

ACCELERATING PACE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT— SOME CRITICAL ASPECTS FOR SUCCESS

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The Government has been, since country's independence, formulating policies, programs, projects and schemes and investing significant financial resources through every Five Year Plan to accelerate the rural development. All these programs and schemes being implemented by the concerned ministries and departments of the union and state governments in the area of education, health, drinking water, sanitation, transport and communication and supporting infrastructure, among others, have shown varying degree of response and performance at the grassroots level, and of course, much less than expected in respect of measurable indicators of human development index. In the context of India being emerging as a strong economy and committed to bring about a rapid and sustainable economic growth through various reforms, the rural development programs must sharply focus on people's participation and rural organizations as the key attributes for their success accompanied by equally important aspects, *inter alia*, concept of integrated development, planning process, Growth Center Approach, management inputs, communication system and supporting Management Information System to improve the effectiveness of programs and achieve the desired objectives of the program.

Concept

The policy and programs of rural development aim at alleviating rural poverty, generating employment and removing hunger and malnourishment accompanied by the enrichment of the quality of human life as reflected by significantly improved human development index. The problem of rural development, however, is not merely one of development of rural areas but of the development of rural communities to dispel ignorance and poverty and assist the process of creating a self-reliant and self-sustaining, healthy modern little communities. Rural development can no longer be now identified with mere increase in country's GDP or even per capita national income. The increased income is expected to be so distributed as to result in significant diminution of inequalities of income and wealth and reflect better human development index. Every rural family should have its reasonable share in the generation of the GDP and increasing per capita income.

Integrated Development

The objective of the national policy should be to reconstruct and develop the rural economy in such a way that income flowing from the ownership of productive assets, skills and labor would be distributed more equitably. It, therefore, focuses the need for building viable rural communities of functional rural clusters with improved dwellings, dependable and convenient energy supplies, adequate transport and communication facilities that link it to the larger world, suitable health and educational facilities, access to credit and markets, culturally invigorated and no longer compartmentalized by barriers of castes and feudal distinctions based on land ownership and occupation. In this process, the concept of integrated development of rural areas acquires significance and added importance. Integrated development means that the planning of diverse aspects of development cannot be attempted in isolation through a project or even a program approach but it is integrated to take account of their mutual interaction and their linkages, with a view to achieving the total development of human being and the geographical area, thereby bridging the rural-urban gap.

While endeavoring for the integrated rural development, it is necessary to understand the specific characteristics of *rural society* which give rise to the problems of rural development as distinguished from other kinds of development.

These characteristics mostly relate to the predominance of :

- [i] land in production with uneven distribution of land and other relevant assets
- [ii] agriculture and allied activities
- [iii] self-employment and family labor among the land-owning working force
- [iv] underemployment and casual employment among the working force who hire out their labor for wages
- [v] rural income on seasonal factors with consequent uncertainty and wider fluctuations in income and
- [vi] factors influencing low level of development in rural areas as compared to urban areas which include demand for local non-agricultural goods and services; capital per capita excluding land; employment of science and technology; energy and machinery; human resources development in terms of literacy, education, health and technical as well as managerial skills; development and welfare services; communication and information; absence of people's organizations to redress grievances, monitor implementation of development programs and functioning as pressure groups; lack of adequate power to take decisions on the part of local officials and greater distance from decision-making authorities.

Integrated Rural Development [IRD] envisages the optimum utilization of the natural, physical and human resources of a given rural area for the enrichment of the quality of life of its population. Optimum utilization takes into account not only production of goods and services without environmental degradation but also their distribution and employment enabling the rural poor to cross the poverty line. The projects formulated for the purpose should be such as can maximize their mutual additive impact on each other and result in a higher than the total sum of its components.

Planning Process

Planning exercise for IRD should consider provision of the basic institutional conditions necessary for maximization of rural productive resources, securing/mobilizing mass participation and ensuring equitable distribution. It is essential that basic pre-conditions for IRD should be a radical change in land distribution, supply of other productive income-generating assets and inputs needed for production along with appropriate machinery for their equitable distribution and setting up people's communities with the specific purpose of ensuring access to and utilization of developmental facilities by the rural people.

The plan of IRD must seek a maximum share of self-help and self-reliance on the part of rural population. The concept of the welfare which governs the national policy of most of the developing countries is built on grants and subsidies. This concept fails to stimulate self-reliance and leads to habit of dependence. This, in turn, results in a larger role of the Government officials, power politics and failure to develop local participation.

While rural development cannot do without an inflow of resources from outside the area, there is no reason why it should not be accompanied from the outside with a built-in policy of contributions in kind, if not in cash, from the local beneficiaries and subsequent mobilization at source of at least a part of the gains from the development. The failure to adopt such a policy has resulted in Community Development Program leading to a revolution in rising expectations that seek fulfillment from outside instead of on self-help and reverting to stagnation when the initial help given from outside stops.

Alleviating Poverty

women and youths and to extension media as a basis of community action in the field of agriculture and other aspects of rural life. However, in recent years in the field of rural development more emphasis has been placed on the hardware of the physical programs and financial expenditure as compared with social education. A more comprehensive program of rural communication is required to deal with rural programs covering all sectors of the rural economy and all sections of the rural society. The content, means, methods and techniques of such rural communication programs need to be carefully designed and institutions established.

For reaching these programs to the remotecorners of the country, a number of techniques could be successfully employed, such as

- [i] visits to villages, arranging meetings and seminars, organization of demonstrations on farms
- [ii] distribution of publicity materials like posters and leaflets
- [iii] use of mass media communication like films, radio and television, especially the community radio, rural forum and instructional television experiments
- [iv] training programs for farmers, artisans and rural leaders including village women and youths [v] exhibitions in the villages, at rural training institutes and agricultural universities
- [vi] mobilization of rural institutions like Mahilamandals, Yuvakmandals, cooperative institutions and PRIs. For communication to be effective, the communication system must work hand-in-hand with the development workers. The development worker knows what needs to be communicated but perhaps not how to communicate. The technology and programs to be communicated form a part of what is called the stock in trade of the development works. Development is a micro-process where as mass media of communication involves certain amount of centralization.

Effective MIS

The Management Information System [MIS] in case of IRD is to be made most effective as the MIS is a process through which the monitoring authority of the IRD has to get proper feedback from grassroots at reasonable time lags that can facilitate him to take immediate corrective steps to plug the loopholes and minimize the leakages from the scheme. Besides, it provides him with the information regarding the impact of the scheme in respect of important variables which could be analyzed on time and placed before the policy makers for introducing necessary changes, if any, in the policy and implementation of the IRD keeping the overall national objective in view. Experience suggests that the performance formats developed by the district level authorities for

calling the periodic information concentrate more on physical and financial progress of the IRD. While not much information is provided which would help the monitoring authorities to understand the real factors leading to lower or exceptionally higher achievements in relation to targets, the formats do not provide data and information on important variables and

measurable indicators like output, employment, income, quality of life etc. These do not provide adequate feedback to the central monitoring authority for initiating corrective measures. The MIS for IRD calls for strengthening and capacity building of the existing organizational set-up, and redesigning the monitoring system. An effective MIS for IRD requires collection, compilation and analysis of the data and information by qualified and trained personnel at each decision-making level. Adequate investment inputting in place appropriate computerized MIS and trained staff is the need of the hour.

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-RURAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES-AN ASSESSMENT

Rural development as an integral part of country's socio-economic development has been recognized as a *sine qua non*. The goal of rural development is the enrichment of the quality of human life in rural areas accompanied by bridging the rural-urban gap through provision of all amenities. The national policy and programs for a successful rural development task should aim at diversification of economic activities, minimizing the dependence of rural households on agriculture and bringing about a significant increase in the share in both output and employment of allied activities, rural industries, business and service components of the rural economy. If this is not pursued, rural development merely remains as agricultural development and neither solves the problem of rural employment and poverty nor of equitable distribution of resources and income-generating assets. This article reviews broadly Government's initiatives to accelerate the process of rural development, programs and performance of the Integrated Rural Development and Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana and makes suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the National Rural Livelihood Mission currently being implemented.

Initiatives

Rural development has been accorded the highest priority in the country's planning process. A beginning was made in this direction by launching the Community Development Program in the early 1950s which proved to be instrumental in the establishment of a network of basic national extension services for development at the grassroots level in the villages so crucial for creating awareness among rural communities of the *potential* as well as *means* of development. In fact, this basic institutional infrastructure at the village level assisted the farmers to adopt major technological advances later in the mid 1960s in the sphere of agriculture and reinforced the process of abolition of intermediary landlords and reform of the land tenure system. Investments in the successive Five Year Plans have led to the creation of essential physical and institutional infrastructure to bring about socio-economic change in remote rural areas. Later on realizing that the benefits of various development programs were being taken by those better endowed with land resources, programs specifically designed for the development of the small and marginal farmers as well as landless and agricultural laborers were taken up in the early 1970s. A special program for the development of drought-prone areas was introduced in the mid-1970s and a program of development of desert areas in the late 1970s.

The Fifth Five Year Plan attempted different approaches to area development. These included:

- [i] Resource/problem based area programs viz. Drought Prone Area Program, the Command Area Development Program, the Desert Development Program.
- [ii] Target-group programs, viz. the Small Farmers' Development Agency Program, the Marginal Farmers' and Agricultural Laborers' Development Agency Program.
- [iii] Area specific incentive programs, viz. Concessional Finance, Investment Subsidy and Transport Subsidy Schemes.
- [iv] Comprehensive area development program viz. Sub-plans for the Hill and Tribal Areas. Besides, a program of "Food for Work" was launched in 1977 to provide opportunity of work for the rural poor particularly in slack employment period of the year which would at the same time create durable community assets. Irrigation facilities have been expanded manifold.

With a view to removing regional disparities, particularly in less endowed or disadvantaged areas, such as drought-prone, desert, hill and tribal areas, special plans for development were introduced. Schemes involving special financial and fiscal concessions, bank credit on soft terms and capital development subsidies have also been introduced in underdeveloped areas to attract increased investments for

Integrated Rural Development Program

Since independence Government has allocated significant resources to alleviate rural poverty. Realizing that piecemeal efforts in the sphere of rural development have not achieved the targeted objectives, the concept of Integrated Rural Development Program [IRDP] was first proposed in the Union Budget of 1976-77 to provide self-employment opportunities to the rural poor through provision of capital subsidy and bank credit so as to help rural poor acquire productive income-generating assets and training to upgrade their skills. This innovation of *direct attack on rural poverty* under the IRDP can help below poverty line rural households cross the poverty line on a sustained basis. In 1978- 79 with some modifications the program initially covered 2300 blocks and focused family as a unit rather than individuals. With addition of 300 blocks during 1979-80, it covered 2600 blocks identifying 53 lakh families for assistance as on 31 March 1980. From October 2, 1980 IRDP was extended to all blocks in the country stipulating targets for SCs/STs and Women beneficiaries and emphasizing primary, secondary and tertiary sectors of rural economy. The District Rural Development Agencies were specifically established to plan and implement IRDP and monitor/review the performance with regard to number of targeted beneficiaries crossing the poverty line, among others. Thus, IRDP basically attempted to attack directly on rural poverty aiming at removing the poverty and unemployment in rural areas through the adoption of the family as a unit of planning and making it self-employed by providing technically feasible and bankable schemes which lead to generation of additional income.

The IRDP was conceptualized as a program oriented towards development of a given area rather than development of specific sector. It was designed to alleviate poverty through local level planning taking into account development of local resources including human resources through formulating projects on scientific lines. The strategy was to identify the poorest of the poor families in the target group and to provide him all the needed assistance and services for taking up economic activities which have potential to generate such a significant incremental income that a beneficiary shall be left with a sufficient surplus to enhance his standard of living to a level which would be above the poverty line.

The program could not achieve its objectives because of lack of desired appreciation of [i] the concept and modalities of IRDP and its integrated approach [ii] scientific planning exercise at grassroots

[iii] developing a result oriented strategy and action plan [iv] effective coordination and support from other institutions and agencies. The DRDA specifically established with specified objectives to assist Below Poverty Line families to cross poverty line directed its effort to achieve physical targets, viz. the number of beneficiaries assisted, subsidy amount released and bank credit disbursed rather than actual number of families crossing the poverty line. While beneficiaries were interested more in availing the subsidy rather than acquiring income-generating assets and maintaining them, DRDA and banks were interested in achieving their physical and financial targets. Lack of scientific planning, monitoring the implementation process and concurrent evaluation to get feedback for further improving the program also contributed to unsatisfactory performance:

Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana

Since 1 April 1999, the "Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana [SGSY]" for the self-employment of the rural poor has been under implementation after restructuring and merging the erstwhile IRDP and its allied programs. The program aims at bringing the assisted BPL families above the Poverty Line through

[i] organizing rural poor into Self-Help-Groups [ii] establishing micro enterprises in rural areas based on the ability of the poor and potential of each area.
[iii] provision of credit linked capital subsidy to help beneficiaries acquire income- generating assets [iv] training of beneficiaries in group dynamics and skill development for managing micro-enterprises [v] marketing support with focus on market research, upgradation and diversification of products, packaging, creation of marketing facilities [vi] provision of infrastructure development fund to provide missing critical links.

The SGSY suffered from major deficiencies, such as [i] weaknesses in the planning and implementation process, improper formation, nurturing and working of SHGs, not strictly as per NABARD guidelines [ii] subsidy acted as a tempting factor rather than enabling one to acquire income generating assets through bank credit resulting in unsatisfactory loan repayment as compared to SHG-Bank-Linkage Program [iii] estimated income was not generated because of lack of effective coordination and systematic monitoring of SGSY implementation [iv] heavy concentration on agriculture and that too milch animals [v] inadequate use of funds earmarked for capacity building and skill development training, infrastructure development and marketing support. Deficiencies were observed in varying degrees in all States but were more pronounced in States of North-East region, Uttar Pradesh, Uttrakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Orissa and West Bengal in particular.

Implementation of IRDP till November 1999 and SGSY since April 1999 could not alleviate rural poverty as expected, as according to NSS round [2004-05], 41.8% rural population had monthly per capita expenditure of Rs.447, which some economists consider *Below Starvation Line* instead BPL. Besides, according to Multidimensional Poverty Index [MPI] worked out by UNDP and Oxford University, July 2010, about 645 million people [55%] in India were poor. As against 410 million MPI poor in 26 of the poorest African countries, eight Indian States [Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal] had 421 million MPI poor. The MPI reveals a vivid spectrum of challenges facing the poorest households. MPI considers 10 sharp indicators, namely Education [child enrolment and years of schooling]; Health [child mortality and nutrition] and Standard of living [electricity, drinking water, sanitation, cooking fuel, flooring and assets]. A global report on poverty eradication of the U.N. Secretary-General [2010] shows that economic growth is evident for the progress in China in reducing extreme poverty and raising living standards, whereas India is expected to be home to more than 300 million in poverty out of 900 million predicted to be in extreme poverty in 2015.

National Rural Livelihood Mission

Acknowledging the fact that out of the estimated 70 million rural BPL households as per 2010 projections, as many as 45 million households still need to be organized into SHGs and the existing SHGs need further strengthening and intensive financial support, the Government approved the restructuring of SGSY as the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and implemented in a mission mode across the country. It has already been launched in Rajasthan in June, 2011. The Government is planning to increase the number of members in women Self-Help-Groups (SHGs) to 70 million in next five years from the current 30 million, effectively bringing one member each from all the families of BPL into the fold of the NRLM. While NRLM is working with an objective to bring all the SHGs into the fold of federations and bank linkage, the Government has launching a scheme for them where micro-loans would be given at a concessional rate of 7% interest. Besides, the Government has identified 150 districts in the country based on various parameters where NRLM is to help 80% of the SHGs come out of dependence on the Government in the next 10 years, meaning they will have to achieve self-sufficiency through various livelihood programs and other business models.

Need for improving effectiveness

Past experiences of planning, implementation and monitoring of IRDP and SGSY suggest to initiate following enabling measures to improve program effectiveness and achieve expected results under NRLM

- NRLM should initially be intensively pilot tested in each of three Blocks [high, moderate & low growth] in three districts [high, Moderate & low growth] in each State of the country to understand and develop modalities of planning, Implementation and monitoring before it is launched throughout the country
- Planning and implementation of NRLM should be integrated with ongoing programs of health, education, drinking water, sanitation, housing, fuel, transport and communication [instead of NRDML]

being implemented in isolation] so as to create impact on the quality of life of rural households in terms of human development index

Functions and responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the planning and implementation of NRLM need to be well defined so as to ensure that BPL Swarozgaris manage their assets efficiently and earn sufficient to come out of poverty within three years

Potential Linked Plan being formulated annually by NABARD for each district should serve as resource document for preparing village, Block and District level NRLM plans incorporating formation of SHGs, their needs for training, skill development and capacity building, utilization of funds to support infrastructure development, technology and market and make economic activities bankable

- The initiative of Rural Self-Employment Training Institutes should, among others, focus on capacity building and empowering SHGs to [a] involve members to identify income generating activities totally based on their occupational skills, local resources, markets and economic viability; obtain bank credit and Government subsidy on time and use them to generate expected level of income, repay credit on time and improve their standard of living [b] share among SHGs within a Block/ District their experience of success and failures to continuously improve the project planning and implementation [c] take full advantage of new technology to improve quality of products, enhance business opportunities, and explore markets for their products [d] fully utilize the allocated and available funds for Revolving Fund Assistance, infrastructure development, marketing initiatives, training for skill development and forming SHGs Federations to create enabling environment and enhance credit absorption capacity that can impact on program outcomes [e] prepare quality bankable loan proposals in consultation with banks
- Banks having considerable experience in formulating, implementing and monitoring the Service Area Credit Plans since April 1989 should incorporate bankable economic activities covering more secondary and tertiary sectors rather than primary sector. Financial literacy and Credit counseling must be an integral part of NRLM to educate BPL Swarozgaris
- The NRLM should benefit from [a] District Rural Industries Projects successfully promoted by NABARD in 106 districts since 1993-94 that provide valuable insight in exploring and exploiting the unfathomable potential of rural industries [b] schemes of NABARD to promote and support rural non-farm sector includingschemes for women
- Resourceful and experienced Institutions, such as District Industries Centers, Khadi & Village Industries, Boards of Handicrafts, Handlooms, Sericulture and Coir working since long should help Swarozgaris enhance product quality and link activities with marketing
- Performance of NRLM must be systematically and in detail monitored quarterly at Block, District and State level to improve quality of planning and implementation and achieve enshrined objectives. Performance at Block level should be monitored village-wise; at District level Block-wise and State level district-wise Academic institutions operating in a district/State must be involved to evaluate the impact of NRLM including repayment of bank credit on a yearly basis
- Progress including deficiencies in implementation along with recovery of credit as revealed in quarterly monitoring and yearly impact evaluation must be released in local print and electronic media quarterly to seek feedback and improve program quality. Website of Ministry of Rural Development should have comprehensive MIS including recovery of bank credit
- NRLM would need comprehensive half yearly monitoring-cum-concurrent evaluation in each district.

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For India, rural development has been an integral part of nation's socio-economic development. Rural development can no longer be identified with mere increase in Gross National Product or even per capita national income. The increased income should be distributed so as to result in significant diminution of inequalities of income and wealth. Every rural family should have its reasonable share in the generation of GNP and sharing increased per capita income. Integrated rural development means optimum utilization of natural and human resources of a given rural area for the enrichment of the quality of life of its population. Optimum utilization emphasizes production, distribution, employment, upliftment of rural poor above poverty line and environmental harmony. Rural economic activity is considered in the context of market economy and the inadequacy in the supply of capital and skills in the rural areas. Integrated rural development considers the links of the rural area concerned with its market relations, the two-way mobility of capital, labor, policies on economic growth and social justice.

People participation and rural Development: Integrated development of rural and undeveloped areas has been an issue of concern throughout the world. In Indian context the thrust of each Government activity since freedom has been to empower marginalized segments of society but the approach has suffered from over exposure and under implementation. There has been plethora of case studies on the causes of under development but practically at grass root level an impactful and effective solution to generate a widespread transformation is still awaited. One aspect that is emphatically appearing from the studies is lack of awareness, information and initiative among the unprivileged segments of the country. Even the Knowledge Commission reiterated vital need of formation of knowledge society by empowering the masses through assisting them identify and utilize knowledge in resource generation. The masses need to be trained to cope with new situation by fulfilling information needs linking to their priorities and possibilities. Another outcome of developmental studies is that the rural poor have little or no participation in their own developmental efforts which has appeared as a critical bottleneck in initiating and sustaining development of underdeveloped areas. The impact of non-participation is lack of control of the common masses on their own environment which has been the major concern in front of grassroots empowerment. The starting point for development cannot be anything else other than the people themselves. The developmental efforts have often concentrated on physical and economic factors, while the human element is ignored.

Post Independent Reforms in India:

[1] **Community Development Program [1952] and National Extension Services [1953]:** With the launching of Community Development Program and establishing a network of National Extension Services in the villages a beginning was made to create awareness among rural communities of the potential and means of development. This institutional infrastructure at grass-root level facilitated abolition of intermediary landlords system and implemented land reforms that enabled farmers to adopt technologies in agriculture.

[2] **Panchayati Raj [1959]:** Panchayati Raj was created on October 2, 1959 on the recommendations of Balvantray Mehta Study Team (1957). The team had suggested a scheme of democratic decentralisation for streamlining the Community Development programme (1952), which had been introduced to bring about a silent revolution in rural society by awakening the dormant forces of progress in it. The scheme provided for a three tier structure of Panchayati Raj with the Gram Panchayat at the base, the Panchayat Samiti in the middle and Zila Parishad at the top. The Panchayati Raj underwent the phase of development (1959-1964), the phase of stagnation in (1964-1971) and the phase of decay (1971- 1977). The phase of its revival started in 1978. And resulted in the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992). The phase of development in fact had started after the submission of the Report by the Balvantray Mehta Study Team in 1957. The first step in that direction was

its approval by the National Development Council. This was followed by the Conference of the Ministers of Local Self Government of various states at Hyderabad. It was resolved to accept the scheme of democratic decentralization suggested by the Team and approved by the Council. However, it was also decided that every state should have the freedom to adopt the scheme as per its requirements. But there should be democratically elected and organically linked bodies at the village, the block and the district levels. Moreover, there should be a genuine decartelization of powers to the Panchayati Raj institutions. Rajasthan was the first states to introduce it on October 2 1959. By 1962, the Panchayati Raj had been set up in almost all the states of Indian Union. This happened because the Congress party was not only ruling in the centre but also in all the states India except Kerala. Another reason was the support to the Panchayati Raj by the then Prime Minister of India and the leader of the Congress party, Jawaharlal Nehru. The credit for it should also be given to S. K. Dey, the first Union Minister of Community Development, Cooperation and Panchayati Raj (1957-1966). It was he who had convinced Nehru on the necessity of Panchayati Raj for the success of parliamentary democracy in India. He was of the view that the Gram Sabha should be linked with the Lok Sabha for this purpose. The phase of stagnation started in 1964 after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru because his successor as Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri did not share Nehru's enthusiasm for democratic decentralisation. Moreover he had to give priority to increase in agricultural production on account of the food shortage. The growth of the Panchayati Raj remained stagnant during 1964-1971.

[3] **High Yielding Variety Programme [1960]:** Green revolution has been the most spectacular success story from India which made the country self reliant in foodgrain production. The success is manifestation of futuristic vision, faith, courage and the sincere efforts on the part of the scientists and the Government of the day. One choice before the country was to go for spread of new seeds of high yielding varieties (HYV) of wheat and rice. Dr. M. S. Swaminathan is one of the main architects of Indian Green Revolution, which started in 1960s and pulled the country from pawl and gloom of hunger and malnutrition and saved millions of lives.

Recent running Government Schemes and Programmes for Rural Development:

[1] **Indira Awaas Yojana [1995]:** IAY is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development to provide houses to the poor in the rural areas. The objective of the Indira Awaas Yojana is primarily to help construction/upgradation of dwelling units of members of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, freed bonded labourers, minorities in the below poverty line and other below poverty line non-SC/ ST rural households by providing them a lump sum financial assistance.

[2] **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana [2000]:** Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched on 25th December 2000 as a fully funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme to provide all weather road connectivity in rural areas of the country. The programme envisages connecting all habitations with a population of 500 persons and above in the plain areas and 250 persons and above in hill States, the tribal and the desert areas. According to latest figures made available by the State Governments under a survey to identify Core Network as part of the PMGSY programme, about 1.67 lakh Unconnected Habitats are eligible for coverage under the programme. This involves construction of about 3.71 lakh km. of roads for New Connectivity and 3.68 lakh km. under upgradation.

[3] **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act [2005]:** The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (MNREGA) was notified on September 7, 2005. The objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

[4] **National Social Assistance Programme [1995]:** The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) then comprised of National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS). These programmes were meant for providing social assistance benefit to the aged, the BPL households in the case of death of the primary

breadwinner and for maternity. These programmes were aimed to ensure minimum national standards in addition to the benefits that the States were then providing or would provide in future. Thus, presently NSAP now comprises of the following five schemes:

(1) **Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS):** Under the scheme, BPL persons aged 60 years or above are entitled to a monthly pension of Rs. 200/- up to 79 years of age and Rs. 500/- thereafter.

(2) **Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS):** BPL widows aged 40-59 years are entitled to a monthly pension of Rs. 200/-.

(3) **Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS):** BPL persons aged 18-59 years with severe and multiple disabilities are entitled to a monthly pension of Rs.

(4) **National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS):** Under the scheme a BPL household is entitled to 200.

(5) **Annapurna:** Under the scheme, 10 kg of food grains per month are provided free of cost to those senior citizens who, though eligible, have remained uncovered under NOAPS.

PURA - Providing Urban Amenities to Rural Areas

[5] **PURA [2004-05]:** PURA aims to achieve a holistic and accelerated development of compact areas around a potential growth centre in a gram panchayat (or a group of gram panchayats) by providing livelihood opportunities and urban amenities to improve the quality of life in rural areas. It recognizes the rapid growth potential of rural India if enhanced connectivity and infrastructure are provided. The rural population would then be empowered and enabled to create opportunities and livelihoods for themselves on a sustainable and growing basis.

Aajeevika Skills: is the skill and placement initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (MoRD). It evolved out of the need to diversify incomes of the rural poor and to cater to the occupational aspirations of their youth. The programme's focus is on skilling and placement in the formal sector for rural youth who are poor.

[6] **Aajeevika Skills [2009]:** Its origins in the 'Special Projects' component of the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). Besides helping to reduce poverty, it rides on the hopes and aspirations for a better quality of life in large sections of the rural poor. Ajeevika Skills aims to skill rural youth who are poor and provide them with jobs having regular monthly wages at or above the minimum wages. Skilling and placement under Aajeevika Skills involves eight distinct steps i. Awareness building within the community on the opportunities. ii. Identifying rural youth who are poor iii. Mobilising rural youth who are interested. iv. Counselling of youth and parents. v. Selection based on aptitude.

vi. Imparting knowledge industry linked skills and attitude that enhance employability.

[7] **Watershed Development (Revised – 2001):** The Watershed approach has conventionally aimed at treating degraded lands with the help of low cost and locally accessed technologies such as in-situ soil and moisture conservation measures, afforestation etc. and through a participatory approach that seeks to secure close involvement of the user-communities. The broad objective was the promotion of the overall economic development and improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the resource poor sections of people inhabiting the programme areas. Many projects designed within this approach were, at different points of time, taken up by the Government of India. The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) were brought into the watershed mode in 1987. The Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP) launched in 1989 under the aegis of the National Wasteland Development Board also aimed at the development of wastelands on watershed basis. The focus of these programmes has, with the advent of the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) shifted to the enhancement of the viability and quality of rural livelihood support systems.

[8] **HARIYALI [2003]:** New projects under the area development programmes shall be implemented in accordance with the Guidelines for Hariyali with effect from 1.4.2003. the main objectives are: Objectives Harvesting every drop of rainwater for purposes of irrigation, plantations

including horticulture and floriculture, pasture development, fisheries etc. to create sustainable sources of income for the village community as well as for drinking water supplies. Ensuring overall development of rural areas through the Gram Panchayats and creating regular sources of income for the Panchayats from rainwater harvesting and management.

[9] **National Horticulture Mission [2005]:** To promote holistic growth of the horticulture sector through area based regionally differentiated strategies, the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) was launched in the country, during the Xth Plan with effect from 2005-06. The scheme has enhanced horticulture production, improved nutritional security and income support to farm households and others; has established convergence and synergy among multiple on-going and planned programmes for horticulture development. The scheme has also helped in generating employment for skilled and unskilled persons, especially unemployed youth.

[10] **Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms [2005]:** The scheme was launched in May, 2005 with an objective to support State Government's efforts to revitalize their extension system. The scheme promotes a decentralized farmer-driven and farmer-accountable extension system through a new institutional arrangement for technology dissemination in the form of Agriculture.

[11] **Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana [2007]:** To provide benefits to the farmer community, the Ministry of Agriculture has launched the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) during the Financial Year 2007-08 to encourage the States to invest more towards agriculture and allied sectors so as to achieve 4% annual growth. This would help in increasing the production and productivity. The Ministry has envisaged an outlay of Rs.25,000/- crore for the 12th Five Year Plan. The scheme requires the States to prepare District and State Agriculture Plans for creation of such infrastructure, which are essential to catalyse the existing production scenario for achieving higher production. The scheme provides adequate flexibility and autonomy to the State Governments in selection, planning and implementation of projects under this new flagship scheme.

[12] **National Food Security Mission [2007]:** Understanding the importance of food security, the National Development Council in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007 adopted a resolution to launch Food Security Mission comprising of rice, wheat and pulses to increase the production of rice by 10 million tons, wheat by 8 million tons and pulses by 2 million tons by the end of Eleventh Plan. Accordingly National Food Security Mission has been launched since Rabi 2007 with a financial outlay of Rs. 4882 crore (Eleventh plan period).

[13] **Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana [2009]:** To improve the present status of women in Agriculture, and to enhance the opportunities for her empowerment, Government of India has announced "Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana" (MKSP), as a sub component of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and decided to provide support to the tune of Rs. 100 crore during 2010-11 budget. The primary objective of the MKSP is to empower women in agriculture by making systematic investments to enhance their participation and productivity, as also create and sustain agriculture based livelihoods of rural women.

Conclusion: The sustainable development intervention in the rural areas largely depends on the successful and effective implementation of rural development programmes. Since independence the country has formulated various rural development programmes and has restructured and revamped them envisaging their wider outreach and acceptability. However, the issues, challenges and concerns relating to the implementation of the rural development programmes have remained more or less the same. The need of the hour is the convergence of all development interventions at the grass-root level so as to enhance necessary infrastructure in the backward regions and ensure capacity building and skill up-gradation.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT TRAJECTORY- THE SHIFTING PARADIGM

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Dr. Parveen Kumar

Rural development in India has been subjected to a lot of experimentation. From community development approach to integrated development and more recently to an inclusive; the trajectory kept on shifting. Unfortunately a suitable one is yet to see the light of the day. The article deliberates on various developmental approaches, programmes and the strategies for rural development. The result is that so far the country has not been able to decide the roadmap to development. The result is that so far the country has not been able to decide the roadmap to development. Before the country attained independence there were some attempts towards social upliftment especially of the rural poor. These efforts were scattered and short lived. An attempt for upliftment of rural peoples on a mass scale was made by F. L. Bryne, who was the Deputy Commissioner in the Gurgaon district of erstwhile Punjab. The attempt tried to increase farmer's yields and for that a village guide was posted in each village for dissemination of agriculture related technology to farmers. The programme also aimed at providing improved seeds, improved methods of cultivation, construction of manure pits. The 'Sevagram' (1920) effort by 'Father of Nation' Mahatma Gandhi, the rural reconstruction institute at Shantiniketan by Rabindra Nath Tagore in 1921, the Marthandum project by Spencer Hatch in 1921 under the auspices of Young Men Christian Association (YMCA) and The Indian Village Service (IVS) established by Mr. Arthur T. Mosher of New York and Shri B.N. Gupta in 1945 had its branches in Lucknow and Etah (U.P) were some of the earlier efforts aimed towards rural reconstruction. These programmes directed towards rural upliftment were largely philanthropic works carried by individuals with selfless interests. As these programmes were largely philanthropic efforts by some noble personalities, these could not cut much ice. These do not have any support from the imperial government. There was no evaluation of these programmes and so the impacts of these programmes were not known precisely. In most of the cases the efforts were isolated, uneven and discontinuous. As a result these programmes could not last much longer and within a short span of time eventually out of existence.

Table 1: Rural reconstruction efforts in the pre independence era

S. No.	Programme (Year)	Objectives
1	Gurgaon Attempt (1920)	Increasing farmer's yields and for that a village guide was posted in each village for dissemination of agriculture related technology to farmers. The programme also aimed at providing improved seeds, improved methods of cultivation, construction of manure pits.
2	Sevagram initiative (1920)	To eradicate untouchability, promote education and sanitation
3	Shanti niketan Project (1921)	Rural reconstruction
4	Marthandum Project (1921)	Spiritual, mental, physical economical and social development of peoples.
5	Indian Village Service (1945)	To develop individual voluntary leaders and local agencies so that they can realize the best in their own villages

6	Nilokheri Project	Basically meant for the displaced persons of West Pakistan had facilities like hospital schools, vocational and technical institutes for training, veterinary and agricultural extension services and recreational facilities.
7	Firka Development Scheme (1946)	Attainment of village self rule by bringing about educational, economic, sanitary improvements and to make peoples self confident

The community development approach: The term Community Development (CD) was first officially used in 1948 at British Colonial Office Cambridge Conference on Development of African Initiative (Hold craft, 1984). The then CD programme aimed at helping British colonies in Africa prepare for independence by improving local government and developing their economies. After attaining independence we also experimented with the community development model. In India it was initiated on 2nd Oct. 1952 with the aim of promoting better living for the whole community in the rural areas. The community development programme was also as a result of the conclusions drawn from the 'Grow more food' enquiry report. A successful post independence project, Etawah Pilot project formed the basis of launching Community Development programme. The Etawah Pilot project was launched in Etawah district of Uttar Pradesh in 1948 and this also served as a prototype for Indian national community development programme. The principles and method of extension education were first tried in Indian soil with official collaboration under Etawah pilot project. The pilot project employed multi subject matter village level workers to act as village contact persons and to develop close personal rapport through frequent contact with villagers. The villagers in turn were backed by a staff of trained specialists in different disciplines.

National Extension Services:

The community development programmes were having limitation of resources. Hence a need was felt to expand these to bring in more and more peoples under its ambit. Hence the National Extension Service was launched in 1953 to have a wider coverage at less cost and more of people's participation. Though the Community Development programmes and National Extension Service, India had made a commitment to all round rural development. But the CDP and the NES could not make much headway. This was even acknowledged by the then President of World Bank who stressed the momentum to be shifted from community development to rural development. The many implementation level problems and lack of local organization were largely responsible for its failure. The bureaucratic intervention was also a factor leading to a dismal performance of the programmes. This was authenticated by the speech of Ashok Mehta, the then Deputy Chairman of Planning Commission who while speaking in the 'Community Development Ministers' Conference in 1963 in Delhi, held Community Development Programme officials responsible for the abysmal ignorance of villagers about this programme. In the mid-60's, the critics of the Community development programme called it a total failure and as a result the Ministry of Community Development got eclipsed and eventually went out of existence in 1966. Community Development became a taboo in the government parlance.

The Decentralized approach

A team was constituted in 1957 for the study of community projects and National Extension service and it was headed by Mr. Balwant Rai Mehta. The team recommended democratic decentralization i.e. the government that derives its authority from the peoples should redistribute it to the peoples so that the peoples can plan for themselves what is best for them. The concept took the shape of Panchayati Raj in India. The Panchayati Raj envisaged a scheme of democratic decentralization with the establishment of elected and organically linked democratic bodies at the grass root level, entrusting all the planning and developmental functions to these bodies and providing them with adequate resources so that they

can discharge their duties effectively. These institutions were although best perceived as the means through which the voice of unheard could be heard, but things did not change to that extent. After having met with some initial success, these were unsuccessful in proving themselves to be people's institutions. Mehta (1978) in his report of the Committee on Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRI's) has described three distinct phases in the evolution of PRI's. The PRI's after having seen a phase of ascendency (1959-1964) came to stagnation (1965- 69) and then to phase of decline (1969-1977). The main reasons for the decline were that these institutions were not provided with adequate funds, functionaries and most of the developmental works were kept outside their purview.

Integrated Development Approach

The IRDP was formulated (1974) to cover the whole country with the objective to assist families below the poverty line in the rural areas by taking up self-employment ventures in a variety of activities like agriculture, horticulture, sericulture and animal husbandry in the primary sector and service and business activities in the tertiary sector. Under the IRDP programme at least 30 percent of the beneficiaries had to be women. Various programmes were started under IRDP. Training of Rural Youth for Self-employment (TRYSEM) was started in 1979 with main objective to equip rural youth (18-38 years) with necessary skills and technology and enable them to take up vocations of self-employment. Another scheme exclusively for women under IRDP was Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA). The main objective of the program was to improve the lot of rural women through the creation of income-generating activities in the district. The program envisaged formation of groups of 10-15 rural women each for carrying on income- generating activities with monetary assistance from financial institutions.

Legal rights based approach:

Finally the rural development trajectory has entered a right based approach. Now, one can demand work, education, information and food as a legal right. For that we have right to work, right to education, right to information and right to food. It is the duty of the government to provide its citizens all these things. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) guarantees the right to work and ensure livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The Constitutional 86th amendment inserted Article 21-A in the Constitution of India; right to education that entails provision of free and compulsory education to all children in the age group of six to fourteen years as a Fundamental Right. The right to information acts provides for right to information for citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities. This will promote transparency and accountability in the working of every public authority. Right to food act compels the government to provide food grains quota to five kilogram per person per family subject to a maximum of 25 kg per family. The act brings under its purview 75% of rural households and 50% of urban households. The beneficiaries would receive five kilograms of subsidized food grains at the rate of rupees three per kilogram for rice, wheat for rupees two per kilogram and coarse cereals for rupees one per kilogram.

Strategy for rural development

Demand rather than Supply driven: The rural development programmes need to be demand driven rather than supply driven. One of the major drawbacks of the rural development programmes in India is that they are supply driven seldom based on

Table 2: Rural development programmes in the Post independence era

S.	Programme (Year)	Objectives
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No.		
1.	Etawah Pilot Project (1948)	Seeking a better life for the villagers by villagers themselves
2	Community Development Programme(1952)	promoting better living for the whole community in the rural areas
3	National Extension Service (1953)	To have a wider coverage at less cost and more of people's participation.
4	Intensive Agriculture District Programme(1960-61)	To increase the income of the cultivator, economic resources and potential of the village.
5	Area Development Programmes (1966)	Development of specific areas such as Hills, Deserts, Border areas
6	Draught Prone Area Programme (1970)	To minimize the adverse effects of drought on production of crops, livestock and productivity of land, water and human resources ultimately leading to drought proofing of the affected areas.
7	Small Farmers Development Agency(1969)	To identify problems of small farmers, ensure that farmers secure loans from Cooperative Banks and they have access to seeds, fertilizers etc
9.	Crash Scheme for Rural Employment(1971)	To provide employment to 1,000 persons in every district during 10 months in a year.
11	Command Area Development Programme(1976),	To improve the utilization of created irrigation potential and optimizing agriculture production and productivity from irrigated agriculture
12	Special Livestock Production Programme(1974-75)	To produce improved livestock and to augment the availability of good quality of animals to those who are interested in rearing the cross bred heifer calves.
13	Food for Work Programme (1977)	To create additional employment in rural areas on works of durable utility to the community, with the use of surplus food grains available in the buffer stock for payment as wages
14	Integrated Rural Development Programme(1974)	to assist families below the poverty line in the rural areas by taking up self-employment ventures in a variety of activities
15	Employment Assurance Scheme (1993)	To provide about 100 days of assured casual manual employment during the lean agricultural season, at statutory minimum wages
16	Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (merger of IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA and Million Wells Scheme) (2001)	Holistic program of micro-enterprises covering all aspects of self-employment which include organizing rural poor into self-help
17	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Guarantee Act	To provide 100 man days of work to each family in a year

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National Rural Livelihood Mission/
Aajeevika (2010)

To create efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor (Self Help Groups) enabling them to increase household income improved access to financial services

the felt needs of the communities. Often it is seen that peoples do not get what they need. People's participation should be ensured in every aspect right from planning to implementation, monitoring and evaluation so that their needs are fully incorporated while formulating any developmental strategy for them.

Participative rather than Representative: Although the Panchayati Raj Institutions at the grass roots level are the main vehicles through which the rural development programmes are carried to the rural masses but often it has been seen that the developmental functionaries reach only the selected and elected ones. The benefits do not percolate deep down at the lowest level. This has made these institutions representative rather than participative ultimately defying the very logic for which they were meant.

Provision of adequate resources: Provision of adequate resources to the people is also a necessary prerequisite for the developmental programmes to succeed. Adequate resources in terms of finances, manpower and infrastructure should be made available to the people and the institutions to work effectively.

Awareness: Although there is no dearth of developmental programmes, yet we are far behind in vital developmental indicators like education, health, sanitation etc. This is because masses are not aware of the different programmes launched for them. Hence there is an immediate need to make people aware by using various audio, video and audio visual sources. Information and communicational technologies (ICT) can be very useful in creating awareness.

Any rural development strategy should focus in harnessing the innate capabilities of the poor so as to manifest the perfection in them and complement them with capacities such as in the growing economy of the country. This is also necessary if we are to make the democracy truly representative and an inclusive one.

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HOW TO SHARPEN NATIONAL RURAL LIVELIHOOD MISSION

Dr. Manju Panwar

The Ministry of Rural Development has re-structured the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) into National Livelihood Mission (NRLM) with effect from April 1, 2013. NLM is one of the flagship programmes of Govt. of India to reduce poverty through building strong institutions of the poor, particularly women, and enabling these institutions to access a wide range of financial and livelihood services in rural areas. In this article, author has narrated her field experiences highlighting the hurdles in the implementation of SGSY and based on these some suggestions have been offered for effective implementation of the Mission. Part I deals with hurdles faced by SGSY in its effective implementation and in the Part II of the article some suggestions

have been offered for effective implementation of NRLM.

Hurdles faced in the Implementation of SGSY

Following were some of the main hurdles in the implementation of SGSY:

Focused on formation of Qualitative SHGs rather than Quantitative SHGs

Various studies conducted on the formation of SHGs conclude that while forming Self Help Group (SHG), emphasis is given on quantitative rather than qualitative formation of SHGs, which is cause of concern. As a result, no proper social mobilisation is conducted at the grassroots level to convince poor to join SHG. They are rather forced to join SHGs by giving lure of getting subsidy and loan from the bank. This is the biggest mistake which is done at the outset of the formation of SHG under SGSY.

Faulty BPL List

Another hurdle which is related to the formation of SHG is the faulty BPL list. Defects in the BPL lists have been found to be the most important problem in the poverty alleviation programmes. Almost all projects for helping the poor at the grassroots have become tied with the BPL lists. Whether it is giving ration cards for subsidized food, or providing training and credit for self-employment. In nutshell, benefits are extended only to those who are in the BPL list. As a result, majority of the actual poor are not able to get the benefits of the schemes and programmes which are implemented for them.

Due to the rural politics, only those persons get BPL cards who are near and dear ones of Sarpanchs. Due to this, benefits mostly have gone to the upper castes, landlords and politically influential people of villages. Field experiences show that the rural poor, BPL families, SC people and other needy people still face hardships and have not been benefited from various schemes to the extent that they should have. As a result, a few non-eligible beneficiaries have been receiving the benefits of the schemes.

Lack of family support and prevailing social customs

It is hard reality that despite implementing various schemes and programmes for empowerment of rural women, they are not able to get the benefits. First, they are not made aware about the schemes and programmes by the implementing agencies. Secondly, there are many young women who have interest to join SHG but due to the prevailing social customs, rituals and lack of support from their families; they confined themselves to the four walls of the house. In order to overcome this problem, NRLM should ensure that at least one member from each identified rural poor household, preferably a woman, is brought under the (SHG) network in a time bound manner.

Indifferent attitude of Bankers toward SHGs

The indifferent attitude of bankers towards SHGs is the major constraint because of which SHGs could not get momentum. There have been instances where women of SHGs have to make several visits to open their accounts in the bank by covering long distances. Maintenance of accounts of SHG is another reason because of which rural women kept distance from the bank and could not sustain their SHGs.

Suggestions

Following are some of the suggestions for the effective implementation of NRLM after

overcoming the hurdles at grassroots level.

Participation of the Community Based Organisations (CBOs) in the Participatory Identification of Poor

The poor would be identified through Participatory Identification of Poor (PIP) and also be approved by the Gram Sabha(GS). To make the PIP as a defacto participatory method of identification of poor under NRLM , CBOs such as Youth Club, Shakhar Mahila Samoohs(SMSs), Mahila Mandal, workers and others who can be instrumental in identifying the actual poor and can bring the marginalised section of the society in the mainstream should be involved. Secondly, the GSs must be held in transparent manner for which, Sarpanch, members of the Gram Panchayat, Gram Sachiv, Aganwari Workers and Block Development Officers must also take active part in the PIP processes.

Change in attitudes of Elders in families:

Due to the socio-culture reasons, older women (mothers-in-law) do not allow their young women (daughters-in-law) in their family to become the members of SHGs. Because of which, younger

women who are interested to join SHGs remain complacent and do not realise their full potential. It is in this view, family should be taken into account and all family members' particularly older ones should be convinced that they should motivate their daughter-in-laws to become the part of SHG. The leaders of existing SHGs and SMSs can be roped in motivating young rural women to overcome social/ cultural barriers and to come out from the four walls of their houses to get benefit of the schemes and programmes implemented for their development.

Intensive Training for Bank Officials

Banks need to be sensitised on the need to provide credit to SHGs. They should be encouraged to take active interest in the projects of SHG and reduce the duration of time which is taken for processing the applications and disbursing loans. Banks should set up branches in rural areas so as to enable SHGs and can get cash/credit facilities from banks at doorsteps for meeting out their working capital requirements. This will also be a right step towards financial inclusion of the poor.

Personality Development Training for SHGs

As training is an important part that contributes to the success of the scheme, more emphasis should be given to proper and effective training for SHGs. Procedure for credit access to SHGs should be made more easy and simple by imparting training to the SHGs. Not only that, training should be provided on personality development programmes covering aspects like importance of team work, group dynamics, book keeping, accounting, financial management, advocacy, bank-linkage, accessing government schemes so that women can get fullest benefit of the SHGs. Special attention needs to be paid for creating understanding and awareness about the financial aspects of the scheme.

Marketing

Field experience shows that dairy emerged as one of the most popular activity in most of SHGs because they were not guided about other income generating avenues such as petty shops, kirana shops, flower selling, candle making, masala and pickle making, brassware, leather goods and many other craft related activities. Some of the key activities like soft toys, embroidery, knitting, stitching, pickle making can be successfully adopted as these have local demand and market. Chalk making and file cover making are other activities which have market in the government offices. The SHGs should also be encouraged to undertake some innovative activities of mutual affinity is the primary building block

of the NRLM community institutional design.

which can give them more earnings.

Strengthening of Federation of SHGs

Women's SHG coming together on the basis of mutual affinity is the primary building block of the NRLM community institutional design. NLRM focuses on building, nurturing and strengthening the institutions of the poor women, including the SHGs and their Federations at village and higher levels. Federation apart from strengthening SHG will also be helpful in selling the products prepared by SHGs. Federation will be instrumental for addressing livelihoods issues i.e. farmers organizations, milk producers' cooperatives, weavers associations, etc.

Conclusion

While concluding it may be stressed that one of the main reasons for the disintegration of SHGs is the lack of attention and regular follow-up under SGSY. It is therefore, imperative under NLRM that target approach for the formation of the group should be discarded. Once the names of members of the SHGs have been identified, adequate time should be given to 'nurture' them. Not only that awareness generation programmes should be organized on regular basis but they should also be made aware about the ways of getting benefit from them. This can be achieved by having a proper display of the pictorial posters about the success stories and by usefulness of the schemes. Since most of the villagers are illiterate, they are not able to read the posters or hoardings, the documentary films and *nukad natak* (folk Media) should be shown to them about the formation of SHGs and outcomes from them.

The success of every programme depends upon the collective efforts. NLRM also emphasises on convergence with various schemes of Rural Development along with other line departments/ministries to strengthen the exiting occupations of the rural poor. It is imperative that DRDA, banks and other institutions which are involved in the promotion of SHGs should understand their responsibility towards society. Hence, it is imperative that there should be proper coordination and cooperation to fulfil the objectives of the poverty alleviation programmes and three Fs ie. Formation, Financing and Federation of women SHGs should be given major attention for making NLRM a success programme for the poor in rural areas.

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THE SAGA OF BOOSTING RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Dr. Anupam Hazra

India, since independence has made a significant progress in rural development with an integrated approach towards improving the quality of life of the rural poor and by ensuring equity and effective people's participation. The thrust of rural development programs has been to make a frontal attack on poverty through special employment generation programs, productive asset transfer through institutional credit and subsidy programs and programs of rural housing, drinking water and sanitation. Social security programs were designed for providing assistance to the destitute and poor families. The Government has undertaken various programs for development of wastelands, desert and drought prone areas and land reforms in the country. Assistance and encouragement to voluntary agencies and training of functionaries of rural development forms part of the emphasis on accelerated rural development.

After the independence, community development assumed high priority. A pilot community development project was launched in 1948 through the Etawah Project. Later in 1952, the Government of India launched 55 Community Development Projects, each covering about 300 villages or a population of 30,000. These programs were multi-dimensional but the major emphasis was placed on agricultural production, as the areas selected for launching the project were located in irrigated areas or where the rainfall was assured. In 1953, the National Extension Service Project was launched with similar objectives to cover larger areas, including the dry regions. This project of three-year duration, demarcated the blocks of 150-300 villages as manageable units for initiating community development programs. To implement the multifaceted program, an extension organisation, headed by a Block Development Officer (BDO) was established at each block or the revenue tehsil, with a team of subject specialists and village level workers (VLW). Each VLW covered a population of 5000-6000, spread over 5-10 villages to implement various development programs launched by different departments. During the initial phase of community development, the government officials prepared the plan under the guidance of the Planning Commission. There was no opportunity for the community to demand any facilities to solve their problems. As the intention was to ensure people's participation, advisory committees were subsequently established at various levels.

There was no significant achievement from 1950s till mid 1970s, and poverty was on the verge of increasing. Five years after launching the community development program - in 1957, the Government appointed the *Balvantrai Mehta* Committee to suggest measures to remove obstacles in implementing development programs. The Committee recommended the formation of a three-tier system of rural local self-government, to be called *Panchayati Raj*. These were Gram Panchayat (Village level), Panchayat Samiti (Block level) and Zilla Parishad (District level). The aim was to decentralize the process of decision making and to shift the decision making centre closer to the people, encourage their participation and place the bureaucracy under the local people's control. However, the Panchayati Raj was not able to fulfil all the expectations of the people and planners as there were lack of harmony among the elected members due to political fractions and prevalence of corruption and inefficiency.

The rural development priority was shifted to agricultural production in mid sixties and a distinct technological orientation was given to agriculture. Under the Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plans (1969-74 and 1974-79), the central government introduced independent administrative hierarchies to carry out special programs, bypassing the Panchayati Raj institutions. Special programs like Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Intensive Agricultural Areas Program (IAAP), Intensive Agricultural District Program (IADP), Tribal Development Agency (TDA),

Major Rural Development Initiatives-Since Independence

1951	First Five Year Plan launched
1952	Community Development program launched.
1958	Three-tier structure of local self-governing bodies (<i>Panchayati Raj</i>) introduced.
1969	Rural Electrification Corporation set up.
1971	" <i>Garibi Hatao</i> " initiated
1972-73	--- Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Project (PIREP) --- Accelerated Rural Water Supply Program (ARWSP)
1973-74	Drought Prone Areas Programs (DPAP)
1977	Food for Work Program
1977-78	Desert Development Program (DDP)
1978-79	Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP)
1979	Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)
1980	National Rural Employment Program (NREP)
1982	Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)
1985-86	<i>Indira Awaas Yojana</i> (IAY) started.
1986	"National Drinking Water Mission" (NDWM) [rechristened as "Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission" (RGNDWM) in 1991]
1986	--- Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) established --- Central Rural Sanitation Program (CRSP).
1988	" <i>Bekari Hatao</i> " initiated
1988-89	Million Wells Scheme (MWS)
1989	Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)
1992	Constitutional 73rd Amendment Act to grant constitutional status to the <i>Panchayati Raj</i> institutions.
1993	Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)
1995	National Social Assistance Program (NSAP)
1999	--- <i>Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana</i> (JGSY) --- <i>Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana</i> (SGSY)
2000	Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY)/Annapurna Scheme
2001	Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)
2004	National Food for Work Program
2005	Bharat Nirman/Common Minimum Program/Varsha Bima Scheme
2006	National Rural Employment Gurantee Act (NREGA)

Marginal, Small Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agency (MFAL) and area development agencies such as Command Area Development, Drought Prone Area and Hill area Development Programs were financed and operated directly by the Central Government. By mid eighties, the Government was able to meet the minimum needs of the poor, which included elementary education, health, water supply, roads, electrification, housing and nutrition.

In 1987, the Planning Commission decided to consider block as the basic unit for development planning. The task of planning at the district level was entrusted to the District Planning and Development Council which had wider representation of the society. Panchayati Raj reforms were introduced through the 73rd Constitutional Amendment to facilitate planning at the micro-level and to strengthen the *Gram Sabha* (village assembly). Under the decentralized planning process, rural development programs have assumed greater significance as their planning and implementation has been transferred to Pachayati Raj Institutions. Department of Rural Development is responsible for effective implementation of many Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Rural Development Ministry and

state sector schemes of similar and complementary nature.

The Government of India has been giving top priority to rural development. However, in the absence of well planned development programs and efficient delivery systems, most of these resources do not benefit the target groups. It has been reported that only 18% of the rural development budget reaches the target families, while the rest is wasted due to inefficient delivery systems or drained out. As a result, the pace of progress has remained stunted and the poor continue to suffer. After six decades of Independence, agricultural growth remains anemic, farmers are trapped in poverty, the poor prefer urban slums to stagnant villages and the rural communities lack basic facilities like schools and health centres. In a word, the policy making for rural development has largely been ineffective though, along with marketisation, technological change and politicization of the masses, the policies for rural development have opened up the rural communities which are now confronted with new opportunities as well as risks.

Eleventh Five Year Plan gives ample indications that agricultural and rural development will demand far more resources and higher priorities than in the past. However, more resources and higher priorities for agricultural and rural development can become effective only if the current weaknesses in policymaking are identified and corrected.

There is a need to initiate more planned and organized endeavors in the direction of integrating rural development departments across the vertical and horizontal dimensions to meet the ultimate objective of rural development in the country. The rural development program should identify the problems of the poor and address the local needs, instead of forcing them to accept pre-conceived plans. The participating families should take active part in the program. There should be equal opportunity for the weaker sections of the society and women. The program should facilitate sustainable management of natural resources and environmental protection and lead to better quality of life. The reasons for rural poverty can be attributed to lack of resources, confidence among the poor and management for implementing the development programs. The planners of the country should aim at coordinating these efforts of various organizations and to have a complete networking between and within various categories of organizations to share the knowledge and experience. This will not only result in faster development but also will integrate the overall development. It is also desirous that such an approach be made, not through a multiplicity of departmental officials, but through an agent common at least to the principal departments engaged in rural work i.e. the village level worker or an NGO working in the area.

Mahatma Gandhi famously noted that India lives in its villages and if the village perishes, India will perish too. This truism about the social, economic and political development of rural areas is valid even today. Since majority of our population lives in the villages, it is important that people in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in suburban and urban areas for the balanced growth of the nation.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN NORTH EAST INDIA

The need for development programmes especially rural development programmes was comprehended as a result of several famines and food scarcities that occurred in India during the period of 1860 and 1870 and again between 1890 and 1900. During the period, the Government officials apprehended food grains and controlled the market to ensure their distribution to the needy people of rural areas. This humanitarian outlook towards the rural needy indigenous people may be termed as the beginning of the rural development in India (Dwibedi, RM, 2005). However, in the planned economic development in the post independent scenario, the development acquired top priority and the development of various sectors of the economy has been a major area concern of successive Five Year Plans.

India's North-East region always has been paid special prominence in all the developmental programmes of Government of India. The eight north eastern states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura are considered as special category states and their development plan are financed by the Centre on the basis of 90% grant and 10% loan. They are also allowed to use 20% of the Central assistance for non-plan expenditure as resources and level of development are significantly below the national average. The performance of five programmes viz. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana(SGSY)/ National Rural Livelihood Mission(NRLM)/AAJEEVIKA, Indira Awaas Yojana(IAY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana(PMGSY) and National Social Assistance Programme(NSAP) of the Ministry of Rural development in the north east India are analysed below.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), currently known as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of country by providing at least one hundred (100) days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The most distinguishing feature of MGNREGA is its approach towards empowering citizens to play an active role in the implementation of employment guarantee schemes, through gram sabha, social audit, participatory planning and other activities.

The Act covered 200 districts in its first phase, implemented on February 2, 2006 and was extended to 330 additional districts in 2007-2008. All the remaining rural areas have been notified with effect from April, 1, 2008.

The Central Government has released a total amount of Rs.2376.98 crore to the North Eastern (N-E) States during the year 2012-13. The actual expenditure of the all the eight states are 1684.23 crore against the total available fund of Rs.3244.4 which is of 51.91% of the available fund. As far individual states are concerned, highest fund is utilised in Assam (78.52%) followed by Meghalaya (72.59%) and Mizoram (54.56%). The utilisation of the remaining states is below 50% of the fund available. The lowest fund is utilised by Arunachal Pradesh which is only 11.49% of the fund available. Again, Tripura has the highest fund available which is more than double than Assam and almost four, five times than the other N-E States. The Table: 1 and Table: 2 give the brief reflection of the implementation of MGNREGA in the North Eastern States.

Table: 1 Fund position under MGNREGA (Figures in parentheses are the percentage of fund utilised to fund available)

State	Fund Available (Rs. in Crore)	Fund Utilised (Rs. in Crore)
Arunachal Pradesh	40.09	11.49 (28.66)
Assam	532.64	418.26(78.52)
Manipur	506.23	168.60 (33.3)
Meghalaya	226.17	164.17(72.59)
Mizoram	267.25	145.83(54.56)
Nagaland	255.51	123.63(48.39)
Sikkim	60.86	28.72(47.19)
Tripura	1355.65	623.53(45.99)
Total:	3244.4	1684.23(51.91)

Source: Compiled from Annual Report 2012-13, MORD

Besides, 26, 11,984 households have been provided employment till December, 2012 and 926.46 lakhs mandays have been generated by these states under MGNREGA. Moreover, highest mandays have been generated by Tripura followed by Assam which is 40.88% and 20.62% respectively of the total mandays generated in the whole North East States. However lowest mandays have been observed in comparatively less populous states Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. Again, the total numbers of 2, 15,220 works have taken up in these states out of which 32458 numbers have been completed and 1, 82,762 numbers are still going on.

Table 2 Mandays generated under MGNREGA

(Figures in parentheses are the percentage of mandays generated to the total mandays)

State	Mandays generated (in Lakhs)
Arunachal Pradesh	9.43(1.02)
Assam	191.06(20.62)
Manipur	93.87(10.13)
Meghalaya	87.49(9.44)
Mizoram	86.55(9.34)
Nagaland	66.92(7.22)
Sikkim	12.42(1.34)
Tripura	378.71(40.88)
Total	926.46

Source: Compiled from Annual Report 2012-13, MORD

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)/National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) /AAJEEVIKA

The single self-employment programme of Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), launched with effect from 1.4.1999, has been conceived keeping in view the strengths and weaknesses of the earlier schemes of Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) and Allied Programmes along with Million Wells Scheme (MWS).

The objective of the programme was to bring the existing poor families above the poverty

line by covering all aspects of self employment viz. organisation of the rural poor into Self help Groups (SHGs) and their capacity building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure build up, technology, credit and marketing. Generally, the list of BPL households identified through BPL census duly approved by the Gram Sabha will form the basis for identification of families for assistance under SGSY. This programme was merged with National Rural Livelihood Mission from April 1, 2013.

The Central Government allocated Rs.3915 crore for the N-E states during 2012-13. The financial position of this programme for the N-E states is reflected in the Table: 3.

Most of the states are in transition stage from SGSY to NRLM i.e. they are in a stage of setting up the various systems required for smooth and efficient implementation of the programme. So fund utilization during this period is quite low. In this stage, the expenditure is mainly on social mobilization and capacity building of the grassroots institutions. Some of the key achievements of NRLM in these states are

State Rural Livelihood Mission (SRLMs) set up in 6 states-Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

Full time Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) have been appointed in Sikkim, Mizoram, Tripura and Nagaland.

Identification of intensive area of operations and Annual Action Plan (AAPs) prepared and submitted by 6 states- Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.

Basic core team at State level recruited in 6 states- Meghalaya, Sikkim, Tripura, Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. (Annual Report 2012-13, MORD, GOI)

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)

Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development and has been in operation since 1985-86. The prime objective of IAY is to provide financial assistance to build dwelling units for SC/ST, free bonded labourers and also to non SC/ST rural poor below poverty line by providing them grants-in-aid. Though IAY is shared between the Centre and States in the ratio 75:25, however for the N-E states the funding pattern is 90:10.

In the year 2011-12, an amount of Rs. 594 crore was earmarked for the North Eastern Region with a physical target of construction of 2.19 lakhs houses. Against the physical target of construction of 2.19 lakh houses, 2.00 lakh houses were constructed in the N-E States under IAY and 1.20 lakhs houses were at various stages of construction. In 2012-13, Rs.1054 crore has been earmarked for the N-E states with a physical target of construction of 2.41 lakhs houses. The state wise fund position is shown in the Table 4.

Table: 4 Fund position under IAY

State	Fund Available(Rs. in Lakh)	Fund Utilised(Rs. in Lakh)
Arunachal Pradesh	2008.212	674.995
Assam	85115.542	43406.208
Manipur	2047.517	816.788
Meghalaya	3951.191	3251.621
Mizoram	1053.228	554.415
Nagaland	NA (Not Available)	NA
Sikkim	NA	NA

Tripura

NA

NA

Source: Compiled from Annual Report 2012-13, MORD

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

The PMGSY launched in December, 2000 as a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme, aims at providing rural connectivity to unconnected habitations with population of 500 persons or more in the rural areas by the end of the Tenth Plan period. During the financial year 2012-13, a total amount of Rs. 1049 crore has been released to the N-E states. The expenditure during that period was Rs. 929.12 crore. The utilisation of funds of N-E states under PMGSY is shown in the Table: 5. Against the targeted length of 2660 kms, a total length of 1441 kms has been completed, which is 54%, and the total number of habitations covered 309 against the target of 340, which is 91%, during 2012-13.

Table 5 Fund utilization under PMGSY

State	Fund Released (Rs. in Crore)	Fund Utilised (Rs. in Crore)
Arunachal Pradesh	273.57	131.61
Assam	N A	460.82
Manipur	117.07	50.64
Meghalaya	50	19.85
Mizoram	71.82	35.28
Nagaland	67.02	66.52
Sikkim	192.61	66.99
Tripura	27.7	97.40

Source: Compiled from Annual Report 2012-13, MORD.

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

The NSAP was launched with effect from 15th August, 1995 as a 100 per cent Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the aim to provide social assistance benefit to poor households in the case of old age, death of primary breadwinner and maternity. At present NSAP comprises - (i) Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), (ii) National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and (iii) Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS) and (iv) Annapurna.

NSAPs are implemented by Rural Development Department in the state of Assam and Meghalaya and by Social Welfare Department in the rest of the states. Some states also made monthly contribution to the schemes. Under IGNOAPS, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram contributed Rs.50 per month, Nagaland contributed Rs.100 per month and Sikkim and Tripura contributed Rs.200 each per month. Under IGNWPS, Sikkim and Tripura contributed Rs.100 and Rs.200 respectively and under IGNDPS, Mizoram contributed Rs.50, Nagaland Rs.100, Sikkim Rs.100 and Tripura Rs.200 per month respectively. The number of beneficiaries under IGNOAPS was 295792, IGNWPS was 17880, IGNDPS was 6318, NFBS was

3722 and Annapurna was 33125 lakhs (excluding Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur). The fund utilised under NSAP is shown in Table:6. Again, an amount of Rs.704.33 lakhs, Rs.15613.07 lakhs and Rs.1044.22 lakhs have been released to Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur respectively during 2012-13.

Table 6 Fund Utilisation under NSAP

State	Fund Utilised (in Lakh)
Meghalaya	277.01
Mizoram	862.2
Nagaland	31 6
Sikkim	550.46
Tripura	3170

(No data available from Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur)

Source: Compiled from Annual Report 2012-13, MORD

Conclusion

North Eastern states of India are recognised as special category states and get special consideration in funding pattern in the Government Schemes. To accelerate the development process, the Central Government has taken a number of steps which also includes initiatives of the government to stipulate earmarking of 10% of the Budget (Gross Budgetary Support-GBS) of the Central Ministers/ Departments and creation of Non-Lapsable Central pool of Resources (NLCPR). Most of the ongoing rural development schemes are interventions towards food security, creation of conditions for socio-economic development and enhancing the capacity level of rural poor to enable them to engage in productive activities. Besides, the Ministry of Rural Development also conducted separate Performance Review Committee (PRC) meetings to ensure that more times are available to them to bring out their special problems. Though the financial allocation and its disbursement on rural development programmes have been increasing, the most of the areas of the north east region are still backward and remote. These areas are untouched by the development programmes of the government. The officials and policy makers, who prepare plans and programmes, should adhere to the ground reality of the problems of north eastern states and to identify the factors that hinder the developmental process. Finally, a dynamic role of the state and its intervention is must for proper implementation of rural development programmes in North East India.

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Assam, as one of north-eastern states constitutes 3,11,69,272 total population out of which 51.19 percent are males and remaining 48.81 percent are females. As per population census 2011, the rural population of the state is about 86 percent of the total population where 51.12 percent are male and 48.88 percent are female (Economic Survey, Assam). The living condition of the rural people of the state is very poor because of which development of rural areas in the state must receive much attention.

The term 'rural development' means all round development of rural areas with a view to betterment of the lifestyles of rural people which in general is multi-dimensional. With a huge existing human resources in Assam, the rural development aims at achieving enhanced production and productivity in rural areas, to bring about a greater socio-economic equity, to bring about a special balance in social and economic development, improvement in the ecological environment so that it may be conducive to growth and happiness and develop broad based community participation in the process of development. Under such circumstances, rural areas development must obtain much attention in various schemes designed for the development of the state's economy. It is the very process of the planning to implement rural development programmes through an appropriate strategy to realize the desired results.

The rural development schemes occupy significant position not only in central economic planning but also in state's economic planning. Without uplifting rural masses in Assam, we cannot think over accelerated the pivot of overall economic development. In order to ensure that there should be balanced economic development of the state's economy and the fruits of development should percolate to the grass-root levels, rural development gets the top most priority in our planned efforts. In this regard, the implementation of various programmes for the benefit of the rural poor is the product of the working with the theory and practice of economic development. For healthy rural sector development, the Panchayat and Rural Development Department of Assam has been implementing various centrally sponsored schemes which includes Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Employment Assurance Schemes (EAS), Rural Housing (RH), Wastelands Development (WD) and Project Golden Thread (PGT) etc. some of major such implemented schemes in Assam are discussed below :

Swarnajyanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

With effect from 1st April, 1999, the Government of India has launched this programme as the single self-employment programme for the rural poor. SGSY replaces the earlier self employment and allied programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment, Supply of Improved Toolkits in Rural Artisans, Ganga Kalyan Yojana and Millions wells scheme. The SGSY is mainly financed by the Central and State Government into the ratio of 75:25 basis. The major objectives of this scheme is to bring the existing poor families above the poverty line covering all aspects of self employment viz. organizing the rural poor into SHGs and their capacity building planning of activity clusters, technology infrastructure and marketing.

Under this scheme, the beneficiaries can increase their income leading to upliftment of their respective living standard with the provision of subsidized bank loan. In Assam, during the period

from 1999-2000 to 2011-12, the total 90036 number of SHGs have obtained bank loan. It can be observed that in 2011-12, the total number of 24218 SHGs under SGSY have formed out of which 15747 SHGs are taken economic activity.

From the viewpoint of financial performance of this scheme, it seems that SGSY is an effective instrument to meet the small entrepreneurs for reducing poverty as well as income inequalities as a sum of '21627.37 lakh amounts is spent for the rural poor through SHGs during the year 2011-12. In the state, as many as 1.64 lakh SHGs have been covered under the ambit of bank credit till March 2010 which has increased to 2.26 lakh SHGs in March 2012 where almost 1.23 lakh SHGs are included under SGSY. We can see that the percentage of credit linked SHGs under SGSY is increasing over the years in Assam which is a blessingful sign for the state economy to reduce the problem of poverty to a certain extent. The progress of credit link SHGs under SGSY in Assam is shown in Table-1.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

A programme like PMGSY is an urgent need of the rural poor of state which was introduced on 15th August, 2000. The major objective of this scheme is to provide road connectivity through good all-weather roads. The state rural development department is the nodal department for the programme and the state PWD is the main executing agency of this scheme. During the year 2000-2001, an amount of '75 crore was released to construct 172 kms road for

Table-1 : SHG-Bank Linkage Under SGSY

Year	Total credit linked SHGs		Credit linked under SGSY		Percentage of credit linked under SGSY
	Number	Amount (in lakh)	Number	Amount (in lakh)	
2004-05	42712	17566.70	20388	11273.74	47.73
2005-06	94352	38392.36	48235	25024.66	51.12
2006-07	109428	52778.91	54735	36549.70	50.02
2007-08	115716	51372.98	54790	31006.57	47.35
2008-09	138392	69879.98	69144	45898.88	49.96
2009-10	163855	83601.33	84678	55161.36	51.68
2010-11	193922	106855.8	102166	74784.79	52.68
2011-12	226361	128813.0	123473	94423.50	54.55

Source : Reports of State Level Bankers Committee, Assam

the state and in the year 2001-2002 another amount of '80 crore was released against the allocation of '155 crores for construction of 593 kms of road. The achievements of implementation under the scheme so far are –

Upto date Road length sanctioned upto 2008-09 :	15909 km. Road length completed : 13151 km	Amount sanctioned : ₹8801.81 Cr. Amount released by GOI : ₹7434.71 Cr.	Fund utilized : ₹7146.79 Cr.
Habitation sanctioned (1000+) :	6102 Nos.		
Habitation already connected :	5146 Nos.		
Balance length in progress :	2758 Km	Balance habitation (1000+) to be connected :	956 Nos.

It should be noted that an amount of '310.48 Cr. has recently been cleared by ministry of Rural Development, Government of India for construction of 426.43 km for connecting 239 habitations of 500+ population under the RCIP Trench-I to be funded by the Asian Development Bank which also includes 90 number of RCC bridges (Economic Survey, Assam 2012-13).

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Generation Scheme (MGNREGA)

The National Rural Employment Programme was introduced during 6th plan that have undergone several modifications like Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme, National Rural Employment Generation Schemes and finally MGNREGA in 11th Five Year Plan. This act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of country by providing at least one hundred mandays of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Thus this act provides social protection to the vulnerable people through supplementary source of income which have broad divisions of expenditure like 60 percent wage component and 40 percent material component. The 1st division implies 100 percent is paid to the job card holders through the account of workers to ensure fairness and better transparency in wage payments. On the other hand, the later division signifies that expenditure is used for purchase of materials which combines with the profit share of the suppliers what generally come from the rural areas giving them indirect employment.

In Assam, an amount of '46108.13 lakh is spent on wage component and '22552.98 lakh is on material component under this act during 2011-12. For minimizing the leakage due to mis-utilization of available fund, the government ensures compulsory Management Information System (MIS). As a result of implementation of this act, the number of issued job card has raised from 1599659 in 2007-08 to 3913176 in 2011-12 with corresponding decrease in employment generated from 500.19 lakh mandays to