



## PERFORMANCE OF RRBS IN INDIA

**Dr. S. G. Bhombe**

Associate Professor, Department of Commerce,  
D.S.M.'s Arts, Commerce & Science College,  
Jintur Dist Parbhani.

### ABSTRACT:

*RRBs were established in India in 1975 essentially for the purpose of taking banking service to the doorsteps of rural people, particularly in places without banking facilities. As part of the comprehensive restructuring programme, recapitalization of RRBs was initiated in the year 1994-95. The process continued till 1990-00 and covered 187 RRBs with aggregate financial support of Rs.2188.44 crore from the shareholders, viz., Government of India, State Governments and sponsor Banks in the ratio of 50:15:35. As a result of the amalgamation, the number of RRBs was reduced from 196 to 86 as on 31st March, 2009. Thus, under the amalgamation process, 145 RRBs have been amalgamated to form 45 new RRBs.*

**KEYWORDS :** restructuring programme, recapitalization , aggregate financial.



## INTRODUCTION

Banks play an important role in mobilization and allocation of resources. Rural people in India are facing problems in the inadequate supply of credit. The major source of credit to rural households, particularly-low income working households, has been the informal sector. Informal sector advances loans at very high rates of interest; the terms and conditions attached to such loans have given rise to an elaborate structure of intimidation of both economic and non-economic conditions in rural population in India. RRBs were established in India in 1975 essentially for the purpose of taking banking service to the doorsteps of rural people, particularly in places without banking facilities.

The objectives of RRBs Act of 1976 were "to develop the rural economy in providing for the purpose of development of agriculture, trade commerce, industry and other productive activities in the rural areas, credit and other facilities particularly to the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entrepreneurs and for matter connected therewith and incidental thereto" Several changes have taken place in the focus and operation of the Regional Rural Banks in the wake of financial sector reforms in India and various measures have been taken by the Government to improve the commercial viability of RRBs since 1994-95.

### REGIONAL RURAL BANKS IN INDIA:

Rural people such as small and marginal farmers, landless agricultural laborers, artisans and socially and economically backward castes and classes they have been exploited in the name of credit facility by informal sector. The rural credit market consists of both formal and informal financial institutions and agencies that meet the credit needs of the rural masses in India. The supply of total formal credit is inadequate and rural credit markets are imperfect and fragmented. Moreover, the distribution of formal sector credit has been unequal, particularly with respect to region and class, cast and gender in the country side.

Regional Rural Banks were established under the provisions of an Ordinance promulgated on the 26<sup>th</sup> September 1975 and the RRB Act, 1975 with an objective to ensure sufficient institutional credit for agriculture and other rural sectors. The RRBs mobilize financial resources from rural/semi-urban areas and grant loans and advances mostly to small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers and rural artisans. For the purpose of classification of bank branches, the Reserve bank of India defines rural area as a place with a population of less than 10,000. RRBs are jointly owned by Government of India, the concerned State Government and Sponsor Banks; the issued capital of a RRB is shared by the owners in the proportion of 50 per cent, 15 per cent and 35 per cent respectively. The first five RRBs were set up in five States in Haryana, West Bengal, Rajasthan, with one each two in Uttar Pradesh, which were sponsored by different commercial banks. These banks covered 11 districts of these five states. The first five Regional Rural Banks are as Prathama Bank, Gorakhpur kshetriya Gramin Bank in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana Krishi Gramin Bank in Haryana, Gour Gramin Bank in West Bengal and Jaipur-Nagpur Anchalik Gramin Bank, Rajasthan.

### MERGERS OF RRBs:

In the wake of introduction of financial sector reforms in 1991-92, the commercial viability of RRBs emerged as the most crucial factor in deciding about their desired role due to their limited business flexibility with hardly any scope of expansion/diversification, smaller size of loans with higher exposure to risk-prone advances and professional efficiency in financial deployment. To strengthen RRBs and improve their performance many initiatives have been taken by the Government of India and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). As part of the comprehensive restructuring programme, recapitalization of RRBs was initiated in the year 1994-95. The process continued till 1990-00 and covered 187 RRBs with aggregate financial support of Rs. 2188.44 crore from the shareholders, viz., Government of India, State Governments and sponsor Banks in the ratio of 50:15:35. Further, the branch licensing policy for RRBs has been liberalized. Under the new norms, empowered committees at the regional offices of RBI clear RRB application to open new branches. The branches of RRBs may undertake government business including conducting foreign exchange business with the prior approval of the concerned Government authority and RBI. These banks have also been allowed to open extension counters at the premises of the institutions of which they are principal bankers after obtaining license from the concerned regional office of the RBI. The RRBs need not obtain permission of RBI for the installation of ATMs at the branches and extension counters for which they hold licenses issued by RBI. They are also permitted to open off-site ATMs after assessing the cost and benefit. As against the earlier policy of opening a large number of branches in far flung rural areas, RRBs have been permitted to merge/close down their unviable branches and the branch licensing policy for RRBs is almost at par with that for commercial banks. Now RRBs compete with the commercial banks in rural credit market of India. RRBs give loans for agriculture and rural development while commercial banks also serve needs of commerce and industry in rural areas.

In 2005-06, the Government of India initiated the process of structural consolidation of RRBs by amalgamating RRBs sponsored by the same bank within a State as per the recommendations of the Vyas Committee (2004). The amalgamated RRBs were expected to provide better customer service due to better infrastructure, computerization of branches, pooling of experienced work force, common publicity, marketing efforts etc., and also derive the benefits of a large area of operation, enhanced credit exposure limits and more diverse banking activities. As a result of the amalgamation, the number of RRBs was reduced

from 196 to 86 as on 31st March, 2009. Thus, under the amalgamation process, 145 RRBs have been amalgamated to form 45 new RRBs.

#### GROWTH OF REGIONAL RURAL BANKS IN INDIA:

Till the birth of RRBs in India, Commercial Banks and Co-operative Banks were rendered services to the rural public. But despite such large net work of bank branches, the credit needs of the rural population in India were quite inadequate. Regional Rural Banks in India have achieved tremendous growth in terms of number of banks and its wide branches. It is very clear that the number of RRBs decreased from 196 in the year 2001-02 to 86 in 2008-09. This was due to the amalgamation that took place in the year 2005-2006, covering 525 districts with a net work of 14,494 branches. However, the number of branches has been significantly increased from 14,390 in 2001-02 to 15,181 in 2008-09. The increase over the period was 1.05 times.

#### CONCLUSIONS:

RRBs were established in India in 1975 essentially for the purpose of taking banking service to the doorsteps of rural people, particularly in places without banking facilities. As part of the comprehensive restructuring programme, recapitalization of RRBs was initiated in the year 1994-95. The process continued till 1990-00 and covered 187 RRBs with aggregate financial support of Rs. 2188.44 crore from the shareholders, viz., Government of India, State Governments and sponsor Banks in the ratio of 50:15:35. As a result of the amalgamation, the number of RRBs was reduced from 196 to 86 as on 31st March, 2009. Thus, under the amalgamation process, 145 RRBs have been amalgamated to form 45 new RRBs.

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