

# THE CHANGING DIMENSIONS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Of late, rural development has assumed global attention especially among the developing nations. It has great significance for a country like India where majority of the population, around 65% of the people, live in rural areas. The present strategy of rural development in India mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment. Since First Five Year Plan, Government of India has spent huge amount of money to tackle socio-economic problems prevailing in rural India. However, Government effort could not make any dent on unemployment and poverty prevailing in rural India. In this context NGOs play an important role in rural development. NGOs help in building a self-reliant and sustainable society. These agencies play the role of mediator between people and government.

**Keywords:** Rural Development, Changing Dimension, Government, NGOs, Five Year Planning

## **Research Problem:**

In the changing scenario of globalization strategy and approaches to rural development has also changed. With the commencement of economic reforms, the emphasis on decentralization has increased, especially because of new partners in both decentralization and development are emerging. In this new era where scope for government intervention is reduced, more and more research is needed to examine how far and how efficiently decentralization can be used as a strategy for rural development in developing countries like India. Right now planning commission is replaced by NITI Aayog (National Institute for Transforming India). NITI Aayog is also focuses more on 'bottom-up' approach to foster rural development in India. In this context, an attempt has made in this paper to bring out changing dimensions of rural management in India.

## Scope and Objectives:

Rural development in India has witnessed several changes over the years in its emphasis, approaches, strategies and programmes. It has assumed a new dimension and perspectives as a consequence. Rural development can be richer and more meaningful only through the participation of clientele of development. Just as implementation is the touchstone for planning, people's participation is the centre-piece in rural development. People's participation is one of the foremost pre-requisites of development process both from procedural and philosophical perspectives. For the development planners and administrators it is important to solicit the participation of different groups of rural people, to make the plans participatory.

In this context, an attempt has made in this paper to discuss changing dimensions of rural management in India. The area of this paper is restricted to Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka State. A special focus has made on role played by Non Governmental Organization, SKDRDP in rural development. The various objectives of this study are:

1. To give an overview of rural development strategies adopted in India.
2. To discuss the changing dimension of rural management in India.
3. To highlight the importance of participation in rural development.

## THE METHODOLOGY:-

Methodologically it is a stupendous task to evaluate the specific contributions of NGOs in rural development due to the social complexities in the micro level, and intervention of many institutions on the target groups in the rural area. Equally, it is difficult to assess the degree of collaboration between government and NGOs as it involves many invisible, non-quantifiable factors. However, in this research an attempt is made to explore the role of NGOs in rural development by using the social auditing technique. This study is based on primary and secondary source of information.

## CHANGING DIMENSIONS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA:

A variety of institutions and organizations are functioning simultaneously in the rural areas of India and carry forward their activities and yet one cannot make a claim that substantial achievements have been made to meet the demands of the people ( Palanithurai G., 2001). It is also true that all the organizations and institutions are performing their duties effectively to deliver goods to the people.

The existing institutional structure of rural development including central and state government departments, local administration units, financial institutions, and local levels self generating, self sustaining bodies coordinate in planning, implementing and monitoring rural development programmes. Yet, achieving the objective of alleviating poverty of rustic folk becomes problematic (Hari Mohan Mathur, 1986). Institutions and organizations are involved, money has been pumped into the society through schemes and

programmes and the success rate is not so high. Where is the lapse? Is it in the institutions or in the people or in the methodology of delivery mechanism or the content of the schemes and programmes? It agitates the minds of the scholars and administrators for the past two decades (Hari Mohan Mathur,1986). To find out answers to the above poised questions, an attempt is made here to investigate the resilience and vibrancy of institutional mechanism devised so far to delivery development goods to the rural sector.

At present, India is in the process of evolving new institutional arrangements to deal with different types of problems (Lewis A.B.,) Rural development is now experiencing the need of many problems solving institution (Dantwala M.L.,1973). In-order to reduce the burden; governments have started reinventing people's institutions or organizations to carry out activities at the grassroots. Sethi and Fellow activists feel that people working with the existing system shall have to attempt mobilization of the poor through politically neutral voluntary agencies (George C.T., 2001).

Although there are many decentralized institutions in different sectors in rural areas, they have a common goal viz- rural development and poverty alleviation but means of approaches are different. However, the institutions which come under non-formal and informal sector such as NGOs, self-help groups have more advantages of being near to the local target groups than the formal ones. Their approaches are incidentally, more demand driven closely matching the needs of the target group than the government institution which is by and large supply oriented with more target reaching consciousness (Singh Katar;1986).

The known processes of development interventions have become more complex with enhanced understanding of the development process itself. Though in the 1950's service delivery was the focus of development initiatives, by the 1960s development activists were taking about transfer of technology. By the 1970s it was recognized that technology transfer remained inadequate, unless backed with competence building. By the 1980s the initiatives concentrated on multiple or comprehensive sets of services, backing up technology transfer with training, credit and market linkages. By the 1990s it had been recognized that the development inputs to be sustainable in an eco-friendly manner, have to have much more than this. The ability of NGOs to deliver high quality development services has also been recognized by the state machinery. This has also led to fairly high expectations from this organizations (Webster, Neil., 2005). Several ministries and departments in the Central and State governments are actively seeking the views of NGOs in the formulation of policies and programmes. The complexities and ill-effects of the past development models call for a multi-dimensional, people-centered rural development to meet the diversity in poverty and poor and marginalized groups (Salamon, Lester and Anheier, Helmut., 1990). In this context an attempt has made in this paper to discuss the role played by SKDRDP in Dakshina Kannada district of Karnataka State.

## SHREE KSHETRA DHARMASTHALA RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (SKDRDP):

Shree Kshetra Dharmasthala is a famous Hindu religious shrine of South India. In the year 1982, on the occasion of the installation of 39 feet monolithic statue of Lord Bhahubali, Padma Bhushan, Dr.D.Veerendra Heggade, President of SKDRDP launched this programme aimed towards the upliftment of the rural poor. Over the years and with experience of rural development activities, SKDRDP invented, adopted new schemes and approaches to rural development. The activities promoted by SKDRDP discussed below-

### The Major Activities of SKDRDP:

A brief of the activities of SKDRDP during the 2012-13 year are presented as under:

1. **SKDRDP as a BC and BF of the Banks:** SKDRDP took an active part in implementing the Financial Inclusion plan of the Government of India by working as Banking Correspondent and Business Facilitator (BC and BF) in several districts of Karnataka.
2. **Promotion of Self Help Groups:** A total number of 67,000 SHGs were promoted during the year. As on 31st March 2013 a total of 2,35,350 SHGs were active. The total number of members associated with these SHGs was 24.83 lakhs.
3. **Financial performance of SHGs :** A total of Rs. 218.00 crores was saved by the SHGs during the year taking the total savings since inception to Rs.531.00 crores. During the period, the groups have availed a loan of Rs. 2,258.00 crores from various banks to meet their financial needs.
4. **Agricultural Development:** During the year 5.56 lakhs members took up various agricultural and allied activities involving horticulture, dairying, floriculture, animal husbandry, bee keeping etc.
5. **Self employment:** Around 1,10,000 members have taken up self employment in various fields like transport, business, service etc.
6. **Renewable Energy Program:** Motivated by the Ashden Award SKDRDP further intensified its efforts in promotion of renewable energy. During the year 7,600 gobar gas plants, 2,800 solar home lighting systems were installed by the members of SHGs.
7. **Sanitation and Hygiene:** Special efforts were made during the year to create awareness among the people on keeping their villages clean, disposing the wastes and civic sense in general. A total number of 70,000 sanitation units (toilets) were constructed during the year by SHG members.
8. **Housing:** A total number of 92,000 members were financially assisted under micro finance for house repair, new construction, extension and renovation, electrification of the houses etc.
9. **Sampoorna Suraksha Health Insurance Program:** Under this program a total number of 13 lakhs members have been enrolled during the year. There were 62,281 claims which have been settled to the extent of Rs. 36.44 crores.

10. **Shudda Ganga Project** : This is a unique project where the drinking water in remote rural villages are purified by removing the toxic fluoride content and hardness. Today about 10,000 families are taking two lakh liters of pure water from these plants every day.
11. **Jnana Vikas Women SHG**: Jnana Vikasa is a forum for women to develop their skills express their innate talents and empower themselves in the company of the fellow rural community.
12. **Human Resource Development -Trainings at the training center**: The SKDRDP has established three training institutes namely Centre for Rural Excellence, Belthangady, Mahila Jnanavikasa Training Institute, Hubli, National SHG Training Institute, Udupi from where various staff and stakeholders of SKDRDP are trained.
13. **Shri Dharmasthala Siri Gramodyoga Samsthe**: This is a producer organization registered under section 25 of the Indian companies act and promoted by SKDRDP. It is working in 295 villages having production centres run by SHG members.
14. **Insurance Programs**: SKDRDP is the corporate agent of life insurance Corporation for popularizing the Jeevan Madhura Life Insurance policies which is specially meant for poor people. During the year 2,74,000 new policies have been canvassed and around 95 % of the policies are renewed. Thus SKDRDP set a national record in popularizing insurance policies.
15. **National Pension Scheme (NPS)**: The **Pension Fund Regulatory Authority of India (PFRDA)** a central government agency for popularizing the **Swavalamban pension scheme** has appointed SKDRDP as the aggregator for the pension scheme. During the year SKDRDP sold the pension schemes to 1,30,000 members.
16. **Jana Jagruthi Program**: Jana Jagruthi forum a people's movement is working jointly with SKDRDP in prevention of alcoholic and drug abuse among the public. During the year 90 de addiction camps were conducted and treatment was given for 6,850 members.
17. **Niranthara monthly magazine**: SKDRDP publishes a in house monthly magazine entitled **Niranthara Pragathi** which gives out information to the readers on various empowerment issues including agriculture, livelihoods, women, children etc. This popular magazine as a circulation of a record 3,15,000 copies per month.

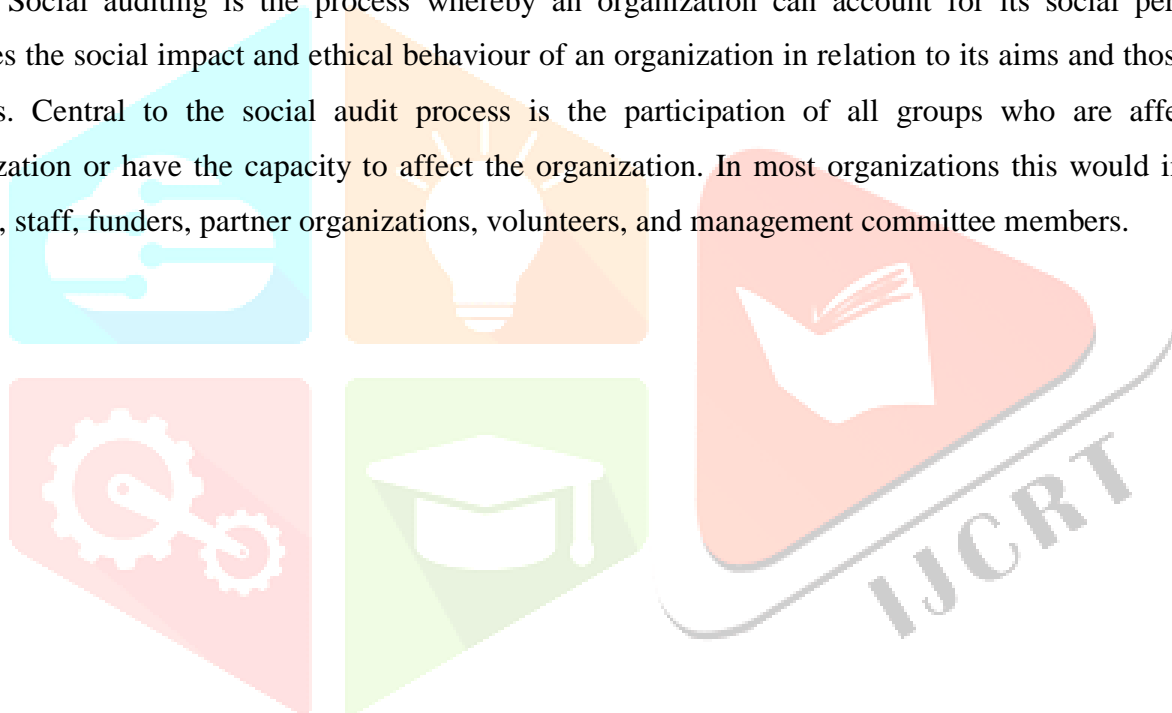
### **Impact Assessment of Development Initiatives:**

In this study an attempt is made to assess the performance by adopting social auditing technique. SKDRDP is an NGO more or less funded by Shree Kshetra Dharmasthala. The impact assessment of the SKDRDP is discussed below:

## SOCIAL AUDITING

Evaluation of a project is done by using social auditing techniques. Social auditing is a popular and sophisticated method of project evaluation. However, in this study an attempt is made to adopt modified social auditing method to evaluate the nature of participation in rural development by NGO. Important parameters such as opinions of the beneficiaries have been ranked and multiplied by the corresponding scores to construct the social auditing index. While constructing this index, opinion of the beneficiaries have been sought with an interval of six months in two periods of time (i.e., current period and previous period). In this context, various aspects like participatory aspect, inclusiveness aspect and transparency aspect has been taken into consideration.

Social auditing is the process whereby an organization can account for its social performance. It assesses the social impact and ethical behaviour of an organization in relation to its aims and those of its stakeholders. Central to the social audit process is the participation of all groups who are affected by the organization or have the capacity to affect the organization. In most organizations this would include client groups, staff, funders, partner organizations, volunteers, and management committee members.



**Table: Social Auditing Ranks- SKDRDP (Beneficiaries)**

S.No	Criteria	Response											
		Current Year					Previous period						
		5	4	3	2	1	Average	5	4	3	2	1	Average
<b>1</b>	<b>Participation aspects</b>												
a.	It promotes participation	185	40	25	-	-	4.64	175	40	35	-	-	4.56
b.	It encourages people to have access to Government facilities	166	39	45	-	-	4.48	152	49	53	-	-	4.46
c.	It adopts need based approach	175	44	31	-	-	4.57	169	34	47	-	-	4.48
d.	It allows people in decision making process	143	62	45	-	-	4.39	135	65	50	-	-	4.34
e.	The activities are based on democratic set-up	153	39	58			4.38	145	56	49	-	-	4.38
	<b>Total Average</b>	<b>164</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>41</b>			<b>22.46</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>47</b>			<b>22.22</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Inclusiveness aspects</b>												
a	They adopt bottom-up approach in their intervention	159	48	43	-	-	4.46	148	48	54	-	-	4.37
b	They work for and work with people	158	55	37	-	-	4.48	142	55	53	-	-	4.47
c	They enable the people to gain sense of belongingness in the programme	169	32	49	-	-	4.51	151	41	58	-	-	4.48
d	They respects the peoples' knowledge, attitude and cultural beliefs	161	58	31	-	-	4.52	152	52	46	-	-	4.42
e	People's involvement is the core of its strength	165	39	46	-	-	4.52	161	39	50	-	-	4.46
	<b>Total Average</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>42</b>			<b>22.49</b>	<b>151</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>52</b>			<b>22.2</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Transparency Aspect</b>												
a.	The activities reflect the objectives of religious institutions.	170	35	45	-	-	4.5	152	52	46	-	-	4.42
b.	The fund utilization by it is transparent	152	49	53	-	-	4.46	145	56	49	-	-	4.38
c.	Programmes are free from bias and prejudice	157	46	47			4.44	135	65	50	-	-	4.34
d.	The support given to marginalized section is adequate	125	65	60	-	-	4.26	116	71	63	-	-	4.21
e.	The activities planned by it is simple, easy to understand and adoptable	140	56	54	-	-	4.34	135	52	63	-	-	4.28
	<b>Total Average</b>	<b>149</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>51</b>			<b>22</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>54</b>			<b>21.63</b>

Source: Field Survey

Note: 5- Always, 4- Often, 3- Occasionally, 2- Rarely, 1- Never

The above mentioned table furnishes details regarding response of beneficiaries related to participatory, inclusiveness and transparency aspect. Participatory aspect comprises variables like participation particulars, encouragement done by it to utilize the government facilities, need based approach initiated, problems solving strategy, democratic set-up of the NGO etc; taken into consideration. Inclusiveness aspect is composed of variables like approach adopted by the NGO, their involvement with the target population, sense of belongingness, its considerations towards people's knowledge, attitude and cultural beliefs, etc. On the other hand, transparency aspect focuses on variables like rate of replication of objectives and activities of NGO, transparency in fund utilization, biased and prejudice aspects, support given to marginalized section, simplicity and adoptability of the programme etc.

With regard to the participatory aspect, opinion has been sought from the beneficiaries in current period and previous period. It is found that, 164(65.6%) respondents expressed that NGO is always emphasize and encourage people's participation, while 45(18.0%) respondents expressed often and 41(16.4%) opined occasionally NGO's promote participation in project implementation. On the other hand in previous period, 154(61.6%) expressed always, 49(19.6%) opined often and 47(18.8%) expressed occasionally NGO promote people's participation. In connection to inclusiveness aspect of NGO 162(64.8%) expressed their opinion that NGO always promotes inclusiveness aspect, 46(18.4%) opined often and remaining 42(16.8%) expressed occasionally. Whereas, in previous period, 151(60.4%) respondents expressed always, 47(18.8%) opined often and 52 expressed their view that occasionally NGO promotes inclusiveness aspect. Regarding transparency aspect, 149(59.6%) respondents opined that always, 50(20.0%) views that often, and remaining 51(20.4%) opined that occasionally NGO promote inclusiveness in the current period. In the context of previous period, 137(54.8%) respondents opined always, 59(23.6%) expressed often and remaining 54(21.6%) were of the opinion that NGO occasionally promotes transparency aspect.

From the above results it is evident that, SKDRDP is socially accepted, recognized by the beneficiaries due to its participation, inclusiveness and transparency in organizing its rural development programmes. However, it is strong in participatory aspect when comparing to inclusiveness and transparency aspect. One more thing can be observed in this analysis is that; there is marked improvement in all the aspect of NGO in current period over previous period of time. This indicates that, there is qualitative progress in NGO's programme implementation capacity and most of the beneficiaries have faith in the programme.



### Social Auditing Index:

Social auditing is a process oriented performance measurement system and principles such as participation, inclusiveness and transparency are central to its approach (Mahony Catherine, 1999). While constructing this index, aspects like participation, inclusiveness and transparency have been taken into consideration with the interval of six months in two periods of time. While constructing this index, responses of the beneficiaries have been converted into percentage and respective index has been worked out. An attempt has been made to assess organizational potentials and needs of capacity-building using qualitative assessment tool rather than statistical methods and qualitative indicators.

#### Social Auditing Index

S. No	SKDRDP	
	Current Period	Previous period
	<b>Response of Beneficiaries</b>	
1	<b>Participation</b>	89.72
		88.88
2	<b>Inclusiveness</b>	89.96
		88.8
3	<b>Transparency</b>	88
		86.52

Source: Field Survey

It is observed that SKDRDP has shown good performance in all the aspects in current period as well as in previous period. With regard to participation in SKDRDP, index is derived out of beneficiaries opinion in current period is 89.72 and in previous period it was 88.88. Regarding inclusiveness aspect of SKDRDP, response of the beneficiaries has been converted into index and in current period it is 89.96 and it was 88.8 in previous period. In addition to that, there is improvement in its performance in current period over previous period of time.

### Participatory Approach of SKDRDP:

It is evident from the above discussion that, the programmes envisioned by the project are participatory in nature. The stake holders, village better committees, school betterment committees play a vital role by raising a part of funds. Various government line departments, agricultural universities, experts, technicians contribute by providing the technical know-how. Need based community development activities were taken

up with the participation of the community. In fact, the catch word “Participatory progress” was practiced in a true sense at SKDRDP.

The Dharmasthala model of rural development aimed at comprehensive transformation of the living environment in rural area. It has adopted holistic approach to achieve its goal. The participatory and inclusiveness approach adopted by the SKDRDP is a motivating factor may be replicated while framing policies and programmes by the government.

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