Cabinet Approves Changes to National Rural Livelihoods Mission (Aajeevika)

In a major boost to the women's self-help movement, the Union Cabinet has approved critical changes to the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) including improved targeting, financial assistance provided to the SHGs and the setting up of a society to implement the Mission. NRLM was launched in 2011 with the mandate of reaching out to all poor households in the country.

The important new or modified features of the restructured programme are:

- Participatory Identification of Poor (PIP) to identify target households. The Mission has been advocating this practice over the use of the BPL list for more accurate identification of beneficiaries.
- Introduction of scheme for interest subvention for SHGs to enable SHGs to avail loans (up to Rs 3 lakh) at 7% interest rate.
- Abolition of capital subsidy, replacing it with a
viable 'Resource in Perpetuity' Community Investment Fund (CIF).

- Setting up of National Level Society under N.R.L.M for more effective implementation. The setting up an 'autonomous, adequately staffed, professionally managed and empowered agency at the national level to implement the N.R.L.M', called the National Rural Livelihoods Promotion Society (N.R.L.P.S) under the Societies Registration Act was approved. The main objective of the Society is to continuously build capacities of the State Rural Livelihoods Missions in planning, implementing and monitoring the programme. The Society structure would enable access to high quality professional support, provide flexibility to create partnerships and facilitate innovations and would serve as a knowledge center for rural livelihoods for the state missions.

- Provision to include costs of professional human resource support at block and sub block level as programme costs.

The Union Minister for Rural Development, Shri Jairam Ramesh noted, “The changes will provide additional resources and additional flexibility to implement the NRLM (Aajeevika) in a more effective and accelerated manner across the country, creating new livelihoods and empowering women across rural India”.

Aajeevika Diwas: celebrating the power of collectives, 3rd June 2013

On the 2nd anniversary of National Rural Livelihoods Mission (Aajeevika-NRLM), Aajeevika Diwas was celebrated as a one day event at Pragati Maidan, Delhi on the 3rd of June 2013. The national level event showcased the richness and nuances of this unique poverty alleviation effort of Government of India in all its complexity and range. The day brought together development experts, practitioners and S.H.G members from different states with a common interest: bringing positive change to the lives of the poor.

UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, who inaugurated Aajeevika Diwas 2013, said the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) is the largest women empowerment programme in the world and it will cover two-third of the country’s population in next five years. Giving thrust to poverty alleviation in her address, Mrs. Gandhi described the National Rural Livelihoods Mission as an important programme of the UPA, and sought quick implementation of Aajeevika mission across the nation especially its central and eastern parts."Today it has been proved that this programme can free women from the curse of poverty," said Mrs. Gandhi. "Our purpose is clear. We have to strengthen the women SHGs and their instruments financially," she added.

The UPA Chairperson also visited various stalls put up by state missions in the 'State Pavilion’. Colorful stalls in the pavilion brought together experts and practitioners from different states and served as a kaleidoscope of changing India. The interactive space had a vibrant ambience and housed approximately 25-30 state exhibits. The States and Project Harnessing Women Power to Eliminate Poverty
Implementing agencies used the designated space to showcase best practices, early stage developments, innovation, rural craft (SHG products) and social entrepreneurship avenues in all the thematic areas of NRLM, including: Institution building, Capacity building, Financial Inclusion, Social Inclusion, Livelihood interventions, Skills development, Innovations, Human Resource Development, Systems and Processes, and Environmental management.

‘Prerna – Inspiring journeys of transformation’ was the name of the Breakaway sessions organized to provide a platform for women to share their experiences in combating poverty and the testimonies touching on the transformation in their lives, the impact on gender and empowerment, the growth of community leadership etc. A panel of eminent social workers, academicians, media people was present to hear about felt experience and personal trials, tribulations and triumphs of the women who shared their stories. The interactive session, also captured the experiences of persons who have been instrumental in transforming the lives of the poor in rural India.

An array of cultural programs by SHG members brought colour, music and vivacity to the day’s celebrations. The well-choreographed programs were a kaleidoscope showcasing multiple dimensions and messages of NRLM viz. PIP, women empowerment, insurance, sensitivity for girl child and the disabled. The programme also screened the NRLM Corporate Film the Magic Box, highlighting the philosophy and strategies of NRLM.

Government of India launches 'ROSHNI’ programme to skill and place 50,000 youth in left-wing extremism (LWE) affected districts

The Minister for Rural Development, Shri Jairam Ramesh launched a new skill development scheme called “Roshni” for rural youth in 24 most critical left-wing extremism (LWE) affected districts on June 7, 2013 at New Delhi. This initiative aims at skilling and placement of fifty thousand youth from these districts, of which about 50% would be women.

The beneficiaries would be selected through the PIP process and be provided training according to their aptitude and skills. The government would enter into partnerships with educational institutions, corporate entities, entities that train and place for improved public service delivery, commercial and not for profit training providers will be roped in for implementing this scheme.

Four training models with duration ranging from 3 months to 1 year shall be taken up to meet the diverse needs of youth depending on their entry level qualifications. The projects shall be funded jointly by the central and state governments in the ratio of 75:25.

Roshni Partners meet was held under the chairpersonship of Hon'ble Minister of Rural Development at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi on 25th July 2013. The objective of the conference was to engage interested stakeholders in roll out of the Roshni Program and discuss new proposed guidelines for ASDP.

Innovation fora in Bihar and Maharashtra

Bihar- JEEViKA had organized innovation forum (BIF I) as a 'Development Marketplace' for innovators and social entrepreneurs from public, private and civil society sectors, funders, investors and development agencies in 2007. The endeavor has helped the state mission to converge and develop strategic partnerships for sustainable scaling up and replication of successful innovations. This year BIF II has been designed to further build on the experience of BIF I with the following key objectives:

- Showcase high impact and high potential innovations across eight livelihood related themes;
Fa c i l i t a t e  P u b l i c - P r i v a t e - 
Community partnerships by 
bringing together innovators and 
v a r i o u s  s u p p o r t 
agencies/investors;

Promote social enterprises/ 
innovators by fostering linkages 
with investments and a poor 
community base as suppliers and 
consumers;

Identify and recognize grassroots 
level innovations and facilitate 
partnerships for incubation, 
refinement and scaling up of 
early-stage ideas;

Institutionalize BIF II as platform 
t o  c r e a t e  a n  e n a b l i n g 
environment for new approaches 
to be tried out in the area of rural 
livelihoods, particularly in 
challenging socio-economic 
contexts

Currently, all submitted projects are 
being screened on the basis of 
information provided as part of the 
application on following criteria: 
applicability, scalability, outreach, 
im p a c t ,  s u s t a i n a b i l i t y  a n d 
replicability

On similar lines, Maharashtra SRLM is 
also planning a forum (MRLIF) to find 
the most promising livelihoods

This forum would be critical for the 
mission to bring in its fold good 
practice and livelihoods innovations 
that are replicable as well as forge 
strategic partnerships with agencies 
and individuals in the state within the 
larger objective of – Promotion and 
Support for Innovations and 
Partnership Development – which 
aims to create institutional 
mechanism to identify, nurture and 
support innovative ideas to address 
the livelihoods needs of the rural 
poor.

Restructuring NRLP

The World Bank undertook a 
Restructuring and Fifth 
Implementation Support Mission for 
NRLM from 13th to 22nd March and 
1st April to 20th April. It was decided 
during the Mission that the World 
Bank funded NRLP would be 
implemented into two phases, with a 
$ 500 million funding for each phase.

The first phase, being implemented in 
13 states would end in December 
2017.

The World Bank has also agreed to 
provide further implementation 
support and technical guidance to 
National Mission Management Unit 
and various State Missions for 
effective implementation support to 
the Project for the next year and 
develop an effective implementation 
support plan which can improve 
disbursements and speed up project 
implementation.

A joint workshop was conducted 
between Bank team and the NMMU 
team to develop a common 
understanding and agreement on the 
key principles for restructuring and 
changes in the project.

The Mission also visited all the 
participant states to review their 
performance and guide the State 
M i s s i o n s  a n d  p r o v i d e 
implementation Support. The 
findings of the state visits and the 
work done on restructured program 
were discussed in an Experience 
Sharing and Learning Workshop of 
CEOs of State Missions on 23rd April, 
2013.

Annual Action Plans Approved 
for FY 2013-14
The Annual Action Plans (AAPs) of 21 states for the year 2013-14 have been approved. The total amount approved is Rs 3963 Cr. The states approached the NMMU with a detailed plan of action for implementing the programme over the next year in April-May 2014. The AAPs were evaluated by the NMMU team and submitted to the Empowered Committee during June. Following approval of the Empowered committee, States have been released the first installment of NRLM and NRLP funds. Certain immediate priorities were highlighted by the EC—these included carrying forward of unspent SGSY balances into the state's NRLM account, and submitting detailed proposals under Pilots and Knowledge Management and Communication. The States would be returning with detailed proposals for specific components in two months' time—ie, by August 2013.

RBI Releases Master Circular

RBI released the "Priority Sector Lending- Restructuring of SGSY as National Rural Livelihood Mission" on 27th June, 2013. The circular was the official communication by RBI to the banks on the restructuring of SGSY to NRLM effective from 1st April, 2013. It stated that NRLM has undergone a major shift from the allocation based strategy of its predecessor to the demand based strategy. The circular provides details on the financial assistance available under NRLM viz the Revolving fund, Community Investment Fund (CIF) in the Intensive blocks, and the Interest Subvention to the SHGs.

The circular has provided with broad guidelines on the role of banks in credit linkage of the SHGs. The circular states that first linkage should be of minimum amount of Rs.50,000 followed by a minimum second and third linkage of Rs. 1 lakhs and Rs. 2 lakhs respectively. SHGs may avail CCL as well as term loans from the banks. No collateral of margin is to be levied for the loans upto 10 lakhs.

Proposed events in August

- Central level coordination Committee Meeting with bankers, N. Delhi
- Resource Block Strategy Workshop for states
- M&E workshop, N. Delhi
- Orientation workshop for new staff for North Eastern states
- NRLM-NREGS convergence workshop, Jharkhand
- World Bank review meeting with NMMU, New Delhi
- PIP workshop

Aajeevika

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