

## 23 Rural Development

INTEGRATED development of rural areas is one of the abiding tasks before the Government of India. The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) of the Central government reiterates the cardinal importance of villages to the overall development of the country and commits to work towards development of rural areas, which for various reasons could not keep pace with urban areas in the past.

In conformity with this commitment of the Government, the Ministry of Rural Development accords foremost priority to development in rural areas and eradication of poverty and hunger from the face of rural India. A number of initiatives have been taken in the recent years for creation of social and economic infrastructure in rural areas to bridge the rural-urban divide as well as to provide food security and fulfil other basic needs of the rural populace.

The renewed emphasis on rural development is also visible in the commensurate progressive increase in the allocation of resources for implementation of poverty alleviation programmes. For the Tenth Five Year Plan, the allocation of funds for rural development programmes has been enhanced to Rs. 76,774 crore as against Rs. 42,874 crore in Ninth Plan.

Addressing the challenge of unemployment in the rural areas of the country is central to the development of rural sector for ameliorating the economic condition of the people. Wage employment is provided in rural areas under National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) and Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) whereas self-employment is provided under Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). Besides generating employment these wage employment schemes also ensure creation of durable assets in rural areas. Initiatives are also taken by the Ministry to build and upgrade the basic rural infrastructure through various schemes. Under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) construction and repairing of rural roads are taken up to ensure rural connectivity. It is expected under the scheme that an expanded and renovated rural road network will lead to an increase in rural employment opportunities, better access to regulated and fair market, better access to health, education and other public services so as to accelerate the pace of economic growth in rural areas. Similarly basic amenities for housing, drinking water and toilets, etc. are provided under Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) and Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) to enhance the welfare and well-being of the vulnerable sections of rural population. Area Development is encouraged through Watershed Programmes to check the diminishing productivity of waste land and loss of natural resources.

### **NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE ACT**

Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development, National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) is the flagship programme of the Government that directly touches lives of the poor and promotes inclusive growth. The Act aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

The Act came into force on February 2, 2006 and was implemented in a phased manner. In Phase one it was introduced in 200 of the most backward districts of the country. It was implemented in an additional 130 districts in Phase two 2007-2008. As per the initial target, NREGA was to be expanded countrywide in five years. However, in order to bring the whole nation under its safety net and keeping in view the demand, the Scheme was extended to the remaining 274 rural districts of India from April 1, 2008 in Phase III.

NREGA is the first ever law internationally, that guarantees wage employment at an unprecedented scale. The primary objective of the Act is augmenting wage employment. Its auxiliary objective is strengthening natural resource management through works that address causes of chronic poverty like drought, deforestation and soil erosion and so encourage sustainable development. The process outcomes include strengthening grassroot processes of democracy and infusing transparency and accountability in governance.

With its rights-based framework and demand driven approach, NREGA marks a paradigm shift from the previous wage programmes. The Act is also a significant vehicle for strengthening decentralization and deepening processes of democracy by giving a pivotal role to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in planning, monitoring and implementation. Unique features of the ACT include, time bound employment guarantee and wage payment within 15 days, incentive-disincentive structure to the State Governments for providing employment as 90 per cent of the cost for employment provided is borne by the Centre or payment of unemployment allowance at their own cost and emphasis on labour intensive works prohibiting the use of contractors and machinery. The Act also mandates a 33 percent participation for women.

Over the last two years, implementation trends vindicate the basic objective of the Act.

**Increasing Employment Opportunities:** In 2007-08, 3.39 crore households were provided employment and 143.5 crore persondays were generated in 330 districts. In 2008-2009, upto July, 253 crore households have been provided employment and 85.29 crore persondays have been generated.

**Enhancing Wage Earning and Impact on Minimum Wage:** The enhanced wage earnings have lead to strengthening of the livelihood resource base of the rural poor in India; in 2007-2008, more than 68% of funds utilised were in the form of wages paid to the labourers. In 2008-2009, 73% of the funds have been utilized in the form of wages.

**Increasing Outreach to the poor:** Self targeting in nature, the Programme has high works participation of marginalized groups like SC/ST (57%), women (43%) in 2007-2008, In 2008-2009, upto July, the participation is SC/ST (54%) and women (49%)

**Strengthening Natural Resource Base of Rural India:** In 2007-08, 17.88 lakh works have been undertaken, of which 49% were related to water conservation. In 2008-2009, upto July, 16.88 lakh works have been undertaken, of which 49% are related to water conservation.

**Financial Inclusion of the poor:** The Central government has been encouraging the state governments to make wage payment through bank and post office accounts of wage seekers. Thus far, 2.9 crore (upto July '08) NREGA bank and post office accounts have been opened to disburse wages. The Ministry is also encouraging the NREGA workers to obtain insurance under Jan Shri Bima Yojana.

Initial evidence through independent studies indicates enhancement of agricultural productivity (through water harvesting, check dams, ground water recharging, improve moisture content, check in soil erosion and micro-irrigation), stemming of distress migration, increased access to markets and services through rural connectivity works, supplementing household incomes, Increase in women workforce participation ratios and the regeneration of natural resources.

The vision of the Ministry is enabling NREGA become a transformative vehicle of empowering local communities to enhance their livelihood security. The Ministry has taken several steps to ensure the Scheme is implemented effectively like encouraging decentralized participatory management, improving delivery systems and public accountability.

The Rozgar Jagrookta Puruskar award has been introduced to recognize outstanding Contributions by Civil society Organizations at State, District, Block and Gram Panchayat levels to generate awareness about provisions and entitlements and ensuring compliance with implementing processes.

### **Building Capacity to implement a demand driven scheme**

- (a) To strengthen the capacity and give priority to the competencies required for effective planning, work execution, public disclosure and social audits the Ministry has been conducting training for NREGA functionaries, Thus far, 6.2 lakh PRI functionaries and 4.82 lakh vigilance and monitoring committees have been trained (upto July'08). The Central Government is also providing technical support in key areas of communication, training, work planning, IT, social audits and fund management at all levels of implementation to the state governments.

### **Using IT for reaching out and inclusion:**

Web enabled *Management Information System (MIS)* is one of the largest data base rural households through their engagement in NREGA. MIS places all critical parameters such as shelf of projects, sanctioned works, wage payments, number of days of employment provided and works under execution on line for easy public access. The data engineered software has been designed for cross verification of records and generation of alerts to support proactive response by management.

### **Evolving processes for transparency and public accountability:**

*Monitoring and Evaluation:* The Ministry has set up a comprehensive monitoring system. This year, 260 National Level Monitors and Area Officers have undertaken field visits to each of the 330 Phase I and Phase II districts atleast once.

For effective monitoring of the projects 100% verification of the works at the Block level, 10% at the District level and 2% at the State level inspections need to be ensured.

### **Road Map for Further Strengthening of NREGA**

*Setting up of the Task force on Convergence:* In order to optimize the multiplier effects of NREGA, the Ministry has set up a Task Force to look at the possibility of convergence of programmes like National Horticulture Mission, Rashtriya Krishi vikas Yojana, Bharat Nirman, Watershed Development with NREGA. These convergence efforts will add value to NREGA, works and aid in creating durable efforts and also enable planned and coordinated public investments in rural areas.

### **SAMPOORNA GRAMEEN ROZGAR YOJANA**

The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) was launched on 25 September, 2001 by merging the on-going schemes of EAS and the JGSY with the objective of providing additional wage employment and food security, alongside creation of durable community assets in rural areas. The programme is self-targeting in nature with provisions for special emphasis on women, scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and parents of children withdrawn from hazardous occupations. While preference is given to BPL families for providing wage employment under SGRY, poor families above the poverty line can also be offered employment under NREGA.

The annual outlay for the programme is Rs.10,000 crore which includes 50 lakh tonnes on food grains. The cash component is shared between the Centre and the States in the ratio of 75:25. Food grains are provided free of cost to the States/UTs. The payment of food grains is made directly to FCI at economic cost by the Centre. However, State Governments are responsible for the cost of transportation of food grains from FCI godown to work-site/PDS shops and its distribution. Minimum wages are paid to the workers through a mix of minimum five kg of food grains and at least 25 per cent of wages in cash.

The programme is implemented by all the three tiers of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Each level of Panchayat is an independent unit for formulation of Action Plan and executing the scheme. Resources are distributed among District Panchayats, Intermediate Panchayats and the Gram Panchayats in the ratio of 20:30:50.

The Gram Panchayats can take up any work with the approval of the gram sabha as per their felt need and within available funds. Fifty per cent of the funds earmarked for the gram panchayats are to be utilised for infrastructure development works in SC/ST localities. 22.5 per cent resources must be spent on individual beneficiary schemes meant for SCs/STs out of the resource share of District Panchayats and Intermediate Panchayats. Contractors are not permitted to be engaged for execution of any of the works and no middlemen/intermediate agencies can be engaged for executing works under the scheme. The programme is regularly monitored. The programme is being evaluated through impact studies conducted by reputed institutions and organisations sponsored by the Central/State governments.

### **NATIONAL FOOD FOR WORK PROGRAMME**

The National Food for Work Programme was launched in November 2004 in 150 most backward districts of the country, identified by the Planning Commission in consultation with the Ministry of Rural Development and the State governments.

The objective of the programme was to provide additional resources apart from the resources available under the Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) to 150 most backward districts of the country so that generation of supplementary wage employment and providing of food-security through creation of need based economic, social and community assets in these districts are further intensified. The scheme was 100 per cent Centrally sponsored. The programme has since been subsumed in National Rural Employment Guarantee Act which has come in force in 200 identified districts of the country including 150 NFFWP districts. The Act provides 100 days of work guarantee to every rural household whose members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

### **PRADHAN MANTRI SADAK YOJANA**

The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna (PMGSY) was launched on 25 December 2000 as a fully funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The primary objective of the PMGSY is to provide connectivity to all the eligible unconnected habitations of more than 500 persons in the rural areas (250 persons in the hilly and desert areas) by good quality all-weather roads.

Under Bharat Nirman, goal has been set to provide connectivity to all the habitations with population of more than 1000 in the plain areas and habitations with a population of 500 or more in hilly and tribal areas in a time-bound manner by 2009. The systematic upgradation of the existing rural road networks is also an integral component of the scheme. Accordingly, an Action Plan has been prepared for connecting 66,802 habitations with 1,46,185 km of all-weather roads. This Action Plan also envisages upgradation/renewal of 1,94,130 km of the existing rural road network. Subsequently, based on ground verification by States, 62,985 habitations were found eligible to be connected under the programme, out of which 3421 habitations have been connected under other schemes. Thus, the revised target is to connect 59,564 habitations. It is estimated that an investment of about Rs.48,000 crore would be required for achieving the targets under Bharat Nirman. The implementation strategy focuses on quality, cost management and 'on time' delivery.

Up to July, 2008, project proposals amounting to Rs. 81,717 crore have been approved against which a sum of Rs. 38,499 crore has been released for 86,146 roads covering a length of 3,31,736 km. Against these, 52,218 road works having road length of 1,75,629 km have been completed with a cumulative expenditure of Rs. 35,295 crore.

### **RURAL HOUSING**

Housing is one of basic requirements for human survival. For a shelterless person, possession of a house brings about a profound social change in his existence, endowing him with an identity, thus integrating him with his immediate social milieu.

The Ministry of Rural Development is implementing Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) with a view to providing financial assistance to the rural poor living below poverty line for construction of pucca house. The details of the scheme along with its performance are given below:

#### **INDIRA AWAAS YOJANA (IAY)**

The Government of India is implementing Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) since the year 1985-86 to provide financial assistance for construction / upgradation of dwelling units to the below poverty line (BPL) rural households belonging to the scheduled castes, scheduled Tribes and freed bonded labourers categories. From the year 1993-94, the scope of the scheme was extended to cover non-Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes rural BPL poor, subject to the condition that the benefits to non-SC/ST would not be more than 40% of the total IAY allocation. The benefits of the Scheme have also been extended to the families of ex-servicemen of the armed and paramilitary forces killed in action, 3% of the Houses are reserved for the rural Below Poverty Line physically and mentally challenged persons, From 2006-07 onward, funds and physical targets under IAY are also being earmarked for BPL minorities in each state.

Under the scheme, financial resources are shared between the centre and the states on a 75 : 25 basis. Since, reduction of shelterlessness is the primary objective, 75% weightage is given to housing shortage and 25% to the poverty ratios prescribed by Planning Commission for state level allocation. For district level allocation, 75% weightage is given again to housing shortage and 25% to SC/ST population of the concerned districts.

On the basis of allocations made and targets fixed, district Rural development Agency (DRDAs)/Zilla Parishada (ZPs) decide Panchayat-wise number of houses to be constructed under IAY and intimate the same to the concerned Gram Panchayat. Thereafter, the Gram Sabha selects the beneficiaries, restricting its number to the target allotted, from the list of eligible households from the Permanent IAY Waitlists. No further approval of the higher authority is required.

The ceiling on construction assistance under the IAY has been enhanced w.e.f. 1.4.2008, Rs. 25,000/- to Rs. 35,000/- per unit in the plain areas and from Rs. 27,500/- to Rs. 38,500/- in hilly/difficult areas. For upgradation of kutchha house, the financial assistance has also been enhanced from Rs. 12,500/- to Rs. 15,000/- per unit. In addition, The Reserve Bank of India has been requested by the Ministry of Finance to include IAY houses under the Differential Rate of Interest (DRI) scheme for lending upto Rs. 20,000 per unit at an interest rate of 4%.

Further, the dwelling units should invariably be allotted in the name of a female member of the beneficiary household. Alternatively, it can be allotted in the name of both husband and wife. Only in case there is no eligible female member in the family, the house can be allotted in the name of an eligible male member.

The Sanitary latrine and smokeless chullah and proper drainage are required for each IAY house. Latrine could be constructed separate for the IAY house on the site of beneficiary.

The construction of the houses is the sole responsibility of the beneficiary. Engagement of contractors is strictly prohibited.

No specific type design has been stipulated for an IAY house. Choice of design, technology and materials for construction of an IAY house is the sole discretion of the beneficiaries.

About 181.51 lakh houses have been constructed under IAY since inception of the Scheme with an expenditure of Rs. 36900.41 crores (upto 31/5/2008)

#### **Performance during the year 2007-08**

During 2007-08, the Central allocation for Rural Housing was Rs. 40322.70 crore. The target for construction/upgradation of IAY houses was 21.27 lakh. Against this target, 19.88 lakh houses were constructed/upgraded by incurring an amount of Rs. 5458.01 crores (including State share).

#### **Performance during the year 2008-09**

The Central allocation for 2008-09 under the IAY is Rs. 56.45.77 crore for the target of constructing/upgrading 21.27 lakh IAY houses. Out of this, an amount of Rs. 1694.48 crore has been released as part of first instalment and 85879 houses have been constructed so far, (upto 31/5/2008).

### Bharat Nirman

Rural Housing is also a one of the six component of Bharat Nirman. Under Bharat Nirman, 60 lakh houses are to be constructed under the Scheme of Indira Awaas Yojana in four years w.e.f 2005-06 to 2008-09. 50.38 lakh houses have been constructed during first three years of the Bharat Nirman Programme period with an expenditure of Rs. 13365.52 crore. The year-wise construction of houses are given below:

Year	Target (in lakh)	Houses constructed (in lakh)	Expenditure (Rs. in crore)
2005-06	14.41	15.51	3654.09
2006-07	15.33	14.98	4253.42
2007-08	21.27	19.88	5458.01
Total	50.71	50.38	13365.52

### SWARNAJAYANTI GRAM SWAROZGAR YOJANA

The Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) was launched as an integrated programme for self-employment of the rural poor with effect from 1 April 1999. The objective of the scheme is to bring the assisted poor families above the poverty line by organising them into Self Help Groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilisation, their training and capacity building and provision of income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy. The scheme emphasizes establishment of activity clusters through selection of key activities based on aptitude and skill of the people, availability of resources and market potentiality. The scheme adopts a process approach and attempts to build the capacities of the rural poor. It provides for involvement of NGOs/CBOs/Individuals/Banks and/Self Help Promoting Institutions in nurturing and development of SHGs, including skill development. The scheme provides for the cost of social intermediation and skill development training based on the local requirement. Flexibility has been given to the DRDAs/States in the utilisation of funds for training, sanction of Revolving Fund, subsidy for economic activity based on the stage of development of groups.

The focus of the programme is on establishing a large number of micro-enterprises in rural areas based on the ability of the poor and potential of each area, both land-based and otherwise, for sustainable income generation. Due emphasis is being laid on different components such as capacity building of the poor, skill development training, credit training, technology transfer, marketing and infrastructure. The subsidy allowed under the SGSY is 30 per cent of the total project cost, subject to a ceiling of Rs 7,500 (for SC/STs and disabled persons subsidy limit is 50 per cent of the project cost subject to a ceiling of Rs 10,000). For Self-Help Groups (SHGs), subsidy would be 50 per cent of the project cost subject to a ceiling of Rs. 1.25 lakh or per capita subsidy of Rs. 10,000, whichever is less. There is no monetary ceiling on subsidy for minor irrigation projects for SHGs as well as individual swarozgaris.

The SGSY has a special focus on the vulnerable groups among the rural poor. SC/STs account for at least 50 per cent, women 40 per cent and the persons with physical disability constitute 3 per cent of the Swarozgaris respectively. The SGSY seeks to promote multiple credits rather than a one-time credit injection.

The SHGs may consist of 10-20 members in case of minor irrigation, and in case of disabled persons and difficult areas, i.e. hilly, desert and sparsely populated areas, this number may be a minimum of five. Self Help Groups should also be drawn from the BPL list approved by the Gram Sabha. The SHGs broadly go through three stages of evolution such as group formation, capital formation through the revolving fund and skill development and taking up of economic activity for income generation.

Selection could be made up to 10 key activities per block based on local resources, occupational skills of the people and availability of market so that the Swarozgaris can draw suitable incomes from their investment. Under SGSY each block should concentrate on 4-5 selected key activities and attend to all aspects of these activities in a cluster approach, so that swarozgaris can draw sustainable income from their investments. The scheme lays special emphasis on development of swarozgaris through well designed training courses tailored to the activities selected and the requirement of each swarozgari. SGSY is being implemented through the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs), with active involvement of panchayati raj institutions, banks and NGOs. It is financed on 75:25 cost-sharing basis between the Centre and the states.

Since the inception of the programme 22.52 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) have been formed covering 66.97 lakh swarozgaris. These include 35.54 lakh members of the SHGs and 31.43 lakh individual Swarozgaris who have been assisted with a total investment of Rs. 14403.73 crore. Out of total Swarozgaris assisted, SCs/STs were 45.54 per cent and women 47.85 per cent. During 2006-2007 the Central allocation for the scheme was Rs.1200 crore.

## **NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME**

Article 41 of the Constitution of India directs the State to provide public assistance to its citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement and in other cases of underserved want within the limit of its economic capacity and development. In accordance with the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Government of India introduced in 1995 the National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) to lay foundation to a National Policy for Social Assistance for the poor. The NSAP aims at ensuring minimum national standard for social assistance in addition to the benefits that state are currently providing or might provide in future. At present NSAP comprises Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and Annapurna.

Under IGNOAPS which was launched on 19th November, 2007, Rs. 200 per month per beneficiary is provided by way of central assistance to all persons who are 65 years of higher and belonging to a family living below the poverty line. Earlier under National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), the pension was restricted to destitutes only. The number of beneficiaries under IGNOAPS is estimated to reach 160 lakh persons as compared to 87 lakh under NOAPS.

The amount of old age pension was increased from Rs. 75 to Rs. 200 per month with effect from 1st April 2006 and the States were urged to contribute at least another Rs. 200 so that an old age pension beneficiary could get at least Rs. 400 per

month. At present 25 States/UTs are providing pension which is more than Rs. 200 per month.

Annapurana Scheme was introduced on 1st April 2000 to provide 10 Kgs of food grains per month free of cost to eligible beneficiaries who could not be covered under NOAPS, Under NFBS, Rs. 10000 is provided to a BPL family in case of natural or accidental death of a primary bread winner in the family while in the age group of 18 to 64 years.

The annual requirement of funds under NSAP at present is Rs. 4200 crore per annum which includes Rs. 3800 crore for old age pension and Rs. 400 crore for National Family Benefit Scheme. After transfer of the Schemes under NSAP to State Plan in 2002-03, funds are released as Additional Central Assistance (ACA) by the Ministry of Finance. The implementation of Programme is monitored by the Ministry of Rural Development.

### **DRDA ADMINISTRATION**

A Centrally-sponsored scheme, District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Administration was launched on 1 April 1999 with the objective of strengthening the DRDAs and making them more professional in their functioning. The funding pattern of the DRDA Administration is in the ratio of 75:25 between the Centre and the States. During 2007-2008 the revised estimate for DRDA administration was Rs. 250 crore and the whole amount was also released. In 2008-09 a budget provision of Rs. 250 crore had been made for the scheme.

### **CAPART**

The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) is an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Rural Development. It was set up in September 1986, as a supporting and funding agency for the voluntary organisations. Its primary objective is to promote voluntary action through community participation and to propagate appropriate rural technologies for the benefit of rural masses. It has a network of regional centres at Jaipur, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Patna, Chandigarh, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Dharwad. The regional committees are empowered to sanction projects up to an outlay of Rs. 25 lakh in their respective regions. The Budget allocation for CAPART during the year 2006-07 was Rs. 70 crore. Since inception and up to March 2007, CAPART has sanctioned 24,466 projects involving an amount of Rs. 909.34 crore and released an amount of Rs.752.61 crore.

### **WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

The Department of Land Resources in the Ministry of Rural Development is administering three area-based watershed programmes for development of wastelands/degraded lands namely Drought Prone Areas Programmes (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP) to check the diminishing productivity of wasteland and loss of natural resources.

The DPAP was launched in 1973-74 to tackle the special problems faced by those areas that are constantly afflicted by drought conditions. Presently, 972 blocks of 195 districts in 16 States are covered under the Programme. DDP was launched in 1977-78 to mitigate the adverse effects of desertification. Presently, 235 blocks of 40 districts in 7 States are covered under the Programme. IWDP has been under

implementation since 1989-90. The projects under the IWDP are generally sanctioned in areas that are not covered under DDP or DPAP.

Since 1 April 1995, these three programmes are being implemented on the basis of Common Guidelines for Watershed Development. Details of projects sanctioned and funds released from 1995-96 to 2007-2008 are as under:

Name of Scheme	No. of project sanctioned	Area covered (in lakh ha.)	Total funds released by Centre (Rs. in crores)
DPAP	27439	130.20	2837.81
DDP	15746	78.73	2103.23
IWDP	1877	107.0	2797.56
Grand Total	45062	322.93	7738.60

The projects under DPAP and DDP are sanctioned for 500 ha. each while the IWDP projects cover an area of 5000-6000 ha.

The cost norms for all the three schemes have been revised to Rs. 6000 per ha. Under DPAP and DDP, it is shared between the Centre and the States in ratio of 75:25. In case of IWDP, the cost sharing between the Centre and State Governments is in the ratio of 11:1.

Funds are released in seven instalments, six instalments at the rate of 15 per cent and the last instalment at the rate of 10 per cent. The first instalment is released along with the initial sanction-order and subsequent instalments on receipt of utilization for 50 per cent of the available funds as well as the following documents: (a) Quarterly Progress Reports; (b) Utilisation Certificates; (c) The Audited Statement of Accounts for the previous years; and (d) Evidence of satisfactory completion of institutional arrangements.

Projects are implemented by District Rural Development Agencies/Zilla Parishads (DRDAs/ZPs) through Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs). PIAs could be a Line Department (of the State Government), Panchayati Raj Institutions or a reputed NGO. One PIA normally handles 10-12 watershed projects covering an area of about 5000-6000 hectares. The PIA is required to maintain a technical team of 4 experts called Watershed Development Team (WDT) and individual projects (500 hectares) are planned and executed by the local people living in the watershed area called the Watershed Association (WA) through an elected body called Watershed Committee (WC).

The Department of Land Resources has brought out a new initiative called *Hariyali* with an objective of empowering PRIs both financially and administratively in implementation of Watershed Development Programmes. Under this initiative, all ongoing area development programmes namely, Integrated Wastelands Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programme (DDP) are to be implemented through the PRIs. New projects under the aforesaid area development programmes are being implemented in accordance with the guidelines for *Hariyali* from 1 April 2003. Projects sanctioned prior to this date shall continue to be implemented as per the Watershed Development Guidelines of 2001.

In the new arrangement, Gram Panchayats shall implement projects under overall supervision and guidance of Project Implementation Agencies (PIAs). An intermediate panchayat may be the PIA for all the projects sanctioned to a particular Block/Taluka. In case, these Panchayats are not adequately empowered, then the Zilla Panchayat can either act as PIA itself or may appoint a suitable Line Department like Agriculture, Forestry /Social Forestry, Soil Conservation, etc., or an Agency of the State Government/ University/Institute as PIA. Failing these options, the ZP/DRDA may consider appointing a reputed Non-Government Organization (NGO) in the district with adequate experience and expertise in the implementation of watershed projects or related area development works as the PIA after thoroughly examining their credentials.

The Project Implementing Agency (PIA) will provide necessary technical guidance to the Gram Panchayat for preparation of development plans for the watershed through Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) exercise, undertake community organisation and training for the village communities, supervise watershed development activities, inspect and authenticate project accounts.

## **LAND REFORMS**

Two Centrally Sponsored Schemes viz; (i) Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) and (ii) Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR) are administered by Land Reforms Division in the Department of Land Resources.

### **COMPUTERISATION OF LAND RECORDS**

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme on Computerisation of Land Records (CLR) was started in 1988-89 with 100 per cent financial assistance on a pilot project basis in eight Districts viz. Rangareddy (A.P.), Sonitpur (Assam), Singhbhum (Jharkhand), Gandhinagar (Gujarat), Morena (M.P.), Wardha (Maharashtra), Mayurbhanj (Orissa) and Dungarpur (Rajasthan) to remove the problems inherent in the manual systems of maintenance and updating of land records and to meet the requirements of various groups of users. It was decided that efforts should be made to computerise CORE DATA contained in land records, so as to assist development planning and to make records accessible to peoples/planners and administrators.

During the 8<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, the scheme was approved as a separate Centrally sponsored scheme on computerisation of land records. The total expenditure under the Scheme during 8<sup>th</sup> plan period was Rs. 64.43 crore. During 9<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan, Ministry of Rural Development released a sum of Rs. 169.13 crore by covering 259 more districts under the Scheme. At present, the Scheme is being implemented in 582 Districts of the country leaving those Districts where there are no proper land records.

A decision has been taken during 1997-98 for operation of the Scheme at the tehsil/taluk level for facilitating delivery of computerised land records to users and public at large. Under this programme, funds are released to the State Governments for data entry work, setting up of computer centres at tehsil level, sub-division level, District Land Records Data Centre and Monitoring Cell at state headquarters and imparting training to revenue officials on application software and computer technology. So far 4434 tehsils/talukas, 392 District Land Records Data Centre, 1045 Sub-division and 17 monitoring cells have been covered under the programme of CLR. As on 31.08.08 funds at the tune of Rs. 586.00 crore has been released to the States/UTs.

### **STRENGTHENING OF REVENUE ADMINISTRATION AND UPDATING OF LAND RECORDS (SRA & ULR)**

With a view to assisting States/UTs in the task of updating of land records, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR) was started in 1987. Initially, the Scheme was approved for the States of Bihar and Orissa in 1987-88 and extended to other States/UTs, during 1989-90. The Scheme is being implemented by state governments through their revenue/land reforms departments. It is financed by the Centre and the state on 50:50 funds sharing basis. However, union territories are provided full Central assistance.

Under this Scheme, financial assistance is given for purchase of modern survey equipment like Global Positioning System (GPS), EDM, Total Stations, Theodolites, Work Stations, Aerial Survey, Office equipment like photocopiers, laminating machines, binding machines and basic facilities to improve work efficiency of subordinate level staff of the revenue departments, construction of office-cum-residence of patwaris, construction/repair/renovation of Training Institutes and equipment for training, etc. as on 31.03.08, financial assistance of Rs. 475.36 crore has been provided to state governments and UTs.

It has been proposed to integrate and enhance the two Centrally sponsored schemes, namely, Computerisation of Land Records (CLR), and Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR), in the shape of the National Land Records Modernization Programme (NLRMP). The NLRMP is concerned not merely with computerization, updating and maintenance of land records and validation of titles, but also a programme that will add value and provide a comprehensive tool for development planning wherever location-specific information is required, Under the NLRMP, three layers of data: (a) Spatial data from satellite imagery / aerial photography. (b) topographic maps and other data from the Survey of India and Forest Survey of India, and (c) land records data - both records of rights (RoRs) and maps will be integrated and harmonized on a geographic information system (GIS) platform. The primary focus of the programme will be on (i) providing citizen services, such as providing records of rights (RoRs) with maps to scale; other land-based certificates such as caste certificates; information for eligibility for development programmes; land passbooks, etc, and (ii) developing a comprehensive tool for supporting and planning developmental, regulatory, and disaster management activities. Ushering in the system of conclusive titles in the country shall be the ultimate goal of the programme, for which all the required activities shall be undertaken in a systematic, ladder-like manner, and the primary activities shall converge in the district, and all districts in the country are proposed to be covered under the programme by the 12th plan period, beginning with 1-2 district per State/UT this year.

### **RURAL DRINKING WATER SUPPLY PROGRAMME**

Clean drinking water is a basic necessity of life. Supply of clean drinking water in the rural areas has always been one of the highest priorities of the Government. A Technology Mission on drinking water named "National Drinking Water Mission" (NDWM) was launched in 1986, which subsequently was rechristened as "Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission" (RGNDWM) in 1991 with three key objectives:

- (i) providing safe drinking water to all villages,
- (ii) assisting local communities to maintain sources of safe drinking water in good condition, and
- (iii) giving special attention for water supply to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

To achieve the objectives, Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) is being implemented to resolve the drinking water problem in rural habitations. The Central Government supplements the efforts of the states by providing financial and technical support. The Tenth Plan emphasizes participatory approach where PRIs should be the key institutions for convergence of drinking water supply programmes at the ground level. The strategy to achieve the Tenth Plan objectives can be briefly summarised as: (a) Accelerating coverage of the remaining Not Covered and Partially Covered habitations including those slipped back from fully covered to partially and not covered categories, with safe drinking water systems; (b) To tackle problems of water quality in affected habitations and to institutionalize water quality monitoring and surveillance systems; and (c) To promote sustainability, both of systems and sources, to ensure continued supply of safe drinking water in covered habitations

Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP) aims at achieving this objective. Considerable success has been achieved in meeting the drinking water needs of the rural population through the said scheme. There are more than 4 million hand pumps and 2 lakh piped water schemes in the rural areas.

The ARWSP was launched during 1972-73. It is currently being implemented through the Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission. The scheme aims at coverage of all rural habitations with population of 100 and above, specially the un-reached ones, ensure sustainability of the systems and sources, tackle the problem of water quality and institutionalise water quality monitoring and surveillance through a Catchment Area Approach.

As on 1 April 2005, 96.13 per cent of rural habitations have been Fully Covered (FC) with drinking water facilities and 3.55 per cent are Partially Covered (PC) and 0.32 per cent are Not Covered (NC) with drinking water facilities. There are slippages of FC into NC or PC due to various factors such as lowering of ground water table, systems outliving their lives, increase in population, etc.

Drinking water supply is one of the six components of Bharat Nirman, which has been envisaged to build strong rural infrastructure in four years (2005-06 to 2008-09). The task ahead is to cover all the remaining uncovered habitations and also to cover the slipped back as well as the water quality affected ones. Action Plans from State/UT Governments for achieving the goals of Bharat Nirman in a time bound manner have been obtained.

For ensuring sustainability of the systems, steps were initiated in 1999 to institutionalise community participation in the implementation of rural drinking water supply schemes by incorporating the following three basic principles:

(i) Adoption of a demand-driven responsive and adaptable approach based on empowerment of villagers to ensure their full participation in the project through a decision-making role in the choice of scheme, design, control of finances and management arrangements. (ii) Increasing role of government for empowering user groups/gram panchayats for sustainable management of drinking water assets and

integrated water management and conservation. (iii) Partial capital cost sharing either in cash or kind or both and 100 per cent responsibility of Operation and Maintenance by end-users.

Sector Reforms Projects, based on the above principles were sanctioned in 67 districts on pilot basis. With the experience gained from these pilot projects, reform process has been scaled up in the entire country through Swajaldhara launched on 25 December 2002. A notable feature of Swajaldhara is involvement of Village Water and Sanitation Committee (VWSC)/Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) in planning, implementation, operation and maintenance. This would in turn ensure sustainability of the system. 10 per cent contribution is made by the community and 90 per cent funds are provided by the Central government. In case of SC and ST habitations, community contribution can be in the form of cash, kind, labour or land or a combination of these.

Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission (RGNDWM) adopts an integrated approach so that conservation and augmentation of water sources is interrelated with rural water supply schemes to provide sustainable supply of safe drinking water to the rural population. The Mission seeks to provide supply of 40 litres of safe drinking water in rural areas.

An initiative has been taken by Government of India in February 2006 by launching the National Rural Drinking Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance Programme which envisages institutionalisation of community participation for monitoring and surveillance of drinking water sources at the grass-root level by Gram Panchayats and Village Water and Sanitation Committees, followed by checking the positively tested samples at the district and State level laboratories.

Another initiative taken by the Government is that from 2006-07 onwards focused funding to tackle drinking water has been started. Up to 20 per cent of ARWSP funds are to be earmarked separately for tackling water quality problems. For 2006-07, 20 per cent of ARWSP funds were allocated for funding under water quality.

### **CENTRAL RURAL SANITATION PROGRAMME**

Rural Sanitation is a State subject. The efforts of the states are supplemented by the Central Government through technical and financial assistance under the Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP).

The Programme was launched in 1986 with the objectives of improving the quality of life of rural people and providing privacy and dignity to women. The concept of sanitation was expanded in 1993 to include personal hygiene, home sanitation, safe water and disposal of garbage, human excreta and wastewater. The components of the programme included construction of individual sanitary toilets for household below poverty-line (BPL), conversion of dry latrines to water-pour flush toilets, construction of village sanitary complexes for women, setting up of sanitary marts, intensive campaign for creating awareness and health education, etc.

Keeping in view the experiences of the Central and state governments, NGOs and other implementing agencies and the recommendations of the Second National Seminar on Rural Sanitation, the strategy for the Ninth Five Year Plan was revised and the programme was restructured from 1 April 1999. The restructured programme moves away from the principle of state-wise allocation of funds, primarily based on poverty criteria, to a demand-driven approach in a phased manner. Total Sanitation

Campaign (TSC) was introduced and the Allocation Based Programme was phased out by 31 March 2002. TSC is community-led and people-centred. There was a shift from a high subsidy to a low subsidy regime. The TSC approach emphasized awareness-building component and meets the demand through alternate delivery mechanism. School Sanitation has been introduced as a major component to encourage wider acceptance of sanitation among rural masses. The States/UTs are required to formulate project proposals under the TSC in order to claim Central government assistance.

Under the TSC, so far 559 projects in 30 States/UTs have been sanctioned with the total project outlay of about Rs.6240.27 crore. The Central, State and Beneficiary/ Panchayat contributions are about Rs.3675.38 crore, Rs.1424.09 crore and Rs.1140.80 crore respectively. The components sanctioned in the 559 projects are (a) construction of 499 lakh individual household latrines; (b) 656690 toilets for Schools; (c) 36098 Community Sanitary Complexes; (d) 199033 toilets for Balwadis/ Anganwadis and (e) 4030 Rural Sanitary Marts/Production Centres. Besides, funds have been earmarked for start-up activities, Information, Education and Communication (IEC) and Administrative charges. The total numbers of household toilets constructed up to 2005-06 are 14,48,1807.

To add vigour to the implementation of TSC, the Government of India has separately launched an award scheme 'Nirmal Gram Puraskar' (NGP) for fully sanitised and open defecation free Gram Panchayats, block and districts. In the first year of its institution only 40 PRIs were awarded NGP on 24 February 2005. In the second year the number of awarded PRIs/Blocks and organisations increased to 772.

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The Ministry of Rural Development lays great emphasis on Monitoring and Evaluation of all rural development programmes in general and poverty alleviation and employment generation schemes in particular, being implemented in various States/UTs.

It is well recognised that the success of the programmes largely depends on the effective delivery system and efficient implementation at the grass-roots level so that the programme benefits reach the rural poor in full measures. In order to ensure this, the Ministry has evolved a comprehensive multi-level and multi-tool system of Monitoring and Evaluation for the implementation of its programmes. The Monitoring mechanism includes, *inter-alia*, the Performance Review Committee, Review meeting by the Ministers of Rural Development with the Chief Ministers/ Ministers of Rural development and Officers of the States, the Area Officer Schemes, periodic progress reports, audit and utilisation certificates, video conferencing and field visits. The Ministry conducts quick evaluation/concurrent evaluation of all major programmes. Impact assessment studies to assess the overall impact of programmes of village-level are also conducted in selected districts. The Vigilance and Monitoring Committees at State and District-levels in all States/UTs to monitor the implementation of programmes are reconstituted. These Committees *inter-alia* include MPs/MLAs representatives of Panchayati Raj Institutions and NGOs. The Members of Parliament both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha have been assigned a Central role in the reconstituted V&M Committees and they have been nominated Chairman/Co-Chairman of the district level V&M Committees.

The Ministry has also taken initiatives to strengthen the monitoring mechanism and quality of implementation of programmes by introducing District Level Monitoring (DLM) System through external research organisation agencies, which include monthly reporting of physical and financial performance, qualitative reporting about policy and implementation environments in the districts and physical verification of the assets created under various programmes of the Ministry. With effect from 1st October, 2006, the DLM systems has been restructured and one combined system for the programmes of Development of Drinking Water Supply and the Programmes of Department of Rural Development (except PMGSY and NREGA) and Land Resources has been put in place. 466 districts of the country have been covered under DLM and 46 independent organisations have been engaged for this purpose.

This system aims at providing continuous, transparent and accountable monitoring inputs in reporting format with the objectives of reporting of the process and progress of the programmes covering different components of the programmes. It also aims at identification of gaps in the implementation at the village, block, district and state level. The monitoring system also elicits the stakeholders' views; assesses the institutional issues and documents case studies and success stories on best practices, innovations and lesson learned.

In order to strengthen the monitoring mechanism, the Ministry of Rural Development has a panel of about 250 National Level Monitors comprising retired Defence Service Officers and Retired Civil Servants to monitor and furnish periodic reports to the Ministry on the implementation of programmes in selected districts including verifying facts of the cases and complaints if any, which may be referred to them.