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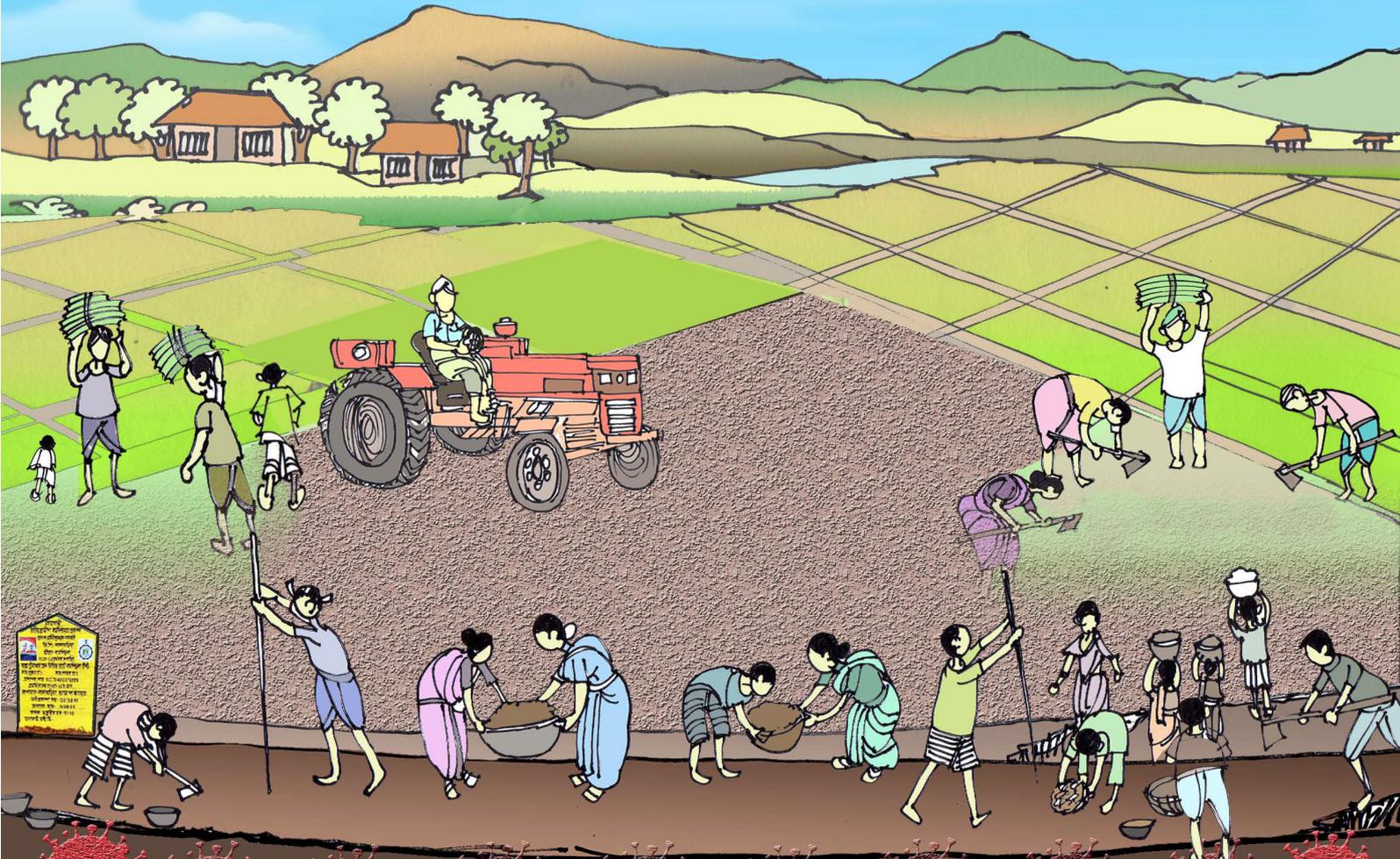
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Tackling rural youth unemployment through skills





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WHEN TO USE A MASK

For healthy people wear a mask only if you are taking care of a person with suspected 2019-nCoV infection

Wear a mask, if you are coughing or sneezing

Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

If you wear a mask then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly

HOW TO PUT ON, USE, TAKE OFF AND DISPOSE OF A MASK

Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water

Cover mouth and nose with mask and make sure there are no gaps between your face and the mask

Avoid touching the mask while using it;

To remove the mask: remove it from behind (do not touch the front of mask); discard immediately in a closed bin

Logos: NIRDPR, CRU, World Health Organization India, unicef for every child

Reduce the risk of Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection

Follow these important precautions

- 1 After coughing and sneezing
- 2 Clean your hands before and after caring for sick person
- 3 Before cooking, after cooking and before eating food
- 4 After using toilet

Remember to wash hands with soap frequently

Stay protected! Stay safe from Coronavirus!

For more information, or if you have questions or concerns, please call the number below.

24X7 Helpline number 104

If you have cough, fever or difficulty in breathing, contact a doctor immediately

Logos: NIRDPR, CRU, World Health Organization India, unicef for every child



Rural youths getting training in automobile sector
(file photo)

Tackling rural youth unemployment through skills

“The consequences of high neighbourhood joblessness are more devastating than those of high neighbourhood poverty... Many of today’s problems in the inner-city ghettos—crime, family dissolution, welfare, low levels of social organisation, and so on are fundamentally a consequence of the disappearance of work.”

- William Julius Wilson, *When Work Disappears*, 1996, pp. xiii.

Labour Day or International Workers’ Day is observed across the globe each year on the first day of May to celebrate the achievements of the working class and their movements. Labour Day in India was first celebrated on 1st May, 1923. But the May Day of 2020 could rarely include neither any single worker from a 400 million plus workforce of India nor it could touch any part of their life. Sadly, it coincided with the global pandemic COVID-19 and subsequent prolonged lockdown. While this day is celebrated to remember the struggle movements of workers for their right, justice and liberation from all forms of exploitation and discrimination, countries across the globe witnessed varying degrees of vulnerability and plight of working class due to the COVID-19. The ongoing COVID-led lockdown could give rise to a plethora of possible outcomes in the labour market, which will have significant implications for workers in general and rural youth in particular.

During the past 10 years or so, rural India was already passing through an

agrarian crisis and economic distress. The latest available employment statistics (Periodic Labour Force Survey: PLFS - 2017-18) suggest that during the period 2011-12/2017-18, all broad sectors of the rural economy registered varying degrees of slowdown or negative employment growth rates. Few sub-sectors of the rural non-farm sector did register positive employment growth rates, but the construction sector, which used to generate a bulk

The ongoing COVID-led lockdown could give rise to a plethora of possible outcomes in the labour market, which will have significant implications for workers in general and rural youth in particular.

of rural employment also suffered severe setbacks. The rural female labour force participation rates continue to decline. It declined from 33.3 per cent in 2004-05 to 25.3 per cent in 2011-12 and further to 18.2 per cent in 2017-18. During 2017-18, we also witnessed a high magnitude of unemployment rates, especially for the youth. The problem of

youth unemployment is more crucial in case of India, as youth (in the age cohort of 15 to 29) constitutes nearly 27.5 per cent of the total population. A high proportion of rural youth continue to fall in the category of ‘Not in employment-education and training’ (NEET), which indicates the growing incidence of inactive, idle and disengaged youth in rural areas. In 2017-18, 40 per cent of rural youth (male = 13.6 per cent and female = 60.0 per cent) in the age cohort of 15 to 29 years were in the NEET category. Besides these quantitative challenges, the rural labour market is also characterised by qualitative challenges such as high degree of informality, rising incidence of working poor, the problems of low paid and insecure jobs, skill deficit and mismatch, distress-driven outmigration, poor working conditions, long working hours, high incidence of occupational hazards, inadequate safety measures at work places and so on. These issues will further accentuate, if we factor in various individual and household attributes such as gender, income



Young women being trained in dress designing and tailoring (file photo)

class, social groups, education and skill profile, and so on. The Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS) 2018-19 showed a marginal decline in the unemployment rates and improvement in the labour force participation rates, as compared to 2017-18. But these trends may be difficult to be retained due to prolonged lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19, resulting in job losses across sectors.

The employment challenges for rural youth

There is no hard data to assess the full impacts of COVID-19 on rural employment and labour market outcomes. But based on indirect and proxy evidences, we may corroborate the following possible changes in the rural labour market in general and for rural youth, in particular: i) the rural labour supply will increase, as millions of migrant workers have returned to their respective destinations; ii) with the rise in supply of labour, the market wage rates may dampen; iii) there will be lay off and job losses and it may accentuate further, if lockdown is stretched; iv) contractual/irregular/daily wage earners will be worst affected; v) longer working hours with same wage or less wage for average eight hours work and delayed wage payments; vi) informality will rise and women and disadvantaged social groups such as SCs, STs, differently

abled persons, street vendors, small shop owners, micro enterprises, etc., will face severe negative impacts; vii) labour addas in cities and towns, which used to provide employment opportunities for rural low skilled migrant daily wage workers, will remain non-operational due to social-distancing and lockdown; viii) the incidence of NEET among rural youth will significantly increase; ix) with the rise in rural labour supply, we may witness rise in demand for public employment programmes such as MGNREGA; x) there will be increasing pressure on rural infrastructure, including water, health, sanitation and housing; xi) at household level, there will be an increase in the out-of-pocket expenses on health, education, resulting in indebtedness. The cloud of COVID-19 will, we hope, be gone sooner rather than later, but a key question that is going to hunt us for quite some time is how we can reverse these adverse currents?

Rural youths are already at a disadvantageous position, as compared to their urban counterparts, in terms of low levels of education and skill and inadequate access to employment opportunities. The COVID-19 led lockdown has made the employment scenario for rural youth even more challenging. We have witnessed a sudden rise in youth population in rural areas, as millions of youth migrants have

returned. The spell of the lockdown and the responses of the government to revive and restore economic activities will decide the magnitude of impacts on the youth. However, in the short term and medium term, we may witness: i) temporary or permanent job losses for the youth ii) youth taking up a low paid job iii) increase in waithood for new job iv) rise in unemployment spell and rate v) rise in requirement of vocational skill, training and entrepreneurship schemes and apprenticeship, internship, on the job training and scholarship vi) rise in the incidence of closure or sickness of micro, small units and rural start-ups.

In addition to the livelihood crises, youth will also have to face challenges in their education, skill and health. During this pandemic period, academic/ education sessions are getting delayed; poor quality and uncertainty in the higher education sector will result in delayed entry into the labour market. With the fall in household income, we may also witness withdrawal of children from the school, reduction in food expenses resulting in malnutrition. In such scenario, the females in the household including girl child will badly be affected. COVID-19 may also throw health challenges for youth such as anxiety, depression and other psycho-social disorder, due to uncertainties in the labour market and

education sector. Some of the youth may also recourse to drug addiction and anti-social activities. The rural youths are going to face a multidimensional challenges during COVID-19 and it will be important to mainstream the youth and put them in the centre of rural economies for driving a better and more sustainable rural development outcome.

Steps to tackle youth crisis

To address the rural youth crisis, as narrated above, we need to design a multi-pronged strategy, as follows:

Invest on skilling: There is an urgent need to invest on skilling, in designing innovative skill programmes focussing more on upskilling, reskilling and apprenticeship to meet the demand of the new scenarios. It is necessary to revisit our flagship skill programmes such as DDU-GKY, PMKVY, and reorient in response to the unprecedented challenges thrown by COVID-19. A large number of skill programmes are being implemented by Central ministries, State governments, private sectors and NGOs. All these programmes are to be brought under one platform and a unified tracking system should be developed for better outcomes

Undertake skill mapping and skill gap analysis: This is a right time to undertake skill mapping and skill gap analysis, specially focussing on youth and returned migrants. Such skill mapping exercise, especially of returned migrants have already been initiated in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand. Attempts are also being made to accommodate these workers in various rural development schemes, i.e., National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector. But it will be difficult to accommodate workers with diverse skill sets only in government programmes. Private players must also pitch in to accommodate skilled workers.

Promote entrepreneurship: As new employment generation is constrained of slump in demand, there will be a huge demand for self-employment ventures, entrepreneurship and start-ups. Therefore, entrepreneurship schemes and programmes need to be leveraged in rural areas. However, the success of these programmes will depend on how quickly domestic demand will pick up. Customised schemes should be designed for women, youth and underserved communities such as SCs and STs. The scope and reach of MUDRA loans, Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP), etc., must be leveraged. It is also important to note that the Ministry of MSME is working on creating an agro MSME category to push entrepreneurship in rural and tribal areas and help manufacturing via local and raw produce. It is also envisaged that Panchayats to become industry clusters.

Engage youth in agriculture: There is an apathetical attitude especially among youth, not to work in agriculture. But the contemporary situation demands for a transformation of subsistence agriculture into a diversified farming business and this process of transformation can be driven by youth. To attract youth into agriculture, it has to be transformed into a vibrant and tech-savvy sector by introducing robotics, ICT and nanotechnology. Agro-entrepreneurship, food processing and value chain development will also encourage youth into agriculture. It is high time the government should increase public investment on crucial agriculture infrastructure, including

irrigation, cold storage, market linkages, and mechanisation, inter alia, to enable farmers to take up high-value agriculture.

Graduate SHGs: There is a need to draw a graduation plan for Self-Help Groups (SHGs) so that it will generate more local employment. These SHGs are to be graduated as an economically-viable and productive enterprise through value chain development in agriculture and the non-farm sector through farmer producer collectives, enterprise development, skills training and access to larger value loans through digital finance. However, identifying and linking SHG enterprises to robust supply chains and markets with sustained levels of demand will be crucial for them to scale up.

Mentoring and handholding: In such crisis time, provisioning of counselling, mentoring and handholding for the youth will be very important, both for skill and entrepreneurship development. There are several agencies including Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs) and commercial banks who are offering these services. But so far, its access has been very limited in rural areas and awareness about these services has also been low. It is important to note that the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in partnership with Facebook has launched 'Going Online As Leaders' (Goal) programme for digital skilling of tribal youth through mentoring across India. Under this, 5,000 young tribal entrepreneurs, professionals, artisans and artists will be trained on digital skills under digital entrepreneurship programme. The programme has been designed with a long-term vision to develop the potential of tribal youth and women to help them acquire skills and knowledge through mentorship in various sectors including horticulture, food processing,



Rural youth laying their hands on traditional weaving (file photo)

bee keeping, tribal art and culture, medicinal herbs, entrepreneurship among others.

Training and capacity development programmes:

NIRDPR being a national level organisation and one of its mandates is to facilitate training and capacity development programmes for livelihood, skill and entrepreneurship. The need of the hour is to prepare customised training programmes, including both broad based and sector specific training modules. It will also be important to include a psycho-social module for the rural youths to address the problems of mental stress, depression, social and cultural discrepancies, loneliness because of staying away from home, financial issues and so on.

Revamp and modernise Employment Exchanges:

There is an urgent need to modernise the Employment Exchanges and to transform these institutions into vibrant centres of job creation. These agencies have failed to reinvent themselves and fulfil the aspirations of job-seekers in present day India. Employment Exchanges must operate as 'one-stop job shops' bringing all the processes such as registration, counselling, job search supports, assessment and job matching under a single centre. The Employment Exchanges must adopt modern techniques and expand its outreach programmes and job fairs. Gram Panchayats can play a crucial role in connecting youth with Employment Exchange and its services.

Role of Placement Agencies: Labour market intermediaries or placement agencies have offered diverse employment opportunities and also have potential to deliver services like skilling of aspiring jobseekers. In the context of growing need for more job creation, the positive contribution of Private Placement Agencies (PPA) can hardly be undermined. More number of public and private placement agencies must be operated, with greater focus on rural youth and these agencies must collaborate with each other and work closely for better results.

Migration Support Centres:

During the COVID period and afterwards, the role of Migration Support Centres (MSCs) both at source and destination sites will be crucial to rebuild the trust of the migrant workers.

It is time to reach out to each and every youth in rural India and start a fresh conversation.

Youth disaggregated database: It is important to develop a comprehensive and policy-sensitive database focusing on youth, which could be placed in the public domain, making identification, understanding their needs and intervention more effective.

Youth-friendly Gram Panchayat and GPDP:

Since the problem of NEET is more acute in rural areas and it has further accentuated during post-COVID period, it is essential to assess the magnitude of the constraints and challenges faced by the rural youth and mainstream them in the overall rural development strategy.

The Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) can play a direct role in profiling and mapping the needs of the rural youth and devise a mechanism to prioritise resource allocation and help them in providing skill, training, entrepreneurship and livelihood avenues. It is also important to mainstream youth in all rural development programmes. Youth may be encouraged to participate in Gram Sabhas and preparation of GPDP. While formulating a youth-friendly GPDP, a few questions/issues may be raised and discussed in the Gram Sabha, such as whether the youth needs have been taken care of while preparing GPDP; what is the nature and extent of youth needs envisaged in the GPDP; what are the major constraints in creating the envisaged skill and entrepreneurship development for rural youths; is it sustainable; and so on. Thus, Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) could be truly an effective tool to mainstream rural youth in the rural development strategies and economic policies.

To sum up the above discussion, the overall enabling environment relating to policy, incentive structures, and improvements in human capital infrastructure, active labour market policies, career counselling, vocational training, job search support, access to better credit, training and skill and effective regulatory mechanism will be crucial

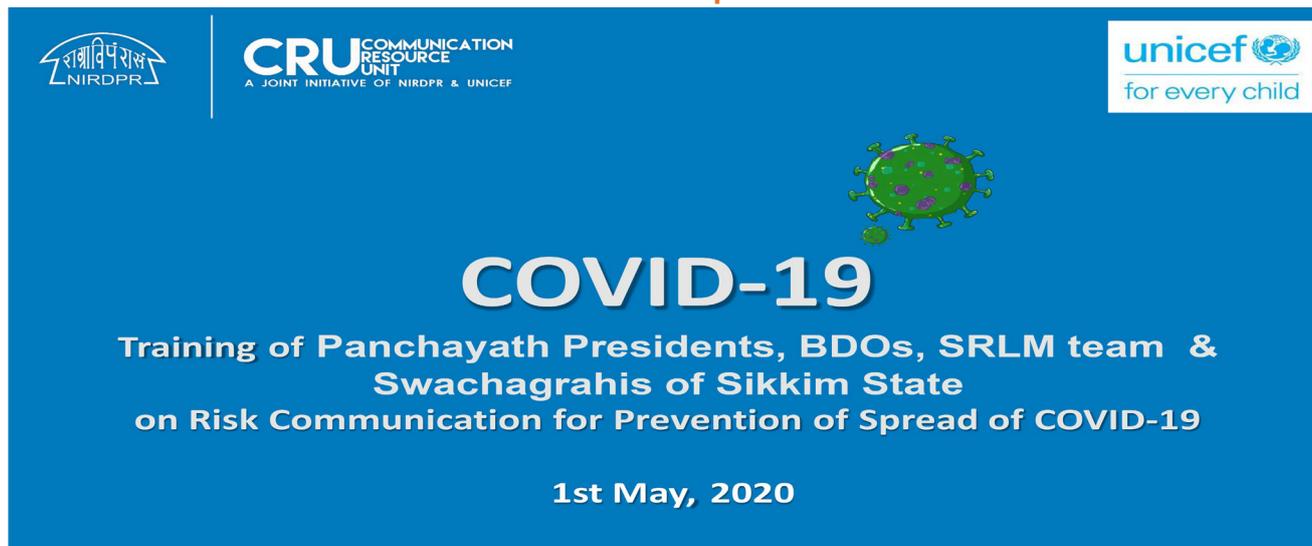
to improve the participation of youth in all spheres of activities of the society and economy. It is time to reach out to each and every youth in rural India and start a fresh conversation. As Benjamin Disraeli, a British politician and former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom has rightly said: *The youth of a nation are the trustees of posterity.*

Dr. Partha Pratim Sahu
Associate Professor

Centre for Entrepreneurship Development and Financial Inclusion (CEDFI), NIRDPR

Cover page Design: **Shri V.G. Bhat**

CGG&PA, NIRDPR organises ToT programme on Risk Communication for Prevention of Spread of COVID-19



Digital poster of training programme

A webinar ToT Programme on 'Risk Communication for Prevention of Spread of COVID-19' was organised to train Panchayat Presidents, BDOs, SRLM team and Swachhagrahi of Sikkim by the Centre for Good Governance and Policy Analysis (CGG&PA), NIRDPR in collaboration with Communication Research Unit – National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj & UNICEF Hyderabad Field Office on 1st May, 2020.

Dr. Gyanmudra, Professor and Head, CGG&PA and Director, CRU, NIRDPR welcomed the participants to the webinar. Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR in his opening address told the participants to exercise caution in the wake of spread of COVID-19. Also he mentioned that during COVID-19 epidemic all government functionaries need to think well in advance on the plan of action for the post-lockdown COVID-19 epidemic because most of the migrant labourers have started coming back to their respective States. In this condition, all government departments have to be ready with possible positive solutions to control the spread of COVID-19.

Shri C. S. Rao, Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Sikkim thanked CGG&PA, NIRDPR for conducting such a programme for the

government functionaries at the right time. He also mentioned that Sikkim is the one State without any positive cases as on (1st May, 2020). He added that as Director General, suggested, they have been already working on a plan of action against post-lockdown once the migrants from Sikkim are returned.

The webinar started with an introduction on the purpose of the training, background and small activity for anxiety management. The webinar mainly focused and covered topics like understanding COVID-19, modes of virus transmission and its spread, key behaviours, prevention: safe practices at home and in the community, hand -hygiene do's and don'ts, social distancing, respiratory hygiene, special attention to high risk groups, key behaviours for suspected or confirmed cases, guidelines for home isolation of pre-symptomatic cases, post-lockdown safety measures, post-lockdown: potential trigger points for fear, anxiety and suspicion, COVID-19 stigma and discrimination, psycho-social issues: whom to prioritise/target? why special attention to swachhagrahis and Panchayat presidents, role of Panchayat presidents, BDOs, SRLM teams and Swachhagrahis.

Course team also shared material available with the participants to take this learning to the next level. The team responded to the participants questions and the

webinar session ended with vote of thanks by Dr. K. Prabahakar, Asst Prof., CGG&PA

Totally, 150 participants attended the webinar and they were State officials like Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj and Rural Development, Sikkim, Director, Panchayati Raj, Director and Faculty of SIRD Sikkim, ADC (Dev) and BDOs, Panchayat presidents and members, swachhagrahis and SRLM teams.

As suggested by Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR a webinar ToT programme on 'Risk Communication for Prevention of Spread of COVID-19' was conducted for all NIRDPR ITEC international training coordinators. In response to Dr. Reddy's suggestion, (CGG&PA has organised webinar for the 2018 & 2019 CGG&PA ITEC participants of 'International Training Programme on 'Good Governance for Management of Rural Development Programmes' in collaboration with CRU – NIRDPR & UNICEF Hyderabad Field Office on 11th May, 2020.

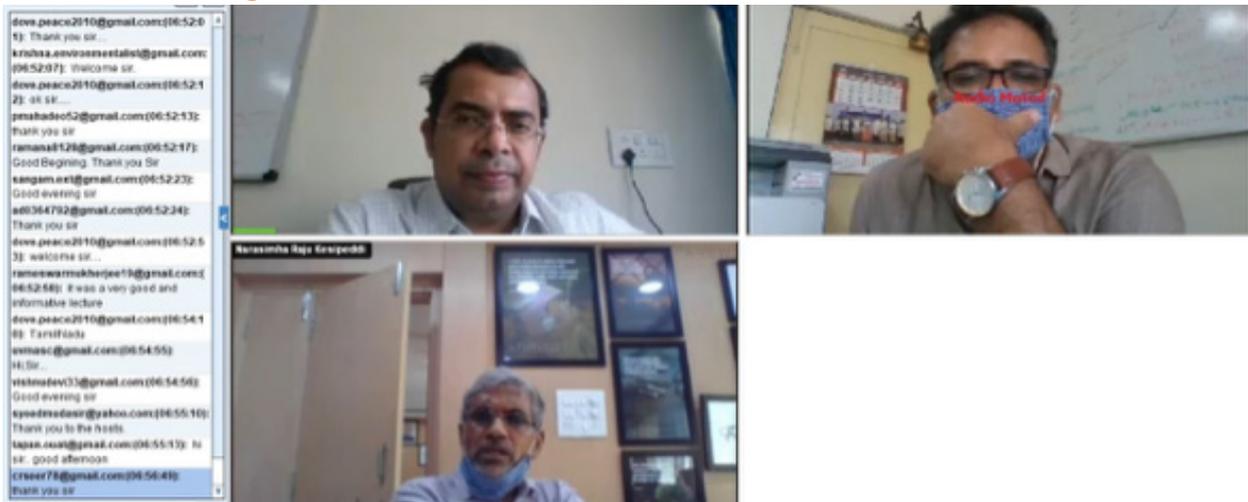
Dr. Gyanmudra, Professor and Head, CGG&PA and Director, CRU, NIRDPR welcomed participants to the webinar. Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR welcomed all ITEC international participants in his opening address and enquired about COVID-19 epidemic in their countries. He also cautioned all countries about the need to be to think well in advance with a plan of action for the post lockdown after COVID-19 epidemic. The webinar began

with an introduction of purpose of the training, background and small activity for anxiety management. Course team also shared material available with the participants to take this learning to next levels.

Team responded to the participants' questions and the webinar session ended with vote thanks by Dr. K. Prabahakar. Totally, 45 international participants from 30 countries participated in the webinar and all of them were government functionaries in

their respective countries. Dr. K. Prabhakar, Assistant Professor, Centre for Good Governance & Policy analysis (CGG&PA) and Dr. Gyanmudra, Professor and Head, CGG&PA organised both the webinars.

Two-week E-Training on Sustainable Livelihoods and Adaptation to Climate Change



Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR addressing the participants along with Course Directors

An E-Training programme on Sustainable Livelihoods and Adaptation to Climate Change (SLACC) was organised by the Centre for Natural Resource Management, Climate Change and Disaster Mitigation (CNRM &CCDM), National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad from 27th May, 2020 to 9th June, 2020 by using A-VIEW application.

This programme was planned to overcome the challenges thrown by the COVID-19 crisis in conducting regular training programmes. Therefore, the E-Training on SLACC was modified to the needs of online mode and thus conducted in lieu of training programmes listed in NIRDPR annual training calendar for both Mission Staff and Community Resource Persons, i.e. 'Community Based Approaches to Climate Resilience and Adaptation Practices'. A total of 420 members registered around the globe including international (ITEC, AARDO and CIRDAP Alumni) participants, representatives of State Rural Livelihoods Mission (SRLM), other officers of line departments, non-government

organisations, researchers, professors and other individuals dealing with sustainable livelihoods and agriculture related subjects.

The programme was inaugurated by Dr. W. R. Reddy, IAS, Director General, NIRDPR who welcomed all the participants. Being the first live online training course of NIRDPR for the calendar year, he appreciated the initiatives taken by CNRM & CCDM team. Dr. Reddy also emphasised upon the ongoing climatic impacts and the need for the implementation of adaptive strategies in agricultural sector, which is the backbone of India. He also highlighted the success stories from the earlier SLACC project which was implemented in Madhya Pradesh and Bihar.

Followed by the inaugural address, course directors Dr. Ravindra S. Gavali, Professor and Head, CNRM, CC&DM, Dr. K. Krishna Reddy, Associate professor and Dr. Subrat K. Mishra, Associate Professor gave a short introduction to the programme, and discussed the programme schedule and the deliverables during the programme. Following the main course director of the programme Dr. Ravindra

S. Gavali delivered a session on climate change and impacts of climate change on water, agriculture and allied sectors.

During the SLACC E-Training programme, various climate-resilient intervention/technologies were taught to the participants by various resources persons from NIRDPR, ICAR-CRIDA, ICAR-NAARM and BISA, etc. The major issues covered during the programme were climate change and its impacts on water, agriculture and allied sectors, Climate Change Adaptation Planning (CCAP), adaptation practices in rice (DSR, MSRI, MT, AWD, etc.), soil health and nutrient management, Weather-based Agro Advisory Services (WBASS), crop insurance, small ruminant farming and backyard poultry rearing, livestock and dairy farming: fodder crops production and management, alternate livelihoods (azolla, mushroom, kitchen garden) and convergence of flagship programmes. The daily schedule included an expert session, followed by screening of an in-house documentary film related to the subject and concluded with a case study discussion prepared for the

subject. The participants were given quiz was taken up in order to retain their free and anytime access to the study attention of the participants and test material, case studies, films and daily their knowledge. Apart from the above session through library recordings and technical issues, the resources persons also via Google Drive link. At the end have clarified the doubts of the participants of each day, a short attention-based through virtual interaction and chat. quiz was conducted on the session.

On the last day of the programme, the participants were given a chance to express their knowledge of the participants to their experiences and learning outcomes various climate resilient technologies, many participants appreciated the course they were shown short films and content and the way of delivering each success stories from earlier SLACC subject. Participants expressed their interest project, which created more enthusiasm to join more courses related to climate and interest in the participants. The change and disaster mitigation subject. At method has compensated the field the end of the programme, an elaborate level exposure to different technologies. quiz was also conducted to assess the At the end of the each day, a short knowledge gained by the participants.

Out of the 420 registered participants a total of 131(male-100 and female-31) including 12 international delegates attended the programme regularly, meeting the requirement of certification i.e., 70 per cent attendance and qualifying the quizzes. Indian participants belonging to 19 States of which Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have highest numbers. Among the Indian participants, line department officials accounted for 52, followed by 46 participants from teaching profession, 26 research scholars and 8 others including NGOs and Individuals. The programme was coordinated by Dr. Ravindra Gavali, Dr. Krishna Reddy and Dr. Subrat Mishra.

NIRDPR and ISLE organise webnair on revival of rural livelihoods



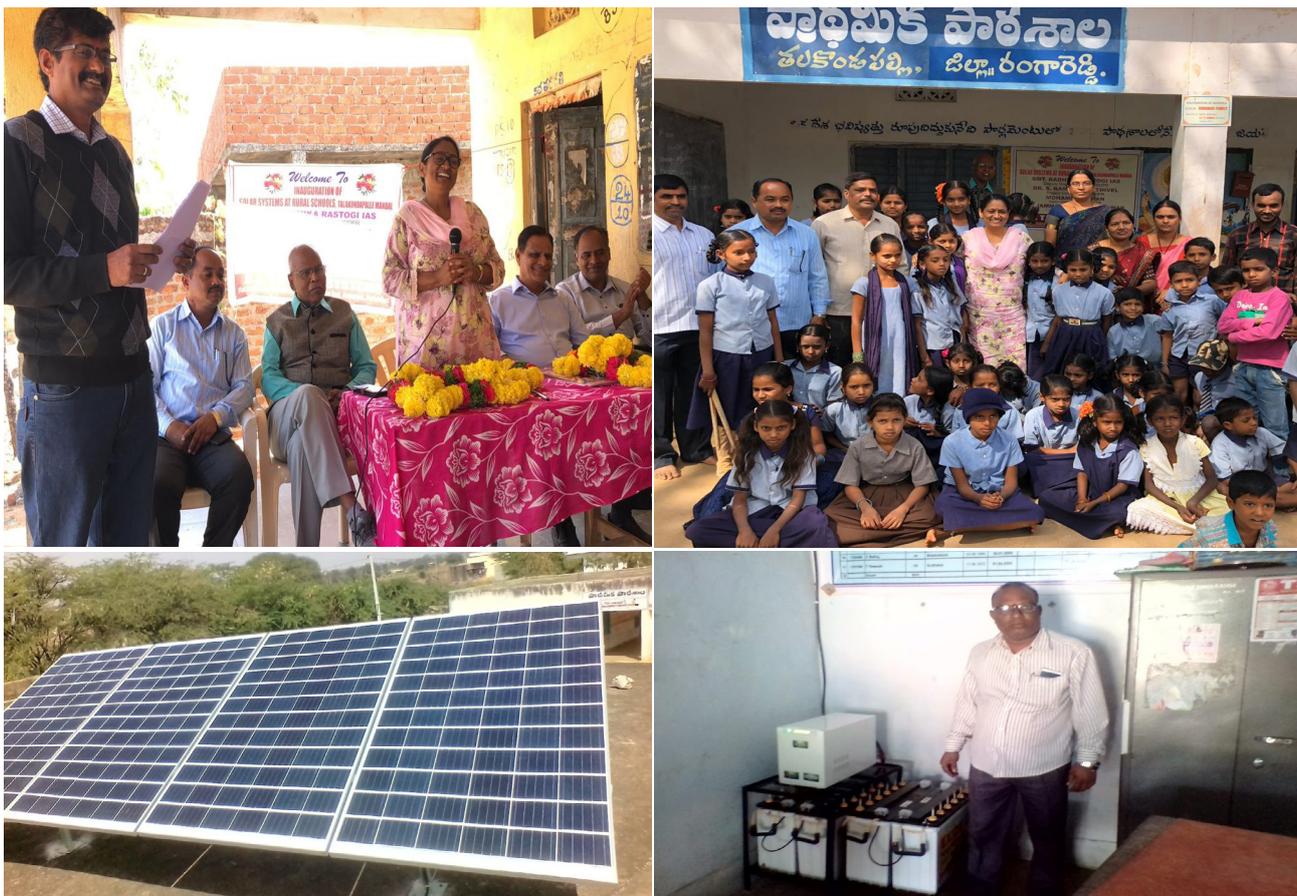
Members of the pannel during the webnair

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad under its S.R. Sankaran Chair jointly with the Indian Society of Labour Economics (ISLE), New Delhi organised a webinar on 'Revival and Reconstruction of Rural Livelihoods Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forward' on 20th May, 2020. The main objectives of this webinar was to discuss the rural economic crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown. The webinar discussed issues related to revival and reconstruction of livelihood in rural India in the context of (i) the outreach, adequacy and effectiveness of the relief and revival

strategies, (ii) the capacity of institutions and challenges to return to normalcy; and (iii) short-term, medium-term and long-term measures towards faster and inclusive economic recovery. Four eminent panellists, 1) Prof. Abhijit Sen, former Professor, JNU New Delhi and former member, Planning Commission 2) Shri S. M. Vijayanand (IAS, Retd.) former Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India 3) Shri Nikhil Dey, Social Activist, Mazdoor Kishan Shakti Sangthan, Rajasthan and 4) Prof. D. N. Reddy, former Professor of Economics, University of Hyderabad shared their views on the theme. These

prolific speakers not only discussed major issues but also highlighted the way forward and plan of action towards achieving a smooth path of revival and reconstruction of rural economy. This webinar was chaired and moderated by Dr. W. R. Reddy, Director General, NIRDPR, who also spoke about reorienting major rural development and Panchayati Raj institutions to bring back the rural economy to the pre-COVID period. This webinar was jointly co-ordinated by Prof. Rajendra P. Mangain (S.R.Sankaran Chair Professor) and Dr. Partha Pratim Sahu, Centre for Entrepreneurship Development & Financial Inclusion, NIRDPR.

Installing Solar Power Systems in government schools of rural Telangana to enhance learning ability of students



Smt. Radhika Rastogi, IAS, Deputy Director General, NIRDPR inaugurating solar powered lighting and cooling systems at the Primary School in Talakondapally, Ranga Reddy district

The Annual Status of Education Report (ASER Rural) – 2018 calls for introducing proactive steps to improve status of education in rural schools of India. According to the study, enrolment of students in rural schools has been above 96 per cent since 2010. However, low attendance rates of 60 per cent, especially in schools in States, like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Manipur is still a major concern. Also, learning level tests result shows that only a quarter of the students who appeared for the test cleared it.

Over the years, it has been established that it is important to ensure availability of basic amenities in schools for improving the overall learning ability of children, rather than merely improving quality of teaching. Although many of these initiatives are being taken up to address this issue, provision of electricity for ensuring lights and fans in

classrooms has not been given adequate attention.

Contrary to the most commonly used phrase “let there be light” which reinforces the realisation of better knowledge and wisdom, schools in most parts of India are reeling under darkness. As a result, children as well as the teachers stay in very uncomfortable classroom environment in summer season due to the hot weather as there are no fans installed in the classrooms. In winters, due to the lack of lighting facility when the opaque wooden window shutters have to be closed due to cold weather conditions.

The State-wise data of electrification for primary and secondary level schools across India prepared by the District Information System for Education (DISE) for 2016-17 gives credence to this issue. According to the data, the percentage of schools with access to electricity in India in

the primary and secondary school categories was about 64.4 per cent and 91 per cent, respectively.

Considering these issues and with encouragement of Late T. L. Sankar, IAS, the Former Energy Secretary, GoI, (Padma Bhushan awardee), the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) promoted solar installation for lighting and cooling purposes in 26 schools of Talakondapally mandal, Mahaboobnagar district and Kadthal mandal, Ranga Reddy district, Telangana State. This initiative was funded by Shri Malli. Varanashi, an NRI based in the USA.

Although the 26 schools were connected to grid, the situation was that only office rooms had lights and fans. Due to lack of funds some schools were not paying electricity charges which ranged from Rs.5,000- Rs.10,000 per year. Considering these factors, with the help of the State Education Department,

solar power systems ranging from 0.3KW to 2KW capacities were installed in anganwadis and primary schools.

In order to meet the power requirements, roof-top solar panels have been connected to a battery system and an inverter in these schools. All the classrooms in these 26 schools have been provided with two lights and fans. After learning the benefits, a few schools have totally disconnected from the regular grid electricity connection and are managing their power needs with the solar power system.

Children, who are predominantly from poor families, are overjoyed to see lights and fans in their classrooms. Students in schools which have smart board facility informed that they can use the smart boards without any

interruptions. This initiative has also given an opportunity for the children to realise the potential of solar energy.

Although solar energy installation requires higher level of initial investments, the overall advantage it offers is immense. At present, the off-grid solar systems of 1KW and 2KW capacities consisting of batteries, wiring, lights and fans would approximately cost about Rs.1,50,000 and Rs. 3,00,000, respectively, per school. On an average, 1KW and 2KW systems can provide power to 10 classrooms and 20 classrooms, respectively.

For supporting the repair and maintenance of solar systems, a central core team with required skills can be created at the district level to ensure trouble-free maintenance in schools. In addition, creating a school or district level corpus fund from the amount being spent for paying electricity

bills can be reserved for meeting the cost of replacement of batteries and solar panels. On an average, batteries need replacement after five years and solar panels have a long life span of 20 years.

This initiative stands as an example of how government can ensure proper learning environment in schools. Apart from the government, donors and corporate social responsibility initiatives of companies can consider replicating this initiative. NIRDPR is willing to offer the much needed technical assistance to promote this noble initiative.

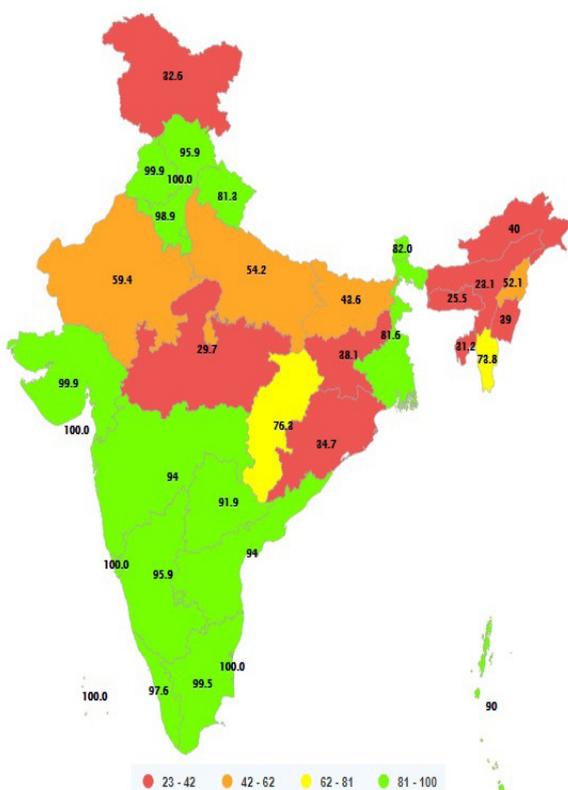
Dr. Ramesh Sakthivel

Associate Professor and Head (I/C)

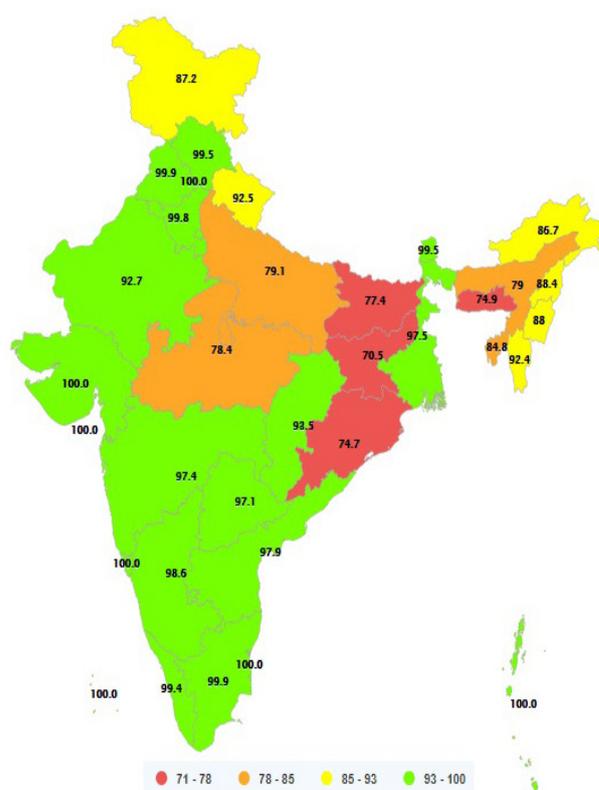
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Elementary Schools



Secondary Schools

State wise percentage of schools electrified till 2016-17 in India

Fifteenth Finance Commission and Grants to Panchayati Raj Institutions



A file photo of villagers fetching water for household purposes. The basic grants provided by the Finance Commission can be used by the local bodies for location-specific felt needs like supply of drinking water, sanitation, rainwater harvesting, etc.

The Fifteenth Finance Commission (FC-XV) was constituted by the President of India under Article 280 of the Constitution on 27th November, 2017. The prime assignment of the Commission is to make recommendations for five-years commencing from 1st April, 2020. The commission submitted its interim report for a period of one year 2020-2021 in February. The final report for the period of five years 2021-2026 is expected to be submitted in October 2020. The primary role of the Finance Commission is to give recommendations on the distribution of taxes collected by the Centre and shared between the Union government and State governments. Only after the introduction of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act which tells about the creation of three-tier Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), Finance Commission has considered sharing the Centre's revenue with the Panchayats also. From the recommendations of the Tenth Finance Commission onwards, the Grant- in-aid has been given to the Panchayats from the Centre.

The table 1 briefs us about the grant given by the Finance Commission to the Panchayats over a period of time:

The FC-XV, in its interim report, has recommended a sum of Rs. 60,750 crore to PRIs for the year 2020-21. All the tiers in the Panchayats – village, block and district including 5th and 6th Schedule Areas shall receive the grants. This will enable pooling of resources across villages and blocks to create durable community assets and improve their functional capability. The distribution of grants for local bodies among the States is based on population and area in the ratio of 90:10. The inter se distribution among the PRIs by the States shall be done in conformity with the following bands:

- 70 to 85 per cent for Gram Panchayats
- 10 to 25 per cent for Block Panchayats
- 5 to 15 per cent for District Panchayats

In Goa, Sikkim and Manipur, which have a two-tier system, the allocation

will be in the bands of 70-85 per cent to Gram Panchayats and 15-30 per cent to District Panchayats. Once the State-level grants are earmarked for each tier, the intra-tier distribution among local-bodies across the State should be on the basis of population and area in the ratio of 90:10 or as per the accepted recommendations of the latest SFC.

Utilisation of Grants: The grants for rural local-bodies and for 5th and 6th Schedule Areas shall be distributed as basic and tied grants in the ratio of 50:50. The basic grants are untied and can be used by the local bodies for location-specific felt needs, except for salary or other establishment expenditure. The tied grants can be used for the basic services such as:

- a) Supply of drinking water
- b) Sanitation and solid and liquid waste management
- c) Maintenance of open-defecation free status
- d) Rainwater harvesting and
- e) Water recycling.

The PRIs shall, as far as possible,

Table 1: Finance Commission Grant to Panchayats since 1995

CFC(Award Period)	Basic Grants	Performance Grant	Total Rs in crores
10 th - 1995-2000	4,380.93	0.00	4,380.93
11 th -2000-2005	7,323.45	0.00	7,323.45
12 th -2005-2010	20,000.00	0.00	20,000.00
13 th -2010-2015	41,224.60	21,825.85	63,050.45
14 th - 2015-2020	1,80,262.98	20,029.22	2,00,292.20
15 th - 2020-21 (For One year)	60,750.00	0.00	60,750.00

earmark one-half of these tied grants each to these two critical services, i.e., for sanitation and drinking water. However, if any local body has fully saturated the needs of one category, it can utilise the funds for the other category. The tied grants should be treated as additional money over and above the funds allocated by the Centre and State governments towards Centrally sponsored scheme such as Swachh Bharat Abhiyan and Jal Jeevan Mission. However, if any local body has fully saturated the needs of one category, it can utilise the funds for the other category. States will come up with detailed guidelines for utilisation of FC-XV grants.

Release of Grants: Grants to all PRIs will be released in two equal installments in June 2020 and October 2020. The States shall transfer grants to respective local bodies within 10 working days of receipt from the Union government. Any delay beyond 10 working days will require the State governments to release the same with interest as per the effective rate of interest on market borrowings by the State for the previous year.

Other Non-Financial Recommendations: The following are the non-financial recommendations of the FC-XV:

- The PRIs to transit to an upgraded accounting code structure in PRIASoft from the current four-level to the six-level structure followed at Central and State governments
- The PRIASoft needs to be integrated with Integrated

Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) of the State governments and the Public Financial Management System (PFMS) of the Controller General of Accounts (CGA)

- Generate online accounts by each rural local-body. Enable online auditing of such accounts and their consolidation at the State and all-India level.

Responsibilities of Panchayats for effective planning and utilisation of FC-XV funds:

To ensure effective utilisation of FC-XV grants, the Gram Panchayats have to amend their Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) which was already prepared for 2020-21 to ensure that 50 per cent funds are strictly allocated for water supply and sanitation. For this, the Panchayats need to:

- Encourage adoption of safe sanitation
- Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) and hygiene practices by the community
- Adopt solutions for waste management primarily segregation of all types of waste in the village
- Maintain, upgrade and repair sanitation facilities through community-led action
- Take responsibility of operations and maintenance (O&M) of water supply schemes
- Encourage community ownership in managing and maintaining water and sanitation facilities
- Take steps for water conservation

including augmentation of water sources.

Illustrative list of activities which the Panchayats can take up under FC-XV:

To provide location-specific felt needs from untied grants, the following activities may be carried out by the Gram Panchayats:

- Construction of internal roads/drains/community halls/community workshed /storm water drainages, etc
- Maintenance of roads/footpaths/community assets/parks/parking places, etc.
- Street-lighting
- Burial and cremation grounds
- Market shed/marketing facility
- Any other felt need as identified in Gram Sabha.

To providing basic Services from tied grants, the following activities may be taken up by the Gram Panchayat:

Drinking Water

- Planning and implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission
- Drinking water source development/augmentation of existing sources
- In-village water tap water connection to every household (55lpcd)/schools /ICDS
- Raise 10 per cent public contribution for capital cost
- Maintenance of piped water supply schemes and raise the service level
- Use of technological intervention for treatment to make water potable
- Geotag all water supply assets
- Activate VWHSC.

Table 2: Grants in aid for Rural Local Bodies as per FC-XV Recommendation (2020-2021) across States

State	Revenue deficit grants	Grants to rural local bodies	State's share in grants for rural local bodies
Andhra Pradesh	5,897	2,625	4.32
Arunachal Pradesh	-	231	0.38
Assam	7,579	1,604	2.64
Bihar	-	5,018	8.26
Chhattisgarh	-	1,454	2.39
Goa	-	75	0.12
Gujarat	-	3,195	5.26
Haryana	-	1,264	2.08
Himachal Pradesh	11,431	429	0.71
Jharkhand	-	1,689	2.78
Karnataka	-	3,217	5.29
Kerala	15,323	1,628	2.68
Madhya Pradesh	-	3,984	6.56
Maharashtra	-	5,827	9.59
Manipur	2,824	177	0.29
Meghalaya	491	182	0.3
Mizoram	1,422	93	0.15
Nagaland	3,917	125	0.21
Odisha	-	2,258	3.72
Punjab	7,659	1,388	2.29
Rajasthan	-	3,862	6.36
Sikkim	448	42	0.07
Tamil Nadu	4,025	3,607	5.94
Telangana	-	1,847	3.04
Tripura	3,236	191	0.31
Uttar Pradesh	-	9,752	16.05
Uttarakhand	5,076	574	0.95
West Bengal	5,013	4,412	7.26
Total	74,341	60,750	100

Sources: Report for the year 2020-21, 15th Finance Commission; PRS.

Rainwater Harvesting and Water Recycling

1. Plan for reuse and recycling of water
2. Reclaim and revitalise traditional water harvesting structures
3. Construction and maintenance of :
 - a) Rainwater harvesting structure
 - b) Permanent storage structures for collection of rainwater
 - c) Farm ponds for collection of runoff water for supplemental irrigation
 - d) Percolation tanks at appropriate sites for augmentation of rainwater
 - e) Ponds and rejuvenation of water bodies.

Sanitation and ODF status

1. Implement SBM (G)
2. Identify households without toilets and facilitate construction of toilets
3. Promote hygiene education/toilet use and maintenance
4. Create facilities for SLWM
5. ODF status verification in Gram Sabha
6. Community engagement for ODF sustainability
7. Sweeping of streets/public places/litter bins/plastic ban
8. Solid waste and greywater management in the villages.

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Picture credits: Dr. Surjit Vikraman
Associate Prof., CAS, NIRDPR

For Devnath Bhati, entrepreneurship means 'never ever give up'



Devnath Bhati's cotton ginning unit at Jodhpur district, Rajasthan; (inset) Devnath Bhati -

Unemployed youth in India today are frantically running from pillar to post in search of employment opportunities. Not very long ago, Devnath Bhati, a 24-year-old educated but unemployed youth from Asop village, Bhopalgarh tehsil, Jodhpur district, Rajasthan, was also one of them.

Floundering from his childhood, Devnath always had to face financial crunch due to the low income of his father despite which children's education was something his family never compromised on. After completing his graduation (B.A.), Devnath had to go through a long phase of unemployment. When he was on the verge of losing all hopes, ICICI RSETI team came to his village to conduct an Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP). He considers himself fortunate to have attended the awareness programme. This programme gave him an insight on the various free skill training programmes conducted by MoRD through RSETIs situated in various districts all over the country.

With high hopes for a better future, Devnath decided to enrol himself in the 'Cotton Ginning and Fitting' skill training programme (training batch number 155, from 15th November 2013 to 15th December 2013), conducted at ICICI Jodhpur RSETI.

According to Devnath, the skill training provided at ICICI RSETI was very useful and effective. In addition to theoretical knowledge, he received hands-on training on ginning machinery. He also

gained insight into various entrepreneurial and behavioural soft skills which helped his transformation into an aspiring entrepreneur.

After completing his training, he decided to gain some experience before starting off on his own and so, he worked for a contractor for six months with minimum wages. Gradually, the entrepreneur inside him gained the confidence to launch his own venture. With guidance from ICICI Jodhpur RSETI, he applied for a loan under PMEGP (Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme). He was sanctioned an amount of Rs. 25,00,000 by Dena Bank-Asop branch, Jodhpur district. He added his family's savings of Rs. 2,50,000 to the loan amount and started his own small enterprise in 2014. Since the work of cotton ginning is a seasonal trade, he had to struggle a lot initially, but with utmost diligence and determination to sustain and grow, he finally carved his niche.

Today, Devnath is a happy and successful entrepreneur with a monthly turnover of Rs. 1,75,000. He has employed eight people to help him in his activities. He is ambitious and has plans for future expansion, one of which is to install a pressing machine in his factory in the near future which could provide employment opportunities to a few more people and thus providing livelihood to more families in his village.

Devnath is grateful to the Ministry of Rural Development for providing free skill training to the rural unemployed youth through RSETIs situated in various districts all

over the country.

Devnath happily shares that he enjoyed his training at ICICI Jodhpur RSETI which is a state-of-the-art training centre in the country with good ambience and good training facilities. As ICICI RSETI Jodhpur has bagged the IGBC rated 'Net Zero Energy – Platinum' award, he is feeling proud to have undergone his skill training in an award-winning training campus.

When asked about the secret of his success, Devnath Bhati wittily chuckles and says, "I have a magic wand of skill in my hands. And that's the key to my success."

RSETI Project Centre at NIRDPR is the implementing agency for MoRD's infrastructure grant aid policy for construction of RSETI buildings, constructed by RSETIs sponsor banks with the help of grant aid from Ministry of Rural Development. RSETI Project Centre at NIRDPR is proud of the state-of-the-art buildings like ICICI RSETI Jodhpur where skill training programmes are being provided free of cost to rural unemployed youth for enabling entrepreneurship ventures to solve India's major economic issues like poverty and unemployment.

Ms. P. Champakavali

Project Director

Mr. Mohammed Khan

Project Manager

RESTI Project, NIRDPR

CAPART merges with NIRDPR, Hyderabad; becomes NIRDPR-Delhi branch



NIRDPR entrance at Hyderabad (left) and Career Guidance Centre, Vaishali, Bihar (right)

The Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), New Delhi has been merged with National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad. The merger has come into effect from 1st May, 2020. The merger of CAPART with NIRDPR was approved by the Union Cabinet in October 2019. Post-merger, the erstwhile CAPART,

are going to function in accordance with the procedures of NIRDPR. The CGC, Vaishali, Bihar will retain the same name and the contact point for the CGC, Vaishali will be the Head, Centre for Innovation and Application of Technologies (CIAT), NIRDPR, Hyderabad. All the existing e-files of erstwhile CAPART will be migrated to NIRDPR e-office.

-CDC Initiatives

OIGS

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