

Grameen Bharat



A monthly Newsletter of the Ministry of Rural Development



Bharat Nirman Quarterly Report of Ministry of Rural Development



Contents

Meet your Minister	3
Spotlight	
Bharat Nirman Quarterly Report of Ministry of Rural Development	5
Landmarks of the Month	
US Ambassador calls on Minister	10
Conference of State ministers	10
RD Ministry to Set up One RUDSETI	11
SARAS Mela inaugurated	11
Agatha Sangma on NE States	11
Dr. C. P. Joshi calls on NGOs	13
Innovations and Improvements	
Guidelines for Vigilance and Monitoring Committees	12
NREGA Feature	
Expert Groups Constituted	13
SGSY Feature	
SGSY Feature - Kalamkari	14
Women's World	
'Sanghatika'	15
In the News	
The Media... on the Ministry	16

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From the Editor's Desk...

From Nagaur to Nagaur: 50 years of Panchayati Raj in India

The philosophy of Panchayat is deeply rooted in the tradition and culture of rural India. Literally meaning governance by five persons, Panchayat finds reference in the ancient scriptures, dating back to Vedic times, and continued for centuries to govern, guide and direct the daily lives of the people. The Panchayat system of governance, wherein even a small village is an independent political entity and acts as an administrative unit, is unique to India. Panchayati Raj institutions have been playing an important role for rural development in general and especially in the upliftment of the downtrodden in rural areas. The system establishes a linkage between the local leadership enjoying the confidence of local people and the Government, and helps in translating and implementing the policies and programmes of the Government at the grassroots level.

Though the Government of India Act of 1919 had granted statutory recognition to Panchayats, Village Panchayats assumed importance only with the beginning of the Planning Era by the enactment of the Panchayat Samiti and Zila Parishad Act of September 2, 1959. The three-tier system for Panchayats was adopted based on the recommendations of the Balwantrai Mehta Committee. The implementation of the Act came into effect from October 2 when Pandit Nehru formally launched the Panchayati Raj from Nagaur. The concept of Block Development and Community Projects to precipitate rural development took shape.

Panchayats however began to languish and almost stifled to death by not holding Panchayat elections for decades. Bureaucracy replaced the elected Panchayats till a new life was infused into them by the passage of the 73rd Amendment to the Constitution in the 80's. The 73rd amendment of the Constitution Provides that the State legislatures should empower Panchayati Raj institutions as the institutions of the local Self Government and strengthen them so that they can evolve schemes for social justice and economic development.

At the National Convention to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Panchayati Raj, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, while lauding the roles of Panchayats, lamented that the full potential of this unique system is not being used effectively in our country till date. Even today, in many States, the functions, the funds and functionaries have not been delegated effectively to the Panchayati Raj institutions and we need to reform the system. He said, "We have to strive continuously to make Panchayati Raj institutions an effective instrument. With the proper training to the PRI representatives in the implementation and monitoring of schemes, accounting and information technology etc., these institutions can play a major role as the units of decentralized governance in a more effective manner. In addition, there is a need to provide basic facilities to these institutions".

Effective use of Panchayats in the implementation of NREGA is one recent example of the Government's commitment to assign greater role to the PRIs. Observing 2009-10, as the "Year of Gram Sabha" is also a reiteration of this. Gram Sabha is a forum, which provides a direct participation to the people in democracy. The people of the village get an opportunity through the Gram Sabha to discuss, deliberate, accept or reject the proposals of Gram Panchayat. This also addresses the cynicism in some quarters that Panchayats are fast becoming yet another centre of corruption and exploitation.

Another hallmark of PRIs has been the effective empowerment of the faceless and voiceless rural women. Highlighting the Government's move of providing 50 percent reservation to the women in Panchayats, the Chairperson of UPA Smt. Sonia Gandhi in her address to the Gram Pramukhs at Nagaur during the Golden Jubilee celebration said, "Panchayats have poised women as the vanguards of a revolution in our rural areas." Long Live the Panchayats.

Nilam Sawhney

Editor-in-Chief

“It’s not the kind of work you do, but how you do the work...that counts ”

– This quote of Shri Pradeep ‘Aditya’ Jain, Minister of State for Rural Development, epitomises the very essence of this young, first time Minister from Bundelkhand.

The following are excerpts from the interview granted by him.

Q1 Heartiest greetings from the Grameen Bharat team this festive season. As you know, the readers of this newsletter extend up to the Block level. You will be a source of inspiration to the common man and they will be encouraged to know that from your humble origins you have become an Union Minister and reached the pinnacles of success. What are the values and ideals you adopted to reach here?



A India is a democratic country. In the Congress party, under the leadership of Smt. Sonia Gandhi, every worker has the opportunity to contribute towards the welfare of the country. Youth icon, Rahulji has been to the remote corners of the

country and he also feels that the ordinary man should have a say in the biggest panchayat of the country and the benefits of the various Government programmes should trickle down to the grassroots people. That is why our dynamic Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh has given this ordinary worker from Bundelkhand an opportunity to be a part of his team.

Q2 Please tell us about your experience in this Ministry and kindly describe its unique features.

A It has been a very good experience. I have got significant guidance and leadership from our compassionate and efficient leader, Union Minister Dr.C.P.Joshi and am also getting a lot of experience from the officers of the Ministry. The biggest thing about the Ministry is that I have now got an opportunity to work under a legend who knows and understands the problems of the villages and is constantly working for its people. We want to be in touch with the rural population as most of India resides in its villages and unless they are integrated with the national mainstream we cannot envision a prosperous India. We can reach out to all the villages in different parts of the country through the rural development programmes, which are implemented in a transparent and non-partisan manner. To this end, Dr.Joshi works constantly with each party and State Government, so that NREGA is implemented properly to give 100 days employment to the needy families.

Meet your Minister

Q3. Sir, you have completed merely 3 months in this Ministry but you have traveled extensively across the country, please tell us about your experiences regarding the different programmes of the Ministry.

A In many districts of U.P. and M.P. I have witnessed the implementation of the various rural development programmes of the Ministry. In all these places I have seen an attachment of the people to the NREGA programmes. The Government should ensure that the benefits of these programmes reach the people for whom they were intended, without getting waylaid by the middle-men. Weeding out corruption is a big challenge – corruption is like a kind of cancer from which we need to free India. Then only we will be able to fulfill the dreams of Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, of a corruption-free India.

I have also noticed that in the regions where the NREGS is being implemented properly, the people are more self-confident and the people are inclined towards the programme in large numbers. Whereas in the areas where the the programme has not been implemented, the resultant picture is self-evident.

Q4. How would you want to curb corruption?

A Corruption is a big problem in the development of the country and at present the common man has resigned himself to it. Even if a person is going to get married, people ask about his 'extra income'. Removal of corruption is a huge challenge and unless everyone works towards creating an anti-corruption environment, it will not go. People have to fight corruption at all levels, in all offices. To end corruption, the UPA chairperson Smt. S.Gandhi and Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh have passed a significant law like the RTI for anyone to avail of important information. Earlier this privilege was restricted for MLAs and MPs.

Q5. What are your views of NREGA?

A Till date, NREGA is the world's unique law which is implemented irrespective of ones caste, creed, religion or State. Like the rays of the sun that reach the rich, poor, Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christians alike so is this law applicable for all. NREGA gives everyone the right to 100 days of work. They can demand work and then enjoy the fruits of their labour. Thanks to the UPA Government, now there is less distress migration as work is available locally. BPL and small and marginal farmers can now change the way their farms look. Even the developed countries are trying to emulate NREGA or learn from it.

Transparency and accountability, which are guaranteed by this act, would help in proper implementation such that each State can show its villages as ideal ones.

Q6. PMGSY has had an economic and social impact on the country, can you give us your views on it?

A PMGSY is a very important programme of the Ministry which connects most villages via roads to the satellite towns. This led to better rural connectivity. Our priority is to connect the remote villages of the country through further implementation of PMGSY. The maintenance and upkeep of the roads is also a major area of this programme.

Q7. Finally, would you like to express your views on any other subject for the readers of Grameen Bharat newsletter?

A I am extremely happy that your newsletter is reaching out to the village level and through this medium the rural folk are directly connected to the Ministry. Through this newsletter I would like to tell them that wherever they perceive any shortcomings in the schemes of the Central Government, they should bring it to our notice and raise their concerns without hesitation.

Bharat Nirman Quarterly Report of Ministry of Rural Development

The Quarterly Report to the people of the Ministry of Rural Development is a comprehensive document. The highlights of the Report form the Spotlight of this issue.

The broad outline of the present Government's objectives during its second term were spelt out in the President's address to the Joint Session of the 15th Lok Sabha on 5 June 2009. The President listed 24 things the UPA Government would do in its first 100 days in office. They included internal security and preservation of communal harmony and stepping up of economic growth, particularly in agriculture, manufacturing and services. The President also mentioned consolidation of the existing flagship programmes for employment, education, health and rural infrastructure, besides introduction of new food security and skill development programmes. Women's empowerment, including early passage of the Women's Reservation Bill, and Constitutional Amendment to provide 50 per cent

reservation for women in panchayats and urban local bodies were also mentioned. Action for welfare of weaker sections and minorities besides disabled and senior citizens and governance reform were the other points covered in the President's address. The other important areas were prudent fiscal management and energy security.

In spite of the new Government battling an economic slowdown, an epidemic that is testing the country's stretched public health infrastructure, and drought, the Government was able to initiate crucial steps in the ministries of Rural Development, Human Resource Development, Home, Finance and Commerce, thanks to the respective proactive ministries.

Dr. C.P. Joshi rolls out Quarterly Progress Report for Ministry of Rural Development

Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Dr. C.P. Joshi reiterated the Government's resolve to reach out to millions of rural poor across the country through better and most speedy implementation of the on-going programmes of the Government. Addressing the media at a press conference on 15 September 2009, while releasing the Quarterly Progress Report of the Ministry of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj,



Dr. Joshi said NREGA, being the pioneer of livelihood security in rural India, now encompasses the entire country and has the potential to transform the lives of rural households.

On Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), the Minister said that several new initiatives have been undertaken including e-procurement, social audits and quality control measures to ensure rural road connectivity. Till March 2009, construction of new rural link roads have been completed, providing connectivity to 31,924 habitations and 1.55 lakh km. of existing rural routes which were upgraded.

The Minister said that under Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), during the first phase of Bharat Nirman from 2005-09, against the target of 60 lakh constructions, 71 lakh houses have been built. It has now been proposed to double the target of

Phase I and to construct 120 lakh houses during the next five year period of Phase II starting from the current year 2009-10.

On Rural Drinking Water Supply, he said that States have been provided incentives from this year in allocation to promote involvement of PRIs to operate and maintain the water supply schemes. The revised National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) has been designed to address all aspects of rural water supply. Under Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) 41.75 lakh individual household toilets have been constructed in the period between April – August 2009 against the target of 38 lakh.

Dr. Joshi highlighted the importance of participation of women at grassroots in decision-making through the approval of the provision of 50% reservation for women in Panchayats. A draft Cabinet Note has been circulated among the ministries for their comments on restructuring the Backwards Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Scheme.

The Rural Development Minister also informed that efforts are on to upgrade the capacity of National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) for better training in rural development and governance reforms are being undertaken to upscale the capacity of CAPART. NIRD and CAPART have been assigned the responsibility to prepare training modules for flagship programmes.

Given below is the quarterly progress of the key programmes of Rural Development

A. National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA)

New initiatives: To continue focus on critical issues and priority areas highlighted by the President to strengthen NREGA, the Ministry has held high level workshops and extensive consultations. The action taken by the Ministry is as follows:

- District Level Ombudsmen are to be appointed by the State Government on the recommendation of the selection committee. The Ombudsman will receive complaints from NREGA workers and others on any matters, consider such complaints and facilitate their disposal in accordance with law.
- NREGA partnership with Unique Identification Development Authority of India (UIDA) has been initiated.
- Social Audit procedures were amended by law to enhance the quality of implementation of NREGA.
- Independent Monitoring Mechanisms with 100 eminent citizens will be identified to further report on the progress of NREGA.
- The Ministry has developed and disseminated guidelines

for convergence of NREGS with different schemes and specific programmes, 115 pilot districts in 23 States have been identified for convergence.

- The scope of works permitted under NREGA to be enlarged from the one presently limited to unskilled manual labour.

Physical and Financial Performance: The physical and financial performance of NREGA in the first quarter of the Financial Year 2009-10, is as follows:

- 2.53 crore households have been provided work and 87.09 crore person-days have been generated. In FY 2008-09, women's participation was 48%, which has increased to 52% in FY 2009-10.
- Post-NREGA, there has been a revision of minimum wages across the country in the last three years, and the daily wage rate has increased from Rs. 75 to Rs. 87.
- Thus, so far, 7.33 crore NREGA bank and post office accounts have been opened.



- 21.76 lakh works have been undertaken, of which 51% relate to water conservation, helping to regenerate natural resources.
- Advisories were issued to all 11 drought-affected States to ensure that adequate funds and shelf of projects be made available to the districts.

B. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

Based on ground verification by the States, 54,648 habitations were targeted to be connected under the programme. The physical target under the programme is as under:

New connectivity component: Habitations to be connected-54,648; road length to be constructed-1,46,185 km.

Upgradation component: Road length to be upgraded-1,94,130 km.

Upto March 2009, construction of new rural link roads has been completed, providing connectivity to 31,924 rural habitations and 1.55 lakh km. of existing routes was upgraded. The residual targets are to be achieved by 2010-11.



Physical Progress during the year 2009-10

		Target (2009-10)	Target (April-June 09)	Achievement (April- June 09)	Achievement 2009-10 (upto July 09)
New Connectivity	Habitations (in Nos.)	13,000	1,600	844	979
	Road Length (in km)	24,000	4,800	4,825	5,540
Upgradation of Roads	Road Length (in km)	16,000	3,200	7,301	9,299

New initiatives for systematic improvement in programme implementation include:

- E-Procurement of PMGSY Projects
- Improving the Quality of Online Monitoring of Projects
- Pilot Project of Citizen Monitoring of PMGSY Projects
- Strengthening of the Quality Monitoring Mechanism

C. Indira Awaas Yojana

Physical and Financial Progress:

- As against the target of 60 lakh houses, 71.76 lakh houses were constructed thereby exceeding the target of Phase I of Bharat Nirman.
- It has now been proposed to double the target of Phase-I Bharat Nirman and to construct 120 lakh houses during the next five year period of Phase II Bharat Nirman, starting from the current year 2009-10.
- During the current year, the Central allocation is Rs.8800.00 crore against which Rs.4027.32 crore has

been released as part of first installment (up to 10.09.2009).

This year's allocation plus the amount of Rs.2428.48 crore released out of the economic

stimulus package at the end of the year 2008-09 is sufficient for construction of 40.52 lakh houses.

- The financial and physical performance under IAY for the first quarter of 2009-10 is given in the table on the Page-8.



Year	Central Allocation (Rs. in crore)	Central Release (Rs. in crore)	Total* Available (Rs. in crore)	Utilization during 1st quarter (Rs. in crore)	% of Fund Utilization	Annual Target (in lakh)	Target during 1st quarter (in lakh)	Achievement during 1st quarter (in lakh)	% of Achievement during 1st quarter
2009-10	8494.70	3209.36	7119.12	2500.55	35.12%	40.52	4.05	5.17	127.65

(*Total Available Funds includes Opening Balance + Central Release + State Matching)

New initiatives taken up under IAY:

- The proposal for incentivising State Governments to provide homestead sites by regularization of the occupied Government land/allotment of Government land/purchase of private land to the 'housesiteless' rural BPL households has been approved by the Cabinet.
- Efforts are being made to ensure that Indira Awaas Yojana beneficiaries get access to various benefits available under other Government schemes meant for rural BPL households.

D. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

In the Hon'ble President's address to both the Houses of Parliament on 4.6.2009 the following is relevant to NSAP - "Provision of scholarships and social security schemes through accounts in post office and banks and phased transition to smart cards."

With regard to this point, instructions have been reiterated to the States / UTs to disburse Old Age Pension through post office / bank accounts, where feasible. However, this mode of payment has been made mandatory in respect of widow and disability pension schemes. At present 155 lakh beneficiaries are receiving Central Assistance under IGNOAPS, of whom nearly 40 lakh persons are receiving

pension through bank accounts and another 40 lakh through post office accounts. Rest of the pensioners are receiving pension either through money order or cash.

Some of the States were facing problems in opening of accounts and accordingly the matter has been taken up with Ministry of Finance for opening of no-frill accounts to beneficiaries under pension schemes of NSAP. Ministry of Finance has since then directed public sector banks for opening of no-frill accounts. As far as post office accounts are concerned, Post Office Saving Account Rules, 1981 are under amendment for permitting opening of zero balance accounts.

E. National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP)

- Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) has now been restructured as National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) from 01.04.2009, with a budgetary allocation of Rs.8000 crore for 2009-10, Rs.2377 crore has been released adhoc (29.7%).
- The goal is to provide every rural person with adequate water for drinking, cooking and other domestic basic needs on a sustainable basis.
- All information pertaining to rural water supply programme is now being obtained online and is now available in the public domain to ensure proper reporting and transparency in programme implementation.

- States have been provided incentives from this year to promote involvement of PRIs to operate and maintain the water supply schemes.

- Under Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) 41.75 lakh individual household toilets have been constructed in the period between April – August 2009 against the objective of Rs.38 lakh. Out of the current year's allocation of Rs.1200 crore, upto August 2009 end Rs.481 crore (40%) has been released and Rs.352.27 crore reported as expenditure (73%).



F. Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)

The Annual Action Plan for CAPART has the following components:

- o One of the objectives of the 100 days plan is to 'Enable NGOs for web-based transparency'. CAPART has been able to adhere to the deadline as set out in the 100 days Action Plan.
- o Under the "Other Focus Areas of CAPART" components of Annual Action Plan online reporting system forming the core of MIS in CAPART is already in progress.
- o Regarding creation of a platform for dialogue with other grant making organisations, action has been initiated

in partnership with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) for creating a

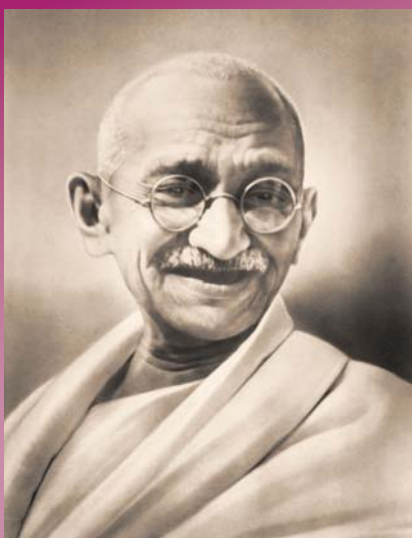


platform where Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Civil Society Organisation (CSO) are targeted to come together for dialogue to institutionalise interaction and flow of funds. Creation of a virtual platform is also under progress.

- o Initiatives have also been taken with MSME and MoWR to work towards partnering with NGOs with a view to enhance convergence and funding.

G. Panchayati Raj

- Provision of 50% reservation for women in Panchayats – Cabinet has approved the Constitution Amendment Bill for the purpose. The Bill would be introduced in the next session of Parliament.
- Restructuring of Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF) Programme – A draft Cabinet Note has been circulated among the Ministries for comments. On receipt of comments, the Note would be suitably modified and placed before Cabinet for a decision.



“Constant development is the law of life, and a man who always tries to maintain his dogmas in order to appear consistent drives himself into a false position”

Mahatma Gandhi

US Ambassador Calls On Minister of Rural Development

The US Ambassador to India, Timothy J Roemer called on the Union Rural Development Minister, Dr. C.P. Joshi on **2 September 2009**. They two shared the vision of Indo-US co-operation in the field of rural development. Dr. Joshi highlighted the efforts made to streamline the functioning of various schemes in the country with the involvement of civil society, experts, academicians and premier agencies both at the national as well as international level. He said that measures are being taken to strengthen the implementation of the flagship schemes for the benefit of the rural population in India. Mr. Roemer showed keen interest in the measures undertaken by the Government of India and appreciated the efforts in this direction. The US Ambassador was accompanied by the USAID Director, Martha Erin Soto.



Conference of State Ministers of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj on Rural Employment



PM addressing the Conference of State Ministers of Rural Development

A day-long conference on Rural Employment was organized by the Ministry of Rural Development on **9 September 2009** in Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi, to discuss the proposed National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and emerging issues in NREGA and was attended by 23 State Ministers of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj. Union Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister, Dr. C.P. Joshi called upon the States to give priority to rain-water harvesting under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) to tackle the drought situation. While addressing the

conference, Dr. Joshi underlined the need to integrate NREGA with the proposed NRLM to provide self-employment and promote skill development for the rural poor. The Minister also stressed that the benefits of poverty reduction programmes reach out to the deprived sections of the society and that the Panchayats should be empowered.

In his inaugural address, the Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh said that the Government attaches highest priority to poverty alleviation and will work purposefully to improve the quality of the public system and delivery of public service for employment generation and rural prosperity. He stressed the need to develop the skills of Panchayati Raj Institutions in designing, planning, monitoring and the implementation of NREGA and the proposed NRLM. Dr. Singh said that the proposed National Rural Livelihoods Mission will use a multi-pronged strategy for poverty reduction in a time bound manner by providing sustainable livelihood through various means to rural population below the poverty line.

Earlier in his welcome address, Union Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister, Dr. C.P. Joshi pointed out that although only 14% households so far have availed of full 100 days employment under NREGA since its inception, efforts would be made to enhance their skills to encourage them to move on from wage employment to self employment. The Minister said that the decision to restructure and redesign the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana and convert it into a National Rural Livelihoods Mission is yet another significant step towards poverty reduction

The Union Minister of State for Rural Development Shri Shishir Adhikari lauded the initiative and called upon the States to extend full cooperation. The Union Minister of State for Rural Development Shri Pradeep Jain 'Aditya' appreciated the views expressed by the States and said that it will result in improving the efficacy of the programme and ultimately benefit the rural poor.

RD Ministry to Set up One Rural Self Employment Training Institute in Each District

Ministry of Rural Development has embarked upon a major initiative to set up one Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) in each district of the country. In order to review the progress of the setting up of Rural Self Employment Training Institutes, a meeting of the National Level Steering Committee was held under the Chairpersonship of Dr. Rita Sharma, Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development on **16 September 2009**.

All the issues related to the operationalisation of RSETIs were discussed in the meeting of the National Level Steering Committee. The Committee has been constituted to give policy directions to all stakeholders involved in the establishment of RSETIs and also periodically monitor the progress of RSETIs. The establishment of RSETIs is one of the most innovative initiatives of the Government of India to provide training to the Rural Below Poverty Line (BPL) persons and ensure wage employment / self-employment to them. Public sector banks have also been associated in this scheme by the Ministry to ensure credit linkage to the people who are trained by the RSETIs. Ministry of Rural Development would provide assistance for establishment of 200 RSETIs throughout the country in the current financial year.

SARAS Mela Inaugurated



A 16-day long SARAS Mela showcasing a vast repertoire of crafts from the rural artisans, craftsmen, Self Help Groups (SHGs) and the beneficiaries of Swarna Jyanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana began on Saturday, **19 September 2009** at Dilli Haat, Pitampura, New Delhi. The fair was organized by the Ministry of Rural Development and Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). The fair will be on till 4th October. Mela was inaugurated by Ms. Agatha Sangma, Minister of State for Rural Development.

The Mela aims at facilitating the SGSY beneficiaries, rural artisans, craftsmen and SHGs to exhibit and sell their products. It also provides them the opportunity for additional income as well as wide scale interactions and significant exposure. Around 195 SHGs representing 22 States and different parts of the country are participating in this SARAS Mela at Dilli Haat, Pitampura. Some of the special attractions for this SARAS are metal work products from Madhya Pradesh, Sambalpur saris from Orissa, wood-work from Tamil Nadu, bamboo craft from Tripura, Madhubani paintings from Bihar, terracotta from Chhattisgarh, shawls and carpets from Jammu & Kashmir and kantha stitch work from West Bengal.

Ms. Agatha Sangma for speedy implementation of Centrally Sponsored Schemes in NE States

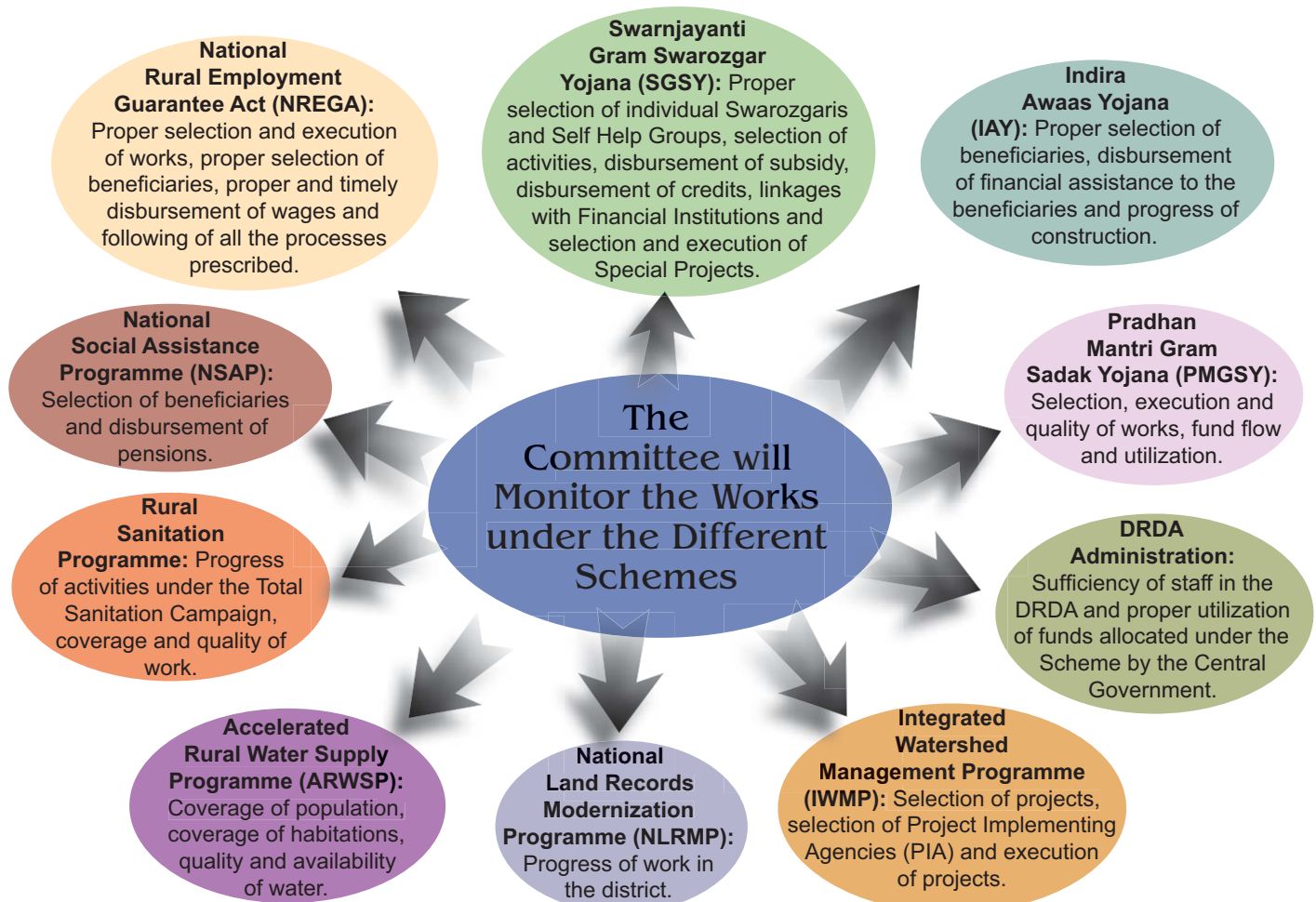
The Minister of State for Rural Development, Ms. Agatha Sangma, has sought active cooperation and personal involvement from the Chief Ministers of North Eastern States to monitor the implementation of various Centrally Sponsored Rural Development schemes in their respective States.

The Minister highlighted that during 2008-09 an amount of Rs.399965.35 lakh was allotted to all the eight NE States. In a letter to the Chief Ministers of all the NE States, namely-Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura the Minister expressed her dissatisfaction on less spending of the funds released as Central Assistance to their States which has resulted in them lagging behind the national mainstream developmental process.

Guidelines for Vigilance and Monitoring Committees

With a view to revitalising the role and functions of the Vigilance and Monitoring Committees as important instruments for effective monitoring of the implementation of the programmes of the Ministry, these Committees were reconstituted at State/Union Territory and District levels. These Vigilance and Monitoring Committees replace all other Committees set up earlier.

The Vigilance and Monitoring Committees are constituted to fulfill the objective of ensuring quality of expenditure, particularly in the context of large public funds being spent under the programmes, such as NREGS, of the Ministry of Rural Development. They would keep a watch on the implementation of the Programmes as per the prescribed procedures and guidelines. They would provide a crucial role for the Members of Parliament and elected representatives of the people in State Legislatures and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in the implementation of the Rural Development programmes. This will also put in place a mechanism to monitor the execution of the schemes in the most effective manner and within the given time frame so that public funds are put to optimal use and programme benefits flow to the rural poor in full measure. These Committees are also to effectively liaise and coordinate with the Ministry of Rural Development and the State Governments. The Committee would monitor the flow of funds through various channels, including allocations, releases, utilization and unspent balances. The Committee would look into complaints received in respect to the implementation of the programmes. The Committee would take all necessary measures to ensure that programme benefits flow to the rural poor in full measure and take necessary follow up action and corrective measures wherever required.



Expert Groups Constituted for Examining Norms for Implementation of Works on Private Land

Every month we focus on a significant aspect of the Ministry of Rural Development's flagship programme, NREGA. We have already featured articles on 'Job Cards', 'Social Audits', 'Muster Roll', 'Financial Inclusion', 'Phases of Implementation', 'ICT' and others. In this issue, we take up the expert groups on private land

At present, the list of permissible works under NREGA allows the taking up of land development, irrigation and horticulture plantation on the lands of designated categories of farmers including small and marginal farmers and other works on community land. The kinds of the works taken up on private lands are different from those of the works which are taken up on community land. For instance, horticulture plantation on private land has very different characteristics than that of tank or road work on community land. These differences arise due to variables like deployment of workers, duration of continuous employment, measurement of work and payment to the beneficiaries.

These issues need to be examined and new norms are being evolved to address the works on the lands of individual beneficiaries. An Expert Group is being constituted under the chairpersonship of the Joint Secretary of NREGA to examine the norms for implementation of works on private land.

Landmarks of the Month (continued)

Dr. C. P. Joshi calls on NGOs to Work as Catalysts for Rural Development

Union Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Dr. C.P.Joshi has called on the voluntary organizations



in remote and rural areas to work as catalyzing agents to bring out convergence with NREGA and other development schemes of the Government especially in the backward regions of the country while addressing the 18th Meeting of the General Body of Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART). The Annual Report

2007-2008 of the Council that had been approved by the General Body of CAPART in its 17th Meeting held on **24th August 2009** was circulated among the Members. The General Body also approved the Annual Report and Annual Accounts 2008-2009 of the Council that was placed before it for consideration.

Addressing the Executive Committee of CAPART, the Rural Development Minister said that CAPART schemes should be realigned to the emerging needs. The committee recommended for approval the Annual Report and Annual Accounts of CAPART for FY 2008-2009 to the General Body. The apex body took note of CAPART's association with technology upgradation in the unorganized sector and also the progress made by the Task Force for accreditation of NGOs. It was pointed out that CAPART has exhibited good progress in creating a portal for partnership with NGOs.

SGSY Feature - Kalamkari

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) is a self-employment programme of the Ministry of Rural Development which aims at providing assistance to the rural poor living Below the Poverty Line (BPL) for establishing micro-enterprises with the help of bank credit and Government subsidy.



Kalamkari is a type of hand-painted or block-printed cotton textile, produced in parts of India. The word is derived from the Persian *kalam* (pen) and *kari* (craftsmanship) meaning drawing with a pen. Kalamkari craft evolved over 3000 years ago and the art has been practised by many families in Andhra Pradesh and has constituted their livelihood.

In ancient times, groups of singers, musicians and painters, called *chitrakattis*, moved village to village to tell the village dwellers, the great stories of Hindu mythology. Progressively, during the course of history, they illustrated their accounts using large bolts of canvas painted on the spot with rudimentary means and dyes extracted from plants - the first Kalamkari was born. In the same way, one found in the Hindu temples large panels of Kalamkari depicting the episodes of Indian mythology, akin to the stained glasses of the Christian cathedrals.

There are two distinctive styles of Kalamkari art in India - one, the Srikalahasti style and the other, the

entirely hand worked. This style flowered around temples and their patronage and so had an almost religious identity - scrolls, temple hangings, chariot banners and the like depicted deities and scenes taken from the great Hindu epics - Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas and the mythological classics. This style owes its present status to Smt. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay who popularised the art as the first Chairperson of the All India Handicrafts Board. The craft made at Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh evolved with the patronage of the Mughals and the Golconda sultanate.

The Technique

Kalamkari is a traditional art form where artists paint using specially crafted pens made of bamboo. Using colored dyes made of natural pigments and extracts, this intricate art form can be widely seen on saris, drapes, hand towels and wall hangings.

Only natural dyes are used in Kalamkari and it involves seventeen painstaking steps. The cotton fabric gets its glossiness by immersing it

for an hour in a mixture of myrabalam resin and cow milk. Contours are then drawn with a point in bamboo soaked in a mixture of jagri fermented and water; one by one these are applied and then come the vegetable dyes. After applying each color, the Kalamkari is washed. Thus, each fabric can undergo up to 20 washings. Various effects are obtained by using cow dung, seeds, plants and crushed flowers.

Before 1950, Kalamkari art almost died because it was neglected. However, the concoction and infusion of new since have given it a new lease of life. Today, fashion designers and art galleries are warming to Kalamkari because of its wide acceptability and heavy demand. The Government has led the revival of this art form by sponsoring institutions in Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat that produce Kalamkari paintings.

SGSY Special Projects

The development of handicrafts clusters of Kalamkari paintings at Srikalahasti in Chittoor district is part of the SGSY special projects. These special projects were formulated to support the traditional skills through creation of improved facilities through a common facility centre. They also provide interventions for improvements in design to attract exporters. The Government of India sanctioned Rs.298.70 lakh for them. So far Rs.131.36 lakh has been utilized, covering 365 beneficiaries.

'Sanghatika'

'Sanghatika' is a women-centric initiative by the Wardha DRDA to nurture the existing Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and try to develop new ones at the grass root level.

Wardha has a network of around 3600 BPL SHGs formed under SGSY. Of these, 1290 SHGs have been formed and nurtured by eleven NGOs. Nearly 2300 SHGs have been formed by the Panchayat Samiti level extension officers and grassroot level Government machinery viz, Gram Sewak and Anganwadi workers. Regular nurturing and follow up of SHGs is not possible because there is no grassroot level worker exclusively involved in SHG formation and nurturing. Hence the initiative called "Sanghatika".

Profile of a 'Sanghatika'

SANGHATIKA is a grassroot worker appointed to form new SHGs and nurture new and existing SHGs in Wardha district. She is preferably a member of some SHG and is experienced in running the day to day activities of the group and in maintaining their accounts. She helps the group understand the principles of self-help, microcredit and micro enterprise and is usually from a similar socio-economic background that the SHG belongs to and speaks their language. Sanghatika should have passed the SSC exam. The 'Sanghatika' acts as a bridge between the Government Banks and SHGs.

The DRDA of Wardha had decided to appoint one Sanghatika per Panchayat Samiti (PS) circle. This Sanghatika ought to be a resident of the respective PS circle and try to nurture around 40 SHGs and rally in all the BPL families in her area of operation.

Work done by the 'Sanghatikas'

Around 700 new groups formed in 10 months against 450 SHGs formed in 2007-08. They provided basic training of 600 SHGs against 400 SHGs in 2007-08. The first gradation of 600 SHGs been done. Attendance of SHG members in trainings rose sharply from 50% to 85%. The Sanghatikas are also spreading awareness amongst SHG members regarding Open Defecation Free Village, thereby taking the TSC campaign forward.



Clockwise.. Sanghatikas with faculty at NIRD, In the classroom, learning motivational skills, interacting with SHG members

PM takes up rural India's aspirations



Prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh addressing the ministers of rural development and Panchayati Raj at Vigyan Bhavan, in New Delhi on Wednesday. || SNS

|| Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, 9 SEPT: Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh today stressed on the need to draw lessons from the implementation of the government's flagship programme NREGA in the past five years and subsequently plan a neo-economic reform path to meet the "legitimate aspirations" of rural India. He was speaking at the inauguration of a conference of ministers of rural development and Panchayati Raj from states and Union Territories at Vigyan Bhavan here.

Dr. Singh said his government gave priority to poverty alleviation and would work to improve the quality of public system and delivery of public service for employment generation and rural prosperity. Though specific allocations of Rs. 68,000 crore have been made to meet the challenges on various poverty alleviation programme, the Prime Minister said implementation of the fund was essential. "Allocation of funds for poverty alleviation programmes are rising every year. We have to ensure that our people get the value of every single penny that is spent on them," he said. He underlined the need to develop skills of Panchayati Raj institutions and proposed a new programme named the

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).

Though admitting the success of rural programmes in certain areas he also mentioned places where the programmes had to meet with failure. He urged the ministers present to ensure that benefits reached out to every single person in need of it. "We still have miles to go before we achieve the full potential of this unique legislation," he said. Dr. Singh said that the proposed NRLM would be implemented as a multi-pronged strategy for poverty alleviation in a time bound manner by providing sustainable livelihood through various means to people living below the poverty line.

Also present at the programme was Union rural development minister Mr CP Joshi, who said that although under the NREGA only 14 per cent households had availed facilities of 100 days employment, efforts would be made to enhance their skills to encourage them to move from wage employment to self-employment. The minister said the decision to restructure and redesign the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana and convert it into a National Rural Livelihoods Mission would be another significant step towards minimising poverty.

The Statesman, Delhi
Thursday, 10th September 2009

Central assistance

The Ministry of Rural Development has sanctioned Rs 80,2678 crore as 1st installment to the State Governments of Madhya Pradesh, Kerala, Meghalaya and West Bengal for the Centrally sponsored National Land Record Management Programme (NLRMP) during the current financial year (2009-10).

The ten districts of Madhya

Pradesh viz. Bhind, Dhar, Guna, Morena, Rajgarh, Rewa, Satna, Shahdol, Shajapur and Tikamgarh are to receive Rs 40,1618 crore (75%) of the total amount of Rs. 53,5491 crore sanctioned to take up and implement the Centrally sponsored National Land Record Management Programme (NLRMP) during the current financial year.

The Assam Tribune, Guwahati
Tuesday, 8th September 2009

Govt may provide health cover to NREGA workers

Subodh Ghildiyal | TNN

New Delhi: The Centre is mulling health insurance cover for all NREGA workers, a move which may incur a huge recurring expenditure on UPA, but also holds the potential to deepen 'aam aadmi' credentials of Congress.

The UPA brass is discussing a proposal to extend the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY), the smart-card driven health insurance scheme for BPL section, to all NREGA workers. The beneficiaries of rural job scheme, who have worked for 15 or more in an year, may be considered for it. The throwing of RSBY cover to NREGA beneficiaries across board will be significant. RSBY caters to BPL section while rural job scheme attracts people from both BPL and APL categories.

To calculate extra burden which the proposal would bring on Centre, sources said rural development ministry has been asked to identify APL beneficiaries among NREGA workers. It may be enormous, given that 75% of the costs of health insurance are borne



SOMETHING TO CHEER ABOUT

by Centre. NREGA, being dubbed as the panacea to all problems, drought or poverty, is attracting poor in big numbers. The possible cost implications of the proposal in future will be known only once it achieves saturation. But with records showing 4.5 crore rural households getting employment in 2008-09 under NREGA, even the current levels of NREGA performance could mean big financial costs for the Centre.

The Times of India, Delhi
Monday, 7th September 2009

drought

Govt to merge rural schemes

AMIT AGNIHOTRI

NEW DELHI

Sept. 1: Following Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's directive towards convergence of NREGS with other agricultural and rural development schemes to minimise the impact of drought, the rural development ministry is planning innovation in the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojna (SGSY).

"We are contemplating combining NREGS to develop skills in the rural poor who benefit from SGSY. For instance, villagers can be trained to work as drivers and security guards and earn better wages," said rural development minister

C.P. Joshi, who is concerned over the slack performance of SGSY in north India.

The effort is part of the innovation in SGSY, which is being restructured as the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM). Reports have shown SGSY has been more successful in south India. Around 20 per cent funds under NRLM are available for such projects, pilots for which can be started in states like UP, Rajasthan and MP, officials said.

SGSY, a Centrally-sponsored scheme, was started in 1999 to promote self-employment for BPL households and is woven around self-help groups (SHGs).

The Asian Age, Delhi
Wednesday, 2nd September 2009

Please contribute to Grameen Bharat. Articles of upto 400 words in English or Hindi and photographs can be sent to Neena Thomas at neena04@gmail.com

If undelivered please return to : IEC Section, Ministry of Rural Development, Basement, Krishi Bhawan, New Delhi-110003.