

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN INDIA SINCE 2000: AN OVERVIEW

MRS. AMARJEET KAUR

Associate Professor

Department of Economics

Maharana Pratap National College, Mullana (Ambala)

Email: wadhwaamarjeetkaur@gmail.com

Abstract.

The rural sector is getting prominence these days, not only in India but also in many developing countries of the world. The rural sector is recognized for its economic potential. The level of agricultural production determines the health of an economy. Rural development means both economic improvements for the people of rural areas and greater social change. Rural development is a multidimensional concept. Rural development presumes simultaneous action on several fronts for increasing employment opportunities, production and productivity. Agriculture, being the largest single source of income and employment in rural areas, obviously takes precedence over other activities both in regard to investment as well as organization efforts. However, the development of agriculture itself is, to a certain extent, dependent upon the development of the infrastructure, tertiary sector and rural industries. Rural infrastructure includes rural electrification, rural roads, communication, housing, agro-service centers warehouses storage etc. These facilities not only enable improved agriculture practices but also contribute to the improvement in living conditions in a rural areas. Rural upliftment is the basic foundation of the Nation's development. Therefore, agriculture policy in India since independence has been framed with the central objective of removing constraints on the production of food grains and agricultural raw materials. Rural development in India was started on 2nd October 1952, during the first five-year plan in India. Since then many policies and programs have been run by the rural development department in rural areas. After the mid-60s agriculture was comparatively given priority from the point of view of the technical support, minor irrigation and command area development. Since the independence of India, a structure of policy-making and policy-implementing institutions has been built up in the country for rural

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MRS. AMARJEET KAUR

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development. This paper throws light on the various programs launched by the government of India for Rural Development.

Keywords

Rural, Development, India, Government, Programmes.

Objectives

1. To know the meaning of Rural Development
2. To find out and understand the developmental efforts of govt. of India to revamp the rural life and livelihood facilities

Research Methodology: The research methodology is descriptive in nature and based on secondary data. Secondary data has been collected from different govt. sites.

Introduction

Rural development is important for achieving better productivity, social economic equality and stability in social and economic development. Rural upliftment is the basic foundation of the nation's development. Mahatma Gandhi had seen Gram Swaraj as the focal point of the economic development of independent India. He wanted to give sustainable shape to rural development. Rural development means economic improvement for the people of rural areas and great social change as well. Rural development means improving the living standard of rural people by providing them with basic facilities such as food, housing, clothing, drinking water, medical, education, means of communication, paved roads etc. In addition, in this regard, it is also necessary to provide minimum wages to unorganized laborers in rural areas. The rural sector is recognized for its economic potential. In the past, whenever efforts for the economic development of the rural areas were made, they were mostly one-sided in character. They were hardly thought of as partners in the process of development. Today the emphasis is on involving the rural people in the development process. This shift is justified because 68.84% population (2011 Census) is rural in India. Increased participation of people in a rural development program aims at improving the lives of the rural people by decentralization of schemes, better implementation of land reforms and their easy achievements. Many problems like unemployment, illiteracy, water, electricity, housing, roads, irrigation etc. are not hidden from anyone in the maximum rural areas of India. Due to the lack of industry, the people of the villages are mainly dependent on the agriculture for employment. They are facing seasonal unemployment.

Rural development is a multidimensional concept. It does not only mean the development of rural areas through agriculture, animal husbandry, rural handicrafts, rural schemes etc., but also brings about social, political, cultural and structural changes

in the lives of the rural people. The strategy of rural development in India has been changing in different phases due to changes in the approach towards rural development. Rural development in India was started on 2 October 1952. The community development program was the largest rural reconstruction scheme launched by the government of India. Many policies and programs are being run by the rural development department in India.

Some of them are:

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana

PMGSY was started by the then prime minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 25th December 2000. This scheme helps in enhancing rural development by increasing social and economic services which ultimately form income and employment opportunities for people. This program ensures easy and fast road connectivity from rural to urban areas. Previously the program was funded solely by the central government but following the recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission, the program is now borne by both the states and the central government. Under this scheme, the work is done through Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Municipality. The third phase of this scheme was done in the year 2019, and was announced by the central rural development minister Narendra Singh Tomar. This program will help the rural people to get more opportunities, employment, education, health and various other social welfare schemes. At present almost all the villages of India have been connected with the PMGSY scheme. In this scheme provision has been made for the reconstruction of roads, if the road breaks down within 5 years of its construction. The rural development program is retarded because of paucity of funds. Under this scheme an agency has been formed to make roads. This agency has been named NRRDA (National Rural Road Development Agency). This agency will look after and maintain the construction of all the roads to be built in the country. Despite the challenges faced, the progress under this scheme has been satisfactory.

Thpura Scheme

Former president Dr. A. P. Abdul Kalam coined the PURA [Provisions of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas] model in 2003 on Republic Day. This scheme was implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development in seven clusters on a pilot basis [2004-05 to 2006-07]. During the 11th five-year plan PURA Scheme was relaunched as a central government scheme with the help of the Asian Development Bank and the Department of Economic Affairs. It implemented the PURA scheme under a Public Private Partnership [PPP] model between the local executive bodies like the gram panchayats and private sector partners. The main objective of this scheme is

to provide urban amenities and livelihood opportunities in rural areas and bridge the rural and urban gap. Water and sewerage, Construction and maintenance of village streets, Drainage, Solid waste management, Skill development, and Development of economic activities are the amenities that are provided under PURA [MoRD schemes]. Amenities provided under the non-MoRD schemes are Village Street lighting, Telecom and Electricity.

Swarn Jayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana

To promote self-employment to remove poverty from rural areas, this program was launched in villages in 1999. Under this program a large number of small enterprises are established in rural areas. The small enterprises are organized as individual enterprises as well as on a collective basis as Self Help Groups (SHGs). The poor are granted loans and subsidies to establish these enterprises. In 2011 SGSY was restructured into the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). This scheme is also known as 'Ajeevika'. In 2015, NRLM is renamed as Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-NRLM.

Under NRLM government provides a loan of Rs 3 lakh at an interest rate of 7% which can be reduced to 4% at the time of re-payment. It helps in utilizing the capabilities of the rural poor so that they can contribute to the development of the country.

The goal is to reduce poverty by giving rural households access to self-employment and skilled-wage employment opportunities. The vision of the DAY-NRLM is to ensure that at least one woman from each rural household can join SGHs and access to livelihood opportunities and financial assistance. This program has three pillars:

1. Vulnerability Reduction
2. Livelihood Enhancement
3. 'Employment' - building skills for the job market outside and 'Enterprises' - nurturing self-employed entrepreneurs.

DAY-NRLM addresses both the demand and supply side of financial inclusion. On the demand side it promotes financial literacy among the poor and provides funds to self-help groups and their association.

On the supply side, DAY- NRLM is working with the financial sector and promotes the use of information communication & technology (ICT) and as well as community facilitators such as 'Bank Mitras'.

A total of 152 financial literacy and service delivery centres (SAKSHAM) have been opened in 77 districts of 13 States from 4th October to 28 October 2021,

as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. On 18th April 2023, as part of DAY-NRLM, the Ministry of Rural Development launched a national campaign, “Sangathan to samridhi- Leave no Rural Women Behind” was launched. This special promotion will run till 30 June 2023 and AIMS to engage all vulnerable and marginalized rural households in self-help groups so that they can take advantage of the services offered under this program. The goal of this campaign is to give women the opportunity to make a significant contribution to make our country’s five trillion economy.

Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana

Sampoorna Gramin Rojgar Yojana was launched on the 1st of September 2001. The main objective of this Yojana is -:

1. To provide opportunities for employment to surplus labor
2. To provide food security
3. Development of community social assets and economic assets
4. Development of the basic infrastructure

The central and state governments bear the cost of this project in the ratio of 87.5 :12.5. In this Yojana, part of wages is paid in terms of food.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The government of India enacted the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act in September 2005. It is an Indian labor law and social security measure which guarantees the right to work. Originally this act was implemented in 200 districts, now it has been extended to all over the nation. On October 2, 2009, NREGA Changed its name from NREGA to MGNREGA. Under this scheme wages are paid at statutory minimum wage rate. This scheme provides at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to the poor persons living in rural areas to at least one adult member in every household who volunteers to do unskilled manual work.

Employment is provided for generating productive assets in rural areas like constructing roads, and irrigation projects (ponds canals and Wells). Work is provided within 15 days of demand. If work is not provided in 15 days, the unemployment allowance is paid equal to one-third of the statutory minimum wage rate. Gram Panchayat will monitor the work in its village. In this scheme emphasis is given on strengthening the process of decentralisation through giving a significant role to Panchayati Raj Institutions in planning and implementing all the works undertaken. Women are granted one-third of the jobs made available under the MGNREGA. 90% expenses of this scheme are borne by the central government and 10% by the state government. This scheme helps in reducing rural-urban migration, fostering social equity and empowering rural women. The SGRY and National Food for Work

Program have been merged into the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme. A major criticism of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act is that most of the funds paid by the government are siphoned off by intermediaries, leaving many MGNREGA workers underpaid or unpaid. Most States have failed to disburse wages within 15 days as mandated by MGNREGA. Workers are not compensated for a delay in payment of wages. To get the full benefit of MGNREGA, it must be implemented in the right spirit. For this reason, MGNREGA accounts must be strictly audited.

Sansad Aadarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY)

This Yojana was launched on 11 October 2014 to realize Mahatma Gandhi's overarching vision of an ideal village, keeping in view the current situation. Under SAGY each member of parliament would adopt a suitable Gram Panchayat to be developed as Adarsh, a Gram other than his /her own village or that of his /her spouse. A Gram Panchayat should have a population of 3000-5000 in plain areas and 1000 -3000 in the hilly, tribal and difficult areas. MP will guide its overall progress giving importance to social development at par with infrastructure. The main objective of SAGY is to bring about a substantial improvement in the living standards and quality of life of all sections of the population through:

- * Improved basic amenities
- * Higher productivity
- * Human development
- * Better livelihood opportunities
- * Reduce disparities
- * Access to rights and entitlements
- * Wider social mobilization
- * And reached the social capital.

An Adarsh village should be developed with the common vision of the people so that their abilities and available resources can be utilized to the best possible extent. Appropriate support should be provided by the MP, Gram Panchayat, civil society and government machinery. The following important activities should be included in the Adarsh Gram Yojana: *Personal development

- * Social development
- * Human development
- * Economic development
- * Environmental development

- * Social security
- * Basic amenities and services
- * Good governance

Pradhanmantri Gram Aawas Yojana

Pradhanmantri Gram Aawas Yojana (formerly known as Indira Awas Yojana) is a social welfare program launched by the government of India to provide housing for the rural poor in India. A similar program for the urban poor was launched in 2015 to provide housing for all by 2022. The purpose of this program is to provide financial assistance to individuals living in kutcha homes as well as those who do not have a home. In addition to constructing housing, the plan also includes providing essential amenities such as electricity, LPG, water and Road connections. Under this scheme, a mandatory provision has been made for the female head of the family to be the owner of the house or co-owner of the house. The cost of constructing the houses will be shared by the center and the state. In plain areas, the central and state governments would split unit costs 60:40 ratio with Rs. 1.2 Lakh allocated to each unit. The ratio is 90:10 in the Himalayan States, the North Eastern States and the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, receiving maximum of RS.1.3 lakh. Gram Sabha is responsible for reviewing the information provided by the socio-economic and caste census to determine who the beneficiaries are. Under the terms of the project, the Central Government will provide Rs 12000 as additional financial support to build a permanent toilet and two tanks in each house. SC, ST and other minorities are also a priority for this program.

Suggestions and Conclusion

The most visible impact of population growth in both rural and urban areas is the ever-increasing need for basic needs especially food, clothing and housing. The rural sector's contribution to meeting these needs is paramount. For instance, in meeting the requirement for food, the basic source is almost exclusively in the rural sector and farm activities. In meeting with the needs of clothing, despite a noticeable progress in the synthetic fiber industry, the major share is still contributed by natural fibers viz., Cotton, jute, silk, wool and fur. As far as housing is concerned, the rural sector contributes directly and indirectly. Some of the basic building materials such as stones, bricks, sand etc. Are provided by rural areas. The increase in housing activities competes with the farm sector for land. Most of the suburbs of big towns and cities are now located on the land that was earlier put to agricultural use. With the expansion of housing estates, agriculture is being boost out as an economic sector and some rural areas are being reclassified as urban areas.

Rural development itself involves not only higher investment and growth of agriculture and activities allied to farming such as dairying, animal husbandry poultry fishery and forestry, but also the development of infrastructure, other services of the tertiary sector and resource-based industries. Rural development plans should take into account all these possibilities depending upon the local physical resources and human skills. For a sustained growth of the rural economy, it is necessary to implement and integrated development policy for crop production, poultry, fisheries etc. and adoption of modern technology in all these agriculture and allied activities. A Scientific agricultural policy should consist of an integrated approach to research education and training for all-round rural development. Emphasis should be placed on national demonstration programs for conveying research results to the farmers. Today, an observed feature of the agricultural economy is the increasing importance of industrial inputs. This has increased the demand for institutional credit both for investment and current operations in the farm sector. Steps should be taken to increase the flow of institutional credit to the agricultural sector through a multi-agency approach. No doubt, many policies and programs are being run by the rural development department in rural areas. It is not that there is no progress in the rural development programmes but their achievements are not of the desired level. Our economy is such that it is basically dependent on agriculture, so it would not be unfair to say that without continuous rural development, our national development would prove to be incomplete and futile.

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