

## Vibrant Village Programme Aims to Bring Prosperity to Border Villages

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### Introduction

India-China border in the north has high mountain ranges running diagonally flanking trough-like river basins in Ladakh; high mountain ranges and narrow river valleys and himals (snow fields) with deep gorges in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Sikkim. India shares 3488 Km of border with China that runs along the States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh. The area is characterised by high altitude terrain and thick habitation which have resulted in inadequate development of infrastructure in these regions. With its massive infrastructure in Tibet bordering India, China enjoys a definitive conventional edge over India and is at a major strategic advantage.

In recent years, comprehensive a 360 degree development of border areas has become a priority of the Central Government, particularly after the increased skirmishes with the Chinese military. A comprehensive border development and management programme not only includes, raising of border patrol forces and building of physical and electronic fences but also development of economic and human infrastructure in the bordering areas through special programmes.

Among a series of central government initiative is a programme called Vibrant Village Programme (VVP) aimed at India building basic facilities and development of infrastructure in the villages in the far-fetched border areas. The Government has conceptualised VVP with a lot of devotion and in spirit of the Constitution that every border village should get all facilities, similar to any other village in mainland. The Programme has three core objectives - overall development of the country's first village in a phased manner, stopping migration from border villages and preserving local culture and improving all kinds of connectivity, basic facilities and development of infrastructure.[\[1\]](#)

Villages with sparse population, limited connectivity and infrastructure often get left out from the development gains. These regions lack development benefits that other states enjoy, leading to migration to mainland cities or other states. Such migration is are deemed a challenge to national security.[\[2\]](#)

During an event, Union Home Minister, Amit Shah, said that 3,000 villages in 19 border areas in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Ladakh are being covered under the VVP, and this programme will last for 10 years. In the first phase of the scheme, 662 villages are being covered with a total population of 1,42,000 and the government is spending ₹4,800 crore on it.[\[3\]](#)

Under the scheme, 136 border villages are being provided connectivity through 113 all-weather road projects at a cost of ₹2,420 crore. 4G connectivity is being worked on rapidly in these areas

and by Dec 2024, all villages under the VVP will be covered by the 4G network. Work is being done to develop tourist circuits to bring vibrancy to these villages and promote tourism. In this endeavour, capacity building and tourism related infrastructure is being developed in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism.[\[4\]](#)

Till Jul 2024, more than 6,000 events have been organised in these border villages, which include about 4,000 service delivery and awareness camps. More than 600 projects have been sanctioned by the Government of India for employment generation in these villages.

### **Focus Areas of Intervention[\[5\]](#):**

The programme focuses on the following:

- Economic growth - Livelihood generation
- Road Connectivity
- Housing and Village Infrastructure
- Energy including renewable energy through Solar and Wind Power
- Television and Telecom Connectivity including setting up of IT enabled Common Service Centre in the village
- Regeneration of eco-system.
- Promotion of tourism and culture
- Financial inclusion
- Skill development and entrepreneurship
- Development of Co-operative Societies for managing livelihood opportunities including agriculture/horticulture/cultivation of medicinal plants/herbs etc.

The programme also focuses on the saturation of central sector, centrally sponsored welfare schemes of different Ministries and State Government Schemes and also on construction of social infrastructure in the identified villages.

### **Key Border States**

Hon'ble Union Home Minister and Minister of Cooperation, Shri Amit Shah launched the 'Vibrant Villages Programme' at Kibithoo - a border village in Arunachal Pradesh on 10 Apr 2023. He also laid the foundation stones of several projects of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) India's premier border security agency that keeps an eye on the Sino -ndian border. The

Government of Arunachal Pradesh has accorded administrative approval and expenditure sanction for 186 projects approved under VVP.[6]

Similarly, the government plans to develop 76 villages in Himachal Pradesh along the China border in two districts of Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti. The Himachal Pradesh government has directed the administration of two districts to prepare plans for developing 76 villages of the total 210 villages selected under the VVP. Kinnaur and Lahaul and Spiti districts share a 240-km border with China, including the 80 km stretch between Chumar in Lahaul and Spiti and 160km from Daroti to Mumri Dogri in Kinnaur district. The border is manned by the ITBP and the Army.[7]

There are multiple reports suggesting that ever since the Government of India launched the VVP, border villages have started witnessing development. Residents of these villages have started feeling more secure than before because along with social security, new employment opportunities are also being created. Providing growth, connectivity, and social and employment security are the main objectives of this programme.

## **Conclusion**

The VVP is a unique project by the Government of India which accords utmost priority to social and economic wellbeing of border population and to provide them all facilities like connectivity, safe drinking water, schools, hospitals and other facilities to ensure sustainable living in these areas. The programme also focuses on the saturation of central sector, centrally sponsored welfare schemes of different ministries and state government schemes and also on construction of social infrastructure in the identified villages.

Projects like VVP provides sufficient incentives for people to stay on in the selected villages, and stay committed to Indian national values. Promotion of tourism is one of the identified focus areas of intervention in these border villages. At the same time, the Indian Neighbourhood First Policy also has close linkages with development in our border areas, particularly, in the North-East Region. The Policy creates various opportunities for States in the North East, greater cross border trade, investment and movement of people, infrastructure development as well as improved connectivity.

## **Endnotes**

[1] Ministry of Home Affairs, Press Information Bureau, 23 May 2023

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1926714>

[2] Vibrant Villages Programme , Ministry of Home Affairs, Press Information Bureau 29 March 2022

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=1811258>

[3] Ministry of Home Affairs, Press Information Bureau, 25 January 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleaselframePage.aspx?PRID=1999688>

[4] Ministry of Home Affairs, Press Information Bureau, 13 July 2024,

<https://pib.gov.in/PressReleasePage.aspx?PRID=2032972>

[5] Government Of India Ministry Of Home Affairs, Lok Sabha, 06 February 2024

<https://sansad.in/getFile/loksabhaquestions/annex/1715/AU516.pdf?source=pqals>

[6] Vibrant Villages: Their Prosperity is Nation's Security Issue 16-30 April 2023

<https://bprd.nic.in/uploads/pdf/2023051905542849455842ndIssueSAJAGBHARATEnglish1.pdf>

[7] Gaurav Bisht, Vibrant village programme: Govt directs 2 Himachal districts to prepare plan for developing 76 villages, Hindustan Times, 16 June

2023 <https://www.hindustantimes.com/cities/chandigarh-news/vibrant-village-programme-govt-directs-2-himachal-districts-to-prepare-plan-for-developing-76-villages-101686855075887.html>

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