



**Prime Minister's
Rural Development Fellows**
प्रधानमंत्री ग्रामीण विकास फैलोज़

Message from Minister of Rural Development

A year has passed since the first batch of Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellows were recruited and joined work. The primary objective of Prime Minister's Rural Development Fellowship (PMRDF) Scheme was to provide catalytic support to the administration of backward and remote districts in improving programme delivery and relationship with the marginalized section of the population. We got over 10,000 applications and selected 156 fellows through a rigorous selection process. Young and bright women and men with the urge to work with the poor were recruited, trained and placed in these districts that have a large 'development deficit'.

I have remained personally in touch with the State Governments as well as with the Fellows and am enthused by the results so far. All the concerned States accepted the Scheme without hesitation and the Fellows were warmly welcomed. We have had little attrition. My field visits, interactions with the various concerned persons, media reports, reflective self profiles of the Fellows in our blog and the Facebook narrations tell me that the Fellows are working hard on their assignments, even if the outcomes are yet to be fully manifest. In my travels to these districts I often meet them and am impressed by their commitment and passion.

Helping the poor get their place in the society and development of the underdeveloped regions remains a major challenge before us. The task is much more complex than is commonly understood. It calls for a high degree of professionalization of our development interventions and a great sense of empathy while dealing with the underprivileged. We have an acute scarcity of professional human resources in the districts and for working with the poor. This is more so in the underdeveloped regions of our country. We need to expand the pool professional human resources to confront the challenge of poverty head-on. PMRDF is an experiment to address this challenge.

I am very happy that we are now going to recruit the second batch of Fellows. I hope through this recruitment process, we shall get yet another batch of the best of our young professionals who would spare no efforts helping the district administration reach out to the poor with efficiency and effectiveness.