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Ministry of Rural Development

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The Union Minister of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Mines, Shri Narendra Singh Tomar today conferred the National Awards on Best Performing Self Help Groups (SHGs) under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) to provide public recognition to the outstanding performance of the community institutions. For the assessment year 2017-18, a total of 34 SHGs have been awarded National Awards at an event held in New Delhi. As part of the Award, each SHG received a cash award of Rs. 1,00,000 along with a commemoration and a certificate of appreciation.

Addressing the gathering, Union Minister for Rural Development Shri Narendra Singh Tomar hailed the key role played by women in becoming agents of change and in promoting and realizing the multi-pronged rural development approach of the government. Shri Tomar said that these SHGs are being honored today for excellent work in their respective fields and that collectively they are coming up in a big way. He said that Centre as well as State governments are promoting SHGs in a big way and that this will benefit India as a whole.

Shri Tomar asserted that the focus of the Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi led government is to bring prosperity into rural areas and into the lives of poor, marginalized and the deprived. He further stated that the Hon'ble Prime Minister ensured that 14 lakh crores out of 24 lakh crores in the Union Budget is dedicated for

the betterment and progress of Gaon, Gareeb and Kisan of the nation. He said that this will play a key role in reducing the socio-economic inequalities and poverty alleviation.

Talking about the importance of financial assistance being provided to the SHGs through the DAY-NRLM, Shri Tomar said that credit facilities are being provided which have led to SHGs becoming an agent of change and a leading light for others to follow. Shri Singh also said that 5 crore women are already dedicated towards this end and the target is to get 9 crore women to become a part of this movement and bring qualitative change into the lives of people.

Shri Tomar also gave two suggestions for further improving the overall awards process and including more people into it. First suggestion related to the problem of NPAs being faced by banks. Talking about this, Union Rural Development Minister said that banks don't give loans easily and especially not to poor but government has ensured that SHGs get loans and easy credit facilities from banks and the overall rate of NPAs among SHGs is very low. Shri Tomar urged all concerned to ensure that this rate becomes zero so that SHGs become an excellent example for others to follow. The second suggestion related to increasing the participation in the awards and also assigning grades among various SHGs to spur healthy competition among them to do better and better and also to highlight their success stories.

Shri Ram Kripal Yadav, Minister of State for Rural Development, was the esteemed Guest of Honor at the Awards Function. Other dignitaries present during the Awards ceremony were Shri Amarjeet Sinha, Secretary – Rural Development, Shri Sanjeev Kumar, Additional Secretary- Rural Development, Shri Atal Dulloo, Joint Secretary, National Mission Director-NRLM, MoRD, Ms. Nita Kejrewal, Joint Secretary-MoRD, Dr. Seema Gaur, Chief Economic Advisor-MoRD and Dr. W.R. Reddy, DG-NIRD.

Women members from 3 states were delighted to share their experiences of coming out of poverty, with the audiences and guests at the event. They highlighted how their association with NRLM and its interventions, has been very virtuous and inculcated a sense of self-respect and dignity to their lives. The three members were Rajkumari Kevat, Santoshi SHG, MPSRLM, Md. Nazeema, Kareena SHG, Telangana SRLM and Rajlakshmi Banik, Radharani SHG, Tripura Rural Livelihoods Mission.

The National Awards to the Self-Help Groups (SHGs) are intended to provide public recognition to the outstanding performance of the community institutions and incorporate a sense of pride among the poor community members. Conferring awards to best performing SHG and Village Organizations was initiated by DAY-NRLM in 2016-17.

The Awards have motivated the State Missions across the country to perform better and it has also brought the mission to the attention to the senior officers in the states. The financial resources leveraged by the Self Help Group members has enabled them to undertake a large ensemble of livelihood activities such as agriculture and allied activities, sheep and goat rearing, horticulture, running of local means of transportation, rearing of milch animals, irrigation development through bore wells, carpentry etc.

The Union Minister of Rural Development, Panchayati Raj and Mines also launched the NRLM Best Practices Compendium and Self Help Group products catalogues. The compendium of 24 select Best Practices under DAY-NRLM will facilitate cross learning from successful implementation and innovation among the State Missions. A catalogue of SHG products was also released which has a range of products made by the SHGs like handmade products, displaying various traditional arts, handlooms – silk and cotton fabrics, applique works etc., handicrafts – wood and clay products, jute items, tribal jewelry, food products, furniture, leather products etc. with the contact numbers of the SHGs and the price range.

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