

Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation from India's North East Perspective

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Abstract: The objectives of development include sustained increase in per capita outputs and incomes, expansion of productive employment and greater equality in the distribution of the benefits of growth. Rural Development over the years has emerged as a strategy designed to improve the economic, social and cultural life of a specific group of people living in the rural areas. The objectives of rural development are multi-dimensional as well as multi-directional. It aims at increased employment, higher productivity, higher income as well as minimum acceptable levels of food, clothing, shelter, education, health and building up of a sound value system which can alleviate poverty from the society. On the other hand poverty is a socio-economic phenomenon that is intimately associated with inequality. It deprives a segment of society of bare necessities of life- food, clothing, housing, education and health. Poverty is more of social marginalization of an individual, household or group in the community/society rather than inadequacy of income to fulfill the basic needs. Indeed, inadequate income is therefore, one of the factors of marginalization but not the sole factor. The goal of poverty alleviation programme should aim merely increasing the income level of individual, household or group but mainstreaming marginalized in the development process of the country. So this paper is an attempt to study rural development and poverty alleviation from India's north-east perspective.

Keywords: Rural, Development, Poverty, Plans, Programmes etc.

Introduction

The meaning of rural development has been the subject of much debate and little agreement. The definition of rural development varies from one point of view to the other. The definition of rural development may be centered on income criterion in which the concept is made to address the problem of rural poverty or it may be defined in sociological concept in which the rural poor represents a reservoir of untapped talent a target group that should be given the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of development through improved education, health and nutrition. This is one of the most important definitions of rural development as the provision of social infrastructures could provide the catalyst that would transform the rural areas. Rural development in general is used to denote the actions and initiatives taken to improve the standard of living in non-urban neighborhoods, countryside, and remote villages. These communities can be exemplified with a low ratio of inhabitants to open space. Agricultural activities may be prominent in this case whereas economic activities would relate to the primary sector, production of foodstuffs and raw materials. The objectives of development include sustained increase in per capita outputs and incomes, expansion of productive employment and greater equality in the distribution of the benefits of growth. Rural Development over the years has emerged as a strategy designed to improve the economic, social and cultural life of a specific group of people living in the rural areas. The objectives of rural development are multi-dimensional as well as multi-directional. It aims at increased employment, higher productivity, higher income as well as minimum acceptable levels of food, clothing, shelter, education, health and building up of a sound value system which can alleviate poverty from the society

On the other hand poverty is a social-economic phenomenon in which a section of society is unable to fulfill even its basic necessities of life. The minimum needs are food, clothing, housing, education and other basic minimum human needs. Humanity faces pains and miseries if it does not attain a subsistence level of such needs. It is generally agreed in this country that only they who fail to reach a certain minimum consumption standard should be regarded as poor. "No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable" (Adam Smith, 1776). Poverty is about denial of opportunities and fulfillment of human potential. Poverty and inequality are closely related, and inequality appears to have been on the rise worldwide in recent decades at both national and international levels. More than 80 percent of the world's population lives in countries where income differentials are widening. The poorest 40 percent of the world's population account for only 5 percent of global income. On the other hand, their next 20 percent account for 75 percent of world income, according to the United Nations Development Programme. Poverty is the principal cause of hunger and undernourishment. According to most recent estimates of the Food & Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO, 2009), the number of hungry people worldwide has reached 963 million, or roughly 15 percent of the estimated world population. Poverty essentially consists of two elements, narrowly defined "income" poverty and a broader concept of "human" poverty. Income poverty is defined as the lack of necessities for minimum material wellbeing determined by the national poverty line. Human poverty means the denial of choices and opportunities for a tolerable life in all economic and social aspects recognising the problem, the Millennium Development Goals of the United Nations also contain a commitment to have the proportion of the world's population living in extreme poverty by 2015. Poverty is widespread in India, with the nation estimated to have a third of the world's poor. The World Bank (2005) estimated that 41.6 percent of the total Indian population lived under the international poverty line of US \$1.25 per day (PPP), reduced from 60 percent in 1981. Poverty eradication has been one of the major objectives of planned development in India. Major determinants of poverty are lack of income and purchasing power attributable to lack of productive employment and considerable underemployment, inadequacy of infrastructure, affecting the quality of life and employability, etc.

Objectives of the study

The main objectives of the paper are:

1. To understand the concept of rural development.
2. To understand north-east India
3. To identify the factors contributing to poverty
4. To review of the poverty alleviation policy initiatives in North- East India.
5. To suggest some strategies for rural development in North- East India.

Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, the paper is divided into four parts- theoretical concept, factors contributing poverty, policy initiatives for poverty alleviation and strategies to be adopted for rural development and poverty alleviation.

Methodology

Descriptive and analytical methods have been used for the purpose of the study. Materials and data have been collected from the secondary sources. Statistical Reports have also been consulted. Keeping in mind the objectives of the study, every possible effort have been made to make the study meaningful and significant.

India's North-East

Regional Peculiarities

Eight political units of the union of India namely; Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura constitute North East India. They together commonly known as North eastern Region (NER). The hallmark of the eight political units is the diversity on account of terrain, climate, ethnicity, culture, institution, land system, language, food habits, and dresses and so on. The regional identity of eight states as NER is a concept based on extreme intra-regional diversity.

Physiographic Profile

The total area of NER is 2.62 lakh sq. km (7.98 % of India's total). Divided into discrete plains encompassed within hills (>70%). Hills are generally rugged and vast areas are inaccessible. Four physiographic divisions: 1. Active Flood Plains, 2. Flood-Free Plains and Valleys, 3. Low Hill Areas (100 to 1000 m amsl) and 4. High Hill Areas (>1000 m amsl). Climate is characterized by heavy precipitation (226mm to 602mm) during the four monsoon months (June to September). Located in the threshold of sub-tropics and has six agro- climatic zones.

Socio-cultural Profile

North-east is the home of over 140 major tribes out of 573 in the country besides non tribal with diverse ethnic origin and cultural diversity (2001 Census). The ST population (2001 Census) is 12.41% of India's ST total. It is 26.93% of NER's total population and is dominant in Arunachal Pradesh (64.22%), Meghalaya (85.94%), Mizoram (94.46%) and Nagaland (89.15%). The group is quite large also in Manipur (34.20%), Tripura (31.05%), Sikkim (20.60%) and Assam (12.41%). SC population is 1.49% of India's total. It is 6.40% of NER's total population. Maximum concentration is in Tripura (17.37%) followed by Assam (6.85%) and Sikkim (5.02%). The dominant religion group is Hindu (57.27%), followed by Muslim (22.82%), Christian (16.12%), others (2.28%), Buddhist (1.35%) and Sikhs (0.08%) and Jain (0.08%).

Local Governance System

The modern and traditional system of governance co-exists in the region. The age old traditional but unrecognized local bodies exist and functions (ex. *Kebang* among the Adis in Arunachal Pradesh, *Mei* among the Karbis of Assam, *Khullakpa* among the Kaboi in Manipur, *Durbar Shong* among the Khasis and Jaintias in Meghalaya etc.). PRI functions in Arunachal Pradesh (GP- 1747; PS- 150 and ZP -15) and Sikkim (GP- 159 and ZP -4) as on April, 2005. Both PRIs and Autonomous Council (AC) function in Assam (GP- 2489; PS- 203 and ZP -20 and AC- 5); Tripura (GP- 537; PS- 23 and ZP -4 TTAADC -1) in Manipur (GP- 166 and ZP -4 and AC- 4); as on April, 2005. Autonomous Council functions in entire Meghalaya (AC-3). In Mizoram, both Village Council (702) and AC (3) function while in Nagaland only Village Council (1029); as on April, 2005. The PRIs acts as development agent.

(GP-Gram Panchayat, PS-Panchayat Samiti, ZP-Zila Parishad, TTAADC-The Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council)

Land tenure system

Two broad types of land tenure systems operate in the region: (i) Revenue administration under government operates in the plains and valleys of Assam, Tripura, Manipur and in the hilly state of Sikkim and (ii) Customary land tenure system under Village level authority operates in the hilly states of Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland and in the hilly parts of Assam, Manipur and Tripura.

Demographic profile

Total population is 388.58 lakh and is 3.79% of India's total (2001 Census). Within region, Assam has 266.56 lakh (68.60%) followed by Tripura (8.23%), Meghalaya (5.97%), Manipur (5.58%), Nagaland (5.12%), Arunachal Pradesh (2.83%), Mizoram (2.29%) and Sikkim only 5.51 lakh (1.39%). The projected population of the region stands at 423.01 lakh in 2006, 429.35 lakh in 2007 and will be 435.63 lakh in 2008 according to Census of India estimate. Rural Population is 327.71 lakh and accounts 84.34% as against all India percentage of 72.20. Mizoram is highly urbanized (49.63%) followed by Manipur (26.28%) and Sikkim is at the bottom (11.07%) The population density is 149

per sq. km as against 324 at all India level. The highest is in Assam (340) followed by Tripura (304). All the hill states have dispersed population with lowest density in Arunachal Pradesh (13). Decadal growth rate (1991-2001) is 21.61 % as against 21.54% at all India level. Within NER, growth rate is highest in Nagaland (64.53%) followed by Sikkim (32.98%), Meghalaya (29.94%), Mizoram (29.18%) and Arunachal Pradesh (26.21%), Growth rate is lower than all India level in Assam (18.92%) and Tripura (16.03%). Sex ratio (2001 Census) is higher (937) as against all India level (933). It is highest in Manipur (978) followed by Meghalaya (975), Tripura (950), Mizoram (938) and lower than all India average in Assam (932), Nagaland (909), Arunachal Pradesh (901) with lowest in Sikkim (875). The potential work force (15-59 years) constitutes 56.97% as against all India totals of 56.93%. It is highest in Manipur (59.45%) followed by Sikkim (59.34%), Mizoram (59.09%) Tripura (58.96%), Nagaland (58.62%) and lower than all India level in Assam (56.63%), Arunachal Pradesh (55.02%) and Meghalaya (52.90%). Literacy rate is marginally higher (65.83%) compared to all India level (64.80%). It is highest in Mizoram (88.80%) followed by Tripura (73.20%), Manipur (70.50%), Sikkim (68.80%) and Nagaland (66.60%). The rate is below all India average in Assam (63.30%), Meghalaya (62.60%) with lowest in Arunachal Pradesh (54.30%). Female literacy is higher in all the states (56.03% in Assam to 86.13% in Mizoram) as against all India level (54.16%) except in Arunachal Pradesh (44.24%).

Resources Profile

Forest (2004-05) is 56.93% of reporting area as against 22.83% at all India level (2004-05). The percentage area is high in all states with highest in Arunachal Pradesh (93.75%) followed by Manipur (86.10%), Mizoram (76.79%), Tripura (57.78%), Nagaland (54.48%), Meghalaya (42.29%), Sikkim (39.35%) and Assam (24.62%). Agricultural land including fallow (2004-05) is 22.20% as against 54.47% at all India level. It is much lower in all NER states with highest in Assam (37.43%) followed by Nagaland (29.45%), Tripura (26.86%), Sikkim (21.72%), Nagaland (19.15%), Mizoram (15.76%), and Manipur (12.14%) and lowest in Arunachal Pradesh (4.40%). The mineral reserve (2000-01) include coal – 327.26 million MT, limestone – 181.28 million MT, clay – 0.59 million MT and iron ore - 3.61 million MT among the important. Oil and gas (2004-05) reserve is 2323 million MT. Annual production of crude petroleum is 4.786 million MT which accounts 14.08% of India's total. Gas is 2786 million CM which accounts 8.7% of India's total. Tea production (2004-05) is 4.47 lakh MT and 49.78% of India's total (8.98 lakh MT) which is done in 2.86 lakh hectares with an average yield of 1557 kg per hectare. NER is the largest bamboo reserve of India with about 89 species out of 126 in India under 16 genera having shelter here.

Economic Profile

Agriculture is the dominant employment provider (2001 Census) in the region. Cultivators (41.61%) and agricultural labour (13.07%) together constitute the majority of the workforce. The corresponding categories comprising 31.65 % and 26.55% at all India level are the position opposite to NER. The cultivators in percentage is highest in Nagaland (64.74%) followed by Arunachal Pradesh (57.84%), Mizoram (54.87%), Sikkim (49.9%), Meghalaya (40.14%), Manipur (40.17%) and Assam (39.11%). It is lower than all India level only in Tripura (21.07%). Agricultural labour is 13.07% in the region and is maximum in Tripura (23.81%) followed by Meghalaya (17.70%), Assam (13.25%), Manipur (12.02%), Sikkim (6.46%), Mizoram (5.73%), Arunachal Pradesh (3.90%) and lowest in Nagaland (3.64%). The regions' per capita income at current price was lower than the country average by 31% in 2004-05. The per capita income will have to grow at 10.5% to reach all India level by 2020 (NER Vision 2020).

What is Rural?

In general, a rural area or countryside is a geographic area that is located outside towns and cities. The Health Resources and Services Administration of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services defines the word "rural" as encompassing "...all population, housing, and territory not included within an urban area. Whatever is not urban is considered rural." Typical rural areas have a low population density and small settlements. Agricultural areas are commonly rural, as are other types of areas such as forests. Different countries have varying definitions of "rural" for statistical and administrative purposes.

Rural in Indian Context

Rural areas are also known as the 'countryside' or a 'village' in India. It has a very low population density. In rural areas, agriculture is the chief source of livelihood along with fishing, cottage industries, pottery etc. The quest to discover the real rural India still continues in great earnest. Almost every economic agency today has a definition of rural India. Here are a few definitions: According to the Planning Commission, a town with a maximum population of 15,000 is considered rural in nature. In these areas the panchayat makes all the decisions. There are five persons in the panchayat. The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) defines 'rural' as follows:

An area with a population density of up to 400 per square kilometer,

Villages with clear surveyed boundaries but no municipal board,

A minimum of 75% of male working population involved in agriculture and allied activities.

RBI defines rural areas as those areas with a population of less than 49,000 (tier -3 to tier-6 cities). It is generally said that the rural areas house up to 70% of India's population. Rural India contributes a large chunk to India's GDP by way of agriculture, self-employment, services, construction etc. As per a strict measure used by the National Sample Survey in its 63rd round, called monthly per capita expenditure, rural expenditure accounts for 55% of total national monthly expenditure. The rural population currently accounts for one-third of the total Indian FMCG sales.

Need of Rural Development

For centuries, the village socio-economic fabric has undergone many changes. Besides, over 31 core of rural people do not have adequate income, employment opportunities, fall short of demand, coupled with illiteracy, ignorance, land under cultivation is not only diminishing but also gets further fragmented, ecology degraded, infrastructural facilities do not match with the rural population. In addition, rural population is unorganized. To lift the people from these moorings, integrated rural development is the only answer. Though man cannot overcome all the limitations his environment imposes upon him, he can always attempt to modify it to suit his convenience. In this matter of

gradual adaptation, man has brought about many changes. In this direction, rural development is the core of development and is a continuous process.

Characteristics of Rural Poverty

Poverty in the rural India is characterized as:

1. Increasing landlessness and no alternative provided to earn meager livelihood.
2. Fragmented division of land and size of land holding has gone up to an alarming level.
3. Per head land has decreased from 0.5 hectare in 1951 to 0.12 hectare by the end of the century.
4. Local infrastructure both at the regional and village level is not sufficient to start any other economic activity.
5. Lack of secure housing in terms of many natural disasters.
6. Poor location in terms of basic amenities and facilities.
7. Poor availability of health facilities, basic education, transportation and food security.
8. Poor employment opportunities.
9. No freedom from violence and intimidation on the basis of social identity based on caste, community and religion.

The main issues of rural development are rising poverty, growing population, inadequate infrastructure, negation of basic amenities, ill-health, fragmentation of land, illiteracy, ignorance, deep-rooted apathy, debased value systems, under employment, rampant unemployment, lack of direction and motivation, social pressures and compulsions, social evils, destruction of eco-system, lack of awareness, lack of organized efforts etc.

Dimensions of Rural Development

Few dimensions of rural development may be pointed out directly helps in poverty reduction in the rural areas are:

1. **Human Development:** The basis of all rural development is people centric. The human dimensions include educational levels, health, cultural identity and their social structure. Human factors are equally important in the urban areas and its impact in different aspects of rural masses.
2. **Natural Resources and Environment:** Rural areas are rich in natural resources such as forests, fertile soils, or rivers that can be used as if not large but mini hydropower, coal or oil has always attracted human population. But in the long run rural development based on natural resources is only possible, if it does not over exploit these resources, if it preserves the cultural landscapes, if it avoids the pollution of soils, water and air, if it preserves the biological diversity of plants and animals. Every new policy of rural development has to be evaluated in its impact on the natural environment.
3. **Economic growth:** In recent years there has also been economic development in rural areas that could be summarized under the term "new economy". These include not only facilitates and services of the IT industry, but also biotechnology forms. These new economy is sometimes combined with traditional production and tourism, such as in the direct marketing projects on the Internet for originally produced agricultural products.

Factors contributing to poverty

The poverty and under development in the NER primarily lies in the self- content subsistence mode of production of the indigenous people. It is aggravated by lack of enabling environment for growth. The higher concentration of poor among the **Self-Employed in agriculture** is the reflection of the poor performance of agriculture economy in six out of the eight NER states namely; Arunachal Pradesh (66.8%), Assam (33.6%), Manipur (77.3%), Meghalaya (63.6%), Mizoram (93.1%), Nagaland (NA), Sikkim (67.7%) and Tripura (15.5%). Poor performance of agriculture has reasons to continue and among many, the most important factors include the size of the techno-managerial unit of majority of the farmers is tiny. The land has difficult problems of rugged terrain and inaccessibility in the hills and flood and water stagnation in about one third areas of the plains. High acidity in the soil and less sunny hours those are adverse to better growth.

Technology in use by tradition was both land and labour using and the same has made very little change over the years as is evident by less area under assured irrigation (11%), less area under High Yielding Varieties (HYV) seeds, least replacement rate of HYV seed, least application of modern machineries and implement. Productivity of food grains per unit of land is low except for Manipur and some pockets of Assam and Tripura.

The subsistence mindset continues as food security oriented diversified production system has found very little scope for commercial production. Surplus production in the case of certain vegetable, fruits and spices crops has problem of conversion of products into remunerative money value. Access to formal credit is major hurdle of the poor.

Concentration of poor among the **Agricultural labour** reveals that Labour market in rural areas with low concentration of poor Agri. labour in Sikkim (7.9%), Arunachal Pradesh (2.7%), Manipur (1.2%), Mizoram (negligible) and Nagaland (negligible) has minimum problem of demand and wage rate. With considerably high concentration of poor among the agricultural labour in Meghalaya (28.8%), Assam (20.7%) and Tripura (16.3%), there is problem of surplus and low wage rate in the agricultural labour market.

In the case of **non-agricultural labour**, the concentration of poor is highest in Tripura (51.6%) followed by Assam (22.1%) and Sikkim (15.5%) and in other states it ranges from 1.5% to 8.9%. The factors that contribute adversely include the following:

1. The supply side of non-agricultural labourer is higher as compared to the demand.
2. The low wage rate affected by higher supply.
3. The investment on generation of rural infrastructure involving skill labour is low.

The poor among the **self-employment in non-agriculture** comprises of the rural artisans, the handloom weavers, small traders and businessmen, service providers etc. Assam has the maximum concentration (19.5%) followed by Manipur (17.1%) and Tripura (13.2%). The percentages in other states range from 2.4 to 6.1%.

The factors that are inherent with rural artisan include are for meeting:

1. The tools, implements produced by *rural artisan* as per local demand and products have low market value.
2. The handicrafts that are produced by the rural artisan lack design and finish as wanted in the modern market.
3. The operational units are tiny, highly manual and thrive in unorganized market.

Handloom Weavers suffer from following problems:

1. The handloom products lack attractive design and finish that have demand in the modern market.
2. The scale of production being very small fails to attract outside buyers.
3. Lacks pre-loom and post-loom processing facilities.
4. Low labour Productivity and depends on outside supply of yarn.
5. The poor engaged with *small and petty business* are far and few. Entrepreneurial mindset and skill is largely absent. Access to formal credit is a major hurdle.
6. Use of modern machineries and equipments is not very common in rural areas and as such the *repairing and servicing activities* are very few among the rural poor.

Issues and Challenges of Rural Development in India

Till 1975 various programmes were started but desirable success could not be achieved. Research and innovation could not reach from lab to the field that means to rural areas. Development programmes were started but benefit could not reach the farmers except deficit and food self-sufficiency was not achieved till 1991. Many other programmes remained confined only to laboratories such as soil conservation, a forestation, rural employment, health programme etc. the target to achieve full literacy by 1985 with 5% margin, to eradicate rural poverty with a 5% margin, to provide full employment with 5% margin remained a big dream and was extended till 2010. The impact of economic development in tribal areas, hill areas and remote areas is being observed in such a way that they feel themselves as the major victims and deprived of even basic food items. Due to overall failure in the development in the rural areas, the unplanned migration in the urban sector and towns has reached such an extent that urban poverty in the country is more or less equal to the rural poverty; otherwise the gap of rural-urban poverty was more than 10%.

The problem of small and marginal farmers, labourers, agricultural labourers and youth employment is taking a serious turn that means social chaos and large scale unrest. It has already taken a platform of "Naxalities Movement" as their basic support from such deprived class of people and till 2002 these political groups including Maoist were effective in 56 districts of India along the belt of north Bihar, West Bengal, Jharkhand, and over all along the eastern coastal districts. If a drastic economic change is not made in rural India, they may turn to be a chaotic and may cause the emergency of a new political system.

Over the last decade or so, India has gradually enhanced its global standing as a growing Asian power. Several political, social and cultural factors have combined to project an image of raising stature that has captured the world's imagination. The image is not inaccurate; but it is not proper, because India is also home of one quarter of the world's poor. Although economic growth has brought considerable benefits in terms of poverty reduction, the achievement on this front have not been as rapid or as effective as expected.

Indeed the problems faced by India today are not just of low income or consumption levels. Non-income poverty affects a much larger section of the population, who do not have access to basic services of a good standard. Social exclusion and uneven development have in many cases widened inequalities and mitigated the poverty- reducing impact of economic growth.

Review of the poverty alleviation policy initiatives in North East

In all NER states, centrally sponsored programmes have been under implementation from Sixth Plan onward. The implementation of self-employment programme through Integrated Rural Development Authority (IRDP) following individual family approach resulted the following:

1. It was able to alleviate 15% to 20% of the poor above poverty line.
2. The method and procedure of identification and selection of poor deviated from the programme guidelines and subsidy became center of attraction.
3. The assets / schemes remain under-financed even where there was bank and in unbanked areas, the scheme size reduced to the size of subsidy component.
4. Capacity building mostly remained women centered in the trades like tailoring, knitting, embroidery and weaving.
5. A poor family unit stood too weak to find access to the (i) assets and inputs (physical and financial) arranged through delivery system (DRDA, Block, Bank and Line Depts.), (ii) technology and skill, (iii) market opportunities of their products.

The self-employment programme through Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) following group approach (SHG):

1. SHGs have shown strength to overcome the vicious cycle of poverty.
2. To upscale the movement, there are weaknesses in the areas of social mobilization and group building process.
3. The attitude, behaviour, skill and time available with the implementing machineries of the government are inadequate for social mobilization and group building process.
4. They implementation failed to involve NGOs participation in the process.
5. Key activity planning following cluster approach is a non-starter.
6. Initiative made through other agencies is by and large successful.

7. The approach of SIRD, Assam is worth mentioning. They adopted social mobilization followed by capacity building, credit linkage to the SHG and their schemes, linkage to market and repeated financing in steps.

Implementation of **wage and infrastructure development programmes** (NREP, RLEGP, JRY, EAS, JGSY, and SGRY) reveals that:

1. The implementation of all the previous programmes except MGNREGA was able to provide wage employment in the range of 20 to 35 person days per worker family per annum.
2. The achievement of employment generation which was the primary objective had problem of implementation in the hilly states as manual labour in individual form fitting to the requirement of muster roll was not available.
3. The secondary objective to create rural infrastructure was partially fulfilled due to high construction cost in scattered hilly settlements.
4. Involvement of Panchayats and local level institutions in the planning and implementation of the programme was highly partial except in Tripura and Nagaland.
5. The technical staff in most of the hilly states is less to look after the technical aspects of the schemes.
6. Infrastructure is rather than wage employment being the primary need in the hills, the same is to be built through community labour participation.

Implementation of **land resource development programme** IWDP (integrated wasteland development project) and Hariyali reveals a number of encouraging results in majority of the project.

The project that were implemented ensuring community participation

Resulted:

1. Tangible improvement in the quality of wastelands in the plain areas.
2. Tangible development of plantation and horticulture in hill states.
3. Formation of groups (SHG/UG) has demonstrated organizational strength leading to sustainability.
4. The projects that ensured less community participation revealed very less success to count.

Success of safe **drinking water and sanitation programme** is of mixed type.

1. In the hills, coverage is high and quantity available is adequate to a greater extent.
2. In the plains, coverage is very poor.
3. The programme suffers most in maintenance.
4. Lack of people's participation is an area of concern.
5. Quality is a problem – mostly turbidity. In some pockets, concentration of metals like arsenic, fluoride etc. is reported.

The **Rural Housing Programme** (IAY) to provide about 20 sq.m. Plinth area is a mix of success and failure.

1. The common structure provided under the programme is a misfit to the housing structure evolved traditionally over the years.
2. The cost of construction using the same materials is very high in the hill regions.
3. The achievement is encouraging particularly in the plain areas.

Rural Connectivity Programme (PMGSY) is most important for NER to bail out its human settlements from the serious problem of inaccessibility.

1. The achievement made under the programme is poor in the region.
2. Due to unfavourable topography and scattered settlement pattern in the hills, the cost of construction is very high.
3. Many villages which have attained the threshold population by 2001 are still remaining unconnected under the programme.
4. The basic objectives of the programme to provide free and fast flow of goods, services and people to support rural economy still remains many a miles to go.

Conclusion & Recommended Strategies

To be socially, and economically sustainable and rural development, India's growth story needs to be inclusive. However, country's north east has been experiencing a comparatively slower pace of industrialization and socio-economic growth. The region is blessed with abundant natural resources for development opportunities; they have not been utilized to their full potential.

The region has certain distinct advantages. It is strategically located with access to the traditional domestic market of eastern India, along with the proximity to the major states in the east and adjacent countries such as Bangladesh and Myanmar. The region is also a vantage of entry point for the South-East Asian markets. The resource rich north east with its expanses of fertile farmland and a huge talent pool could turn into one of India's prosperous region. Owing to its unique challenges, the conventional market-based solutions may not work here, given the issues related to poor infrastructure connectivity, unemployment and low economic development, law and order problems etc.

The government and the private sector need to collaborate and take the lead in providing solutions to these problems. More reform needs to be initiated in a range areas, such as investment in agriculture, hydro power, infrastructure as well as in creating new avenues of growth through the development of vertically integrated food processing chains, market linked skill development and cross-border trade.

1. Rural Development needs rural participation, rural urge to grow and prosper and sustain development by playing catalyst role in the rural society.
2. The academic institutions and research bodies should be associated both at the level of planning and implementation. To be effective, it is important that rural development management be decentralized through proper delegation of authority and accountability to be given to the local grass root levels.

3. It is also desirable to consider coordination and integration of various anti-poverty programmes to offer more benefits to the poorest of the poor.
4. Instead of taking up national policy fragmented policy should be adopted and implement region wise on needful basis. The success of rural development depends upon planning, project design and a careful identification of various target groups in the community. At the same time it needs careful assessment of the capacity of local institutions to act as implementing agencies.
5. There is also need to improve the proper evaluation of the programmes at the grass root levels.
6. Most of the rural people are ignorant about various schemes and policies and deprived of its benefits. Hence, it is necessary to make aware and to transmit all the policy information to the village people through local administrative machinery.
7. Identification of beneficiaries is the major problem in rural areas. Proper beneficiaries, proper amount and proper time are the major constraints for the success of the programme. Therefore, utmost care should be taken at the selection of beneficiaries so that unscrupulous elements cannot intervene in it.
8. Infrastructure has a great impact on rural development. A road or highway may transform a sleepy country into a vibrant tourist resort and economic activity; a simple power line may propel remote village in to a vibrant rural community; a wireless transmitter may link the most isolated place with the World Wide Web.

The overall success of rural development depends on well planning, well implementation of programmes, participation of people etc. It means rural development programmes cannot be successful without adequate planning, strong central co-ordination, effective local level organization and people's active participation at the planning and implementation stages.

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