

# Development of backward districts

At the time of presentation of the budget for the year 2010-11, the Government had announced its decision to introduce a special scheme to address the development of 33 Left Wing Extremism (LWE) affected districts. It was inter-alia, stated that the Planning Commission would prepare an Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for the affected areas and that adequate funds would be made available to support the action plan. The 33 districts (later expanded to 34) referred to in the Finance Minister's announcement were a sub-set of the 83 LWE affected districts identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs for coverage under its Security Related Expenditure (SRE) Scheme. This sub-set consisted of those districts where more than 20% of the Police Stations experienced some incidents of naxal violence. Subsequently, West Medinipur district of West Bengal was added to the list due to the situation prevailing there, taking the total to 35 districts.

## **Implementation of IAP**

IAP was formulated as an additional central assistance scheme on 100% grant basis in November 2010. To begin with, the Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for 60 tribal and backward districts was to be implemented with a block grant of Rs.25 crore and Rs.30 crore per district during 2010-11 and 2011-12 respectively for which the funds were to be placed at the disposal of the Committee headed by the District Collector and consisting of the Superintendent of Police of the district and the District Forest Officer.

The district level committee will have flexibility to spend the amount for development schemes according to need, as assessed by it. The Committee would draw up a Plan consisting of concrete proposals for public infrastructure and services such as School Buildings, Anganwadi Centres, Primary Health Centres, Drinking Water Supply, Village Roads, Electric Lights in public places such as PHCs and Schools etc. The concerned Development Commissioner/ equivalent officer in charge of development in the State shall be responsible for scrutiny of expenditure and monitoring of IAP.

The Planning Commission will undertake macro level monitoring of the scheme and implementation of the scheme will be reviewed and suitable decisions taken on the modalities for implementation of the scheme as a part of the 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan.

### **Salient features of the scheme**

The salient features of the guidelines are:

- (i) The district level committee should draw up a plan consisting of concrete proposals for public infrastructure and services such as school buildings, Anganwadi centres, Drinking Water supply, Village Roads, electric lights in public places such as PHCs and schools etc. The schemes so selected should show results in the short term.
- (ii) A suitable form of consultation is to be ensured with the local Members of Parliament on the schemes to be taken up under the IAP.
- (iii) The expenditure on the projects should be over and above the expenditure being incurred for the regular State/Central/Centrally Sponsored Schemes. The district level committee should ensure that there is no duplication of expenditure on the same project.
- (iv) The State Government will release the funds directly into the bank account opened for this purpose by the District Collector or District Magistrate. The State Government will ensure that funds are transferred to this bank account within 15 days of the release of the funds to the Consolidated Fund of the State Government failing which the State Government should transfer to the district penal interest at RBI rate.

### **Achievements Under IAP**

The implementation of the scheme commenced in the year 2010-11 and Rs.25 crore per district i.e. total Rs.1500 crore for the year 2010-11 was released in December, 2010. The districts immediately finalized the works to be taken up, completed the tender processes wherever required and the works on the ground commenced immediately in all the 60 districts. Currently, the implementation of IAP in the districts is in full swing. The total funds released so far for the year 2011-12 is Rs.1090 crore and the total funds released so far since the commencement of the Scheme is Rs.2590 crore. Against the total amount of Rs.2590 crores released so far to the 9 States, the expenditure as on 27.12.2011 is Rs.1468.83 crore i.e. 56.71% of the funds released.

Under the IAP, so far 62327 projects for an amount of Rs. 3230.02 crore have been taken up in the 9 States. These include construction of School Buildings/School Furniture, Anganwadi Centres, Drinking Water facilities, Rural roads, Panchayat Bhawan/Community Halls, Godowns/PDS shops, livelihood activities, skill development/trainings, minor irrigation works, electric lighting, health centres/facilities, Ashram Schools, construction of toilets, construction of multi-purpose chabutra, construction of passenger waiting hall, special coaching classes

for students, construction of ANM centres, development of play grounds etc. 44.42% of projects taken up so far have been completed i.e., 27687 projects have been completed so far. State-wise details of physical progress as on 27.12.2011 vis-à-vis projects sanctioned are: Andhra Pradesh- 702 (1140), Bihar – 2367 (12889), Chhattisgarh – 6115 (14718), Jharkhand- 5621 (11769), Madhya Pradesh – 1446 (5352), Maharashtra – 2667 (4398), Orissa – 6829 (15087), Uttar Pradesh – 1337 (1548) and West Bengal - 603 (1272).

### **Parameters to Qualify under IAP**

While formulating the scheme, the Planning Commission considered that the scheme should not be limited only to the severely LWE affected districts. It was proposed by them that the scheme should cover other tribal and backward districts also and the following criteria were adopted to identify districts for inclusion in the scheme:

- Whether the district is included in the list of 83 SRE districts identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs;
- Whether the tribal population exceeds 25%;
- Whether the forest area exceeds 30%;
- Whether the poverty ratio in the district exceeds 50%; and
- Whether the district is covered under the Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF).

Districts meeting four of the above-mentioned five criteria and forming a contiguous block were selected for coverage under the proposed scheme. Thus, with these criteria, a total of 60 districts were selected for coverage under the scheme.

### **Monitoring**

The Development Commissioner of the State/equivalent officer incharge of development in the State is responsible for scrutiny of expenditure and monitoring of the IAP in the State. In order to facilitate the monitoring, the States are required to send district-wise monthly progress reports in the prescribed format and also upload the information on the Management Information System(MIS) along with photographs of the works.

Regular monitoring of the IAP is being carried out by the Member-Secretary, Planning Commission through video conferences with the District Collectors/District Magistrates and Development Commissioner of the States concerned. So far 14 such video conferences/meetings have been held including

the Video Conference meetings held by the Union Home Minister, Union Minister of Rural Development and MoS (Independent charge) for Environment and Forests. In addition, the Review Group headed by the Cabinet Secretary also reviewed the progress of implementation of IAP with the Chief Secretaries of 9 States through video conference meeting.

### **Provisions for change in IAP**

The Ministry of Home Affairs has also constituted an Empowered Group of Officers with Member-Secretary, Planning Commission as its Chairperson. The Empowered Group, inter-alia, has overriding powers to modify existing norms/guidelines on implementation of various development programmes and flagship schemes in consultation with the Ministries/Departments concerned.

### **States' Response to IAP**

The implementation of IAP has been successful and the scheme has had a very good response. A number of requests had been received from the Chief Ministers, Members of Parliament and State Governments for inclusion of more districts under the IAP. On the basis of requests received from the State Govts., the Govt. of India has decided on 07.12.2011 to include additional 18 LWE affected districts under IAP from the financial year 2011-12 onwards and to provide block grant of Rs.30 crore to each of these districts during the current financial year.

**Conclusion:** The Government's approach is to deal with Left Wing Extremism activities in a holistic manner, in the areas of security, development, rights of local communities, administration and public perception. In dealing with this decades old problem, it has been felt appropriate, after various high-level deliberations and interactions with the State Governments concerned that an integrated approach aimed at the relatively more affected areas would deliver results. With this in view, a detailed analysis of the spread and trends in respect of LWE violence has been made and 83 affected districts in nine States have been taken up for special attention on planning, implementation and monitoring of security situation and development schemes (India Current Affairs 14-1-12).