

Rural Development Programmes: A Case of Gadchiroli, Maharashtra

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Abstract - India is a nation of towns, and its improvement is synonymous with the development of individuals living in rural areas. In the Indian setting, rural development is called essential for two significant reasons. First, around two-thirds of the population, despite everything, lives in rural areas. Second, the rural areas' backwardness would be a significant obstruction to the general development of the economy. The term 'rural development' is of central interest and is broadly acclaimed in both the developed and the developing nations of the world. There is anyway no all-around adequate meaning of rural development, and the term is utilized in various manners and in an immensely different setting. As an idea, it can note generally speaking development of rural areas to improve the personal satisfaction of rural individuals. The paper discusses the concept of a backward/less developed district of Maharashtra state, Gadchiroli. The focus is majorly on the rural development programmes and their effectiveness in the district.

Key Words: Backward, District, Development, Rural, Poverty, GDDP, Education

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper attempts to identify the poorest or most backward districts in the country that have been made since 1960. A committee of the GoI's Ministry of Rural Areas and Employment, the previous name for the Ministry of Rural Development, conducted one of the most elaborate exercises for the identification of backward districts in 1997. Headed by EAS Sarma, who was then Principal Advisor to the Planning Commission, the committee used a composite method with differing weights for parameters such as Incidence of poverty, Education, Health, Water supply, Transport and communications, and Degree of industrialization.

1.1 Backward Districts

The major elements of the most backward districts are they lie in the Naxal belt that extends from Bihar to Andhra Pradesh and there is 'no linkage' to street organizations or major highways. These districts are found in the north and eastern areas, these are not hit by drought but are very prone to floods. Normally, a large portion of these need water system improvement. Neither would they be able to flaunt any industrial development. These districts are the most exceedingly worst performers both in literacy sector and school enrollment. Because of low literacy, there is lack

of inoculation and high infant mortality. It could be said, these areas give an appalling sight of both the reason and the impact of hardship.

The Sarma Committee's list of 100 most backward districts included:

- 38 districts from undivided Bihar
- 19 from undivided Madhya Pradesh
- 17 from undivided Uttar Pradesh
- 10 from Maharashtra, and
- A smaller number of districts from other states

There were no districts from Gujarat, Goa, Kerala, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The committee did not consider the northeastern states and Jammu and Kashmir as it felt "they had problems which were specific and peculiar to them".

Bibek Debroy made a comprehensive estimation of district-level deprivation in 2003 for Contemporary Studies, New Delhi. In the report, District-level Deprivation in the New Millennium (Konark Publishers, New Delhi; 2003), He used six indicators derived from the UN Millennium Development Goals:

- Poverty
- Hunger
- Infant mortality
- Immunization, and
- Literacy and elementary school enrolment

The backward or less developed districts of Maharashtra are in sequence Gadchiroli, Dhule, Nandubar, Bhandara, Chandrapur, Gondia, Hingoli, Nanded, Aurangabad, Ahmednagar.

2. CASE AREA: GADCHIROLI, MAHARASHTRA

The administrative set up shows that the district is divided into 12 Tahsils and 12 Panchayat Samities. According to the 2001 Census, there was 467 Gram Panchayat for the purpose of Rural Development. The main crops grown in the district is Paddy. Gadchiroli district stretches over an area of 14412 sq. km. In terms of area, Gadchiroli district constitutes 4.68% of the total area of the Maharashtra State.

The total district population, according to the 2011 census, was 1,071,795. Of the total population, 93% is residing in the rural area, and 7% is residing in an urban area. About one third (38.3%) of the population is tribal (13). Close to 75% of the total land of the district is covered by forest. The literacy rate of the district is 66%. Subsistence farming and farm labor are the main occupations in the district, and in 2011, the per capita annual income was Rs 33,504.

Gadchiroli District is situated in the Southeastern corner of Maharashtra and is bounded by Chandrapur district in the west, Gondia District in the north, Chhattisgarh state in the east, and Andhra Pradesh state in the south and southwest. Gadchiroli district lies between 19°31' & 19°45' N latitude and 80°15' & 80°45' E longitude (Tiwari 1994). The total land cover of the study area is 14412.0 sq. km. Out of which, nearly 78.4% (i.e.11,694.0 sq. km.) is covered by reserve or protected forest. Dhanora, Etapalli, Aheri and Sironcha talukas in the eastern part of the district are covered by forest. The remaining 1.55% land of the total area is a wasteland. The area receives an annual rainfall of nearly 1510 mm. The district's main river basin is the Godavari, which flows west to east and forms the southern boundary of the district. Gadchiroli district has prominent hills like Bhamragad, Tipagad, Palasgad and Surjagad area (Tiwari 1994) and is inhabited by tribes such as the Halbi, Gond, Pawra, Bhil (Tiwari and Padhye 1993).

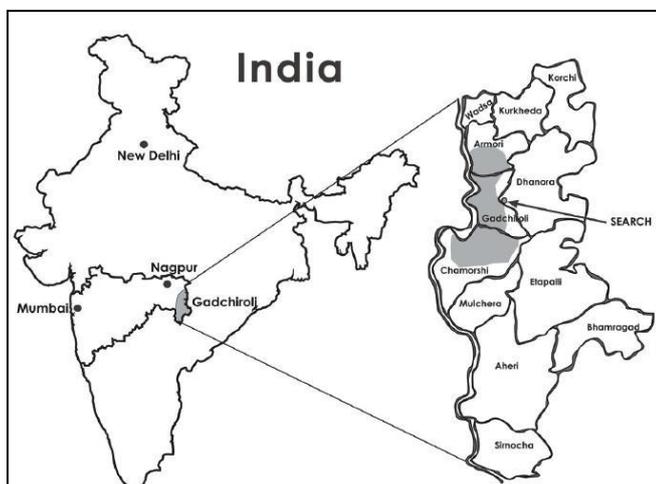


Fig -1: Location Map of Gadchiroli District

Gadchiroli district is well-known for the forest resources. Out of the total geographical area of the district, 1133 thousand hectares is under forest. Silk is also largely produced in the district. The district is largely known by tribe community. Nearly 38 % of the population of ST is found in the district. Most of the area (85.76 %) of the district is occupied by the forest, and therefore, cultivable land is very less. The primary profession of individuals is cultivation or farming. There is no Large Industry in the whole district aside from the Paper Mill at Ashti in Chamorshi Taluka and Paper Pulp Factory at Desaiganj. The district isn't modernly evolved and therefore economically backward. There are many Rice Mills in the region as the Paddy is the essential produce here. The Tussar Silk Worm Center exist in Armori taluka of the dictrict. A 18.5 kilometres Railway route passes through the district.

Table -1: District Profile: Gadchiroli

District Headquarter	Gadchiroli
Geographical Area of District	14412 sq. km.
Geographical Location	19°31' & 19°45' North Latitudes,
	80°15' & 80°45' East Latitudes
	Altitude - 217 mtr (715 ft)
Average Rainfall (2011)	840.7 m.m.
No of Sub Divisions (6)	1. Gadchiroli 2.Desaignanj (Wadsa) 3. Aheri 4. Chamorshi 5. Etapalli 6. Kurkheda
No of Talukas	12
Villages in the District	1679
No. of Cities	2 (Gadchiroli, Desaiganj)
No of Gram panchayats	457
Municipalities (2)	1. Gadchiroli 2. Desaiganj
Nagar Panchayats (10)	Armori, Kurkheda, Korchi, Dhanora, Chamorshi, Mulchera, Aheri, Etapalli, Sironcha, Bhamragad
Loksabha Constituencies(1)	Chimur-Gadchiroli
Assembly Constituencies(3)	Gadchiroli, Armori, Aheri
Police Stations	29
Police Out Post	31
Population (2011)	
Total	1071795
Male	542813
Female	528982
Density	67 Per K.M.(C-2001)
Female/Male Ratio	982/1000
Literacy (Census 2011)	
Total	66.03%

Male	72.98%
Female	58.92%
Main workers, No. (2001)	336,959
Marginal workers, No. (2001)	160,145
Working-age population as a percentage of total population (2001)	58%
Work participation rate, % (2001)	51%

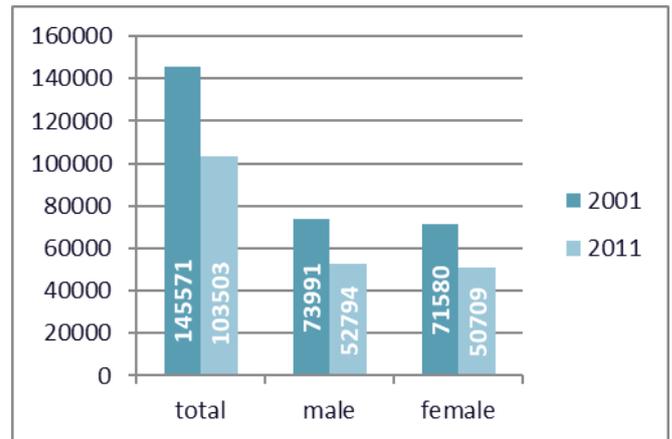


Chart -2: Total Rural Population 0-6 years

Table -2: Administrative Units in Gadchiroli District

Administrative units	2001	2011
Number of Sub-Districts	12	12
Number of Villages	1,679	1,675
Number of Statutory Towns	2	2
Number of Census Towns	0	4

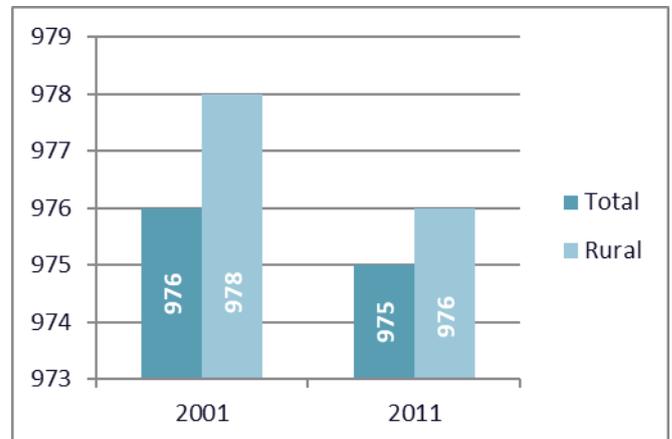


Chart -3: Sex ratio (females per 1000 males)

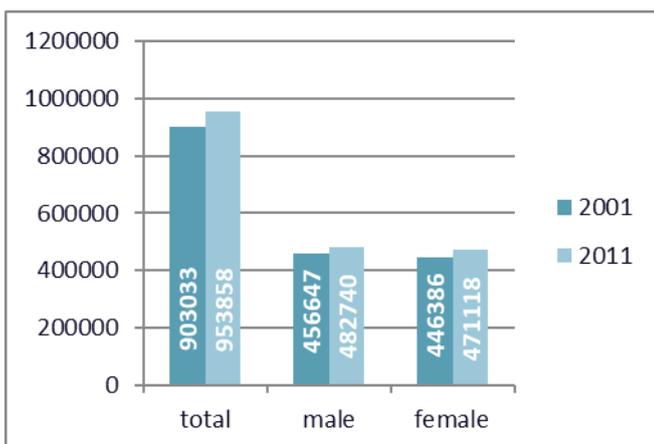


Chart -1: Total Rural Population of the District

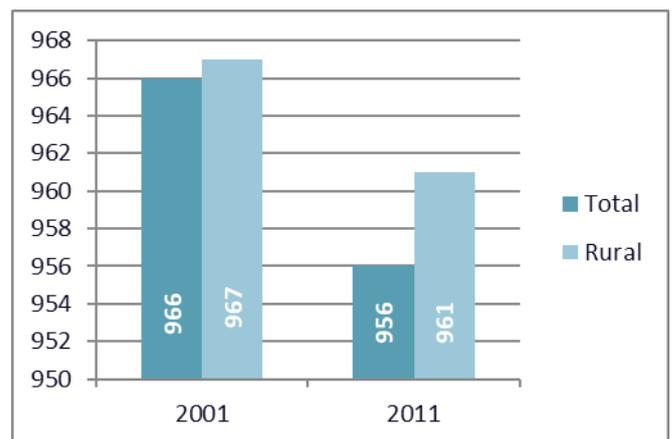


Chart -4: Child sex ratio (0-6 yrs), (F per 1,000 m)

The district has a total workforce of about 8.5 lakh persons. Of this, 44 per cent are cultivators, 38 per cent are agricultural labourers, four per cent are workers in the household industry, and 31 per cent are other workers.

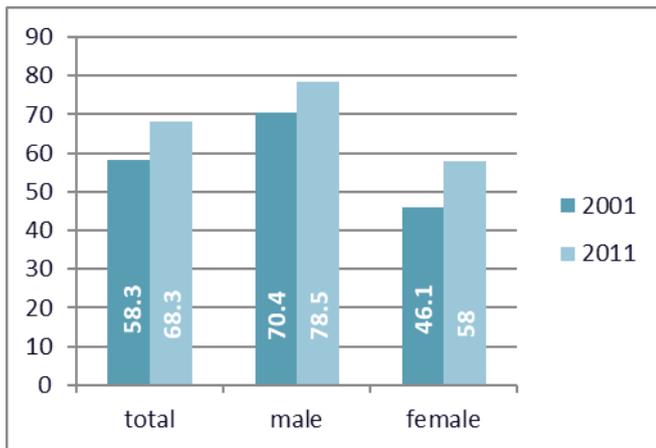


Chart -6: Literacy Rate (7+ years) Rural (in %)

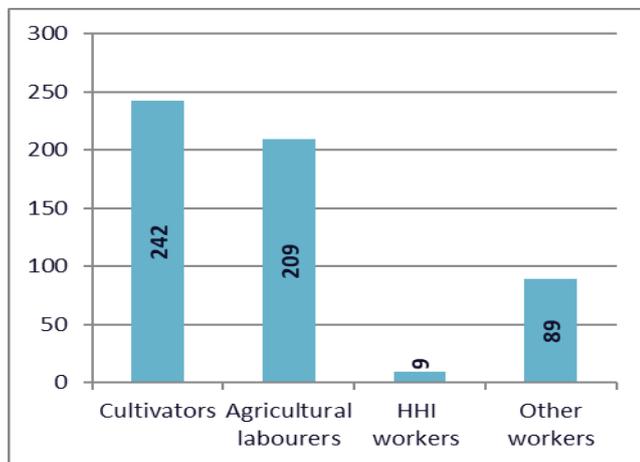


Chart -7: Worker profile, as of 2011, in 1000s

Agriculture: Of the total area of 14,412 sq. km, only around 13 per cent of the land is a cultivable area. In district, Paddy is the major crop grown. There are rice mills in the district set up due to the rice production in the district. Agricultural activities are low in the district. However, forest-based resources contribute significantly to the primary sector and the economy of the sector. Most of the small household industries are dependent on forest-based resources (such as bamboo) and perform livelihood works. From the above chart, it can be clearly seen that the forest resource (forestry and logging at 21 per cent of the total GDDP) is a major contributor to the district's economy.

Industry: Gadchiroli is an industrially backward district. There is only one large size industry unit in the district, viz. Ballarpur Industries (paper industry). The district has 733 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), employing 4,843 persons. As of September 2012, the prominent MSME industries in the district were 'Wood, products of wood', 'Food products and Beverages' and 'Furniture'.

Services: Services account for 61 per cent of GDDP in the Gadchiroli district. The key services in the district are of 'real estate, ownership of dwellings, business and legal services at 16 per cent of GDDP, followed by 'trade, hotels and restaurants at 11 per cent, other services at 13 per cent, 'public administration' at 10 per cent each, 'banking and insurance' at six per cent and 'transportation and storage' and 'railways' contributes around three per cent.

Education: As of 2011-12, Gadchiroli district had 2,040 schools. Of this, 58 per cent were primary schools, 25 per cent were upper primary schools, and the remaining 17 per cent were secondary and higher secondary schools. Total student enrolment in all the schools was 161,364, while the student-teacher ratio was at 20 students per teacher.

Economy: As of 2010-11, Gadchiroli district had the lowest Gross District Domestic Product (GDDP) in Maharashtra at Rs 4,851 crore (0.45 per cent of the Gross State Domestic Product). In terms of per capita DDDP also, it ranked last amongst all the districts at Rs 43,058. This was almost half of the State average of Rs 87,686. The district economy is predominantly service-based, with the service sector's share in GDDP at 61 per cent in 2009-10. This is followed by the primary sector at 22 per cent and the secondary sector at 17 per cent.

2.1 Developmental Concerns

Based on the above data collection of the district, i have identified the following issues and challenges for the district:

- **Difficult geographic terrain:** 76% area of the district is Forest. Maximum "very dense" forest area (4706 sq. km.) amongst any district in India (State of Forest Report 2017 FSI). Very Dense forest than states of Uttarakhand, Kerala, UP and Jharkhand. Undulated and hilly terrain - steep slope even in plains. Numerous rivers and streams, Loss of connectivity for 212 villages in monsoon for 4 months. Increased cost to provide all-weather connectivity to reach the last village.
- **Issues of forest diversion for development projects:** Increased cost due to NPV for any major development project - many irrigation projects have become unviable - Yella Project. Issues of CFR compensation in the Power Grid Project which has led to increased costs. Delays in Project Implementation in Case of Wadsa - Gadchiroli Railway line, i.e. the Tiger Corridor.
- **Connectivity:** Poor road infrastructure is the concern. The district has numerous rivers, streams and nallahs. HQ

is not connected by Railways, and the railways are limited to the northern tip of the district.

Lack of internet and mobile connectivity is also an issue. 60% of the district is still Heavy unconnected dependence on BSNL Connectivity issues creates a bouquet of issues and impacts every domain of service delivery - health, education, PDS, ICDS.

- **Naxal activities in the district:** Gadchiroli district is one of the deeply affected Naxal regions in the country. Due to these Naxal activities, the district's development and progress has been affected to a certain extent. There are no adequate industries in the district, and new players are also not keen on establishing a unit considering the problems.

There are also other issues due to the Naxal activities in the district. Many officials (such as government officers, trainers in educational institutions, etc.) are not much interested in working in the region. Also, when there are sudden Naxal activities, institutes and offices might not work, or the people might not attend and stay in their places due to fear.

- **Inadequate educational infrastructure in the district:** The district lacks adequate educational institutes in the district. For example, the district has only one polytechnic. The students need to travel outside for higher education. Also, the few institutes present in the district lack quality in terms of infrastructure, availability of qualified faculties, etc. (especially in rural and forest region)

The students passing out of schools in the rural region are finding it very difficult to compete with urban students in higher education.

- **Naxalite activities have resulted in poor social infrastructure and industrial activities**
- **Lack of Awareness:** People don't know their rights. A large segment of the tribal population continues to stay disconnected from the "mainstream". This leads to a lack of awareness about government schemes and forest rights - the concept of entitlement is missing (though increasing).
- **Ensuring Rights and Entitlements of Local Communities**

2.2 Steps towards Development

2.2.1 Indian Institute of Youth Welfare (IIYW)

IIYW is working on various issues and projects in rural, urban and tribal areas in Maharashtra, MP, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Punjab. In Maharashtra, the organization mainly

focuses its work on Gadchiroli in the Vidharbha region. IIYW works in over 500 villages in 12 blocks of Gadchiroli District. The Institute implements the following project/activities at Gadchiroli district:

- **Backward region Grand Funds (BRGF):** Capacity Dev. Training Program BRGF is the Govt. of India program sponsored by the Panchayati Raj Ministry run by the DRDA ZP Gadchiroli. Our organization work as a training institute. We are conducting 4 days capacity building program for Panchayati Raj member, Gramsevak, Talathi & Agriculture Asst. Institute is running this programme since 2009.

Our organization conducted Training at block level in 4 blocks i.e Eatapalli, Armori, Dhanora, & Gadchiroli. Last year 53 Training program conducted, and 1579 participants are trained.

- **SHGs for Women:** SHG s is a important programme for women's empowerment and socio-economic development of society. Since 1992 our organization formed 750 SHG of women & men.

The Groups are linked with Bank and Institute conducted Training for them. The organization has conducted seminar, group discussion, Mahila Melava and Health Camp, Legal Literacy Camp and Literacy Program through SHGs, in Rural & Urban areas to generate awareness among the communities. 2 full-time social worker are taking care of this project.

- **CBM (Community Based Monitoring of Health Services in Gadchiroli.**
- **Community-Based Monitoring of Health Services** is being implemented in Maharashtra as well as certain other states in India as a component of NRHM Since 2007 with facilitation by civil society. Community members have been involved in periodically collecting information about local health services, preparing and displaying report cards on health services, dialogue with health service providers and officials in various committees, organizing public hearing on health services and raising issues at Dist. & State level.

The goal is to make accessible quality health services at the village level. CBM processes related to NRHM are organized at the village PHC, block Dist. & State levels. A State nodal NGO SATHI Pune, coordinates the CBM activities across the district in collaboration with the District and Block nodal NGOs working with the State health department.

IIYW Gadchiroli working in Gadchiroli block nodal NGO in 3 PHC & 15 villages, and activities are as :

- Filling Health Report cards
- Public Hearing (Jansurwai)
- Organize Training for the community
- Conduct meeting for various committee members
- Dialogues with Govt.
- Networking with civil society

2.2.2 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

Table -2: Administrative Units in Gadchiroli District

Year	No. of Works Started	No. of Works completed	Not yet completed	Work completion rate
FY 2017-18 & earlier	54122	51144	2978	94.5
FY 2018-19	9416	6422	2994	68.2
FY 2019-20	6656	1712	4944	25.72

A few other schemes working for the development of the district are Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY) / National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana -Gramin (PMAY-G), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Swacch Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-Gramin), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY).

2.2.3 Veer Baburao Shedmake Caste Certificate Mohim)

Despite a high ST population, including Madia PVTGs, caste certificate penetration was not there in the core tribal belt of the district. This was due to lack of awareness among the tribal population, lack of any documentation with them and lack of any demand from the tribal population to avail the caste certificate. Due to lack of Caste certificates, applicants of various government schemes have not been able to avail government services.

Steps were taken to solve the above problems

1. Adopted a "Doorstep Delivery" approach to provide caste certificates in the remotest hamlets and villages in 100% saturation mode.
2. Provided digital tabs to all Kotwals to scan and store the necessary documents at the doorstep of each beneficiary.
3. Documents were processed in Tehsils, and then certificates were delivered after colour printing and plastic lamination in the village.
4. Distribution through 'distribution fairs' - MAHARAJASWA ABHIYAAN.
5. RESULT: Over 19,281 Caste certificates issued to date.

2.2.4 Providing electrification in remote villages

Context: High cost to provide traditional electric connections in very remote habitations. Issues of the breakdown of long transmission lines passing through this forest. People not coming forward to register complaints of breakdown.

Solution: Solar based electrification proposed by MEDA in 71 villages. But still creates issue of maintenance and repair of solar setup. Udaan - a for-profit company of SHG ladies (1476 shareholders) for a Manufacturing plant set up to manufacture sub 100 W solar panels. Repair and maintenance services. Retail network of SHG VOs.

2.2.5 Cultural And Social Issues - Tackling Linguistic Diversity

IEC campaigns

1. All major IEC campaigns are devised in 6 languages at least - Marathi, Madia, Gondi, Bengali, Hindi and Telugu
2. Election SVEEP material, Disaster Management modules and Pamphlets, Health department campaigns
3. Path Natya, hugely popular in Gadchiroli are designed as per the language of that particular block for better messaging

SVEEP campaign

1. The voting percentage increased by 4% as compared to Lok Sabha 2014
2. The highest voting percentage in Gadchiroli amongst all Parliamentary Constituencies in Maharashtra
3. Elections not just elections but a means to gain trust amongst the people and bring them into the net of public service delivery
4. A means to get them to start demanding services politically and administratively

3. SUGGESTIONS AND OBSERVATIONS

Common facility center and Training would help the local craftsmen to create diverse furnishings/articles and will also help them to gain market exposure. The skill gaps observed in the sector are as follows:

- Lack of adequate creative knowledge to create new intricate designs
- Inadequate knowledge about marketing and promoting their products
- Lack of sufficient knowledge about chemicals used for the finishing process (which helps in extending the life of the product)

Recommendations for the district focuses on the sectors of agriculture and allied (forest-based resources), and others

(construction, hospitality and facility management). A portion of these areas will have proposals for the private area, which will straightforwardly mean abilities being created and the others will require Government intervention to workout with improvements.

Agriculture and allied - (Forest-based resources): Government should play a major role in this sector. There is a common facility centre build for bamboo furnishing. Training can be provided in this facility centre on various types of bamboo products. The Government should also help the craftsmen by providing bamboo at subsidized rates, marketing facilities, etc., after the Training to make it a livelihood program.

Government can also aid the other training providers operating in the same space through providing aid in sourcing the candidates for training, providing subsidy on training cost and stipend to trainees and Facilitate training infrastructure

For private training providers -

- Training on using forest-based resources
- Bamboo furnishing training
- Marketing Knowledge

For Government players -

- Training through Common facility centre
- Providing subsidies and stipend facilities

For NSDC -

- Interventions required through funding of private Training as well as SSCs

Others - Construction, Hospitality and Facility Management sectors:

The Government needs to play a crucial role in skill development activities in this region (the district is deeply affected by Naxal activities and is industrially backward). The Government has understood the importance of skilling and already taken some steps towards skill development in the district. The district skill executive committee has identified some high growth sectors with employment potential and has started training the local people by partnering with the external training provider. Now the Government can scale up the initiative to different sectors based on the employment demand.

The Government needs to play the role of facilitator of these skill development training programs and can aid in the following ways:

- Awareness programs on opportunities in the identified sectors and the importance of Training to get a job
- Sourcing candidates for the training program (this can be done through the department of employment and self-employment, which has data and access to qualified and unemployed youth in the district who are the prime target for the training program)

- In the initial years, Government may also provide subsidy for the training program through skill development schemes Monitoring of training providers and training process (which are conducted through government funds).

For private training providers -

- Training in sector-related courses
- Provide Interpersonal and communication skills as they are from a backward region
- Industry tie-up to ensure placement

- Adequate Industry exposure

For Government players -

- Sourcing, Tie up with training providers
- Support for Training through subsidy or infrastructural facilities

For Industry

- Tie up with training provider and provide job to candidates upon successful completion of Training
- Encourage skilled people from an industrially backward region

For NSDC

- Interventions required through funding of private Training as well as SSCs

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