Joint workshop of the Ministries of Agriculture and Rural Development, on their role in eradication of poverty, concludes in Delhi under the chairmanship of Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Encouraging officers and employees, Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan says: “You have not merely framed schemes; you have built the nation. You are the true drivers of this development journey”

“Extreme poverty has declined from 27.1% to 2.6%; our resolve is to lift those still left behind out of poverty”: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

“Agriculture growth rate reaches a historic 4.45%, taking India’s farm sector beyond even the Green Revolution era”: Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

“Lakhpati Didis, permanent houses, rural roads, Viksit Bharat - G RAM G and watershed development have transformed the lives of the rural poor”: Shri Shivraj Singh

ICAR innovations have increased farmers’ incomes, delivering an economic return of ₹13.85 for every rupee invested

“Celebrate this achievement with joy and a sense of occasion”: Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan appreciates the efforts of everyone, from Section Officers to Secretaries

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan sits among employees for direct interaction and seeks their suggestions; the next goal is to make a mark in global markets through FTAs

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Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has achieved unprecedented, extraordinary and historic milestones in the field of poverty eradication. According to the World Bank's recent report, nearly 500 million people in the country have moved out of poverty, while the rate of extreme poverty has declined from 27.1 per cent to just 2.6 per cent. This remarkable progress reflects the contribution of several sectors and government initiatives, particularly agriculture and allied activities, agricultural research, land resources and rural development. To assess the role played by these areas in the achievement and discuss the strategy for the road ahead, a special one-day workshop was organised today at the Dr Ambedkar International Centre in New Delhi. The joint workshop was chaired by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, and Rural Development, Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan. Union Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Shri Bhagirath Choudhary and Union Minister of State for Rural Development Shri Kamlesh Paswan also participated. Describing the country's progress, Shri Chouhan called it an "extraordinary, unimaginable and unprecedented miracle".



The workshop brought together the senior-most officials of all four departments whose work and initiatives were being reviewed. Those present included Secretary, Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shri Atish Chandra; Secretary, Department of Rural Development, Shri Rohit Kansal; Secretary, Department of Land Resources, Shri Dilip Kumar; and Secretary, Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE) and Director General of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Dr M. L. Jat. Senior officials and scientists from the four departments also attended, along with Section Officers, Assistant Section Officers and a large number of other officers and employees. The participation of staff across different levels reflected the workshop's focus not only on reviewing departmental achievements, but also on recognising the contribution of those involved in taking policies and schemes from the planning stage to implementation.

Lifting 500 million people out of poverty, more than the population of the United States, is a miracle

Addressing officers and employees of the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, ICAR, Department of Rural Development and Department of Land Resources, Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that the achievement India had secured under the leadership and guidance of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was truly extraordinary, remarkable and unimaginable. The World Bank itself had acknowledged that no other country in the world had reduced poverty at such a rapid pace. The fact that nearly 500 million people had moved above the poverty line represented a historic development, particularly given the scale of the population involved. Shri Chouhan said that this progress was the result of the Prime Minister's leadership, vision and hard work, but it was also important to recognise the contribution made by every officer and employee in the two ministries. The achievement, he stressed, was not the work of any one individual or department; it reflected the collective effort of people working across the government machinery to deliver development and improve lives.



"You have not merely framed schemes; you have built the nation": Celebrate this achievement

Encouraging officers and employees, Union Minister Shri Chouhan said that this success had not come about on its own. Behind it lay the hard work, dedication and sustained efforts of everyone who had contributed to the implementation of government programmes. He urged those attending the workshop to participate with a sense of joy and celebration, observing that when the country had achieved something so significant, the happiness and pride it inspired should also be visible on their faces. Shri Chouhan recalled that the Prime Minister had emphasised that "you have not merely framed schemes; you have built the nation". He explained that review meetings are generally attended by senior officials, but he had consciously decided to make this workshop different. He wanted colleagues at every level, from Section Officers and Assistant Section Officers to Secretaries, to be present because they were the foundation stones of the administrative system and the work on files began at these levels. He told the employees that they were not merely witnesses to the country's development journey, but its true

drivers and participants. Demonstrating his intention to engage directly with them, Shri Chouhan left the stage and sat among the audience, speaking with employees and seeking to understand their experiences on the ground and their suggestions.



Resolve to bring those still left behind out of poverty

Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan said that people work not merely to earn a livelihood, but also to find purpose in their lives and serve the people of the country. He observed that every stage in the journey of a government scheme involves the contribution of employees. Whether a scheme is developed from the grassroots, considered and approved by the Cabinet, or eventually implemented on the ground, the efforts of people working at different levels are essential to its success. He said that two major commitments made by the Prime Minister now lay before the nation. The first was to ensure that those who had already risen above the poverty line did not fall back below it under any circumstances. The second was to rapidly bring the remaining 2.6 to 2.7 per cent of the population out of poverty and improve their standard of living. Shri Chouhan emphasised that the progress achieved so far must be protected, while the government continued working to reach those who had yet to benefit sufficiently from the country's development. The task ahead, therefore, was both to sustain the gains made and to ensure that the remaining people were also able to lead better lives.



Agriculture growth rate reaches a historic 4.45%; ICAR research delivers returns of 13.85 times the investment

Highlighting the achievements of the agriculture sector, Union Minister Shri Chouhan said that the past 12 years had witnessed remarkable progress, with work being undertaken in agriculture that the country could take pride in. He pointed out that even during the Green Revolution, the agriculture growth rate generally remained in the range of 3 to 3.5 per cent. India's decadal agriculture growth rate had now reached the historic level of 4.45 per cent, surpassing the levels recorded during that period. Among the key initiatives contributing to the sector's progress, he highlighted the direct assistance of more than ₹4.66 lakh crore provided through the PM-KISAN Samman Nidhi under the Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. The sector had also recorded foodgrain production of 376.56 million tonnes and horticulture production of 386.91 million tonnes. Affordable agricultural credit, crop insurance, natural farming, the establishment of 10,000 Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and digital initiatives such as AgriStack had further supported farmers and contributed to increasing their incomes. Together, these measures reflected the progress made in strengthening agricultural production and improving the support available to farmers.



A presentation by the Department of Agricultural Research and Education (DARE/ICAR) highlighted the economic returns generated by scientific research and innovation. It stated that every rupee invested in agricultural research and education had yielded an economic benefit of ₹13.85, while investment in animal husbandry research had generated a return of ₹20.81. Since 2014, a total of 3,436 new crop varieties had been released, of which 93 per cent were climate-resilient. The presentation also highlighted the contribution of biofortified crop varieties, fish production of 19.78 million tonnes and the availability of more than 500 agricultural machines. In addition, digital outreach through Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) was reaching five crore farmers every year. These research-led developments, technological interventions and knowledge-sharing efforts had helped strengthen the rural economy and extend the benefits of agricultural science to farmers across the country.





Rural development and DoLR schemes have transformed the lives of villages and the rural poor

The workshop also examined in detail the impact of schemes implemented by the Department of Rural Development and the Department of Land Resources. Shri Chouhan said that these departments had played a highly significant role in the country's progress towards poverty eradication. Presentations highlighted the reach of several rural development initiatives. Under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihoods Mission, more than 10 crore women had been connected with self-help groups, and 3.76 crore women had so far become ‘Lakhpati Didis’. The Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana - Gramin (PMAY-G) had enabled the construction of 3.99 crore permanent houses, while the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) had created a network of 7.99 lakh kilometres of all-weather rural roads. Under Viksit Bharat - G RAM G (VB-G RAM G), rural households are now assured of 125 days of employment. Social assistance programmes and 99.9 per cent transparency in Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) have also helped empower the last person in the queue. These initiatives have contributed to changing the lives of rural families by supporting livelihoods, providing housing, improving connectivity and strengthening the delivery of assistance to beneficiaries.





Under the Department of Land Resources (DoLR), the watershed development component of the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (WDC-PMKSY) has supported water conservation and land improvement works across 3.40 crore hectares. These interventions have directly benefited 61.15 lakh farmers. The work has contributed to an increase in irrigated areas and milk production, while farmers' average annual incomes have recorded growth of up to 70 per cent. The figures presented at the workshop highlighted the contribution of watershed development to improving land and water resources, strengthening agricultural activity and supporting the livelihoods of farming communities. The programme's impact was also reflected in the number of farmers who had directly benefited from these interventions and the reported improvement in their annual incomes.



Suggestions sought to improve budgets and schemes; call to take achievements to the public

During the concluding session of the workshop, Union Minister Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan extended an open invitation to officers and employees to share their ideas and suggestions. He emphasised that the achievements made so far did not mean there was no scope for further improvement. Several useful suggestions had already been received on schemes such as PM-KISAN and e-NAM. He encouraged everyone to write to him without hesitation if they had any ideas concerning the budget, changes to existing schemes or the introduction of new initiatives that could help increase farmers' incomes. Shri Chouhan said that he would also hold informal, department-wise meetings with employees working at lower levels in the future. As the head of the department, he assured colleagues that he would remain accessible and approachable to everyone, regardless of their position or level of responsibility. He invited them to contribute their practical experience and ideas to the process of improving government programmes and making them more effective.



Shri Chouhan also placed particular emphasis on the need to ensure that the departments' achievements and public welfare initiatives did not remain confined to files and formal communications, but were effectively taken to the people and farmers. He said that communicating the work being done by the departments and its impact on people's lives was an important responsibility. Giving an example, he observed that when officials go directly to the ground and engage with people, the positive message reaches the entire country. He stressed that the development journey was far from over and that the targets set for 2029, 2030–31 and 'Viksit Bharat @2047' had to be achieved on time. Referring to the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), he said that the next objective was to enable Indian agricultural products to make their mark in markets across the world. The country now had to build on the progress achieved in agriculture and ensure that its products reached and competed successfully in global markets.

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