



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA – A WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

In the quality of life of rural people is the important agenda of rural development programme. In India so many people living in rural areas, rural development programme is necessary aspect. Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. The basic objective of all rural development endeavours / programmes has been the welfare of the millions. In order to achieve this, planned attempts have been made to eliminate poverty, ignorance and inequality of opportunities. Rural development is a dynamic process, which is mainly concerned with the rural areas. These include agricultural growth, putting up of economic and social infrastructure, fair wages as also housing and house sites for the landless, village planning, public health, education and functional literacy, communication etc. The Community Development programme was launched during the first five-year plan period to reach as much as rural poor as possible through developmental activities. Drought Prone Areas in India have continued to suffer from chronic instability of weather, crop production and consequential economic burden, necessitating for an immediate need to evolve a strategy of development to mitigate these conditions. The food for works programme was started in the year 1977-78, as a non-plan scheme to augment the funds of the state Government for the maintenance of public work. The concept of the Minimum Needs programme (MNP) emerged and crystallized out of the experience of the previous plans that neither growth nor social consumption could be sustained much less accelerated without being mutually supportive. After independence, recognizing the importance of irrigation to boost up crop production, quite a good number of Major and Medium Irrigation Projects were taken up in the country. Many more were taken up in subsequent stages. The

NREP programme was launched in October 1980 and became a regular plan programme right from April, 1981. MGNREGA is one of the largest work guarantee programmes in the world. The primary objective of the scheme is to guarantee 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work.

Key Words: Rural Development, Programme, Panchayat, Central Government, Employment, Rural People.

Introduction

The term 'Rural Development' is of focal interest and is widely acclaimed in both the developed and the developing countries of the world. There is however no universally acceptable definition of rural development and the term is used in different ways and in vastly divergent contexts. As concept, it connotes over all development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities - village and cottage industries and crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities, and above all, the human resource in rural areas. As a phenomenon, it is the result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural, and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social well-being of a special group of people the rural poor. As discipline, it is multidisciplinary in nature representing an intersection of agricultural, social, behavioural, engineering and management sciences.

Importance of Rural Development:

Improvement in the quality of life of rural people is the important agenda of rural development programme. In India so many people living in rural areas, rural development programme is necessary aspect. Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. The basic objective of all rural development endeavours / programmes has been the welfare of the millions. In order to achieve this, planned attempts have been made to eliminate poverty, ignorance and inequality of opportunities. A wide spectrum of programmes has been undertaken so far, to alleviate rural poverty and ensure improved quality of life for the rural population especially those below the poverty line. In the initial phase of planned rural development, the concentration was on sectors of agriculture industry, communication, education and health. The Ministry of Rural Development places importance now on health, education, drinking water, housing and road so that the quality of life in rural areas improves and the fruit of economic reform are shared by all sections of the society. With time and experience, it is realized that accelerated and meaningful

development can be achieved only if people of the grass root are involved; people's participation has become the keyword in rural development programmes. The participation of the people is necessity to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development.

Scope and Importance of Rural Development:

Rural development is a dynamic process, which is mainly concerned with the rural areas. These include agricultural growth, putting up of economic and social infrastructure, fair wages as also housing and house sites for the landless, village planning, public health, education and functional literacy, communication etc. Rural development is a national necessity and has considerable importance in India because of the following reasons.

1. About three-fourth of India's population live in rural areas, thus rural development is needed to develop nation as whole.
2. Nearly half of the country's national income is derived from agriculture, which is major occupation of rural India.
3. Around seventy per cent of Indian population gets employment through agriculture.
4. Bunks of raw materials for industries come from agriculture and rural sector.
5. Increase in industrial population can be justified only in rural population's motivation and increasing the purchasing power to buy industrial goods.
6. Growing disparity between the urban elite and the rural poor can lead to political instability. The main objective of the rural development programme is to raise the economic and social level of the rural people.

Innovative Ideas for Rural Development in India:

1. **Utilization of Local Resources:** For example: If there are water resources like rivers and tanks near by the villages, in summer itself, arrangements must be made to tap this resource by removing slit in the tanks, constructing new reservoirs, bunds, canals and simultaneously strengthening the existing ones, so that the water cannot go waste. Similarly, if there are any mines like iron, coal and granites, they should be excavated so that local population can be provided employment.

2. **Establishment of Rural Industries:** All the village industries come under the following broad categories:
 - a). **Agro Based Industries:** Sugar industries, Jaggery, Oil processing from oil seeds, Pickles, Fruit juice, Spices, Dairy products etc.
 - b). **Forest Based Industries:** Wood products, Bamboo products, Honey, Coir industry, making eating plates from leaves.
 - c). **Mineral based industry:** Stone crushing, Cement industries, red oxide making, wall coating powders etc.
 - d). **Textile Industry:** Spinning, Weaving, Colouring and Bleaching.
 - e). **Engineering and Services:** Tractors and Pump set repairs etc. Small and medium sized industries to produce agricultural machinery, equipment for usage in rural areas etc.
 - f). **Handicrafts:** These include making of wooden or bamboo handicrafts that are local to that area, traditional decorative products, toys and all other forms of handicrafts typical to the region.
4. **Services:** There are a wide range of services including mobile repair, agriculture machinery servicing, etc which are being undertaken under this category.
5. **Startups:** They are entrepreneurial ventures, which are newly emerged businesses aims to meet marketplace need, want or problem by developing a viable business model around products, services, processes or platforms. For example: Agriculture, Supply Chain, Trading in Agricultural produce, Processing Agricultural produces, Fisheries - Both Culture and Trading, Rural Micro Finance, Rural Health - Rural Primary Health Cared and Rural Education etc.
6. **Computer & Internet Services:** Providing Computer Training and Repairing Services, Internet based business-like E-Commerce, Rail & Bus Ticket booking, Digital Marketing Agency – Examples: Social Media Marketing, Email Marketing etc.
7. **Encourage Rural Entrepreneurship:** They may be of the following types: a). Individual Entrepreneurship - It is basically single ownership of the enterprise. b). Group Entrepreneurship - It mainly covers partnership, private limited company and public limited company. c). Cluster Formation Entrepreneurship - It covers NGOs, VOs, CBOs, SHGs and even networking of these groups. These also cover formal and non-formal association of a group of individuals on the basis of caste, occupation,

income, etc. d). Cooperative Entrepreneurship - It is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily for a common objective.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES: AN OVER VIEW

Community Development Programme

The Community Development programme was launched during the first five-year plan period (on 2nd October, 1952) with a view to make systematic approach to reach as much as rural poor as possible through developmental activities more particularly in the field of Agriculture, animal husbandry, social education, public health, programme for women, children and youth etc. This was a unique step taken which was viewed as unparallel in the history on any developing country. The basic objective of the monument was to secure the full development of material and human resources of rural areas on an area basic and to develop local leadership and self-governing institutions. The central idea was to raise the local community to higher levels of living with the active participation and initiative of the people. This pattern was revised from first April, 1958 when National Extension Service Blocks were set up with lesser area and population coverage Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs)

Village Panchayats have been an age-old institution in India Deriving power from the customary laws and local conditions. In the year 1957, Blatant Ray Mehta Committee recommended for administrative decentralization of the process of developmental programmes, its implementation and control through elected bodies. Thereafter, on the basis of the report of the Study team, Panchayati Raj System was introduced with a three-tier system or approach, such as Zilla Parishad at the district level, Panchayat Samiti at the Block level and Garm Panchayat at the village level. The system was first introduced in Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh in 1959. Out of 21 states, namely, Andhra 30 Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Hibachi Pradesh, Maharashtra, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Two-tier system namely Panchayat Samiti at Block level and Gram Panchayat at village level is in force in Assam, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa. Only Gram Panchayat system at village level is in practice in the states of Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, Manipur and Tripura.

INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL DISTRICT PROGRAMME (IADP) AND INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL AREA PROGRAMME (IAAP)

In the year 1960, on the basis of the report of the Ford Foundation Team known as “India’s Food Crisis and Steps to Meet it”, a significant feature took place and a new programme known as “Intensive Agricultural District Programme” based on the principles of concentration and better management of resources and efforts in potential and responsive area with assured water supply was introduced. It was called a package programme. The programme was “intensive” in the sense that all aspects of improvement essential for a rapid increase in farm production and income were to be accrued simultaneously in the selected districts in coordinated and integrated manner. The concept was based on an intensive impact approach at the district level. It was to be organized as a single operation programme directed from the District Officer under the guidance of agriculturally trained District Officer.

Whole Village Development Programme (WVDP)

On the recommendations of the National Commission on Agriculture for improvement and modernization of Indian Agriculture with a view to promote welfare of the people, and urgency of increasing the productive capabilities in rural areas and promoting the welfare and prosperity of the masses through equitable distribution of the benefits of development, the “Whole Village Development Programme” took birth during the Fifth Five Year Plan Period. Through the scheme, it was stipulated to explore the possibilities of adopting a whole village programme to develop the potentials of a village in particular and adjoining village in general. The aim of the project was: Consolidation of holdings; Overall land development plan on maximizing irrigation potentials subject to maximum limit of investment based on the need to repay investment credit by extra production; Change in Cropping pattern for the best use of irrigation and for ensuring the best control of irrigation and drainage.

Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP)

Drought Prone Areas in India have continued to suffer from chronic instability of weather, crop production and consequential economic burden, necessitating for an immediate need to evolve a strategy of development to mitigate these conditions. The geographical side of such areas differs from State to State. For instance, in Rajasthan the drought prone areas spread over 56% of geographical area covering 33% of the population. More or less prominently a similar state of affairs prevails in states like Bihar, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh. These areas constitute a major factor contributing to

regional imbalance in the country since overall productivity has been abysmally low. Due to acute water scarcity and moisture stress, these areas remain a continuing source of strain on the financial resources of the nation given in shape of relief measures. Hence, a special development programme designed for Drought Prone Area was introduced in 1970-71.

Cash Programme for Rural Development

This programme was sponsored by Central Government and implemented through the agency of State Government in April, 1971 for a period of 3 years. The main objective of the Scheme was: (a) Direct generation of employment for 1000 persons, on an average, continuously over a working season of 10 months in a year in all rural districts of the country through the execution of projects which were essentially labor intensive; (b) The production of assets of works of a tangible nature in consonance with local development plans so that all round development of the district becomes possible. The labor-intensive works under the scheme mainly relate to land development and reclamation, conservation of roads, drainage, minor irrigation projects, water conservation, soil conservation, afforestation and special repairs of these community assets. The project taken up under the scheme were of most absorptive in nature as such could perennial potentialities of employment for soon as they were completed, the labour force was thrown out of employment.

Food for Works Programme (FFW)

The food for works programme was started in the year 1977-78, as a non-plan scheme to augment the funds of the state Government for the maintenance of public work. The scheme was designed to offer gainful employment to the rural poor and improve their nutritional status and income level through development of infrastructure and creation of community assets by utilizing surplus food stocks. The category works quality for assistance under the scheme included irrigation works, soil and water conservation, afforestation by Forest Department, construction of village roads, construction of field channels, construction of school buildings and community centres. This programme was merged with National Rural Employment programme in the year 1980-81.

Small Farmers, Marginal Farmer and Agricultural Labourer's Development Agency

The creation of these two Agencies lies in the Report of the All-India Rural Credit Review committee, which was constituted in 1966 and submitted its report in 1969. The committee pointed out that there was a significant section of cultivators whose land holdings were small and who were unable to benefit from the new strategy because of poor resource base. To put it in the words of the committee "It is new

generally agreed that the small farmers have not benefited in proportion either to their numbers or their needs from the various programmes or rural development, which have been under implementation during the three plans. This is also broadly true in regard to availability of traditional credit for agricultural". The committee further opined that "If the fruits of development continued to be denied to large section of the rural community, while prosperity accrues to some, the resulting tensions, social and economic, may not only upset the process of orderly and peaceful change in the rural economy but may even frustrate the peaceful national effort, to step up agriculture production". The committee was also of the view that if these farmers were assured of adequate resources they could switch over the stage of subsistence agriculture to commercial agricultural. The committee, therefore, recommended the establishment of countrywide network of pilot projects in the form of Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agency (MEAL).

Minimum Needs Programme (MNP)

The concept of the Minimum Needs programme (MNP) emerged and crystallized out of the experience of the previous plans that neither growth nor social consumption could be sustained much less accelerated without being mutually supportive. The programme was essentially directed towards investment in human resources development. The provision of free or subsidized services through public agencies is below poverty line, and thereby improves the productive efficiency of both the rural and urban workers. Integration of social consumption along with economic development has been considered necessary to accelerate growth and ensure achievement of plan objectives.

Command Area Development (CAD)

After independence, recognizing the importance of irrigation to boost up crop production, quite a good number of Major and Medium Irrigation Projects were taken up in the country. Many more were taken up in subsequent stages. These projects were considered and sanctioned in the manner of interdependence projects with no provision for Command Area Development. The estimates of the projects in most cases included only the cost of the projects and construction of watercourses. The irrigation Department did not feel responsible for Common Area Development. As such, the utilization of created irrigation potentials was of traditional nature. The urgency and necessity to boost agricultural production create additional employment opportunities and boost up level of income in the rural areas drew the attention of the policy makers for rapid command area development. In the Third Five Year Plan, certain measures necessary for securing speedy

benefits from irrigation projects were initiated and in the Fourth and Fifth Five Year Plan periods, some special programmes of command area development were taken up.

National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)

The NREP programme was launched in October 1980 and became a regular plan programme right from April, 1981. The programme replaced the earlier programme of Food for Works. In fact, Food for Works programme was renamed as National rural Employment programme. The problem of unemployment in the rural areas is mainly seasonal. However, the very dimension of the problem of unemployment calls for a multi-pronged strategy, which aims, on the one hand on resources development and, on the other, on supplementing the existing employment opportunities available to the rural poor, particularly during the lean periods of the year. Since programmes like SFDA, DPAP, DDP, CADP, TRYSEM aimed at resources development of the needy individuals on area basis, a beginning was made in providing supplementary employment opportunities in the rural areas through the Food Works Programme.

Million Wells Scheme (MWS)

In our country, the land holdings being small and the large irrigation projects being expensive, and small irrigation schemes being more effective as experimented in China and elsewhere, the MWS was introduced in the 1988. The objective was to lift the small and the marginal farmers through the provision of assured but reliable source of irrigation. During 1988, this, the scheme was started as a part of NREP and aimed at installing dug wells for the benefits of the small and the marginal farmers belonging to the scheduled Cast and scheduled Tribe categories free of cost. The target was to construct one million of such open irrigation wells within two years. But in the very next year, NREP was merged with Jawahar Rajgar Yojna(JRY) and focus on MWS became dim in the light of a major shift in Government policy towards the Panchayati RAj bodies and making wage employment programmes to reach each and every village in the country. In the year 1989, the MWS become a sub-scheme of JRY, but no specific funds were allotted for this purpose. Realizing the importance of the scheme in eradication of rural poverty, it was restored in the year 1990 when 20 per cent of the JRY funds were specifically ear-marked for MWS.

Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYESM)

One of the major objectives of the Sixth Five-year Plan was to promote employment opportunities to eradicate poverty. As a part of the strategy promoting self-employment, Central Government launched a scheme from 15th august, 1979 named as the National Scheme for Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TYSEM) The objective was to provide technical skill to the rural youth with a view to make them capable of taking of self-employment in the field of Agriculture, industries and household/ professional trades etc., basing on the local need, capabilities and skill of the rural youth.

Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)

During the year 1989-90 two employment generating programmes viz. National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) were merged into a single programme known as Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) and since then it is in operation as a centrally sponsored programme. The expenditure under the programme is shared by the Centre and the state on 80:20 basis. Under the programme, wage employment is provided to the unemployed in the rural areas particularly in public works that directly benefits the village community.

Indira Awas Yojana

This was a component Programme under Jawahar Rozgar Yojana introduced in the year 1985-86. The objective of the programme was to provide housing facilities or house sites to homeless Scheduled Cast and the Scheduled Tribes and the released bonded laborers in rural areas. The scheme stipulated construction of low-cost houses with the provision of some of the basic facilities. The other objective was to generate employment opportunities for the homeless family members at the time of construction of such low-cost houses.

Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)

The scheme was introduced from August, 1983 with the objective: (a) improvement and expansion of employment opportunities for the rural landless laborers with a view to provide them the guarantee of employment to at least one member from each of the landless labour households for a period up to 100 days in a year; and (b) creation of durable assets for strengthening the rural infrastructure so as to meet the growing requirement of the rural people.

Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

On the basis of the experience gained during the first three year of the Sixth Five Year Plan, when it noticed that the benefits of IRDP failed to trickle down adequately to promote welfare of women and children, a new scheme known as Development of women children on Rural Areas (DWCRA) was introduced in September, 1982, in 60 Blocks on a pilot basis , with stipulation to enhance the number in subsequent years and during the Seventh Five Year Plan. Now DWCRA covers the entire country. The main objective of this programme provides support services to rural women in order enable them to take up income generating pursuits keeping the view the local requirements and a availability of local raw materials.

Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS)

The Employment Assurance Scheme was launched as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the cost sharing pattern of 80:20 between the Centre and the State with effect from second October, 1993. The noble purpose was to generating employment opportunities for the rural poor on an assured basis in 143 blocks of 16 districts of the State. However, subsequently it has been extended to 250 blocks of 27 districts. The main objective of the scheme is to provide wage employment to the agricultural laborer's and other workers who are in need of wage employment to the agricultural laborer's and other workers who are in need of wage employment especially during the lean agricultural season. Under this scheme, assured employment of about 100 days to be provided to those persons who are above 18 years and below 60 years of age and seeking employment during the lean season.

Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission

SPMRM is a scheme launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) in 2016 to deliver integrated project-based infrastructure in the rural areas, which will also include development of economic activities and skill development. Bridging the rural-urban divide-viz: economic, technological and those related to facilities and services. There are 2 categories of clusters: Non-Tribal and Tribal. Rurban clusters are identified across the country's rural areas showing increasing signs of urbanization - i.e. increase in population density, high levels of non-farm employment, presence of growing economic activities and other socioeconomic parameters. For the purposes of SPMRM, Rurban areas refer to a cluster of 15-20 villages having about 30 to 40 lakh population. The clusters will be geographically contiguous Gram Panchayats with a population of about 25000 to 50000 in plain and coastal areas and a population of 5000 to 15000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas.

Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana

According to the Ministry of Rural Development, only 252 Members of Parliament (MPs) have adopted gram panchayats under phase-4 of Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY). At present, the total strength of both Houses is about 790 which includes elected as well as nominated members. Under the Yojana, Members of Parliament (MPs) are responsible for developing the socio-economic and physical infrastructure of three villages each by 2019, and a total of eight villages each by 2024. The first Adarsh Gram (Model Village) was to be developed by 2016, and two more by 2019. From 2019 to 2024, five more Adarsh Grams must be developed by each MP, one each year. This implies that a total of 6,433 Adarsh Grams, of the 2,65,000 gram panchayats, will be created by 2024.

Mission Antyodaya:

In India, 8.88 crore households are found to be deprived and poor households as per Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) of 2011 from the perspective of multi-dimensional deprivations such as shelterlessness, landlessness, households headed by single women, SC/ST household or disabled member in the family. These households require targeted interventions under government's various schemes and programmes in areas such as wage creation, skill generation, social security, education, health, nutrition and livelihood creation. Already, financial resources to the tune of about Rupees four lakh crore are allocated annually to impact lives of rural poor by several government ministries/ departments including Ministry of Rural Development in schemes spanning rural wages, rural roads, skill development, health, education, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, environment, etc. In this context, 'Mission Antyodaya' seeks to converge government interventions with Gram Panchayats as the basic unit for planning by following a saturation approach by pooling resources - human and financial - to ensure sustainable livelihoods. It is a State - led initiative for rural transformation to make a real difference based on measurable outcomes to the lives of 1,00,00,000 households in 5,000 rural clusters or 50,000 Gram Panchayats in 1,000 days.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme:

MGNREGA is one of the largest work guarantee programmes in the world. The primary objective of the scheme is to guarantee 100 days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work. Legal Right to Work: Unlike earlier employment guarantee schemes, the act aims at addressing the causes of chronic poverty through a rights-based framework. The most important part of MGNREGA's design is its legally-backed guarantee for any

rural adult to get work within 15 days of demanding it, failing which an 'unemployment allowance' must be given. However, the allocation amounts to 0.47% of the GDP continues to be much lower than the World Bank recommendations of 1.7% of GDP for the optimal functioning of the programme. Due to lack of funds, state governments find it difficult to meet the demand for employment under MGNREGA.

Conclusion:

Apart from strengthening the agricultural sector, rural entrepreneurship plays a vital role in the economic development of India, particularly in the rural economy. It helps in generating employment opportunities in the rural areas with low capital, raising the real income of the people, contributing to the development of agriculture by reducing disguised unemployment, under employment, unemployment, poverty, migration and economic disparity. Government should go for appraisal of various rural development schemes and programmes in order to uplift rural areas. Rural entrepreneurship finds it difficult to take off is due to lack of capital accumulation, risk taking and innovation. The rural development programs should combine infrastructure development, education, health services, investment in agriculture and the promotion of rural non-farm activities in which women and rural population can engage themselves. Rural development and rural entrepreneurship are the way of converting developing country into developed nation. Promotion of rural entrepreneurship is extremely important in the context of producing gainful employment and reducing the widening disparities between the rural and urban. Monitoring rural development programmes by supplying right information at the right time, providing timely and adequate credit and continuous motivation of bankers, Panchayat union leaders and voluntary service organizations will lead to the development of rural entrepreneurship and in turn rural development.

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