

Panchayat & Rural Development Department



Panchayats & Rural Development Department:
Increasingly reaching out to the people in the one year of the new dispensation

1. Introduction

Panchayats & Rural Development Department implements major Rural Development Programmes of the Government and the Department has made major strides in implementation of all the major schemes and programmes and has been able to achieve new milestones.

2. Major policy reforms

In a major move, the West Bengal Panchayat Act 1973 has been amended to incorporate the provisions for reservation of seats for Other Backward Classes along with the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. Reservation women in Panchayat have also been enhanced from the existing 33.33% to as close to 50% of seats in all the categories.

3. MGNREGA:

Work under MGNREGA has gained significant momentum and almost all the parameters relating to number of days of employment generated per family and amount of expenditure incurred have **started showing improvement.**

The fourth quarter of **2011-12** saw a **huge expenditure of Rs. 1688.71 Cr, creating over 33 days of employment per family under MGNREGA.**

To enhance participation of job-card holders in MGNREGS, the **Schedule of Rates (SoR)** have been revised in January, 2012 and reduced **from 89 cft of earth work to 69 cft of earth work in regular soil condition.**

4. Developing Rural Infrastructure - Rural connectivity through Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and infrastructure building through RIDF

In PMGSY, we built 1154 K.M of metal road connecting 243 habitations for which Rs.417 crores was incurred as expenditure. However, the major initiative under PMGSY was taken during the last quarters of the financial year when Detailed Project Reports (DPR) covering a total length of nearly 874 K.M with the projected cost of Rs.407.45 crores were sent to the Government of India. Under RIDF rural infrastructures are constructed with NABARD loans ranging from 80-90 percent of the total project cost. In 2011-12 the State could utilise Rs. 15,937.44 lakhs which is higher than the financial performance in previous years.

5. Providing shelter to the rural houseless families under Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)

In Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) there was slow but steady increase in performance figures over the previous two years. An amount of Rs. 925.76 crore could be utilized out of an available fund of Rs.1141.52 crores. 195770 houses were constructed which too is substantially higher than the previous years.

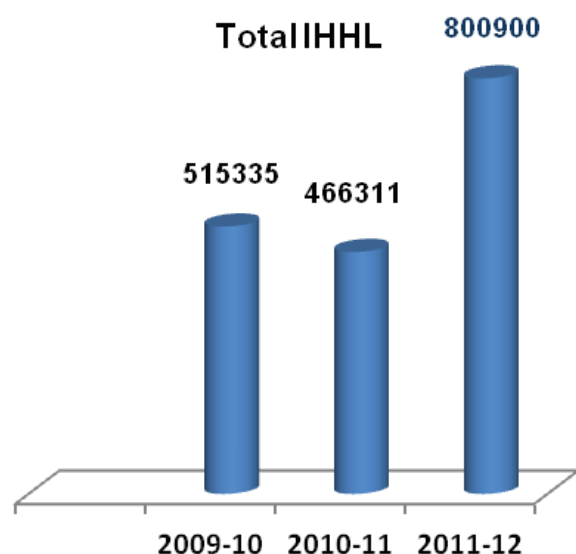
6. Empowering rural poor, especially women through Self-Help Groups (SGSY)

2011-12 marked the end of SGSY in its present form and initiated a restructured mission-mode programme in the form of National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). The State Mission named "Anandadhara" has already been constituted and is

expected to start functioning shortly. There was improvement in disbursement of cash credit to the SHGs and formation of SHG Clusters at the Block level improved substantially. Through participation in thirteen State, National and International Fairs and other promotional activities we could provide marketing support to the SHGs to the tune of Rs.50.32 crores.

7. Total Sanitation Campaign: Improving personal hygiene and healthcare practices

In 2011-12, the State could construct 8,00,900 IHHL as compared to 4,66,311 in 2010-11 and 5,15,335 in 2009-10 financial years. In School Sanitation category, the State could construct toilet blocks in 16,898 Schools across the State which is higher to the achievement figures in 2010-11 (12,060). In providing sanitation facilities in the ICDS centres, performance witnessed steady increase and we could construct 9148 ICDS toilets as compared to 6180 in the previous year.



8. Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF): Focused development initiative for the 'backward districts'

BRGF is being implemented in eleven districts of West Bengal. In 2011-12, the Department took up 43,142 schemes in eleven BRGF districts for which a total amount of Rs. 27,844 lakh was released to the districts. Fund utilization status has improved over the years and at the end of the financial year, the district could utilize a total amount of Rs. 22,688.71 lakh which is 81.37 % of the released amount.

9. Finance Commission Grants for the three-tier Panchayats:

Untied assistance to the Panchayat Bodies 2011-12 witnessed substantial increase in Finance Commission Grants to the 3-tier Panchayats in the State over the previous years. In 13th FC, the hike was from Rs. 19,293 lakh in 2010-11 to Rs. 62,361 lakh in 2011-12. Grant released to the Districts on the basis of the awards of the 3rd State Finance Commission too witnessed substantial increase from Rs. 30,180 lakhs in 2010-11 to Rs. 55,126.99 lakh in 2011-12.

10. Application of e-Governance for better transparency and effectiveness of PRIs:

Computerization of accounts of PRI: All ZP, 333 PS out of 341 and 3179 Gram Panchayats out of 3351 GPs are computerized. Zilla Parishads are issuing and processing tender in an online format for values of more than Rs. 5 lakhs since 01.01.2012. Pensions are being disbursed to beneficiaries' bank account directly using IT applications. Four districts have identified where pensions will be disbursed through Business Correspondent mode by the banks. e-Panchayat applications have been adopted and 600 GPs have already developed their portals under the National Panchayat Portal.

11. SAHAY

Under the SAHAY Programme one cooked meal per day is being provided through the SAHAY BANDHU SHGs for identified destitute families of rural West Bengal. Besides cooked food non-food support including clothing, medicines, cooking utensils etc. are also provided from out of BRGF and own source revenue of the PRIs. From 1st October, 2011 the rate of state Government support to the Gram Panchayats per destitute person fed under SAHAY has been enhanced to Rs. 20.00 per destitute person per day.

12. Alternative avenues for ensuring the Right to Education (RTE): SSK and MSK

Under SSK and MSK, the Department, apart from providing regular support for payment of honorarium to the Sahayikas and Samprasarakas, provided support for construction of New School Buildings for both the SSKs and the MSKs. In 2011-12, Rs.6998.73 lakh for construction of 1035 new SSK buildings was released to the districts. Similarly, for construction of 64 MSKs, an amount of Rs. 828.75 lakh was utilized. In SSK, 6390 Additional

Class Rooms (ACR) was constructed with an expenditure of Rs.22871.11 Lakh.

13. Community Health in Community Hand-Community Health Care Management Initiative (CHCMI)

In CHCMI, there was substantial increase in AYUSH dispensaries in the uncovered Gram Panchayats. Formation of the Village Health, Sanitation and Nutrition Committee too received a boost under the new Government.

14. NSAP, PROFLAL and Aam Admi Bima Yojana

National Social assistance programme (NSAP) is a combination of Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS) and the National family Benefit Scheme (NFBS). In 2011-12, the Department could provide assistance to 1515705 BPL old age pensioners with an expenditure of Rs. 47285.13 lakhs under IGNOAPS. 287508 widows could be provided pension against an expenditure of Rs. 13392.32 lakhs under IGWPS and 29192 disabled persons were given pension with an expenditure of Rs. 684.11 lakhs under IGNDPS. One-time financial assistance under NFBS could be provided to 20613 BPL families against an expenditure of Rs. 2061.29 lakhs. Under PROFLAL, 4478 SSY beneficiaries were assisted and 19,115 PROFLAL claims were settled. Total expenditure incurred under PROFLAL was to the tune of Rs. 957.61 lakhs. Under AABY, the State paid premium to the tune of Rs. 288.01 lakhs and 29 AABY claims were settled during the financial year.

15. Capacity building of elected Panchayat functionaries and the official of the Panchayats & Rural Development:

During 2011-12, 47,921 elected panchayat members and 87,242 officials were provided training on different issues connected with Panchayat functioning and implementation of rural development programmes.

16. Major Initiatives in 2012-13:

1. To give effect to the newly amended provision of reservation for the OBC category and women before the Panchayat General Election 2013 the West Bengal Panchayat Election Rules, 2006 and the West Bengal Panchayat (Constitution) Rules, 1975 are under processed of amendment.

2. The department has taken a giant initiative to conduct a State-wide survey to obtain information on people belonging to OBC category in every Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samity and Zilla/Mahakuma Parishad of the State under a very tight time schedule so as to make it possible to effect reservation for these categories during the Panchayat Generation Election, 2013.
3. Within the first year of assuming charges, the Government could conceptualize and put in the idea of an ICT and Biometry-based end-to-end solution in implementing MGNREGS in the State. The solution has been visualized in such a way that all critical events in implementation the Act (MGNREGA) and the Scheme (MGNREGS) from registration of Job Card holders through taking attendance in the field, taking measurement of work, geo-referring of the worksite, preparing e-muster roles, issuing advice to banks and finally to paying the labourers could be made by using this computer-based system. Once implemented, the software would make it possible to pay the workers on a by-weekly basis. The provision of appointing Business Correspondents by the Banks has also been included in the scope of the system.
4. To provide improved marketing support to the SHG members, the Department has already initiated steps for setting up of Special Marketing Hubs at Block, District and State levels.
5. The Department has prepared an ambitious plan to convert all the Gram Panchayats of the State into 'Nirmal Gram' within the five year period of the 12th Five Year Plan. A detailed Plan of Action (POA) has been prepared and shared with the Government of India.
6. Socio-economic survey and census work has started in most of the districts and enumeration work is expected to be completed soon.
7. World Bank aided project on institutional strengthening of Gram Panchayats has started and more than one thousand Gram Panchayats have been assisted so far.