

Adarsh Gram (Model Village): A Concept Note

1. The Idea of a model village

68.9% of our population lives in rural areas (Census 2011). Though number is expected to fall in the coming years, it is still estimated that more than half of our population would be rural even in 2050. Despite there being several past initiatives by governments at all levels – Central, State and Local – in the past, the level of improvement has not kept pace with the rising aspirations among Indians. On most development parameters, there is still a significant gap between rural and urban India, as the table below illustrates:

Sector	Parameter	Urban	Rural
Expenditure poverty	% people below poverty line (2011-12) (Tendulkar estimates)	14%	26%
	% people below poverty line (2011-12) (Rangarajan estimates)	27.2%	31.3%
Education	Literacy Rate - 2011#	85%	68.9%
	Average years of school education of working population*	8.42	4.72
Health	Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) – 2011##	28	46
	Life Expectancy at birth - 2002-06 **	68.8	62.1

Source: Census 2011, *Source: NSS 2009-10, Rural-Urban Divide in India, Hnatkovska and Lahiri, 2012, ** Source: Family Welfare Statistics in India, 2011, ## Source: National Health Profile, CBHI

One reason for the failure of rural development schemes has been the lack of a holistic focus on the village as a unit. Separate flagship schemes targeting different sectors such as health (NRHM), education (SSA) and livelihood (NREGA, NRLM) have been launched in the past, but met with limited success. The “Model Village” concept could address these challenges comprehensively. It can address resource deficits in each of these sectors, with adequate focus on the special needs of every village.

The idea of an “Adarsh Gram” or model village has been explored earlier as well, most notably through the **Pradhanmantri Adarsh Gram Yojana**, launched by the Central Government in 2009-10. The scheme was implemented in pilot mode in 1000 villages of Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, with an allocation of Rs 10 lakh per village. This limit was later raised to Rs 20 lakh per village. The target villages under the scheme were those with more than 50% of the population belonging to Scheduled Castes (SCs). Additionally, State governments have also taken steps in this direction. Himachal Pradesh launched a **Mukhya Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana** along similar lines in 2011, with the allocation of Rs 10 lakh per village.

The proposed “**Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana**” of the Central Government aims to involve MPs more directly in the development of model villages. By adopting a village(s) under this initiative, an MP has the opportunity to directly benefit all sections of a village community in an integrated, efficient and participatory fashion. The following sections in this brief highlight the important objectives that a model village could achieve, and covers the core features of a model village in India. Section 6 covers the important guidelines under the new “**Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana**”.

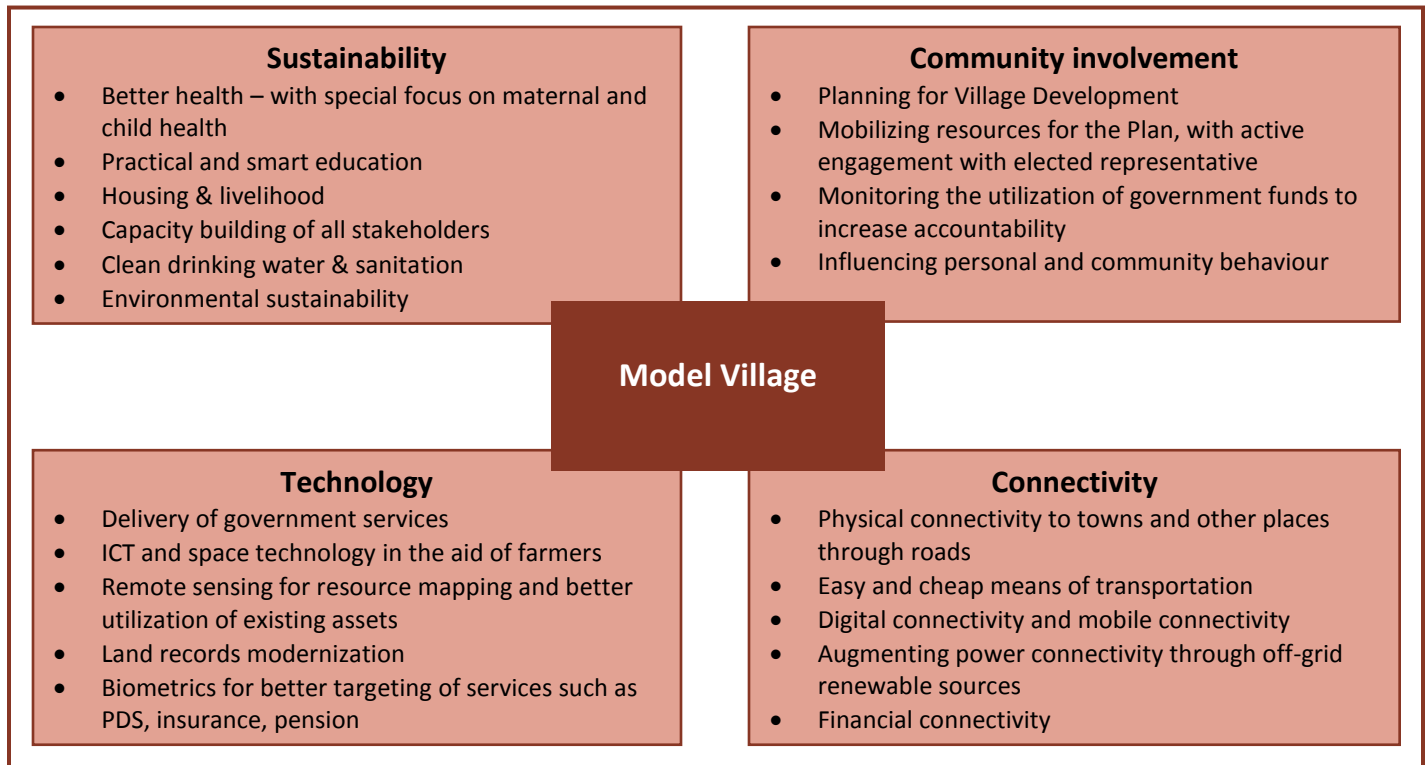
2. Objectives

A model village project has the following important objectives:

- **Prevent distress migration** from rural to urban areas, which is a common phenomenon in India's villages due to lack of opportunities and facilities that guarantee a **decent standard of living**.
- Make the model village a **“hub”** that could attract resources for the development of other villages in its vicinity.
- Provide **easier, faster and cheaper access** to urban markets for agricultural produce or other marketable commodities produced in such villages
- Contribute towards **social empowerment** by engaging all sections of the community in the task of village development.
- Create and sustain a **culture of cooperative living** for inclusive and rapid development.

3. Key elements of a model village

A 21st century model village in India needs to incorporate certain key themes which would be essential for its success. The figure below highlights these broad thematic focus areas, and also mentions the important elements under each such theme.



An intervention under one of these areas could have an effect across other areas as well. For example, technology could be used to improve the quality and delivery of other services such as health and education, which in turn contributes to sustainable development. Similarly, the use of renewable energy, apart from meeting energy needs, also contributes towards environmental sustainability. Village tree plantation drives could encourage a community participation, benefit the environment, prevent soil erosion and benefit agriculture, conserve water, and finally contribute to the aesthetics of the village. A number of these initiatives have already been taken in different parts of the country, but most of them have been attempted in isolation. The urgent need is to bring about a convergence of all such initiatives, for which 2 things would be essential – a) grassroots level planning; and b) mobilization of resources.

4. Resources

For an MP, there are 3 primary resource streams which can be utilized for this purpose:

- **Funds under existing schemes** across different sectors such as health, education, skill development, livelihood etc could be utilized, and based on the specific demands of the village, resources could be channelized into the development of the village. Some important Centrally Sponsored Schemes (CSS) which could be utilized are NRLM, NHM, SSA, NREGA, BRGF, RKVY and Mid-day Meal Scheme.
- **MPLAD** funds (Rs 5 crore per year) could be utilized for the construction of high quality, sustainable assets such as school buildings, hospitals, Anganwadi Centres and school kitchens for Mid-Day meals. Funds could also be channelized into road construction, and the construction of toilets in schools and homes, particularly for girls.
- **CSR** funds, of which a much larger corpus is available after the latest amendment to the Companies Act, could also be used for the purpose of infrastructure development in the constituency.
- **Self-help groups**, who are eligible for subsidized loans under various Central and State government initiatives
- **Gram Panchayats** could also raise loans, if legally permitted to do so under the State Panchayati Raj Acts like in the case of Kerala.

5. Choosing a village for adoption

As per the latest Census, there are more than 640,000 villages in India, and more than 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats (GPs). In other words, every Lok Sabha constituency has more than 450 such Panchayats on an average. Among these, choosing one (or 2-3) GP for the purpose of adoption is also an important decision to be made. According to the latest guidelines, the MP may choose any Gram Panchayat with a population of 3000-5000 people in plain areas, and 1000-3000 in hilly, tribal and difficult areas. However, as the PM has observed,

1. **Strong Panchayats in terms of finances, functions and functionaries** – The village Panchayat will have a pivotal role to play in any village development project. The financial and functional strength of a Panchayat will be extremely useful in preparing village plans, mobilizing community opinion in favour of a particular initiative, and implementing the initiative in a transparent and time-bound manner.
2. **Proximity to an urban centre** – Choosing a village close to an urban centre might facilitate access to physical and financial resources, and also help in establishing better connectivity between the village and the urban town. Such a village could also become an extension of the urban centre, and have facilities which could virtually be at par with the urban centre. This would be very similar to the “**Rurban**” approach announced in the latest Union Budget, which aims to provide city-like facilities in rural areas close to existing cities.
3. **Potential for piloting new technologies** – Since technology would be at the core of the model village concept, the village must offer avenues for experimenting with such technology. Some examples of such technologies could be the use of solar power for irrigation and domestic lighting, and agricultural innovations based on soil suitability and climate.
4. **Diverse population groups** – The real success of such an initiative can be demonstrated if the lives of large and diverse sections of the population can be positively impacted by it. Rather than focusing on any particular religious or caste group, the model village must aim towards the uplift of all sections of the population in the village. However, it is important that special attention is paid to vulnerable groups such as young children, women and the BPL population.

The guidelines for the proposed scheme clearly state that an MP may adopt any village except his own village or that of his/her spouse

The “Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana” was formally inaugurated by the Prime Minister on October 11th. Under the Scheme, the target is for each MP to adopt at least one village and develop it into a model village by 2016. The longer-term target is for each MP to develop at least 2 model villages by the next Lok Sabha elections in 2019. The important features of the scheme are covered in the following sections.

6. Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY)

Apart from those covered earlier in this brief, the other important features of the new Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana are as follows:

- **2379 villages** would be covered by the scheme till 2019
- **Village Development Plans** will be prepared by the Gram Panchayat and approved by the Gram Sabha. The Planning Stages outlined in the Scheme are as follows:

Key stages in the preparation of a Village Development Plan under SAGY

1. Creating an environment for community-led planning, with the MP spearheading this campaign
2. Situation Analysis, including baseline surveying and resource mapping.
3. Identification of financial resource streams
4. Finalizing needs
5. Preparation of the Village Development Plan(VDP) by a Working Group set up by the District Collector with representation of experts from diverse fields,
6. Clearance to VDP by the Gram Sabha
7. Approval of VDP by District Level Committee headed by the District Collector in the presence of an MP

- **Role of an MP** – The primary roles and responsibilities of an MP under SAGY are as follows:
 - Identifying the Gram Panchayat
 - Facilitating the planning process
 - Mobilizing additional resources as and when required under the Plan
 - Filling in critical gaps using MPLADs funds
- **Two National level Committees** would monitor the implementation of the Scheme.
 - One Committee would be headed by the Rural Development Minister and include Ministers in-charge of planning and programme implementation.
 - The second Committee will be headed the Secretary, Rural Development with representatives from various other ministries/departments relevant to SAGY
- **State-level Committee** headed by the State Chief Secretary and including experts from various disciplines. The Secretary of the State Rural Development Department would serve as member-convenor to this Committee

The final section in this document presents actual examples of “model villages” from different parts of the country. The initiatives for development taken up in these villages could be replicated in other Gram Panchayats under the new Scheme. Though no village in India has managed to incorporate all elements envisaged in the Model Village Scheme, the collective experience from the initiatives in these villages could prove immensely useful.

7. Model Village – Case Studies

1. Hiware-Bazaar, Maharashtra



This is a village located in the rainshadow region of the Sahyadri mountain range in Maharashtra's Ahmednagar district. Till the 1980s, farming in the village was largely rainfed. and farmers were forced to migrate seasonally to surrounding areas for work.

From the 1990s onwards, things began to change. The village Panchayat adopted a holistic focus on a variety of activities, with community groups responsible for various aspects of the village economy and social development. Women thrift groups, Milk Dairy Society and Youth Clubs are examples of such community-based organizations. The village Panchayat also focused on family planning and reforestation, for which awareness programmes and drives have frequently been organized in the village. The village Gram Sabha also launched a watershed development programme, and an annual water audit is being conducted in the village since 2004 for more efficient and equitable management of water resources. It has also contributed to greater agricultural productivity.

Today, the village is considered a model for community-led, multi-sectoral growth of rural parts of the country.

2. Punsari village Gujarat



Located in Gujarat's Sabarkantha district, Punsari village has emerged as a model village with modern urban amenities such as 24X7 power supply, WiFi connectivity, CCTV cameras to ensure security, and pucca roads connecting the village with other villages and towns.

Other important features of the village include:

- A reverse osmosis plant which supplies 20 litres of water to each household at Rs 4.
- Use of solar power for agricultural purposes
- Accidental Insurance cover to one member of every household
- Air-conditioned primary schools with no dropouts
- Bus facility for all households
- Focus on behavioural change through campaigns and awareness drives. For this purpose, 120 loudspeakers have been installed in different parts of the village

Punsari was awarded with the Best Gram Panchayat Award from the Centre and the State in 2011.

3. Ankapoor, Telangana



Ankapoor is located in the Nizamabad district in the state of Telangana. Ankapoor has been globally recognized as a “Model Agricultural Village” for its achievements in introducing modern technologies in agriculture while ensuring the participation of all sections of the village community, particularly women. Organizations like the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR), International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), Manila and International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-arid Tropics (ICRISAT) have formally commended the developments in agriculture in the village.

Some of the important features of the agricultural model of the Ankapoor include:

- Peasant Association of the village coordinates various agricultural interventions
- The decision making process is inclusive and based on consensus-building. Women have a dominant role in the utilization and supervision of labour.
- Focus on new sources of income, such as commercial cultivation of seeds, scientific crop rotation techniques.
- Sustainable agriculture with greater use of farmyard manure and lesser use of chemical fertilizers
- Village Market Yards facilitate the sale of agricultural produce with minimal wastage

Since agriculture accounts for almost the entire economic output from many villages in India, participatory agriculture, with equal focus on irrigation, watershed management and technology-led cultivation should be the way forward.

4. Kumbalangi village, Kerala – a model for eco-tourism



Kumbalangi is essentially a fishing hamlet which has been developed as a unique rural tourist destination in Kerala’s Ernakulam district. The Kumbalangi Integrated Tourism Village Project was launched in 2004, with a focus on eco-tourism, while offering tourists a glimpse of the rich and rustic life of the Indian countryside. The important attractions in Kumbalangi include organic farm produce used to prepare meals for tourists, toddy tapping and crab farming. To keep the village clean and serve its energy needs, households are also provided subsidies for setting up mini biogas plants in their households.

The Kumbalangi approach could be adopted by other coastal villages to boost tourism and provide livelihood to local communities

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