

Helping India to Build its Future

Infrastructure lays the foundation of a modern nation. It lights up our homes, connects us to others, turns the wheels of industry, and makes the lives of people easier.

Transportation sinews - roads, railways, and airports unlock a country's growth potential by linking towns and cities, farms and villages. Rural roads increase farmers' earnings, make it easier for village dwellers to reach critical healthcare, and enable more children, especially girls, to go to school.

Reliable power supply opens up vast new opportunities, allowing young people to study after dark and adults to use their evening hours productively. Good water supply releases women and children in villages and slums from hours of drudgery in fetching water each day, freeing the children to attend school and the women to go out to work. Irrigation infrastructure, whether large or small, gives a fresh lease of life to rain-fed lands, enabling farmers to reap the bounty of nature and break the cycle of poverty.

The Government of India recognizes the magnitude of the task ahead in building this full spectrum of infrastructure, and spells out the way forward in the 11th Five Year Plan. In our own small way, we support the government in its efforts, and through the pages of this calendar, hope to provide a glimpse of some of our work in this direction. We not only focus on bricks and mortar, cement and steel, but also on building that critical factor - human capital.

Needless to say, it is not enough to just construct this vital national foundation. Emphasis must also be placed on maintaining it to sustain the quality of services needed in a rapidly developing economy. It is therefore equally important that the people who use this infrastructure participate in the process of its building - from the drawing board, to its construction, and ultimately to its maintenance over the years.

Accordingly, many of our projects showcased here support the active participation of communities in the process of development. Recognizing the importance of the human element, they focus on empowering people and building lasting institutions that will remain sustainable for many years to come.

Rachid Benmessaoud
Acting Country Director,
The World Bank, New Delhi

Illustrations

The World Bank wishes to thank the Dastkari Haat Samiti for permission to use the visuals from its magnificent series, Craft Maps of India.