccessible regions are also being expeditiously connected with off-grid power solutions.

The Government is also making efforts to connect villages in Naxal-hit and inaccessible areas with off-grid power solution under its power for all initiatives.

At a recent meeting of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee, members gave their valuable suggestions to further improve the process of rural electrification. These included monitoring the quality of power distribution infrastructure as also fixing of accountability on the ground level so as to prevent corrupt practices and ensure that there is last mile coverage of beneficiaries.

The Union Government has ensured that surplus power and adequate financial support are made available to the states in order to facilitate expeditious intensive electrification at the village/ *majla/ tola/ dhaani* level.

***(The author is a senior journalist and Founder & Editor of EnergyInfraPost.com)***



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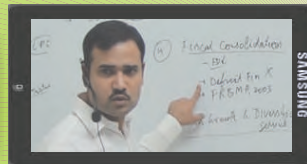
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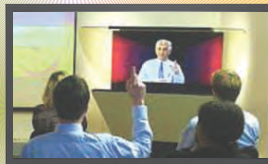
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## IMPLEMENTATION OF PRADHAN MANTRI FASAL BIMA YOJANA

To provide financial support to farmers suffering crop loss/damage arising out of unforeseen events, a new scheme namely, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) has been approved for implementation in all states and Union Territories from Kharif 2016 season in place of National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS). PMFBY is a marked improvement over the earlier schemes on several counts and comprehensive risk coverage from pre-sowing to post-harvest losses has been provided under it. A budget provision of Rs.5,501.15 crore has been made for the scheme during 2016-17.

The PMFBY is compulsory for loanee farmers availing crop loans for notified crops in notified areas and voluntary for non-loanee farmers.

Scale of Finance declared by the District Level Technical Committee has been taken as Sum Insured of the crops under the Scheme. There is no capping in premium, however, premium payable by farmers has been substantially reduced and simplified and there is one premium rate on pan-

### Pradhan Mantri Fasal Beema Yojna to give unprecedented security

Lowest premium rate for farmers

Full Security – no capping on premium rates & no reduction in sum insured

One crop – One rate (Kharif : 2 per cent, Rabi : 1.5 per cent, Horticulture Crops : 5 per cent)

Since independence, only around 20 per cent farmers covered under insurance till now. Target of 50 per cent coverage in next 3 years.

Multi-pronged approach to augment farmers' income

- The 'Saving-cum-Relief' component provided to fishermen during fishing ban / lean period of three months has been increased to Rs. 1,500 per month under Blue Revolution Scheme



India basis for farmers which would be maximum 1.5 per cent, 2 per cent and 5 per cent for all Rabi, Kharif and annual horticultural/commercial crops, respectively.

### Salient Features of PMFBY

- Provide comprehensive insurance coverage against crop loss on account of non-preventable natural risks, thus helping in stabilising the income of the farmers and encourage them for adoption of innovative practices.
- Increase the risk coverage of crop cycle – pre-sowing to post-harvest losses.
- Area approach for settlement of claims for widespread damage. Notified Insurance unit has been reduced to Village/Village Panchayat for major crops.
- Uniform maximum premium of only 2 per cent, 1.5 per cent and 5 per cent to be paid by farmers for all Kharif crops, Rabi Crops and Commercial/ horticultural crops respectively.
- The difference between premium and the rate of insurance charges payable by farmers shall be provided as subsidy and shared equally by the Centre and the State.
- Uniform seasonality discipline & Sum Insured for both loanee & non-loanee farmers
- Removal of the provision of capping on premium and reduction of sum insured to

### Improving Irrigation Facilities – Per Drop More Crop

- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana to be implemented in Mission Mode & 28.5 Lakh hectares will be brought under irrigation
- Implementation of 89 irrigation projects under AIBP, which are languishing for a long time, will be fast tracked
- A dedicated Long Term Irrigation Fund will be created in NABARD with an initial corpus of about Rs. 20,000 crore
- 5 Lakh farm ponds and dug wells in rain fed areas and 10 lakh compost pits for production of organic manure will be taken up under MGNREGA
- 100% Neem coated urea is available in the country. This will improve fertilizer use efficiency by 10 to 15 percent and thereby reduce the consumption of urea fertilizer

facilitate farmers to get claim against full sum insured without any reduction.

- viii) Inundation has been incorporated as a localized calamity in addition to hailstorm and landslide for individual farm level assessment.
- ix) Provision of individual farm level assessment for post harvest losses against the cyclonic and unseasonal rains for the crops kept in the field for drying up to a period of 14 days, throughout the country.
- x) Provision of claims up to 25 per cent of sum insured for prevented sowing.
- xi) “On-Account payment” up to 25 per cent of sum insured for mid season adversity, if the crop damage is reported more than 50 per cent in the insurance unit. Remaining claims based on Crop Cutting Experiments (CCEs) data.
- xii) For more effective implementation, a cluster approach will be adopted under which a group of districts with variable risk profile will be allotted to an insurance company through bidding for a longer duration up to three years.

### One Nation, One Market

#### Unified Market to help integrate farmers across the country

- E-platform for National Agriculture Market to help farmers fetch best price for their produce
- Pan-India electronic trading portal which networks the existing APMC mandis to create a unified market for agricultural commodities. Selected 585 regulated wholesale mandis to be integrated by March, 2018

- xiii) Use of Remote Sensing Technology, Smartphones & Drones for quick estimation of crop losses to ensure early settlement of claims.
- xiv) Crop Insurance Portal has been launched. This will be used extensively for ensuring better administration, co-ordination, transparency and dissemination of information.
- xv) Focused attention on increasing awareness about the schemes among all stakeholders and appropriate provisioning of resources for the same.
- xvi) The claim amount will be credited electronically to the individual farmer’s Bank Account.
- xvii) Adequate publicity in all the villages of the notified districts/areas
- xviii) Premium rates under Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme (WBCIS) have also been reduced and brought at par with new scheme. Further, capping on actuarial premium and reduction in sum insured has been removed in this scheme also.
- xix) In addition, a Unified Package Insurance Scheme (UPIS) has also been approved for implementation on pilot basis in 45 districts of the country from Kharif 2016 season to cover the other assets/activities like machinery, life, accident, house and student-safety for farmers along with their notified crops (under PMFBY/ Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme - WBCIS).

(Source- PIB)

# SMART VILLAGE: AN INITIATIVE FOR SUSTAINABLE VILLAGES

Mayanglambam Ojit Kumar Singh

According to NITI AYOJ, a settlement with a maximum population of 15,000 is considered as a “Village”. Much of India’s rural population lives in nucleated villages, which most commonly have a settlement form described as shapeless agglomerate. India being a rural dominated country, the smartness concept is not even thought about in the rural areas. According to 2011 Census, the population of rural areas comprised of 68.84 per cent. Villages are the heart of our nation. However, large scale migration of the people from rural areas to urban areas, has its own risk parameters on the urban areas. If the vision of the founders of this Nation is to be respected and implemented, then we all have the responsibility to make our villages smart, which means self-sufficient, efficient, healthy and educated villagers. To make the villages smart means to make the country self-reliant, stronger and secured. Some of the ways include offering basic facilities, education, employment generation activities, technology etc.

## Concept of Smart Village:

The concept of the smart village is not constructed on the image of a city or a very developed village of some states or nations. It is not an adopted smartness, but an avenue to show the inherent smartness of the villages.

One of the most important factors totally disregarded by the development policies and programmes, misinterpreted heavily and ill considerate for many years is to make the villagers’ sense of possessiveness and belonging to their own villages more concrete and visible through public policies or institution. India lives in its villages. Close to 70 per cent of India’s population still resides in more than 2.5 lakh villages. This is the food basket of the nation. Village panchayats have become the centres of grass root democracy. However, the holistic development of rural India is still under tremendous pressure owing to the declining farm output, increasing trend of distressed migration, absence of basic amenities

and emerging problems of environmental pollution and conflicts.

The general imagination of the people in urban areas is that the rural is a static, timeless domain where people are bare-minimalists who lack ambition and entrepreneurship. Given an opportunity, a village has all the potential to be at par with all sorts of development socially, scientifically, economically and environmentally. If we know the eco-system of the Indian villages, truly there are all the opportunities and avenues to make our villages - our country a sustainably developing nation.

A smart village feels that its citizen know its available resources, applicable services and schemes. It knows what it needs and when it needs. Focused areas of the Smart village initiative are improved resource-use efficiency, empowered local self-governance, access to assured basic amenities and responsible individual and community behaviour to build a vibrant and happy society. The major thrust behind the concept on “Smart Village” is that the technology should act as a means for development, enabling education and local business opportunities, improving health and welfare, enhancing democratic engagement and overall enhancement of rural village dwellers. The Information and Communication Technology has proved its potential in various sectors of development in urban and rural areas. And here in the smart village concept, the use of the Information and telecommunication is surely a major priority area.

The ratio of school dropouts at school or college level is quite high amongst the rural youth which is negatively impacting the education policy and targets of the Government. Added to this is the non-availability of vocational avenues in rural environments which is further adversely affecting the aspirations of the youth from the rural areas. All such youth with little education, no vocational skills and passing through utter poverty, find their way



to nearest urban cities or large cities where they migrate to find some source of livelihood. The rural youth finds a great disconnect with the way of life in cities which impacts him culturally, professionally and mentally only to add to his woes and thrusts him on the path of crime, except in few cases. This results in tremendous socio-economic disconnect.

The concept of smart village includes a bundle of dozens of services delivered effectively to the residents and businesses in an efficient manner. These services could be location specific depending on the demography of the village and occupations of the residents.

For the development of smart village, a cluster approach can be followed. Each district may be divided in cluster of 10 to 15 villages (consisting of a specific number of population say 50-75,000). Each district could have seven to 20 such clusters of villages depending on its size of population and then design the blue print to develop Infrastructure like roads, buildings, bridges, water, sewage, schools, colleges, hospitals and other facilities as per need based on local talent available, local vocations available, local raw materials/facilities available, service/vocational avenues available locally or in the district or within the state.

The smart village concept should formulate Growth Strategies for the village to make it self-sufficient taking into account the investment climate and protecting native occupation and heritage of the village. The residents should be trained in providing these services and the funding agencies, microfinance institutions and NGOs can be approached for creating a financial eco-system to develop a development chain.

### **Need for Smart Villages:**

The smart village concept is needed for a sustainable and a secured future. This will act as a catalyst to appreciate and facilitate the challenges and welcome the outcomes of an empowered village. It is about understanding the villages towards the growth model which is inclusive. It's about achieving a higher goal without compromising the roots and the sense of belongingness of the masses. The concept of smart village is contemporary and very reliable today as there is a limit of the growth of cities

which is leading to creation of urban jungles, where the population ratio and its related issues per km of land is way above the desired norms. A smart village should be interactive and multi-functional and provisions must be there for active participation of people in various activities. A smart village is one which will automatically link local production with local procurement and local distribution. A smart village will also have the power, knowledge, healthcare, technology, entrepreneurship and quicker connectivity in terms of information acquiring and dissipation besides being capable to execute the responsibilities to the best possible manner. A smart village will not only bring Internet connection to the rural lands, but will also provide support to sustainable agricultural practices.

Simply parroting the much standardised views and ideas of some selected institutions shall not suffice the needs and requirements of our villages. We need customized solutions and procedures specific to the concerned villages. Indian villages are located in different geographies and ecosystems with definite and concretely embedded respective differences in terms of needs, cultures, values and requirements. Emptying villages is no longer considered a growth imperative. Focus on the village economy with sincere efforts to create economic conditions such that more and more people contribute to the growth of the village economy, farming on their own land, producing more from their own fields shall lighten the burden of the migrants to the cities looking for menial jobs. The simplest method to push for rural-urban migration has been to starve agriculture of adequate financial support and keep the farmers impoverished by giving them low prices for their produce.

### **Some Parameters of a Smart Village: Addressing the Challenges**

#### ***Agriculture and Agro-based Services:***

The Indian economy is still highly dependent on the agricultural sector. A huge population essentially translates into a need to address the growing food demands each year. And the Indian villagers and the villages where they are residing are dependent on agricultural

activities. Hence, aiming for a smart village in India requires us to see the agricultural activities happening in the villages. Strengthening village economy should be the priority for a smart village. It is important to turn farming economically viable not only because a large proportion of the population is engaged in agriculture, directly as well as indirectly, but also to provide financial support for setting up rural infrastructure. The former President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam had a serious belief about the importance of providing urban amenities in the rural areas. Facilities like educational institutions, colleges, hospitals, along with agri-based industries in the villages as well as at the block level will create opportunities within rural areas, thereby drastically reducing the migration to urban centres. Making the villages self-reliant as far as their food security needs are concerned and this would require synergy of the provisions under Food Security Law with farming systems. Every cluster of village at the block or tehsil level should be encouraged to follow the principles of ensuring local production, local procurement and local distribution.

#### **Electronic Delivery of Citizen-centric Service :**

Electronic services if managed properly are a great equaliser. They are transparent, efficient and cost effective. Various access points for delivery of various electronic services to villages in India must be arranged. This will surely contribute to a digitally, socially and financially inclusive society.

#### **Mobile Health Unit:**

To transform rural areas to economically, socially and physically sustainable spaces, the health condition of the people in the rural areas need to be taken care of. Health care is now regarded as the public right and as an important responsibility of governments to provide this care to all people irrespective of race, religion, caste, creed, urban or rural, rich or poor. Villagers in India even today are so distantly placed as far as the provisioning of the health care is concerned. Here, mobile health care shall act as an important bridge to connect the gaps. In this regard, the mobile health unit that visit and share the health care to the rural areas must be guided by relevance that is, it should be based on the health needs and

demands of the people. If the system lacks the local participation, it will not be long lasting and sustainable.

#### **Pure Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation**

Pure drinking water and good sanitation are essential prerequisites for good health and hygiene. Most of the epidemics and ill health in India is mainly due to communicable diseases caused by oral faecal routes. Open defecation along with contaminated water are still the major challenge in our villages to day. A smart village must have this aim to eliminate the above mentioned problems. Innovative approaches to improve water supply and sanitation must be tested well and introduced in the villages. Community-led total sanitation and public-private partnerships to improve the supply of pure drinking water and sanitation should be practiced.

#### **Skill Development Training for Economic Activities:**

Considerable evidences are there for the marginalisation of rural populations and the incidence of poverty within rural areas. In terms of access to services, including education and training rural people in general, are the inaugurator. Rural people are most likely in many settings, to be amongst those who are not being reached in the drive towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Moreover, such problems are typically starker for rural women and girls, given their multiple burdens. Skills and knowledge are essential driving forces of economic growth and social development of any country. They have become even more important given the increasing pace of globalization, and technological change that is taking place in the world. Countries with higher and better levels of skills adjust more



effectively to the challenges and opportunities of globalization. Smart villages should take best opportunities to showcase the area and region specific skills and wisdom to the world.

### Street Lights:

Solar powered street lights have all the required means today to lighten up the villagers in terms of the sense of security. Solar LED street lighting will provide a high quality, sustainable lighting solution for people in remote areas who don't have access to the conventional electricity grid. It will help in increasing the level of safety on roads and streets and allowing for more economic and social activity.

### Waste Management:

Everywhere there is a rise of a consumer culture. And the villages are being introduced to this invading culture. Unorganised growth model has seen in the forms of mammoth heaps of waste in many cities. This form of growth that generates more waste than efficient consumption of resources must not be replicated in our villages. Sustainable waste management, conversion of rural waste into rural wealth will help our villages to be free from unwanted waste that is left uncollected. This will make the working conditions much better and will definitely help in improving the life expectancy of the locals.

### Climate and Biodiversity:

Climate change today is a reality and is no longer a fiction. Climate change directly or indirectly affects the culture, productivity, disease outbreak and many other socio-economic problems. Practical steps must be taken up today for the rural people to adapt their livelihood activities to secure and dependable food supplies. Every practical adaptation option to improve food security and resilience must be properly scrutinised and efforts be made to promote the better ones with priority.

Biodiversity is the totality of the varieties, variability among the organisms and the habitats or the environment where they are found. It is an important natural resource. Conservation of biodiversity and renewable exploitation of the biodiversity shall help in sustaining the economic,

## Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna

### Opening a new world of possibilities with financial inclusion

- For the first time since independence, zero balance accounts for the poor opened at great speed & scale
- 21.81 crore accounts opened, Rs. 37,616 crore deposited as on 11th May, 2016
- Over 1.25 lakh banking correspondents deployed
- RuPay Card issued in 17.78 crore accounts

health and welfare of the villages. Investment towards the conservation of biodiversity without confronting the rights and welfare of the people shall pave a secured way towards attaining a sustainable society and a secured future for all. Conservation of biodiversity is for the sustainable rural livelihoods besides enjoying the fruits of the balanced conditions of the surroundings.

Smart villages can translate into improved farm productivity, water conservation and economic independence to village youth. It makes great social, economic and political sense.

### Conclusion:

Creation of opportunities for youths in villages is the major requirement priority for a smart village programme and policy. Discouraging migration to cities should not be an advice or suggestion, rather making the village self-sufficient and serviceable shall surely attract the villagers to remain productive in their own homes and villages. Proper guidance and mentoring to small farmers on how to get the best yield for the market at remunerative prices must be provided. The benefits of schemes of the Government must be directed efficiently. Every villager must be educated to rediscover his strengths and opportunities available in his village. Creating an eco-system that makes youth interested in working from their villages is a challenge that is worth taking.

*(The Author is an Assistant Professor in Zoology, Life Sciences, Ramjas College, Delhi University)*

## MISSION INDRADHANUSH: PROGRESS AND CONSTRAINTS

Dr. Suresh Sharma & Manisha Bothra

In light of the fact that India has a very high rate of child mortality despite a steep reduction over the years, Mission Indradhanush as a programme was launched in the year 2014 by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare with a dominant motive to immunize all the children under two years of age and pregnant women with the vaccines for seven major preventable diseases namely Whooping Cough, Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Tetanus, Polio, Tuberculosis and Measles which would reciprocate itself into better child health and lower chances of their death as similarly indicated by UNICEF that almost one-third of total child deaths are preventable provided a child receive all necessary vaccines and is fully immunised.

Apart from the above mentioned seven vaccines four new vaccines namely Rotavirus, Measles Rubella, inactivated Polio Vaccine Bivalent and Japanese Encephalitis for adults have been added to the bouquet of Mission Indradhanush. Amongst these vaccines Rotavirus is the most important one since around 80,000 children die every year because of Diarrhoea.

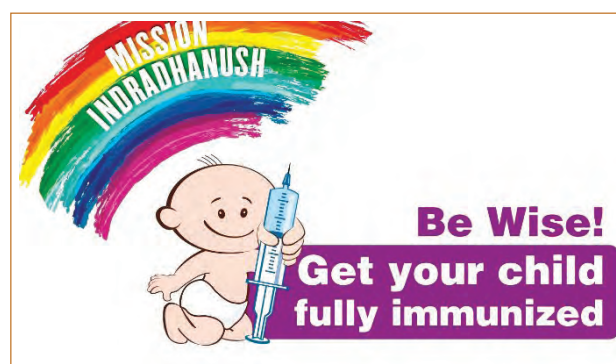
Ensuring full Immunization of a child is identified as one of the most economical method to reduce high rates of child mortality in India. Under Mission Indradhanush 201 high focused districts, (accounting for around 50 per cent of total children who are either partly immunized or not immunized at all) out of which around 82 districts were scattered majorly in the parts of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, were identified as the ones having major cluster (i.e. around 25 per cent) of unvaccinated or not fully immunized children. The Government of India has involved various external agencies for example WHO, UNICEF and Rotary for technical and financial guidance.

Under Mission Indradhanush, a local ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) worker identifies potential beneficiaries i.e. the children who are left out or not vaccinated and prepares a due list for her area and along with ANM (Auxiliary

Nurse and Midwife) organizes a session near the local area to immunize the children mentioned in the due list. There has been a substantial increase in the immunisation coverage and through the mechanism of camps and sessions in the outreach areas, it becomes possible to identify and immunize children even in the rural/remote areas. In high-risk settlement areas in the rural strata of a state where large cohort of unvaccinated children are present, ANMs and ASHA workers go door to door to identify and immunise the unimmunised children.

The focus of the programme is one the areas which are identified as high risk and under served areas comprising of population living in the deprived strata of the country such as urban slums, brick kilns workers, construction site workers with high rate of migration, people living in fishermen's villages, riverine terrains, difficult and forested areas and nomadic and tribal population. Apart from areas with low routine immunization (RI) coverage along with vacant sub centres where routine immunization sessions are missed. All the above mentioned areas along with Small villages, hamlets, dhanis or purbas clubbed with another village for RI sessions and not having independent RI sessions constitute the major focused areas of the programme.

Thus, the majority of potential beneficiaries identified under Mission Indradhanush reside in rural areas where children are either fully unvaccinated or partly vaccinated. Although, the rural areas comprise of large number of unimmunised or partly immunised children, there are various challenges to spread awareness in



these areas and convince the parents who prefer their daily wage over wasting a day to sit at home and take care of the immunised child. Further, the immunisation sessions are conducted at the peak hours generally from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., a time where majority of parents are absent from the location, thus immunizing all the children in such areas is a challenging task. Another major reason behind a child not fully vaccinated in rural areas is the lack of awareness amongst parents regarding the importance of full immunization for the development of a child and fear of adverse symptoms like fever post immunization. Here, the role of community workers becomes even more crucial to convince parents and ensure that no child is left unvaccinated.

Mission Indradhanush has completed its first and second phase in various parts of India with a commendable response covering more than 75 lakhs children who were vaccinated and approximately 20 lakh children fully vaccinated. Apart from that, more than 57 lakh Zinc tablets and 16 lakh ORS packets were distributed in the sessions to prevent diarrhoea. More than 20 lakh women were provided with Tetanus Toxoid vaccine in the first phase. The first phase comprised of 9.4 lakh sessions organized during the four rounds of the Mission Indradhanush. After a huge success in the first phase and the second phase, the third phase has started from June 2016.

Almost 1.62 crore children were immunized under Mission Indradhanush in the last one year and around 45 lakh have been fully immunised. Overall, Mission Indradhanush is expected to expand full immunization coverage to around 100 per cent by 2020 after recording only one per cent annual increase in the immunization coverage amidst the year 2009 and 2013. However, there are various problems in the implementation level of the scheme which shrinks the overall effectiveness of the scheme. For example, ASHAs and ANMs face various difficulties like poor storage of vaccines, fewer incentives to ASHAs and ANMs, not getting official conveyance and many a times travelling in the potentially unsafe areas where they do not even have proper place to sit thereby leading to fewer efforts by them. The concept of organizing camps in the local areas reduces incentives of the parents to bring their child to health facility to get them immunized.

### Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojna

#### Making a holistic improvement in the lives of poor

- To reach 8-9 Crore rural poor households, organize them into women Self Help Groups (SHGs), enable them to access financial resources, improve their livelihoods, access their entitlements through continuous handholding and nurturing till they come out of abject poverty
- 59 lakh Households have been mobilized under the programme and 5.31 lakh SHG have been formed
- Rs. 363.71 crore of financial assistance given to 2.59 lakh SHGs
- 743.87 crore provided to 1.60 lakh SHGs as Community Invest Fund
- 4.05 lakh urban poor were imparted skill training; 93,800 were assisted for setting up individual and group micro-enterprises; 1.05 lakh SHGs formed; 96,000 SHGs provided loans; 770 Shelters for homeless sanctioned and 270 Shelters made operational

#### Atal Pension Yojna

- Minimum Investment, Maximum Benefits during old age
- Fixed monthly Pension from Rs. 1,000 to 5,000 depending on contribution
- Government would contribute 50% of the premium (upto Rs.1,000) for 5 years in new accounts opened before 31st March, 2016.

Apart from the problems of human resource and infrastructure in the health sector, there is a major challenge of identifying all the left-out children and ensuring that the benefits reach to every child. Although a big challenge, if implemented effectively, Mission Indradhanush i.e. seven vaccines along with two new vaccines under the Mission are expected to reduce child death rate by a substantial percentage in the coming years thereby ensuring lower mortality and morbidity from diseases.

*(Dr. Suresh Sharma works as Associate Professor and Acting Head at Population Research Centre, Institute of Economic Growth (IEG), Delhi & Manisha Bothra works as Research Analyst at Population Research Centre, Institute of economic Growth, Delhi.)*

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## MEASURES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT FOR UPLIFTMENT OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE SECTOR

As per Census 2011, Sixty five percent (65 per cent) of the total female workers in India are engaged in agriculture. Of the total cultivators (118.7 million), 30.3 per cent are female. Out of 144.3 million agricultural labourers 42.6 per cent are women. In 2001, female agricultural labourers were 21 per cent which increased to 23 per cent in 2011.

The Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare implements various programmes of farmers including women in agriculture sector. As per directives for the Women Component Plan, the state governments have been asked to ensure flow of funds to the tune of 30 per cent for the benefit of women farmers.

The guidelines of Centrally Sponsored Scheme/Missions such as Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms under Sub-Mission on Agricultural Extension (SMAE), National Food Security Mission, National Mission on Oil Seed and Oil Palm and National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture, Sub-Mission for Seed & Planting Material, Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization and Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) stipulate that States and other Implementing Agencies are required to earmark at least 30 per cent expenditure on Women Farmers.

The primary objective of “*Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP)*” implemented by Ministry of Rural Development is to empower women in agriculture by making systematic investments to enhance their participation and productivity, as also create and sustain agriculture based livelihoods of rural women. Under the MKSP, projects are conceived in such a manner that the skill base of the women in agriculture is enhanced to enable them to pursue their livelihoods on a sustainable basis.

The measures taken by the Government for upliftment of women in the agriculture sector include:



1. Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme **Support to States Extension Programme for Extension Reforms**, mainstreaming gender concerns in agriculture is being addressed by ensuring utilization of minimum 30% of resources on programmes and activities for women farmers and women extension functionaries. In order to encourage women farmers' participation in planning and decision making process, their representation in Farmers' Advisory Committee at block, district and state level has been provided under the Scheme's guidelines.
2. Under **Sub Mission on Seed and Planting Material (SMSP)**, the training is provided under the components of the Scheme Seed Village Programme and Quality Control Arrangement of Seeds in which women farmers are equally benefitted. State governments are also advised to allocate adequate funds to women farmers.
3. Under the **National Food Security Mission (NFSM)** implemented in 28 states, 30 per cent of allocation of fund is being earmark for women farmer. There is also an intervention under NFSM providing cropping system based training to farmers including SC, ST and women farmers to create awareness on improved technology for increasing production and productivity of crops. State

governments are implementing the NFSM as per the provisions of the guideline.

4. Under the **National Mission on Oilseeds and Oil Palm (NMOOP)**, 30% of budgetary allocation is being earmarked for women beneficiaries/farmers. Concerned implementing agencies will be responsible for monitoring implementation of these components i.e. allocation of resources for SC/ST/Women beneficiaries and maintenance of database for the same.
5. Under the **Sub-Mission on Agricultural Mechanization (SMAM)**, 31 drudgery reducing technologies for women in agriculture developed by ICAR are promoted through training, demonstration and financial assistance. Women beneficiaries are also provided 10 per cent additional financial assistance for purchase of various agricultural machines and equipments. Farm Machinery Training and Testing Institutes conducts training on Agricultural Mechanization for women farmers on regular basis and in the year, 2014-15, 936 women farmers were trained.
6. Under the **National Horticulture Mission**, women are organized into Self Help Groups and farm inputs and technological & extension supports are provided to make women self-reliant.
7. The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has established a network of 645 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the country aiming at assessment and demonstration of technologies/products and its dissemination through number of extension programmes including training of farmers to update their knowledge and skill. These training programmes are conducted by KVKs on improved technologies related to agriculture and allied fields and have benefited the farmers in terms of increased crop production and improved farm income. During 2015-16, as many as 205 women specific income generation technologies related to technological empowerment of rural women were assessed in 394 locations covering 2917 trials under the thematic areas, namely

Drudgery Reduction, Farm Mechanization, Health and Nutrition, Processing and Value

Addition, Production and Management, Energy Conservation, Small Scale Income Generation, and Storage Techniques. The major enterprises included mushroom, sericulture, vermin compost production, nutritional gardens etc. Nearly 339700 farm women were trained in the crop production training programmes.

8. ICAR- Central Institute for Women in Agriculture (ICAR-CIWA) has been in the forefront undertaking research on issues affecting women in agriculture. It has focused on participatory action research in different technology based theme areas involving rural women to test suitability of technologies for women and suggest their refinement. The Institute is also working to catalyse and facilitate R & D institutions to bring in farm women perspectives in their programmes. For gender mainstreaming and empowering women in agriculture, various projects are being implemented to address issues related to women in agriculture in the areas of integrated farming system, IPM, drudgery, livestock and fisheries, extension methodologies and gender indices etc. Drudgery faced by farm women in various agricultural operations including household are being addressed with quantifiable data on the required parameters and designing/ refining women friendly farm tools & equipment. It is also working on gender sensitive approaches and methodologies to enhance access of women to critical resources, programmes and services which are critical for women's empowerment in agriculture. Since women in agriculture is a new area of research, capacity building of all the stakeholders are being organized through sensitization programmes for development functionaries, research scientists/ managers, teachers and KVKs scientists/ SMS who are directly or indirectly associated with farm women empowerment by ICAR-CIWA at different places in the country.

*Source- PIB*



## REACHING OUT TO INDIA'S DISADVANTAGED-NSAP

Praveen Shukla

From King as incarnation of God, who practise canon of *Prajaa Sukhe Sukham Rajyah, Prajanam cha Hiteh Hitam* i.e. in the welfare and happiness of the people lies the king's welfare and happiness to the modern neo-liberal yet welfare state, India had its own tryst with destiny. However, values are one thing, how they are interpreted, shaped together into policy and applied to the real world quite another. India is an economically diverse nation; its geography varies from cosmopolitan cities like Mumbai and Delhi to the rustic ravines of Kalahandi. The management of resources and revenue in such diversity is always an arduous task, particularly while deciding benchmarks for allocation. Let us consider the case of poverty, the poor comprises almost 40 per cent of the population, but if we seek to set poverty level then urban poverty and rural poverty are two asymmetrical concepts, which need to be handled differently. Apart from benchmarking reaching out to the worst hit segment is another important task. Amongst these poverty stricken people the sections which are most hit are old age person, widows and disabled; they need financial

assistance and income generation plans. Culturally, India had tradition of *Vridhdhasya Tirtheshu Pratipaadini*- apportionment or the bestowal of the surplus upon the deservers and *Yogakshemam Vahaamyaham* where the state has to carry the burden of acquisition and preservation of needs of people who shows confidence in it.

Now the state has the obligation to reach out to the poor and helpless so that they must live their lives with dignity which is also codified in Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Constitution of India, which enjoin upon the State that it shall, within the limits of its economic capacity and development, make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education, and to public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases of undeserved want. It is in compliance of these guiding principles, that the Government of India introduced fully funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Independence Day, 1995.

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) was not a new concept. At the time of its introduction, many state governments were already supporting their vulnerable sections of society, so when it was designed it was aimed to ensure minimum national standards in addition to the benefits that the states were then providing or would provide in future. Initially started with three schemes National Old Age Pension Schemes (NOAPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS), it has now expanded to five schemes namely - **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and Annapurna Scheme.** The Annapurna Scheme was introduced in year 2000 for providing 10 kg of free food grains to those not covered under NOAPS, while the National Maternity Benefit Scheme NMBS was transferred to Ministry of Health in 2001-02, which eventually



became part of *Janani Suraksha Yojana*. Since the responsibility for identification of beneficiaries, sanction of benefits and disbursement of the same vests with the respective state government/union territory administration, the NSAP was transferred to the State Plan from the financial year 2002-03, funds are provided to states as Additional Central Assistance (ACA).

### **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS)**

Traditionally, Indian society has joint families in its social setup, which had households taking care of the social security needs of the elders. The presence of young and the old under the same roof enabled spreading of income risks and had for long negated the need for a centralized system of old age financial planning. The rapid urbanisation changed this age old system as, migratory worker seldom take their old aged members to their new area of employment, thus it brought the decline in joint families.

With Life expectancy on the rise, leading to rise in elderly population, the first or second generation of middle aged now needs to plan for their old age. Currently, 90 per cent of the working population are engaged in the unorganized sector and have no access to any formal system of old age economic security. As per the available data, eight to nine per cent of the total population will be of 60+ age group person in coming decades. The 60+ age-group has been experiencing an increasing trend ever since 1881, the proportion hovered around five per cent till 1931. But, since 1941, there had been a continuous rise in the proportion of the elderly population. The maximum percentage in this group is recorded in the 2001 Census. In this census year, the persons over 60 years of age were at 7.72 per cent.

The imperative and more proximate reasons for old age pension are – large population under the poverty line, skewed coverage of the existing benefit schemes and growing informal workforce leading to large number of them without any pension support for livelihood. With the aim to reaching out these hapless old age NOAPS was launched in 1995 with a monthly pension of ₹ 75 per beneficiary for destitute above 65 years. The scheme covered destitute having little or no regular means of subsistence from his/her

own sources of income or through financial support from family members or other sources. In order to determine destitution, the criteria, if any, currently in force in the state / UT Governments were adapted. The Old Age Pension Scheme is increased from ₹ 75 to 200 per month per beneficiary from year 2006-07. In Year 2011 the government lowered the age limit from 65 years to 60 years and increased the assistance from ₹ 200 to ₹ 500 for beneficiaries of 80 years and above. The states were requested to contribute another 200 from their own resources so that a beneficiary could get at least 400 per month.

From its initial sluggish pace, the growth of IGNOAPS has been phenomenal since 2006-07, again it slowed a bit in 2010-11 and then took upward movement till 2013 and from then it has stagnated. Gender wise its equally distributed amongst male and females but transgender are left out from its ambit.

### **Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)**

Losing a spouse in life is known to have profound effects on well-being of an individual. The situation is compounded especially if it is combined with poverty and old age. Poverty among elderly widows is one of the most serious, persistent and pervasive social problems. Over the life cycle, both needs and potential change in income do transform the probability of falling into poverty. In most developing countries, poverty increases with age and is particularly prevalent among elderly women principally those who are living without their spouses. Thus, widowhood plays a significant role in poverty of elderly widows. It is an event that provokes important life change. The issue of poverty is particularly troublesome for this population segment since they have fewer possibilities to recover from a drop of income. Traditional practices further adds to their woes by depriving them from rights to shelter, inheritance, land ownership, food security, credit, protection from violence and even access to justice.

Keeping this in mind government introduced pension to BPL widows in February 2009 with a rate of ₹ 200/-p.m. per beneficiary in the age group of 40 to 64 years. In the year 2011 the eligibility age was brought down to 40 years to 59 years. In year

2012 eligibility age was further extended from 40 years to 79 years and the pension is increased to ₹ 300 per month. After attaining the age of 80 years, the beneficiary will get ₹ 500/- per month through IGNOAPS. According to the marital status recorded in the census 2011 there are around 4.32 crore female widow in the country, around 3.5 crore fall in the age group of 40 years to 79 years which is eligible age for the IGNOAPS. As the Scheme is applicable to BPL population which is around 40 per cent, then there must be at least 1.4 crore BPL widows in the country while the current disbursement under the scheme is reaching to around 0.63 crore BPL Widows.

### Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)

Census 2011 has revealed that over 2.68 million people in India are suffering from one or the other kind of disability. This is equivalent to 2.21 per cent of the population in 2011 Census, it rose from 2.1 per cent in 2001 census. Among the total disabled in the country, 14.98 million are males and 11.82 million are females. Around 70 per cent of all disabled live in rural areas making them more and more vulnerable due to lack of access to other assistance.



Among the types of disabilities on which data has been collected, disability in movement (20.28 per cent), in hearing and seeing at around 19 per cent emerges as the top categories. The government introduced pension to BPL person with severe or multiple disabilities in February 2009 with a rate of ₹ 200/-p.m. per beneficiary in the age group of 18 to 64 years. In the year 2011 the eligibility age was brought down to 40 years to 59 years. In year 2012 eligibility age was further extended from 40 years to 79 years and the pension is increased to Rs.300 per month. After attaining the age of 80 years, the beneficiary will get Rs.500/- per month through IGNOAPS. The had been scheme also covers the dwarf people who left earlier.

NUMBER OF DISABLED POPULATION AND TYPE OF DISABILITY				
	Population	Percentage (%) of Total Population	Disability in different Sex	
			No of Male	No of Female
Total population	121,08,54,977	100.0		
Total disabled	2,68,10,557	2.21	1,49,86,202	1,18,24,355
Rural	1,86,31,921	1.53	1,04,08,168	82,23,753
Urban	81,78,636	0.67	45,78,034	36,00,602
<b>Type of Disability</b>				
(a) In seeing	50,32,463	0.41	26,38,516	23,93,947
(b) In hearing	50,71,007	0.42	26,77,544	23,93,463
(c) In speech	19,98,535	0.16	11,22,896	8,75,639
(d) In movement	54,36,604	0.45	33,70,374	20,66,230
(e) Mental Retardation	15,05,624	0.12	8,70,708	6,34,916
(f) Mental Illness	7,22,826	0.06	4,15,732	3,07,094
(g) Any Other	49,27,011	0.41	27,27,828	21,99,183
(h) Multiple Disability	21,16,487	0.17	11,62,604	953,88

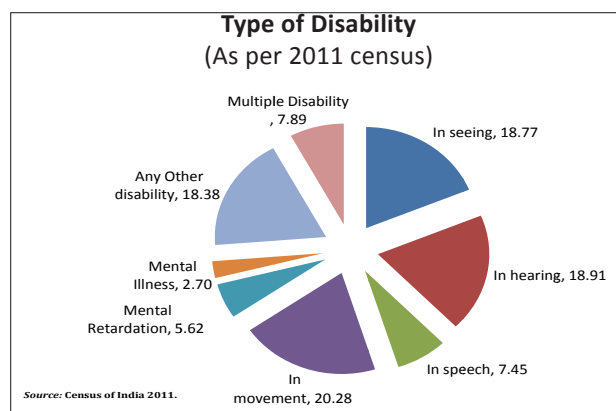
Source: Census of India 2011.

### National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)

A grant of ₹ 5000 in case of death due to natural causes and ₹ 10,000 in case of accidental death of the “primary breadwinner” is provided to the bereaved household under this scheme. The primary breadwinner as specified in the scheme, whether male or female, had to be a member of the household whose earning contributed substantially to the total household income. The death of such a primary breadwinner occurring whilst he or she is in the age group of 18 to 64 years i.e., more than 18 years of age and less than 65 years of age, makes the family eligible to receive grants under the scheme. In 1998, the amount of benefit under NFBS was raised to ₹ 10,000 in case of death due to natural causes as well as accidental causes. In Year 2012 the government had revised the guidelines for the purpose of claiming central assistance, the death of breadwinner while he or she is in the age group of 18 to 64 years was reduced to 18-59 years; the lump sum grant under NFBS was increased from ₹ 10000 to ₹ 20000.

### Annapurna Scheme:

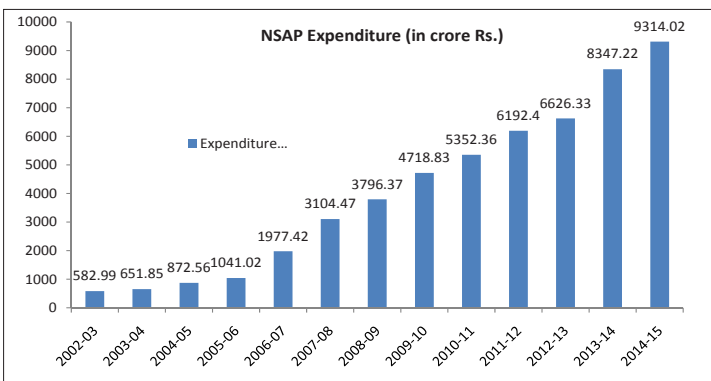
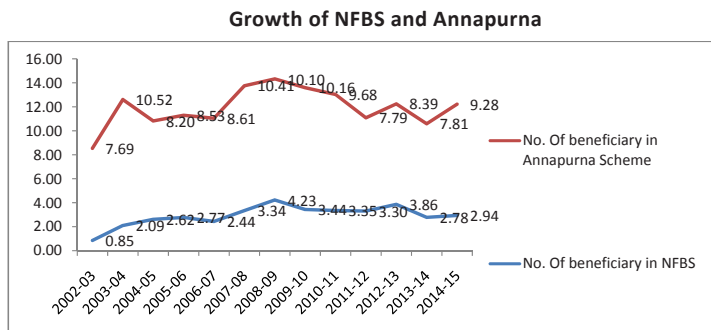
Annapurna is a social sector scheme and forms part of the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) which came into effect from



1st April, 2000. Annapurna Scheme was to cater to food security to those indigent senior citizens who were not covered under the Targeted Public Distribution System (PDS) and who had no income of their own. Annapurna Scheme was aimed to provide food security to those senior citizens who though eligible have remained uncovered under NOAPS, since it was also not demand driven so the target was to cover around 20% of persons eligible to receive pension under NOAPS. In 2000, NOAPS covered some 68.81 lacs people thus it was calculated that the target for Annapurna scheme will be 20 per cent of 68.81 lacs i.e 13.762 lacs persons; then there was state wise allocation for this scheme was also planned. Under the Annapurna Scheme 10 kgs of food grains per month are provided free of cost to the beneficiary.

Year	Expenditure in cr	No. of beneficiary in IGNOAPS	No. of beneficiary in IGNWPS	No. of beneficiary in IGNDPS	No. of beneficiary in NFBS	No. of beneficiary in Annapurna Scheme
2002-03	582.99	6697509	NA	NA	85209	768593
2003-04	651.85	6624000	NA	NA	209456	1051773
2004-05	872.56	8079386	NA	NA	261981	820075
2005-06	1041.02	8002598	NA	NA	276737	853179
2006-07	1977.42	8708837	NA	NA	243972	860785
2007-08	3104.47	11514026	NA	NA	334153	1041133
2008-09	3796.37	15020640	NA	NA	423292	1009792
2009-10	4718.83	16333578	3213467	699680	343726	1015655
2010-11	5352.36	17059756	3425390	728004	335044	968419
2011-12	6192.4	21384404	3628467	794249	330240	778682
2012-13	6626.33	22712043	4960887	1090270	386005	838914
2013-14	8347.22	22331089	6197062	1579246	277537	780795
2014-15	9314.02	22981127	6333059	1087361	293977	928333

Source: Ministry of Rural Development



## Expenditure

These schemes are not demand driven schemes, every scheme has a fixed annual target to achieve, they cannot provide more than that unlike demand driven schemes are like MGNREGA, in which if a person wants employment then government is duty bound for that. In contrast to the fact that they are not demand driven government had tried to increase its reach, the expenditure on these schemes have grown many fold since its inception in year 2014-2015. The expenditure of ₹ 9314.02 crores was incurred for these schemes.

## New Paradigms

NSAP and Annapurna Scheme which started out as Centrally Sponsored Scheme but were briefly transferred to the State Plan. Logic was that the Centrally Sponsored Schemes should

be confined to schemes of an inter-state character, matters impinging on national security, selected national priorities where central supervision is essential for effective implementation. After reviewing these schemes the Planning Commission consultation with its parent Ministry of Rural Development decided to transfer NSAP and Annapurna to the State Plans from the year 2002-03. The funds for these schemes were given as Additional Central Assistance, with this it was expected from state to contribute Mandatory Minimum Provision (MMP) for these schemes under their own budget. The Ministry of Rural Development has a role in monitoring the expenditure against the ACA and the MMP. However in March 2014, NSAP was again converted into Centrally Sponsored Scheme under supervision of Ministry of Rural Development. It was observed in 2014 that out of 3.17 crore Beneficiary of NSAP 0.81 lacs were taking these benefits through cash, the same year Ministry proposed Aadhar seeding for the same. The NSAP is digitised and it can be availed using newly introduced web services.

**Conclusion :** The programme has reached the target segment and has been well accepted by the people. However, the programme should lay emphasis on improving awareness level through publicity and to ensure timely distribution of benefit. It can also be made demand driven as the framework and data of targeted BPL section is already available. The amount given in the scheme is too less for an individual, whereas we can see there are huge LPG subsidy given to middle class, It should be enhanced keeping in mind the golden word of Kabir – *Rahiman itna dijiye jaame Kutumb samaye.*

*(The Author is a Research Fellow at Centre for Civilisational Studies, New Delhi)*

# Kurukshetra

FORTHCOMING ISSUE

**October 2016 : Rural Sanitation**

# RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY: INITIATIVES FROM BAIF

Girish G Sohani, Rajashri Joshi and Rakesh Warriar

Development efforts in India have come a long way. From a hand-to-mouth food importer, India has almost trebled the agricultural production that prevailed 60- 70 years ago. The life expectancy at birth has also increased to 2.5 times. Poverty has declined in percentage terms, whereas, industrial and service sectors have made rapid strides. India now has a more robust and resilient economy.

Yet, there are emergent problems and needs in the changing context of current times. Some of these arise out of global situations (such as those arising out of climate change factors) and many others, out of our own situation (such as the degraded environment, the jobless growth that characterizes industry, stagnation in agriculture sector, demographic shifts from agricultural to non-agricultural sectors and from rural to the urban habitations. These in turn pose the current challenges to continued development.

On the livelihoods front, the challenge is to generate adequate livelihoods outside the farm sector, yet which are located in rural and peri-urban areas. On the environmental front, the challenge is to achieve environmental restoration which will simultaneously generate 'green' livelihoods. On the health front, the challenge is to proceed beyond protein-calorie malnutrition to tackle various other deficiencies, as well as to ensure quality drinking water and sanitation for all.

These challenges thus provide an agenda for rural development action in the first half of the 21st century.

The above challenges, combined with contextual needs of promoting enterprises, improving resource utilization to more efficient levels, harnessing of renewable low-carbon technologies, ensuring sustainability of development efforts, generating livelihoods (rather than jobs) around these, ensuring more holistic well-being through enhanced health, skills and capabilities will provide the opportunity to develop a knowledge-based society and provide the new rural development directions appropriate to our climate.

## Newer Initiatives

In view of the emerging challenges, needs and priorities BAIF - formerly registered as the Bharatiya Agro Industries, is a reputed voluntary organisation has undertaken a number of new initiatives in the form of programme components and approaches which can provide newer directions for rural development in the coming years. BAIF is actively engaged in effort of natural resource management based livelihood generation. Within the climate change context, thrust is laid on ecosystem based and landscape based management.

## Towards Sustainable Agriculture

While agriculture provides employment to about half of the working population, it contributes less than a fifth to the national income. This clearly indicates the farming system's inability of driving growth and in turn catalyzing rural prosperity in the present scenario. To a large extent, this has been the result of following cost intensive, external chemical inputs dependent and low technology adoption approach combined with exploitation and depletion of natural resources. Sustainability should be emphasized upon if agriculture has to be remunerative in future.

"Integrated Renewable Energy and Sustainable Agriculture (IRESA)" approach, which presents a complete package comprising of a portfolio of activities around the central theme of household level biogas units. The focus is on optimal use of existing resources for sustainable energy generation for cooking and value added organic manure production for soil fertility. The approach intends to enable farmers to reduce dependence on external sources for fulfilling energy needs and soil nutrient requirements. The savings on fuel and chemical fertilizers along with high value intensive crop cultivation presents a decent payback possibility. The savings on import bills for the country is considerable.

The package includes compact, pre-fabricated and easy to install biogas system, low cost slurry filtration unit for efficient slurry handling and water

recycling, use of filtered sludge residue and filtrate for production of quality organic inputs, guiding farmers for downstream production of cash crops on intensive small plots for higher earnings. The concept of decentralized enterprises for production and marketing of the derived organic inputs is being initiated focusing on rural entrepreneurship and easy availability of affordable, quality organic inputs.

### **New Age Rural Enterprises**

#### ***Solar lighting through development of rural enterprises***

The “*Saur Deep*” initiative caters to sustainable and affordable solar lighting solutions through development of rural enterprises comprising a value chain of local assemblers, retailers and service providers. While the inherent aim is to provide access to clean energy in energy deficit rural areas, the strategy builds in the components of decentralization (local assembly, sales, usage and service) coupled with grass-roots income generation, skill development and empowerment. A portfolio of solar products assembled at the community level fulfils the demand in the cluster and district levels. The initiative follows a revenue model wherein the expenses are met through income from sales. All proceeds from sales accrue to the enterprise which is a community managed entity. Considering the price sensitivity of rural markets, comparative advantage in the form of competitive pricing is targeted without compromising on quality. This is possible with a shorter and efficient supply chain linking the component vendor directly with the enterprise. The reduced dependence on financial support for operations enhances sustainability, replication and scalability. The endeavor has overarching economic, social and environmental benefits at the individual, household and community domains.



### **Solar Drier Initiative**

Solar driers have been introduced in some of the programme areas for dehydration of fruits and vegetables. Focus has been on price hedging, livelihood and decentralized enterprises catering to demand for such products. Moreover, considering various estimates of domestic post-harvest losses ranging from 20–30 per cent for fruits and vegetables costing about Rs.50,000 crores annually, the importance of such post-harvest management solution cannot be overlooked. Perishable food produce dehydrated in such a manner has prolonged shelf life while preserving its colour, nutritional value and aroma at the same time. With changing lifestyles and growing preference for ready to cook food items, there is immense potential in this line of business. Exports and health (herbal medicines) are other sectors which show promising demand for dehydrated products.

Women in our programme clusters in Urulikanchan in Pune and Jawhar in Palghar district of Maharashtra have formed groups to undertake drying at the household level and aggregation & marketing at the group level. This approach ensures that women are able to earn by working from their households while leveraging economies of scale through collective action. A new dimension in the adoption of solar driers is being explored to combat malnutrition by preserving locally available vegetables and fruits for consumption during lean periods.

### **Drinking water initiative**

In India, about a fifth of rural households lack access to safe drinking water. Absence of clean water facilities poses a serious health issue to the society in particular and nation at large. Various programmes and initiatives are putting in efforts to make these amenities available all across the country. But, if the objective of access to clean drinking water to the whole country has to be realized at the earliest, then it is pertinent that supplementary efforts in increasing coverage are undertaken to the possible extent considering that the targets are substantial.

Realizing the extent of problem and importance of clean drinking water in quality of life, BAIF's initiative is based on a model which envisages setting up of sustainable enterprises making pure drinking water available to community at affordable



rates. These enterprises are managed by the village water user groups. Operations follow a complete revenue model which takes into account all the costs of operations and maintenance. Household delivery along with automated cashless dispensing system with smart card is deployed for efficient and hassle-free distribution. Each plant with a capacity of 1,000 litres per hour caters to about 400 households daily. These have been deployed in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra.

#### **Economising Resource Use: Efficient Water Application**

Timely irrigation is crucial for agriculture which is the primary source of income for a vast majority of rural population. Only about 40 per cent of the farmers have access to irrigation while the rest resort to rain-fed farming. Even for those with assured irrigation facility, lifting water from source to the fields is a major challenge. Water lifting for domestic uses is another area that is as important as agricultural usage. Absence of water lifting applications leads to drudgery in fetching and carrying water from source. It also has an adverse effect on health and sanitation. Electricity supply, though highly subsidized, is largely erratic in rural areas. Fossil fuel usage for water pumping is neither economical nor sustainable. Solar energy for water lifting is a good alternative. Being a tropical country, available solar insolation can suffice most of the requirements. However, initial cost is a hindrance which often leads the potential user to overlook the negligible operational costs.

We have introduced solar pumping systems in our programme areas primarily for two broad applications – irrigation and domestic usage. Use of solar energy for irrigation can make farmers self-reliant. There is substantial savings when compared

to conventional diesel run pumps. Innovative small capacity (1 to 2 hp) mobile solar pump design makes shared usage possible. This also opens up the avenue of providing water supply as a service.

While focus on clean energy is important, it is imperative to ensure that intended application is also efficient. Hence, solar water pumping needs to be integrated with water conservation initiatives like drip and sprinkler irrigation. Since the quantity of water required is drastically reduced in efficient irrigation systems, pumping capacity too can be down scaled resulting in reduced initial costs.

Taking into account the emerging paradigm of “per drop, more crop”, BAIF has also been exploring various innovative water management solutions.

Waterbox, developed by Groasis, Netherlands, is an innovative water management device which works as a plant incubator, sheltering both a newly planted sapling and the ground around it from heat of the sun, while providing water for the plant. The lid collects water from rain and night time condensation, which is then stored in the bucket and releases water in small quantity to the root zone of the plant over a longer period of time. A wick drips about 50 cc of water to the plant every day, which is enough for it not to die, but not enough for it to grow properly. In this way, the plant is challenged to develop its taproots to find water itself. In brief, it harvests rain water & condensation (fog and dew), functions as a micro-irrigation tool and reduces water evaporation.

In our trials over the past two years, the results with vegetables grown in Waterboxx are very encouraging. Vegetables like bottle gourd, ridge gourd, okra and brinjal have attained spectacular growth in Waterboxx while the same in control plots (normal conditions) have either not survived or the growth has been much lower. Height attained in Waterboxx is 3 – 5 times more than the control plots. After initial filling of 16 litres of water, there has been no refill over the period of 7 – 8 months. It is thus evident that water requirement for plants grown in Waterboxx could be substantially reduced. The maximum diurnal temperature has been as high as 40 deg. C in some of the trial locations. Waterboxx thus makes cultivation possible in arid areas.

Another novel device is Water conservation tray developed by Tal-ya, Israel which reports to increase water use efficiency of drip by 50%, saves 30-40% fertilizer requirement and controls weed growth thereby resulting in improved



yields. Validation trials at BAIF are presently in progress.

System of Water for Agriculture Rejuvenation (SWAR) developed by Centre for Environment Concerns (CEC), Hyderabad is a system which optimizes and conserves water by delivering to the plant root zone the required moisture. Trials undertaken by CEC over the past 1.5 years have recorded more than 60 per cent less water consumption compared to conventional drip. The system is a sub-surface drip system which results in water rationing, minimal evaporation, low weed growth & low surface salt accumulation. This mechanism ensures moisture is retained in soil which will help growth of beneficial microbes and growth (survival) of plant. A low cost gravity based drip arrangement is used for water delivery.

### Adapting for Climate Change

Changing climate and increased climate variability, increased incidence of sudden extreme climatic events all over India has the ability to jeopardize all the earlier development efforts. This leads to loss of hope and increased vulnerability of rural communities who are dependent on climate sensitive livelihood sectors.

In view of the above backdrop, BAIF has introduced several responses and programme interventions for helping these vulnerable communities adapt to the changing climatic context :

- Soil Fertility management and soil improvement in an environmentally sound manner and by integrating agro ecological principles.
- Site specific actions for water resource development and improved water use efficiency and participatory management of water resource in the region.
- Introduction of Climate Smart Agriculture Technologies such as, agriculture /farm diversification efforts by introducing tree based farming, horticulture promotion, cultivation under protected conditions such as under poly house, Introduction of flood and drought resistant and short duration crops , Integrating and optimizing potential of livestock resources by transfer of technologies such as improved breeding, scientific management inputs , fodder plantation and promotion, forward linkages and organized marketing efforts for overall benefit of producers etc.



- Linkage development and required facilitation support for providing services of weather based crop advisory in local language to farmers, establishing automated / manual weather station for possible input for weather forecasting to farmers.
- Participatory conservation and revival of local breeds of livestock and crop resources /cultivars and community level seed bank establishment.
- Introduction of energy efficient *chulhas* / cooking devices based on solar, biogas, and bio mass based technologies.
- Measures for reducing the drudgery of rural women by developing options for improved security of water, fodder, fuel etc. and by improved farm mechanization efforts.
- Last but not the least, laying thrust on community mobilisation, community engagement, building capacities of community based groups and facilitating community led climate change adaptation efforts/ preparedness planning.

### End note

The above programme ideas are a few examples of how newer directions can emerge to address newer challenges and how these can be tailor-made to the requirements, opportunities that are available as well as address the aspirations of the next generation. A mainstreaming of such components will help continue the impetus of rural development into the successive decades of this century.

*(Girish G. Sohani is the President and Managing Trustee of BAIF Development Research Foundation, Rajashri Joshi is the Thematic Programme Executive & Rakesh Warriar is the Additional Chief Programme Executive, BAIF, Pune, Maharashtra)*

## PARENTS LEARN A THING OR TWO FROM THEIR CHILDREN

**T**he district administration of Kabirdham in Chhattisgarh came up with a winning strategy: to work through children to win parents over.

On July-15, as many as 1.38 lakh students from 1,738 schools participated in a letter writing exercise – some in English, some in Hindi and a few even in Chhattisgarhi. They wrote to their parents, appealing to them to build a toilet at their home and every child in the age group of 7-17 years participated from the entire district. That evening, each of the students entered their homes with a firm resolve of seeking blessings before presenting the letter and touched their parents' feet.



The health benefits of having a toilet at home were mentioned in the letter. Further, when children got to use toilets at school, they reasoned that their home too should have such a facility, particularly to protect their dignity.

The result was better than anticipated. “The next morning, every child went back to school with a date of commitment, a deadline by which their homes will have toilets,” said CEO, Zila Panchayat, Sarveshwar Bhure, with a sense of accomplishment.

It was certainly a proud moment for the administration which is now regularly following up. “Yes, construction of toilets has begun and the children are seeing that it happens,” he added.

A few parents questioned the need for toilets and a few wanted the incentive before they commenced any work. To address this, teachers who received letters of resistance made haste to visit those families and convinced them of the need to provide toilets to their families. “But 75 per cent of

the parents committed to building toilets,” Bhure confirmed.

In an attempt to make the entire district open defecation free (ODF), the district administration put children high on the agenda.

“We decided to focus on the younger generation. To reach the head of the family, it seemed a good idea to target those close to him or her and kids are undoubtedly very dear to their parents and so we started with them,” he said, explaining that ever since the Swachh Bharat Mission began its campaign there, they had been brainstorming ways to implement the programme effectively, while pondering over novel ideas.

For starters, they began with training of about 80 community resource persons on all matters pertaining to the Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin as well as Swachh Vidyalaya; about good sanitation practices, ill effects of open defecation, the need to build and use toilets and ways to trigger behaviour change.

Thereafter, in a well-thought-out plan, meetings were conducted in 1,738 schools in eight shifts. On completion of their training, each of the community resource persons was allotted about 20-25 schools that they visited several times to speak to children about hygiene and the health benefits it would bring.

As a part of Swachh Vidyalaya the district administration intended to follow about 8-10 steps. One of them was writing letters to parents. “We realized it had to be a mass based activity and not a solitary effort. In fact, the idea to write to their parents first came from children themselves,” he added.

Bhure and his team hope to make Kabirdham ODF between December 2016 and February 2017. They still have a lot of ground to cover, but are confident of making the deadline.

Though the baseline survey indicated 52 per cent sanitation coverage, in actuality there was only 30 per cent coverage. With about 42,000 household being constructed at present, they are confident of becoming ODF soon.

*(Courtesy : Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation)*

## Books on Rashtrapati Bhavan Released Recently



*The Vice President of India, Shri M. Hamid Ansari releasing the book titled "Discover the Magnificent World of Rashtrapati Bhavan" and first copy presented to the President of India, Shri Pranab Mukherjee at Rashtrapati Bhavan in the presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on July 25, 2016.*

Over the past two years, Publications Division has brought out a series of books on various aspects of the Rashtrapati Bhavan to bring to the people its rich cultural, historical and social legacy. Five books were recently released by the Hon'ble Vice President and the Hon'ble Prime Minister at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan, where the first copy of each book was presented to the Hon'ble President. The books released were 'The First Garden of the Republic : Nature of the President's Estate', 'Arts and Interiors of the Rashtrapati Bhavan', 'Discover the Magnificent World of Rashtrapati Bhavan', 'A Work of Beauty: The Architecture & Landscape of the Rashtrapati Bhavan', and 'Around India's First Table: Dining & Entertaining at the Rashtrapati Bhavan'.

The books were widely appreciated at the event. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi specifically mentioned in his address on the day that "the books... are *Grantha*s which will leave a mark in history."

Publications Division has earlier published four more books under the Rashtrapati Bhavan series, namely, 'Winged Wonders', 'Indradhanush', 'Right of the lines: The President's Bodyguard', 'Abode Under the Dome', 'The Presidential Retreat', and three volumes of Selected Speeches of Pranab Mukherjee.

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