



Role and Scheme of District Rural Development Agency

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Abstract: Poverty alleviation through Self-employment and Wage-employment programme is the theme of rural development. It is District Rural Development Agency at the District level which oversees the implementation of different anti-poverty programme. District Rural Development Agency came into existence with effect from 1.4.1980. Previously it was known as Marginal Farmer & Agricultural Land Development Agency (MFALDA). Later on it became Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA). These agencies were only to cater the development of Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Laborers in rural area. Now District Rural Development Agency has embraced manifold activities for up liftment of rural poor. District Rural Development Agency has traditionally been the principal organ at the district level to oversee the implementation of anti-poverty programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development. This agency was created originally to implement the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). Subsequently the District Rural Development Agencies were entrusted with number of programme of both state and central governments. From 01 April 1989 a separate District Rural Development Agency Administration has been introduced to take care of the administrative costs.

Key words: IRDP-Integrated Rural Development Programme, TRYSEM-Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment, DWCRA-Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, GKY-Ganga Kalyan Yojana, MWS-Million Wells Scheme (MWS).

Introduction: The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) has traditionally been the principal organ at the District level to oversee the implementation of different anti-poverty programme.¹ Since its inception, the administrative costs of the DRDAs were met by way of setting apart a share of the allocations for each programme. However, of late, the number of the programme had increased and while some of the programme provided for administrative costs of the DRDAs, others did not. There was no uniformity among the different programme with reference to administrative costs.² Keeping in view the need for an effective agency at the district level to coordinate the anti-poverty effort, a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme for strengthening the DRDAs has been introduced with effect from 1st April 1999. Accordingly, the administrative costs are met by providing separate budget provisions. This scheme which is funded on a 60:40 basis between Centre and States, aims at strengthening and professionalising the DRDAs. The funding ratio in respect of NE States has been revised to 90:10 with effect from the financial year 2015-2016.³

Roles and Functions of DRDA:

- If effective programme design is critical to successful implementation of rural development programmes, so is an effective delivery agency. None of the anti-poverty programmes can have impact unless they are implemented with clarity of purpose and a commitment to the task. It is here that the DRDAs play a critical role. The DRDAs are not the implementing agencies, but can be very effective in enhancing the quality of implementation through overseeing the implementation of different programmes and ensuring that necessary linkages are provided. To this extent the DRDAs is a supporting and a facilitating organisation and needs to play a very effective role as a catalyst in development process.

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¹ http://rural.nic.in/sites/downloads/right-information-act/DRDA_RTI.pdf

² See The state of panchayats : 2007-08 , An independent assessment, Volume I : Thematic reports P 55

³ P. Arjun Rao, "Organisation and Working of District Rural Development Agency-Special Reference to Khammam District in Andhra Pradesh", Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. XXX No. 4, October- December (1984), pp. 1082 -1084.



- The District Rural Development Agency is visualised as a specialised and a professional agency capable of managing the anti-poverty programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development on the one hand and to effectively relate these to the overall effort of poverty eradication in the District. In other words, while the DRDA will continue to watch over the implementation of RD Programme to ensure effective utilisation of the funds intended for anti-poverty programmes, it will need to develop a far greater understanding of the processes necessary for poverty alleviation/eradication. It will also need to develop the capacity to build synergies among different agencies involved for the most effective results. It will therefore need to develop distinctive capabilities rather than perform tasks that are legitimately in the domain of the PRIs or the line departments. The role of the DRDA will therefore be distinct from all the other agencies, including the Zilla Parishad.
- DRDAs must themselves be more professional and should be able to interact effectively with various other agencies. They are expected to coordinate with the line departments, the Panchayati Raj Institutions, the banks and other financial institutions, the NGOs as well as the technical institutions, with a view to gathering the support and resources required for poverty reduction effort in the district. It shall be their endeavour and objective to secure inter-sectoral and inter-departmental coordination and cooperation for reducing poverty in the district. It is their ability to coordinate and bring about a convergence of approach among different agencies for poverty alleviation that would set them apart.
- The DRDAs are expected to coordinate effectively with the Panchayati Raj Institutions. Under no circumstances will they perform the functions of PRIs. 1.5 The DRDAs will maintain their separate identity but will function under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Zilla Parishad. They are expected to be a facilitating and supporting organisation to the Zilla Parishad, providing necessary executive and technical support in respect of poverty reduction efforts. Wherever the Zilla Parishads are not in existence or are not functional, the DRDAs would function under the Collector/District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner, as the case may be.
- The DRDAs are expected to oversee the implementation of different anti-poverty programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development in the district. This is not to be confused with actual implementation, which will be by the Panchayati Raj and other Institutions. The DRDAs will monitor closely the implementation through obtaining of periodic reports as well as frequent field visits. The purpose of the visit should be to facilitate the implementing agencies in improving implementation process, besides ensuring that the quality of implementation of programmes is high. This would include over-seeing whether the intended beneficiaries are receiving the benefits under the different programmes.
- The DRDAs shall keep the Zilla Parishad, the State and the Central Government duly informed of the progress of the implementation of the programmes through periodic reports in the prescribed formats. Special report, as and when called for, shall be provided.
- It shall be the duty of the DRDAs to oversee and ensure that the benefits specifically earmarked for certain target groups (SC/ST, women and disabled) reach them. They shall take all necessary steps to achieve the prescribed norms.
- The DRDAs shall take necessary step to improve the awareness regarding rural development and poverty alleviation particularly among the rural poor. This would involve issues of poverty, the opportunities available to the rural poor and generally infusing a sense of confidence in their ability to overcome poverty. It would also involve sensitizing the different functionaries in the district to the different aspects of poverty and poverty alleviation programmes.
- The DRDAs will strive to promote transparency in the implementation of different anti-poverty programmes. Towards this end, they shall publish periodically, the details of the different programmes and their implementation.
- Keeping in view, the substantial investment that are being made in poverty alleviation programmes, the DRDAs shall ensure financial discipline in respect of the funds received by them, whether from Central or



State Governments. They shall also ensure that the accounts are properly maintained including in respect of the funds allocated to banks or implementing agencies in accordance with the guidelines of different programme.⁴

SCHEMES IMPLEMENTED BY DISTRICT RURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCY:⁵

- **Integrated Wastelands Development Programme:** The broad objectives of the program are: (I) Development of wastelands based on village/ micro-watershed plans. The stake holders prepare these plans after taking into consideration the capability of land-site conditions and local needs. (ii) Promoting the overall economic development and improving the socio economic condition of the resource poor and disadvantaged sections inhabiting the programme areas.
- **Wastelands /Degraded Lands:** As per the Report of the Technical Task Group constituted by the Planning Commission, 1987, the wastelands are the degraded lands which can be brought under vegetative cover with reasonable efforts and which are currently under-utilized and the land which is deteriorating for lack of appropriate water & soil management or on account of natural causes. Broadly, the following are the causes of degradation. Habiting the programme areas.
- **Watershed Approach:** On the recommendations of the Hanumantha Rao Committee, The two Area Development Programme and the development of wastelands are to be taken up through community participation following a watershed approach under common guidelines with effect from 1st April, 1995. A watershed is a Geo-hydrological unit, which drains into a common point.
- **Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY):** The Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana has the following objectives:
 - (a) Primary Objective The primary objective of the Scheme is to provide additional wage employment in all rural areas and thereby provide food security and improve nutritional levels.
 - (b) Secondary Objective The secondary objective is the creation of durable community, social and economic assets and infrastructural development in rural areas.
- **Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY):** Anti-poverty Programmes have been a dominant feature of government initiatives in the rural areas. The Programmes have been reviewed and strengthened in the successive years in order to sharpen their focus on reduction of Rural Poverty.
- **Rural Housing:** Housing is one of basic requirements for human survival. For a normal citizen, owning a house provides significant economic security and dignity in society. For a shelter less person, possession of a house brings about a profound social change in his existence, endowing him with an identity, thus integrating him with his immediate social milieu.
- **National Family Benefit Scheme:** Under this scheme, an assistance of Rs.10,000/- is given to the family on the death of its Primary Bread Winner. The following criteria are adopted to obtain assistance under this scheme.
- **Balika Samrudhi Yojana (BSY):** The Balika Samrudhi Yojana (BSY) covers the girl child in families below poverty line as defined by the Govt. of India in rural areas, who are born on or after 15th August 1997. The Girl Child in India generally has a low status and enjoys fewer rights, opportunities and benefits of childhood as compared to boy child. The Balika Samrudhi Yojana is a part of the long term strategy to change attitude and behavioral pattern towards the girl child while raising her status.

⁴ K. Chakrapani and G. Vidyasagar (1992), DRDA, Nizamabad: Organisational Framework, in G.Vidya Sagar, K. Chakra Pani and K. Sateesh Reddy, Rural Development and Local Participation (eds), Anmol Publications, New Delhi, p. 132.

⁵ Government of India (2003), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana – Annual Report 2002, Ministry of Rural Development, New Delhi, p.39.



Conclusion: The effective programme design is crucial to successful implementation of rural development programmes, so is an effective delivery agency. None of the anti poverty programmes can have impact unless they are implemented with clarity of purpose and a commitment to the task. It is here that the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs) play a critical role. DRDA is a supporting and facilitation organization and needs to play a very effective role as a catalyst in development process. The objective of the DRDA is integrated rural development through implementation of anti poverty programs including self-employment and area development programmes.

DRDA.s/ZP.s and Blocks are responsible for the correct accounting of money distributed to the implementing agencies. They are supposed to supervise and control the whole accounting functions of Blocks/Panchayats. Project Directors/CEO.s are supposed to carry out essential checks.

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