

# **Towards an Institutional Approach for Inclusive and Equitable Rural and Agricultural Development of Gujarat**

**Munish Alagh**



S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour)  
**National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj**  
Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India  
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030, India  
[www.nirdpr.org.in](http://www.nirdpr.org.in)



## About NIRDPR

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) continuously strives to serve the nation through research, training, action research and consultancy activities for development of the rural poor and enhance their quality of life. It aims to:

1. Organise training programmes, conferences, seminars and workshops for senior-level development managers, elected representatives, bankers, NGOs and other stakeholders;
2. Undertake, aid, promote and coordinate research on its own and/or collaborate with State, national and international development agencies;
3. Analyse and offer solutions to problems encountered in the planning and implementation of the programmes for rural development, decentralised governance, panchayati raj and related programmes;
4. Study the functioning of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and rural development programmes across the States;
5. Analyse and propose solutions to problems in planning and implementation of the programmes for rural development; and
6. Develop content and disseminate information and transfer technology through periodicals, reports, e-modules and other publications.

Considering the challenges faced by the government in the development of a large section of rural poor across the country through its various policies and programmes, NIRDPR as an apex training institute in the field of rural development, has to cater to the training and capacity development needs of a larger clientele. To achieve these objectives, a nationwide network of training infrastructure has to play its rightful role. The clientele includes a large number of elected PRI representatives at different levels, rural development functionaries, NGOs, bankers and other stakeholders. Capacity building of rural development personnel and elected representatives is an intrinsic part of the entire rural development process. It helps to improve their managerial skills while keeping them abreast with the latest changes in strategies, government policies and programmes to augment their knowledge and working efficiency, resulting in strengthening of the delivery mechanism for the benefit of all the stakeholders. The challenge is huge and NIRDPR has been able to play its role in the country's rural development initiatives by facilitating qualitative changes in the implementation of programmes through a process of training, research, action research, consultancy, information dissemination and information building on a continual basis. This has enabled the Institute to emerge as the National Apex Institute for capacity development in the area of rural development.

In its continuous effort to develop managerial skills of functionaries in the rural development process, the Institute offers two regular fully residential diploma programmes – one-year Post Graduate Diploma in Rural Development Management (PGDRDM) and two-year Post Graduate Diploma in Management (Rural Development). Further, it offers M.Tech Programme on Appropriate Technology & Entrepreneurship (ATE) and three distance mode programmes - Post Graduate Diploma in Sustainable Rural Development (PGDSRD), Post Graduate Diploma in Tribal Development Management (PGDTDM) and Post Graduate Diploma in Geo-Spatial and Technological Applications in Rural Development (PGDGARD). The Institute is also offering one-year Diploma Programme on Panchayati Raj Governance & Rural Development (DP-PRGRD) in association with the University of Hyderabad through distance mode.

# **Towards an Institutional Approach for Inclusive and Equitable Rural and Agricultural Development of Gujarat**

**Munish Alagh**



**S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour)**  
**National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj**

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India

Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030

[www.nirdpr.org.in](http://www.nirdpr.org.in)

**April 2021**

---

# **Towards an Institutional Approach for Inclusive and Equitable Rural and Agricultural Development of Gujarat**

**Munish Alagh<sup>1</sup>**

## **1. Introduction**

The basic premise of this paper is to identify the challenges to be addressed in transforming high growth Gujarat agriculture into market-friendly and equitable agriculture. It offers solutions through the prism of institutional framework. In this context, firstly, an attempt has been made to develop a narrative of the present status of agriculture in Gujarat after a brief literature review. Secondly, the challenges to be addressed are identified to transform a rural system dependent largely on the inherent strength of the stable yet unchanging village hierarchy and the hardiness and practicality of the farmer here; yet, it is constrained by these very same factors to deal with uncertainty. Thirdly, the possible solutions are developed from the institutional framework of State Agricultural Universities, which already exists in the State. To this effect, some field case studies carried out by the author from 2011 to 2017 are described as an illustration of the problematique and possible solutions.

## **2. Brief Literature Review**

The available literature underscores the need to enlarge the scope of the Klein/Tinbergenistic approach (Alagh, 2004) and make it more in tune with the frontiers of knowledge in economic theory which has embraced institutions in its fold. There are other features of working towards a balanced agriculture development model which ensures equity as well as promotes efficiency.

This view is articulated by dominant authors such as Easterly (2001) and is given weight by Mellor (1982). He built up his thesis with regard to creating a pull factor towards such type of combination of push and pull factors towards agglomerations resulting as an outcome of the synergy induced by rural progress

---

<sup>1</sup>Sardar Patel Institute of Economic and Social Research, Ahmedabad, India.

*The views expressed are of author's own.*



feeding into urban areas. Schultz (1964) has elaborated the idea that extension mechanisms are successful with farmers even in backward, less prosperous areas.

Yet, all the above is constrained by the political and social elite in a society and is generally biased to its own interests (Acemoglu et al., 2005). North (1992) focusses on institutions in society. Endogenous growth theorists like Romer (1986), and Barro and Martin (1995) describe the necessary conditions like skills of the workforce, efficiencies of economic activities, innovations of knowledge systems and learning and experience effects of skilled stakeholders that create stable and sustainable growth.

### **3. Status of Agriculture in Gujarat**

The growth of agricultural sector had increased at a higher rate in Gujarat during 2001-02 to 2010-11 than in India. The achievement of staple crops like wheat in terms of yield between 2002-07 and commercial crops (including horticulture) in the State has been influenced by the massive growth of the net irrigated area, gross irrigated area, and increased gross irrigated area to gross cropped area. It merits mention here that the agricultural development of Gujarat has increased substantially after the 2000s. This could be possible due to effective agricultural policy of the State relating to irrigation, electrification, research, extension, subsidies and fertiliser consumption, etc. Specific plans in this regard include the Krishi Mahotsav campaign for research and extension support, soil health card facilities for soil conservation, Jyotigram Yojana to provide 24/7 electricity, Sardar Sarovar Project for the construction of major and medium canal irrigation, management of groundwater irrigation under Sardar Patel Sahakari Jal Sanchaya Yojana and related programmes.

Other policies include programmes for horticulture development through the Gujarat Horticulture Mission, improved market access through Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees and Farmer Producer Companies (Behera, 2015). The Government of Gujarat has a dynamic water resources development department which has been estimating the irrigation potential and utilisation of surface and groundwater sources.

The sources of irrigation from surface water are major and medium irrigation canals under the Sujalam Sufalam Yojana, minor irrigation schemes and indirect benefits through percolation tanks, check dams, etc., under the Sardar Sarovar Project (SSP) Yojana which aims to reach the last and marginal farmers. Unfortunately, the results vary depending on how the bureaucracy is motivated in handling these

issues, and so more effective channels of communication between the government and the farmers must be put into action.

It was in 2003 that the Government of Gujarat implemented the Jyotigram Scheme, aimed at to provide 24/7 power supply. But the implementation of this scheme was depended on an effective rationing system. Now, this scheme is providing three phases of full voltage power supply for agriculture and farmers among 18,000 odd villages across Gujarat (Shah et al., 2009).

Some researchers have attributed the variation in the growth rate of agriculture to the fact that Gujarat does not have perennial rivers and lacks sufficient rainfall. There are some good rainfall years and particularly due to the Sardar Sarovar Basin, the surplus water from Narmada distributaries has found its way to the fields. This is contributing to the growth in agriculture in the production of groundnut, wheat, cotton, dairying, fruits, vegetables and sugarcane.

The import of water from Sardar Sarovar reservoir through canals under SSP in the very recent years has boosted the agricultural production at least in a few districts of South (Bharuch, Baroda and Narmada districts) and North Gujarat (Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar). There is no doubt that the initiative of the State government to promote micro-irrigation systems has had significant results. While groundwater is critical in agriculturally prosperous semi-arid and arid regions, the depletion due to its unsustainable use is now posing a threat. To overcome the groundwater crisis, the Gujarat government launched a massive programme of decentralised groundwater deficits that can be filled through water imports, like what has been done in the case of the Sardar Sarovar Project.

Gujarat is well established in India in the production of fruits, vegetables and spices. These are high-value crops and the demand for these crops is now increasing in the world market. This type of crop plantation will bring fast agriculture development. But again, the scale and scope of existing horticulture development programmes do not measure to that much in the State. These programmes though help to reduce rural poverty but generally focus on already sustainable farmers. This undermines the benefits of such programmes on improving income levels of other farmers.

The growth trajectory of agriculture in Gujarat has been particularly with regard to higher production of cotton and wheat after the Sardar Sarovar Project. It has also been influenced by some exogenous factors, i.e. increased gross cropped and net irrigated area, increase in fertiliser consumption and more use



of modern agricultural implements, etc. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has provided subsistence employment to the rural landless agriculture labourers and manual workers and improved economic outcomes resulting reduction in distress migration. More use of tractors for ploughing and electric pump for groundwater irrigation effectively influenced agricultural production and productivity.

#### 4. Challenges

In spite of major strides in irrigation through the Sardar Sarovar Project, Gujarat is still a water scarcity State. More than 80 per cent of the State is affected by arid and semi-arid conditions. The meagre and erratic rainfall, depleting groundwater resources especially in North Gujarat and Kutch, waterlogging and secondary salination in South and Middle Gujarat along with poor irrigation efficiency cry for the revival of participatory water management institutions for better use of water and an efficient method of irrigation. Similar innovative institutional initiatives are needed in the marketing of agricultural produce, especially expanding horticultural production with greater participation by small-marginal farmers (IIM, 2018).

Water harvesting and farm field irrigation, which otherwise is an innovative concept capable of generating a lot of social and economic benefits in water-rich regions (Ilyas, 1999), does not work in these naturally water-scarce regions with less moisture-absorbing soils like Saurashtra. Some scholars in the recent past had argued for the transfer of surplus water from the Narmada for recharging the alluvial aquifers in North Gujarat, using gravity recharge by spreading water in the fields, and the initial analysis had shown that this is economically viable. But, pricing this water is very crucial. Expanding the government extension mechanisms in areas where the soil and weather conditions are difficult and combining with concerted and focused action towards a regionally well spread out and intensive input supply and extension arrangement are needed.

The State government should plan for further changes in investment and technology only after looking at the needs for the investment required to deal with the uncertainty concurrently prevalent in rural Gujarat. When agricultural trade is privately handled, a quick advance towards commercialisation is *de-rigueur* in the plan for rural transformation. But ignoring traditional agriculture could prove costly. The fact that a new epoch in agricultural growth has not been seen post-liberalisation, whereas the Green revolution technology's impact has ebbed out is well documented (Chand, 2008). A major conclusion of

research by this author on Gujarat Agriculture's Marketed Surplus (Alagh, 2014) was that agricultural trade was mostly privately handled and this is a severe limitation in Gujarat's rural transformation.

In brief, the story of agriculture growth of Gujarat says much about the already existing targeted extension machinery of the State Government and recently, the well-directed large projects which the government needs to effectively monitor. These focused areas include cropping and irrigation intensity, fertiliser and electricity consumption and uses of modern agricultural implements, etc., and it makes for an agricultural miracle. If across the board collective community is enabled to join into this process, then an era of universally good measures is on the way.

The hope is that the combining of sustainability and efficiency as one goal is swift and alternate paths and mechanisms for positive feedback which creates a truly modern yet rooted world. Much literature for such situations (Nadkarni, 1988) suggests a quick transformation by commercialisation. But the danger is that the paradigm shift that we are talking about involves corporatisation (Pal et al., 2008). Organisational forms of the new agriculture are important for this transformation, this will involve thinking in collectives and as groups (Agarwal, 2010). Singh's (2012) extensive research of new forms of organisations addressing value addition across the value chain is worth to emulate for policy actions.

The transformation involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants and the landless. Nowadays, however, rural development is used in a more holistic way, taking into account the industrialization and tertiarisation of rural spaces, infrastructure, markets, and the social and economic well-being of rural poor. So, there needs to be a liberal economy and capitalist globalisation connotation of the concept of rural development, yet not ignoring small farmers. These alternate mechanisms include the complex policy option of making rural areas the focus of diversified enterprise (Birthal, et al., 2007).

## 5. Field Studies

In areas where soil, water or rainfall conditions are poor, one hardly finds extension services. One such area where extension seems to be missing is the Panchmahal district. For rural institutions to function well across the board, the necessary condition is for minimum sustainability of a rural stakeholder. More of enthusiasm for protecting institutions irrespective of politics needs to be there, this is a matter of culture, not agriculture.



Here, the monsoon is erratic and long dry spell is common even in the rainy season in districts like Panchmahal. The average rainfall varies from 700 mm to 800 mm. I interviewed Hasmukh Parmar from Derol village of Kalol taluk in Panchmahal district, who is a large farmer owning 40 bighas of land (One hectare = approximately 6 bighas in Gujarat). The farmer faces problems at the time of irrigation like lack of power connection for the tube well. The SSP water though flowing through this area is not reaching the village as it is uphill from the canal distributary. There is much publicity, he said, for very little work been done by extension offices. Yes, seeds and fertilisers are provided by government agencies, but other problems like wild pigs and nilgais eating the crop remain. The cost of “getting things done” increases depending on how big is the requirement.

The price of agricultural labour has increased by four times due to the nearby factory. The sale of the crop was dominated by the trader, unlike in Bavla and Unjha which had well-functioning APMCs. Though there is storage godown in the APMC registered in the name of the local trader, it often acts as a government intermediary, something that should not have been happening. It has been due to lack of needed checks and balances. Digital India, the farmer felt, had made things complicated as bureaucracy had set in deeper in terms of intermediaries to fill up e-applications for the illiterate farmers.

Based on the field level discussions, it is observed that the Farm Bills will work in Gujarat if arrangements like global alliances with McCain potato contract farming in Mahesana and proposed reform of APMCs take place. But small cultivators are not secure regarding the security of their produce and hence, keeping them loyal to the farm institutions in the Farm bills by the Government of India becomes difficult. For instance, a small farmer as a potato contract farmer will be challenged by the urge to sell in the open market rather than meet the exacting quality conditions, such as shape and size of the potato. If the cooperative for small farmers is able to ensure that his problems, including sale and delivery communications with contract agency are heard regularly, he will stick it out. Specifically, as labour is fixed in number, delay happens in produce ready for sale and processing organizations’ requirements which are often tight.

Agents deny taking the harvested product in time and delay the procurement procedure in low rainfall years. As a result, produce is not accepted for processing purpose. When this happens, agents bargain to procure at a lower price and farmers had no choice at that instant and sell them at a price that was much

lower than the pre-agreed price between them and the organisation. Yet another issues arise when farmers assume that cost of production in contract farming is quite high. In Gujarat, the tripartite system of contract farming exists where APMCs act as the facilitators.

## 6. Viability of this Model: Role of Institutions

Let us assume that the decision-maker is a State who is idealist by nature and is motivated by equity considerations. His desire is to create maximum welfare opportunities for the smallest player in the game. The actual intent of the public by large desires an outcome of benefit to the larger number.

In a State like Gujarat where the nature of rural employment is based on the nature of the farmer as an innovator and as an enterprising risk-taker within constraints, as is the Gujarati traits further success beyond sustenance, through Sardar Sarovar, can only be achieved through a degree of interlinking and networking with the help of others regarding behaviour, trust and reciprocity among farming institutions and stakeholders of the rural economy, including farm cultivators and non-farm workers.

### 6.1 Modification of Production Structures and Institutions

A dual approach of taking traditional farming along is possible if alternative organisational forms of rural communities like Pani-Panchayats, Self-Help Groups, Village Cooperative Credit Societies, Producer Companies, etc., are given a boost. An approach that focusses explicitly on how to create synergy among farmers and develop linkages through institutions is a sure recipe for success. If we see various rural organisations across the landscape of Gujarat as working towards the same objective and plan for further changes in investment and technology only after looking at the needs for the investment required to deal with the uncertainty concurrently prevalent in Gujarat's rural scenario. When agricultural trade is privately handled a quick advance towards commercialisation is *de-rigueur* in the plan for rural transformation. But ignoring conventional agriculture is not an option; modernisation of staple farm fields can have a significant positive effect on the marketed surplus ratio. This means that the more modern agriculture the more it induces them to sell proportionate higher amounts of crop in the market. These would be farms taking advantage of modern technology in agriculture and have larger surpluses to sell.

For modifications of institutions the bureaucracy need to be active and political will for action to be strong. Since solution to problems will only be long term, this does not generally interest the political



leaders. All the advantages of irrigated areas like Anand and Kheda where the farmers are relatively better off are missing in dry and semi-arid regions. In these areas the common problems like the moneylender/trader trap and the inadequate solutions to the problem of conditions for crop sale tended to become worse.

If mutual trust between particular individuals were thus elevated to a moral code in society, large savings would be realised in transactions costs. The transaction costs include the costs of contract negotiation and enforcement concerning transactions. If one can trust the other party in a contract, there is little reason to worry about possible default (Hayami, page 246, 1997). The consumer will be better off. As a member of the cooperative here he will be able to get more utility due to access to the modern financial system of credit.

## ***6.2 Non-Farm Economy Reform***

To illustrate required institutional reforms for prompting non-farm economy, Hearty Mart Enterprise is an example worth to mention (Alagh M, 2017). It is a Community for promoting non form economy Retail Super Market Business network set up by Nadeem Jafri, the cousin of Pir Syed Mujahid Hussain Jafri, who is sect head of the Chilea community (a business-minded community from the Shia sect of Muslims, originally from North Gujarat), runs a network of around one hundred restaurants in and around Ahmedabad and various restaurants in the entire highway belt of Ahmedabad to Mumbai. Nadeem set up a Super Market Hearty Mart at Vishala Circle area of Ahmedabad in February 2004. Nadeem satisfies the latent consumer demands of the middle class, largely the Muslim community in the area of Vishala circle. Between 2004 and 2011, Hearty Mart Vishala Circle has grown into a prominent landmark in the Juhapura area.

By venturing into villages of North and Central Gujarat and setting up franchises of Hearty Mart, Nadeem provides entrepreneurial opportunities to the youth in the rural areas and now nurtures the franchising relationship and handholds their franchisees through the entire process by providing complete operations, marketing and even by educating them on acquiring best deal from other suppliers. The Hearty Mart system includes some factors such as trust, sincerity, justice, truth and magnanimity which are influenced by Islamic business, where entrepreneurship is considered as a value-based activity.

Following are select field study observations from the store franchisees:

- 1) Some stores like the one at Dholka have expanded into two-three floors, but every expansion is based on a careful reading of the market and that is the reason for success. These store franchisees are direct to the point and hard-headed businessmen.
- 2) In some stores such as the one at Ilol, there is a demand for the bottom of pyramid goods like Newport Jeans which have to be specially procured from the Ahmedabad wholesale market. The store owner's younger brother who manned the store seemed impatient at such requests.
- 3) Jethipura, a Gandhian cooperative store influenced by Gandhian and Islamic philosophies, stores goods of everyday use in its small cooperative store. The village has a very active Gandhian cooperative though the population of the village is largely Muslim and especially the youth are urban in approach, the store is more focused on fair dealing.
- 4) Nadeem, as a franchisor, defines his business model as one based on principles of approachability in daily life. He is a cosmopolitan and approachable as a businessman and a person; he encourages those people to buy a franchise who are willing to have patience and work their way towards viability.
- 5) The smaller stores, which are in the form of provision or medical stores as compared to the larger supermarkets, have achieved great success due to the organisation and systemic dealing of accounts and inventories. They switched from the kirana store to modern organised over-the-counter stores, but with better organisation of inventory and accounts in keeping with Hearty Mart philosophy.
- 6) In Nutan store in Jethipura near Idar, Sabarkantha district, the store franchisee described how he provided modern convenience items like Garnier Beauty Solutions Pack to a middle-aged lady staying in the flats nearby (Idar is a small town, adjacent to Jethipura village) and this helped the lady run her business of a beauty salon without hassles even in less urbanised settings.
- 7) Other franchisees told us how they struggle to market with minimum noise their packed goods versus the cheaper and handier 100 gram polythene packets of edible oil or dal sold by nearby kirana stores.
- 8) Some franchisees spoke of how the villagers had to be trained to shop with a cart, trolley or a basket and pay at the counter. They also spoke of how customers had gradually albeit hesitatingly making demands more clear for specific commodities.
- 9) Store owners spoke of how the distribution and training provided by the central store had helped

them become viable.

## 7. Conclusion

In Gujarat as in India, area, farm acreage growth and public investment as well as support schemes have run their course. The new Agricultural Policy of 2000 needs to show its effects in faster and more equitable growth. Diversified farm and non-farm enterprises will work in Gujarat if effective credit cooperatives, rural commercial banks, rural retail, rural colleges, roads, storage godowns and mandis are streamlined and supported. Small business stores not just restricted to kirana stores, but rural supermarkets in some areas, local milk dairies, tailoring shops, commercial banks, small papad or other cottage industries are seen in Gujarati villages as an extension of urban culture. As information steps up, the NGOs and trusts need to think synergistically. The spread has to be faster.

Horticultural projects, online APMCs, micro-irrigation, technology in seeds, fertilisers and pesticides --all will work provided the Government machinery does encourage to not just enforce its will, but becomes a more effective facilitator.

Success breeds many progenies, so if policy academics and other rural stakeholders join hands, change can be on the horizon. As some studies (Mellor, 1963) show with state-of-the-art community organisations and effective welfare organisations, the rural economy can create a pull factor and be complementary to the urban economy, economists call it a 'Rural-Urban Continuum' (Alagh Y, 2011). Ultimately, an academic can only go so far and pass the baton to policymakers. To what avail this effort only time will tell.

Top-down arrangements including contracts and modern enterprise will work if the rural stakeholder is empowered by knowledge and his business is supported, at least by the government bureaucracy over time if not immediately.



## References

- Acemoglu, D., Johnson, S., & Robinson, J. A. (2005). Institutions as a fundamental cause of long-run growth. *Handbook of Economic Growth*, 1, 385-472.
- Alagh, Y. K. (2004). Policy without Theory: India in a Globalising Economy. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 1748-1753.
- Alagh, Y. K. (2011). Agriculture in a Rural-Urban Continuum. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 66(902-2016-67897).
- Acemoglu, D. (2012). Introduction to economic growth. *Journal of Economic Theory*, 147(2), 545-550.
- Alagh, M. (2014). Assessment of marketed and marketable surplus of major foodgrains in Gujarat. *Indian Journal of Agricultural Marketing*, 28(2), 60-80.
- Alagh, M. (2017) Supermarket for rural customers: A study of a community-oriented enterprise in Gujarat. *Academic Foundation*.
- Behera, D. (2015). Agricultural development and inclusive growth in India: A case study of Gujarat. *International Journal of Food, Agriculture and Veterinary Sciences*, 5(1), 41-52.
- Birthal, P. S., Joshi, P. K., Roy, D., & Thorat, A. (2007). *Diversification in Indian agriculture towards high -value crops* (Vol. 727). Intl Food Policy Res Inst.
- Barro, R.J. & Sala-i-Martin, X (1995), *Economic Growth*, MIT Press, Cambridge, Second Edition.
- Chand, R. (2008). The global food crisis: causes, severity and outlook. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 115 -122.
- Easterly, W. (2001). The lost decades: developing countries' stagnation in spite of policy reform 1980–1998. *Journal of Economic Growth*, 6(2), 135-157.
- Easterly, W. (2001). *The elusive quest for growth: economists' adventures and misadventures in the tropics*. MIT Press.
- Hayami, Y. & Platteau, J. P. (1997). *Resource endowments and agricultural development: Africa vs. Asia* (No. 192).
- Indian Institute of Management-Ahmedabad (IIM). (2018). Report on Socio-Economic Impact of the Micro Irrigation (MI) Scheme Implemented by GGRC, Ahmadabad.
- Ilyas, S. M. (1999). Water harvesting towards water demand management and sustainable development. *Journal of Rural Reconstruction*, 32(2), 31-43.
- Mellor, J. W. (1963). The use and productivity of farm family labor in early stages of agricultural development. *Journal of Farm Economics*, 45(3), 517-534. *and institutions*. Oxford University Press.
- Nadkarni, M. V. (1988). Crisis of increasing costs in agriculture: Is there a way out? *Economic and Political Weekly*, A114-A119.

- North, D. (1990). Institutions and their consequences for economic performance. *The limits of rationality*, 383-401.
- Pal, S., Joshi, P.K & Saxena, R. (2003), Institutional change in Indian agriculture, Workshop proceedings 11869, National Centre for Agricultural Economics and Policy Research (NCAP), New Delhi.
- Romer, P. M. (1986). Increasing returns and long-run growth. *Journal of Political Economy*, 94(5), 1002-1037.
- Schultz, T. W. (1964). *Transforming Traditional Agriculture*, Yale University Press, New Haven CT.
- Shah, T., Gulati, A., Shreedhar, G., & Jain, R. C. (2009). Secret of Gujarat's agrarian miracle after 2000. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 45-55.
- Singh, S. (2012). New markets for smallholders in India: Exclusion, policy and mechanisms. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 95-105.

## Shri S.R. Sankaran

S.R. Sankaran, a distinguished Civil Servant, is known for his commitments and actions for the upliftment of the poor and the marginalized. The seamless integrity between his life, ideas and work was the unique dimension of his personality. As a civil servant he took Constitution as a mandate and made every opportunity to put in practice the fundamental principles of equality, non-discrimination, justice and affirmative action in favour of the economically backward sections of the Indian society. He believed that his true vocation as a civil servant was to serve the people where the poor occupied the primacy of position. Within the poor his concern was about SCs and STs as they have been at the lowest rung of the social hierarchy, wallowing in chronic misery and deprivation and subjected to daily acts of injustice and indignity.

The transformative role that Sankaran as a civil servant played in the lives of the poor is exemplary to date. His deep understanding of the social environment of the poor is remarkable. In his view, the poor are typically unorganized, hard to reach, inarticulate and often visible by residing in periphery. Along with lack of access to land and other natural resources, lack of access to education makes them vulnerable to manipulation by adversaries leading them to internalize the ideology of dependence and submission. The conditions of poor can be compressed into five disabilities: (i) lack of access to land and employment, (ii) unfree labour, (iii) low wages, (iv) institutionalised discrimination, and (v) deprivation in social services. His work during his career and after retirement devoted to uplifting the poor by relieving them from such adversaries and organizing them. While working for the poor he had not only used his professional skills but also brought to bear on the problem of human touch and his impeccable moral values.

Sankaran was legendary civil servant, a crusader for social justice, a civil rights activist, a perceptive critic of development and public policy with extraordinary sensitivity, clarity, and above all, an epitome of compassion. A single social goal of his entire life's work was the reduction of contradiction between political and socio-economic inequality.



### **S.R.Sankaran Chair ( Rural Labour)**

S.R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour) is instituted at the National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad by the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India with the objective of promoting research and constructive debates on issues that would enhance understanding and help in improving the world of work and the lives of rural labour. Collaborative research, seminars, workshops and policy dialogues involving institutions, organizations, policy makers and other stakeholders with similar objectives, and placing the results in the larger public domain through working papers, articles in learned journals, books and policy briefs are part of the activities set out for the Chair.



S. R. Sankaran Chair (Rural Labour)  
**National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj**  
Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India  
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500 030, India  
Tel:-40-24008516  
[www.nirdpr.org.in](http://www.nirdpr.org.in)