

Proceedings of National Colloquium on Lab to Land Initiative held at Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala on 15-17 September, 2011.

The National Colloquium on Lab to Land Initiative was held on 15-17 September, 2011 at Thiruvananthapuram to review progress achieved so far and to lay down the strategy for the next two months to be followed by SIRDs and ETCs/PTCs. The Colloquium was inaugurated by Sri B.K. Sinha, Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of India along with Shri Mathew Kunnumkal, DG, NIRD, Shri James Varghese, Principal Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Shri Nandakumar, Commissioner, Rural Development, Government of Kerala, Shri Sankaran, Director, SIRD, Kerala and Shri Niten Chandra, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India. Earlier, Shri R.K. Singh, Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of Kerala welcomed the participants. He referred to the high level of decentralisation of powers to Local Self-Governments in Kerala and to the community-based programme of Kudumbashree, the network of women's groups for poverty alleviation. The list of participants is placed at Annexure A.

2. Sri B.K. Sinha commended the SIRDs for the progress achieved under the Lab to Land Initiative. Highlighting the importance of the initiative in improving the quality of implementation of government programmes for the development and welfare of the rural population, he observed that we must continue to focus on building the capacity of the rural community, the PRIs and the District Administration/State Government to ensure that all the objectives of the programme are met and awareness is generated among the people so that they participate effectively in the implementation of the programmes. Bharat Nirman Volunteers programme under the Lab to Land Initiative not only provides an opportunity to the rural community to engage with the PRIs, Line Departments and other implementing agencies, but also precludes the misuse of the energy of the rural youth. He urged the SIRDs, District Collectors, CEOs, BDOs and other participants to focus on the expansion of the programme to cover more Districts, Blocks and Gram Panchayats. He emphasised the need for the ownership of the programmes by the people for their success. He referred to the achievement of BNVs in Chidedu village in Andhra Pradesh where the BNVs stopped sale of liquor in the village. He added that if BNVs come into conflict situation with rural elite, the Administration must support them.

Secretary(RD) emphasised the need for transforming the rural youth into a rural positive force. He observed that due to unemployment, many youth are turning towards Naxalism and coercive solution alone will not stop them. But BNVs, who should continue to work voluntarily, can prevent them from becoming naxalites. He said that the considering the impact of the BNVs on the programmes, Training Division should formulate a proposal for strengthening of the implementation of the Lab to Land Initiative so that all the Districts and Blocks may be covered. Stress should also be laid on proper documentation of the progress especially by production of at least 300 films in different languages for dissemination of information on Lab to Land Initiative and Bharat Nirman Volunteers programme. He also launched the new training portal Diksha with the URL *ruraldiksha.nic.in*.

3. Shri Mathew Kunnumkal, DG, NIRD observed that the Lab to Land Initiative is progressing well all over the country and called for reorienting training programmes to reach out to the ordinary masses. He said that the Bharat Nirman Volunteers can act as a bridge between the government and the people. Lack of awareness about programmes thwarts programme implementation resulting in misuse or shortfall in use of funds. It impedes the realization of the full potential benefit of the programmes. He underscored the importance of constructive engagement of the rural community in implementation of the flagship programmes so that they contribute to the task of nation building. Observing that Lab to Land Initiative plays an important role in building awareness among the people, he urged the SIRDs to improve their outreach to the people so that success can be sustained. He assured the participants of all support from the NIRD.

4. Sri James Varghese, Principal Secretary, Rural Development, Government of Kerala pointed out the progress achieved by State Government under the Lab to Land Initiative. He said that The State Level Committee meeting was convened and a joint strategy has been developed to implement the initiative in the selected block. He said that the initiative should be expanded in all the Blocks of the State.

5. Shri Nandakumar, Commissioner Rural Development, Government of Kerala, stated that the implementation of Government Programmes suffer from drawbacks mainly on account of lack of awareness and participation of the people. He said that Bharat Nirman Volunteers can greatly contribute to plugging the loophole in the implementation of Government Programmes.

6. Shri Niten Chandra, Joint Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Government of India, stressed the importance of Lab to Land Initiatives in transfer of knowledge about the programmes to the people. Bharat Nirman Volunteers under this initiative have brought a radical change in the quality of programme implementation by enhancing the people's participation and building ownership of the people in regard to the programmes. He also informed the participants about the proposal of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India to involve SIRDs in setting up Centres for training in Hospitality sector under the scheme *Hunar Se Rozgar*. Each SIRD may get Rs 2 crore as a fixed grant to set up infrastructure (building and equipment) and a budget to undertake training @ Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000 per participant.

7. Presentations were made by the representatives of States and SIRDs regarding progress made under the Lab to Land initiative. In all, 22 presentations were made. While these presentations are uploaded on the Diksha website, some of the main points made by them are given in the succeeding paragraphs.

Andhra Pradesh

8. The BNVs were instrumental in closing belt shops and strictly prohibiting the sale of all kinds of liquor, gutkha, Panparag, etc. They conducted medical camps, particularly for checking haemoglobin levels among women. They also

took up avenue plantation. District Collector, Rangareddy, put forth the role of BNV as facilitator, motivator and vigilante.

Shri Madan Mohan Naidu, former Sarpanch mentioned that whatever he could not achieve during his 5 year tenure, he had achieved during the last 6 months with the help of BNVs. APARD had given him a force of 30 well trained youth who are helping the village progress to an exponential path. He hoped that the country be rebuilt through the immense and intense voluntary action of BNVs.

Ms. Sudha, a BNV, mentioned that she voluntarily came forward to offer her services to accelerate her village development. BNVs in her village thought of creating a common fund for village development and initially each BNV had contributed Rs.1000/- to generate seed money of Rs.30000/-. Then many people in their village had contributed in cash and kind for undertaking developmental activities. They are focussing not only on infrastructure development but also on human development. They had prohibited the sale of illicit liquor in the village, prohibited the usage of Pan Parag, Ghutka, etc., They would like to transform the village as an open defecation village and ISL construction activity is at its swing. They are planning to adopt the usage of bio gas and solar energy. With the active involvement of BNVs in the village, the service delivery in Schools, Anganwadi Centres, Panchayat Office, PDS shop and other government machinery has improved a lot. Bus facility was restored after 12 years to the village.

Assam

9. The BNVs have been making household survey. They were also given skill development training in areas like masonry, electrical repairing and maintenance of appliances and in income generating activities such as fruits & vegetables processing, rubber cultivation & processing and preparation of agricultural chemical- Bordeaux mixture

Bihar

10. The BNVs participated and managed the IAY camp and 34 beneficiaries of Mirpur Oknawa village were benefited. 36 poor and isolated households came into SHG fold by the effort of BNVs.

Chhattisgarh

11. The BNVs provided assistance in the village level planning. They are also making concerted effort to increase the attendance of women in the Gram Sabha.

Gujarat

12. Shri Ravi Arora, DDO, Banaskantha, Gujarat, and Ms Gauri Trivedi, Director SIRD, Gujarat, gave the details of work done by BNVs under the Lab to Land initiative in Prantij Block. They explained the changes brought by the

BNVs in the nutritional status of poor women and children in the Block by strengthening of the implementation of programmes for income and employment generation and nutrition. The BNVs disseminated information about government programmes and helped villagers to get access to government services. In Pirantij, the BNVs used an energy saving device to collect rain water and then distribute for drinking purposes to school children of Moyad village. They used the see saw to generate energy to pump water into a tank and carry through the pipes. One BNV is taking all volunteers for an exposure visit to see an ideal village at his own cost to sensitise them. In turn they will motivate the villagers to make their village an ideal village.

Himachal Pradesh

13. Shri Ajay Sharma, Director, HIPA, Himachal Pradesh elaborated the Village Development plans made by the BNVs under various flagship programmes of the government. He also said that since BNVs play an important role in strengthening the delivery system, the cadre of BNVs need to be expanded to other Blocks also.

Jammu and Kashmir

14. The orientation programmes of all the stakeholders at State and block level were started. The identification of BNVs has been completed and their database stands uploaded on the Diksha Website. Initially there was a lukewarm response but with the intervention of SIRD & block level functionaries there was overwhelming enthusiasm especially after training at SIRD. The households were allotted and they are keen to conduct household surveys and identify issues/problems that can be integrated into a village development plan. Master trainers would be developed to organise future training interventions identified in the TNA workshop. The committees would be constituted at the village level in the areas like health, sanitation, safe drinking water, social welfare, forestation & infrastructure to work for the effective implementation of the rural development programmes.

Jharkhand

15. In Angana Block of Khunti district BNVs were instrumental in making the local people aware about the ongoing rural development schemes like MGNREGA, Indira Awaas Yojana, National Rural Livelihood Mission, Rural Drinking water and sanitation programme etc. SIRD gave BNV details of RDD programme which in turn were made available to villagers. With the start of BNV, level of vigilance about the Rural Development and Panchayati Raj schemes has gone up. Block level officials are being informed about loopholes, complaints and grievances of local people which are now being attended promptly by officials.

Karnataka

16. In Karnataka, in the first stage, 625 Bharath Nirman Volunteers had been selected in Harihar taluk of Davangere district and the first phase training of 170

volunteers had been completed. In the second stage, Karkala of Udupi district & Srirangapatna of Mandya district have been included for coverage. The volunteers who have already been trained are actively working in their villages. They are working as a link between the government and community to deliver the facilities to the true beneficiaries. They are giving information about the government development programmes to the village community. The training of 2000 new volunteers of Karkala & Srirangapatna is being planned.

Kerala

17. SIRD, Kerala have completed three batches of training for the Bharat Nirman Volunteers. One ToT programme for the Resource persons from the Grama Panchayats has also been completed. Training was also undertaken for all the elected representatives of the block panchayat. The Bharat Nirman Volunteers were associated with a programme called 'Before the Rains' whereby various activities like cleaning of drains, disposal of waste, etc. were taken up before the onset of monsoons. All this work was taken up as part of MGNREGS work. An impact of this initiative was that there was a drastic fall in the number of diseases reported in hospitals. The Volunteers were also associated with the identification of disabled persons for the Social Welfare Department and also with the Unique Identification Number.

Madhya Pradesh

18. The approach of BNVs was first to establish rapport with the rural households. The BNVs successfully organised health check camp in Devhala Gram Panchayat of Satna District. The BNVs had earlier observed that several children were not attending school due to illness. After holding a meeting with Block Medical Officer, the health camp was organised and the BNVs ensured the participation of people in the camp. In Kakreta gram panchayat under Patan Janpad, they encouraged women to form a SHG after continuous interaction with them.

Mizoram

19. The BNVs had found out malpractices in the selection of beneficiaries under Indira Awaas Yojana. This was reported to Project Director, DRDA, Kolasib and new order had been sent to all villages to select beneficiaries of IAY with the approval of Gram Sabha. As a consequence of work done by the BNV, two villages viz. Khamrang and Mualkhang in the selected block are giving importance to Gram Sabha. The Village Councils are also co-operating in the organisation of Gram Sabha and selection of beneficiaries for various schemes is done through the Gram Sabha. People are now enjoying their rights, which is a very encouraging sign.

Odisha

20. BNVs organised Project Initiation Meetings in MGNREGA and made it more transparent. Medical check up of all the households was done. With the active participation of BNVs, a mega health camp was conducted at Angarpula

GP headquarters and 147 women and adult girls were registered for checking anaemia. Avenue plantation was made by BNVs on both side of PMGSY road from Palara Chhak to Baunspur.

In Binida village of Mallarpada GP under Saherapada Block, the BNVs conducted Blood Group and Malaria slide collection camp. With the assistance of BNVs, people are doing plantation work in the village. The BNVs also did work for prohibition of liquor. The BNVs are motivating people through door to door campaign to increase demand for MGNREGA.

Punjab

21. The BNVs have carried out the door to door survey of households. The training of BNVs is in progress in Khera Block, District Fatehgarh Sahib. After taking training, the BNVs will facilitate the delivery of services.

Rajasthan

22. Shri Onkar Singh, District Collector, Bhilwara, Rajasthan, informed that he had launched the initiative in 33 Gram Panchayats covering 11 Blocks of Bhilwara District. He has assigned Department-wise roles to the BNVs. He said that there is a great deal of enthusiasm among the Volunteers as they have been given special status and recognition by the District administration. They are acting as eyes and ears of the Government. He narrated the story of a case of highway accident resulting in death of a person. The body remained unattended for several hours until the time when a BNV saw the body. He informed the District Collector on his mobile, who in turn informed the SP to take immediate action. He said that he is also issuing an Identity card to each BNVs under his signature as the BNVs can become a useful group of resource persons with whom the line departments can share their responsibilities. He said that the BNVs had prepared 260 applications under MGNREGA and got them sanctioned under category IV. 16 pension applications were prepared and got sanctioned under Social Security Schemes.

Sikkim

23. In one of the GPU (Chisopani GPU) under Jorethang Block, Bharat Nirman Volunteers have been successful in preventing open defecation by migrant labours in the village. In Salghari G.P.U., Bharat Nirman Volunteers have linked farmers to various Horticulture Schemes of the Government. The Department has now proposed to start a pilot dug well scheme in the village.

Tamil Nadu

24. The BNVs of Melpakkam Panchayat mobilised women members of Melpak who were not members of SHGs and formed them into a SHG in February 2011. The BNVs of Dhadhapuram Village Panchayat assisted 3 families in getting ration cards and 2 old persons in getting Old Age Pension. After receiving training on agricultural activities, especially on eradication of Parthenium Plants, the BNVs of Karuvambakkam of Olakkur Block organised

and eradicated the Parthinium Plants in their Village. One BNV of Pangulathur Village, assisted 26 farmers in getting Food Grains Storage Bins from the Agriculture Department. Another BNV of Panchalam Village Panchayat readmitted into school two girl students who dropped out. Two women received marriage assistance of Rs.20,000/- each from Social Welfare Department through the help of BNVs,.

Uttarakhand

25. The BNVs have facilitated the registration of births and deaths in the selected Block. The participation of people in the activities of gram panchayats has increased and they discuss the programme implementation resulting in transparency. Benefits under the Schemes are now being given to the eligible and needy persons only.

Uttar Pradesh

26. The BNVs were sensitised about the concept and their role of Lab to land initiative by organising a workshop with the participation of all line Department officials, PRI members, BNVs, CBO/NGO, academicians. Gram Sabha was organised with participation of all line Department officials, PRI members, BNVs, CBO/NGOs, etc. and the community and BNV were sensitised. By October 2011, all the BNVs would be trained.

27. Summary

1 Expansion in IAP Districts

All 60 IAP districts affected by naxalite violence will be covered under the Lab-to-Land Initiative for mobilization of BNVs. At least one thousand BNVs will be identified and trained in every Block. Each BNV will have charge of 10 to 40 rural households. SIRDs will contact the District Collectors, identify Blocks/GPs, draw up a strategy for building up rapport with the rural community, provide necessary technical support to identify, train and handhold the BNVs, expose the District officials in the use of Diksha website, and fill up the ten point performance metric for Lab to Land Initiative. Priority will be given to the involvement of BNVs in the following activities :

- a) Provision of job cards to all eligible households
- b) Collecting applications for demand for work upto 100 days per household.
- c) Identifying projects through Ward Sabha/Gram Sabha for providing work to the eligible households.
- d) Proper out-turn of work by the workers as per technical standards prescribed in Schedule of Rates.
- e) Timely measurement of work and recording of attendance on the muster roll every week.
- f) Timely submission of advice to Banks and Post Offices for timely payment of wages within a fortnight of work done.

- g) Proper entry on the job cards of attendance and wages paid.
- h) Performance of social audit of work and records through the Gram Sabha.
- i) Disseminating information in the Gram Sabha regarding provision of assistance under MGNREGA to SC/ST and small and marginal farmers for work on their individual land holdings including irrigation, horticulture plantations and land development.
- j) Mobilization of at least one woman member per BPL household in Self Help Group and facilitation for provision of government subsidy and bank finance.
- k) Mobilization of eligible households for provision of IAY houses.
- l) Dissemination of information regarding provision of household latrines and attainment of Nirmal Gram status for the Gram Panchayat.
- m) Facilitation for maintenance of drinking water tube-wells and providing timely information regarding non-functional tube-wells.
- n) Mobilization of the Gram Sabha for proper implementation of watershed projects under IWMP and activation of SHGs and user groups for maintenance of assets.
- o) Identification of eligible beneficiaries for provision of old age, widow and disability pensions.

2. **Hunar-Se-Rozgar**

SIRDs may submit proposals for implementation of the scheme for skill development in hospitality sector to be funded under *Hunar-Se-Rozgar* Scheme of Ministry of Tourism.

3. **Strengthening of implementation of Lab to Land Initiative**

Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India would formulate proposals for proper implementation of Lab-to-Land Initiative for mobilization of BNVs with required professional and administrative support to SIRDs and at district level.

4. **Production of films**

Ministry will produce at least 300 films in coordination with the SIRDs depicting the success stories of the flagship programmes. SIRDs will identify the film locations and assist in preparation of the scripts for the production of such films.

5. **Expansion of coverage of Blocks for BNVs**

SIRDs/ETCs/PRTCs/GTCs shall focus on increase in the coverage of Blocks in all the Districts for enrolment of the BNVs. Work may begin from one village/Gram Panchayat by regular weekly visits to the village and screening of motivational films in the Gram Sabha during the visit. District Collectors/ CEO Zilla Parishad may be closely involved in the expansion process as in the case of IAP Districts.

6. **Next Colloquium**

Next Colloquium will be held in Assam by which time SIRDs should have completed film production on the work done by the BNVs. Their Power-Point presentation must include the 10-point performance metrics the programme-wise tabular detail of change in programme quality before BNV and after BNV mobilization.