



Role and Scheme of District Rural Development Agency

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Abstract: Poverty alleviation through Self-employment and Wage-employment programme is the theme of rural development. It is District Rural Development Agency at the District level which oversees the implementation of different anti-poverty programme. District Rural Development Agency came into existence with effect from 1.4.1980. Previously it was known as Marginal Farmer & Agricultural Land Development Agency (MFALDA). Later on it became Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA). These agencies were only to cater the development of Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Laborers in rural area. Now District Rural Development Agency has embraced manifold activities for up liftmen of rural poor. District Rural Development Agency has traditionally been the principal organ at the district level to oversee the implementation of anti-poverty programmers of the Ministry of Rural Development. This agency was created originally to implement the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). Subsequently the District Rural Development Agencies were entrusted with number of programme of both state and central governments. From 01 April 1989 a separate District Rural Development Agency Administration has been introduced to take care of the administrative costs.

Key words: IRDP-Integrated Rural Development Programme, TRYSEM-Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment, DWCRA-Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas, GKY-Ganga Kalyan Yojana, MWS-Million Wells Scheme (MWS).

Introduction: The District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) has traditionally been the principal organ at the District level to oversee the implementation of different anti-poverty programme.¹ Since its inception, the administrative costs of the DRDAs were met by way of setting apart a share of the allocations for each programme. However, of late, the number of the programme had increased and while some of the programme provided for administrative costs of the DRDAs, others did not. There was no uniformity among the different programme with reference to administrative costs.² Keeping in view the need for an effective agency at the district level to coordinate the anti-poverty effort, a new Centrally Sponsored Scheme for strengthening the DRDAs has been introduced with effect from 1st April 1999. Accordingly, the administrative costs are met by providing separate budget provisions. This scheme which is funded on a 60:40 basis between Centre and States, aims at strengthening and professionalising the DRDAs. The funding ratio in respect of NE States has been revised to 90:10 with effect from the financial year 2015-2016.³

Roles and Functions of DRDA:

- If effective programme design is critical to successful implementation of rural development programmes, so is an effective delivery agency. None of the anti-poverty programmes can have impact unless they are implemented with clarity of purpose and a commitment to the task. It is here that the DRDAs play a critical role. The DRDAs are not the implementing agencies, but can be very effective in enhancing the quality of implementation through overseeing the implementation of different programmes and ensuring that necessary linkages are provided. To this extent the DRDAs is a supporting and a facilitating organisation and needs to play a very effective role as a catalyst in development process.

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¹ http://rural.nic.in/sites/downloads/right-information-act/DRDA_RTI.pdf

² See The state of panchayats : 2007-08 , An independent assessment, Volume I : Thematic reports P 55

³ P. Arjun Rao, "Organisation and Working of District Rural Development Agency-Special Reference to Khammam District in Andhra Pradesh", Indian Journal of Public Administration, Vol. XXX No. 4, October- December (1984), pp. 1082 -1084.