Lab to Land Initiative
Narayanpur is one of the over 80 districts in the country which is inflicted by the Left Wing Extremism. The state and the district administration are hard pressed here to grapple with the situation. There was a seemingly unbridgeable void an ever increasing trust deficit between the people and the government machinery. All that is changing and changing fast and would soon become a thing of past and Narayanpur is set to become a model in participatory governance and key to the problem of bringing development in LWE districts. All thanks to the BNV initiative and people like Suresh Kuldeep who have not only joined the cadre of BNVs but are today inspiring and instilling confidence among many disgruntled youths who had taken to arms to abjure path and join the development bandwagon.

“This concept of BNV has transformed me otherwise I would be just like any other inhabitant of this village, unaware and directionless. At one time, I hardly knew any person in the village. But now almost everyone in the village knows me and see a hope in me. But I look for a hope in them because this movement that I started, has to be carried forth by them. My parents are also proud of me and am keen to change more mindsets so that every common Indian becomes a special human being and a catalyst for development” - Suresh Kuldeep

In a world owned by egocentric people and covetous lifestyles, it’s good to know that are people like Suresh Kuldeep, who refuse to follow stereotypes diktats and are given to thinking of a community as a whole rather than their ownself.

A "Rajmisti" by profession and a Bharat Nirman Volunteer by passion, Suresh Kuldeep belongs to village Panchayat Mahmagwadi, post Dhorahi in district Narayanpur of Chattisgarh. A distant backward village in the dense forests of Chattisgarh, this hamlet is devoid of basic needs like adequate food, housing, clothing, Healthcare facilities, education & electricity.

Here lies Suresh Kuldeep and his family in bereft financial conditions. But he wears his penury with great courage, all because he has found a purpose in his life. To cultivate his village, uplift their living standards and make India a 'Sone Ki Chidiya', once again.

Tough task but inspiring enough for Suresh Kuldeep to kick start his objective.

Tough conditions and financial woes did not deter him from either studying or working towards change the state of affairs in Chattisgarh village. He shifted to district headquarter Narayanpur after completing his high school and started working as a "Rajmisti" while continuing his studies till M.Com. Work and studies did not eclipse his desire to change mindsets and bring development in this small village.

The direction of his life found ground when he happened to meet the CEO of his Janpad Panchayat, who sensed the desire in Kuldeep and got him enrolled in SIRD Nimora for a three month "Aajivika Niyojan" course. A lifetime opportunity and experience for him, this course changed his mind completely. " I was delighted to be in a bid institution like SIRD, where I saw a documentary "Hiware Bazar" on the transformation of a village called, 'Hiware Bazar' of Maharashtra. My inherent social service zeal started bustling with energy and I decided to make my village like Hiware Bazar", he states and also informs about his involvement in social service endeavours like NCC and NSS right from his school days.

Soon, he got an opportunity to attend a three day camp of Bharat Nirman Volunteers where he learnt...

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The government is spending crores of Rupees on various development programmes in the rural areas. However, there are gaps in the implementation of these schemes which ultimately affect the delivery to the beneficiaries. The reason for these gaps are many but the paramount reason is that some of the agencies which implement these schemes are ill-equipped with manpower at the state levels.

At this point voluntary help can be one of the best inputs to carry out the variety of welfare programmes of the government. The Ministry of Rural Development has initiated a Lab to Land programme which constitutes Bharat Nirman Volunteers, who are working at the household level in the villages on voluntary basis.

Volunteering is in vogue globally. China hosted the 2008 Beijing Olympics, hired volunteers to meet the needs of the participants and to look after the arrangements. Similarly during natural disasters, volunteers are always on the forefront of the rescue missions.

In this issue we focus on the Lab to Land initiative in the form of Bharat Nirman Volunteers. Lab to Land initiative is also an old concept in agriculture extension work, which we touch briefly in this issue.

Lab-to-Land initiative aims at achieving improvement in the quality of life of people by bringing into fruition provisions of the programmes for the development and welfare of the people in rural areas. This scheme seeks to secure greater involvement and commitment of the people at large and make the implementing agencies more responsive and efficient so that deficiencies and discrepancies in the implementation stage can be diagnosed and corrective measures can be taken to make it more efficient and meaningful. This initiative has been implemented through the NIRD/SIRDs and District Administration at the Panchayat level.

There are around 1 lakh 70 thousand BNV volunteers who are knitting a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) that will work together for full achievement of the objectives of various Government programmes being implemented in rural areas for sustainable and inclusive development.

The BNV’s have become a new effective bridge between the Ministry and the people living in rural areas.
LAB-TO-LAND INITIATIVE—AN INTRODUCTION

Dhiraj Kumar Kakadia

It has been found that the awareness of people about the programmes and their entitlements is low and participation of people in planning, implementation and social audit of programmes is limited. People have large number of complaints and grievances and the implementing agencies are unable to respond to them satisfactorily.

The government implements a wide range of programmes for the welfare and development of rural population. The Ministry of Rural Development also has a large number of schemes and programmes. The investment under these programmes has grown at a compounded annual rate of growth of 26.8% from Rs. 7169 crores in 2001-02 to Rs. 76376 crores crores in 2012-13. These programmes aim to improve the quality of life of rural households by providing them infrastructure for roads, housing, drinking water and sanitation, opportunities for income, employment, skill development, social security and support for proper management of natural resources. People’s institutions like Gram Sabhas/Ward Sabhas are assigned a pivotal role in planning and implementation of these programmes along with the Panchayati Raj Institutions. However, various evaluation studies have shown myriad shortcomings in the implementation of programmes and have highlighted the need to improve the quality by enhancing people’s participation and improving mechanisms for vigilance and redressal of public grievances. It has been found that the awareness of people about the programmes and their entitlements is low and participation of people in planning, implementation and social audit of programmes is limited. People have large number of complaints and grievances and the implementing agencies are unable to respond to them satisfactorily. Many of the provisions of the programmes remain unimplemented or are wrongly implemented due to various constraints facing the implementing agencies such as shortage of staff, frequent transfers of key functionaries, lack of training and exposure to best practices,
ineffective quality control systems, weak monitoring and vigilance, and fragile mechanisms of social audit. These problems give rise to serious friction within the delivery system and loss of focus from the goals underlying the programmes. Despite huge investment in development and welfare programmes, the relationship between the people and government institutions is perceived to be marred by a deficit of trust. Communication between people and government institutions is thwarted by illiteracy, remoteness of habitations, poor rural infrastructure, local factionalism, uneven distribution of power, social inequality, prejudices and discrimination. As a result, the objectives of the programmes are not achieved fully. A wide chasm is observed between the provisions of the programmes and the state of actual delivery system.

**Awareness**

A plethora of measures are required to educate the people about their rights, entitlements and procedures to avail them under various programmes, forge partnerships between the people and government institutions, strengthen inter-departmental coordination, prepare village development plans, monitor and audit their implementation in accordance with the provisions of the programmes, and reinforce village unity and harmony by eliminating barriers of caste and class. It is also imperative to build the capacity of the implementing agencies to expand their outreach and become more responsive to the needs of the people in order to make the utilization of programme resources more efficient and meaningful.

**BNV Structure**

Department of Rural Development, Government of India started building a cadre of Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) under the Labo-Land Initiative in 2010-11 in a few selected Blocks/Gram Panchayats in order to involve the people in the implementation of programmes. In each village 30 to 60 adult persons are identified as volunteers to take a leading role in mobilization of people for effective implementation of programmes. Each volunteer is assigned 10 to 40 rural households to understand their needs and facilitate their fulfillment in partnership with government agencies. The details of each volunteer along with photograph are placed on website ruralniksha.nic.in that provides the facility for free SMS to the volunteers. No payment is made to the volunteers and the volunteers do not have any expectation of pecuniary or non-pecuniary return for their contributions.

The initiative has yielded encouraging results. Induction as volunteers and training at SIRDs has enhanced the status of the select persons and instilled in them values honesty, charity and patriotism which enthuse them to act in unison for the benefit of their villages voluntarily. Having become conscious of their rights and duties, people have taken ownership of the programmes and made programme implementation fair and efficient. Embued with a sense of common purpose they are working along with the PRIs and Line Departments to strengthen village solidarity, peacefully resolve disputes, neutralize vested interests, help the poorest of the poor, fight social evils like alcoholism, corruption, child labour and gender discrimination and push the village economy to the highest level of development by mobilization of institutional credit, revamping of old relations of production and distribution and inculcation of latest technologies.
Gram Sabhas have become active and are able to exercise their powers for equitable and transparent allocation and use of resources under various programmes. Line Departments and PRIs, having realized the benefits of people's initiatives, are also sharing responsibility with the people to ensure proper delivery of public services. The volunteers enrolled and trained under this initiative are acting like the eyes and ears of the Government. The initiative is being monitored with a web-based programme management software hosted on the website ruraldiksha.nic.in.

This initiative is being implemented through the NIRD/SIRDs and select District Administration. Its impact on the people has made it popular both among the people and the District Administration who have sought its extension in other areas also. There is a need to expand this initiative in a phased manner to other Blocks and Gram Panchayats so that people are able to connect with the government and assume greater control over planning and implementation of development and welfare programmes of the government.

Department of Rural Development is accorded special focus on implementation of flagship programmes in 82 districts affected by Left Wing Extremism (LWE), also known as Integrated Action Plan (IAP) districts. In order to involve the people in these Districts in the implementation of programmes, it has been decided to take up mobilization of BNVs in large scale. NIRD has the mandate to organize off-campus training programmes, workshops, seminars and conferences and conduct action research. They can play a significant role in the expansion of the initiative by networking with SIRDs, ETCs, PRTC and DTCs and other allied institutions.

**Objectives**

Specifically, it aims to achieve the following objectives.

i. Generate awareness about rights and entitlements among the people, in particular landless labourers, SC/STs, small and marginal farmers, rural artisans, BPL families, beneficiaries of land reforms, weavers, fishermen, tribal communities, Forest dwellers, dalits, women, old, infirm, sick and other weaker sections of the society;

ii. Promote participation of people in programme implementation by activation of gram and ward sabhas and strengthening of people's institutions like SHGs, user groups, pani panchayats, forest management committees, mahila mandals, youth clubs, farmers' club and other community-based organizations;

iii. Develop a sense of ownership among the people for proper implementation of programmes;

iv. Empower the people to act as vigilante, motivators and facilitators for proper allocation, distribution and utilization of resources and social audit under various programmes;

v. Inculcate in the people a common sense of purpose and resolve for adoption of the model of faster, sustainable and inclusive development that ensures rapid development of infrastructure, generation of income and employment opportunities along with conservation of land, water, forests and wildlife;

vi. Enable PRIs, Line Departments and Banks to share their responsibilities with the people so that outreach of their services is widened and extended to remote areas, particularly in hill, desert, forest and tribal areas;

vii. Improve governance by enhancing transparency and accountability in programme implementation and forging close relationships between the government institutions and the community;

viii. Facilitate social audit, redressal of grievances of the people, amicable settlement of disputes.

**Purpose**

Lab-to-Land Initiative aims at achieving improvement in quality of life of the people by bringing into fruition provisions of the programmes for the development and welfare of the people in rural areas. It seeks to secure greater involvement of the people and make the implementing agencies more responsive so that the deficiencies in programme implementation are diagnosed and removed, and programme objectives are achieved.
and improve communications between the people and the government institutions;

ix. Document success stories, innovations and best practices and disseminate them among all the stakeholders for their wider adoption;

x. Identify and award persons and institutions who have made significant contributions in achieving the objectives of the programmes;

xi. Build and manage knowledge assets to facilitate learning and development and to that end prepare, print, publish and distribute manuals, guidelines and e-learning materials, and maintain and update common website (ruraldiksha.nic.in);

xii. Organize workshops, seminars and conferences for dissemination of information on programmes, improvement in coordination and convergence among different stakeholders and development of a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) that may bring its expertise to deal with challenges in programme implementation;

xiii. Improve communications among the stakeholders so that there is a common sense of purpose, solidarity and cohesion among them in implementation of programmes;

xiv. Design, develop and deploy tools for E-governance to disseminate information, improve communication, facilitate exchange of ideas, build networks and partnerships, and expedite settlement of grievances.

Stakeholders

Lab-to-Land initiative aims to achieve upgradation in the standard of living of the people by bringing a qualitative change in the implementation of programmes for the development and welfare of the people in rural areas. The stakeholders of the Programme include different State Governments, Panchayat Raj Institutions, Banks, SHGs, NGOs, volunteers, Line Departments which are implementing various development programmes as well as the Training institutions. The varied and divergent interests of the stakeholders need to be mapped and their commitment needs to be obtained for facilitating awareness generation, enhancing people’s participation in planning, monitoring, social audit and facilitating redressal of grievances of the people. Stakeholders need to be properly educated to work in close coordination in order to achieve the full potential of the programmes.

Implementing Agencies and Activities

The initiative will be implemented by NIRD through the State Governments, SIRDs, ETCs, PRTC, DTCs and District Administration. For this purpose, a Programme Management Unit will be set up by NIRD in NIRD, SIRDs and other Training Institutions like ETCs, PRTC and DTCs. The PMU will have resources to undertake off-campus training programmes, village level campaigns, workshops, conferences and meetings to review progress and share experiences, maintain database in ruraldiksha.nic.in website; train BNVs, officials and elected representatives and facilitate strengthening of the delivery system. At the Block level, financial support will be provided to meet expenses on training kits and other items for the mobilisation of volunteers.

Specifically, the implementing agencies will undertake the following activities:

i. Identify a Block / Gram Panchayat for the implementation of the Initiative;

ii. Identify and train the stakeholders including the officials, PRIs and Banks;

iii. Undertake periodic village visits for awareness generation in the people about the programmes, motivating them to promote village unity and harmony, check social evils and forging a shared vision for all round village development;

iv. Identify committed adult villagers (30-60) for voluntary action and enroll them as Bharat Nirman Volunteers who will carry forward the message of unity, harmony and development to the people (each volunteer to be attached to 10-40 families in his neighbourhood) in the village;

v. Train the BNVs for acting as the link between government and the people, planning and implementation of various flagship programs and buildings and maintaining rural infrastructure, providing livelihood security, skill development, promoting flow of bank credit for income and employment generation, integrated use of natural...
resources, and fostering hygienic community practices for health and sanitation;

vi. Train BNVs to organize gram sabhas or ward sabhas and meetings of other community groups to foster village unity and harmony, remove barriers of caste and class, prepare and implement village development plans, facilitate social audit and perform other functions as prescribed under various programmes;

vii. Train BNVs to coordinate with PRIs and Line Departments in formulation and implementation of plans under various programmes, conduct of social audit, redressal of grievances and peaceful settlement of disputes that stultify programmes;

viii. Achieve win-win situation among all the stakeholders by maintaining regular communications;

ix. Promote the trained BNVs and the villagers and deploy them as resource persons for dissemination of information and initiating similar change process in other areas;

x. Document the entire change process and report all information on the ruralniksha.nic.in website through the Performance Metrics;

xi. Award good performing BNVs to recognize meritorious contribution;

xii. Design, develop, print, distribute training and IEC materials including posters, leaflets, pamphlets, handouts, calendars, magazines, audio-video and other materials for documentation and dissemination of programmes and best practices;

xiii. Coordinate with local Doordarshan, AIR, private Cable and Satellite Channels, and community radio stations for dissemination of information in a campaign mode;

xiv. Organize camps in villages for redressal of grievances, settlement of disputes arising in course of implementation of programmes, social audit, collection of applications for delivery of public services under various programmes in consultation with the line departments.

Monitoring & Evaluation

For the proper monitoring of the progress of the Initiative, the computer based MIS developed in the ruralniksha.nic.in website will be used. At least six National Colloquia will be held every year to review the progress and exchange of success stories and best practices. These Colloquia will be attended by representatives from NIRD, Hyderabad, SIRDS, State Government, District Administration, PRIs, BNVs, and other persons approved by the Department of Rural Development, Government of India, NIRD, Hyderabad will undertake monitoring and evaluation of the Initiative from time to time through reputed external agencies. Besides, the data collected from the successful implementation of the Initiative may be used for undertaking action research and providing inputs for policy formulation.

Innovations

Identification and dissemination of innovations is the foremost priority of the Initiative. For this purpose, workshops, seminars, conferences are organized with various stakeholders to facilitate exhibition of successful innovations and their impact. Stories of notable innovations are reproduced as films for training and dissemination across the country and put up on ruralniksha website.

Expected Outcome

i. With the implementation of the Initiative, following outcomes are expected:

ii. Better access to public services and improvement in outreach of government programmes especially for the women, dalits and tribals

iii. Improvement in human development indicators such as income, literacy, gender empowerment and life expectancy and reduction in infant and maternal mortality, child, malnutrition

iv. Accelerated poverty reduction by mobilization of the poor households comprising small and marginal farmers and labourers, and better access to government grants, institutional finance and farm extension support services

v. Infrastructure development and market integration - rural roads, telephony, irrigation watersheds, housing, drinking water and sanitation, electrification, new and renewable energy sources, broadband connectivity, Bharat Nirman Rajiv Gandhi Seva Kendras

vi. Vibrant people's institutions like gram sabhas,
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village health and sanitation committees, vigilance and monitoring committees, Joint Forest Management Committees, Social Audit Committees, etc.

vii. Better management of natural resources through proper implementation of watershed, forestry, land development, drought proofing, flood protection and anti-water-logging measures under Mahatma Gandhi NREGA, Integrated Watershed Management, and other programmes.

vi. Environmental protection by biomass conservation and afforestation through people's participation

vii. Greater transparency and accountability in implementation of government programmes by dissemination of information and speedier delivery of public services

viii. Enhancing benefits for landless labourers, herdsmen, forest-dwellers, artisans, farmers, weavers and fishermen through improved access to infrastructure, institutional services, physical capital and financial resources

ix. Leadership development in rural community

x. Support to local administration and PRI's

xi. Better quality of programme implementation

xii. Proper social audit of government schemes

xiii. Effective redressal of grievances

xiv. Facilitation in resolution of conflict

(The author is Director IEC, Ministry of Rural Development New Delhi)
The Vision of Lab to Land Initiative is to demonstrate sustainable and full achievement of objectives of all schemes of rural sector as Agriculture, Horticulture, Watershed, MG NREGA, Indra Awas, SGSY, Health, Education, Sanitation, Drinking water, Animal Husbandry, ICDS, Social Justice and Empowerment, Fisheries, Employment, Forest, Land Record, Electrification, Public Distribution System, Industries, PMGSY etc.

Lab to Land is an initiative of the Union Ministry of Rural Development being implemented with the help of Panchayats and Rural Development Department on pilot project in select districts. LAB here means State Institute of Panchayat and Rural Development (SIPRD) and LAND means the rural field of one selected Block. Lab-to-Land Initiative aims at achieving improvement in quality of life of the people by bringing into fruition provisions of the programs for the development and welfare of the people in rural areas. It seeks to secure greater involvement of the people and make the implementing agencies more responsive so that the deficiencies in program implementation are diagnosed and removed and program objectives are achieved.

**Stakeholders**

The stakeholders of the Program include different State Governments, Panchayat Raj Institutions, Banks, SHGs, NGOs, volunteers, Line Departments which are implementing various development programs as well as the Training institutions. The varied and divergent interests of the stakeholders need to be mapped and their commitment needs to be obtained for facilitating awareness generation, enhancing people’s participation in planning, monitoring, social audit and facilitating redressal of grievances of the people. Stakeholders need to be properly educated to work in close coordination in order to achieve the full potential of the programs. The
The main objectives of Lab to Land Program include are [i] Enhancing effectiveness of the government programs through increased communication and efficient implementation in a selected block. [ii] Capacity building of PRI and Govt. functionaries for effective and efficient implementation of programs. [iii] Encouraging innovation and creation of a knowledge and innovation community with the stakeholders. This article briefly highlights broadly the aims, objectives and strategy being adopted in pilot projects to achieve the aims targeted under the Lab to Land initiative.

Aim: Land or Rural Development field functionaries come to the Lab or Training institute to get trained and develop their capacities. It is expected that this training in turn would increase the efficiency of the development process which doesn't happen always because the functionaries do not get training assistance continuously to bridge up the knowledge gap and to solve other implementation related problems in field. Training institute would go to the field continuously for two years and try to develop [1] the level of awareness of the people regarding the functioning of Panchayat system and people's role in it and regarding all the Rural Development programs funes benefits and their planned utilization to increase the standard of living of themselves. [2] The knowledge and skill of the elected and govt. official functionaries who are responsible for providing services to the people through speedy, efficient and planned implementation of the Rural Development programs.

Objective: The Lab-to-Land Initiative aims at organization of the stakeholders into a Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC) that will work together for full achievement of the objectives of various Government programs being implemented in rural areas for sustainable and inclusive development. For this purpose in the initial phase of this initiative, one Block has been identified in each State. Stakeholders involved in the implementation of the programs in the Block will be identified and their interests and abilities will be mapped. A program will be drawn up to engage and involve all the stakeholders under the leadership of the District Collector at the district level and the BDO at the execution of the initiative will be constituted at State, District, Block levels including areas/objectives under various programs, actions required to achieve the desired results and indicators to measure performance. This will constitute the action plan under the initiative which will be taken up for implementation. The action plan will ultimately lead to building people's institutions, improved management of natural resources, development of infrastructure and better marketing of rural products to ensure steady flow of rural income.

Key Points of Lab to Land: Lab to Land initiative endeavors to [i] build a cohesive Knowledge and Innovation Community comprising policy makers, implementers, academia, financial institutions, experts, NGOs and international bodies and over all the end users [ii] build collaborations to overcome the challenges [iii] bridge the urban and rural development gaps. The main point of Lab to Land is access to information by all to ensure a vibrant and efficient knowledge community and meeting information needs of all constituents of the community.


Steps of Information, Education and Communication:

[i] Information Need Assessment (INA): This is first important step which is used in Lab to Land. Need Assessment is the process of identifying and analyzing specific causes of problems within an organization in order to suggest an appropriate solution. Needs assessment is an integral part of well-designed programs. A Four step Model for need assessment is given as following: [a] Performing Gap Analysis: it is done in order to check the actual performance
of organization and people against existing standard or to set new standard. [b] Prioritization of Needs: This can be done on the basis of their importance from a large list of needs. [c] Identification of cause of problems and opportunities: Problem can be identified through situation analysis, group discussion, and various participatory rural development techniques. [d] Identification of possible solution and growth opportunities: This can be identified through participatory way of communication. On the basis of prioritization of needs rural development personnel provides information through various sources of communication. [ii] Campaign and Studies regarding to Lab to Land: A report on the awareness campaign on lab-to-land initiative at diakkawn community hall, kolasi, for bilkhawthir rural development block on the 31st July, 2012 depicts that for successful implementation of development programs, the need for maximizing people's participation in planning, implementation and monitoring of all development programs was necessary.

Some Lab to Land Initiatives: Under the initiative, 43 districts have been identified from 28 states across the country wherein on a pilot basis the effectiveness of program implementation would be enhanced through field level training. The initiative aims to build collaborative knowledge and innovation community and demonstrate full achievement of the objective of all schemes of the rural sector (Rural Development, Agriculture, Watershed, Environment, Income generation, Employment, Roads, Health, Education, Sanitation, Drinking water, Electrification, Food Security, Land record, Industries, Irrigation, Citizen's charter, Grievance Redressal mechanism, etc.) Some of the initiatives includes [a] District Fatehgarh Sahib, Punjab. Transfer the knowledge from lab to land and demonstrate the achievements of the entire poverty alleviation programs and get hold of feedback for improvements in training, communication and overall implementation strategy, with the maturing of the intervention in the selected one block in a district. [b] Sasthamcott Block, Kerala; [c] Thingdaw block and District Kolasi in Mizoram; Government of Mizoram constituted State Level Committee on Lab-to-Land Initiative under the Chairmanship of Minister, Rural Development and Parliamentary Secretary, Rural Development Department as Vice Chairman. [d] District Bhilwara in Rajasthan [d] Dimoria block, Assam.

Pilot Project:

Training: In order to bring together different stakeholders to a common understanding and constitute the Knowledge and Innovation Community (KIC), training programs will be conducted in the Block and the District by SRDs. Stakeholders will be made aware of the availability of resources under various programs and the manner in which the resources can be optimally utilized in a collaborative fashion. Stress will be laid on enhancing the knowledge and program management skills of the elected Panchayati Raj representatives, Community Resource Persons, Self Help Groups and other peoples' institutions like youth clubs, mahila mandals, user groups, watershed committees, JFMC, youth volunteers, etc. Knowledge of latest innovations and best practices in program management will be shared with all the stakeholders. In particular, use of community radio will be promoted along with other media of communication such as wall newspapers, leaflets, pamphlets, magazines.

Implementation: The action plan prepared under the initiative will be implemented with available resources under various programs. Training programs will be completed in one block within a period of three to four months. On successful completion of the training program in three to four months, similar activities will be taken up in other blocks of the district by the District Administration. State may take another block in another district for undertaking this initiative. The achievements in the block may be showcased at different venues and it can be used as best practice model which can be customized in local context to take up Initiative in other blocks. In this manner, coverage of the implementation of the Initiative will progressively expand. It is expected that the outcome of the initiative will go a long way towards fulfilling the dreams of Gram Swaraj, as envisioned by the Father of the Nation, Mahatma Gandhi.

Way Forward: Training methods to be used to give information, education and knowledge to the rural people include [i] Use of Information Communication Technologies: “Information is like a deep well, fed by perennial spring and our mind is the little bucket that we drop in to it”. Print media is one of the first to be used as mass media for communicating the information. The main components of print media through which information is disseminated by extension functionaries are newspapers, magazines, booklets, folders, leaflets and bulletins. Oral media such as individual contact, seminars, lectures,
List of districts/blocks identified for the pilot project is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>Block</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Andhra Pradesh</td>
<td>Rangareddi</td>
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<td>Warangal</td>
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<td>2. Arunachal Pradesh</td>
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<td>3. Assam</td>
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<td>4. Bihar</td>
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<td>5. Chattisgarh</td>
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<td>10. Jharkhand</td>
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<td>15. Manipur</td>
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<td>17. Mizoram</td>
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<td>22. Tamil Nadu</td>
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<td>West Tripura</td>
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<td>23. Tripura</td>
<td>Charakot</td>
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<td>24. Uttar Pradesh</td>
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<td>25. Uttarakhand</td>
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<td>Nagar</td>
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<td>26. West Bengal</td>
<td>Nadra</td>
<td>Shangpur</td>
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Discussions etcetera also play an important role in information dissemination. Communication can be more effective with rural women if traditional media are used. Traditional media are personal, familiar and credible forms include puppetry, drama, folk songs. These all media can be used by rural development personnel to give the information to the rural people. [ii] Contact programs and demonstrations: Demonstration is a method of training in which the trainers shows step by step process of a method, operation and describe it. Rural development or the Extension Personnel’s can be used these demonstration to give the information among the rural people. [iii] Knowledge centre for every village: Village Knowledge Centres can provide villages with knowledge that the local community needs and it uses information and communication technologies (ICTs) to deliver the knowledge when it is needed. The aim is to bridge the digital divide and thus address the social exclusion and poverty associated with it. The information provided should be: demand-driven and timely, locale-specific and relevant to the day-to-day life. Address to season based queries. Community newspaper reader’s opinion should be necessary for user register analysis, findings from village profile, thematic wise segregation, need based user meetings, government announcements, area specific, target group. [iv] Solar operated rural tele-marts: Tele-centre on Wheels is a new way to access information in rural India. [v] INFO THELA and Information Kiosks: InfoTheola and Information Kiosks can be good source of communication. [vi] Internet radio through mobile phone: [vii] Community radio: community radio is a form of local radio which defines itself as an autonomous entity and relies on the community for its survival without any commercial aims or objects. Community radio is a medium that gives voice to the voiceless that serves as the mouthpiece of the marginalized and is at the heart of communication and democratic processes within societies. This is a participatory medium of communication provides a platform to rural people to share their views, their problems. Community radio can be used by the rural development workers to provide information, Education and Knowledge to the rural people.

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PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT AND DECENTRALIZATION

Participatory development and devolution of decentralization is the key elements of people centered environment in which the rural community can exercise their voices and rights and thereby can get involved in the decision making process for better inclusiveness. The feeling of belongingness and affiliation will certainly increase the people’s participation in various schemes and that will empower and motivate them to raise voice against any corrupt practices and any wrong doings which may hamper the growth of rural economy.

“Power to the people” can be given a useful meaning through community participation in their own development process. The true democratic participation and its success very much depend upon “AWARE AND POWER” in the society among the commoner. The enlargement of people’s
choice and their involvement in various schemes is very much inevitable for the triumph of true democracy. Beside it, constitutional guarantee for self-governance and people’s participation in the implementation stage of various rural development schemes and their effectiveness truly based on the awareness and knowledge of the people at the grass root level.

Gram Swaraj or Village Democracy envisaged by Gandhiji based on bottom up approach ensures designing and implementation of people’s centered schemes for rural development where people can have the voice and choice and be the part of the schemes. But in India, there has been a contrast in formulating the policies and implementing them at the grass root level, fundamentally due to inability of the government to make the people to participate in the policy formulation. Hence development process gets halted and thus unable to cater the benefits among the masses. In fact, it will deter the power to reach to the public especially at the bottom of the pyramid. The three ‘f’ funds, functions, and functionaries are not optimally operated; leads to leakage of benefits that is unable percolates to the masses. To overcome such constraints and challenges in the process, The Ministry of Rural Development has taken Lab to Land Initiative in this direction.

LAB to Land Initiative

Better India can be envisaged only when better citizen can be created. Lab to Land (L2L) initiative is no doubt a welcome initiative taken up by The Ministry of Rural Development, for a purpose to create and spread awareness to enhance the rural productivity through information and knowledge sharing in the implementation stages of various rural development schemes at village level.

L2L initiative purposefully designed to bring qualitative changes in the rural landscape by improvising the effectiveness of implementation stage of rural schemes/programmes. The initiative facilitates in awareness generation, enhances the people’s choice and motivates the people to participate in designing, planning and monitoring of plans, social audit and facilitating redress of grievances of the citizens and protection of their rights.

Vision

Lab-to-Land initiative aims at achieving improvement in quality of life of the people by bringing into fruition provisions of the programmes for the development and welfare of the people in rural areas. This scheme seeks to secure greater involvement and commitment of the people at large and make the implementing agencies more responsive and efficient so that deficiencies and discrepancies in the implementation stage can be diagnosed and corrective measures can be taken to make it more efficient and meaningful. This initiative has been implemented through the NIRD/SIRDs and District Administration at the Panchayat level.

Bharat Nirman Volunteers: A Cadre for Capacity Building

UNDP Report-2002 has emphasized on the importance of volunteerism that has “enormous scope for broadening participation in governance and promoting more equitable outcomes of people.” The Ministry of Rural Development has conceived Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) as a part of Lab to Land initiative for better coordination among the various schemes and stakeholders and thus helps in reducing the gap in implementation of various schemes.

If model government initiatives are to be flagged off through a vital participative and model citizenry then, the BNVs scheme is an ideal flagship scheme to empower the citizenry to participate in direct government to citizen (G2C) initiatives, seeking to revive the interest of youth and other deprived sections in matters of collaborative, community capacity building and inclusive development. By coming out such a contemplative programme, Government of India intends to bring in the rural youth in the mainstream of governance at the grass root level and hence entailing and crafting a significant move for democratic participation at rural areas. It will create wonders in the states where the youth feels to be aloof and isolated from the development process. BNVs schemes definitely give an impetus to much talk about inclusive development especially in the context of youth and unprivileged sections.
The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India started building a cadre of Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) under the Lab to Land Initiative in 2010-11 and intends to train and develop about 40 lakhs persons as Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) to bring greater efficiency and effectiveness in implementation of rural development programmes. This mass-based, decentralized capacity building people's centered initiative is quite innovative and futuristic too.

**BNVS: Role and Functional Benefits**

- They will be engaged in creating and spreading awareness and initiate people's involvement and participate in various government programmes to make it very much popular and successful. Beside it, they will work for agriculture, livestock, fisheries, SHGs, sanitation and literacy etc. Without mass awareness, people's participation in planning, execution and monitoring of any programme is difficult.

- They will communicate the instances of misuse of funds, irregularities and corruption that come to their notice and communicate the same to the local rural development authority for action. This scheme will certainly contributes to the strengthening of vigilance and monitoring of the rural development programmes.

- They will create awareness for better transparency and accountability in implementation of government programme by disseminating of information and helps in speeding up delivery of public services in the rural areas.

- Through improved access of infrastructure and institutional services and other resources, BNVs may enhance the provision of benefits to landless laborers, forest dwellers, artisans, farmers, women and other weaker sections like SC/ST too. They will awaken them about their rights and entitlement and help them to build confidence to raise voice.

- They will disseminate and build a sense of purpose, solidarity and cohesion among the local level for better and effective implementation of programmes.

- The scheme no doubt enhance the status of a definite group of persons by inculcating the values of honesty, charity and integrity and thereby making them to work unitedly and voluntarily for the development of their villages and for the country too. This will develop the sense patriotism among them.

- BNVs are working to help poorest among the poor and help the oppressed classes to fight against social evils like alcoholism, corruption, child labour and any other discrimination which work against social harmony.

- These volunteers may assist the government functionaries in shouldering the responsibility in delivery of public services and can improve administrative efficiency in a cost effective manner.

- There is a chance of propelling a level participation of rural youth to see for themselves "governance in practice" and seizing their chance of brainstorming a citizen led "community-based innovation" in carrying and this specific rural development programme will definitely enhance the G2C (government to citizen) service delivery mechanism for a better governance.

- This BNVs programme is highly idealistic and positivist in terms of providing the BNVs a direct government insignia and emphasizing on the well publicized capacity building and decentralized approach in spearheading lab to land initiatives.

- They should help in preparation of citizen charters and its implementation by the assistance of Gram Panchayat, Block with other functionaries by communicating the expectations of the citizens and help in preparing a workable delivery standard for that purpose.

- They sometimes work together to neutralize and nullify the negative forces which undermine the effectiveness of Gram Sabha and implementation of various programmes.

- These schemes certainly motivate the rural youth to contribute for the holistic development of their village and their neighborhood.
BNVs may create awareness and social audit through which any deviation and discrepancy in programme can be highlighted and corrective measures can be taken.

It provides a platform to the marginalised and socially deprived population to actively participate in the decision making process and can raise their voice against any malpractices in the implementation of rural development schemes.

Scheme meant for BNVs, may serve as a training ground/internship for the rural / educated / interested youth for look out to gain experience in term of conduct and give an opportunity to these marginalised group, to essay a pivotal leadership and community steering role.

The programme is set to be the stomping ground of highly motivated individuals seeking to establish their clout, reputation and presence with the village demography and using their “presence” at the village level. They will become harbinger of change and initiative to chart a political route for them via local self government Panchayat level.

BNVs: Key Challenges and Implied Suggestions

- Although the schemes comes with best of intentions (on account of The Ministry of Rural Development), there is a spring of “impractical idealism” in the way proposal has been drafted.
- Accountability and responsibility cannot be imposed on them without any remuneration paid and thereby the purpose may be defeated and ineffective.
- By not allocating even a tinge of allowance or perk or remuneration to the Bharat Nirman Volunteers, the government seems to be expecting some unrealistic and unfeasible results to come. We have to realize that the probable eligible applicants will be not so affluent at this level, thus in order to cater an appropriate human resource as Bharat Nirman Volunteer, the government needs to provide them some lucrative incentives, if not to lure them, but at least to dispense the money in lieu of their time and service they are rendering.
- Lack of monetary incentives to BNVs may lead to “rent seeking behaviour” and may cause distrust among the people.
- The BNVs have not been given the direct responsibility to co-ordinate with either elected representatives of Panchayat Raj or permanent executive or the state functionaries, in the environment of uncertainty and vagueness of specification of task; it will not cater the best of talent. They should be affiliated to Gram Panchayat for better implementation of program.
- The eligibility of BNVs should be elaborated and element of experience in any of the programme of Bharat Nirman Programme should have been given considerable preference.
- The five pronged reservation (SC, ST, OBC, Minority, Women) provided for the BNVs is contradictory to the spirits of volunteerism and volunteerism implies an individual’s deliberate discretion to come forward and participate. In this scenario, the reservation in BNVs dilutes the rational of being a volunteer. But at the same time, keeping in consideration, the deprived classes should be given an opportunity by replacing the reservation to a “preference based mechanism”.
- For the BNVs to be a catalyst of change at the village level, he must be seen by the citizens as a source of trust, by the citizens as a source of trust, confidence and be strongly connected to the linguistic, socio-economic landscape of the particular demographic. But reservation may disrupt the expectation.
- The proposed installation of National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN) and Broadband Optical Fibre Network (BOFN) will certainly enhance the institutional delivery mechanism from G2C (government to citizen) and the role of BNVs may be reduced and will add to intermediary cost in politics.

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BHARAT NIRMAN VOLUNTEERING: IS IT A FAVOUR?

Dr. G. Mary Sunanda

Volunteering is in vogue in each and every country. China hosted 2008 Beijing Olympics, hired volunteers to meet the needs of all people, participants and to look after few things meticulously.

Bharat Nirman is a branded programme launched by the Government of India in the year 2005. It is now 8 years old, taking huge strides into rural development with flagship of Volunteering. Its scope is divided into 6 + 1 sub-areas like water supply, Roads, Housing, Telephone, Electricity, irrigation and capacity building of rural youth, women folk etc. Government has been launching some programmes to uplift the rural poor, since Independence. Every five year plan had some allocation with regard to rural poor. ICDS scheme is a first of its kind remarkable one which is meant for the all round development of small kids(0-6) and their nutritional food. But it lost its rudder and became sulky. Midday meals programme is also another programme could not attract the rural children to break the stagnation and wastage. This programme also could not yield 100% results. Some parents due to less awareness could not send their children to ICDS centres and also to Schools. So, Bharath Nirman Programme is the mixture of old and new schemes and flagship programmes based on the philosophies of Gandhi, Swami Vivekananda, Ambedkar, Rajiv Gandhi and other leaders.

Philosophy of volunteering is easy to understand. "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country". People are reminded of this quotation with regard to the concept of volunteering. Ministry of Rural Development floated this concept of volunteering in the year 2010. Since then number of volunteers has been increasing, MoRD target is upto 4.5 lakhs. We find number at 1,56,323.

BNVS inspect Anganwadi Centre
Volunteering is in vogue in each and every country. China hosted 2008 Beijing Olympics, hired volunteers to meet the needs of all people, participants and to look after few things meticulously. Similarly earth quake calamities. Both these incidents the volunteer work is needed. Volunteers work in time without any hazards. Volunteering is done to yield good results and to chase the goals in time. Some time back in Andhra Pradesh vidya volunteers were recruited to work at schools to substitute the regular teachers. They were paid some honorarium, in some cases these vidya volunteers were given importance at the time of selection of the regular teachers. Adult Education also has some volunteers like village coordinators and Mandal coordinators. But these people are paid some honorarium.BNV is first of its kind. One thing one would say, Rural youth comes of age to have become a volunteer in the BNV Programme.

Bharath Nirman volunteering has three dimensions. In the first dimension, volunteers are the representatives of Government. In India rural people live in villages. Government cannot have such a huge network to disseminate the flagship programmes at the door step of every poor family. Due to this democracy is strengthened. Poor people can now access any nearest sarpanch or any officer of the panchayath raj institution to express their grievances and seek some help. People will now understand the government policies and start cooperating with the government. Knowledge is power and now in the modern sense it is an asset too. So, knowledgeable society begins to originate. In this manner government is benefitted.

Secondly, Volunteers also benefit. All the volunteers that/who have undergone training have success stories to their credit. Capacity building is one area where youth is not aware, hence it is imparted among all the volunteers. Understanding ones weaknesses is also one of the benefit of this training programme. Grooming oneself into a resource person and to work like a leader are some of the areas where the participants are benefitted. Newly enrolled volunteer will be trained only once. AMR-APARD will decide the venue for conducting the training program.

GOVT. 2 VOLUNTEERS 3. SOCIETY including all politicians, bureaucrats, ordinary people.

Thirdly, Gandhi was a good volunteer. He learnt volunteering from house hold incidents and family related situations. And also from the way of life of his mother and father. Volunteering, for him is an acid test and a home product too. Here, BN volunteer is without honorarium, this can lead to corruption free society. Today, children and parents watch same serials on TV. Children after watching some programmes create their own role models from drama, cinema background because ethics and morals are no more demonstrated at home. Now BNV can set a good example of serving the Nation with courage and confidence. Volunteering can act like self motivation. Society is benefitted.

**Good Governance**

Prajala vaddaku palana. Good Governance is the bottom line. The total number of volunteers are 1,56,323. Schedule caste candidates stood at 3,31,786, Scheduled tribes candidate enrolled are around 4,03,807, other backward classes are around 6,72,728, Minorities are about 1,09,106. The number of these volunteers, working without any remuneration, is set to be Rs 4.5 lakh by the end of this year.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak yojana was started in the year December 25,2000. This is to provide good quality, long lasting durable roads. This facility connects very often urban to rural and rural to urban. This programme includes to construct bridges. Good number of FLY OVERS have been constructed in Hyderabad. Well raid roads people to move from one place to another. Ethnicity is dissiminated and preserved also. If a particular volunteer hails from one ward, his job is to visit the house holds and explain them about the mission of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak yojana.
Pucca houses is the scheme of government of known as Indira Awaas Yojana. The target set was 60 lac houses up to 2009. Telecommunication facilities is another task ahead. There are 66,822 villages need to be covered. Ten lac hectare of irrigation potential is worked out in the form of renovation, restoration of water bodies and extention and other irrigation schemes.

The Mission: British government legacy to our country, Education became the state responsibility, but now due to the growing population, government role extended to provide the basic necessities like water, good roads, pucca houses, telephonic connections, electricity and effective and modern irrigation facilities. Some of these areas have been planned in earlier five year plans, but substantial results have not been recorded. Hence, 1.21 billion have to be brought into this fold. To provide all these facilities is the Millennium Development Goals. This is the yardstick for India to keep hopes on grabbing a seat in Security Council.

The Role of Madhava Reddy – Andhra Pradesh Academy of Rural Development (AMR-APARD): APARD is an apex training institute in Andhra Pradesh for capacity building of rural development officers and the personnel of Panchayat Raj Institutions. It is headed by a Commissioner. The training centre started functioning from 3rd May, 1954 with its first batch of 30 Block Development Officers. In the initial years some of the IAS Probationers and delegates from Indonesia also underwent training here. The original clientele of APARD is personnel of Panchayat Raj Institutions. It is a feather in the cap of this training centre to extend its services in the form of training the volunteers of Bharat Nirman. The current enrollment of BNV is approximately 26,000.

This training centre published the volunteer forms to avoid inordinate delay in filling up in Online. A few testimonies of the participants were also mentioned to encourage the new volunteers to get interested. A national retreat, in collaboration with Ministry of Rural Development and National Institute of Rural Development, for elected representatives of PRI's and BNV volunteers was inaugurated on 20th September, 2012. Mr. Chandra moul, IAS, Commissioner, briefed the participants about organizing 15 workshops on ethics and morals by inviting the most eligible resource persons. Conducting Video conferences is a regular routine. A Mana T.V. programme is scheduled on 3rd November, this year.

As result of training, given at APARD, some of the BNV volunteers worked beyond their capacities. Creating an awareness and sensitizing among rural beneficiaries is the task of each volunteer. This task they have to complete with the given number of house holds, but going by the other unforeseen incidents, these volunteers helped aged people, widow people, organized health programmes, banned the use of plastic. Door to door survey was conducted etc., and won the hearts of the people. They have worked like Brand Ambassador.

Conclusion: ‘Hands that serve are holier than lips that pray’. Volunteer profile has to be updated as frequently as possible. So that any body can contact with them to know the brave stories and the substantial work done in each ward or mandal or district. Rural India is the backbone of Indian Economy. Rural youth forms the raw infrastructure of human resources. Teachers and Doctors have to be brought into this fold to disseminate the information to the students and to the patients, and make themselves good at current trends.

Niten Chandra, joint secretary, rural development, said a huge disconnect between the rural development ministry and people at large was being noticed for quite some time, which generated the idea for the initiative. People selected as volunteers are master trainers who generate awareness among the villagers about the benefits of various schemes.

Enrollment of volunteers of Bharat Nirman is in full swing in 25 states. Tamil Nadu has 3,00,000. This programme has to be included in the curriculum of all levels of courses.

[The author is Assistant Professor of Education, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar Open University Department of education Hyderabad]
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It's late night around 09:45 PM when Director, SIRD, Ranchi receives a phone call on his mobile from an unknown number and the caller informs him that 2-3 villages of Murto Panchayat in Bero Block of Ranchi district were badly affected from Diarrhea, Malaria and seasonal fever and no help form the Block PHC had come to their rescue till then. "Please do something for us Sir", requested the caller. When asked for an introduction the caller identified himself as Ravi Toppo, a young man who had joined recently as BNV from the very Panchayat. The Director assured that a special medical team from SIRD, Ranchi would be sent to the Panchayat immediately the very next day.

A Medical team from SIRD, Ranchi consisting of a Lady doctor and a male doctor was rushed to the Murto Panchayat next day wherein they not only treated 92 (ninety two) patients but also provided them with free medicines. This effort of SIRD was highly lauded by H.E. Governor of Jharkhand during the foundation day celebrations on 2nd October 2012 at SIRD, Ranchi.

Bharat Nirman Volunteers are a group of young people who have volunteered to bridge the gaps prevailing in our rural society between the various Government Programmes meant for their welfare and the rural poor. The best thing is that these volunteers belong to their village for whom they have pledged to work. As such they are the “son of the soil” who has now volunteered to carry the flag of sustainable development of our rural society under Lab – to – Land initiatives.

The main role of these BNVs are:

1. To communicate with the rural people.
2. To encourage them to participate in development process.
3. To help the rural people in getting benefits of flagship programme.
4. To bridge the gap between welfare scheme and actual implementation.
5. To act as a vigilant group.
6. To help promote Livelihood Generating Activities.
7. To co-ordinate between Government Agencies and the Common people.

With these objectives, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India in co-ordination with the State Government has launched this ambitious scheme of BNVs under the aegis of “Lab to Land initiatives”. Presently each State Govt. has been given a reasonable target of enrolling BNVs which has crossed the figure of 1.40 lakh till now. This scheme is based on the Gandhian Philosophy and the stimulus thoughts of Swami Vivekanandji wherein a great emphasis has been laid on voluntary social work. It has been quoted that no society can grow unless its young population volunteers to help it in its effort to develop in a sustainable manner.

Any youth who is above 18 years can enroll as BNV for his village/Panchayat provided he volunteers to work free of cost to help the growth
of his own village. It is expected that 1/3rd of the enrolments should be of women. If the proportion of women is more than 33% it is considered even better for the overall growth of the society. Once these BNVs are selected, they are given a basic training ranging from 3-5 days in which they are taught about voluntarism, moral values, Govt. Flagship Programmes and Panchayati Raj issues which shall help them in future while discharging their roles. They are also trained to get maximum benefit of Principle of Convergence. Thereafter each BNVs allotted 10-40 families of their village for whose interest they are supposed to look after.

Although this scheme is being promoted by MoRD but these BNVs are expected to help all the line departments of Govt. in implementation of their respective schemes. Most of the SIRDs have already organized workshops for all the line departments where the roles and responsibilities of these BNVs have been explained at stretch. The elected representatives of the State Assemblies as well as the PRIs have shown a great interest in this scheme as these people are playing a key role in the development process and their presence have become instrumental for the development of their constituencies. Actually these BNVs have proved to be a great help in implementing Panchayati Raj System. With their help Gram Sabhas have become more effective and regular. They are taking keen interest in empowering Gram Sabhas which acts as a village Parliament in true sense.

Today, we find BNVs extremely relevant as they have proved their worth during their pilot period. Even our Honorable President/Prime Minister has congratulated them for being the bridge between the Government and the common people. It is imperative that their roles and responsibilities should be encouraged in such a manner that the benefit of the Govt. schemes reaches to the rural poor in its true spirit.

[The author is a senior government official and Director, SIRD, Jharkhand]

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**Kurukshetra**

**FORTHCOMING ISSUES**

- Rural Drinking Water and Sanitation: January 2013
- Rural employment: February 2013
- Land Resources: March 2013
- Rural Budget: April 2013
- Empowering Gram Sabha: May 2013
"We have to shed mutual bickerings, shed the difference of being high or low and develop the sense of equality..."

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
Birth anniversary
31st October
"A nation's strength ultimately consists in what it can do on its own, and not what it can borrow from others."

Indira

National Integration Day
19 November

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India
Mobilisation of Bharat Nirman Volunteers

K. Kalita

A large number of rural development programmes are being implemented all over the country. Success of these depends to a large extent on active participation of the people in planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Ministry of rural Development, Government of India has started building a cadre of Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) under Lab To Land Initiative in 2010 – 2011 in a few selected blocks / Gram Panchayats through SIRDs and Selected district administration. In each village, adult persons are identified as volunteers for the effective implementation and monitoring of the programmes. Each volunteer is assigned 10 – 40 rural households to understand their need and to facilitate their fulfillment in partnership with Government agencies. The volunteers are supposed to work with the Panchayat Raj Institutions and line departments in the effective implementation of the programmes without any remuneration or honorarium for the services being rendered by them.

How BNVs began in the State

The Institute participated in a series of workshops /seminars organized by Department of Rural Development, Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India in New Delhi and NIRD, Hyderabad. The seminars provided the basic ideas of the Lab to Land Initiative to work with the Bharat Nirman Volunteers. A core group

BNVs extending Social Service at a Cultural Programme

BNV inspects MGNREGA Works
was constituted at the institutions to look into the matter. All relevant documents and guidelines provided by the Ministry has been translated into the Assamese language for easy understanding of the subjects. Various training and workshops were organized for the B.D.O. and other Block level officials. Different awareness generation camps were also organized for the Panchayat functionaries. PRIs have been helped a lot in selection of the BNVs.

**How present status achieved**

Several workshops and seminars were organized for the PRI functionaries as well as the B.D.O.s & Block level officials. Different awareness generation camps were also organized for the rural people of the selected blocks for dissemination of information about the Lab to Land Initiative and proper selection of BNVs. This helps in selection of BNVs in the selected blocks. These BNVs act

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**Details of the BNVs: number, gender wise, educational details etc.**

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Total 4813
as facilitator for proper dissemination as well as effective implementation of the govt. programmes. There are 4813 BNVs in the State till Date.

Statistics of the BNVs

Total number of Districts, Blocks, GPs, Villages in the state
- Districts: 27
- Blocks: 219
- Gaon Panchayat: 2202
- Villages: 26395

Districts, Blocks, GPs, Villages where BNV concept is implemented.
- Districts: 22
- Blocks: 39
- Gaon Panchayat: 402
- Villages: 3859
- Total no. of BNVs: 4813

Justification for selection of the areas where intervention made

39 blocks have been included under Lab to Lab Initiative for development of Bharat Nirman Volunteers. Different zones have been covered including blocks in Upper Assam, Middle Assam, Lower Assam, Barak Valley, BTAD area and Hill districts. Thrust has been given to cover tea garden areas, pockets inhabited by various tribal communities, char areas etc. Emphasis has been given to develop BNV from flood prone areas to orient BNV for disaster management activities.

Following selection process has adopted by SIRD for empanelling the BNVs:
- Sensitizing people on need for BNVs
- Orientation of block officials & PRIs for selecting BNVs in respective areas
- Participatory selection process through PRIs
- Inclusion of old existing group members who came forward to work as BNVs.

The SIRD, Assam has involved Faculty members and Jr. Faculty Members, Research associates, Project Associates working in the SIRD’s state H.Q.s as well as 12 extension centers as Trainers of different levels. Besides this, the SIRD has also developed a penal of Resource Persons for the training of BNVs at State and District levels.

Training and capacity building of the BNVs: when, where, how?

The BNVs were given 4 doses of training—
- i) One Day Orientation Training
- ii) 4 Days full fledged training
- iii) Exposure visit to the outside of the selected BNVs and
- iv) Skilled Development training for specific trade.

The training were conducted both in campus as well as off campus.

Activities and objectives:
- They will be able to know the concept and approaches of Bharat Nirman Volunteers.
- They will be able to know the concept, approaches for development of rural areas.
- They will be able to know the different flagship programmes of the government.
- They will be able to know about the different development programmes of the Government of India and State Government.
- They will be able to know the tools and techniques of social mobilisation and participatory development, monitoring etc.

Subjects to be covered:

1st round:
- Discussion on Bharat Nirman Volunteers.
- Role of Bharat Nirman Volunteers.
- Video film on volunteerism.
- Self esteem of the volunteers.
- Film on self esteem of the volunteers.
- Motivation, ethics and character building of volunteers.
- Film show on motivation.
- Discussion on various rural development programmes.
- PLA exercise.
- Right to Information Act.
- Practical exercise on form fillup.

2nd round:
- Functions of panchayats and role of Gram Panchayats.
- Social mobilisation for meaningful participation in Gram Sabhas.
• Village level participatory planning.
• Field exercise on village planning by applying PRA techniques.
• Planning and implementation of MGNREGA.
• Management of programmes relating to sanitation and drinking water – responsibility of rural people in maintaining health and hygiene in the villages.
• Programmes under NRHM.
• Social audit – concept and approaches.

3rd round.
• Income generating activities for rural livelihoods.
• Programmes for development of agriculture and horticulture.
• Role of livestock development and poultry farming in rural economy.
• Integrated fish farming.
• Income generating activities for rural youth and facilities for skill development.
• Credit delivery system through banks and financial institutions.

CASE STUDIES:

Name : Mr. Narayan Dev.
VILLAGE : DURUNG P.O.; DURUNG PATHAR
PIN: 782403
MOBILE NO. : 9678495070 GAON PANCHAYAT : TOPATOLI
BLOCK : DIMORIA DEVELOPMENT BLOCK
DISTRICT : KAMRUP METRO

Durung is a remote tribal village in Dimoria Development Block of Kamrup district of Assam. Most of the inhabitants are poor farmers and landless labourers. Awareness level of the villagers is very low in the village. The SIRD, Assam developed around 25 BNVs in the village. All these BNVs are very sincere and attended all the training programmes. They took keen interest in Right to information Act and learned thoroughly the Assamese version of RTI Act prepared by SIRD, Assam.

One of the BNVs from this village Narayan Dev is a very active social worker. His motto in life is to root out corruption from society and he dared to fight against it in many occasions. A person named Nikhil Das is a resident of Durrung village and he is very poor. Though he was living below poverty line he was not allotted a house under Indira Awas Yojana scheme by the Topatoli GP. After coming to know about this irregularity Narayan Dev with other members filed an application under RTI in the Block office and it was revealed that Nikhil Das had been deprived mainly because of the out of turn allocation of IAY house to another non deserving family. After this development the Block authority made an enquiry into the case and found the President of the concerned Gram Panchayat guilty. The BNVs filed an FIR in the police station and a case was registered against the President of the GP. Now as the case is sub judice in the court and the process is going to be lengthy one, the BNVs along with the villagers and panchayat officials has taken a decision in a meeting that the case will be withdrawn against the President to facilitate the panchayat to build the house for Nikhil Das’s family.

Being a very active BNV, he made a complaint against the concerned department for irregularities in the construction of a village road under PMGSY. According to the complaint the norms are not followed while constructing the road. Another incident is the construction of the irrigation canal which was not properly constructed. However after the initiative taken by the BNV Narayan Dev and his team the authority has taken measures to rectify the irregularities under his leadership. The BNVs of Durung Village formed a vigilance committee. This committee has taken care of all development activities of the village.

As a successful BNV worker Narayan Dev & his vigilance committee was awarded with a sum of Rs 25,000.00 which he wanted to utilize for a good cause. As there was no library in his village he along with other BNVs decided to build a library for the benefit of the student and common people. For this purpose, they approached the Zilla Parishad for financial help. The ZP financially helped them and now the house has been used as library. The SIRD Assam also helped them by donating two almirahs and lots of books.
NAME : Mr. Lalit Sonowal

VILLAGE : LAUMURI P.O. : NARUATHAN GAON PANCHAYAT : NARUATHAN PIN : 787058 MOBILE NO. : 9864446430

BLOCK : DHEMAJI DEVELOPMENT BLOCK DISTRICT : DHEMAJI

A young man Lalit Sonowal from Laumuri village under Naruathan GP of Dhemaji development block, is now very active as a Bharat Nirman Volunteer. Before joining the BNV he was a dedicated social worker and helping people in distress was his motto. He was known to all. One day the president of Naruathan GP wanted to know whether he is interested to work as a BNV. His answer was instant yes and from then there was no looking back for Sonowal. After joining as BNV, he participated in many training programmes organized by SIRD at the Block level. Now he is well equipped with the knowledge of various Government schemes like ICDS, RTI, MGNREGA, PMGSY etc. which he want to disseminate and create awareness among illiterate people. Now people are more aware about various government schemes and importance of participating in gram Sabha.

There were various anomalies in the construction of a village road under PMGSY. He quickly took the initiative and informed the villagers about the whole matter. Villagers were very much relieved at his initiative and they collectively lodged a complaint at concerned department. Sonowal and other BNVs wanted to see the estimate of the project from the contractor. Initially, he was reluctant to provide the estimate. Then the BNVs discussed the matter with the Chief engineer and insisted on examining the estimate. It was found that the construction was below standard as it was not as per the norms. As the public pressure was mounting, the Chief Engineer directed the contractor to reconstruct the road and he finally yielded to the public pressure led by BNV activist Mr. Sonowal and his team.

Under his leadership the people of his village got a Bailey bridge as the approach road of the RCC bridge in Ghilamora – Dhemaji PWD road was not completed for a long time despite repeated demands. The BNVs with the villagers decided to build a bamboo bridge and one day the chief engineer was prevented to cross the road. Mr. Lalit Sonowal argued with him that it was only for common people as it had been made by them. There was heated altercation and situation reached such a stage that local police had to rush to the spot and finally the DC had to pull up the officials for neglecting the demand of the people. The DC assured the BNVs and the villagers that he would take steps to build a Bailey bridge for the benefit of the people for smooth communication and that materialized within one week.

As his village is situated in a flood prone area the people are always in distress due to flood problems. This year there was a devastating flood in his district. He along with other BNVs were always active in providing flood relief to the people. For proper distribution of materials he cooperated with the local administration and this action facilitated the proper utilization of relief materials.

With his initiative the department of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary organized animal health camp in the flood prone areas. The affected animals had got proper treatment and medicines. This is a great relief to the local people at the time of distress. Likewise the Department of health and family welfare also came forward to organize a health camp in the flood affected area. Mr. Sonowal and other BNVs helped in distributing medicine to the local people. Now he is very active volunteer in the area and inspired many others to join as BNV to serve the nation.

The movement of the BNV will take more momentum if we look into the following recommendations:

a) To act as national policy like in MGNREGA, NRLM etc.

b) Involvement of district administration as in MGNREGA

c) Presence of D.C’s and B.D.O’s during the colloquium organized by the Ministry.

d) Progress report by District Administration in consultation with SIRDs

e) Exposure visit of faculty as well as BNVs to the States where excellent work is done by BNVs.

f) Recognition of BNVs doing excellent work by the Ministry.

[The author is Director State Institute of Rural Development Assam]
COMMUNITY MOBILIZATION—ANDHRA PRADESH EXPERIENCE

K.CHANDRA MOULI

In view of the factors like inadequate staff, heavy work load, illiteracy among many of the rural households, lack of access to information on programmes, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development has recognized the need to disseminate information on all government sponsored programmes among rural households through a network of volunteers called Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs).

After independence, both Central and State Governments have been striving hard to improve the socio-economic well-being of rural households through various welfare and development programmes for the last 64 years. The Government had established a machinery to plan, implement and monitor these programmes at state, district, mandal and village level.

Due to higher number of rural households, inadequate government staff and time at their disposal to reach out all these households, lower level people participation in planning and implementation are important reasons for lacking transparency and accountability in the government sponsored welfare and development programmes.

The Ministry of Rural Development allocated Rs 87,000 crores during 2011-12 and in addition to that, Central and State governments have earmarked Rs 8,00,000 crores for various welfare and development schemes. The Government has recognized the need to form a dedicated volunteers as bridge and messenger for the programmes planned at the Central Government level (Lab) to the field level (Land) so as to deliver the benefits to the deserving and eligible rural households with enhanced transparency and accountability.

In view of the factors like inadequate staff, heavy work load, illiteracy among many of the rural households, lack of access to information on programmes, Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development has recognized the need to disseminate information on all government sponsored programmes among rural households through a network of volunteers called Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs). We are aware that the Government of India, Ministry of Rural
Development have been implementing various programmes through State Governments like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Act (MGNREGA) Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) National Rural Drinking water Programme (NRDWP) Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) Rajeev Gandhi Gramin Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY) Pradhan Mantri Gramin Sacya Yojana (PMGSY) National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA).

For effective and efficient implementation of programmes, community participation is compulsory and to ensure their participation, awareness about such programmes needs to be generated and this is well thought over by the Government of India, Ministry of Rural Development through a network of Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs).

Andhra Pradesh Experiment:

In Andhra Pradesh, Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) initiative was piloted initially in one village called Cheedel, Manchal mandal in Ranga Reddy district and later scaled the incredible success to 81 villages of 68 mandals in 22 rural districts. During the first phase, 1742 Bharat Nirman Volunteers were trained in a foundation course at AMR-APARD, the duration of which was 3 days. As a result of this training programme, Bharat Nirman Volunteers have taken up various voluntary activities in their respective villages for the benefit of the community, by converging some of the components under various flagships programmes of both Gol and GoAP. During the second phase, 15,550 Bharat Nirman Volunteers are identified from 735 villages of 225 mandals in 22 districts. Realizing the importance of community planning and owning the inputs in many service delivery sectors and after fully convinced that a saturation approach for a whole mandal may be of immense learning, one mandal namely Moinabao of Ranga Reddy district was selected by the community themselves facilitated by a Mandal Development Officer, Sri K. Yadavaya.

From that mandal alone, there are 255 Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs), who have already undergone the foundation course and are able to work on all the components in HENS G-DEE. The result so far are very encouraging and many services under Health, Education, Sanitation, etc for which there was no demand from the community are today being accessed due to which even the service delivery sectors are surprisingly responding well.

Approach

1) State, District and Mandal level committees were constituted.

2) Core Committee constituted at APARD

3) APARD Core Committee (ACC) held several rounds of interactive meetings with the mandal level officials and elected representatives and collected mandal level Profile.

4) APARD Core Committee visits Cheedel gram panchayat every Friday in a week.

5) Initially for a period of one month, APARD Core Committee have interacted with the local community and elected representatives and understood local dynamics.

6) As a follow-up action, the key functionaries, elected representatives and SHG members of Cheedel gram panchayat and mandal level officials were invited to APARD for one-day orientation workshop and they were briefed about the objectives of the Lab-to-Land Initiative and shown documentary films on beacon gram panchayats were also shown to them.

7) Commissioner, Core committee from AMR-APARD, district, mandal level officials visited Cheedel gram and held detailed discussions with the local community.

8) After several visits and interactions and entry point activities like blood test camps for hemoglobin levels among women, the local youth were self-motivated and enrolled themselves as Bharat Nirman Volunteers.
Initiative taken up by the community with the facilitation by BNVs

- As part of National Pulse Polio Immunization Programme, from 23-01-2011 to 25-01-2011, 0-5 year age children about 134 were administered polio vaccine in Cheeded Gram Panchayat.

- In the pilot mandal of Manchal, Ranga Reddy district, number of 0-5 year children were administered polio vaccine and the details are furnished below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>23-01-2011</th>
<th>6009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24-01-2011</td>
<td>166</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25-01-2011</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>6237</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A screening camp organized by Primary Health Centre, Manchal on 18th February 2011 to assess the hemoglobin levels among women in Cheeded, has attracted as many as 189 women and girl children. Women literally flocked together keeping aside their routine day to day works at the venue by 9 AM waiting their turn to come for health check-up.” Thanks to the APARD’s KEYCAP – Lab to Land Initiative.

It was for the first time such type of blood screening camp had been organized in the village” says gram sarpanch Smt. Anasuya. She feels very proud for successfully organizing a health camp with the help of a lady doctor from PHC. According to Dr. Sandhya Rani majority of the women in Cheeded village are suffering from anemic problems and are suffering from various opportunistic diseases. Of the 189 women screened, the results are as follows:

**Case Study**

**Health & Nutrition**

A case study on conflict resolution by Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) of Cheeded village of Manchal mandal in Ranga Reddy district

Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) has sanctioned one “NUTRITION CENTRE” through District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) to SGSY members of Cheeded village with an outlay of Rs 3.0 lakhs, in the background of the following concept: The cycle of malnutrition starts from absence of Antenatal Care (ANC) to pregnant women, aggravates due to low birth weight of babies (<2.5 Kg) and ultimately leads to infant morbidity or mortality. The nutritional status of children is strongly related to the nutritional status of their mothers. Children whose mothers are underweight (with a body mass index less than 18.5 kg/m2) are much more likely than other children to be stunted, wasted, and underweight. The solution to this huge problem thus lies in maternal nutrition which then leads to child nutrition and consequent elimination of maternal and child mortality. The Nutrition Centre was established by one SGSY group belonging to one of the political parties existing in the village. Another SGSY group actively supported by another opposition political party had locked the “NUTRITION CENTRE”. Then the SGSY Group which has established the centre had reported the incidence to the mandal community coordinator of manchal mandal and DRDA official concerned of Ranga Reddy district. The reason found to be for this incidence is only political rivalry; The District and Mandal level Officials have made several rounds of talks with both the parties but of no use.

Kurukshetra  ▼ December 2012
### Hemoglobin Levels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hemoglobin Levels</th>
<th>Number of Women screened</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.00-8.00</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.00-9.00</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>31.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.00-10.00</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>31.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.00-10.50</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>24.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5-11.00</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.00-11.50</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.94</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### How present status achieved

Experiencing the success of initiative in the pilot village of Cheed, the Commissioner, AMR-APARD has called for meeting with the District Training Managers (DTMs) to scale up the initiative in the state.

- Commissioner, AMR-APARD had convened a workshop with the District Resource Persons of 22 districts on 02-02-2011 and explained about the concept of the Lab-to-Land Initiative (KEYCAP) and identified 81 Gram Panchayats in 68 mandals in 22 districts.

- Two Day Workshop on Lab-to-Land Initiative with Sarpanches, Volunteers and Ward members of 81 Gram Panchayats on 25-03-2011 to 26-03-2011 at AMR-APARD.

- The Commissioner, APARD has addressed all the District Collectors, Chief Executive Officers, District Panchayat Officers through D.O. Letters about the initiative.

- The Principals and faculty of ETCs are also involved actively in the initiative.

- The District Training Managers (DTMs) of the districts concerned are also involved in the initiative.

- Monthly video conferencing is being conducted with the BNVs, DTMs. Communication through Bulk SMS with the BNVs.

- Success stories of BNV villages in “Sthanika Palana” magazine.

- Interaction with the Mandal Parishad Development Officers (MPDOs) and BNVs.

- Participation of Select BNVs in the National Colloquium

- Interaction of BNVs with Face Book, Y-TUBE in the APARD’s website.

- Brochures on Lab to Land Initiative (KEYCAP) were printed and distributed to the 81 select villages and after reading the concept given in the brochure, self-motivated Volunteers have filled up the perforated format and sent to AMR-APARD with a request to enroll them and accordingly all those BNVs were registered. All these enrolled BNVs have undergone 3-day foundation training programme at AMR-APARD. The details are furnished below:

After conducting Training Needs Analysis (TNA), 3-days foundation course was designed and training was conducted for all 1742 BNVs at AMR-APARD. The highest number of BNVs trained are from Warangal district and the lowest numbers of BNVs are from SPSR Nellore district. In the training programme Organizations like Brahma Kumaris, Vandemataram Founéaion, Lead India 2020 were involved.
Modus operandi for engagement of BNVs and their work evaluation

It is completely voluntary. Concept of lab to land initiative, need for awareness among rural households about various flagship programmes are given in the printed brochure along with the prescribed format. These brochures along with the perforated application part were given to the Extension Training Centres. They in turn have distributed them to the Mandal Parishad Development Officers (MPDOs), who have distributed them to the select Gram Panchayats. The Gram Panchayat Secretaries have handed over these brochures and application formats for registration to local youth in the villages concerned. Youth after duly filling up have returned the filled-in formats to the Gram Panchayat Secretaries. The Gram Panchayat Secretaries have sent them to MPDOs, which were finally uploaded by the District Training Managers (DTMs) in the website: www.ruralaksha.nic.in at the Computer Centres in the offices of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs), Zilla Parishad.

Training and capacity building of the BNVs:
When, Where, How?

The enrolled Bharat Nirman Volunteers are from different background like some of them are housewives, college students, farmers, agricultural Labor, retired Employees, Business people, ex-sarpanches, ex-MPTCs and paid functionaries of different flagship programmes etc. And, their educational backgrounds are ranging from 1st standard to Post Graduation. The trainees are volunteers and they are not under anybody’s control and nothing is binding on them. Only factor which drives them to work with and for the benefit of the community is self-motivation.

In the light of above background of diversified nature, the Commissioner, APARD had carefully designed a 3-day foundation training programme in consultation with the Core Committee of Lab to Land Initiative and this 3-day foundation training programme has been designed with combination of different training methods like lecture in-house faculty and external expert speakers, group discussion, short documentary films, interactive discussions, Computer-based Tutorials, Peer learnings.

1. TV sets are available in 293 mandal offices.
2. Conference hall is available with the seating capacity of 50 in each MPDO office.
3. MANA TV Studio is at Hyderabad. From studio, 3-day training programme is planned for BNVs present at all 293 mandal headquarters.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sl No</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>No.of Mandals</th>
<th>No.of Villages</th>
<th>Total no. of BNVs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Adilabad</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Anantapur</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Chittoor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>East Godavari</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Guntur</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>YSR Kadapa</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Karimnagar</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Khammam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Krishna</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Kurnool</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Mahaabubnagar</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Medak</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Nalgonda</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>SPSR Nellore</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Nizamabad</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Prakasam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ranga Reddy</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Srikakulam</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Visakhapatnam</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Vizianagaram</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Warangal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>West Godavari</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>1742</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Coverage of all newly registered BNVs is planned during the month of June 2012.

5. Group Discussion, Evaluation test and feedback from trainees will be obtained by the MPDOs.

In this initiative, a group of families are attached to each BNV. Each BNV talks to each family and finds out requirements and link with the ongoing programmes. For example, in a village there are 9 wards, and in ward 1 there are 24 families. From ward 1, only 6 volunteers have come forward to do voluntary work. Then each volunteer in ward 1 select 4 families and talk to those attached 6 families from time to time and identify needs and link those needs for fulfillment within the available ongoing government programmes. The following is the example of BNV 1 in Ward 1.

![Diagram of BNV structure]

**Role of BNVS**

Government of Andhra Pradesh is implementing following rural development programmes in rural areas:

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)
2. Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)
3. Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY)

The Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) was established by the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GOAP) as a sensitive support structure to facilitate poverty reduction through social mobilization and improvement of Livelihoods of rural poor in Andhra Pradesh. SERP is implementing this flagship programme through District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh. The Government of India have earmarked 50% SGSS funds for covering the SC/ST families belonging to BPL category under Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub Plan (TSP). DRDAs ensure that these earmarked funds are properly utilized for assisting SC/ST families to come out of poverty.
SERP is working on the following areas for the benefit of people in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SL No</th>
<th>Area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Institutional Building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>SHG Bank linkage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sree Nidhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Insurance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Finance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>PoP</td>
</tr>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Education</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>Health &amp; Nutrition</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>Disability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Dairy</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>NPM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Land</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>EGMM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Pensions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(4) Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)
Andhra Pradesh State Housing Corporation is implementing IAY in rural areas of Andhra Pradesh.
(5) Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF)
(6) Prime Minister’s Grameen Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)
(7) National Rural Drinking Water Mission (NDRDWM)
(8) Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC)
(9) Rajeev Gandhi Grameen Vidyudikarana Yojana (RGGVY)
(10) Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURAs)
(11) Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDP)
(12) National Rural Health Mission (NRHM)
(13) Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA)
(14) National Horticulture Mission (NHM)

There are many flagship programmes of Government of India as listed above. An equal number of important programmes of Government of Andhra Pradesh are also implemented simultaneously in the areas of Health, Education, Nutrition, Sanitation, Gender, Drinking water, Employment, Environment, etc. (HENS G DEE). Bharat Nirman Volunteers in Andhra Pradesh engage themselves in facilitating the services under all the above programmes to reach unreached families by creating awareness.

Apart from attending individual families, BNVs as a team also take up voluntary activities in the village for the benefit of the community. As the initiative is scaled up in all the rural districts, feedback for recording the performance is obtained through following ways:

- Face book in APARD’s website
- Post cards to Commissioner, APARD
- Monthly Videoconferencing
- Sthanika Palana
- Bulk SMS
- Weekly visits by faculty and DTMs
- Interaction through MANA TV
- Learning through news published in the daily newspapers
- Feedback from ETCs

A Third party Evaluation was already conducted by engaging the services of Sundarayya Vignan Kendra, Hyderabad and the summary findings are given below:

- Arranged cremation of two unclaimed dead bodies
- Arranged rickshaws for collection and transportation of waste generated to the dumping yard
- Motivated liquor vendors to close 10 shops
Motivated farmers to give up crop holiday, an agitation against government.

Mobilized around 300 women and purchased vanitha cards at Rs 200 per card from APSRTC and obtained signatures of around 500 persons and got bus services.

BNVs motivated the family members of a dalit woman just before she passed away to donate her eyes to EYE BANK.

BNVs have formed into 3 teams and cleared scrub jungle in the premises of veterinary hospital, community hall, primary school, high school, office of a cooperative society.

With the help of lions club, health camp was conducted by Mediciti Corporate Hospital for 480 people, identified 20 persons ailing from heart ailments. Among 20, 4 are school children. All the 20 were treated in the MEDICITI CORPORATE HOSPITAL under “Arogya Sree” scheme.

Obtained plant species of teak, neem and amla from Forest Department and supplied @ 3 plants of teak, neem and amla per household for all households.

Enrolled 1 school drop out into the primary and 2 drop outs into high school.

BNVs have associated with SHGs and constituted into street sanitation committees. Every Sunday and Thursday they carry out street sanitation activity.

Campaigns are conducted for adult literacy.

This is an excellent initiative in which trained BNVs are sparing their leisure time in taking up voluntary activities and also facilitating better implementation of welfare and development activities.

[The author is a senior government officer and is COMMISSIONER A.M.R-A.P. ACADEMY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT RAJENDRANAGAR, HYDERABAD]
Children's Day
14 November

"Freedom brings responsibilities and burdens and we have to face them in the spirit of a free and disciplined people."

[Signature]

Ministry of Information and Broadcasting
Government of India
BHILWARA, RAJASTHAN

Over the past few years, Onkar Singh, District Collector of Bhilwara along with a team of dedicated Bharat Nirman Volunteers (BNVs) has catapulted the Bhilwara district of Rajasthan into a successful 'model' of Government's 'Lab to Land' initiative. Collectively they have created awareness about the welfare and development activities among rural households leading to better planning and quality implementation of programs with transparency and accountability.

Onkar Singh started with mobilizing people to join as BNVs. The BNV program was publicized via mass media, interpersonal activities and through grass root functionaries such as Gram Sabha and GP level Prerna Shivir, that reached every house hold. This led to a good number of people enrolling as BNVs.

Today, Bhilwara District has identified about 12000 BNVs and the bio-data of about 9500 BNVs have already been uploaded on Tiksha Website www.ruraldiksha.nic.in. Visibly enthusiastic in their dress code of T-shirt & Cap with a logo of BNV and identity card, each BNV is trained to regularly interact with the BDOs and the district administration to update themselves with the latest Government schemes, ensure effective implementation of the same, provide a feedback to the authorities on the tasks achieved and maintain close contact with the authorities and village people.

Capacity building of selected BNVs, through training modules and learning materials based on the local situations is another vital part of the BNV training plan. Trained BNVs develop close understanding with line departments for effective implementation of the schemes.

All along Onkar Singh has played an ingenious role in this makeover endeavour of Bhilwara. He has activated an effective communication circuit between the villagers and BNVs, wherein they contact district authorities over phone and help the people at the grass root level to take benefits of all the Govt. aided programs being implemented in the district.

This initiative has fuelled a feeling of ownership among the community as redressal of public grievances is done at the doorstep of the people through Rotri Choupal, Gram Sabhas and Mini Sachivalaya. We have also advocated the cause of 2200 CMBSPLAY (Chief Ministers Rural BPL Awas Yojana) beneficiaries and 872 IAY (Indira Awas Yojana) beneficiaries under the housing schemes of which 72 cases were dealt through Rotri Choupals and 147 cases through Jan Sunwai”, explains Onkar Singh.

Harnessing his position to bring about a social change as well, Onkar Singh along with BNVs has ensured pension for 266 old aged people, 130 widows and 15 disabled people, fought against child marriages, dowry cases and alcoholism issue. He also started a mass movement against illiteracy. Help to 207 Palanhar Yojana cases, assistance to them in attaining ration cards and help in identifying and registering BPL families with Mangarh of Madailgarh Block are other matters he has successfully dealt with.

"In Bhilwara, BNVs have helped MGNREGA (Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act) workers in obtaining benefits under Apna Khet Apna Kaam (AKAK), thus fostering this flagship programme of the Ministry of Rural Development. The breakthrough efforts of volunteers have assisted 16500 households to generate Form 6, and secure 100 days job for 18658 job-card holders. I can confidently say that the total works sanctioned through BNV efforts is more than 8000 in the district i.e almost one fourth of the entire works generated in the State under AKAK", he adds.

As part of the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, BNVs campaigned for sanitation practices and this led to the selection of eight Gram Panchayats of the District for 'NIRMAL Gram Panchayat' award among the 32 selected Gram Panchayats of the State. Other tasks taken up by the BNVs have been repairing of water supply tank and pipe line in some areas along with eco-restoration work and up-dating the electoral lists.

The change in Bhilwara district has been apparent and the efforts of Onkar Singh and his team of BNVs lauded by the construction of community hall in Galwa of Raipur Block as a memento of volunteerism generated by their perseverance.

"Accepted, appreciated and recognized in the district, makes the BNVs supremely active. Quick response by district administration towards the issues brought by them and direct contact with district functionaries, including myself, through mobile phones makes them proud, involved and in charge. Bhilwara depicts how guidelines can be sculpted into actions to make a difference in people's life", he concludes.

[Onkar Singh, is District Collector Bhilwara]

(Source: IEC, Mord)
THE STORY OF HIWARE BAZAR

Nothing about Popatrao Pawar suggests that this man would define the future of Hiware Bazar, a village in Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. But look further and you will easily sense the promise he lives his life with. The determination that made him enrich the life quality of a village that no one was really interested in.

Under Popatrao Pawar, Hiware Bazar has undergone remarkable socio economic transformation. As torch bearer to the villagers here, his step-by-step approach has made this water scarce zone into a flourishing water rich village of Maharashtra. A powerful influencer, he has introduced proper management of natural resources for a sustainable income growth among the people in Hiware Bazar.

He started his journey in 1990 after being elected Sarpanch of the village. Leaving behind a successful career as an M.com in the city, he took upon himself the onerous task of transforming this drought hit hamlet into a socially and economically successful model.

His aim was dynamic and his plan was focussed. To empower the village with education, fodder, irrigation, safe drinking water and health — a village which faced a steady degradation of its forest land, had little water left to even irrigate the fields and a skewed financial situation.

Pawar channelled his thinking to enter a long courageous battle against hostile conditions.

It did not take him long to understand that one of the main factors pulling down the village speedily was a crippling water scarcity that threatened lives and livelihoods. Other being limited water retention due to geology (basalt rock) and continuous degradation of forests and green cover over the years. Accentuated by improper management of groundwater and exploitation of the same by farmers, the conditioned worsened and Maharashtra faced acute drought periods. Despite decades of drought relief programs, large parts of this region were identified as over-exploited, critical or semi-critical in terms of groundwater availability.

Hiware Bazar, an ambit of 977 hectares saw its residents migrating to the city due to water woes. The ones left behind: cut down forest land for firewood and sustenance, prepared and sold illicit alcohol for income source or took to crime. Over 90% families
lived below the poverty line, had no access to lacked medical facilities and a literacy rate well below the national average.

Haware Bazar needed help and Popatrao Pawar took up this challenge to make Haware Bazar an icon unto itself.

The turnaround soon became possible with Watershed development and strict observance of rules to preserve the water table. It did not wait for Government-supplied tanker water to meet its drinking needs and utilized the available resources to assure drinking water and sanitation for all households. Once a place where teachers were unwilling to teach in the local school saw many of its students pursuing careers in teaching or mechanical or civil engineering.

Assured income and lower risk led farmers to invest more in their land by building additional water storage structures. They bought cattle to focus on dairy farming. The re-vegetation program, undertaken as part of watershed development, increased the availability of good quality grass thus leading to a plentiful milk yield.

As the poor village changed into a prosperous fringe, villagers who had shifted to the city, returned back. Another quality that sets this village apart is that it has a Mosque for a single Muslim family, thus showing respect for all religions.

Today, Haware Bazare ranks in the top income decile in the country with only 3 families living below poverty line. Lying on the foothills of the Sahyadri hills, it receives only 300-400 millimeters (mm) of rainfall a year but flourishes on the fundamental premise of treating water as a community resource.

Haware Bazare development has shown that with proper watershed development measures, cropping intensity and cropping pattern, groundwater can be substantially increased and incomes can be generated to a large level. The village has today planted a robi crop, albeit over reduced acreage. Cultivation takes place in more seasons now and farmers have switched from the traditional jowar and bajra to cash crops such as onion, potato, tomato and horticulture.

This all has been possible because Popatrao Pawar saw a dream and made it come true. "I have simply shown the villagers the importance of water management, environment conservation, collective efforts to alleviate poverty and live in social harmony to make the future gleam with possibilities", says Pawar of his devotion of last 20 years, almost like a zen master.

Today Popat Rao is also a Bharat Nirman Volunteer. He sees immense potential in this initiative. He has mobilised many others in the village to become BNVs. He feels that since he was all alone when he started his work in Haware Bazar initially a lot of his time and energy had to be devoted to getting people along. It took 20 years to achieve what is Haware Bazar today with a dedicated cadre of Volunteers like BNVs every village of the country can be turned into even a better village than Haware bazar in next ten years. Popat Rao is not only motivating people in his own village to become BNVs he has become a main protagonist of this initiative and spreading the message all across the country and motivating people to be BNVs and participate in the development process of their own village.

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<th>Table 1: Outcomes pre-and post-watershed development program</th>
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<td>No. of BPL families</td>
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<td>Area under drip irrigation (ha)</td>
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<td>No. of milk producing cattle</td>
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<td>Milk production (litres per day)</td>
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<td>Fodder availability (tonnes)</td>
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<td>Main workers* (as % of total pop)</td>
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<td>Main workers in cultivation (%)</td>
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<td>Main workers as agri labourers (%)</td>
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Sources: Panchayat records; Census 1991 and 2001 (Source: IEC, MORD)
GUMORIA VILLAGE UNDER DIMORIA DEVELOPMENT BLOCK, KAMRUP, ASSAM

Dimoria Development Block is the first block in Assam to take up Lab to land Initiative with the help of Bharat Nirman Volunteers. Around 500 volunteers have so far been developed in the block. Though the volunteers have taken up various activities in different villages, activities and performance of the volunteers in Gumoria village have become prominent with some visible impact. One of the reasons behind this impact is the social mobilisation process undertaken by the volunteers in a massive way in the village. Around 85 volunteers have been developed in Gumoria village and trained in different subjects in consecutive rounds. Each of these volunteers have undertaken household level study covering 40 households. During this data collection process the volunteers identified the problems of the households and tried to create awareness among the families on various issues they had learned during the training programmes. This approach of volunteers coming to households with different information has become very popular among the villagers because they have come to learn many things from the volunteers. This has created social acceptability of this new approach among the villagers belonging to different habitations of Gumoria village. Awareness level of around 3000 rural households in greater Gumoria village has got enhanced. Villagers have developed a tendency to come to the nearest volunteer whenever they face any problem either at their household level or in the locality. Flow of information to the volunteers during the training programmes and subsequently to the rural households seems to have facilitated a quick learning process in the village. A good rapport has been established between the villagers and the volunteers.

Along with awareness generation, volunteers have started conducting Participatory Rural Appraisal Exercises in different locations of the village to identify different issues, problems of the villagers so that meaningful planning and their submission in the Gram Sabhas can be done. Participation of these villagers in the Gram Sabhas has become more meaningful.

Women volunteers of that village underwent a training programme on health, sanitation and child care in SIRD. More than 30 volunteers so trained have been making rural people aware about health, sanitation and child care. They have been working as health workers in their locality in terms of providing health guidance particularly to the young mothers.

Volunteers like Mukunda Bora, Simanta Jyoti Das, Binoy Jyoti Boro, Sabina Sultana and Bimal Dey of greater Gumoria village have done commendable job and shown the true spirit of volunteerism by their dedicated services. These are only few names among the 80 volunteers in the village who have been working voluntarily in different areas.

(Source: IEC, Ministry of Rural Development)
Lack of awareness was driving Lalpur in Rudrapur district of Uttarakhand into a frightening deluge. But there was someone holding the torch and preventing the village from entering a dark future.

The man was Sewak Singh, who amazingly put Lalpur on a fast lane. Registered as a Bharat Nirman Volunteer (BNV), this Insurance Consultant has many accomplishments to his credit. Arranging marriage of four girls with proper customs, rituals and registration, making six girls who were class 12 passed aware of ‘Gauri Kanya Dhan Yojna’ and registering them in the office of social workers, was his commendable move towards empowering the girl child in the village.

He played a vital role in expediting cases of Indira Awas Yojna, registered with the District Development Office. His efforts have procured homes for six families and other cases are being persuasively followed. Sewak Singh inspired people to work collectively and in tandem with BNVs to take the village towards progress. With his motivation, a wave of volunteerism has enveloped the village and awakened its people towards a bright future. A future that is possible if the children are well fed and educated. With this golden rule in mind, he sought the support of teachers in Gram Panchayat schools to check the Mid-Day Meal scheme for quality and ensure a well balanced diet. More work in the field of education was possible because Sewak Singh took the initiative of persuading the authorities to grant scholarships to deserving students and further inspire them to work hard. “A lot of efforts are being made to give the right of education to every child and grant them admission in private colleges,” he says.

Leaving no stone unturned, Sewak Singh and his team of BNVs launched a population control drive with the support of Anganwadi centre workers. Under this drive, the BNVs went from door-to-door, teaching people about family planning. “This is a vital step for the overall development of people in this hamlet. The construction of an Anganwadi Bhavan is also in the offing. So far the formalities have been completed and one out of the two sanctioned bhavans, is already complete while the other is under construction,” he tells adding, “The BNVs are given training through Uttarakhand Gram Development Society (UGDS) and State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) to educate all those involved in the implementation of various state-sponsored programmes. This is a unique capacity-building venture of the state,” he explains.

The BNVs also addresses the problem of getting caste and residential certificates made. “We met civic authorities and made them aware of the requirement of these certificates for the villagers. We even procured the past land record of 40 years from the collector’s office and got many certificates made. The officials supported us and today names of a few family members are registered in the files,” he adds.

From educating the villagers to leading a family planning drive, Sewak Singh just does not know how to stop in the path of social betterment. Next on his agenda was the pension scheme for Lalpur widows and aged women and he made them aware of provisions of the Government. With the help of Sewak Singh and BNVs, their forms were filled and sent to the Secretary for quick grant. “We also procured online accounts of other pensioners so that they could get the pension amount transferred into their accounts. For this the Lalpur branch of Bank of Baroda volunteered to open an account of pensioners with zero balance and send the account details to the Block Development Officer,” says Sewak Singh with a triumphant tone in his voice.

“One person even got a ‘Smart card’ made and used it to get his eyes operated. Initially he had a problem using this card as his thumb impressions did not match. I personally looked into the matter, got the changes done and had his card remade. This way, the person was able to get his eyes operated in a city hospital. He is now better with an improved vision,” says Sewak Singh who has also joined the bandwagon of a cleanliness drive.

[Compiled by M.P. Khali, Assistant Director, Uttarakhand Institute for Rural Development]
LAB TO LAND INITIATIVES IN AGRICULTURE CAN FILL TECHNOLOGY GAP

Dr. Harender Raj Gautam and Dr. Narender Kumar Bharat

Technology dissemination has to take at faster rate so that farmers can plan their farm operations in an effective way. Compared to developed countries, our farmers are not able to achieve higher yield and productivity in major foodgrains and other crops due to the technological gap.

Technology gap between laboratory and the farmer’s field is the major cause of slow pace of agriculture growth in India. Technology dissemination in agriculture is challenging in India as 81 per cent of our farmers are cultivating an area of 2 hectares or less. The pace of agriculture growth is hampered by many factors like low public investment, productivity stagnation, soil deterioration, post harvest waste, low value addition, low technology application in rain fed areas and appropriation of value by market intermediaries at the cost of farmer. There is a need to transfer the next level of technology by using the technology advancement in bio-sciences and space science.

This knowledge deficit is despite the fact that our country has scores of Agricultural Universities which are generating vast pool of agriculture technology every year. Agriculture production can only be increased by reducing prevailing knowledge deficit of latest agricultural technologies with the farmers. Knowledge deficit can be improved by strengthening human resource, capacity building and rapid transfer of the farm technology.
Technology dissemination has to take at faster rate so that farmers can plan their farm operations in an effective way. Farmers need time-bound information regarding seed availability of high yielding crop varieties, better crop production technology, disease and pest resistant varieties, availability of different farm inputs, technology for better irrigation and nutrient efficiency in crops, technology for protected cultivation of crops, information regarding post harvest handling of the crops and marketing of the agricultural produce. In comparison to developed countries, our farmers are not able to achieve higher yield and productivity in major foodgrains and other crops due to the technological gap. In spite of the green revolution, our agricultural productivity continues to be low at 1.7 tons/ha as against the world's average of 2.6 tons/ha, leave alone the world's best of 4 to 5 tons/ha.

Need to Modernize Technology Transfer Tools

Technology transfer in agriculture should focus on key interventions at different stages of the crop starting from land preparation to sowing of the seed, crop protection, harvesting, post-harvest management and marketing. Technology transfer need effective interactive groups at grass root level in the villages. This groups should become tool of disseminating information about various government sponsored schemes and these entities will help in liaising with various Govt. departments for developmental activities.

The key focus areas are:

- A comprehensive Kisan knowledge Management Systems (KKMS) should be developed to provide and disseminate information related to the modern technology, modern farm implements, best agricultural practices and post-harvest management including market information.
- Dissemination of weather data and agro-climatic conditions, latest information on prices of agriculture produce to farmers.
- Imparting knowledge on diversification of Agriculture to increase income per unit of land and developing Farm-based Enterprises to augment the income of the farmers from off-farm allied sources.
- Farmers should be sensitized for the judicious use of natural bio-resources like water, energy and other resources.
- Financial counselling of the farmers for better management of their financial needs.
- Engagement of the Self Help Groups, Non-Government Organizations and other Farmer Organizations in technology dissemination and demonstrations.
- Special emphasis should be given to engage women in implementation of various agricultural schemes.
- There should be regular Farmer Scientist Interaction programmes at State/District level to reduce the gap between research findings and adoption of technologies.
- Exposure visit of Farmers/Extension to technology demonstration models of the State Agriculture Universities/ICAR Institutes/State Agriculture and Horticulture Departments.
- Regular support for training for improving the technical competency of extension functionaries.
- Establishment of Community Radio Stations in Agriculture Universities.
- Engagement of private sector in technology transfer.
- Sensitize different stakeholders (Public, Private, Civil Society, trade, industry, academics) towards challenges in agriculture.
- Get feedback from farmers about the constraints, issues and successful interventions.

Krishi Vigyan Kendras: Central Government has taken number of steps to create necessary infrastructure for dissemination of agriculture technology in the country. Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) have been established in each district of the country and now these are the backbone of technology dissemination in our country. There are 589 KVKs in the country with the mandate to function as knowledge and resource centres of agricultural technology at the district level which could increase the technology adoption rate. These KVKs should work as technology umbrella in the
district and should work in an integrated way with State Departments of Agriculture, Horticulture and other sister departments in the district for effective delivery of the technology and inputs in an effective way. They should meet every six months to discuss their input delivery and technology dissemination strategies in an effective manner to assess the past performance and plan the strategy for the next season. But, there is urgent need to equip these KVKs with necessary technical manpower and technological infrastructure. Technical manpower is also important in the agricultural institutes and development departments in the centre and the states. State governments should fill up vacancies of scientific and extension personnel in State Agricultural Universities, and State Departments of Agriculture, Horticulture and other allied Departments without any time gap to tackle the problem of manpower shortage.

**Village Knowledge Centres**: Village Knowledge Centres serve as information dissemination centres providing instant access to farmers to latest information/knowledge available in the field of agriculture, starting from crop production to marketing. Every VKC is manned by a “VKC In-charge” who looks after the operations of the VKC. Union Bank of India has taken this initiative of forming these VKCs which aims at impacting rural livelihoods to build resourceful and progressive villages.

**Farm Schools**: To minimize the knowledge deficit, village schools should be developed as the last technology centre so that farmer has not to go far away places to get the farm information. There is need to promote the establishment of 50,000 village-based farm schools throughout the country, mostly as private institutions supported and supervised by government. Media can play an important role in reducing the knowledge deficit whether it is visual, audio or print media. The world has witnessed a revolution of information and communication technologies and our farmer too deserves to be benefited from it. A communication system that provides information about agricultural policies, markets and weather, credit and crop insurance services is important. Knowledge has to be synergized at the village level through “farm knowledge centres” in which Panchayati Raj institutions can play a critical role. The recently launched India Development Gateway Portal by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology could be used extensively for dissemination of information to all our villages.

**Farmer’s Clubs**: National Bank of Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has taken a good initiative of formation of Farmer’s Clubs and has facilitated formation of about 25500 Farmers’ clubs spread over many states. Their key role relates to dissemination of locally appropriate technology. The bank also provides support to these clubs for various training programmes and exposure visits.

**Kisan Call Centres**: Kisan Call Centres and Mass media need to be harnessed for wider dissemination of best practices. Free Call Centres of the Central Ministry of Agriculture are doing excellent job. Central Ministry of Agriculture has started a toll free service to the farmers where they can dial 1551 on their landline number directly access the required information during the day time and also through their mobile numbers by dialling on 18001801551. These Call Centres have been established in each state to cater to the local needs of the farmers. Farmers can interact in these call centres in their local languages. These Call Centres coordinate well with the concerned scientists and officers of the region to furnish the information to the farmers. These Call Centres should be further strengthened in technical manpower and technical area coverage.

**Radio and Television**: Radio and Doordarshan have made a great leap in taking the technology rapidly to the doorsteps of the farmers. The impact of this live media has certainly helped the technology to disseminate rightly and exactly with visuals and interactive live programmes. Radio has a reach to more than 90 per cent of our population and it has helped a great deal in the last 60 years. Community Radio Station can also be an effective and cheap tool for agriculture development and it should be promoted in Public – Private Partnership model. State Agriculture Universities, State Agriculture and Horticulture Departments and Non-Government Organizations should come forward in establishment of these Community Radios for dissemination of the technology at local level. Television has made technology dissemination more effective with its visual effects. Doordarshan has played a key role in this direction in collaboration with Central Ministry of Agriculture and State Agriculture and Horticulture Departments. In recent past, Doordarshan has started many innovative programmes like Live Chat Shows, Crop Seminars and many other programmes for dissemination of the innovations and other crop and season based technologies to the farmers.
Modern Vehicles of Technology Transfer:
Technology has revolutionized the dissemination of information. Today, the people have easy access to many such gadgets like internet, mobile phone and satellite linkages which can help in faster dissemination of the farm technologies. The Central Ministry of Agriculture wants to make extensive use of Information Communication Technology and its infrastructure would be a critical component of the strategy to revitalize the National Agricultural Extension Services. Government is under way in developing infrastructure under the National e-Governance Plan (NeGP) to link all the blocks by a wide area network and provide connectivity up to the village level through Common Service Centres (CSCs) which would provide important support at all levels in the extension set up. Space science can also be put to effective use in dissemination of farm technologies. To provide the space technology enabled services directly to the rural population, Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched the Village Resource Centres (VRCs) programme in association with the help of reputed NGOs/Trusts and state/central agencies and so far 473 VRCs have been set up in 22 States/Union Territories. In this scheme, ISRO has provided the necessary infrastructure to the selected organizations/institutes in the field for video-conferencing of the technical manpower with the people in the rural areas. Farmers can interact with the scientist by interactive video conferencing from their villages. Technology has many uses and in this direction, access of internet has also made technology transfer very fast and cheap. State farm universities and Central Agricultural and Horticultural Institutes have put the package and practices of fruit, vegetables and crops on their website for easy access of the farmers. Mobile is another effective tool for dissemination of the technologies. In Himachal Pradesh, mobile service provider Airtel has joined hands with fertilizer giant IFFCO to provide information through SMS to the farmers on their mobile phones. Some more developmental agencies and individuals are using the service of SMS to disseminate the technology. Of course, farmer-friendly personal approaches of the scientists of the farm universities and officers of the developmental departments also keep the farmers close through their mobile phones and internet. Village Knowledge Centres, and online databases in local languages should be established. Fast technology dissemination will certainly reduce the knowledge deficit with the farmers and will help in accelerating the stagnant growth of agriculture, realizing higher potential of our land and hard work of our farmers.

The Central Ministry of Agriculture has tried to establish an institutional mechanism in the form of the Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) at the district level under the Innovations in Technology Dissemination (ITD) component of the National Agricultural Technology Project (NATP) in 28 districts of seven States from 1998 to 2005. In this project, planning was made at the level of cluster of villages keeping in view the needs and feedback of the farmers. In this programme, extension support at the village level would be provided to the farmers through a Farmer Friend (FF) for every 500 farmers or one FF in every village. This programme has been further strengthened on the basis of recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers (NCF) and the Planning Commission’s Working Group on Extension by duly incorporating new provisions, strengthening of existing provisions and implementation mechanisms. In the technology dissemination, set up of the State Governments, Subject Matter Specialists and Agriculture/Horticulture Extension Officers are the key officials. These officials will be responsible for operationalization of Farm Schools; Front Line Demonstrations; Training & Exposure visits and will assist the Gram Panchayat in selection of beneficiaries for implementation of extension as well as other programmes.

Beyond these key areas, there is need to revamp the research, teaching and extension network of the state agriculture universities. Most of the agriculture universities often face resource crunch in funding their different research, teaching and extension programmes. The funding to these institutions should be increased linked with time bound objectives and with a cap on need-based scientific and other manpower. The central government should also devise effective system in inter-linking the institutes of Indian Council of Agricultural Research and other institutes engaged in agriculture research with the state agriculture universities for pooling of the resources scientific expertise in achieving common objectives. We have the third largest pool of scientific and technical professionals. Hence, agriculture should continue to receive the first priority and best and dedicated efforts of everybody in the ladder of governance and decision making in the field.

[Dr. Harendra Raj Gautam is Senior Scientist, and Dr. Narender Kumar Bharat is Scientist, Department of Plant Pathology, Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Nauni-173230, Solan, Himachal Pradesh.]
about all the governmental schemes and how their execution through Bharat Nirman Volunteers movement can benefit the society, even till the last person. Upon returning to his village in June 2012, Suresh Kuldeep realized that even after 65 years of Independence, people were struggling under stifling conditions in the villages. They were unaware of the benefits available to them or how to avail the various Government schemes. His instinctive approach was to start informing people about the different schemes like Pension scheme, Indira Awas Yojana, BPL Card, Mahatma Gandhi NAREGA, Plantation, good quality seeds availability, ICDS etc.

But challenges were galore in the way of Suresh Kuldeep’s mission. Sensitivity of his area and financial responsibility of his family was like weathering a storm to give vent to his philanthropic gusto. But this also gave him the energy to continue his work as “Rajmistry” till 6 PM and then start interacting with people in the village, friends, acquaintances and other backward people to explain them about the BNV movement.

His campaign caught on people and Suresh Kuldeep was able to convince many educated youth to become BNVs. He helped filling up BNV forms in 20 wards, made people aware of the role of Panchayats, compiled a list of BPL families, pensioners, malnutrition children and students to be displayed in Panchayat Bhawan and made sure that the schemes are effectively implemented. The list of blood groups of all BNVs was also enlisted for emergency requirement.

Inspiring all BNVs to plant trees, he succeeded in planting 4000 Banana plants in his area. Display of informative banners, posters at prominent place requesting people to participate in Gram Sabha accomplished the exemplary task of motivating over 500 men and women to take part. Suresh Kuldeep also took up the cause of 40 NISHAKT widows with the Gram sabha.

Carving a niche, he made four different committees of BNVs such as Education Committee, Health committee, Income—expense monitoring committee for Panchayat and a Social audit committee. There was also a BNV monitoring committee to check the sales and consumption of Alcohol in public places of the village. A President, Vice President and secretary was selected for every ward to give rise to team spirit and leadership skills in BNVs

Suresh Kuldeep’s dream of a model village like “Hiware Bazar” was coming true. “This concept of BNV has transformed me otherwise I would be just like any other Inhabitant of this village, unaware and directionless. At one time, I hardly knew any person in the village. But now almost everyone in the village knows me and see a hope in me. But I look for a hope in them because this movement that I started, has to be carried forth by them. My parents are also proud of me and I am keen to change more mindsets so that every common Indian becomes a special human being and a catalyst for development”, concludes this protagonist of the BNV movement in district Narayanpur of Chattisgarh.

(Source: (IEC) Ministry of rural Development)
Join the BNV movement
Be a BNV - Participate in Nation Building

Bharat Nirman Volunteer

For more details visit: www.runsidikaha.nic.in