
Rural Development Programmes

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Introduction

"INDIA LIVES IN ITS VILLAGES"

- Mahatma Gandhi

Literally and from the social, economic and political perspectives the statement is valid even today. Around 65% of the state's population is living in rural areas. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in sub urban and urban areas. Further there are cascading effects of poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure in rural areas on urban centers causing slums and consequential social and economic tensions manifesting in economic deprivation and urban poverty. Hence rural development which is concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential. The present strategy of rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructural facilities through innovative programs of wage and self employment. As a measure to strengthen the grass root level democracy, the Government is constantly endeavoring to empower Panchayat Raj Institution in terms of functions, powers and finance. Grama Sabha, NGOs, Self-Help Groups and PRIs have been accorded adequate role to make participatory democracy meaningful and effective.

Various Rural Development Programmes

1. PANCHAYATI RAJ

The passage of the Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 marks a new era in the federal democratic set up of the country and provides Constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The Act which came into force on 24 April, 1993 stipulates that Panchayats shall be given powers and authority to function as institutions of self-government.

Salient Features of the Act

- A 3-tier system of Panchayati Raj for all States having a population of over 20 lakhs
- Regular Panchayat elections every 5 years
- Reservation of seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes in proportion to their population and not less than 13 seats for women

- State Finance Commission to make recommendations on financial powers of the Panchayats.
- Independent State Election Commissions

Powers and Responsibilities of Panchayats

- Preparation of plan for economic development and social justice.
- Implementation of schemes for economic development and social justice in relation to 29 subjects given in Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- To levy, collect and appropriate taxes, duties, tolls and fees.

Gram Sabha

The 73rd Amendment Act gives Constitutional status to the Gram Sabhas -the general assembly of villagers. In the Gram Sabha the rural poor, women and the marginalized get an opportunity to participate in decision making on matters affecting their lives. Actively functioning Gram Sabhas ensure vibrant grass-roots democracy with transparency, accountability and achievement.

The Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996

This Act extends Panchayats to the tribal areas of nine States, namely, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa and Rajasthan. This law vests Gram Sabhas and Panchayats with significant powers of control over natural resources as well as the social and cultural spheres of their lives.

Training and Awareness Generation Programme

The Ministry supports State Government's efforts to train members of Panchayats. Financial assistance is also provided to NGOs through the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). Research and evaluation studies related to Panchayati Raj are also commissioned.

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana Objective

The objective of Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is to bring the assisted poor families (Swarozgaris) above the poverty line by organising them into Self Help Groups (SHGS) through the process of social mobilisation, their training and capacity building and provision of income generating assets through a mix of Bank credit and Government subsidy. The programme aims at establishing a large number of micro-enterprises in the rural areas, building upon the potential of the rural poor. Emphasis under the programme is on group approach and developing activity clusters. However, individuals are also eligible for assistance to acquire assets for income generation.

Scope

Launched on 1st April, 1999, the programme replaces the erstwhile self-employment and allied programmes - IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, GKY and MWS, which are no longer in operation. The programme covers families below the poverty line in rural areas of the country. Within the target groups special safeguards have been provided for the benefit of the vulnerable groups i.e. SCs/STs, women and physically handicapped persons. Accordingly, SCs/STs should account for 50 per cent of the Swarozgaris, women for 40 per cent and the disabled persons for 3 per cent.

Funding

SGSY is a Centrally sponsored scheme and funding is shared by the Central and State Governments in the ratio of 75:25.

Strategy

SGSY is a credit-cum-subsidy programme, wherein credit is the key component. It covers all aspects of self-employment, such as organization of the poor into self-Help Groups (SHGs), training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing. One of the key areas of the SGSY therefore, is social mobilization of the poor through the SHGs. The social mobilization process helps the poor to be self-reliant and realize their own strength and advantage of group behaviour. Fifty per cent of the groups formed in each block should be exclusively for women.

How to Seek Assistance

For assistance under the programme, District Rural Development Agencies and Block Development Officers may be contacted.

Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana

Pursuant to the announcement made by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech, a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme, namely, Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) was launched on 25th September, 2001 by merging the on-going schemes of EAS and the JGSY.

Objectives

The objectives of the programme is to provide additional wage employment in the rural areas as also food security alongside the creation of durable community, social and economic infrastructure in the rural areas. The programme is self-targeting in nature with special emphasis to provide wage employment to women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and parents of children withdrawn from hazardous occupations.

Strategy

The Programme is being implemented in two streams :

1. The First Stream of the Programme will be implemented at the District and Intermediate level. Panchayats. Fifty per cent of the funds available under the SGRY are earmarked for First Stream, these are distributed between the Zilla Parishad and the Intermediate Panchayats in the ratio of 40:60.
2. The Second Stream of the Programme will be implemented at the Village Panchayat level. Fifty per cent of the SGRY funds are earmarked for this Stream. The entire funds are released to the Village Panchayats through the DRDAs/Zilla Parishads.

Salient Features of SGRY

The salient features of the proposed Scheme are as under:-

- The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) being implemented with a total outlay of Rs.10,000 crores.
- Under the Scheme, 50 lakh tonnes of food grains amounting to Rs.5,000 crores (at economic cost) will be provided every year, free of cost to the State Governments and Union Territory Administrations.
- The remaining funds (Rs.5,000 crores) will be utilized, to meet the cost component of wages and material cost.
- The cost of the cash component of the Programme will be shared by the Centre and States in the ratio of 75:25.
- The payment for food grains will be made by the Ministry of Rural Development to the Food Corporation of India (FCI) directly.
- About 100 crore mandals of employment are envisaged to be generated every year in the rural areas through the SGRY.
- Fifty per cent of the total available funds under the SGRY will be provided to each stream.
- Every worker seeking employment under the SGRY will be provided 5 kg. of food grains (in kind) per mandal as part of wages.
- The balance of wages will be paid in cash so that they are assured of the notified minimum wages.
- The State Governments and UT Administrations will be free to calculate the cost of food grains (paid as part of wages) at either BPL rates or APL rates or anywhere between these two rates.
- The SGRY has been in operation from the financial year 2002-2003. Since the Scheme was launched in the middle of 2001-02, the ongoing schemes of the EAS and the JGSY were merged with the new Scheme

The Programme permits works which lead to the creation of additional wage employment, durable assets and infrastructure, particularly those which assist in drought proofing such as soil and moisture conservation works, watershed development, promotion of traditional water resources, afforestation and construction of rural infrastructure and link roads,

primary school buildings, dispensaries, veterinary hospitals, marketing infrastructure and Panchayat Ghars in rural areas.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The overall supervision of the programme rests with the Zilia Parisad. The programme will be regularly monitored by the Department of Rural Development in accordance with the in-built monitoring mechanisms, including periodical reports and returns, Vigilance and Monitoring Committees, visits by officers of the Central and State Governments and by the Area officers of the Ministry of Rural Development. The programme would also be evaluated through the studies conducted by reputed institutions, organizations and sponsored by the Central/State Governments.

How to Seek Assistance

Village Pradhan/Panchayat Members, Block Development Officers, Chief Executive Officer or Zilia Parishad, District Collector of District Rural Development Agency may be contacted.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

There is a yawning gap between 'Urban India' and 'Rural Bharat'. Villages have not been able to keep pace on the path of progress. A critical link on this path is a national network of All-weather roads in the Rural Areas.

There is a close link between Rural Connectivity and Growth, be it in the area of Trade, Employment, Education or Healthcare. States with poor connectivity are also States that reflect poor socio-economic indices.

A critical link for progress is, therefore, a nationwide network of All-weather roads in our rural areas.

While over the last five decades, the length of Rural Roads has been increasing, there are still more than 40% of India's villages, numbering over 2.5 lakh, which remain unconnected.

For the first time, a Programme is being launched, that is dedicated solely to the construction of Rural Roads- the Pradhan Mantri Gram sadak Yojana(PMGSY).

The Programme envisages connecting every Habitation with a population of over 1,000 persons through Good, all-weather roads, by the year 2003; and those with a population of more than 500 persons, by the year 2007.

Besides providing connectivity to about 1,00,000 habitations, the Programme also aims to upgrade, to specifications, about 5 lakh kilometres of existing Rural Roads.

In order that a Programme of this nature and magnitude is effective, PMGSY incorporates the following key elements:

- Preparation of Master Plans- District Rural Roads Plans to be generated based on Block-level Plans.

- Project Implementation Units to be formed to ensure professional and timely completion.
- Execution on a Project Mode.
- Ensuring Standard Specifications, including adequate cross-drainage works.
- Time-bound Execution- completion in 9-12 months; Penalty clauses for time overruns; No Escalation permitted.
- Strict Quality Control - independent Monitors to inspect works.
- Innovative Financing - for assured funding.
- Extensive Use of Information Technology- for on-line monitoring etc.
- Audit - Internal and External.

The Programme Further Envisages

- Ready availability of Land for the Roads;
- Maintenance of the Roads by Panchayati Raj Institutions;
- Encouraging Use of locally available materials for construction of roads;
- Planting of trees on either side of roads.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

A Programme with vision, clarity of purpose, professionalism, transparency and accountability. A Programme to transform the lives of 30 crores people through Roads that would bring Change, Employment and Growth. A Programme that would enable 10 crores rural poor to cross the Poverty line.

Rural Housing

- Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)
- Innovative Stream for Rural Housing and Habitat Development
- Samagra Awaas Yojana
- Rural Building Centre
- National Mission for Rural Housing
- Credit-Cum-Subsidy Scheme for Rural Housing

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)

The objective of Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) is primarily to help construction of new dwelling units as well as conversion of unserviceable Kutcha houses into Pucca/semi Pucca by members of Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes, freed bonded labourers and also non-SC/ST rural poor below the poverty line by extending them grant-in-aid.

Innovative Stream for Rural Housing and Habitat Development

The objective of the Innovative Stream for Rural Housing and Habitat Development is to promote/propagate innovative and proven housing technologies, designs and material in the rural areas.

Samagra Awaas Yojana

The basic objective of the Samagra Awaas Yojana (SAY) is to improve the quality of life of the people and overall habitat in the rural areas.

Rural Building Centre

The objective behind the setting up of Rural Building Centres is transfer of technology and dissemination of information on cost effective and environmental friendly technologies, materials, methods, etc. and skill up- gradation through training and production of cost effective building components. These Rural Building Centres will be involved in transfer of technology from lab to land.

National Mission for Rural Housing

National Mission for Rural Housing has been set by the Ministry of Rural Development to enable the induction of science and technology inputs on a continuous basis, in the sector. It also seeks to provide convergence of technology, habitat and energy-related issues in order to provide affordable shelter for all in rural areas, within a specified time frame, and through community participation.

Credit-Cum-Subsidy Scheme for Rural Housing

The objective of the Credit-cum-Subsidy Scheme for Rural Housing is to facilitate construction of houses for rural families who have some repayment capacity. The scheme aims at eradicating shelterlessness from the rural areas of the country.

Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP)

Rural water supply being a State subject, States take up projects and schemes from their own resources. However, Government of India has been supplementing State efforts in providing safe drinking water in rural areas. The National Agenda for Governance of the Government envisages provision for safe drinking water to all rural habitations in the country by 2004.

Objectives

To accelerate the coverage of uncovered and partially covered rural habitations with safe drinking water, the Central Government has launched the Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP), with the following priorities:

- Coverage of no safe source habitations
- Coverage of quality affected habitations with acute toxicity

- Upgradation of source level of safe source habitations, which get less than 40 liters per capita per day (Ipcd)
- Coverage of schools and Angwadis

Funding

Funds are provided to States for making provision of safe drinking water in rural habitations. The State Governments are to provide matching funds from their own resources. To tackle water quality problems and to ensure source sustainability, up to 20 per cent of the fund can be utilized. Projects/schemes on sustainability of sources can also be taken up under this programme for rainwater harvesting, artificial recharge, revival of traditional systems like Kundis, Johads, dugwells, etc. Further, 15 per cent of the funds released can be spent on operation and maintenance (O&M) of the existing systems/sources of rural water supply.

SwajalDhara

A new initiative " SwajalDhara "was launched on 25th December, 2002, to open up the reform initiatives in the rural drinking water supply sector throughout the country.

Key Elements

The strategic elements of the Scheme are: (i) demand driven and community participation approach; (ii) panchayats/communities to plan, implement, operate, maintain and manage all drinking water schemes; (iii) partial capital cost sharing by the communities upfront in cash; (iv) full ownership of drinking water assets with Gram Panchayats; and (v) full operation and maintenance by the users/Panchayats. The unique feature of the scheme is that the rural people should feel as the owners of the Scheme.

Scope

Beneficiary Groups, Gram Panchayats and Blocks adopting the reforms principles will be eligible for Swajaldhara Projects. The Swajaldhara Scheme is meant for taking up only simple and basically community oriented schemes. This scheme can be implemented by the States/U.Ts in Gram Panchayats/Blocks/Beneficiary Groups. The entire district can be taken up in phases. Providing water supply facilities in schools and uncovered, partially covered and water scarcity habitations and revival of traditional water sources to ensure drinking water sustainability can also be implemented under Swajaldhara.

Funding

The Swajaldhara proposals will be approved and sanctioned only, if the proposals are found to have the commitment of the concerned District Implementing Agency and the State Government for compliance of reform principles and 10 per cent of the estimated capital cost of the schemes (5 per cent in case of predominantly SC/ST habitations) is paid by the community, in cash upfront, as their contribution. The cost of the project excluding community contribution will

be fully met by the Government of India. The Gram Panchayat must also be willing to take up the Operation & Maintenance (O&M) responsibility after the Scheme is completed and taken over by Gram Panchayat.

Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP)

Objective

The Centrally sponsored Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP) strives to provide sanitation facilities to the rural populations, generate awareness about use of toilets and safe sanitation by providing individual household latrine, women complex, school sanitation and garbage disposal system.

Significant activities under this scheme include construction of individual sanitary latrines with 80 per cent subsidy to the poor below the poverty line, stress on school sanitation, encourage other households to have facilities on their own, launch intensive awareness campaigns, establish sanitary complexes exclusively for women and promote total sanitation of villages. Implementation is done through the State Government Department, namely Public Health Engineering Department / Panchayati Raj Department and Rural Development Department with the active involvement of NGOs through campaign approach.

Drought Prone Areas Programme

Objective

The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) aims at mitigating the adverse effects of drought on the production of crops and livestock and productivity of land, water and human resources. It strives to encourage restoration of ecological balance and seeks to improve the economic and social conditions of the poor and the disadvantaged sections of the rural community.

Scope

DPAP is a people's programme with Government assistance. There is a special arrangement for maintenance of assets and social audit by Panchayati Raj institutions. Development of all categories of land belonging to Gram Panchayats, government and individuals fall within the limits of the selected watershed for development.

Desert Development Programme Objective

The Desert Development Programme (DDP) aims at combating drought and desertification, mitigating the adverse effects on crop production, livestock and people; encouraging restoration of ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing natural resources i.e. land, water vegetative cover and raising land productivity. The programme also strives to improve the economic conditions of the resource poor and disadvantaged sections of the society through creation, widening and equitable distribution of resources and increased

employment opportunities. It is envisaged as an essentially land based activity for combating desertification.

Scope

It is a people's programme with Government assistance and special arrangement for maintenance of assets. Social audit is done by Panchayati Raj institutions. All categories of land belonging to Gram Panchayats, Government and individual falling within the limits of the project area can be developed.

Land Reforms

Objective

The Land Reforms Programme strives to fulfill all the principles of the national land reforms policy which consist of abolition of intermediary tenures tenancy reforms, ceiling on agricultural holdings and distribution of surplus land, consolidation of agricultural holdings, computerization of land records and strengthening of revenue administration and updating of land records.

Computerization of land records facilitates easy maintenance and updating of the changes which occur in the land data base and provides for comprehensive scrutiny to make the land records tamper-proof. Its objectives include providing the required support for implementation of development programmes for which data about distribution of land holding is vital. It also includes preparation of annual set of records thereby producing documents for recording details. Land holders can get updated copy of Record of Right (ROR) quickly and at cheaper rates.

For taking up re-survey and settlement operations, adoption of new technology in the field of survey, settlement, updation/reproduction of cadastral maps and updation of revenue records is emphasized.

Council for Advancement Of People's Action and Rural Technology

Objective

The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), a registered society under aegis of the Department of Rural Development, strives to encourage, promote and assist voluntary action in implementation of projects for the enhancement of rural prosperity. It strengthens and promotes voluntary efforts in rural development with the focus on injecting new technological inputs. It also acts as a catalyst for development of technology appropriate for rural areas. It strives to promote, plan, undertake, develop, maintain and support projects/schemes aimed at all-round development, creation of employment opportunities, promotion of self-reliance, generation of awareness, organization and improvement in the quality of life of the people in rural areas through voluntary action.

Scope

While CAP ART seeks to associate the voluntary sector in several schemes that are part of the planned development and are being implemented on national basis, it also supports several innovative projects keeping the needs of specific areas in view.

Conclusion

Hence the Government policies is to empower Panchayat Raj Institutions interms of its functions, power and finances and also accorded adequate participatory role to help Grama Sabha, NGOs, Self Help Groups and PRIs.

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