

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 4905
ANSWERED ON 01/04/2025**

RURAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

4905. SHRI GODAM NAGESH:

ADV. CHANDRA SHEKHAR:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

- (a) the measures taken by the Government to enhance agricultural productivity while ensuring sustainability in rural and marginalised communities;**
- (b) the steps taken by the Government to integrate climate resilience into rural development policy; and**
- (c) the measures taken to ensure that the benefits of rural development initiatives reach the most vulnerable sections of society, including women, small-scale farmers and indigenous communities?**

ANSWER

**MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
(SHRI KAMLESH PASWAN)**

(a): The Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare (DA&FW) is implementing National Food Security Mission (NFSM) with the objective of increasing foodgrains production through increase in productivity and area expansion in all the 28 states and 2 Union Territories (Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh) of the country. Under (NFSM) assistance is given through state governments to farmers for interventions like cluster demonstrations on improved package of practices, demonstrations on cropping system, distribution of seeds of High Yielding Varieties (HYVs)/hybrids, improved farm machineries/resource conservation machineries/tools, efficient water application tools, plant protection measures, nutrient management/soil ameliorants, processing & post-harvest equipment, cropping system based trainings to the farmers etc.

Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is implementing Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) under which the following measures have been taken to enhance agricultural productivity:-

- i. Water Conservation and Irrigation Projects: MGNREGS focuses on creating water-harvesting structures such as check dams, ponds, and wells, helping improve water availability for agriculture in rural areas. These initiatives increase agricultural productivity, especially in drought-prone areas.**
- ii. Works for promoting agricultural productivity by creating durable infrastructure required for bio-fertilizers and post-harvest facilities including pucca storage facilities for agricultural produce.**

As part of the farm sector development, DeenDayalUpadhyayaAntyodayaYojana (DAY-NRLM) of this Ministry empowers mahilakisans (women farmers) on adopting sustainable and climate resilient practices in Agriculture and Allied sectors such Agro Ecological Practices, better livestock management practices around health, hygiene, feed and fodder. The aim is to support the mahilakisans in reduction of cost of cultivation, support increase in yield and facilitate in marketing of produce in due course of time by adopting a sustainable practice. The local expert institutions like KrishiVigyan Kendra and Agriculture Universities are continuously guiding the state units of the mission on this.

(b): Several steps have been taken by this Ministry to integrate climate resilience into rural development policies. Under MGNREGS, the following steps have been taken:

- i. Water conservation and water harvesting structures to augment and improve groundwater like underground dykes, earthen dams, stop dams, checks dams and rooftop rainwater harvesting structures in Government or Panchayat building with special focus on recharging ground water including drinking water sources;**
- ii. Watershed management works such as contour trenches, terracing, contour bunds, boulder checks, gabion structures and spring shed development resulting in a comprehensive treatment of a watershed;**

- iii. **Micro and minor irrigation works and creation, renovation and maintenance of irrigation canals and drains;**
- iv. **Renovation of traditional water bodies including desilting of irrigation tanks and other water bodies and conservation of old step wells or baolis;**
- v. **Land development works in common land.**

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G) incorporates State-specific housing designs and promotes the use of local materials, reducing costs and environmental impact. It encourages adoption of, as far as possible, green designs and technologies, appropriate to the local culture and geo-climatic conditions (including multi-hazards), use of local building material minimizing carbon foot prints and that the houses are comfortable. As per Framework for implementation of PMAY-G, the States Government has been directed take steps to encourage willing beneficiaries to adopt green technologies by using appropriate materials and technologies to reduce CO2 emission and depletion of non-renewable energy resources by using different rural housing typologies as per PAHAL for achieving greenness in housing.

Under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), the Ministry has taken many initiatives to construct climate-resilient rural roads. Ministry promotes the construction of roads under PMGSY using New materials/Waste materials/Locally available materials. The Ministry has brought out a new Technology Vision Document in 2022 for promoting green/ new technologies in PMGSY road construction. The implementation of these technologies is based on Indian Road Congress (IRC) guidelines and evaluations undertaken by premier technical institutions in the country. The National Rural Infrastructure Development Agency (NRIDA) organizes workshops, trainings, and field demonstrations for States/ UTs to encourage cross-learning and adoption of these technologies for saving natural resources, enhancing the speed of construction and also for utilizing local waste. The Vision document on new technology Initiatives prescribes enhanced use of new technologies/ materials in the construction of PMGSY roads. Accordingly, States are being promoted to propose at least 50% of the length using new/green technologies/ materials.

Under DAY-NRLM, the mahilakisans are encouraged to adopt organic farming and natural farming practices. As on January 2025, the mission has covered 4.40 crore mahilakisans across the country

on adoption of Agro Ecological Practices, 3 lakhs women farmers into organic farming through adoption of Participatory Guarantee Systems (PGS) practices. In addition to promoting natural farming practices, 70,000 KrishiSakhi (Community Resource Persons) have been certified in convergence with Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare to promote natural farming with the mahilakisan households. DAY-NRLM ensures the benefits of rural development initiatives reach the most vulnerable sections, including women, by promoting inclusive farm and non-farm livelihood models. Through Producer Groups, Integrated Farming Clusters, Sub-Sector Approach, and Non-Farm Enterprises, the mission fosters economic empowerment, social inclusion, and climate resilience. These initiatives create sustainable income opportunities, reduce rural poverty, and strengthen women's leadership in economic development.

The main objective of watershed development is resource conservation, resource generation and resource utilization. Watershed Development Component of Pradhan MantriKrishiSinchayeeYojana (WDC-PMKSY), through its interventions, seeks to address the concerns of land degradation, improving productivity. It rejuvenates watershed landscapes, which leads to improvement in physical properties of degraded soils and sustenance of ground water, reduction of surface runoff, reduction in soil erosion and sedimentation of reservoirs. Springs Rejuvenation ensures sustainable development through improved natural resource management and better resilience of farmers to climate change and generates livelihood opportunities for the watershed communities.

(c): Several measures have been taken by this Ministry to ensure benefits reach vulnerable sections of society. Under MGNREGS, the following measures have been taken:

- i. MGNREGS prioritizes providing employment to marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), and women. These groups are given preference for work under the scheme, ensuring that they benefit from rural employment opportunities.**
- ii. The scheme ensures that at least 33% of the beneficiaries are women, and in many cases, the proportion exceeds this target. Women are given equal wages for equal work, and provisions**

exist for child care in some areas to encourage women's participation in the workforce.

- iii. MGNREGS assists small and marginal farmers through activities like land development, irrigation, and water conservation, which directly benefit them by improving agricultural productivity and sustainability.**

Under PMAY-G, the following provisions have been made:

- i. 60% of the target is to be earmarked for Schedules Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST).**
- ii. In view of the provisions of the Rights of the Persons with Disabilities Act 2016, the States to the extent possible may ensure that 5% of beneficiaries at the State Level are from among Persons with Disabilities.**
- iii. Allotment of house is made jointly in the name of husband and wife except in the case of a widow/unmarried /separated person. The scheme allows the State to also choose to allot it solely in the name of the woman.**
- iv. Women beneficiaries are being encouraged to join Self Help Groups (SHGs) accredited to NRLM of Ministry of Rural Development, to get the livelihood opportunities for augmenting their household income.**

PMGSY has also brought about socio-economic change in the lives of rural people, particularly in the lives of women farmers and other vulnerable sections of society. The findings are as follows:

- i. New roads have provided better education opportunities for children particularly girl children to continue their education beyond the elementary school level.**
- ii. PMGSY roads have made health facilities accessible to people. Women have been the major beneficiaries, with most of the childbirth taking place in government hospitals.**
- iii. Women's participation in financial decisions has increased and it is reflected in their market accessibility.**
- iv. The PMGSY roads have provided new opportunities for employment like employment in nearby urban areas where people could commute daily.**

Further, under Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN), the provision of pucca house to the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) households is one of the interventions which is being implemented by the MoRD. The target is to provide financial assistance to 4.90 lakh PVTG beneficiaries in convergence with PMAY-G for the construction of pucca houses with basic amenities at Rs. 2.39 lakhs/house, including unit cost of Rs. 2 lakh with Rs 12,000/- for toilet construction in convergence with Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin (SBM-G) and 90/95 days unskilled wages (Rs 27,000/- approx.) under MGNREGS. Under PMGSY, target length of construction of roads is 8,000 Km with a period of 5 years (2023-24 to 2027-28).

Further, all households with one or more deprivation, are automatically included households as per SECC 2011 which constitute the DAY NRLM target group. Further, eligible households identified through 'participatory identification of poor' (PIP) process and validated by gram sabha are also included in the Self Help Groups. Furthermore, DAY NRLM has an objective for saturation through its inclusion strategy in order to bring the most vulnerable and unreached population into its fold. There are special efforts to include persons with disabilities, old age population, transgenders and poorest of poor.

National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is a social security programme for the most vulnerable persons of our society living below poverty line, both in rural and urban areas irrespective of the category of the beneficiaries. Under the programme, the old aged, widows, and disabled persons belonging to Below Poverty Line (BPL) and fulfilling eligibility criteria prescribed in the NSAP guidelines, are provided financial assistance, in form of pension and in the case of death of the breadwinner of such family, a lump sum assistance is given to the bereaved family.
