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## **Role of Model Village Scheme in Rural Development in Jammu District of Jammu and Kashmir - A Study**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The concept of Adarsh Gram or Model Village aims to ensure the overall development of village, improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of all sections of the population and make them self-sufficient by providing them all the basic facilities like health, education, sanitation, employment, communication, internet, electrification and technological advancements in agriculture. The Model Village Scheme was launched in 2004 in Jammu and Kashmir to bring overall development in selected villages by providing basic facilities and developing infrastructure in order to improve the living standard of villagers. But various issues like lack of basic services, lack of infrastructural developments, absence of maintenance; poor construction quality are affecting the role of the scheme in developing rural areas.

In this context, present study has made an attempt to to examine the role of the ‘Model Village’ scheme in Rural Development in Jammu District, Jammu and Kashmir by monitoring the development of infrastructure and the working condition of the developed assets in the selected villages.

**Key words:** Rural Development, Infrastructure Development, Model Village Scheme.

### **Introduction**

In the rural context, development involves use of physical, financial and human resources for economic growth and social development of the rural economies. World Bank (1975) defined rural development as “a strategy aiming at the improvement of economic and social living conditions, focusing on a specific group of poor people in a rural area. It assists the poorest group among the people living in rural areas to benefit from development”. The term rural development also represents improvement in quality of life of rural people in villages. According to Kartar Singh (2009) rural development is the “overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural masses”.

Rural Development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need and rural development as a process leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor (Green, 2013). Rural Development which is concerned with

economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential. The present strategy of rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment etc. The main objectives of rural development are:

1. To raise the standard of living of rural people.
2. To improve the quality of life of rural people by alleviating poverty.
3. To develop both farming and non-farming activities in order to generate employment.
4. To provide social infrastructure such as drinking water, education, sanitation, housing, roads, health facilities, electrification etc.
5. To make maximum utilisation of local resources without affecting environment.
6. To increase the income of rural people by improving productivity.

In order to fulfil these objectives, strong participative efforts are required at national level, state level and at village level to make the effective implementation of rural development programmes at micro level.

### **Model Village Scheme in Jammu and Kashmir**

The concept of Adarsh Gram or Model Village aims to ensure the overall development of village, improvement in the standard of living and quality of life of all sections of the population and make them self-sufficient by providing them all the basic facilities like health, education, sanitation, employment, communication, internet, electrification and technological advancements in agriculture. The concept of Model Village is not a new concept. Since pre independence India this concept of Model Village exists like Mahatma Gandhi's "Wardha village (Sevagram)", Rabindra Nath Tagore's "Sriniketan" attempt and recently "Info village" model by M.S. Swaminathan research foundation and are examples of Model Villages (Sarat, 2017). N. Viswanadham and S. Vedula described Smart village as a bundle of services delivered to its residents and businesses in an effective and efficient manner (Viswanadham, 2010). Dr. Pritesh Shukla has defined Smart Village just like a Smart city is interactive and multi-functional there should be active participation of people in various activities. A smart village is one which will automatically link local production with local procurement and local distribution. A smart village will also have power, knowledge, healthcare, technology, entrepreneurship and internet connectivity (Shukla, 2016).

The concept of Model Village came to Jammu and Kashmir in 2004 with the announcement made by honourable Prime Minister under the Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan. This programme aims at the overall development of one village in each block as "Model Villages" by the Rural Development Department on the recommendation of elected representatives. A total of 119 villages have been approved to develop them as "Model Village" in Jammu and Kashmir in which 57 villages were selected from Jammu division and 62 villages were selected from Kashmir division. The main aim of this scheme is not only to provide basic services in rural areas but also to minimize the Rural-Urban divide, to check migration of population and improve the quality of life with the use of the latest technology and ensure integrated development of these areas by using local resources (Governemnt of J&K).

For the development of a village as "Model Village" the focus is on following areas:

1. Improvement in overall sanitation of the village including lane/drains.
2. Use of Solar Technology for Street Lights.
3. Creation of essential facilities like Common Facility Centres (CFCs, Playground and Recreation Parks.
4. Creation of Rural roads and Entry Gates.
5. Establishment of Rural Informatics Centres.
6. Creation of Small shopping Line/Lines for Local Educated Youths.

Under the Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan the approved cost of each model village is Rs. 120 lakhs and that of project is Rs. 6840 Lakhs. Many of the model villages are inaugurated, some have been completed and some are near completion (Governemnt of J&K). After the separation of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh as two separate Union Territories in 2019 the two districts of Kashmir division namely Leh and Kargil became part of Union Territory of Ladakh. So, at present the Model Village scheme is implemented in all the 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir.

This Model Village Scheme is meant to bring infrastructure development in the model villages by providing basic services like road, electricity, water, education, employment, sanitation, communication and health facilities. The scheme is supposed to provide the installation of solar lights, formation of children parks, playgrounds, rural informatics centres and common facility centres.

### **Review of Literature**

The concept of Model Village means overall development of village by providing all the basic facilities. The concept of Model Village exists since pre-independence time from the

time of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindra Nath Tagore. Many scholars have defined the concept of Model Village. Shukla (2016) conducted case study of Punsri village, which was upgraded as a smart village, with the all multi-functional and interactive facilities provided. "Punsari" is an example of "Model Village" which is found near Gandhinagar region of Gujarat. This village has all the facilities. Smart Village focus on local production, local procurement and local distribution. Smart Village should have facilities of healthcare, knowledge, power, technology, entrepreneurship and internet connectivity. Mahalingam (2016) explained Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, the scheme has two aims for the development: firstly 'holistic development' of the identified gram panchayats, which includes social mobilization and community driven grassroot development. Singh (2016) in his article stated that the aim of Saansad Adarsh gram Yojana is to empower the villagers to make choices and provide them opportunities to exercise those choices. This scheme provides physical infrastructure, basic amenities, improve the living standard of people, enrich social capital builds community spirit and increases community participation. This yojana is inspired by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi whose concept of Rural Development revolves around creating Model Villages which can transform 'swaraj' (self-rule) into 'su-raj' (good governance). Kale (2017) covered the criteria for the introduction of a Smart village, in a Smart village there is smart and active participation of people in various activities. The main focus of smart village is not only on developing big infrastructure, providing internet connection, smart transportation to the rural lands but also to provide support to sustainable agricultural practices. Ralegan siddhi village is an example of smart village developed by Mr. Anna Hazare in Parner. This village focused on water shed management, rain water harvesting and drip irrigation. Ponnusammy (2017) provided indicators of Model village are: (1) Infrastructural indicators, (2) Economic Indicators (3) Farming Indicators (4) Social Indicators (5) Environmental Indicators. A model village should have infrastructure like roads, schools, water supply, health centres, community centres, sanitation facilities and communication facilities. Economic Indicators like average annual income of households, type of housing, APL and BPL population in village and food self-sufficiency. Farming Indicators like sustainable agriculture, self-sufficiency and scientific agricultural practices. Social Indicators like literacy rate, status of women in village and absence of social evils like communal tension and consumption of Alcohol. Environmental Indicators like maintaining forest cover, adopting renewable resources, ensure ecological security. Chandra and Sarat (2017) opined that model village is not only meant for the representation of somebody's idea

but also it is the bench mark and ideal in a position to motivate the neighbouring villages to turn as like". Rudra (2018) has discussed the overall performance of the 'The Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana' has been inspired by the ideals and values of Mahatma Gandhi and thus stresses on the values of patriotism, nation pride, community service and on developing infrastructure.

Jammu and Kashmir always remained a disturbed territory since Independence. The region has faced civil conflict, lack of development, poverty and unemployment. A large population of Jammu and Kashmir lives in rural areas. So, Model Village Scheme was launched in 2004 under the Prime Minister Reconstruction Plan (PMRP) in order to bring overall development and to check migration in rural areas. The Tribune (2004), in its article stated that in order to transform the rural profile of Jammu and Kashmir one village in each block was developed as a model village. The main focus is on rural requirements including electricity, drinking water, sanitation, education, employment, healthcare, communication and road connectivity. Greater Kashmir (2015), in its article reported that the development of Eight Model Villages with an expenditure of Rs. 9.47 crore in various blocks of Jammu district have been completed under the Prime Minister reconstruction Programme (PMRP). Hakhoo (2015) correspondent of the Greater Kashmir, reported that-A State Level Evaluation Committee (SLEC) was constituted by the government for monitoring and evaluation of the projects taken up under Prime Minister Reconstruction Programme. "Model Village" scheme was also launched under Prime Minister Reconstruction Programme (PMRP), in 2004-05. The State level Evaluation Committee in its report has put question mark on the claim of government about the success of "Model village" scheme. The committee found that the installation of solar lights in 122 villages, have proven a failure. Also, some of the installed solar lights are non-functional due to absence of maintenance. It was also found that the allotment of shopping complexes was not done in a transparent manner. The committee found that the sanitary units constructed were very poor and, in some cases, there is lack of water connections. Daily Excelsior (2016) stated that in Jammu and Kashmir 119 villages have been upgraded to Model Villages under the Prime Minister's Reconstruction Programme, at an estimated cost of Rs. 120 lakh per village. This information was provided by Minister for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj in the Legislative Council. A total of 117 villages have been taken for development as Model Villages in Jammu province under different schemes over the years. Bhat T (2016) has covered the news on Model Village in Kishtwar that the estimate cost for the development of Model village project is 1 to 2 crore per village. It also includes the provision of all basic

amenities like improvement of sanitation, community felicitation centre with internet facility and many other facilities. “Garh” a village in Paddar area of Kishtwar district was also identified for developing as Model Village in 2006. Some works were also taken up for the development of this village but still the villagers are living without electricity. In the official records the rural development department has shown that Rs 1 crore has been spent for the development of Garh village into Model Village. However, locals said that this village has been waiting for electricity for last six decade. Department of Panchayati Raj and Rural Development J&K (2017) has conducted a study on Model village under Border area Development Programme (BADP), mainly three villages of Samba district. The study found constraints in the implementation of the scheme, issues related to the supervision and monitoring of scheme, overall maintenance of asset created, non-functional nature of assets created, poor quality of construction works and maintenance, delay in release of funds etc. Daily Excelsior (2019) reported that “Salwah” a model village in Mendhar sub division of Poonch district lacks basic facilities. There is worst condition of roads and the supply of electricity is not proper in the village.

### **Research Gap**

The studies that aim at assessment of the role of the scheme in rural development were few at national level. In Jammu and Kashmir, there are only few studies related to the assessment of the scheme. From the limited literature available on “Model Village” scheme in Jammu and Kashmir, it has been inferred that, although the scheme was launched to bring the development in the selected villages by providing them all the basic facilities like electricity, drinking water, sanitation, education, employment, healthcare, communication and road connectivity, but the scheme has highlighted various issues like lack of basic services, lack of infrastructural developments, absence of maintenance; poor construction quality and also the problems faced by officials and elected representative while implementing the scheme. Hence, this study attempted to fill the gap by making fresh assessment on the role of Model village scheme and the benefit it had provided to the rural areas.

### **Research Questions:**

1. To what extent the guidelines of Model village Scheme have been fulfilled in study area?
2. What are the perceptions of respondents about the “Model Village” scheme?
3. What type of infrastructure developments have been made under the Model village scheme?

### Objectives of the Study:

1. To study the impact of 'Model Village Scheme' in rural development in the selected villages of Jammu District.
2. To assess the perception of the villagers towards the implementation of "Model Village" scheme in their villages.
3. To evaluate the performance of "Model Village" scheme in the Jammu district of Jammu division with respect to (a) awareness of villagers (b) infrastructural facilities (c) basic services provided by the scheme.

### Methodology

The research design adopted for the present study is Descriptive and Analytical. The present study is based on mixed method approach i.e. quantitative and qualitative methods. Both primary and secondary sources were consulted for data collection. For the purpose of conducting primary study, survey method was used. Jammu District is selected for conducting the study. The main rationale for selecting Jammu District is that the district consists of highest number of rural population among all the districts of Jammu Division. The scheme has identified 8 Model Villages for implementation. All the 8 villages of Jammu District were part of the study.

**Table 3: List of Model Villages in Jammu District**

S. No.	CD Block	Model Village	Total Population	Number of Households
1.	Bhalwal	Ghaink	2623	525
2.	Marh	Akalpur	2363	499
3.	R.S. Pura	Suchet Garh	946	208
4.	Akhnoor	Budhwal	1086	288
5.	Khour	Gigrial	441	115
6.	Satwari	Bhour	1175	295
7.	Dansal	Jandrah	1863	349
8.	Bishnah	Allah	3905	816
<b>Total</b>			<b>14402</b>	<b>3095</b>

A sample of 341 households is derived from a total of 3095 households of all the 8 model villages by using DARYLE W. MORGAN formula. These 341 households were selected on the basis of proportion of households in each village and within each village systematic random sampling will be used for selecting respondent households. The data for the present study was collected by using both primary and secondary sources. For the primary data, the assessment is based on both closed and open-ended questions through observation method, focussed group discussions and face to face interviews with the concerned Government officials, *panches*, *sarpanches* and villagers. Separate Structured and Semi-structured

Interview Schedules were used as research tools for the concerned government officials, *panches*, *sarpanches* and villagers in order to assess the impact of “Model Village” scheme. Data collected from different sources were analysed with the help of statistical tools and techniques such as percentage, frequency and averages.

### Findings of the Study

The Model Village Scheme was the commitment of the government to transform the rural backward villages into “Model Villages” by providing them all the basic facilities and by the development of infrastructure there. One village from each all the eight blocks of Jammu district have been developed as “Model Villages”. The condition of villages has been improved a lot but still many more efforts are required. During the field study primary data is collected directly by researcher from the villagers and the implementing agencies like Block Development Officers of the concerned blocks and the Sarpanches of the respective villages. However, the secondary data is collected from books, journals, newspapers, reports, discussions and websites.

The findings from the data collected in the field are discussed below:

1. The implementation of Model Village scheme in the selected villages has increased the connectivity to the villages by the construction of the roads and thus helps in minimising the rural-urban divide in terms of infrastructural provisions.
2. The implementation of the scheme has improved the living conditions of the villagers up to some extent as it provides basic facilities in the villages.
3. The entry gate in each village has been developed and is found satisfactory.
4. The scheme develops the sanitation system in the selected villages by the construction of pucca lanes and drains. But presently they are in poor condition due to lack of maintenance.
5. Common facility centre has been developed in every village and in found satisfactory except the Common facility centre of Budhwal village which is in very poor condition.
6. Solar lights were installed in every village under the scheme but none of them is operational now in any of eight villages. Many are stolen and some are in poor condition due to lack of maintenance.
7. Playground has been developed in Gigrial and Bhour villages and recreation parks has been developed in villages like Ghaink, Akalpur, Suchet Garh, Budhwal, Jandrah, and Allah. But the condition of parks is pathetic due to lack of maintenance.



8. Shopping lines has been constructed in all villages except Allah and Jindrah village but the developed shopping lines has not been allotted to youth in any village.
9. Rural Informatics Centre (Computer centre) in villages Akalpur, Allah, and Suchetgarh were established in school complex. Whereas in villages like Budhwal, Ghaink, Gigrial, Jindrah and Bhour separate buildings were constructed near school. Only the computer centre of Gigrial village is in good condition. All other computer centres are in very worst condition. Computers from these centres were either stolen are broken and none is in working condition. In fact in the rural informatics centre building of Bhour village, primary health centre has been set up.
10. Migration from villages has not been reduced much. There are different reasons for migration such as in search of employment, cross border shelling etc.
11. On discussion with implementing agencies like BDOs and Sarpanches it was found that the villagers were almost cooperative in the development of assets. However, they did not provide their land for the development of assets. So, the developed assets were mainly established on the state lands.
12. According to implementing agencies, no fund was allotted for the maintenance of developed assets.

### **Conclusion**

Thus, from the above discussion it is clear that the Model Village scheme was launched by government in Jammu and Kashmir to transform the backward and least developed villages in each block as Model Villages by improving the physical infrastructure, by providing basic facilities, by improving the living standard of villagers, by minimizing the Rural-Urban divide, by checking the migration of population from rural areas and by bringing overall development in these areas by using local resources. (Government of Jammu & Kashmir).

However in contrast to achieve these fixed and targeted objectives, the scheme has achieved partial results due to different reasons like lack of maintenance fund, lack of awareness among villagers, lack of people participation, lack of interest of implementing agencies, high rate of corruption and local politics. But inspite of some drawbacks, scheme still proves beneficial for villagers as it helps in creation of assets like roads, pucca lanes, drains, parks, playgrounds, solar lights, common facility centres, shopping complexes and rural informatics centres. Although the quality of developed asstes is questionable which proves that the assets were developed only to withdraw the allotted funds.

### Recommendations

This Model Village scheme is a centralised scheme. It can be made more effective by decentralising the scheme, by generating more awareness among villagers and by encouraging their participation in decision making processes at the panchayats level. Also, Funds should be allotted for maintenance of developed assets and regular inspections should be made by Block Development officers and Sarpanches to check the condition of developed assets. The scheme can be effectively implemented by reducing the rampant corruption at any stage. Also, the local politics should be minimised and collective efforts should be taken by government, block officials, sarpanches and villagers to gain desired results.

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