



Smart Village - Smart Ward towards Smart Andhra Pradesh

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ABSTRACT: *Smart Villages is a community based initiative of Samanvay.Com Welfare Society, primarily aimed to harness the benefits of information technology for the rural folks. The initiative is a community effort to mobilize the collective strengths of people from various streams and integrate it with information technology to provide benefits to the rural community. Seventy percent of population of India lives in villages and the youth belonging to this segment are passing through a dramatic psychological turmoil. The invasion of bedroom from the skies in the form of television and the advancement in telephony through internet has given his mind dreams that were unthinkable few years ago. However, the ground realities around him by way of minimum educational avenues, minimum basic needs of life and same age old shabby surroundings are deterrent for his talent and the dreams to take shape and flourish. The ratio of school dropouts at school or college level is quite high amongst the rural youth which is negatively impacting the education policy and targets of the Govt. Added to this is the non-availability of vocational avenues in rural environs which is further adversely affecting the aspirations of the youth from the rural areas. All such youth with little education, no vocational skills and passing through utter poverty, find their way to nearest urban cities or large cities where they migrate to find some source of livelihood. This has two major negative impacts on the county and also on the youth of rural background. The “Smart Village- Smart Ward towards Smart AP” programme that was inaugurated in January has inspired dozens of NRIs, businessmen, bureaucrats, politicians, celebrities and even ordinary citizens to work together with the government to raise the living standards of the state’s rural residents. “To become smart, sustainable and inclusive, it is necessary for us to have smart towns and villages, apart from smart cities,” Naidu said recently, referring to the Centre’s “smart cities” mission aimed at making room for a booming urban population. “So, I appeal to NRIs, NGOs, VIPs, corporate, philanthropists, ministers, MLAs, etc, to adopt one village each and develop our state into smart Andhra Pradesh.”*

INTRODUCTION:

SMART VILLAGE-SMART WARD, TOWARDS SMART ANDHRA PRADESH

Smart Village-Smart Ward, towards Smart Andhra Pradesh initiative focuses on improved resource-use efficiency, empowered local self-governance, access to assured basic amenities and responsible individual and community behaviour to build a vibrant and happy society. In tune with the Hon’ble Prime Minister’s call to the members of parliament to provide leadership and work in partnership with the local communities, the Government of Andhra Pradesh seeks partnerships in 12,918 Gram Panchayats and 3,465 Wards. It appeals to public representatives (like Ministers, MPs, MLCs, MLAs, Mayors), film personalities, celebrities, NRIs, NRVs, corporate houses, officers viz. IAS/IPS/IFS and other officers, NGOs and volunteers etc. to partner a village/ward. They can do this by handholding the development process on the above aspects, in addition to innovations and good practices, to rejuvenate energies, especially among children, women and marginalized groups.

Building on the existing Missions, Campaigns, Grids, Programmers and Schemes of the State and Central Government, the Smart Village-Smart Ward program intends to achieve SMART infrastructure, SMART service delivery, SMART technology and innovation, SMART institutions along with optimal mobilization and utilization of available resources, leading to faster and more inclusive growth.

Being “Smart” also means having vision, the ability to foresee and to learn best practices from others – be it an individual, a community, a Gram Panchayat/Ward, a city or a country. Being a continuous process, it also means acquiring better processes and better equipment with latest knowhow. Being smart means not only acquiring the latest knowledge but also acting upon it. Until an idea gets converted into action, it will not serve the purpose

EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF PROGRAMME

- Villages (Gram Panchayats)/Wards take collective responsibility to realize their shared vision of development.
- Partnerships to guide and demonstrate innovations, latest affordable technologies, and resources to facilitate and accelerate participatory, inclusive and sustainable development within Gram Panchayats/Wards.
- Trigger processes to strengthen on-going services and schemes for effectiveness and efficiency in equitable access and utilization of entitlements.
- Significant improvement in the identified development commitments.

A 'Smart Village/Ward' encompasses sustainable and inclusive development of all sections of its community, so they enjoy a high standard of living. The 100 per cent achievement of the following basic amenities, outcomes and services in a definite time frame, is a non-negotiable condition for moving towards Smart Village-Smart Ward:

- Homes for all – with access to toilet, safe-drinking water, and regular power.
- Every household has diversified livelihood opportunities and/or micro-enterprise.
- SHGs and youths have access to skills development and Village Enterprise Development with bank and market linkages.
- End open defecation.
- Has functional solid/liquid waste management system.
- End all preventable maternal deaths and infant deaths.
- 100 per cent institutional deliveries.
- Zero school drop outs of boys and girls up to 12th class.
- Functional toilet, potable water, electricity available in Anganwadi Centres, schools, health centres, GP/Ward buildings.
- Malnutrition free (children below 9 years of age).
- No girl-child marriages (girls below 18 years of age).
- Every farm has soil health card, enriched essential micro-nutrients and diversification with livestock and trees.
- Every village household has a functional bank account/PM Jan Dhan Bank Account.
- Every GP/Ward has its own dynamic development plan prepared by community Participation.
- Every GP/Ward has green trees all over its geographic boundaries.
- Every GP/Ward has functional water conservation and harvesting structures.
- Every GP/Ward has functional Information Centre, Computer Lab, and MeeSeva Centre.
- Every GP/Ward has telecom/internet connectivity.
- Gram Sabha / Ward Sabha are held four times a year with minimum two-thirds Attendance.
- Every GP/Ward has a functional grievance redressed system.

To achieve the 'Smart Village/Ward' status, the community, individually and collectively, will be empowered to take smart decisions using smart technologies and with the support of smart manpower and by managing to be self-sufficient. Partner(s) will be encouraged to bring in innovative ideas, technology and resources and disseminate information on best practices to facilitate and accelerate the process. They may also interface between the community and the service providers to achieve the last-mile reach to the most marginalized and the vulnerable. Achievement of the Smart Village/Ward status will be monitored on the above listed development commitments/indicators against the baseline and agreed milestones over the span of five years.

Once a village/ward achieves the key development commitments/indicators, it will self-declare as a 'Smart Village/Smart Ward' and display it on the village/ward information board erected at a public place/entrance of the Gram Panchayat/Ward office.