

Cash subsidy transfer is not a magic wand but people will get purchasing power: Expert

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RAIPUR: Expert in public policy and capacity building T R Raghunandan, a former IAS officer of Karnataka Cadre, said on Thursday that transfer of cash subsidy to the beneficiaries was not a "magic wand" but it could help create purchasing power among the masses in the respective areas.

Speaking at the media capacity building workshop, organised by the centre and the UN joint programme on [convergence](#) here, he said he felt that it could equip the rural masses with much needed purchasing power which, in turn, could help develop markets in the respective areas.

Pointing out that he has no answer to questions supporting or opposing cash subsidy transfer scheme, Raghunandan said there were many people who are thinking differently. He said [Bihar](#) chief minister [Nitish Kumar](#) had gone on record that his government's priority was to have all-weather roads in all villages and hamlets so that people from any part of the state could come to [Patna](#) within six hours.

"If the market cannot come to you, you can come to the market", he said adding that he could not see any other viable option to address the problem. "Even if we form self-help groups (SHGs) in the remote villages, eventually it will also die. " It's certainly not an alternative to for anti-poverty programme—which he said has failed in India", he said.

Raghunandan said the number of bank branches and post offices in the country as of now were not sufficient to deal with transfer of cash subsidy to the beneficiaries. "I am sure that technology will change [the game](#) in the next five years", he added.

Participants at the workshop were eager to know about the centre's move to introduce cash subsidy transfer scheme and how it could benefit the people in the remote tribal areas of Bastar where people have to walk miles together to reach a bank or even a fair price shop.

Speakers at the workshop opined that decentralisation was the need of the hour but there were limitations in its implementation.

Vipul Mudgal, director of inclusive media project, felt there was a need for greater peoples' involvement in participative governance where people are involved equally in the planning process. Decentralization is one of those mechanisms with tools like public hearing and social audit which could make the system more effective, he added.