



INDIAN INSTITUTE OF  
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

## IIPA NEWSLETTER



Vol. LV No. 11

November 2011

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### INSTITUTE NEWS

#### Election of Chairman

The Executive Council in its meeting, held on October 21, elected Shri T.N. Chaturvedi as Chairman of IIPA for a two-year term i.e. till the Annual General Body Meeting to be held in 2013 through secret ballot.

#### Election of Vice-Presidents

The Executive Council in its meeting, held on October 21, also elected Prof. R.V. Dhanapalan and Prof. N. Rajalakshmi as Vice-Presidents of the Institute for a two-year term i.e. till the Annual General Body Meeting to be held in 2013 through secret ballot.

#### Annual General Body Meeting

The Fifty-seventh Annual General Body Meeting of IIPA members was held on October 21 at IIPA auditorium. Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Chairman of IIPA, presided. Dr. Rakesh Hooja, Director of IIPA, gave the welcome address. Prof. N.P. Singh, Chairman of IIPA's Standing Committee; Prof. K.N. Srivastava and Prof. Aruna Sivakami, Vice-Presidents of IIPA; and Prof. S.L. Goel,



Shri T.N. Chaturvedi addresses the AGM

Treasurer of IIPA also shared the dais. While taking stock of the activities and achievements of the Institute, Shri Chaturvedi emphasised that we should try to be of use to the government and help them to attain the various new facets of programmes that they are unfolding before the public. Earlier, in his address Dr. Hooja highlighted the achievements of in-house faculty members and also the initiatives and innovative beginnings which the Institute has made. About 250 members attended the programme.

The Institute's Annual Report and Annual Statement of Accounts for the year 2010-11 were presented to the AGM, which were approved by the House along with the proceedings of last year's General Body Meeting and Special General Meeting.

#### Members' Annual Conference

The fifty-fifth IIPA Members' Annual Conference was held on October 22 at IIPA auditorium. The theme of the conference was "Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development since 1959".

In his welcome address, Dr. Rakesh Hooja, Director of IIPA, highlighted the significance of the theme. Owing to some unforeseen reasons, Shri V. Narayanasamy, Union Minister of State for Personnel Public Grievances and Pensions, could not be present to deliver the inaugural address. However, in his message which was read out by the Director, Shri Narayanasamy mentioned that the main objective of the Central Government is to build an inclusive society where there would be no discrimination between regions and society. He stated that our endeavour is to remove the gap between rural and urban India, between the rich and the poor, between educated and uneducated, and between strong and the weak. He complimented IIPA for implementing major training and research programmes for various ministries/

**The IIPA fraternity extends its greetings to all its readers for Idu'l Zuha and Guru Nanak's Birthday**

departments. He assured that the DoPT would consider extending support for mutually agreed plan activities and works of IIPA as a part of the government's upcoming 12th Five Year Plan. Dr. V.N. Alok, Associate Professor of Urban Finance, presented the theme paper. Discussing the establishment of panchayati raj institutions, he observed that though much remains to be achieved, it is generally recognised that almost all the states today have put in place significant changes aimed to achieve decentralised democracy in general and people's participation as sub set of decentralised democracy in particular. He expressed that India's long-term success of its panchayats in delivering the outcomes for rural development including greater incomes, reduction of poverty, access to local public goods services that include sanitation, drinking water, healthcare, education, safety and security, rural roads, gender empowerment, green environments, etc.

Besides the discussion paper, 14 selected papers on the theme were also presented by: Dr. Binda Kumari, Bihar; Dr. Nittam Chandel, Bilaspur; Prof. Bishnu Charan Choudhuri, Orissa; Shri T.N. Dhar, Lucknow; Dr. Rakesh Hooja, New Delhi; Dr. Murari Mohan Jha, Bihar; Dr. P. Lakshminarayanan, Nagpur; Dr. Bijoyini Mohanty, Orissa; Dr. Anil Kumar Ojha, Bihar; Dr. S.K. Pachauri, Noida; Prof. S.A. Palekar, Karnataka; Dr. A.N. Panda, Orissa; Shri Durga Charan Samal, Cuttack; and Dr. Johani Xaxa. In addition, 27 synopses of the paper on the theme by the following were presented: Dr. Arvind Adityaraj, Patna; Dr. Md. Mushfique Alam, Bhagalpur; Shri M. Amanullakhan, Madurai; Dr. Arun Kumar, Rampur; Dr. Punya Baruah, Jorhat; Prof. Mamta Chandrashekhar, Indore; Dr. Panchanan Chattopadhyay,

Assam; Shri Anil Chowdhry, Bareilly; Dr. R.R. Dhanapall and B. Hari Balakrishnan, Puducherry; Shri B. Hari Balakrishnan, Puducherry; Dr. A. Kalaimathi, Chennai; Shri Kanhaiya Lal, Jharkhand; Dr. B.K. Mahakul, Chhattisgarh; Dr. Nagendra Nath Misra, Uttarakhand; Smt. Sasmita Misra, Orissa; Prof. E.A. Narayana, Visakhapatnam; Dr. Rajesh Kumar, Nagpur; Dr. Diwakar Singh Rajput and Dr. Arvind Singh, Sagar; Dr. Sigamani P., New Delhi; Dr. Tanuja Singh and Shreya Ishita, New Delhi; Dr. Madan Gopal Sinha, Ghazipur; Dr. S. Sundaresan, New Delhi; Dr. Surendra Kumar, Bihar; Dr. Umesh Kumar, Bihar; Dr. K. Usha, Chennai; Dr. G. Vedanthadesikan, Annamalai Nagar; and Dr. V.N. Viswanathan. Reports of Prelude Conferences organised by 36 Regional and Local Branches on the theme was also presented. During the programme, following publications were released by Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Chairman of IIPA: (i) *Proceedings of the Members' Annual Conference 2010*; (ii) *Conference Volume 2011 of Members' Annual Conference on Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development since 1959*; (iii) *Political Reality and Political Consciousness* by Dr. Binda Kumari; and (iv) *Samvid Sarkar evam Bharatiya Prashasan* by Dr. Umesh Kumar. About 250 members participated in the programme.



Dr. V.N. Alok addresses the members at the Annual Conference

### Result of Annual Essay Competition

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi, Chairman of IIPA, handed out the prizes to the following four winners of IIPA's Annual Essay Prize Competition 2011: one first prize of Rs. 5000 to Ms. Roshni Chadda, Patiala for her entry on "Judicial Accountability and Democracy". One second prize of Rs. 3000 to Ms. Divya Singla, Patiala for her entry on "Judicial Accountability and Democracy"; and one third prize of Rs. 2000 to Dr. Jadabendra Lal Bose, IAS (retired) Bhopal for his entry on "Food Security, Food Inflation and the Public Distribution System". For Hindi essay, one second prize of Rs. 3000 to Shri Jaswant Singh, Ghaziabad for his entry on "Jansamuha Hetu Soochna Proddogiki—Digital Antar Bharna".

### Result of Hindi Essay Competition

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi awarded the prizes to the following winners of Hindi Essay Competition 2011 under Raj Bhasha Committee on the topic *Shiksha ka Adhikar*: First prize of Rs. 5000 to Dr. Janak Singh Meena, Jaipur; and second and third prizes of Rs. 3000 and Rs. 2000 to Dr. Nutan Thakur, Lucknow and Shri Jainul Abedin Ansari Antlib, Patna respectively.

### Case Study Award Scheme

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi handed out prizes to the following three winners of Annual Decision Making/Teaching Case Study Competition-2011: two first prizes of Rs. 10000 to (i) Dr. Divya U. Joshi, Nainital for her entry on "Gender and Green Governance: Case Study of a Van Panchayat in

Central Himalayas”; and (ii) Shri P. Krishnamoorthy, Chennai for his entry on “Decision Making and Teaching Case Study of the Corporation of Chennai”. One second prize of Rs. 6000 to Dr. Vandana Mathur, Noida for her entry on “HR Fraternity”.

### **Distinguished Members of IIPA Honoured**

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi honoured the following members with Paul H. Appleby Awards at the AGM for their distinguished services to the Institute: Prof. R.V. Dhanapalan, Prof. S.N. Mishra, Prof. N.P. Singh, Dr. Marina Rita Pinto, Prof. Krishna K. Tummala (U.S.A.) and Prof. Yasodha Shanmugasundaram.

### **Books Released**

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi released the following publications during AGM: *Public Policy and Administration* by Ramesh Kumar Tiwari and Aasha Kapur Mehta; (ii) *Urban Infrastructure for the Common Man* by Rakesh Hooja and Rakesh Gupta; (iii) *Planning Development for Metropolitan Region* by K.K. Pandey; (iv) *Public Enterprises Management: Issues and Challenges* by Nand Dhameja and Pranab Banerji; (v) *Cumulative Index to Indian Journal of Public Administration (Vol. XXI to LVI- 1975-2010)* by Rakesh Hooja and Usha Mujoo Munshi; (vi) *Standards and Quality in Service Delivery* by Suresh Misra and Mamta Pathania; (vii) *Bihar Journal of Public Administration* by R.J.M. Pillai and Navneet Sinha; (viii) *Indians in India, Mauritius and South Africa* by Chit Dukhira; two publications of Uttar Pradesh Regional Branch (a) *Key to Progress (Education in U.P.)-2011* by T.N. Dhar & S.P. Gupta (b) *U.P. Economy Monitor (2009-10)* by T.N. Dhar, R.K. Kacker & K.N. Trivedi and (ix) three publications from Karnataka Regional Branch: (a) *The Great Recession*

*2008 and its Impact on India* by Shri V. Balasubramanian; (b) *Proceedings of Seminar on Karnataka Vision 2020* (held on November 17, 2009); and (c) *Report of the Workshop on Consumer Protection and Welfare* (held on December 2-3, 2009).

### **Release of Special Issue of IJPA and Lok Prashasan**

The Chairman of IIPA released the Special Issue of *Indian Journal of Public Administration* on “Controlling Corruption in India: Various Approaches and their Efficacy” at the Annual General Body Meeting held on October 21. The issue, containing 507 pages, carries 38 articles contributed on different aspects of the theme by the author of eminence along with one document and a select bibliography. The Hindi journal, *Lok Prashasan*, containing 32 pages, carries 340 articles.

### **Shri T.N. Chaturvedi Award for Best Article**

Shri T.N. Chaturvedi Award for Best Article in the *Indian Journal of Public Administration* 2010 was given to Shri P.C. Hota IAS (retired) for his article “The Civil Service—Past, Present and Future” published in Vol. LVI No. 2 (April-June 2010). The award was presented by the Chairman of IIPA at the AGM on October 21.

### **Meeting of Office-bearers of Branches**

Office-bearers of the regional/local branches of IIPA met at IIPA on October 21 to discuss a large number of issues pertaining to strengthening IIPA activities and development of the branches. Dr. Rakesh Hooja, Director of IIPA presided.

### **Programme on Public Administration**

Sponsored by Central Public Works Department, the captioned

programme was conducted at IIPA, for assistant executive engineer trainees of CPWD, from October 17-21. Director Dr. Rakesh Hooja inaugurated course. Er. C.S. Prasad Director General CPWD presided and Shri P.K. Gupta Additional Director General CPWD was special guest at inauguration. Apart from strengthening the skills, the capacity and upgrading of knowledge through the inputs of public administration, the programme was designed to enable the participants to: (i) comprehend the dynamics of administration; (ii) understand the changing nature of administration in contemporary times; (iii) familiarise with the process of interface between administration and society and technocrats; (iv) identify the role of bureaucrats and technocrats in a globalised era; (v) appreciate the various initiatives taken up by the government towards ensuring good governance and decentralisation of power; and (vi) define the expected role of technocrats in the larger context of public administration and help reach the benefit of good governance to the larger section of society. The faculty comprised guest speakers and in-house faculty. Dr. Sujit Kumar Pruseeth and Dr. Mamta Pathania coordinated it.

### **Programme on Project Management: Formulation and Appraisal**

Sponsored by the Department of Personnel and Training, the programme was conducted at IIPA from October 31-November 4. The programme-content included: (i) project management and economic development; (ii) project life cycle and its relevance; (iii) project and appraisal; (iv) commercial and financial aspect of a project; (v) project implementation: network analysis; (vi) project time and cost over-run: implications; (vii) social cost

benefit analysis; (viii) infrastructure projects: viability gap funding scheme; and (ix) infrastructure project: PTP—Indian and international experience. Programme faculty comprised guest speakers and in-house faculty. Prof. Nand Dhameja and Prof. Rakesh Gupta coordinated it.

### Programme on Economics, Law and Constitution

Sponsored by the Central Public Works Department, the programme was conducted at IIPA for trainee assistant executive engineers of CPWD from October 31–November 4. Besides familiarising the participants with governance structure and legislature process, the programme was designed to help them to: (i) acquaint with basic laws relevant in their service; (ii) grasp the economic environment of the country; (iii) gain rudimentary financial knowledge; and (iv) develop broad-based understanding of work environment. The programme faculty comprised guest speakers and in-house faculty. Prof. P.K. Chaubey coordinated it.

### Faculty News

- Dr. Lokendra Malik, Assistant Professor of Laws in Urban Governance, has been nominated as a member of the Babu Jagjivan Ram National Foundation (under the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment) for a period of three

years by the Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment.

- Prof. P.K. Chaubey delivered the key-note address on “Sustainable Development” in a national seminar organised by the Institute of Environmental and Development Studies, Bundelkhand University, Jhansi on October 14.

### Visitors

A group of 28 students pursuing Master of Public Administration and three faculty members from N.S. Patel Arts College, Anand, visited the Institute on October 14. They were addressed on “Emerging Trends in Public Administration” by Dr. Sachin Chowdhry; and “Challenges in Federal Polity” by Prof. R.K. Barik. Dr. Sachin Chowdhry coordinated it.

### Book Review Discussion

The Institute organised the seventh book discussion meet on the book entitled *The Battle for Employment Guarantee* by Dr. Reetika Khera, Assistant Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT, Delhi on October 11. This volume presents a comprehensive account of the 'battle for employment guarantee' in rural India. Staying clear of the propaganda and mud-slinging that has characterised much of the NREGA debate so far, the book presents an informed and authentic picture of the ground realities. The

essays are based on field studies of NREGA by a team of researchers who have been actively involved in the campaign for the right to work, the essays in this volume cover four broad areas: (i) a brief history of the Act and a comparative summary of official NREGA statistics; (ii) the socio-economic impact of NREGA on a wide range of issues such as women's empowerment, mobilisation of unorganised workers, and corruption; (iii) a comparative analysis of the challenges and successes in the implementation of NREGA in several states, from Orissa in the east to Rajasthan in the west and Himachal Pradesh in the north to Tamil Nadu in the south; and (iv) recent setbacks and 'trouble spots' including the lack of proper grievance redressal mechanisms and of accountability in the system. This volume is a chronicle of the various 'battles' for employment guarantee, from the enactment of the law to the fight against corruption and workers' struggles to organise and defend their rights. The discussion was moderated by Prof. T.S. Papola, Director of Institute for Studies in Industrial Development; and discussants were Prof. P.K. Chaubey of IIPA and Shri Pranav Khullar, Director (Finance), Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance. Dr. Reetika Khare, author of the book, gave a broad overview of the book.

## NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES

### Andhra Pradesh Regional Branch

The branch organised the prelude seminar on “Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development in Andhra Pradesh since 1959” on October 16. Shri M.V. Rao, Director General of National Institute of Rural Development, inaugurated the programme; and Shri Rajiv Sharma, Principal Secretary, Panchayati Raj

and Rural Development, Government of Andhra Pradesh, gave the key-note address.

### Burdwan Local Branch

The branch organised the prelude seminar on “Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development” on September 23. Dr. Sorosimohan Dan, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Burdwan University, inaugurated the programme. Prof.

Apurva Kumar Mukhopadhyay of Netaji Institute of Asian Studies; Prof. Rabindranath Bhattacharya of Burdwan University; and Prof. Jahangir Hossain of Vivekananda Mahavidyalaya also spoke on the theme. Earlier, Dr. Bijoy Chand, Secretary of the branch, gave the welcome address. Prof. Mohit Bhattacharya, Chairman of the

branch, presided over it.

### **Budaun Local Branch**

The branch organised seminar on “Women Empowerment and Rural Development” on September 24. Shri Amar Nath Goel, of Bankey Behari Law College/B.Ed. College, was the Chief Guest. Twenty-one B.Ed. students participated in the programme who stressed on the literacy and employment opportunities to the women. Shri Vishwas Nath, HoD of Law, urged the need to involve women at all levels in the panchayati raj institutions. Presiding over the programme, Shri Anwar Alam, Chairman of the branch, observed that the interests of the men and women are supplementary with each other; hence it is necessary that women should be encouraged. Earlier, the branch organised a lecture-meeting on “Role of Girls’ Colleges in Women Development and Rural Development Programme” on September 17. Shri S.P. Rastogi, Convenor of the Rural Development Programme, stated that the village development programme is a challenging task which can be managed by involving the local village people particularly the educated girls of the village. Shri Mahmud Akhtar, Principal of Chandrika Devi Girls’ Inter College, presided over it.

### **Delhi Regional Branch**

The branch organised the prelude conference on “Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development since 1959” on September 29. Dr. Rakesh Hooja, Director of IIPA, gave the introductory remarks and also presented his paper on “Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development”; and Dr. V.N. Alok gave the key-note address on the theme. Dr. S.K. Pachauri and Prof. Noorjahan Bava also presented papers on the theme. Prof. Jaytilak Guha Roy, Chairman of the branch, presided

over the programme. The branch also organised a lecture on “Management of Diabetics” by Dr. M.K. Garg, Sr. Advisor and Professor of Medicine and Endocrinology, Army Hospital (Research and Referral), New Delhi on October 22. Earlier, the branch organised free eye check-up camp by Centre for Sight, New Delhi on October 21; and free heart check-up camp by Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, New Delhi on October 22.

### **Gulbarga Local Branch**

The branch jointly with the Department of Political Science, Gulbarga University organised the prelude seminar on “Role of Panchayat Raj Institutions in Rural Development Since 1959” on October 13. Shri S. Hiremath, Registrar Gulbarga University inaugurated the programme. Prof. Chaya Degaonkar, Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, Gulbarga University; and Dr. B.S. Gulshetty, Joint Secretary of the branch, spoke on the topic. Shri S. Basawaraj, President of the branch, presided over it.

### **Kerala Regional Branch**

The branch organised the prelude conference on “Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development since 1959” in the form of a panel discussion on October 14. The panelists included Shri James Varghese, Principal Secretary, Local Self Government Department, Kerala; Shri Nandakumar, Commissioner, Rural Development; and Smt. Ramani P. Nair, President of District Panchayat, Thiruvananthapuram.

### **Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh Regional Branch**

The branch organised the prelude seminar on “Role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in Rural Development since 1959”. Delivering the key-note address, Smt. Aruna Sharma,

Principal Secretary to Government of Madhya Pradesh, gave a detailed account of the situation in Madhya Pradesh regarding PRI role in rural development including the shortcomings that are being noticed. She also listed the steps being taken to remove the obstacles in greater role of panchayats for development.

### **Mizoram Regional Branch**

The branch teamed up with the Department of Public Administration, Mizoram University, in organising the following programmes: (I) Seminar on “Significant Aspect of Census 2011: Mizoram” on April 29. Prof. Srinibas Pathi, Secretary of the branch, introduced the topic and welcomed the guests. Prof. A.K. Agarwal, Vice-Chancellor of Mizoram University, was the Chief Guest; and Shri Bikash Nath, ADCO (Technical) of the Directorate of Census, Mizoram, was the Guest Speaker. Prof. Lianzela, Vice-Chairman of the branch, presided. (II) Interactive session on “Good Governance through e-Governance” on August 11. Prof. Rakesh Gupta, Shri Sunil Dutt and Shri S.R. Das from IIPA were the guest speakers. Prof. Srinibas Pathi presided over the programme. (III) Seminar on “Challenges to Urban Governance in India” on September 1. Prof. Ashok Sharma, former HoD of Public Administration, University of Rajasthan, was the Guest Speaker. Prof. Srinibas Pathi presided over it. (IV) Prelude conference and national seminar on “Rural Development and PRIs in India” on September 23. Shri Lalwata, State Minister of Education, was the Chief Guest; and Prof. A.K. Agarwal, Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University, was the Guest of Honour. Prof. Srinibas Pathi presented the theme paper. Prof. C. Lalkima, Chairman of the branch, presided over the programme.

### Revival of Magadh Local Branch

The Executive Council in its meeting, held on September 20, has approved the proposal of the General Body of Magadh Local Branch of IIPA made in its special meeting held on July 7 to revive the branch and noted the following office-bearers who were elected for a period of two years: Chairman: Dr. G.N. Singh; Vice-Chairman: Prof. Tapan Kr. Singh; Secretary and Treasurer: Dr. C.P. Singh; and Joint Secretary: Shri Kantesh Kr. Singh.

### Puducherry Local Branch

The branch celebrated its 44th anniversary on September 27. In her inaugural address, Smt. B. Sathiavathy, Chief Secretary, Government of Puducherry, stressed the need for systematic reforms in Puducherry administration. Pointing out the loopholes in administration, she appealed to the general public to initiate the reform process and ensure good governance. She emphasised that training should not be confined to the bureaucracy; it should also be extended to legislature and judiciary. She also congratulated the branch for organising seminars and welcomed the civil service coaching programme. The branch also organised a prelude

conference on “Role of Panchayats in Rural Development in Puducherry U.T. since 1959”. Shri T. Sreekanth, Secretary (Local Administration), inaugurated the programme; and Shri G. Pannirselvam, Minister for Local Administration, gave the valedictory address. Shri A. Balasubramanian, Director of Local Administration, gave the special address while Dr. V.N. Viswanathan, Secretary of Tamil Nadu Regional Branch, presented the theme paper. Dr. R.R. Dhanapall, Chairman of the branch, presided over both the programmes.

### Punjab and Chandigarh Regional Branch

The branch collaborated with the Department of Public Administration, Panjab University in organising the prelude conference on “Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development Since 1959” on October 12. The theme paper was presented by Dr. Ramanjit Kaur Johal, Chairperson, Department of Public Administration, Panjab University. Shri B.S. Ojha, Chairman of the branch chaired the conference. Prof. B.S. Ghuman, Secretary of the branch, welcomed the participants. The paper highlighted various phases of development of panchayati raj institutions India

since Rig Veda dating back to 1200 B.C., to Lord Ripon’s Resolution of 1882 and the post-independence landmarks in the PRIs namely Balwant Rai Mehta Committee, Ashok Mehta Committee, G.V.K. Rao Committee, L.M. Singhvi Committee and 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992.

Focus of this paper was to examine how far this modern system of panchayat has succeeded in fulfilling its objectives and to review the developments in the engineering of panchayats to make them true catalysts for rural development. She also raised certain issues such as autonomy versus dependency, integrated view and action, free and fair local elections, autonomous institutions, storing fiscal information system, authority to identify local needs and preferences, ability to monitor and evaluate the system, etc. Shri Ojha emphasised the need to strengthen state finance commissions and the need for the author to conduct field visits to study the real impact of the various schemes on the rural development.

### Tamil Nadu Regional Branch

The branch organised the prelude seminar on “Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development Since 1959” on September 17. Dr. Ramu Manivannan, HoD of Politics and Public Administration, University of Madras, delivered the key-note address; and Thiru K. Allaudin, Vice-Chairman of the branch, gave the special address. Thiru K. Ganesan, Chairman of the branch, presided.

### West Bengal Regional Branch

The branch organised the prelude conference on “Role of Panchayat Bodies in Rural Development since 1959” on October 1. Dr. Sibranjana Chatterjee, Secretary of the branch, gave the key-note address. Shri Suryya Ray, Chairman of the branch, presided over the programme.



Smt. Sathiavathy addresses the audience

***A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything but the value of nothing — Oscar Wilde***

## NEWS FROM THE CENTRE

### Convergence of Rural Schemes to Improve Quality of Life

After guaranteeing rural employment, the government is now attempting to address basic quality of life issues in the rural area. In an effort to ensure better use of resources to improve the lives of the rural poor, the government is working on converging schemes that impact basic quality of life. The rural development and drinking water and sanitation ministries have prepared an integrated habitat development scheme, which is a convergence of three existing schemes — rural housing, drinking water and total sanitation schemes. The aim is to ensure integrated development of habitations. Drinking water and sanitation facilities are absolute essentials in any housing project; however, providing all three requirements seldom happens at the same in the rural areas. For the government, the proposal comes at a time when it is seeking to re-establish its credentials as the voice of the poor and marginalised. For maximum impact, it has been suggested that the village or habitation, a compact cluster of at least ten houses, be the unit for the scheme. In rolling out the programme, it is recommended that simultaneous sanctions be given to adjacent units, so as to ensure developing common infrastructure for sanitation and drinking water. The proposed houses would be permanent constructions of at least 300 square feet, with toilet facilities and a minimum of three consulting with HDFC for partnering the project. Another aspect that is currently under discussion is working out the role of the private sector and the households' taps from the common water supply source, which should have 24 hours

supply. State governments will provide their fund requirement. Since this proposed integrated is a convergence scheme, it would draw on funds provisioned for the existing schemes and the gap will be funded under this scheme. To ensure that no one district corners the scheme benefits, it has been suggested that not more than five projects can be taken up in a district. The ministry is understood to be consulting with HDFC for partnering the project. The ministry's proposal suggests that the gram panchayat executes, supervises and runs the project. However, it is not clear how the scheme would ensure that gram panchayats are actively involved and have a stake in the successful implementation of the scheme.

### A Report on NREGA

Five years into the implementation of the right to work programme, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) has the potential to create even sharper division between states than what existed before it was launched. This has been suggested the second report of the National Consortium of Civil Society Organisations on NREGA. The report narrates the success and failure of the programme in 10 largest states in India shows how the inter-state differences in rural India are building up, basically through the success of NREGA. This has happened because the programme is becoming more and more successful in states where governance is better. Consequently, a state that is good in attracting investment from industry is also likely to do better in making NREGA a better show. States like Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka excel in NREGA outcomes.

According to the report, cash transfer system will eliminate the intermediate role of the lower levels of the government after the first stage. Since this move is built on the lessons learnt from NREGA to graduate to the next stage, there should be no dissonance about the replacement of the programme. The target is to reduce poverty and so the means adopted should not become the block to the movement to that goal. The sterling work being done by the clutch of non-governmental organisations, as the report shows can be broadly divided into two categories. At one level, they are making the landless labourers and, in some cases, even marginal farmers aware of the programme and encouraging them to apply for a job card. At the other level, the organisations are working with the local government like the block development officers and sometimes the district and state level officers to make them respond to the demand for jobs.

NREGA is distinct from all other government programmes that went before it in that it is demand-driven. While the other programmes that came before and even some other concurrent ones depend on the cash/quota available with the government to decide how many people can benefit, there is no upper limit in NREGA. If a family can show that it is poor but has no work to survive upon, the government has to provide work within 15 days or provide unemployment allowance. So, NREGA has fixed one part of the problem, which is handing out the poor the authority to demand state intervention. To make this happen, the report shows the NGOs have to negotiate with the local government to keep, at all

*The future influences the present just as much as the past — Friedrich Nietzsche*

times, ready a shelf of projects that can be made available to those who demand jobs. For even swift private sector organisations to develop such a customer focus is tough; to expect the government across the country to do so is a fantastic leap of faith. The alternative then is for the blocks to give out unemployment allowance. As the table shows, most districts are not keen to do this as it reflects badly on their performance. So, the struggle the NGOs wage with the government

is reduced to blocking efforts to reduce the size of the muster rolls, skipping payment of full wages by delaying the measurement of the works done and sometimes plain theft like attempting to give payment in cash instead of through post offices. States that are smart, respond to the civil society better. In some places like Karnataka, where daily labourers get Rs.150 at plentiful construction sites, the lure of earning Rs.100 from NREGA pales. Overall, the better states do better for

their people in many ways. But where most of the poor live, i.e., states like Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and even Bihar, five years after the passage of the Act, the basics are yet to fall in place. If the net result is the better states are racing away, and the time of some of our most committed social evangelists is spent trying to get the basic architecture up, the answer must surely lie in moving to a plan that relies less on intervention and more on the neutral electronic platform.

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#### *Quotable Quotes*

- **Cowards die many times before their deaths; the valiant never taste of death but once — William Shakespeare**
- **No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking — Voltaire**
- **Success is getting and achieving what you want. Happiness is wanting and being content with what you get — Bernard Meltzer**
- **Death is not the worst thing; rather, when one who craves death cannot attain even that wish — Sophocles**
- **Failure is the condiment that gives success its flavour — Truman Capote**
- **Natural ability without education has more often attained to glory and virtue than education without natural ability — Cicero**

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