

Importance of Rural Development in National Growth

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Abstract

Rural development is the main pillar of nation's development. Development is concerned with improving and transforming the economic and social life of the rural poor. Some countryperson are even deprive of the basic human services such as food nutrition, health and education. It is equally concerned with development of infrastructure like roads, transport, power, insurance and banking, development of cottage industries and providing decent cheap houses for rural poor and the depressed classes. Aim to be developed country may only be achieved by uplifting every citizen's status either town dwellers or villagers. Equal distribution of national income and wealth for promoting social justice is essential. Villagers should not be considered to minister the needs of uplifted mass. Sufficient food, cloth and roof shelter for poor folk should be confirmed. The Panchayati Raj Institutions to disburse the State or Central funds rather than discharge or exercise their statutory rights. The central planning process involving bureaucracy has certain limitations beyond which it may not be possible for it to reach to fulfil the task of "Antyodaya" that is emancipation of the last men of society. There are debates over the treatment of local governments as mere extensions of the governments at the Centre/State and the demand from time to time to treat them as independent units on par with other federal units.

In fact bureaucracy derives power through the constitution and is directly accountable to the Constitution and the President, as in the case of India. This should not preclude their duties at the local level. In most cases, a central officer of the IAS rank prefers to ostracize rural developmental activities. This is not in good taste. More often this is due to the presence of non-officials above him at higher levels of functioning in the Zila Parishads.

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Rural development is the main pillar of nation's development. Development is concerned with improving and transforming the economic and social life of the rural poor. In India, a large proportion of rural population is poor. Some country persons are even deprived of the basic human services such as food nutrition, health and education. It's equally concerned with development of infrastructure like roads, transport, power, insurance and banking, development of cottage industries and providing decent cheap houses for rural poor and the depressed classes. A developed country may only be achieved by uplifting every citizen's status either town dwellers or villagers. Equal distribution of national income and wealth for promoting social justice is essential. Villagers' poor mass of villagers should not be considered to minister the needs of uplifted mass. Sufficient food, cloth and roof shelter for poor folk should be confirmed. Unfortunately appropriate organization structure have not been designed for rural development in our country. While any strategy of socio-economic development in India cannot be successful and significant unless 2000 million rural dwellers are disconnected from main stream and development. After independence actual goals of development cannot be claimed till today despite of establishment of new development agencies and corporations due to unethical value system. The need for revitalizing Panchayati raj has therefore recognized as an instrument for participative planning and implementation of various development programmes at grassroots level. Government of India is doing its utmost to bring about sustainable development in rural areas by undertaking development of Wetlands, Deserts and drought prone areas but abolition of poverty is undone. Target of 100% literacy is undone. Economic solidity of rural citizens is undone. My aim of writing this research paper is to understand the limitations and challenges face by our government. I also wish to investigate the way ahead for rural development as whole picture of our nation will only be perfect and beautiful by making rural people's life style advanced and progressive.

The real potential for the development of our nation is in rural India. It is actually the backbone of economy but as a matter of fact the rural India has been exploited and rural India has been lagged behind in development because of many historical factors. After independence new development agencies and corporations have been set up but the goal of rural development is fantasy till today perhaps the reason of failure is unethical value system. An agrarian reform begun in 1950's but remained unfinished and long overdue task. With the change of era the shape of problem transformed without solution. Technological changes also couldn't remove hunger as the reach of technology has been severely restricted by myopic policy vision and resource constraints. The direct anti-poverty programs achieved some

limited progress. It's paradoxical that bureaucracy created to govern a colonial feudal system was entrusted to implement agrarian reforms and elements of those policies that were inherently anti feudal, progressive and democratic. After judicious analysis, most critics find bureaucracy an impediment to an efficient programme of rural development. Apart from these expressions about bureaucracy, there are many other lacunas revealed by other studies made in India in matters of bureaucracy and rural development. Political ill will prompts the bureaucracy at the Panchayati Raj Institutions to disburse the State or Central funds rather than discharge or exercise their statutory rights. The central planning process involving bureaucracy has certain limitations beyond which it may not be possible for it to reach to fulfil the task of "Antyodaya" that is emancipation of the last men of society. There are debates over the treatment of local governments as mere extensions of the governments at the Centre/State and the demand from time to time to treat them as independent units on par with other federal units.

In fact bureaucracy derives power through the constitution and is directly accountable to the Constitution and the President, as in the case of India. This should not preclude their duties at the local level. In most cases, a central officer of the IAS rank prefers to ostracize rural developmental activities. This is not in good taste. More often this is due to the presence of non-officials above him at higher levels of functioning in the Zila Parishads. It has been observed that the ability of bureaucratic system to carry out planned programme of socioeconomic development has been limited, partly due to lack of commitment to the ultimate goals of society and partly due to its inability to mobilize enough public support for development programmes. Basically rural development is needed to improve people's knowledge of themselves, of their society and of their environment so that confidence in people may build up for what they can do their skills, mental and physical. Farming is the fabric of rural society and, in almost all countries of the world, it is the main economic activity. Any sudden and profound changes which impacted on the farm sector could have severe consequences in terms of social and political stability in economically developing countries.

Rural education in India is also in very pitiable condition while majority of India still lives in villages and basic education to every villager will verify the right to education of every Indian citizen. A survey named called the Annual Status of Education Report (ASER), shows that even though the number of rural students attending schools is rising, but more than half of the students in fifth grade are unable to read a second grade text book and are not able to solve simple mathematical problems. Not only this, the level of math's and reading is further declining. Though

efforts are being made, they are not in the right direction. The reason cited for this problem in surveys is the increasing number of single classroom to educate students from more than one grade. In some states attendance of teachers and students is also declining. These are a few reasons why schools have failed to educate rural India. Quality and access to education is the major concern in rural schools as there are fewer committed teachers, lack of proper text books and learning material in the schools. Though Government schools exist, but when compared to private schools then quality is a major issue. Majority of people living in villages have understood the importance of education and know that it is the only way to get rid of poverty. But due to lack of money they are not able to send their children to private schools and hence depend upon government schools for education. Above that, in some of the government schools there is only one teacher for the entire school and if they don't show up at work, then it is a holiday. If the quality along with number of teachers and, that too committed teachers can be improved in these schools, then aspiring rural children and India can fulfil their dreams of doing something great.

Some of the biggest hurdles in the development of rural India are:

- 1) Dispute between Central Government, State Government and Local Government that is Panchayati Raj. As in India no one leaves an opportunity to indulge in politics over any single issue.
- 2) Lack of basic infrastructure, connectivity and other needs.
- 3) Education: Due to low literacy rates, people often are not able to get benefits from government programs and are not entitled to their basic rights.
- 4) Migration of workforce: As very less job opportunities are provided so local workforce often tend to migrate to cities and metropolis.
- 5) Cooperation of people with government (Not everywhere and with all still at some places people often don't show any particular interests in public schemes).

Villages play an equal role in upliftment of economy or contributing in development of a nation as often resources and a huge workforce often are supplied by them as majority of India is village. Rural poverty alleviation has been the primary concern in the economic planning and development process of the country ... rural development which encompasses the entire gamut of improvement in the overall quality of life in the rural areas can be achieved through eradication of poverty in rural areas.'

Keeping in view the planning policy various schemes of development, especially the development of agriculture, the main occupation of the rural people, have been introduced.

The major early programmes were:

1. Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (LAAP)
2. Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP)
3. High Yielding Varieties Programme (HYVP)
4. Rural Industries Projects and Rural Artisans Programmes (RIP and RAP)

Besides the above programmes, several poverty alleviation programmes have also been launched by the central and state governments for the rural people. These are discussed in the following paragraphs:

A. 20-Point Programme:

This has been a major programme of rural development encompassing various aspects of rural people. This programme is associated with former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who introduced it in July 1975 for reducing poverty and economic exploitation and for the uplift of weaker sections of society. She gave the slogan 'Garibi Hatao' during parliamentary elections.

The important goals of this programme were:

1. Welfare of the rural masses
2. Increase in rural employment
3. Minimum wages to landless laborers
4. Uplift of the SC and ST people
5. Growth of housing facilities
6. New programmes of family planning
7. Extension of primary health facilities
8. Making primary education more effective
9. Welfare of women and children
10. Some other programmes—drinking water facilities, public distribution system, increasing power production, etc.

The programme was discontinued with the change in government (during Janata Party government). However, it was revised in 1982 after the returning of congress government at the centre with an emphasis on eradicating poverty and reducing income inequalities, removing social and economic disparities and improving the quality of life.

B. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):

The programme was launched by the Centre in March 1976 as a major instrument of the government to alleviate poverty. Its main feature was to enable selected families to cross the poverty line in a given time-frame by taking up self-employment in various activities like agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, weaving and handicrafts and services and business activities.

The target group consisted of small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers and rural artisans having annual income below Rs 11,000 defined as poverty line in the Eighth Plan. Among the selected families, it is stipulated that at least 50 per cent of assisted families should be from SCs and STs. Furthermore, 40 per cent of the coverage should be of women beneficiaries. In spite of its many important features, the programme has also been criticized widely.

The main criticisms against the programme are:

1. There was much corruption, misuse and malpractice in the implementation of the programme at every level—from selection of beneficiary families to the distribution of loans. Bribing was a sine qua non for obtaining a loan.
2. The poor people were not well conversant about the programme. They took less interest in the programme because they were afraid of being cheated. Moreover, they were unable to fill up complicated forms and find the ‘guarantors’ for themselves.
3. The bank officials, through which loans were to be given, were often reluctant towards these poor borrowers.
4. It was found that this scheme also could not make any significant impact in the generation of employment in rural areas.
5. Several studies indicated that IRDP loans neither raised the living standard of the beneficiaries, nor does it had any impact in the alleviation of rural poverty for which this scheme was launched.

C. Training Rural Youths for Self-Employment (TRYSEM):

This scheme was launched in 1979 to provide technical skills (training) to rural youths (between 18-35 years) living below the poverty line, to enable them to seek employment in fields of agriculture, industry, services and business activities.

As in other schemes of poverty alleviation, in this scheme also, youths belonging to SCs and STs and ex-servicemen, who had passed ninth class, were given priority. One-third seats were reserved for women. The beneficiaries of this scheme after completion of training were absorbed in the IRDP scheme.

According to an estimate, up to 1995-96, about two lakh youths were being trained every year, of whom about 45 per cent became self-employed and 30 per cent got regular employment.

In spite of being a good scheme, it has many shortcomings. For example,

1. its coverage is very small in relation to need;
2. the amount of stipend given to the trainees (about Rs 75 to 200 per month) to motivate the youth is very meagre to join training programme; and

3. Skills imparted in the training are of very low level and not linked with rural industrialization process.

D. Food for Work Programme (FWP):

This programme was introduced in 1977 by the then Janata government with the objective to provide employment to the unemployed/underemployed village persons during the slack season. The wages paid to the workers were in kind, i.e., food grains.

The works undertaken were flood protection, maintenance of existing roads, construction of new link roads, improvement of irrigation facilities, construction of school buildings, medical and health centers and Panchayat Ghars (community halls) etc.

E. National Rural Employment Programme (NREP):

This is redesigned programme of FWP, planned for creating additional employment opportunities in the rural areas with the help of surplus food grains. It was started in 1980 as a part of the Sixth Plan (1980-85). This programme was especially for those rural people who largely depended on wage employment but had no source of income during lean agricultural period. PRIs were actively involved in this programme.

Later on, this programme was merged with Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY).

F. Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP):

Special schemes were formulated by some states such as Maharashtra and Gujarat to provide increasing employment opportunities to rural people, especially landless people. Maharashtra started the Employment Guarantee Scheme (EGS) for the unemployed in rural areas. The Gujarat government's scheme provided for unskilled jobs to the unemployed workers on different projects. This scheme was later on merged into JRY along with NREP.

G. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY):

This programme came into existence in April 1989 with the merger of the NREP and the RLEGP. Under this scheme, it was expected to provide at least one member of each poor family (BPL family) an employment for 50 to 100 days in a year at a work near his/her residence. About 30 per cent of the jobs under this programme were reserved for women. The scheme was implemented through Village Panchayats.

H. Antyodaya Yojana:

The Hindi word 'Antyodaya' is a combination of two words—ant meaning end or bottom level and udaya meaning development. Thus, as a whole, it implies the development or welfare of a person standing at the end of the queue (lowest level), that is, the poorest of the poor.

This programme was initiated by the Government of Rajasthan on 2nd October, 1977 for special assistance to persons living below the poverty line (BPL). It was later on picked up by the then Janata government at the centre in 1978. The idea was to select five of the poorest families from each village every year and help them in their economic betterment.

For the selection of beneficiary families, a few economic criteria were laid down, in order of priority:

- (1) Families under severe destitution without any productive assets with no member in the age group of 15-59 years capable of any economic activity;
- (2) Families without any productive assets of land or cattle but having one or more persons capable of working and with a per capita income up to Rs 20 per month;
- (3) Families having some productive assets with per capita income upto Rs 30 per month; and
- (4) Families having per capita income upto Rs 40 per month.

Under this scheme, assistance was given in the form of allotting land for cultivation, monthly pension (Rs 30-40 per month), bank loan for purchasing bullocks, buffaloes, cows, goats and pigs, basket making, carpentry tools, opening a tailor's shop, a tea shop, a barber's shop or a grocer's shop and manufacturing activities like niwar-making, soap-making, etc.

Following the footsteps of the Government of Rajasthan, UP and Himachal governments also launched it on the same lines in 1980. The scheme has seen much ups and downs with many shortcomings, such as delay in the payment of loans, apathy on the part of government officials, etc. 'Antyodaya,' as preached by Mahatma Gandhi, has disappeared into 'Ananta' or eternity and is replaced with 'swantyodaya', meaning one's own development. It places emphasis on 'myself mentality.

I. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS):

After independence, for the development of rural society, particularly to develop the socio-economic life of the rural poor, many schemes and programmes were launched from time to time but unfortunately the fruits of these programmes reached to a very low proportion of these people.

It was estimated about 70 per cent of rural population was still deprived of the basic necessities of life. For the purpose of extending the benefits to rural people, a new scheme was launched and legislation was enacted under the name 'National Rural Employment Guarantee Act' (NREGA).

This scheme was initially started in 200 districts of the country from February 2006 and from April 2008, it has been extended to cover all the districts of the country. The main objective of the scheme is to provide 100 days employment to rural unemployed people. In this scheme, employment to women is also provided.

Like other rural development schemes, this scheme is also plagued with many problems—workers' identification and registration, muster rolls, works attendance, calculations and disbursement of wages and overall transparency. In recent months, people from all circles have also voiced great concern about the rampant corruption in this scheme.

Some Other Development Schemes:

1. Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Sadak Yojana (PMAGSY):

It focuses on integrated development of 100 villages with a 50 per cent population of SCs.

2. Bharat Nirmaan Yojana:

It was launched in 2005 for building infrastructure and basic amenities in rural areas. It comprises of six components—rural housing, irrigation, drinking water, rural roads, electrification and rural telephony.

3. Indira Awas Yojana:

It is one of the six components of Bharat Nirmaan Yojana. It was introduced in 1985-86. It aims to help built or upgrade the households of people living under BPL.

4. Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM):

It was launched on 3rd December, 2005. The main objective of this scheme was fast track development of cities across the country. It was focused especially on developing efficient urban infrastructure service delivery mechanism, community participation and accountability of urban local bodies and other agencies towards citizen.

5. Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY):

This programme was announced in June 2009 with an objective to make the country slum-free.

6. National Rural Health Mission:

It was launched to make basic health care facilities accessible to the rural people.

7. National Rural Livelihood Mission:

It is meant to eradicate poverty by 2014-15.

8. National Food Security Scheme:

On the pattern of MNREGS, the central government is trying hard to bring a bill in the monsoon session (2013) to provide guarantee for food to the poor people, although it has already issued an ordinance in this regard.

Modi government's schemes for rural development-

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana ^[2] MoP 2015

Rural Power Supply is a Government of India program aimed at providing 24x7 uninterrupted power supply to all homes in Rural India

Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gramin Kaushalya Yojana 2015

It is a government of India Project to engage rural youth specially BPL and SC/ST segment of population, in gainful employment through skill training programmes.

In an endeavor to strengthen Panchayati Raj in villages and ensure social harmony, Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently announced Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan on the 125th birth anniversary of Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar. He declared to start the campaign at Ambedkar's ancestral village Mhow in Madhya Pradesh.

According to sources, the campaign will be run jointly by the ministries of Rural Development, Agriculture, Social Justice, Labour and Information and Broadcasting, along with the states.

The campaign will focus on issues pertaining to rural development, improving farmers' income, SC and ST welfare and social harmony.

On this platform village farmer assemblies will be organized to promote agriculture by providing information to farmers about various schemes of the government such as Fasal Bima Yojana and Soil Health Card scheme.

Gram Uday Se Bharat Uday Abhiyan concluded on Panchayati Raj Diwas on April 24 with address of the Prime Minister to all Gram Sabha from Jamshedpur through radio and television.

In the challenge of transforming rural India, the EPCO's centre has selected 60 villages in three districts of Rajgarh, Sehore, and Satna to develop as 'Smart Villages' under the most ambitious smart cities project. In this smart village's development, each village will get Rs. 25 crore.

In the development of smart villages, the government will focus on climate change, smart energy, agriculture, and water. Smart village development will come about in the state in coordination with Environment Planning and Coordinating Agency (EPCO).

The proposal developed by coordinating with National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). In this proposal, it will focus on uplift of rural areas by greater credit flow to give push to agriculture and rural non-farm sector. The project is expected to be of three years duration. However, 20 villages have been selected for development in districts tagged as climate change smart villages.

Insemination is uneven and slow in the rural areas. Good efforts of organizations developing technologies, devices and products for rural areas could

not yield high success. Experiences of many countries suggest that technological development fueled by demand has a higher dissemination rate. However, in India, technology developers for rural areas have been catering to needs (with small improvement), rather than creating demand. There is no industry linkage machinery to create demand-based-technology market for rural communities. Besides, there is also an imbalance between strategies and effective management programmes.

Finally Implementation of the programmes should be increasingly based on approaches and methods which involve the rural poor themselves in the process of poverty eradication and economic growth. This is possible through a process of social mobilization, encouraging participatory approaches and institutions and empowerment of the poor. In this the PRIs, the voluntary organizations and community based Self-Help Groups will be more closely involved.

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