

Regional consultation of the Task Force on Elimination of Poverty in India, Jaipur 22nd April, 2016

Background

In the first meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog held under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister on 8th February, 2015 it was decided to constitute a Task Force in NITI Aayog on Elimination of Poverty in India under the Chairmanship of Dr. Arvind Panagariya, Vice Chairman, NITI Aayog. It was also decided that parallel Task Forces on Poverty Elimination will be constituted by each State. Accordingly, a Task Force on Elimination of Poverty in India was constituted by NITI Aayog on 16th March, 2015. The Task Force of NITI Aayog held three meetings and interacted with experts in the field including NGOs. The states were required to submit their respective Task Force report to NITI Aayog as an input for preparing the Task Force Report on Elimination of Poverty in India.

Based on the work of the NITI Aayog's Task Force on Elimination of Poverty in India and inputs provided in the States' Task Force reports, an occasional paper on 'Eliminating Poverty: Creating Jobs and Strengthening Social Programs' has been posted on official website of NITI Aayog (www.niti.gov.in) on 21st March 2016. This paper forms the basis of regional consultation meetings to prepare a roadmap for elimination of poverty in the country.

Views of States at the Regional Consultation

On April 22nd, the regional consultation meeting for Western and Northern States/UTS was held in Jaipur. States/UTs that participated in this meeting are Gujarat, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli.

Four broad issues that were discussed in the Jaipur consultation are:

- (i) Measurement of poverty and identification of beneficiary households
 - Issues relating to tracking progress in poverty reduction
 - Use of SECC-2011 data for identification of beneficiary households
- (ii) Strategies for employment-intensive sustainable rapid growth of the economy
 - Primarily focus was on generation of increased employment opportunities in industrial and services sector.
- (iii) Ways to make anti-poverty programs more effective
 - Possible modifications, use of technology and JAM trinity
- (iv) Innovative poverty reduction program of the State/UT that has been developed.

The States agreed with the view of NITI Aayog on poverty line that it should be used for tracking progress in poverty reduction and not for identification of poor to provide benefit under welfare schemes.

Gujarat opined that poverty is a multidimensional concept and shared its life cycle and area based approach to be followed to combat poverty. It briefed about some of its best practices which have been successful in addressing the poverty in the state such as Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana, Sagarkhedu Sarvangi Vikas Yojana, Krishi Mahotsava and Garib Kalyan Mela. One of the innovative model worth consideration for replicating in other states was that of rehabilitation of slum dwellers. This has reduced slum population drastically from 2001 to 2011 in Gujarat. However, it raised concern that more and more children are going for private schools but they are not covered under Mid-Day Meal Scheme to provide nutritional support to children.

Maharashtra flagged that managerial issues of MGNREGS should be looked into. They opined that there should be common MIS for all rural development schemes addressing poverty to leverage optimal resource utilization. Rajasthan highlighted that communitization efforts in the State has brought paradigm shift in poverty alleviation, wherein all interventions in Rajeevika are led by women resource persons from the community. It stressed that capacity development atleast to block level functionaries need urgent attention as large amount of resources are being dealt at this level.

Haryana is adopting Polyhouse model to boosting the productivity of exotic flowers and vegetables in view of small land holdings. This is helping farmers to move away from water intensive paddy crop in the state. The participating states, particularly Maharashtra and Rajasthan, wanted the issue of watershed development to be looked into and some remedial measures on availability of drinking water may be taken up by NITI Aayog. All the states raised concern over quality of education in government schools.
