Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission

The Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, better known as the SGSY programme, was restructured into the National Rural Livelihoods Mission by the Government of India in 2010. This reconfiguration has been a result of recommendations from stakeholder consultations with state governments, civil society organizations, bankers and academicians among others. The programme also includes past experience and lessons from many livelihood programmes that demonstrated the value in building self-managed institutions of the poor and their amalgamation for effective poverty reduction. Conceivably, the largest poverty reduction programme for women in the world, the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) aims at reaching nearly 70 million rural households in 12 states of India that account for 85% of the rural poor households in the country. The NRLM will be funded jointly by the Government of India and the World Bank over the next seven years. While the GOI will invest US$5.1 billion including expected allocation for 12th Five-Year Plan, the World Bank is committing US$1 billion through its national rural livelihoods project (NRLP)—its largest single investment in a poverty reduction program. Apart from the GOI and the WB, the NRLM will leverage funds from formal finance, other public sector programs, the private sector, and CSOs in support of rural poverty reduction.

The Maharashtra State Rural Livelihoods Mission (MSRLM) has been launched in Maharashtra in July 2011 as a registered organization under the aegis of the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) – Aajeevika - endeavors to impact rural poverty through a range of comprehensive and strategic livelihoods interventions in a time bound manner. The Mission aims at eradication of rural poverty by building sustainable institutions of poor and ultimately leading them to sustainable livelihoods. The conceptualization and design of the MSRLM goes beyond income generation activities and employment programs to include capacity building, financial inclusion, social mobilization and marketing services as equally important elements of livelihoods enhancement. The exponential growth in the livelihoods sector as a whole, both rural and urban, combined with experiences and learning from earlier programs such as the IRDP, SGSY, etc. has led to a shift in the envisioning of the mission from an agency-beneficiary equation/relationship to a more holistic and equal partnership with the poor/communities. Building and strengthening institutions of the poor, putting in place dedicated support structures for such institutions and drawing upon their skills, knowledge and desire to overcome poverty lie at the core of the mission.

According to the 2001 Census report Maharashtra has a rural population of 5.57 crores of which 2.05 crore people languish below the poverty line (approx. 45 lakh households) and the HDI of 19 districts in the state is lower than the national Index. To begin with ten districts have been identified on the basis of, ranking on the HDI index, IAP districts, geographical location etc. that include Gadchiroli, Wardha, Yavatmal, Osmanabad, Jalna, Ratnagiri, Nandurbar, Solapur, Thane and Gondia as the pilot districts for the National Rural Livelihoods Project (NRLP). 36 blocks have been identified based on criteria such as percentage of SC/ST, number of BPL families, number of SHGs formed in the block under various schemes and better financial management track record/ better co operation from Banks, etc. The mission will engage poor and marginalised communities intensively in these ten districts, whereas the remaining 23 districts in the state will be covered under a non-intensive intervention strategy in a phased manner.
The Mission is implemented through a three tier structure comprising a State Mission Management Unit, District Mission Management Unit and Block Mission Management Unit. The mission envisions poverty elimination through social mobilization, institution building, financial inclusion and the creation of several models of sustainable livelihoods so that each poor family is able to secure incremental annual income. The key task under the mission is to reach out to 45 lakh rural poor households of Maharashtra and stay engaged with them till they come out of poverty. The mission will bring about a paradigm shift in the approach to rural livelihoods and rural poverty eradication in that it engages directly with institutions of poor and empowers them to find lasting solutions to poverty. It sees the poor as the engines of growth rather than mere receivers of aid or being dependent on ‘trickle down’. The NRLM believes that poor have the innate capabilities to overcome poverty if they are supported with sensitive, dedicated and responsive institutions at one level and by building strong and sustainable institutions of the poor themselves on the other.