

# Five more welfare plans under Centre's model-village scheme

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**NEW DELHI:** The Centre's model-village scheme now includes 12 welfare flagship programmes and has been extended to more villages, rural development ministry officials said on Monday.

Launched on April 14 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan aims to improve socio-economic conditions of villages by providing poor households with electricity, insurance, LPG connections and other such facilities. Government think tank NITI Aayog picked 115 districts for the scheme.

The second phase comes as the country enters the election year. With Lok Sabha polls due in May 2019, the Modi government would like to see its promise of development reflected in the country's backward areas.

The first phase, between April

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and May, comprised seven schemes—LPG connection, free LED bulbs and electricity, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, accident and life insurances and Mission Indradhanush, a vaccination programme.

The five new initiatives will concentrate on improving schools, health services and nutrition and launching agricultural projects and a skill development programme officials said.

The second phase will cover 49,175 villages, up from 16,850 in the first phase. To improve health

services, the government will ensure wellness centers in each district, nutrition days in villages and assistance to patients with diseases like TB.

Similarly, pilot projects in agriculture will include distribution of soil-health cards, mini kits of pulses and oil seeds, horticultural or bamboo plants.

In his last Pragati meeting, Modi rated the first phase as a "great success in the implementation of seven key schemes in over 16,000 villages".

The second phase was on in more than 40,000 villages, the PM said as he called upon state and union government officials to work towards achieving the best possible outcomes by August 15, a release issued after the meeting said. Pragati, or Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation, is an interactive platform aimed at addressing grievances of people.