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Kurukshetra seeks to carry the message of Rural Development to all people. It serves as a forum for free, frank and serious discussion on the problems of Rural Development with special focus on Rural Uplift.

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# Editorial

Infrastructure is, undoubtedly, the backbone on which different sectors of the economy of any nation are established. It is the pillar that supports the different aspects of social and economic development like education, connectivity, communication, food supply, water availability, health services, electrification so on and so forth. The economy and our daily lives would come to a standstill, if this basic necessity is not catered to.

Majority i.e. 69 per cent of India resides in villages and that is why the rural development assumes all the more importance, and influences every matter of public policy making. The agricultural infrastructure attains the top priority, when it comes to rural growth and economy as India is predominantly an agriculture-based country with one-fifth of its gross domestic product pouring in from agricultural activities. Realizing its criticality, the PM has launched for a holistic growth in agricultural production along with upliftment of allied sectors like animal husbandry, bee-keeping and fisheries will go a long way in ensuring food security of the country.

The education scenario today in our country faces many bottlenecks like sanitation facilities, teaching staff etc. As the education is the key to a better life and opportunities for our rural children and youth, schemes like SSA, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Swacch Vidyalaya Abhiyan, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana etc to enable our rural youth to attain good quality education at the primary and secondary level.

For the facilitating such education, the rural Road connectivity holds the key. In this context, the role of schemes like PMGSY, MGNREGA, Rurban Mission becomes very important in providing all-weather road connectivity to all inhabited rural population in order to bring them on the road map for development.

Rural Housing is yet another important aspect of rural development as housing is the basic necessity for any individual. The aim is to provide a pucca house with in-built basic amenities to all the houseless and households living below poverty line in kutcha and dilapidated houses by 2022 as part of 'Housing for all' by 2022 by building more houses for the rural masses. Providing clean and pure Drinking water in rural areas is another very important part of overall health and sanitation. If we analyse Census 2001-2011, there has been considerable improvement in the supply of drinking water both by source and availability as a result of numerous efforts of government in making drinking water available to all rural households in a sustainable manner. The role of NGOs and private institutions can also prove to be of great help in this regard. The health of rural masses depend alot upon the clean drinking water too. Though less in number, the role of Sub Centres, Primary Health Centre (PHCs) and Community Health Centre (CHCs) is the most important as these are the first points of contact between the medical services and the rural masses. The government is taking up all the necessary steps to fill in their gaps by providing medical practioners and the stalk of medicines.

The discussion of rural infrastructure in India is rather incomplete without some focus on the North Eastern Region, which lately, due to insurgencies and other cross border problems, has been lacking in infrastructure. Many region specific schemes have been launched by both the Centre and the respective states for employment opportunities, boosting agriculture and local industries and also to provide proper connectivity in the hilly, remote and inaccessible areas through roads, national highways, new railway lines and bridges.

India is the land where the majority lives in the villages. Needless to say ,no matter how much we try to bring the country on the path of holistic growth and economic development, the prosperity of India will never be complete without the prosperity of its rural brethren.

# INFRASTRUCTURE FOR RURAL PROSPERITY

Sanjay Jha

The primary hindrance to growth in rural productivity and subsequent economic growth, is the lack of basic infrastructure such as electricity, clean water and sanitation. Farmers and casual wage workers account for roughly 90% of the working population in rural areas and a healthy growth rate of income will certainly help in achieving faster economic growth for the country.

India's economic journey from an impoverished nation to one of fastest global economy has inspired many other developing nations and this rapid economic development has been possible with contribution from every sector of Indian economy.

With huge population still living in Rural India, Rural Development plays an important factor for the growth of the Indian economy and Rural India is yet to play big role in India's economic voyage and there is dire need for future investments in the rural areas of India to decrease urbanization and increase employment in small towns and villages.

The economic prosperity in rural India can only be achieved if the critical issues of physical connectivity, electronic connectivity and knowledge connectivity are addressed effectively.

While urban India has seen big progress in recent years, the small towns of India continue to lag behind. There are many challenges that these places face including poor road connectivity, primary healthcare system, educational infrastructure and affordable housing. Rise in Indian exports, Industrial development and adoption of modern technologies have mostly helped in generating additional employment in urban areas and rural India has been left out.

India joined the club of trillion-dollar economies many years back and it will undoubtedly double its size to 2 trillion dollars because of economic reforms and globalization but without push from rural India this faster growth may not be possible.

Despite growth of services and other sectors, Indian economy is dependent on agrobased activities. Agriculture, with its allied various sectors, is undeniably the largest livelihood provider in India.

67 per cent of the Indian population is employed in the agricultural sector, and even than it adds up to only 37 per cent to the GDP. A majority of these families spend over 90 per cent of their earnings on basic needs such as food, fuel and health care.

In order to increase the growth of agriculture, Central Government has launched several programs for Rural Development in India. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector and thrust area is Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and dairy which are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy.

The primary hindrance to growth in rural productivity and subsequent economic growth, is the lack of basic infrastructure such as electricity, clean water and sanitation. Farmers and casual wage workers account for roughly 90 per cent of the working population in rural areas and a healthy growth rate of income will certainly help in achieving faster economic growth for the country.

In the Union Budget 2016-17, many provisions have been made for reforming agriculture. These revolve around investments, incentives and institutions. The allocation for agriculture and farmers' welfare this year is Rs.35,984 crore, the highest ever.

The government has placed great emphasis on agriculture and farmers' welfare, rural and social sectors. Several attempts have been made to generate more employment and revive the rural demand, which will spur farmers' welfare. The Ministry of Agriculture was renamed as Ministry of Agriculture & Farmer Welfare, which symbolizes this renewed focus.

These initiatives of development of rural infrastructure will bring prosperity and economic growth in rural areas.

### Connectivity for Poverty Upliftment

There is a positive relationship between connectivity and development in villages in India. With better roads and highways, there will be a better flow of business, trade and communication that will eventually enhance growth for all the stakeholders and over all for country. A large part of India especially Mountainous areas and remote villages are cut off from the network of roads, which need to be connected. The government has allocated thousands of crores for building a strong transport network that can link different cities and small towns with regional hubs. However, several projects across the country have seen slow progress over the years severely impacting the economic progress of the small towns.

**Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana** has connected remote hamlets to the national highways, from where it's a smoother ride ahead. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for providing all-weather road connectivity to every rural habitation with a minimum population of 500 in the plains and 250-plus in hill states, tribal districts and desert areas.

The fully centrally-sponsored scheme covered a total of 1,78,184 habitations as per the criteria laid down. The fact that 1,14,540 or 64 per cent of these eligible habitations actually have roads today — with projects being cleared for another 30,501 — can be considered a reasonable achievement. Since its inception, PMGSY has provided connectivity of over 4,66,044 km — including upgradation of 1,67,977 km of existing roads — at an aggregate cost of Rs 1,41,822 crore as on January 2016. Government wants to connect 65,000 rural habitations through the PM Gram Sadak Yojana.

The Rural Development Ministry is now tasked with constructing 2.23 lakh km of roads by 2019. The allocation for the PM Gram Sadak Yojana has been increased from Rs 14,200 crore in 2014-15 to Rs 18,291 crore in 2015-16 and Rs 19,000 crore for the current financial year. Between 2014 and 2016, 18,488 habitations were connected after construction of 72,835 km of rural roads.

Due to these roads, now it has been made it possible for producers of perishable produce such as milk, fish and vegetables to sell these to a wider base of consumers in nearby towns. Equally, it has enabled companies to distribute their products through rural retail stores. These stores were earlier unviable both for their owners and the companies wanting to replenish stocks. But with motorable roads today, you have more efficient supply chains and lower inventory costs.

### Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Gramin)

The Central Government took a major towards ensuring that people can get a house within their financial capability. Launched on June 25, 2015 the primary aim for this is to ensure that 3 crore houses are built across nation's length and bread in next 7 years. The rural housing scheme will help achieve housing for all by 2022 in Rural areas across the country.

The government has allocated Rs 15,000 crore to the programme for the current fiscal and increased payout per household to more than





Rs 1.2 lakh from Rs 75,000 earlier, along with increasing area per home to 25 square metres from 22 sq metres.

The housing scheme will have linkages with Swachh Bharat Abhiyan or national cleanliness mission to ensure toilets in each house, with provision of an additional allocation of Rs 12,000 per household. This will be coupled with 90-day wage provided under the governments flagship rural jobs programme under Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, adding another Rs 18,000 to each household.

To address the gap in rural housing and in view of Government's commitment to provide "Housing for All" by 2022, the scheme of IAY has been re-structured into Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) w.e.f. 1st April, 2016.

### **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin: Highlights**

- Government to construct 1 Crore pucca (permanent) houses for the rural poor in the next three years.
- The scheme is expected to boost job creation in rural areas.
- The project will be implemented in a span of three years from 2016-17 to 2018-19 with a budget of Rs. 81,975 crore.
- Of the total estimated expenditure, Rs. 60,000 crore will come from budgetary allocations and the remaining through Nabard.

- The cost of unit (house) assistance is to be shared between central and state governments in the ratio 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for north-eastern and hilly states.
- Beneficiaries of the rural houses would be chosen according to data taken from the Socio-Economic Caste Census of 2011.
- An allowance of Rs. 120,000 in plain areas and Rs. 130,000 in hilly areas will be provided for construction of homes.
- The unit size will be enhanced from the existing 20 sq.mt. to up to 25 sq.mt. including a dedicated area for hygienic cooking.
- Provision of toilets at Rs. 12000/- and 90/95 days of unskilled wage labour under MGNREGA over and above the unit cost.
- Funds will be transferred electronically directly to the account of the beneficiaries.
- The beneficiary would be facilitated to avail loan of up to 70000 rupees for construction of the house which is optional.
- Special Projects to be sanctioned to states based on situational exigencies and special needs.

The scheme is also expected to generate employment in the rural areas, especially in the construction sector which is currently the 2nd largest employers in India.



### Rural Electrification:

In November 2015, the Union Cabinet approved '*Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY)*.' RGVVY -which dealt purely with electrification — was subsumed under it and this was launched by Prime Minister for power sector reforms in rural areas with a view to ensuring round the clock electricity supply to farmers and rural households.

The new power scheme focuses on feeder separation (rural households and agricultural) and strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution infrastructure, including metering at all levels in rural areas.

The scheme is one of the flagship programmes of the Power Ministry and will facilitate 24x7 supply of electricity.

The major components of the new scheme are feeder separation; strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution network; Metering at all levels (input points, feeders and distribution transformers); Micro grid and off grid distribution network & Rural electrification - already sanctioned projects under RGGVY to be completed.

The scheme has an outlay of Rs. 76,000 crore for implementation of the projects under which the Centre shall provide grant of Rs. 63,000 crore.

The Indian government has electrified over 7,000 villages in 2015-16 which stands 37 per cent higher than the previous three years.

Nearly 30 crore people in rural India lack access to grid-connected power, promoting use of archaic sources of energy such as kerosene, diesel, wood-fired chulhas, etc, which not only

results in huge government subsidies, but also substantial health and environmental hazards. Solar power offers an opportunity to bridge this massive infrastructure gap and improve the social, economic, environment and health indicators of 30 per cent of India's population.

As on April 1, 2015, only 18,542 villages remained unelectrified. Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech in 2015 announced that these villages will be electrified within the next 1000 days. At the present date, just 7,716 villages are unelectrified. Each and every village would soon be deemed electrified by the government well before the deadline.

Even World Bank has noted that "Rural electrification in India has caused changes in consumption and earnings, with increases in the labour supply of both men and women, and promoted girls' schooling by reallocating their time to tasks more conducive to school attendance"

Regular and reliable electricity could have a galvanising effect in reducing poverty in rural India.

### Digital India Connecting Rural India With Mainstream

Technology will play a significant role for access to quality education, healthcare and financial services in empowering people in non-urban and rural areas and Digital India is slowly but steadily connecting rural India with the mainstream. Prime Minister plans to provide government services online, expand Internet connectivity to rural areas



and boost manufacturing of electronic goods in the country. The Digital India programme can help in bridging the rural-urban digital divide through rural focused initiatives.

The Digital India programme is going to help in bridging the rural-urban digital divide through rural focused initiatives.

Strengthening digital infrastructure in rural areas is a major focus area under Digital India programme. Digital India Program will work for the prosperity and growth of rural population of the country.

Among the various schemes launched under Digital India, the Bharat Net Program aimed at establishing a high-speed digital highway to connect all 2,50,000 gram panchayats will clearly be a major step forward in strengthening the digital infrastructure of the country, especially in the rural areas. Additionally, the Next Generation Network project of BSNL can be expected to contribute to the modernisation of the telecom infrastructure in rural areas. The plan to set up WiFi hotspots all over the country would be extremely helpful to accelerate provision of broadband connectivity in India. It can be hoped, however, that the locations of such WiFi hotspots would be decided keeping in mind the need of the rural population of the country.

Digital technology like mobile and Internet seems to bring a positive change in the lives of Indian farmers. Farmers will be able to get information about weather such as rain forecast, wind speed, etc. by using features like SMS, Helplines, Voice messages etc. Information about crops, soils, climate, cultivation practices, financing, storage of produce and marketing in the farming communities will be available to every farmer at his finger tips so Indian agriculture and farming sector would be a big beneficiary of expansion of digital India.

By the year 2019, the 'Digital India' program of India envisages that 250,000 Indian villages will enjoy broadband connectivity, and universal phone connectivity.

The Prime Minister's vision of Digital India is strongly dependent upon dissemination of digital literacy to India's rural population, making at least one person in the family digitally literate.

The National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) proposes to provide Information Communication and Technology (ICT) training to 10 lakh (Ten lakh) persons initially, one in every eligible household in selected Blocks in each State/ UT of the country. Central government also plans to launch a Rs. 1,800 crore Digital Literacy Mission for 6 Crore people in rural areas as another initiative to bridge the gap between those who have access to and can use computers and the internet and those who don't.

These 6 crore people form almost 40 per cent of our rural population. The government target is to make each of these 60 million rural people digitally literate in three years.

As a part of PM Digital India initiative, Central government is all set to digitally connect all rural post offices by March 2017.

Government is going to digitally connect all 1,29,323 gramin dak sewa post offices in rural areas across the country by March 2017. The government has approved the Department of Posts' IT Modernization Project with a total outlay of Rs 4,909 crore aiming modernization, digitization and networking of around 1,55,000 post offices.

The government is also working on the concept of digital villages—rural areas that will have telemedicine facilities, virtual classes and solar power-based WiFi hot spots.

Developing digital infrastructure will not only help in technological advancement here, but bring a large so untapped population on the same page as the rest of the world. The telecommunication connectivity with rural India will not only boost e-commerce or literacy, it will certainly enhance the dialogue between the citizens and government. Activities like banking, providing subsidies, selling crops and other agro-products would become easy and efficient for the rural people. It will also positively affect the human resource development, GDP of the nation and strengthen democracy. After all, a well-connected nation is the first important step towards building a well-governed nation.

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# AUGMENTING SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE IN RURAL INDIA

Dr. Amiya Kumar Mohapatra

Empirical evidences revealed that qualitative and quantitative growth of rural housing always has positive impact on the rural people in terms of health, employment, income, wealth, productivity and welfare as well. Considering the above fact, the Government has taken a series of initiatives to fulfill the rural housing needs in particular.

The strengths and success of Indian economy certainly depends upon how the rural economy performs and progresses. In India, 69 per cent of the total population lives in villages and therefore rural development itself signifies its importance in all kinds of public policy making. Consequently, rural development can be used as an index of measuring economic development of our country. Economics of rural well-being rests on advancement of infrastructure especially on the social infrastructure, which brings qualitative changes in the life of the people. Social infrastructure plays a vital role in shaping the rural economy by enhancing people's capabilities, choices and quality of life. Amongst the social infrastructure, rural housing and rural drinking water by sources and availability determine mainly the state of well-being of the rural economy.

## Rural Housing:

Housing, like food and clothing, satisfies one of the fundamental needs of human being. How to own a house is the biggest challenge for a common man, especially in the rural India. Further empirical evidences revealed that qualitative and quantitative growth of rural housing always has positive impacts on the rural people in terms of health, employment, income, wealth, productivity and welfare as well. Considering the above fact, the Government has taken a series of initiatives to fulfill the rural housing needs in particular.

If we take the stock of housing, it is found that the total number of houses have increased from 18.7 crores (2001) to 24.5 crores (2011), that is around 30.7 per cent higher than 2001 housing stock. Correspondingly, rural housing stock has also increased by 23 per cent during that period. During the decade (2001-2011), a higher growth rate is recorded in terms of number of census rural houses (24.3 per cent), occupied census houses (23.1 per cent) and those being occupied and used as residence (23.9 per cent) in rural India.

The assessment of quality of rural housing depends on the types of houses like pucca and kutcha houses and obviously relies upon the types of material used for making roof, floor and wall of the houses. The change in material used during the decade, portrays a positive and progressive shifting in the areas of quality of rural housing.





Based on decadal changes with regards to types of material used for making roof, we find the evidence of improvement in quality of rural housing. The use of G.I./Metal/Asbestos sheets and concrete has increased whereas the use of grass/thatch/bamboo/wood/mud as roof building material has decreased between 2001 and 2011, indicating a shift towards sustainable houses (pucca).

The uses of stone and burnt bricks as material for making walls of houses have increased during the reference period and also, the use of mud or un-burnt bricks has fallen down, clearly signifying the qualitative improvement in wall in terms of material used. Besides, the preference for cement

and mosaic over mud as a material for floor during the decade is the testimony of quality improvement in rural housing (refer Table 1).

### Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (Earlier Known as Indira Awaas Yojana)

Government of India has already initiated and implemented various schemes to address the housing needs in rural India. Although rural housing has a history of long journey but its first dedicated scheme was introduced in 1996 in the name of “Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)”, with a sole objective to address and meet the housing needs of people living below poverty line in the rural areas. IAY was re-structured as “Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin” (PMAY-G) recently due to its limited scope

**Table-1: Qualitative Improvement in Rural Housing: A Decadal Analysis 2001-2011**

Material used for Roof/Wall/Floor–All India 2001 & 2011 ( per cent Change)				
1	Materials used-Roof	2001	2011	Change
Materials used-Roof	Grass/Thatch/Bamboo/Wood/Mud	27.7	20.0	-7.7
	Tiles	37.6	28.7	-8.9
	Handmade tiles	NA	18.3	-
	Machine made tiles	NA	10.4	-
	G. I. / Metal/ Asbestos sheets	9.8	15.9	6.1
	Concrete	11.0	18.3	7.3
	Others	14.0	17.1	3.1
2	Materials used-Wall	2001	2011	Change
Materials used-Wall	Grass/Thatch/Bamboo	12.6	11.9	-0.7
	Mud/ Un-burnt bricks	39.7	30.5	-9.2
	Stone	10.5	13.6	3.1
	Packed with mortar	NA	10.0	NA
	Not packed with mortar	NA	3.6	NA
	Burnt brick	34.2	40.0	5.8
	Others	3.0	3.9	0.9
3	Materials used-Floor	2001	2011	Change
Materials used-Floor	Mud	72.3	62.6	-9.7
	Stone	4.5	6.2	1.7
	Cement	18.0	24.2	6.2
	Mosaic/ Floor tiles	2.2	3.7	1.5
	Others	3.0	3.2	0.2

(Source: Census 2011, GoI)

of coverage, even after 20 years of its credential and existence.

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) was launched by the present government w.e.f 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2016, as a flagship rural housing scheme which is much wider in its scope and coverage and it targets to provide a pucca house with in-built basic amenities to all the roof less households and households living in kutcha and dilapidated houses by 2022. Its motto is to provide “House for All” in the rural areas. Endeavour is made to construct pucca and quality houses using local materials and designs, by adopting a habitat approach and in providing houses to one crore rural households, those are living in kutcha and dilapidated houses in the rural areas within a period three years from 2016 to 2019.

The estimated expenditure to implement the ‘Housing for All’ scheme under the PMAY-G to cover one crore households is Rs. 81,975 crore. Rs. 60,000 crore was allocated through budgetary provisions and the remaining amount of Rs.21,975 crore will be borrowed from NABARD to finance the gap.



### Indira Awaas Yojana: Allocation of Funds 2015-16

To augment rural housing, Central Government has allocated Rs. 9,50,875 lakh under Indira Awaas Yojana for the year 2015-16; out of which central share for target was Rs.9,14,302.885 lakh and Rs. 3,6,572.115 lakh were allocated for admin funds as a part of central share. Besides, north-eastern states got a fund allocation of Rs. 1,00,300 lakh whereas remaining states (excluding north-eastern

**Table-2: Notable Features of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)**

S. No	Key Factors/ Parameters	Notable Features of Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)
1	Demographic Coverage	Providing assistance for construction of one crore houses in rural areas.
2	Time Period	Over the period of 3 years from 2016-17 to 2018-19.
3	Built Area	Unit (house) size enhanced from the existing 20 sq. metres to 25 sq. metres including a dedicated area for hygienic cooking.
4	Funding Support	Enhancement of unit assistance from Rs.70,000 to Rs.1.20 lakh in plains and from Rs.75,000 to Rs.1.30 lakh in hilly states and difficult areas etc.
5	Cost Sharing	The cost of unit (house) assistance is to be shared between central and state governments in the ratio 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for north-eastern and hilly states
6	Provision of Toilets	Provision of toilets at Rs.12000/- and 90/95 days of unskilled wage labour under MGNREGA over and above the unit cost
7	Target Demography	The identification and selection of the beneficiaries shall be done by the community through the Gram Sabha, from the SECC-2011 list, based on the housing deficiency and other social deprivation parameters.
8	Mode of Payments	All payments through DBT to beneficiary’s Bank/Post office accounts registered in Awaas Soft MIS.

(Source: Draft Framework for Implementation of PMAY-G, MoRD, GoI)

states and union territories) got Rs. 8,49,575 lakh, out of the central allocation of Rs. 9,50,875 lakh.

Similarly, states share was Rs.571036.161 lakh, out of which, Rs.549073.232 was considered as state share of target and remaining Rs.21962.929 lakh was kept aside for state share of admin funds. The total allocation of fund for target combining centre and state (Rs.914302.885 lakh+ Rs.549073.232 lakh) was Rs.1463376.117 lakh, which was allocated to IAY during 2015-16 without considering the admin funds of both Centre and State. Out of this total target allocation, 92.61 per cent target allocation was made in favour of various states excluding North-eastern states and Union Territories. 7.32 per cent was marked for north-eastern states and the remaining target amount was distributed in favour of Union Territories.

**Table-3: Allocation under Indira Awaas Yojana 2015-16 (Total Allocation Target)**

S. No	Fund Allocation	Rs. in Lakh
1	Central Allocation	950875.000
2	Central Share for Target	914302.885
3	Central Share of Admin Funds	36572.115
4	State Share (60:40 and 90:10)	571036.161
5	State Share for Target	549073.232
6	State Share of Admin Funds	21962.929
7	Total Allocation for Target	1463376.117

(Source: Circular, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, MoRD, GoI)

**Table-4: Allocation under Indira Awaas Yojana 2015-16 (Physical Targets)**

S. No	Category/ Beneficiaries	Number of Units	per cent Share
1	Schedule Caste (SC)	731934	35.20 per cent
2	Schedule Tribe (ST)	506221	24.34 per cent
3	Minority Group	311702	14.99 per cent
4	Others	529289	25.46 per cent
5	Physical Target Total	2079146	100.00 per cent

(Source: Circular, 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2015, MoRD, GoI)



### Indira Awaas Yojana: Physical Targets 2015-16

The physical target under IAY has been worked out on the basis of fund sharing pattern. On the basis of fund allocation in 2015-16, it was targeted to achieve the target of 2079146 units of rural housing. Out of the set physical target, 731934 units (35.20 per cent) were allocated to SC category whereas 506221 units (24.34 per cent) were marked for ST category.

Similarly, 311702 units (14.99 per cent) were kept aside for minority group and the remaining 529289 units remained available for other category. Hence, in total, 1549857 numbers of dwelling units were sanctioned to SC, ST and minority category which was around 75 per cent of the total units allotted. North-eastern states got a share of 6.87 per cent and other states got a share of 93.06 per cent of the physical targets and the rest was allotted to UTs.

### Drinking Water in Rural India

Housing alone cannot support sustainable rural development unless supported by basic amenities like drinking water, sanitation, etc. Water is a basic human need. Every individual requires safe water for drinking, cooking and keeping themselves clean. The Government of India is making continuous efforts to provide clean and safe drinking water to all the citizens, especially to rural population.

### Main Sources of Drinking Water in Rural India

The main source of drinking water in India varies from place to place, time to time, area to area and state to state. The use of source relies on changed geo-climatic conditions that India has. The

**Table-5: Main Sources of Drinking Water in Rural India (as per cent of Households)**

S. No	Sources	2001	2011	Changed (in per cent)
1	Tap Water	24.3	30.8	+26.74
2	Hand Pump/ Tube Well	48.9	51.9	+6.13
3	Well Water	22.2	13.3	(-)40.09
4	Other Sources	4.5	4.0	(-)11.11
5	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

(Source: Census of India-2011, GoI)

primary sources of drinking water are tap water from treated sources, untreated sources, covered well, uncovered well, hand pumps, tube well, borehole, spring, canal/ river/tank/ pond / lake and other sources.

The census 2001 and 2011 data reveals that, there is a favorable shifting in the safe drinking water sources. From the decade analysis, it is evident that tap water as a source of drinking water has attained growth from 24.3 per cent (2001) to 30.8 per cent (2011). Consumption of well water has diminished by 40 per cent, delineating a pattern for tap water utilization as a noteworthy drinking water source. It is an encouraging sign for us. However, dependence on hand pump and tube well as a source of drinking water was exceeded by more than 50 per cent is a matter of concern.

#### Availability of Drinking Water in Rural India

The proximity and availability of sources of drinking water provide us the true picture of quality of life of rural people. The proximity and availability of drinking water source is divided into three categories namely; within the premises, near the premises (within 100 metres) and



**Table-6: Availability of Sources of Water in Rural India (as per cent of Households)**

Availability of Sources of Water	Within Premises		Near the Premises		Away	
	2001	2011	2001	2011	2001	2011
Rural Area	28.7	35	51.8	42.9	19.5	22.1
All India level	39	46.6	44.3	35.8	16.7	17.6

Source: Census of India-2011, GoI

away from the premises (beyond 500 metres in rural areas). On the basis of Census 2001-2011, it is found that 35 per cent rural households have access to drinking water within their premises, 42.9 per cent near the premises and 22.1 per cent away from the premises. The decade (2001-2011) change reflects that there has been a favourable shift in the availability of water in the premises in rural areas.

Although, drinking water by source and availability has improved over the years due to the continuous efforts of the government, still much is needed to be done to make drinking water available to all rural households on a sustainable basis, considering the adverse effect of climate change on water table. Government should collaborate with NGOs, private institutions to mark a success, by providing safe drinking water to all rural households to make the rural economy better.

#### Conclusion:

Just creation and provision of shelter and drinking water in the rural India is not enough but it should be continuous and sustainable. However, various initiatives and schemes undertaken for rural development should be redefined in order to customize them to meet the current needs of the people, in the context of changing socio-economic environment and public needs. In fact, democracy loses its shine if the poorer and the deprived masses of our country are not able to get their share in the areas of progress and prosperity of the country.

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# ROAD CONNECTIVITY THROUGH PMGSY: ACHIEVEMENTS, INITIATIVES AND CHALLENGES

Dr. Mahi Pal

PMGSY roads have to a large extent assisted in contributing towards the achievement of India's targets for the Millennium Development Goals relating to poverty reduction and removal of hunger by way of increasing agricultural production and creating job opportunities not only in construction sector but also in primary and secondary sectors of rural economy.

Infrastructure is an axis around which, various sectors of the economy revolve as it not only provides support to primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of the economy, but also expand capabilities of various stakeholders of development everywhere. Small and tiny businesses and enterprises spread over the countryside need access to good quality and reliable infrastructure for their development.

Infrastructure unlocks the huge potential of the population which is presently trapped in poverty and its associated deprivations. An analysis of the incidence of poverty across the states depicts that poverty is very closely related to the absence of social infrastructure. The 11<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission had constructed an index of infrastructure which included economic, social and administrative infrastructure indicators and found that incidence of poverty is low where index of infrastructure is high. For example, index of infrastructure is the highest (i.e. 187.5) in Punjab where incidence of poverty is the lowest (i.e. 9.15 per cent).

The roads as one of the components of the infrastructure in rural area is very important as these are like arteries which infuse life and raise hopes and aspirations among masses for a better quality of life. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act provides all weather rural road connectivity to unconnected villages and to connect identified rural production centres to the existing pucca road network and construction of pucca internal roads. Secondly, Rurban Mission also aims to create relevant infrastructure in rural areas and one of the components of the package of infrastructure covered under it is inter-road connectivity. But in this article, Pradhan Mantri Gram

Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) has been focused which aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to all eligible unconnected habitations, existing in the Core Network, in the rural areas. This article throws lights on the achievements, new initiatives taken and challenges faced by the programmes in meeting out the expectations of rural people in the country.

## Better Road Connectivity Through PMGSY

The PMGSY which came into being in 2000 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which envisages to provide single connectivity by way of all weather roads to 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, Tribal (Schedule-V) areas, the Desert Areas and in selected tribal and backward districts. In the blocks affected by insurgencies additional relaxation has been given to connect habitations with population 100 to 249 persons also. Programme also provides farm to market connectivity by way of up- gradating existing Routes and Major Rural Links to prescribed standards, though it is not central to the programme.



In recognition of the importance of the roads in the economy and society of rural India, the Budgetary outlay which was Rs. 14200 crores during 2014-15 under the PMGSY was raised to Rs. 18291 crores as revised outlay during 2015-16 which was further raised to Rs. 19000 crores during 2016-17.

PMGSY-II was launched in May, 2013 with the purpose to consolidate the existing rural road network. It covers upgradation of existing selected rural roads based on a criterion to make the rural road-network vibrant and improve its overall efficiency. The routes would be selected on the basis of identification of rural growth centres , other critical rural hubs , tourist places as these are crucial to the reduction of poverty through creation of relevant infrastructure. It is proposed to cover, overall 50,000 km road length by upgradation at an estimated cost of Rs.33,030 crore at 2012-13 prices during the 12th Five Year Plan period. Projects of 11, 235 Kms of roads with a value of 6,624 crore in the 6 States (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, UP) have also been sanctioned by the Ministry during 2015-16.

The status of new connectivity to eligible unconnected habitations under PMGSY-I is as follow. Out of total eligible habitations (1,78,184) at the time of starting of the PMGSY , projects have been sanctioned for 1,46,757 habitations and out of them ,116,310 habitations have been connected and the rest are yet to be connected. Besides, against the target length of 2,24,906 kms under upgradation of rural roads , 1,80,025 kms length of road have been sanctioned and 1,63,959 kms roads length have been completed during 2015-16. There are 1, 78, 184 eligible unconnected habitations as per the core network. Since inception, projects for about 5,46,552 kms roads to connect 1,45,041 number of habitations have been cleared with an estimated cost of Rs. 1,83,608 crores including upgradation. A sum of Rs. 1,33,128 crore has been released to the States/UTs and expenditure of Rs. 1,46,861 crore has been incurred by the States in 2015-16. A total of 4,62,025 km. road length has been completed against the sanctioned strength of 5,48,994 kms.

To give impetus for public investment in the rural sector particularly rural infrastructure, the Ministry has taken a decision to accelerate execution of PMGSY and complete the connectivity mandate of the balance eligible habitations under PMGSY-I by



March, 2019 itself, before the target year of 2022. As many as 15000 habitations with a road length of 48,812 are proposed to be connected during 2016-17 under PMGSY.

Quality of the roads are very important for their better outcomes . In this regard , it may be stated that a three tier Quality Control Mechanism( i.e. in house quality control, State Quality Monitors and National Quality Monitors) has been designed for the inspection of roads. The National Quality Monitors are managed and assigned inspections by National Rural Roads Development Agency an arm of the Ministry of Rural Development.

It may be seen from above discussion that continuous emphasis has been given to the Scheme for construction and maintenance of roads as these roads are very important for holistic development of the countryside.

### **New Initiatives:**

Various initiatives have been initiated recently to increase the outreach of the PMGSY.

1. To improve the socio-economic status of rural people, the present government has not only substantially increased allocation from Rs. 14,200 crores in 2014-15 to Rs. 19000 crores during 2016-17, but also decided to sustain the enhanced level of allocation of funds over the next three years.
2. It has been decided to advance the decision to complete targets three years before from 2022 to 2019 of the programme.
3. The pace of construction has been improved substantially during last two years (2014 to 2016) which is evident from the fact that

against the targets of connecting 14, 865 habitations, 18,488 have been connected. In a similar pace against the targets of completing length of road 55,424 kms, 72836 kms have been completed by investing Rs. 32,590 crores under the Scheme.

4. Focus on using green technologies like waste plastic, cold mix, cell filled concrete, geotextiles have been used in the construction of roads. As much as 3,218 kms roads have been constructed using green technologies and non-conventional materials.
5. "Meri Sadak" App has been launched to facilitate grievance redressal of citizen's complaints.
6. Gender and SC/ST budgeting have been initiated for inclusion of women SHGs and women Panchayat members at the time of preparation of detailed project reports.
7. Launching the **Pradhan Mantri Grameen Pariwahan Yojana (PMGPY)** shortly to improve access to safe and secure transport facilities on PMGSY roads. This initiative would help rural entrepreneurs, farmers and workers commute and transport goods as well.

### Implementation Programme Challenges:

Following are the challenges in the implementation of the programme.

1. The maintenance of roads which are older than 5 years is a major challenge before the programme. Although older roads were repaired through patchwork, they are in poor quality.
2. Each State has different mechanism of implementation of PMGSY. In some States, PIUs were implementing construction of roads under PMGSY as well as other schemes of the state government. Hence, less time available for PMGSY. The multiplicity of responsibility, without additional manpower being provided to the PIUs has been impacting the speed of execution in States like Jharkhand, Odisha and Rajasthan. This may likely to adversely affect the increased targets under the programme unless remedial measures are initiated immediately.

3. Delays in execution of construction of roads due to non clearance from forest department, railway crossings and in LWE affected areas. For example, in 2004 as many as 124 road works were not progressed due to lack of necessary clearance from Forest Department
4. The trees planted either side of the roads in convergence with Forest Department and MGNREGA need to maintain properly so that the high mortality rate among trees could be checked.
5. Although LWE affected areas have been relaxed to cover the habitations with 100 to 249 persons, this needs to be extended in other hill and tribal habitations which have a population less than 250. For instance, as per 2011 Census, out of 5,97,608 census villages, 82, 151 (14 per cent) villages had population less than 200 sparsely populated tribal, hill and desert areas. As per existing guidelines, they would not be covered under PMGSY.

### Conclusion:

To conclude, PMGSY roads have not only provided both direct and indirect benefits to village community but also greatly benefited to women in terms of more informed choices at their levels and easier access to the outer world. Hence, PMGSY roads have to a large extent assisted in contributing towards the achievement of India's targets for the Millennium Development Goals relating to poverty reduction and removal of hunger by way of increasing agricultural production and creating job opportunities not only in construction sector but also in primary and secondary sectors of rural economy. It would also be instrumental in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Seeing the political will of the government at the helm of the affairs, it is expected that the emerging challenges would be addressed squarely. Launching of PMGPY shortly would utilise the rural road network to provide transport at affordable rates to rural people.

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# DRIVING AGRO-ECONOMY TOWARDS GREATER GLORY

Nirendra Dev

India is now eyeing second Green Revolution in eastern India. The need for enhanced investment in agriculture with twin focus on higher quality productivity and welfare of farmers is rightly emphasized from time to time by the Prime Minister. In the entire scenario, the government has laid emphasis on the awareness campaign and enhanced agri-knowledge for the farming community.

In India successful management of economy and political life is seen as a true test case of nation's success as a democracy and its march towards a greater glory. But given the vastness of the country, immense geographical differences and sharp rise in population graph, there are certain grey areas vis-a-vis developmental works and infrastructures. However, the present government at the Centre is certainly looking into these challenges.

For a start, a number of schemes have already been envisaged with adequate fund allocation and tasks ear-marked even at micro-level. The plans actually relating to basic rural infrastructures with focus on agro-development are sought to be addressed in a rather cohesive and more direct manner than before. Steps have been accordingly taken and schemes tailored to ensure creation of gainful employment in villages and small towns through help to generate a resource base at the household level, improve agriculture and allied sectors and, ultimately, usher in rural happiness and prosperity. It goes without saying that the uplift of rural infrastructure is one of the most important factors for the overall growth of the Indian economy.

It is also true that India is primarily an agriculture-based

country wherein farm activities ultimately contributes nearly one-fifth of the gross domestic product.

Thus, it is imperative to understand that in order to enhance the growth of the country and in order to achieve inclusive growth plans as envisaged in Prime Minister much talked about slogan 'Sabka Saath-Sabka Vikas (With all-Development for all), rural infrastructures in agriculture and allied sectors would be very important.

The rural development in India has witnessed several changes over the years in its emphasis, approaches, strategies and programmes. However, despite a well spread out and adequately staffed rural development machinery, it has been experienced that the results of certain integrated rural development schemes remained unsatisfactory – often due to implementation lapses and leakages.



Thus, we have the experiences of rural areas often with high concentration of poverty given the background of disguised unemployment in agriculture.

The incumbent government headed by the Prime Minister has hence, taken some basic corrective steps. It has tried to focus on basic infrastructure necessities like effective irrigation mechanism and also launched the ambitious Soil Health Card strategy. Emphasis is also on proper execution as we know the effective implementation is the touchstone of any result-oriented planning, ensured people's participation in rural areas is the centre-piece in the development of agro-economy.

Prime Minister himself has number of times emphasized in unambiguous terms that people's participation is the foremost pre-requisites of development process chiefly from philosophical perspectives.

To cite a few illustrations of government initiatives, in September 2015, the Union Cabinet approved **Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Rurban Mission (SPMRM)** and earmarked over Rs 5,000 crore to develop at least 300 clusters over next three years across the country.

Importantly, seeking to achieve catalyzing overall regional growth, the programme aims to strengthen rural areas in basic infrastructures like roads and electrification with adequate jobs and "de-burdening" the urban areas. Thus it seeks for balanced regional development particularly in rural pockets.

Among other features, the programme also envisaged agriculture processing, agriculture market, go-downs and warehouses. It is certainly appreciated that these actually linked to gainful employment – a vital feature to keep rural India attractive especially for the younger generation.

In the Union Budget for 2016-17, the Central Government drew out mechanisms also to develop governance capabilities of Panchayati Raj Institutions on the Sustainable Development Goals. In this connection, the Finance Minister announced a new scheme namely '**Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**', for which Rs. 655 crore were set apart.



It is important here to reflect upon what's at hand for the Government of India or the Union Rural Development ministry or the Agriculture ministry – catering to rural infrastructures - with regard to ensuring food security in India. In the words of Prof M S Swaminathan, former chairman of National Farmers Commission, the foremost priority should be the well-being of Indian farmers simply because agriculture is the mainstay of the people. "First it is imperative to protect the interests of the farmers. Most problems with regard to the farming community like reasonable prices for their products, doing away with middlemen are manmade. In India, we cherish democracy. Democracy is all about majority, and that way we stand as a country of farmers as for majority of the population in the country, agriculture is the mainstay," Prof Swaminathan had told this writer not long back.

To catch up with the pressing needs, therefore, there is talk about larger investments from both public and private to the Agriculture sector and rural upliftment. Sometime back, the private sector investment in agriculture had actually risen from about 8 per cent to anything between 9.9 to 10 per cent or little more. The Central Government has from time to time only underlined that larger investments in agriculture could only help sustained growth in other sectors like industries.

According to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, India's robust growth rate when compared to other countries has also rendered in attractive destination for foreign investment. "Public investment in India



in the last few years has significantly picked up. In this regard we have been helped by the global economic situation where oil and commodity prices being moderate have helped us in accumulating a lot of savings.”

In fact, the first half of this financial year 2016-16, has witnessed an improvement in private sector’s willingness to invest in infrastructures. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), as against 2015-16, there has been about 43 per cent increase in the value of new project announcements.

In 2015-16, new projects worth Rs. 44,607 crore were announced. The Agriculture Ministry officials say that infrastructure development in rural areas and agrarian fields will also mean impounding of rainwater in ponds and using it for critical irrigation particularly in low rainfall areas. While many states have enacted legislation to ensure water harvesting both in urban and rural areas to supplement irrigation water supplies, in 2014 the Modi government launched the ambitious Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana. In more ways than one, this is being seen as a ‘game changer’.

The Union Budget for fiscal 2016-17 also pledged that steps will be taken to reorient its interventions in the farm and non-farm sectors to double the income of the farmers by 2022. Stating that the ‘**Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana**’ has been strengthened and will be implemented in mission mode, 28.5 lakh hectares will be brought under irrigation. The government has also announced creation of a dedicated Long Term Irrigation Fund in the NABARD

bank with an initial corpus of about Rs. 20,000 crore. Simultaneously, a major programme for sustainable management of ground water resources has been prepared with an estimated cost of Rs. 6,000 crore.

The government has meanwhile taken other related steps. It has approved Mega Food Parks in several states including the likes of Jharkhand, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Tripura. The Mega Food Parks Scheme (MFPS), a flagship programme of the Food Processing ministry is aimed at ensuring an efficient supply chain.

The cold chain scheme with adequate storage arrangements was approved with an objective to provide integrated and complete cold chain, value addition and preservation infrastructure facilities. The assistance under the scheme includes financial assistance for installing plants and machinery and technical civil works in general areas. Special funding mechanism under this has been drawn for rural areas as also far-flung northeastern states.

The government has been also lately encouraging use of self propelled combine harvesters. The combine harvester includes a threshing module, a separating module and a cleaning module. Driven by the technology these harvesters are economical in operation and ensures high crop recovery.

The Green Revolution had heralded the first round of changes in Indian rural economy and agri movement. India is the largest producer of pulses and also the consumer. It is second largest producer of wheat, rice, sugar, groundnut as also in production of cash crops like coffee, coconut and tea.

India is now eyeing second Green Revolution in eastern India. The need for enhanced investment in agriculture with twin focus on higher quality productivity and welfare of farmers is rightly emphasized from time to time by the Prime Minister. In the entire scenario, the government has laid emphasis on the awareness campaign and enhanced agri-knowledge for the farming community. But besides the measures to improve minimum support price and assistance like improved irrigation and rural electrification, the mandatory regime has laid emphasis on the Soil Health Card Scheme.

Awareness of soil health position and the role of manures would help in higher production of foodgrains in eastern India too and this would help tackle the decline in production in central and peninsular India.

Launched by the Central Government in February 2015, the scheme is tailor-made to issue 'Soil Card' to farmers which will carry crop-wise recommendations of nutrients. This is aimed to help farmers to improve productivity through judicious use of inputs.

This path-breaking initiative would create a golden opportunity for the farmers to improve the productivity of their crops and also go for diversification. A comprehensive growth in agriculture production and also focused approach for uplift of allied sectors like animal husbandry, bee-keeping and fisheries will certainly contribute significantly to ensuring food security of the country.

*(The Author is a New Delhi-based Senior Journalist and a keen observer of Rural Development and Agro-Economy. Email: nirendev1@gmail.com)*

### Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Gramin)

Prime Minister formally launched "Housing for All" in rural areas under which the Government proposes to provide an environmentally safe and secure pucca house to every rural household by 2022. The scheme is named as Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana (Gramin), at the recently concluded Agra Parivartan Rally in Agra, U.P. The PM saw over 40 of the over 200 building designs and interacted with newly trained Rural Masons and beneficiaries which were showcased to him. The main highlights of the scheme are:

- 'Housing for All' in rural areas under which the Government proposes to provide an environmentally safe and secure pucca house to every rural household by 2022.
- The target of the first phase is to complete one crore houses by March 2019 and minimum support of nearly Rs. 1.5 lakh to Rs. 1.6 lakh to a household is available.
- Provision of bank loan upto Rs. 70,000/-, if the beneficiary so desires.
- A major step forward in bringing together Skill India, Digital India, Make In India, IT/DBT Aadhaar platform and Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY).
- Programme provides for skilling 5 lakh Rural Masons by 2019 and allows over 200 different housing designs across the country based on a detailed study of housing typologies, environmental hazards and the households' requirements
- Large scale use of local materials is envisaged along with a complete home with cooking space, electricity provision, LPG, toilet and bathing area, drinking water etc through convergence.
- All payments are through IT/DBT mode with Aadhaar linked Bank accounts with consent, to ensure complete transparency and accountability.
- A 45 days on site hands-on skill training of Rural Masons to help poor households to better their skills.



# RURAL HEALTH CARE INFRASTRUCTURE IN INDIA

Shashi Rani Dev

To meet the health care need of the rural population, the assessment of the infrastructure should be based on the availability and accessibility to the basic health services. The shortage in the basic infrastructure and manpower not only have direct impact on availability and accessibility of the health care services by rural population, but also having greater impact on the health status of the people

**H**ealth is a basic human right. It means that everyone has the right to the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, which includes access to all medical services, sanitation, adequate food, decent housing, healthy working conditions, and a clean environment. As defined by World Health Organization (WHO), it is a “State of complete physical, mental, and social well being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity”.

The Constitution of India gives its every citizen the right to health as a fundamental right. As per the constitution of India under Article 21 which says that “the right to life includes the right to health”.

Health comes under the State List of the Seventh Schedule of the Indian constitution. It is the duty of the state to ensure and protect the right to health and sanitation; hospitals and dispensaries. Any failure of this right is the violation of the right of life. So, it is very important for the state to primarily focus on the basic health care system for a healthy society.

As per the 2011 Census, the total population of India was 121 crore. Among this, the rural population was 83.3 crore (68.84 per cent) and 37.7 crore (31.16 per cent). It is seen that the rural population is more than twice than the urban population. The irony of the health system since independence is the basic health care facilities and policies are mainly urban centric. All the main and reputed hospitals are mainly located at the state capital and the district headquarter. The rural villages are always neglected where the basic health facilities are required. 2279 rural villages had increased between the Census 2001

and 2011. In 2001 Census, the total number of villages were 6,38,588 and in 2011, it increased to 6,40,867. But the health facilities are not available in each village.

In India, there are two land mark initiatives with regard to health care structure. First, the Bhore Committee, 1946 which stated that every citizen of India should get the basic health care regardless of their paying capacity. It was a very clear message to the newly established post independence Government of India to take care of the population with the provision of basic health care facility. Second, post independence, the Alma Atta Declaration guided all the governments to frame their health care policies. Further, the Government of India started various health care programmes (Box 1) and set up various health care policies mentioned in the Table 1.

The major health policy in India came into effect as National Health Policy (NHP) in 1983 which was after the 36 years of Independence,



### Box 1

1. National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP)
2. School Health Programme
3. Operational Guidelines / Financial Guidelines
4. Prevention & Control of Non Communicable Diseases
5. Pilot Programme on Prevention and Control of Diabetes, CVD and Stroke
6. National Programme for Prevention and Control of Deafness
7. Universal Immunization Programme
8. National Cancer Control Programme
9. National Aids Control Programme
10. National Mental Health Programme
11. National Iodine Deficiency Disorder Control Programme
12. National Programme for Control of Blindness
13. Revised National TB Control Programme (RNTCP)
14. National Leprosy Eradication Programme
15. National Filaria Control Programme
16. National Tobacco Control Program

clearly showed that the government focus was not primarily on the health of the people of this country. After that, other major health care initiatives

such as Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP), Reproductive Child Health (RCH), National Population Policy (NPP) and National Health Policy (NHP) 2002 also had been undertaken. At present, the country's health care structure is as per the guidance provided under the National Health Mission (NHM). Further keeping in view the separate requirement of the health care needs of the rural and urban areas, separate arrangements were made under the banner ship of National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) and National Urban health Mission (NUHM).

### National Rural Health Mission (NRHM):

The NRHM was launched on 12th April, 2005 throughout the country with special focus on 18 states, including eight Empowered Action Group (EAG) States, the North-eastern States, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. The NRHM seeks to provide accessible, affordable and quality health care to the rural population, especially the vulnerable sections. The key features of the Mission include making the public health delivery system fully functional and accountable to the community, human resources management, community involvement, decentralisation, rigorous monitoring and evaluation against standards, convergence of health and related programmes from village level upwards, innovations and flexible financing and also interventions for improving the health indicators.

In order to achieve the objectives of NRHM, the Core and Supplementary Strategies were planned and adopted which are as under:

**Table 1:**  
**Milestones of Health Care Policies**

Policy	Year
Health Survey and Development Committee (HSDC) also known as Bhore Committee	1946
National Family Planning Programme (NFPP)	1952
Alma Ata Declaration	1978
National Health Policy (NHP)	1983
Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP)	1985
Reproductive Child Health (RCH)	1996
National Population Policy (NPP)	2000
National Health Policy (NHP)	2002
National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)	2005

## Core Strategies:

- Train and enhance capacity of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) to own, control and manage public health services;
- Promote access to improved healthcare at household level through the female health activist (ASHA);
- Health Plan for each village through Village Health, Sanitation & Nutrition Committee of the Panchayat;
- Strengthening Sub Centre through a fund to enable local planning and action and more multi-purpose workers (MPWs);
- Strengthening existing PHCs and CHCs, and provision of 30-50 bedded CHC per lakh population for improved curative care to a normative standard (Indian Public Health Standards defining personnel, equipment and management standards);
- Preparation and implementation of an inter-sectoral District Health Plan prepared by the District Health Mission, including drinking water, sanitation & hygiene and nutrition;
- Integrating vertical health and family welfare programmes at national, State, district, and block levels;
- Technical support to national, State and district health missions for public health management;
- Strengthening capacities for data collection, assessment and review for evidence based planning, monitoring and supervision;
- Formulation of transparent policies for deployment and career development of human resources for health;
- Developing capacities for preventive health care at all levels for promoting healthy life styles, reduction in consumption of tobacco and alcohol etc. promoting non- profit sector particularly in underserved areas.

## Supplementary Strategies:

- Regulation of private sector including the informal rural practitioners to ensure availability of quality service to citizens at a reasonable cost. Promotion of Public Private Partnerships for achieving public health

goals. Mainstreaming AYUSH - revitalizing local health traditions.

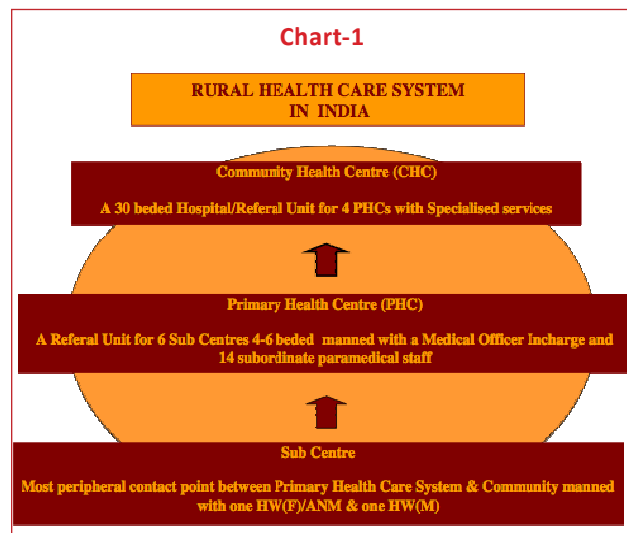
- Reorienting medical education to support rural health issues including regulation of Medical care and Medical Ethics.

In the above context, it is very important to look at the present scenario of the health care system for the 121 million population of India and especially for the rural population which is more than double than urban population.

The health care infrastructure in rural areas has been developed as a three tier system (See Chart-1) and is based on the following population norms given in Table 2.

Centre	Population Norms	
	Plain Area	Hilly/Tribal/ Difficult Area
Sub Centre (SC)	5,000	3,000
Primary Health Centre (PHC)	30,000	20,000
Community Health Centre (CHC)	1,20,000	80,000

Source: Rural Health Statistics 2014-15, M/o HFW, GoI.



## Status of Health Infrastructure in Rural Areas:

### Sub Centres (SCs):

The Sub Centre is the most peripheral and first contact point between the primary health care

system and the community. Sub Centres are assigned tasks relating to interpersonal communication in order to bring about behavioral change and provide services in relation to maternal and child health, family welfare, nutrition, immunisation, diarrhoea control and control of programmes. Each Sub Centre is required to be manned by at least one auxiliary nurse midwife (ANM) /female health worker and one male health worker. There were 1,53,655 Sub-Centres functioning in the country as on 31st March, 2015.



### Primary Health Centre (PHCs):

PHC is the first contact point between village community and the medical officer. The PHCs were envisaged to provide an integrated curative and preventive health care to the rural population with emphasis on preventive and promotive aspects of health care. There were 25,308 PHCs functioning in the country as on 31st March, 2015.

### Community Health Centre (CHCs):

CHCs are being established and maintained by the State government under MNP/BMS programme. As per minimum norms (Table 2), a CHC is required to be manned by four medical specialists i.e. surgeon, physician, gynecologist and pediatrician supported by 21 paramedical and other staff

**Table 3:**  
**Status of Health Infrastructure in Rural Areas as per 2011 population in India (As on 31st March, 2015)**

Health Infra-structure	Required	In Position	Shortfalls	per cent Shortfall
Sub Centres (SCs)	179240	153655	35145	20
PHCs	29337	25308	6556	22
CHCs	7322	5396	2316	32

Source: Rural Health Statistics 2014-15, M/o HFW, Gol.

It serves as a referral centre for 4 PHCs and also provides facilities for obstetric care and specialist consultations. As on 31st March, 2015, there were 5,396 CHCs functioning in the country. The data from the Table- 3 reveals that there is still shortfall in health infrastructure against the required needs. In the case of sub-centre, the shortfall is of 20 per cent against the required numbers of sub-centres. Similarly, for PHCs and CHCs, the shortfall is of 22 per cent and 32 per cent respectively. This indicates that if government wisher to provide

**Table 4:**  
**Status of Health Manpower in Rural Areas as per 2011 population in India (As on 31st March, 2015)**

Manpower	Required	Sanctioned	In Position	Vacant	Shortfall
Health Worker (Female) / ANM at Sub Centres	153655	178480	193191	18226	3934
Health Worker (Male) at Sub Centres	153655	93002	55657	37888	98027
Health Assistances (Female)/LHV at PHCs	25308	22993	13372	9636	12448
Health Assistances (Male) at PHCs	25308	23505	12646	11019	15513
Doctors at Primary Health Centres	25308	34750	27421	9389	3002
Surgeons at CHCs	5396	3320	896	2477	4500
Obstetricians & Gynaecologists at CHCs	5396	3429	1296	2242	4115
Physicians at CHCs	5396	2772	918	1889	4479
Paediatricians at CHCs	5396	2484	968	1560	4432
Radiographers at CHCs	5396	4167	2150	2032	3406

Source: Rural Health Statistics 2014-15, M/o HFW, Gol.



maximum coverage to the rural population with basic health care infrastructure, it needs to fill up the gaps that are existing at present.

If we look at the data from Table-4 with regard to health care manpower in rural areas, it shows that against the required number 153655 of health workers (Female)/ANM at sub centres, there are 18226 vacant positions and there is a shortfall of 3934 positions. Even at PHCs level, Female Health Assistance positions, 9636 are vacant and there is a shortfall of 12448 positions. For the Doctors ,9389 positions are also vacant at the PHCs level, which is the primary unit for health care need.

The CHC that were established to provide referral and specialist services for the rural population are also having the gaps in terms of infrastructural provisions. The data shows that there is shortfall in various positions, for surgeons 2477 positions are vacant, another important position is of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists in which 2242 positions are vacant. For the Physicians 1889, Paediatricians 1560 and for Radiographers 2032 positions are vacant. The Table-4 indicates the need to review the efforts made to create basic health care infrastructure for the rural population as per the requirement. For the rural population, health care requirements are different than the urban due to various social economic reasons.

### Way Forward:

Many studies suggests that to meet the health care need of the rural population, the assessment of the infrastructure should be based on the availability and accessibility to the basic health services. The shortage in the basic infrastructure and manpower not only have direct impact on availability and accessibility of the health care services by rural population, but also having greater impact on the health status of the people. It is important to look at the social determinants of health and its relation

with the health status of the people. The WHO also emphasised on the need to consider the social determinants of health before making policy and programmes.

According to the WHO, the Social determinants of health are “the circumstances in which people are born, grow up, live, work and age, and the systems put in place to deal with illness. These circumstances are in turn shaped by a wider set of forces: economics, social policies, and politics.”

In rural areas, people experience different social and economic barriers such as lack of basic health education and awareness, gender discrimination, economic constraints, lack of transport facilities etc. All these barriers exposed them to different challenges to access the basic health services which create health inequalities.

As far as the need of basic rural health care infrastructure is concerned, the government should consider the socio and economic disparities that are existing in our country and various challenges faced by the rural population . Also, the government should focus on to fill up the gaps that are existing in the present health care systems and accordingly the efforts needs to put forward.

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# Kurukshetra

FORTHCOMING ISSUE

January 2017

: Animal Husbandry

# PROVIDING QUALITY EDUCATION IN RURAL AREAS

JP Pandey

Ensuring quality education of all children especially in rural area is highest priority of government. Emphasis should be on providing infrastructural support to all existing schools and to ensure quality education rather than increasing the number of school. Needless to say that Government's initiative to provide infrastructural support has improved the situation.

**M**ajority of India still lives in villages therefore the topic of rural education in India is of utmost importance.

The number of rural students, attending schools is, rising and 96 per cent of children in the age group of 6-14 are enrolled in a school. The foundation to turn India into a strong nation has to be laid down at primary and rural levels, so the quality of education right from the beginning should be excellent. Right to Education Act passed in 2009 made education a fundamental right of every Indian citizen. India, with more than a billion residents, has the second largest education system in the world (after China). Experts estimate that 32 per cent of its current population is under the age of 15 years. Education system has a huge challenge to provide quality education especially in rural areas.

Following are the main infrastructural bottlenecks in rural schools, that can be worked upon to improve education in rural areas.

## School Infrastructure:

School building, furniture, textbooks, libraries, laboratories, uniforms, and mid-day meals are basics of school infrastructure. Paucity of proper class rooms is concern in rural schools. All classrooms need refurbishing or upgrading to acceptable minimum standards for learning. India needs almost more than a million new classrooms largely in rural and marginalized areas, to accommodate those who are not in schools and properly accommodate those students already studying in schools. More classrooms will alleviate overcrowding and cut class sizes. Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) prescribes the minimum infrastructure required in school.

1. The school must have about 2 acres or as otherwise permitted measurement of land and a building constructed on a part of land and proper playground on the remaining land. It should provide minimum floor space of 1 Sq. Mtr. per student in the class.



2. The school should have a well equipped and spacious library with minimum of 1500 books and at least 15 magazines. Also, the school should maintain pupil book ratio 1:5.
3. The school should have at least 1 computer lab with minimum 10 computers or computer students ratio of 1:20 and internet connection.
4. Adequate facilities should be provided for recreational activities and physical education as well as for conduct of various activities and programmes for the social, cultural, physical and moral development of students and for safeguarding their health.
5. Science labs composite for secondary or/ separate physics, chemistry, biology labs for senior secondary should be available. Minimum size should be 9m\*6m each, approximately 600 sq. Ft / students.
6. Separate toilet block for boys and toilets for girls to be installed as per norms. A closed container for disposal of sanitary napkins to be provided within each cubicle for girls.
7. Safe drinking water source inside school premises is mandatory. There should be minimum 500 Ltrs water tank for every 100 children.

### Teaching Staff:

Small schools are a significant feature of the educational landscape in India, with approximately 78 per cent of primary schools having three or fewer teachers to attend to all grade levels. If the quality and commitment along with number of teachers can be improved in these schools, then aspiring rural children can fulfill their dreams of doing something great. Some government schools in rural India are overly packed with students, leading to a distorted teacher- student ratio. It is difficult for teachers to pay full attention towards each and every student. The pupil to teacher ratio (PTR) in primary and upper primary schools in India was 28:1 and 30:1 respectively in 2013-2014. The Right to Education (RTE) Act recommends a PTR of 30:1 for primary classes and 35:1 for upper primary classes.

### Accessibility to School:

The lack of proper connectivity makes it difficult to reach school. Students need to cross the



rivers, dense forest and difficult terrain or to cycle or walk a considerable distance, through narrow muddy paths and wading across streams to reach the school. In difficult weather conditions, it's almost impossible for them to reach the schools. Schools in high reaches, deserts, far flung areas of North East and Jammu and Kashmir are often closed due to accessibility issues.

The Government has formulated a proposal for providing the road connections to more than 38,484 villages above 1000 population and all 20,867 habitations above 500 populations in hilly and tribal areas. A sum of approximately Rs.48, 000 crore is proposed to be invested to achieve this. With implementation of such schemes, accessibility is improving which will enable students to attend schools.

### Separate Toilets for Boys and Girls:

Adequate sanitary facilities and water for hygiene are also lacking in rural schools. The health implications of inadequate toilets and sanitation can be serious. Girls in particular are pushed out of school if facilities are inadequate. Older primary-age girls are unlikely to continue at school after they attain puberty if sanitary facilities are poor or non-existent. "Swacch Vidyalaya Abhiyan", an initiative taken by Prime Minister, in this regard is proving to be revolutionary for improving the sanitation facilities in rural schools.

### Electricity and Internet Connectivity :

Electricity and Internet are essential requirements to meet the high education standards. Electricity has not reached to the many remote areas. Frequent electricity cuts make it

difficult to use electricity operated educational tools in the school. Study says that only 60 per cent of schools have electric connections in India. Nowadays Internet has become a vital tool in education. Without an internet connection in most of the remote area schools, it can be difficult to use smart classes and virtual class room facility to provide quality education to the children. Central Government in Union Budget 2016-17 promised for 100 per cent electrification in all the villages. It will provide impetus to knowledge dissemination efforts in sub-urban parts of India.

### Poverty:

In rural India, people struggle to meet their basic needs. Their low income is hardly enough to cover daily supplies of food and shelter, let alone education. Children are needed to work in fields, which eventually mean that they drop out of school, usually after their primary education. A report by UNICEF estimates that there is a 40-percentage point difference in attendance rate between primary (69.4 per cent) and secondary (39.1 per cent) of students coming from poor families. In rural areas, 15.9 per cent of boys and 17.3 per cent of girls in age group of 15 to 16 years are currently out of school. If the rural infrastructure are developed to reduce the unemployment level and income of people is increased, people in rural India will automatically be encouraged to send their children to schools.

### Infrastructural support: Government Initiatives

Education is a state responsibility, consequently, state and local governments provide more than 90 per cent of the funding for public education up to Class 12<sup>th</sup>. Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) shows that 71 per cent of students are receiving education in government schools in the 6 to 14 age group. Beside this, Central government has also taken various steps to provide Infrastructural support.

- **Scheme for Infrastructure Development in Minority Institutes (IDMI)** has been operationalised to aid Infrastructure in Private Aided/Unaided Minority Schools in order to enhance quality of education to minority



children. The scheme will fund infrastructure development to the extent of 75 per cent and subject to a maximum of Rs. 50 lakhs per institution for strengthening of educational infrastructure and physical facilities in the existing schools including additional classrooms, science / computer lab rooms, library rooms, toilets, drinking water facilities and hostel buildings.

- In order to create a pool of quality teachers, the Government launched the Scheme of Restructuring and Re-organization of Teacher Education in 1987. The aim of this scheme was to create a sound institutional infrastructure for pre-service and in-service training of elementary and secondary school teachers and for provision of academic resource support to elementary and secondary schools.
- Cleanliness and Sanitation has been major concern of Central Government. On 15<sup>th</sup> August 2014, Prime Minister announced the **Swacch Vidyalaya Abhiyan** and promised to build separate toilets for 137.7 million boys and girls at 11.2 lakhs schools nationwide within a year. On 15<sup>th</sup> Aug 2015, The Ministry of Human Resource Development, the nodal ministry, announced that 100 per cent targets of building 4,17,796 toilets has been achieved, thus now, separate toilets for boys and girls have been made available in all schools across India. Sanitation facility has a direct relation with drop-out rates. But now with the availability of toilet facilities, we can

hope to improve education in rural areas, however, continuous efforts are needed for upkeep and cleanliness of these toilets.

- **Digital Literacy Mission** has been started for rural India with a target to cover 6 crore new households within next 3 years. Government's effective usage of technology for imparting education in the remote parts can be a game changer in changing education's scenario.
- Education has been listed amongst the "9 pillars" in the Union Budget 2015-16. Allocation of Rs 72,394 crore compared to Rs 68,963 crore for last year is 4.9 per cent increase. In 2015-16, Rs 43,554 crore were allocated for school education and Rs 28,840 crore were allocated for higher education. However, education sector budget needs to be around 6 per cent of the GDP.
- The programme like **Skill India**, efforts of modernization of the ways of agriculture, effective implementations of schemes like **MNREGA** and **Mid-Day meal** will boost the rural economy and in turn, will increase the education level and standard also. Government focus on skills development and entrepreneurship should decrease the poverty level. Allocation of Rs 1,700 crore for 1500 multi-skill development centers, target of skilling one crore youth in the next 3 years under the **Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana** and allocation of Rs 500 crore for promoting entrepreneurship among SC/ST will encourage more and more people to send their children to schools. It has also been decided in Union Budget 2016-17 to open 62 more Navodaya Vidyalayas especially in remote areas to impart quality education.
- As part of the Central Government's commitment to make secondary education of good quality available, accessible and affordable to all students, **Rashtriya Madhyamik education Abhiyan** (RMSA) has been launched in public schools throughout India. The allocation for 2014-15 for the composite scheme of RMSA has been Rs.5000 crore. 10513 new secondary schools have been approved under the Scheme, out

of which, 9239 new secondary schools have been made functional. Strengthening of 35539 existing schools have been approved under RMSA scheme in which 24581 new science lab, 30761 art/craft/culture rooms, 19510 toilet blocks. With regard to teachers, 107480 teachers (including 41507 additional teachers) have been sanctioned for secondary schools. Out of which 59353 teachers have been appointed.

- Some of the other initiatives for improving school education in rural area have also been taken. **E-Pathshala** provides Web-site containing 364 ebooks, 137 videos and 100 audios books. **Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat (PBBB)** focuses on early learning on reading and arithmetic in Class Ist and IInd. **Rashtriva Avishkar Abhivan (RAA)** was launched to motivate and encourage schools and students in science, mathematics and technology.

### Conclusion:

Schools are the temples of learning. Education transforms lives and it is mandatory to build peace, eradicate poverty and drive sustainable development. Students of rural schools are very talented. They know how to survive in even very harsh situations. They know amazing variety of things. Many children here have amazing skills - drawing, making cane baskets and implements, weaving clothes and so on. Thus, infrastructures have to be upgraded to provide all important forms of learning.

Ensuring quality education of all children especially in rural area is highest priority of government. Emphasis should be on providing infrastructural support to all existing schools and to ensure quality education rather than increasing the number of school. Needless to say that Government's initiative to provide infrastructural support has improved the situation. Effective implementation of its various schemes for the elementary stage and for secondary level will ensure quality education to millions of children in rural areas.

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## SWACHHTA PAKHWADA OBSERVED BY MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND FARMER'S WELFARE

The Swachhta Pakhwada was observed this year from 16th to 31st October, 2016 in all the three Departments under the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, namely Department of Agriculture, Cooperation & Farmers Welfare, Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying & Fisheries and Department of Agricultural Research & Education, as per the directions of Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

Swachhta drive was carried out in Agricultural Mandis, Fish Markets & villages near each Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). During the Pakhwada, the focus was to put certain measures that are dynamic and to be continued beyond Pakhwada period. Some of the activities carried out are as under:

- Cleaning drives were undertaken in 271 Agricultural Mandis. Under their Swachhta Action Plan, provision of Rs.10 lakh was made for each mandi for setting up waste management plants under e-Nam scheme. Also, under RKVY, one per cent fund will be spent on Solid and Waste Management. Various offices under the three Departments were cleaned involving, installation of sensors in toilets, installation of motorized grinder and weeding out of unwanted records, removing encroachments and all junk lying in the offices. Hon'ble Agriculture & Farmers Welfare Minister was involved in cleanliness & plantation drive at Krishi Bhavan on 26<sup>th</sup> October, 2016 and at Agricultural Mandi in Chandigarh on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2016. Centers of All India Soil & Land Use Survey of India involved local MPs/ public representatives in the Swachhta Activities. A Compost pit was also inaugurated in SLUSI, Kolkata. Compost Machines were installed in the Mandis in coordination with States.
- The National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Fishery Survey of India (FSI), Central Institute of Fisheries Nautical and Engineering Training, (CIFNET), National Institute of Fisheries Post Harvest Technology and Training (NIFPHATT), Central Institute of Coastal Engineering for Fishery (CICEF), in coordination with State/UTs conducted the following major activities during the Swachhta Pakhwada:
  - Cleaning of 50 wholesale & retail Fish markets in 15 states was carried out and also awareness about maintenance of cleanliness was spread during this drive.
  - Cleaning of Institute Buildings and premises by all the Subordinate institutes under Fishery Division.
  - Awareness camps including Padayatra (procession) on hygienic Fish handling, maintaining cleanliness in fish markets, cleanliness in processing, cleanliness in marketing etc. and distribution of Pamphlets.



- Conducting of State level Workshops viz., (i) Recycling of waste through integrated fish farming for NE States at NFDB NE Center, Guwahati (ii) Waste Water Aquaculture, Nalban, Kolkata etc.



- Hon'ble Members of Parliament, State Fisheries Minister from West Bengal, Mayors and Councilors from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, Senior officials from the State Fisheries Department, District Collectors etc. actively participated in the Swachhta Pakhwada activities. Minister of State for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare also participated in cleanliness activities at Amreli (Gujarat). Also, the Fish vendors, retailers, net makers, students, staff and trainees of the institutes, members of fisherman associations and general public were also involved in the various activities under taken during Swachhta Pakhwada across the State/UTs. The awareness camps/cleaning drives were taken up across the country with the help of State/UT Governments. Some of the notable activities were held in Bilaspur and Durg in Chhattisgarh, Guwahati, Silchar, Cachar in Assam, Bishnupur in Manipur, Nellore in Andhra Pradesh Cuddalore and Nagercoil in Tamil Nadu and also in Kolkatta Bangalore, Lucknow, Ranchi and Kochi.
- Department of Agricultural Research & Education/ Indian Council of Agricultural Research, celebrated Swachhta Pakhwada during Oct 16-31, 2016. The ICAR Head Quarters in New Delhi, all the 102 Research Institutes and 648 KVKs took active part in the Pakhwada activities and conducted a wide range of activities which included
  - cleaning of campuses, residential areas, villages and localities in their vicinity in addition to conducting Seminars, awareness camps, rallies, street plays and expert talks.
  - Swachhta activities was done through KVKs and institutes promotion in 3040 villages with the active participation of farmers and village youth. Efforts were made to promote clean farming technologies and package of practices and make best use of farm waste. Central and local leaders, Senior Officers from the Institutes and the ICAR Headquarters participated in the events organised at various places across the country during the pakhwada.
  - IARI, New Delhi set up a team of sanitation inspectors in each block of their residential complex who organise the dry and wet waste generated
  - On 27th October, 2016 a special Seminar on the topic "Creating Wealth from Agricultural Wastes" was organised at KVK Shikohpur (Gurgaon) in which Minister of State of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare was the chief guest. Various technologies making the best use of agricultural wastes like, preparation of bio compost, vermi-composting, straw enrichment, waste water recycling, cotton waste management, fisheries waste management and engineering technologies were showcased. More than 350 farmers and Scientists participated in the event. Based on the daily and final reporting of the swachhta activities, the awards will be given to the outstanding performers in the competitions announced for offices in ICAR Head Quarters, ICAR Research Institute and KVKs and these awards will be given on the foundation day of the ICAR.
  - DD Kisan was asked to make two films- one of Solid Waste Disposal Technology of NCOF and the second on Liquid Waste Disposal technology developed by ICAR. DD Kisan will show these films in their existing programmes.

## ELECTRIFICATION IN RURAL INDIA

Siddhartha P Saikia

Energy is now an unavoidable aspect in the growth of the nation. Energy is also one of the essential infrastructures for economic growth, employment generation and poverty alleviation. The rate of economic growth in the new globalized economy is dependent on the availability of adequate, reliable and quality energy at competitive rates. Therefore, the basic responsibility of the “Electricity Industry” as the principal source of energy is to provide adequate power at economical cost, while ensuring reliable and quality supply.

Electricity is one of the basic human needs and to improve human development, every household must have access to electricity. But a large number of villages and habitations in the country still do not have access to electricity. Emphasizing the importance of rural electrification, the Government launched — Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY). The primary objective of the scheme was to create rural electricity infrastructure and complete household electrification.

The new government, after assuming office in May 2014, gave a thrust on providing electricity connections to all the villages within 1000-days of coming to power. RGGVY was subsumed in the new programme -- Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) in December 2014. The focus was on electrifying the remaining 18,452 unelectrified villages within 1000 days (by May 1st, 2018). The project 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 timelines for monitoring.

DDUGJY provides complete flexibility

with wider scope as there is no minimum population criterion as well as 100 per cent subsidy for Project Management Agency. The key thrust of the programme was separation of agriculture and non-agriculture feeders facilitating judicious restoring of supply to agricultural & non-agriculture consumers in the rural areas; and strengthening and augmentation of sub-transmission & distribution infrastructure in rural areas, including metering of distribution transformers, feeders, consumers.

Energy is now an unavoidable aspect in the growth of the nation. Energy is also one of the essential infrastructures for economic growth, employment generation and poverty alleviation. The rate of economic growth in the new globalized economy is dependent on the availability of adequate, reliable and quality energy at competitive







per cent as loan by Rural Electrification Corporation to the State Governments. The symbolic three components of the scheme are to electrify all the villages, to provide electricity to all rural households and electrifying the BPL households free of cost. The States of Delhi, Goa and Union Territories of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Chandigarh, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Puducherry have not participated in rural electrification programme as they had achieved 100 per cent electrification of villages. In remaining 27 states, projects for 579 districts have been sanctioned.

rates. Therefore, the basic responsibility of the “Electricity Industry” as the principal source of energy is to provide adequate power at economical cost, while ensuring reliable and quality supply.

DDUGJY is being implemented through Rural Electrification Corporation, aimed at 100 per cent rural electrification by next year. The scheme intends to accelerate rural development, generate employment and eliminate poverty through development in areas of irrigation, small scale industry, cold chains, health care, education, IT and other services.

Recently it was said that the electrification of villages has slowed down during the last couple of months due to rain. After my discussion with the states during these two days, I am confident that all the villages will get electricity connections by May 1, 2017, which is one year before the 1000-day deadline set by our government, which ends in May 2018.

Under DDUGJY, electrification of un-electrified Below Poverty Line (BPL) households is provided free electricity service connection. Infrastructures created under the programme can be used for providing connections to Above Poverty Line (APL) by respective distribution utilities. APL households are required to pay for prescribed connection charges and no subsidy is available for this purpose.

#### **Funding Pattern:**

Under the programme, 90 per cent of the grant is provided by the Centre and the remaining 10

#### **Implementation:**

Planning for implementation is dependent upon the availability of an approved detailed project report. Detailed Project Report (DPR) and guidelines are the two major instruments that are used to carry on with implementation works. After getting the letter of award, the implementation work starts at the district, block and village level.

The contractors are recruited after a due and established process for installation of infrastructure. They are also responsible for internal wiring of the BPL beneficiary households. The contractors procure all the requisite materials as per specifications recommended by state electricity board (SEB) or state electricity authority (responsible for state’s electrification works). As per the DPR, the contractor installs poles, provides Low Tension line and High Tension line.

Household/Beneficiary electrification is also another responsibility of the contractor. For household electrification, they use the latest BPL list received from the district administration. Contractors complete the work in villages which are nearer to the location, where the work has already started. The implementation is region specific because different agencies are engaged in different regions.

After village electrification, Gram Panchayat Pradhan/Sarpanch certifies the electrification work in the required and specified format. Pradhans at Gram Panchayat level and villagers at village level

are satisfied with the scheme that aims at full rural electrification.

### **Time Span for Electrification:**

Electrification work in a village can be completed in a month or at most two when all factors are conducive. Timely land acquisition, communication with villagers, letter of award, and availability of materials and distance of villages are crucial factors in starting and completing village electrification work. Any delay for whatever reason will have a major bearing resulting in slow progress.

### **Socio-Economic Improvements:**

Electrification of villages has resulted in socio-economic improvements and villagers are able to utilise electrical appliances for additional comfort, convenience and education of their children. It has been reported that some economic activities like *agarbatti* making, bamboo items etc. have started specially in the States like West Bengal & Tripura, where electric supply is better.

Electrification of villages in addition to having positive impact on beneficiaries, has also provided positive externalities for non-beneficiaries as well. For example, at the time of village functions or religious festivities, all households of the village or rural areas enjoy light and associated religious and festivities, fan and entertainment made possible by recordings of music, video, films, TV etc.. Villages found electricity as a good facilitator of entertainment and information specially through the television .

### **Improvement in Connectivity:**

Easy charging of batteries of mobile phone has encouraged many to have a mobile set for themselves for improving connectivity which was not available before. With mobile phone connectivity, there is better connection with the outside world. People are no longer dependent on using a landline/STD booth to make a call

### **Increase in Spending Power:**

The Evaluation of Report on RGGVY by NITI Aayog in 2014 says that with electricity, 53.19 per cent households feel that expenditure or



entertainment and other important events have increased. They feel happier spending their money on non-food items as well. 14.89 per cent sample households feel that electricity has impacted their health and hygiene positively. TV has been a mega source in mass education on the benefits of safe health and hygiene habits. Access to TV has opened up a whole new world to information, educating the masses on better farm practices (better seed/pest management/organic options for agriculture) and locally made cheaper options for many agriculture inputs (agriculture being a large source of income in the rural areas). The evaluation report has identified several factors:

### **Children Are The Biggest Beneficiaries:**

Except for Bihar and Jharkhand where power tripping is a regular phenomenon in the evening, all beneficiaries States indicated positive contribution of rural electrification programme on children's education and performance due to availability of electricity for about two hours in evening. As performance of school children is determined, among other factors, by the number of critical hours put in for home work and study.



### Gender Benefits:

Implementation of this programme has important gender positive benefits. It has substantially reduced burden of women by reducing number of hours they spent on household activities. Lighting of the house has substantially reduced expenditure on kerosene. Women are now free from watching children studying or playing around kerosene lamps and hazards associated with it. Currently, they learn important activities on health, nutrition and sanitation from TV programmes now available to rural people because of electricity connection. It has also provided them with opportunities to self-employment leading to generation of income used both for self-improvement (health, beautification, education) and improvement of income and social status of the family.

As the visibility improves, women's eyesight is not strained. The zeal to keep things clean has increased among women, who were getting bogged from sweltering heat or terrible monsoon conditions before implementation of DDUGJY. Women feel a great deal of safety and are not afraid to go outside the house in the evening. Electricity safeguards them and their children from outsiders including in certain areas from wild animals as were found in some villages of Odisha. Women mentioned that use of fan, not only gives relief from hard day's work, but also fends off flies, mosquitoes etc. thus improving living conditions and sanitation.

### Challenges in Implementation:

Although, the objective to electrify all identified BPL households has been more or

less achieved, poor identification has left many families who consider themselves as BPL, but are not included in the BPL list. Small villages and padas not covered under the population criterion are left out of the 'electrification scheme'.

There are few challenges such as villagers demand coverage of left out BPL households and habitations. There is demand for more number of distribution transformers to cater to higher Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) loads. The villagers demanded increased hours of electric supply especially in the evening hours. They also required more quality and reliability of electric supply, i.e. reduction in unscheduled power cuts.

Although, most eligible have been covered through DDUGJY, yet some of the BPL households that were on long duration migration for work during the rural electrification had been left out. The BPL households are at a distance from the transformer experience low-voltage situation. This problem needs to be addressed.

### Timeliness of Funding:

The scheme is being implemented at all India level as per guideline. Neither the officials nor any of the stakeholders raised any issue about the inadequacy of the fund at the time of implementation or during post implementation. It was however, found that requirement for replacing the burnt transformers and or upgrading to higher capacity of transformers needed to provide normal voltage not met during the initial years of 11th Plan. Because of the persistent demand, adequate funds were provided from various sources, Massive investments were made on changes in transformers thereby improving quality of power supply in almost all the sample areas.

### Way Forward:

DDUGJY has largely fulfilled its objective of providing electricity to villages and hamlets/padas in rural areas and by bringing electricity connection to BPL, Dalit and ST households free of cost. It has been possible due to Government's initiative, primarily at the central level and the commitment from the states that implemented the scheme. While, the scheme mainly targeted

at the BPL households, APL households could also get electric connection through this scheme once they submitted an application with required fees. Electricity is now regarded by the consumers in rural areas as a basic requirement. Out of 597,464 census villages, 590,631 villages (98.8%) have been electrified so far. During 2015-16, 5537 villages have been electrified. Out of remaining 12,915

villages, 9026 villages are to be electrified through grid, 3381 villages are to be electrified through off-grid where grid solutions are out of reach due to geographical barriers and 508 villages are to be electrified by state government on its own.

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### Himanchal Pradesh & Kerala declared ODF States

The State of Himanchal Pradesh was declared Open Defecation Free (ODF), becoming the second State in the country, after Sikkim, to achieve this significant milestone. With this feat, Himanchal Pradesh has successfully achieved a total rural sanitation coverage of 100 per cent in the State, with all 12 out of 12 districts in the State being both, declared as well as verified, as ODF. The State of Kerala became the third State overall and the largest State so far to be declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) under the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) (Gramin). With this, all 14 districts, 152 blocks, 940 Gram Panchayat and 2117 villages of the State have been declared free from open defecation. These declarations were made by the respective Chief Ministers of the States.



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## SAFE DRINKING WATER : CONNECT, COMMUNICATE & CREDIT

Keshav Chaturvedi

Ensuring safe and clean drinking water to the people is one of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that the United Nations has set for the governments of the 192 member nations. These SDGs are going to guide national policies for the next 15 years when these goals would come up for review. India, however, has been ahead in realising and acting in the sphere of providing clean drinking water for its population. Way back in 1972, the year United Nations organised its first summit to address the challenges of global warming and environmental pollution, India launched its Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP). However, the noble intentions and constant efforts have not borne desired results due to lack of people's participation. It's in stark contrast to Swachh Bharat Mission which has witnessed an ownership of the people on the ground. There is an urgent need to create a comprehensive communication plan to turn the National Rural Drinking Programme into a people's movement.

Consider a scenario where everyday a passenger train is meeting with an accident killing everyone on board. This is exactly what is happening in India albeit although in a slightly staggered manner. Each day 1600 people die of diarrhoea, a number which matches favourably with the number of passengers travelling in a passenger train.

Now consider the next scenario. There is all the money in the world, technology is in place and the government resolve is like steel in preventing this daily loss. Yet even after putting in 44 years of constant efforts the results are not up to the satisfaction.

This is how the story of providing safe drinking water in rural India has unfolded over the decades. Beginning in 1972 as Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP), it has grown in size, scope and ambition.

In 2009, ARSWP was renamed as the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP). The goal was to provide adequate safe water for drinking, cooking and other domestic needs.

As the 11<sup>th</sup> Plan was drawing to a close, a Strategic Plan was drawn to fulfil the goal of providing drinking water to every household in the rural areas. It

is a 10 year plan that envisages providing 70 lpcd (litres per capita per day) to every rural household by 2022. The 11<sup>th</sup> Plan also made a qualification that this water supply should be ensured throughout the year even during natural disasters. It also made a departure from the earlier goals by expanding the scope of supply from habitation to households.

Since the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, another distinction was added. It reframed the programme by insisting that household will get piped water. It synergised its goal with the Strategic Plan for drinking water where the government aims to ensure that at least 90 per cent of rural households get piped water supply with 80 per cent of rural households getting their individual tap connections.



## The Issue of Messaging:

Time and again, it has been seen with many a great central schemes that they find difficult interact with the people on the ground. Experience shows that the goal of providing sustainable safe drinking water supply in rural areas has remained elusive in many places.

It has been seen that the moment the Central Government funding is decreased, the local governments also adopt a hands off approach. As the major part of the infrastructure is based on the ground water supply, once it dries, the entire system shuts down. In the absence of funds or know-how for maintaining the supply systems, the infrastructure falls in disuse.

Many reasons have been cited and every argument depends on which side of the table you are sitting. However, the most important aspect of the problem, people, is lost. Curiously, it has been seen that if the people are not participating in any scheme or event or a movement than no matter how well crafted it is, it's not going to achieve its full potential.

It may seem ironic but people are habitually resistant to change even if it is for their own good. They need to be convinced and made to feel important before a new idea can sink in with some effect. As late Nani Palkiwalla, eminent lawyer, would say, "It all boils down to managing egos". Engaging people needs communication strategy which begins with a simple yet crisp and precise message. A



cursory glance at the National Rural Drinking Water Programme and other efforts reveal there is no one clear message packaged in a slogan or catch line that can enthuse people to rally around.

Take the case of Swachh Bharat Mission. It has a clear cut clarion call, *Ek Kadam Swachhta Ki Oar* (Taking a step towards cleanliness). Every other message is built around it. This clarity of message has helped the government machinery, social workers and village officials to rally people on the ground to take action.

## Changing the Script:

Many success stories of clear messaging and resultant public participation have been documented in the field of water conservation that can act as a template for the safe piped drinking water programme to emulate.

One good thing about water is that its importance need not be established. Everyone knows it is their lifeline. In such a situation, the policymakers should work on creating the basic message to propagate the idea of supplying safe drinking water to every household. It can be as simple as *har ghar nal, shudhh Jal har pal* (tap in every home, pure water all the time).

With this basic line, work should begin on an integrated communication programme to inspire people to take charge of their resources at the hyper local level.





### Integrated Communication Programme:

The integrated communications programme should have three distinct approaches introduced in three stages.

During the stage one, the stakeholders (villagers and households) should be made aware of the clear and present dangers of the way they are living (the business as usual approach). It should be made known to them that our population is rising but the per capita water availability is decreasing. The statistics should be in your face. And then it should be made clear that if the present generation doesn't take any action, then not only their kids, but they too will suffer in old age.

Stage two would be of comfort but also a call to partial responsibility. This communication would tell the people that government help is at hand but will be best utilised if they take matters in their own hands. It should be made clear at the beginning itself that the help is limited in both time and resources and local genius as well as efforts and commitment are needed to see it through.

This has been the standard practice in afforestation programmes where women self help groups are encouraged and supported by the forest department to not only plant trees, but monitor them till they attain a degree of maturity. The same principle is embedded in MGNREGA where the demand for work is generated at the grassroots level and a list of deliverables are identified by the people who want to work then the work plan is funded by the Central Government.

The third stage of communication would be sharing credit. As in Swachh Bharat Mission, the people who have led the transformation drive have been felicitated publicly (As was the case with 102 year old woman in Chhattisgarh) and praised by the Prime Minister in his Mann ki Baat radio programme. On the similar lines *jal mitr* (water friends) should be appointed in every village and their good work should be appreciated by the District Collectors, Chief Ministers and others.

Creating local celebrities will go a long way in creating a volunteer force to achieve long term goal of providing sustainable piped drinking water to every household in rural areas.

### Sharpening Focus and Channelizing Resources :

No communication plan alone can achieve the objective if it is not backed by backward integration of action plans. Similarly, in the quest to achieve the noble goal of safe piped drinking water to every rural household, the grand action plan should be built around three aspects:-

1. Safe guarding the resource (water);
2. Ensuring its quality;
3. Ensuring sustainable supply.

For this, the people should be told that the efforts to bring down pollution, maintain cleanliness, promoting afforestation are all meant to assure sustainable supply of water.

The government should also look into ways to integrate the funds in afforestation, plantation drives, Swachh Bharat Mission, MGNREGA, promoting organic farming, rain water harvesting and other programmes into one corpus.

This corpus should create habitat level programmes borne out their unique geographies and social needs to ensure that all the above mentioned efforts are taken in tandem to create an eco-system that not only helps but promotes conservation of clean water resources but also its sustainable supply and use.

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# RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH EAST: THE EASTERN GATEWAY

Nilanjana Das

India's North-eastern region is considered to be the eastern gateway to the country. The eight states of the region are endowed with huge untapped resources. In the past the region witnessed a series of insurgencies and remained alienated from the economic resurgence experienced by the rest of the country. With the renewed efforts by the Government to develop the region, the North-eastern states could be brought into the mainstream of the national development.

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. Increased participation of people in the rural development process, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit and inputs go a long way in providing the rural people with better prospects for economic development. Improvements in health, education, drinking water, energy supply, sanitation and housing coupled with attitudinal changes also facilitate their social development.

India's north east region (NER) is endowed with huge untapped natural resources and is acknowledged as the eastern gateway for the country. Prime Minister in his recent visit to the region at the 65th Plenary Session of North Eastern Council (NEC) in Shillong said that North-east is gateway to South-east Asia and if developed and promoted well, the region can emerge as the biggest employer in the region. It can also add to the growth and income of the country.

The region comprises of eight states Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura and Assam. Occupying 8 per cent of India's geographical spread, the states are home to only 4 per cent of the country's population, while Assam accounts for 68 per cent of the regional population. The states comprising the NER, while unique in most respects, have similar economic and geographical attributes that merit special policy interventions. However, in spite of being endowed with vast natural resources in terms of forests, biological diversity, hydroelectricity, the region has remained largely underdeveloped. A good infrastructure and wide connectivity are the key factors for

growth and development, both within the region as well as with the rest of the country. The region, connected to the rest of India by a narrow stretch of land called the 'Chicken's Neck', needs infrastructure to support and ensure significant investments and developmental aids. The region in the past witnessed a series of insurgencies and is alienated from the economic resurgence experienced by the rest of the country. But with time, the situation has improved and insurgency has almost come to a halt. The World Bank describes conditions in the region as a low-level equilibrium of poverty, non-development, civil conflict and lack of faith in political leadership. All the eight states have different developmental prospects and resources to support their efforts in contributing to the regional as well as national economy. A critical appraisal of the key economic indicators along with a detailed sketch of the individual strengths of the seven states is necessary to achieve a holistic framework to target growth in the region.

## Rural Poverty and Unemployment: Interlinked

Rural poverty is inextricably linked with low rural productivity and unemployment, including





underemployment. Hence, it is imperative to improve productivity and increase employment in rural areas. Moreover, more employment needs to be generated at higher levels of productivity in order to generate higher output. Employment at miserably low levels of productivity and incomes is already a problem of far greater magnitude than unemployment as such. The rural subsystem of the NER (North Eastern Region) economy consists of some 35 thousand villages inhabited by over 32 million people who constitute about 85 per cent of the total population in the region. Of approximately 10.6 million main workers in the NER economy, about eight million are directly engaged as cultivators or agricultural labourers. The land-base of the rural economy in NER can contribute in a much larger way.

A strategy for development of rural economy and employment in the region must be outlined in what follows: (a) a well thought out plan to develop the rural infrastructure, (b) harnessing of the central non-lapsable pool for supporting projects to build up infrastructure and take up other economic development programmes, (c) harnessing of the Central grants for development of info-tech infrastructure and utilize them, (d) development of agro-based, horticulture based, forest based small scale industries, (e) development of floriculture and mushroom culture, (f) use of the export development fund for setting up marketing infrastructure, (g) change in the educational policy favoring larger out turn of technically educated manpower, and (h) deliberate attempt to train the educated manpower for entrepreneurial activities. The region, which is heavily dependent on the agricultural sector, needs a green revolution to eradicate poverty and boost its economy. Such a green revolution must be adequately backed by financial institutions.

The Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12) discussed the critical parameters for growth of the North Eastern Region. The growth strategy proposed consists of creation of critical infrastructure and creation of employment opportunities. Governance, capacity building, connectivity & power, social infrastructure, realizing the full potential of the primary sector, active involvement of the grass root social institutions in development planning, encouragement of private investment and public



private participation (PPP), and capitalising on the opportunities provided by India's Look east policy constitute the critical parameters.

The industries of this region can be broadly classified as under:

**Agro-based Industries:** It includes tea industry, sugar industry, grain mill products industry (rice, oil and flour mills), food processing industry and the textile industry. **Mineral-based Industries:** Mineral-based industries of the north eastern region include railway workshops, engineering industry, and re-rolling mills, steelworks, motor-vehicle workshops, galvanized wire units, cycle factories, aluminum utensils industry, cycle spare parts, steel wire net, barbed wire, cement industry etc. Moreover, the non-metal based industries include petroleum oil industry and natural gas-based industry. **Forest-based Industries:** It includes plywood industry, saw-mill industry, paper and paper pulp industry, match industry, letter industry, hard board industry etc. **Other industries:** It includes power generation industry, fertilizer industry, printing press, brick and tiles industry, ice industry, chemical industry etc.

The industries of the north eastern region can also be classified into: (a) organised industries and (b) unorganised industries. The organised industries of the north eastern region include tea, petroleum, paper, cement, plywood, coal, jute, sugar, fertiliser etc.

Industrial unemployment is a consequence of two factors: (a) Slow industrialisation, (b) Exodus of labourers from rural to urban areas. The rate at which the population eligible for work is growing in the urban areas is much higher than the rate at which industries are growing.



The most important type of urban unemployment is the educated unemployment which is also a socio-economic problem with far-reaching consequences. The unemployment rate in the North-eastern region represents one of the highest rates of unemployment in the country, with an unemployment rate close to 12%, against the national average of 7.7%.

### Causes of Unemployment:

Rapid growth of population, under-utilised natural resources, primitive agriculture and slow growth of industrialisation are the main factors responsible for the problem of unemployment in the north-east.

The basic causes of unemployment are as follows:

**Rapid Growth Of Population :** The most fundamental cause of large scale unemployment in the North-East is the rapid growth of population which increases the labour force. The higher rate of growth of population along with growing migration of population from neighbouring countries is responsible for this widespread unemployment in the north-east.

**Primitive Agriculture:** Heavy pressure of population on land and primitive methods of agricultural operation are responsible for the rural unemployment and under-unemployment in the north-east. More than 60 per cent of the population of the North-Eastern Region depends on agriculture for their living. Cultivators in the North-Eastern Region remain unemployed for five to six months every year. Unemployment in North-East is also aggravated by endless sub-division and fragmentation of land holdings. Application of modern methods of agriculture on such uneconomic

holding is impossible and thus there is little scope of expanding employment opportunities in Agriculture in the States of North-East.

**Poor Rate of Growth:** The rate of growth of the North-Eastern Regions is very poor. Thus, the increased employment opportunities created under successive plans have not kept pace with the additions to the labour force in the north-east every year.

**Slow Industrialization:** Another cause of unemployment in north-east is the poor industrial growth. Most of the small scale and medium scale industries suffers from various problems. Without a sound industrial growth, the problem of unemployment in the north-east could hardly be tackled effectively.

**Prevailing Education System:** The prevailing education system in the North-East is not very sound to provide technical and commercial education. Huge number of matriculates, undergraduates and graduates are coming out every year leading to the increasing gap between employment opportunities and job seekers among the educated middle class. Professional guidance and training facilities need to be improved.

**Immobility of Labour Force:** Immobility in the labour force is another factor responsible for growing unemployment in the region. The system of joint family is also retarding the growth of employment opportunities in the north-east.

**Attitude of Educated People:** In the North-East, the educated people have apathy in accepting trade and commerce as a profession. Due to this, the educated people of north-east are sometimes not availing the employment opportunities available to them, leading to the growth of widespread unemployment in north-east.

### Boosting Employment :

The following are the important long-term and short-term measures that may be adopted for solving the problem :

1. Long-term measures: The long term measures are as follows :
  - The present high rate of population growth must be arrested. This can be done by intensifying family planning programme, particularly in the rural areas and also by

stopping infiltration of people from the neighbouring countries.

- Adequate steps must be taken for rapid economic development of the North-Eastern Region, especially through quick and diversified industrialisation. This will create new employment opportunities, especially for the educated persons and skilled workers. This will also divert surplus labour force from agriculture to industries and thus reduce the pressure of rural unemployment
- Modernized methods of cultivation should be introduced to increase the employment potential of agriculture. Spread of new farm technology will help the economy of the north-eastern region by raising their agricultural productivity.
- The system of education prevalent at present has to be changed thoroughly. The present literary educational system must be replaced by technical and vocational education system to make it production oriented.
- Steps must be taken for introducing network of employment exchanges both in the rural and urban areas of the north-east. This will increase mobility of labour and reduce unemployment due to social time-lag.
- For enlarging the scope of self-employment, liberal institutional finance should be made available.
- Short term measures: The short term measures are as follows:
- For establishing small industries and business, special assistance should be provided to individuals and small groups of people.
- Arrangement should be made for the establishment of work and training camps at places where a provision of work opportunities is available under the plans such as irrigation, power projects and road construction programme.
- Entrepreneurship can be a constructive solution to the unemployment in the

north-east region. The entrepreneurial mindset is not stimulated enough among the indigenous people of the area. The area needs a push from external agents in this regard. Initially, this will need strong support from the government and the NGOs. Micro-finance credit and appropriate training hold the key. This kind of forward-moving initiative will empower a lot of people and provide a moral boost to the rest. The efficient implementation of Self Help Group model with further modifications based on need and situation basis will deliver positive results.

- The setting up of medium and small enterprises will in turn generate employment in large numbers. The handloom, agriculture, dairy, food processing etc. are some of the industries which have immense growth potential, not just in the region but much beyond.

### Opportunities in the North Eastern Region

The economy of the region has been disrupted by the forces discussed in the preceding section in spite of its rich natural resources. Besides the natural resources, many new opportunities have also emerged with the changing contour of world economy that can boost the economy of the region. But, the need of the hour is to focus on those areas which would lead to growth of the economy, develop the sense of participation and can extinguish the social and political chasm.

Training facilities should be arranged in those areas where there is a shortage of man power at present. The products of cottage and small scale industries should be given active encouragement by public authorities through sympathetic storage and purchase policy.

### Tourism Advantage:

Tourism is one sector where the region has comparative advantage. This industry is highly competitive where the tourists have a wide range of choices and look for good value of their money. With bountiful nature's breathtaking scenic beauty, pleasant climatic conditions, extraordinarily diverse

and cultural heritage of the people, this region can become a hotspot for eco and adventure tourism.

Tourism industry involves a vast network of business activities relating to attracting, receiving, accommodating, managing and servicing of tourists. These include hotels, restaurants, transport agencies and several other related activities. The development of tourism industry would promote national integration and international understanding, generate employment and revenue and provide prospective buyers for locally manufactured products especially handloom and handicraft products—a dyeing industry due to lack of access to market.

Tourism can generate more employment per million of rupees spent than any other activities. It can generate jobs to unskilled as well as highly specialized skilled workers which would help in the realization of the plan objectives. It would also enlarge the base of locally manufactured products. All this, however, would be possible only when there is well-developed infrastructure like transport and communication and sense of participation of the people of the region.

However, this growth has not been adequate to catch up with all India per capita income. The challenge of growth before the north eastern states is shown in table below which shows how fast these states should grow to catch up with the per capita GDP of the country by 2020. This becomes a big challenge when it is examined in the context of the

**Table 1**  
**Growth Rate of state domestic products of North Eastern India**

State	Eighth plan	Ninth plan	Tenth plan*	Eleventh plan target
Arunachal Pradesh	5.1	4.4	5.8	6.4
Assam	2.8	2.1	6.1	6.5
Manipur	4.6	6.4	11.6	5.9
Meghalaya	3.8	6.2	5.6	7.3
Mizoram	NA	NA	5.9	7.1
Nagaland	8.9	2.6	8.3	9.3
Sikkim	5.3	8.3	7.7	6.7
Tripura	5.3	7.4	8.7	6.9

Source: CSO

achievements of the states in the last three five year plans.

### North Eastern Region : Vision 2020

North Eastern Vision (NER) 2020 incorporates the principles of participatory planning. The NER Vision 2020 analyses the challenges confronting the region and closely examines the developmental aspirations of the people to identify as clearly as possible the felt needs of the people. The realisation of people's vision of development requires a paradigm

**Table**  
**Average annual growth of GSDP at 2006-7 prices**

States	2007-12	2012-17	2017-20	2007-20
Arunachal Pradesh	8.15	10.75	12.75	9.93
Assam	10.00	14.90	17.25	13.21
Manipur	9.00	12.85	15.75	11.73
Meghalaya	8.0	10.75	12.0	9.86
Mizoram	9.68	9.68	9.68	9.68
Nagaland	8.52	8.52	8.52	8.52
Sikkim	7.80	7.80	7.80	7.80
Tripura	7.50	8.50	8.50	8.16
NER	9.25	12.65	14.50	11.78
India	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0

Source: NIPFP

shift in the planning process – from the one in which investment allocations are imposed from above to the one in which they are determined according to the needs and requirements of the people. The document stresses the following five components of development strategy

- (i) Participatory development strategy articulated through grass roots planning to harness the natural resource advantage of the region
- (ii) Capacity development of the people and institutions to reach the targeted groups
- (iii) Augmenting infrastructure particularly connectivity and transport infrastructure
- (iv) Ensuring adequate resources for public investment in infrastructure along with a framework for private participation in

Table 3  
Sectoral distribution of workers in the region (2001)

State	Rural			Urban		
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Arunachal Pradesh	83.4	7.5	9	8.7	13.4	77.9
Assam	67.7	6.2	26.2		13.5	80.5
Manipur	75.3	8.9	15.8	28.3	15.6	55.9
Meghalaya	86.5	3	10.5	1.3	14.6	84.1
Mizoram	88.	2.4	12.2	30.3	14.7	55
Nagaland	79.7	2.2	18.1	8.4	12.1	79.5
Sikkim	60.8	9.9	29.3	2.1	16.1	81.8
Tripura	45.7	12	42.3	2.7	8	89.3
India	76.3	11.4	12.4	8.8	32	59.2

Source: Census of India 2001

augmenting infrastructure and an enabling environment for the flow of investments

- (v) Transforming governance by providing a secure, responsive and market friendly environment including protection of property rights of the investors and ensuring a corruption free administration. It includes resolving insurgencies and putting an end to the leakages in the system.

### Transport and Communication :

Transport and communication is the basic infrastructure for economic development of a country. Highways and roads are regarded as arteries and veins of a State which are essential for sustainable economic growth. However, overestimation of the requirement and planning beyond the necessity of road transport would be delayed in the process of economic development of a region. The total road length of the NE region of India during 2001-2002 was 1, 73261 kms against 2.4 kms per 1000 population of all India average.

The economic development of India and her northeastern region was sound during the plan period of 2001-2002 at a GDP growth rate of about 8 per cent. The actual economic growth rate of the country has not been able to maintain after the expansion and extension of road transport since 2005-2006.

The country's road network consists of national highways, State highways, major district roads, other district roads and village roads. Out of the total length of national highways, about 30 per cent length is single lane/intermediate lane, about 53 per cent is two lane standard and the remaining 17 per cent is four lane or more standard. Though national highways comprise only about 2 per cent of the total length of roads, they account for about 40 per cent of the total traffic.

Industrially, the NER needs to have a good and promising industrial base, e.g. Assam has, because of its traditional tea, oil and wood based industries. To some extent, Meghalaya has made some headway in setting up of small and medium industries. Industrial growth in the region, good infrastructure, adequate electricity supply can add to a great economic growth in the region. Entrepreneurial motivation on the part of the local people, high level of public sector investment, etc are the major factors for the overall development of the region.

### Look East Policy:

In recent years, the 'Look East Policy' of Government of India has made North East more important and strategic. The region has to gear up to take up more challenges and capitalize on the opportunities thrown open by the huge market in the South East Asian Countries.

## Government Initiatives in North –Eastern Region:

The Central Government has also been announcing special packages for socio-economic development of the North Eastern Region (NER). Priority funding is given to both the Central Plan and State Plan by the present government. Funds are being arranged from time to time for expeditious implementation of these packages. Prime Minister , during his visit to the North Eastern States announced some special packages for the region as follows:

- **Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) Package,** Assam. scheme is under the DoNER Ministry.
- **Special Accelerated Road Development Programme** for North East was implemented under the Road Transport and Highways. Non-Lapsable North East Railway Development Fund for National Projects of NE Region” for the 10 National Projects of the Ministry of Railways in NER. It has been approved by Cabinet Committee on Infrastructure. Contribution to this Fund is 25 per cent through Railway’s gross budgetary support and 75 per cent as additionally from Ministry of Finance.

## Horticulture Mission:

This mission in the North-east comprises 4 Mini Missions:

- Mini Mission-I (Research) relates to production and supply of supply quality seed and planting material, technology generation, standardization and refinement, specific to the region and on farm demonstration and training.
- Mini Mission- II (Production and Productivity Improvement) through creation of infrastructure and adoption of improved production systems.

## Enhancing the Training/Education capacity in the IECT Area

- To expand the capacity and to reach the far flung/remote areas of the North East;
- Upgrade the 6 existing NIELIT centres located at Imphal, Aizawl, Guwahati, Shillong, Gangtok, Itanagar;

- Set up 10 new Extension centres at: Senapati Churachandpur – Manipur Dibrugarh, Silchar, Jorhat & Kokrajhar – Assam Lunglei – Mizoram Tura – Meghalaya Tezu & Pasighat - Arunachal Pradesh;
- Upgrade 2 existing Extension Centres located at Chuchuyimlang, Nagaland & Tezpur, Assam.

Each Upgraded NEILIT Centre would have its own campus with an integrated facility of state-of-the-art labs, classrooms to cater to various training needs right from certificate level to under graduate/post graduate courses.

There are only 68 ITIs in NER with seating capacity of 10308. There is an urgent need for specialized programmes for expansion of skill development institutions in NER. Ministry of Labour and Employment has sanctioned a new centrally Sponsored scheme ‘Enhancing Skill Development Infrastructure in NE states and Sikkim’ at a cost of Rs.57.39 crore, with following components: Up gradation of 20 ITIs at a cost of Rs.30.18 crore. Supplementing deficient infrastructure in 28 ITIs Rs.24.24 crore Establishment of Project Management Units – Rs.2.97 crore.

It was also announced that artisans belonging to minority communities, Schedule Castes, Schedule Tribes and BPL families will be provided free tool kits as per their art. The PAHCHAN card will give national identity to the artisans and that they will be covered under a national database. Artisans would be able to get benefit of any government scheme through the PAHCHAN card. The Ministry will organize insurance camps in February 2017 at the places where artisans live, and provide them credit guarantee and insurance schemes at their doorsteps.

The camp for “PAHCHAN” was launched on 7<sup>th</sup> October, 2016 nationwide, to ensure a unique identity to the handicraft artisans of the nation. The artisan cards being distributed to the artisans shall essentially target special needs of people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the international border.

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## FUND ALLOCATIONS RURAL ECONOMY AND INFRASTRUCTURE :2016-17

- Rs 35,984 crore have been allocated for Agriculture and Farmers' welfare.
- A dedicated Long Term Irrigation Fund will be created in NABARD with an initial corpus of about Rs.20,000 crores.
- Programme for sustainable management of ground water resources with an estimated cost of Rs 6,000 crore will be implemented through 3 multilateral funding.
- Allocation under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana has been increased to Rs 19,000 crore. The remaining 65,000 eligible habitations will get road connectivity by 2019.
- A provision of Rs 15,000 crore has been made in the BE 2016-17 towards interest subvention to reduce the burden of loan repayment on farmers.
- Allocation for Rural Sector has been Rs 87,765 crore for 2016-17.
- A Grant in Aid of Rs 2.87 lakh crore will be given to Gram Panchayats and Municipalities as per the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission.
- MGNREGS has been allocated a sum of Rs 38,500.
- Krishi Kalyan Cess of 0.5 per cent on all taxable services since 1 June, 2016, to finance the initiatives for improvement of agriculture and welfare of farmers. Input tax credit of this cess will be available for payment of this cess.
- Surcharge levied at 7.5 per cent of undisclosed income will be called Krishi Kalyan surcharge that will be used for agriculture and rural economy.

# Mahatma Gandhi

## His Life & Message

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## 30 SARPANCH PARTAKE OF JUST ONE MEAL A DAY

In the run up to Gandhi Jayanthi on October-2 this year, one pradhan and as many as 30 sarpanch of 30 panchayat in the Atru block of Baran district in Rajasthan took a vow to partake of just one meal a day until their villages became open defecation free (ODF). They were convinced that it was an effective way to speed up efforts of their communities in making their villages ODF.



“The Pradhan was of the view that Gandhiji fought against so many social evils and injustices. So in his honour, it seemed right to fight against open defecation in this non-violent manner,” said CEO of Zila Parishad, Baran District, Bhagwati Prasad Kalal.

Beginning on September-1, the district administration held various meetings with pradhan, sarpanch, gram sevak, teachers in schools and anganwadi workers, government officers and dealers of ration shops who are the closest to the people. After much deliberation, the block and panchayat heads decided on this course of action on September-14— of eating just one meal a day until all people in their villages used toilets to relieve themselves.

The efforts according to the CEO were far better than anticipated. To begin with, people were surprised, and then they began to understand the seriousness of the issue. Thereafter, construction activity began in earnest. Sarpanch supported families with financial assistance, provided construction material. Not wanting the rain to delay the momentum, they used carts to transport bricks. Their homes were filled with all the paraphernalia needed to construct toilets.



In addition, students and teachers pitched in to support the campaign as they went door to door to convince people.

The effect of this campaign was immense. While there were 5 ODF panchayat before September-1, the remaining 30 panchayat have become ODF in just 25 days. Now the whole of the Atru block has become ODF, the CEO said.