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## Public aid must for rural growth: Modi

By *editor*

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Emphasising the importance of people's involvement in bringing about significant changes in rural areas, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, while interacting with over 200 youth working in these areas under a national scheme, appreciated their dedication to work for the upliftment of the poor.

The PM has invited the comments and suggestions to further refine the PM's Rural Development Fellows (PMRDF) scheme and appreciated participants for working with dedication and devotion in rural and backward areas of the country, often withstanding peer and family pressures, an official statement said.

After interacting with 230 (PMRD) fellows, he said that people's participation emerges as the common theme of presentations and responses he has received. Further, he stressed that this can be the most important aspect of bringing about a "change".

Eleven young participants presented brief account of their works in remote, rural, tribal and Left-Wing Extremism affected areas, on women empowerment, maternal and infant health-care, education, nutrition, livelihoods, Swachchh Bharat, Ek Bharat-Shreshtha Bharat, and people's participation in governance, the statement said.

Later, in an interactive session with the PM, several participants shared their thoughts on themes such as development of the North-East, rural education, tribal development, organic farming and welfare of the disabled.

PMDRF is an initiative of the ministry of rural development (MoRD) implemented in collaboration with state governments.

It focuses on poverty alleviation and improving the lives of the population in backward and isolated regions of India. It was announced in September 2011 and inducted its first batch of Fellows in April 2012.

During the two-year fellowship, the Fellows work closely with the District Collector of Additional Central Assistance and Integrated Action Plan districts and strive to bridge

the gap between people's needs and the system's provisions by reducing developmental and governance deficits.

After successful completion of the fellowship, the PMRD Fellow is required to spend one year in public service in the State to which she/he is assigned.

Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), as a knowledge partner of MoRD, facilitates the process of selection, recruitment, training, mentoring and monitoring the work of the Fellows.

The idea behind PMRDF is to provide fresh inputs and ideas to leverage support to the reform process, infuse optimism and instill confidence among key stakeholders, and provide decision-making support to the district leadership.

Recalling a letter that he had written to all Fellows, seeking their responses on the "Narendra Modi App", the Prime Minister appreciated the extensive responses that he had received from them, and especially emphasised that there was not a single complaint among the responses, the statement said.

Rural Development minister Chaudhary Birender Singh was also present on the occasion.

India Age Correspondent New Delhi

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