



Overview of Some Approaches to Development and Changing Dynamics of Rural India

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Abstract: The paper deals with some approaches to rural development and their social transformation in rural India. The perspectives of the visionary leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan who led to the rural transformation and socio-economic change is discussed. Gandhian concept of rural reconstruction, his idealized village and its emphasize on improving living standards of the rural poor is discussed. Nehru concept of planned economy and his focus to uplift the rural health facilities and also improving of rural education sector is discussed. Jayaprakash Narayan's concept for rural development through rural industrialization is discussed. Abdul Kalam's vision for development of rural India is also highlighted in the present paper.

Index Terms - Rural development, Changing dynamics, Transformation, Rural economy.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Perspectives on development and their transformation in rural India

The development of any country depends upon the dynamics of change brought about by the implementation of various programmes and schemes in rural areas at different times. The rural development has never been a new concept for India because majority ($\approx 70\%$) of the total population of the country resides in rural areas. The rural development policies since their independence have been backed by different visions put before them by great leaders so that the ruralites of the country would have a chance to be a real part of reliant India. The country has its major part of economy depended on agriculture, so land development is necessary for increased production and economic benefits so that social transformation occurs with the increasing income level in the rural areas. The leaders Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Jayaprakash Narayan had their great visions to rural development of the country which led to the growth and transformation in the rural areas. The rural development policies still give a lot of infinity to the visions of these leaders who always dreamed making the country a self sufficient state in all aspects. Pyarelal Nayyar (1977)¹ in his book says that Gandhi ji had a clear perception of rural India and said that India live in seven and a half lakh of villages. The rural development and the perspectives of the visionary leaders which led to the social transformation due to rural development in India is discussed in the following sections.

1.2 The concept of rural development in India

The concept of rural development is a complex process aiming at all round development of poor in the country. It involves implementing a planned policy of reconstruction and increased agricultural production by taking up different programmes and schemes for uplifting the rural people. India after independence gave much emphasis on planned economic growth with the strategy on inclusive growth in rural areas. Since 1951, Five year commissions have made India a self reliant country for poor through various programmes and policies from time to time. The planning commission always aimed at sustainable rural development with better access to sources for the rural poor. Because, poverty which is the major concern for the developing countries like India hindering its development process always. The growing population has also caused malnutrition and undernourishment rate to go up as 20 crore people are malnourished in the country of which two thirds are in rural areas. Thus the aim of the rural development is to enhance the well being of the rural poor and meeting their basic needs like accessing the adequate food, clothing, good shelter, safe drinking water and sanitation to sustain their life. The main sources of income in rural areas are agriculture related activities like horticulture, animal husbandry, fisheries, forestry, and other related activities. Hence, the visionary leaders of India focuses on transfer of technology to rural areas to increase production,

management of natural resources for their economic gains, providing entrepreneurial activities in the rural areas. The following section deals with Mahatma Gandhi's approach and concept towards rural development and its social transformation.

II. MAHATMA GANDHI'S APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Gandhian concept of development attaches more importance to micro-groups such as village communities in turn interact with the society at large. Because, the village is the central point of economic development at local level in his view. He strongly felt that true development can occur only by uplifting of the rural areas and wiping out the poverty and hunger from the rural India. He says, "My ideal village will contain intelligent human beings. They will not live in dirt and darkness as animals. Men and women would be free and able to hold their own against anyone in the world" (Vyas, 2015)². According to Thadani (2011)³, Gandhiji's idealised village had:

- (a) Access to health care and food production
- (b) Preserve useful resources
- (c) Democratic political structure
- (d) Decreasing the gap between rural and urban India and
- (e) Job led economy.

Thus the village is the basic unit of Gandhian idea of Indian social structure. He says, "If the villages perish, India will perish too". He emphasized on its reconstruction, decentralisation of governance, self sufficiency, industrialization and trusteeship. He adds, "I know that the work is as difficult as to make of India an ideal country. But if one can produce ideal village, he will have provided a pattern not only for the whole country but perhaps for the whole world. More than this, a seeker may not aspire after."

2.1 Gandhiji's views on rural development:

Gandhiji was of the view that the rural development would take place only when there will be decentralization of power and development of village based industries like khadi and village industries so that the local people will get the employment in their own villages and they not be forced to migrate to the urban areas.

2.2 Rural economy and industries:

Gandhiji gave more emphasis on the development of rural economy through small scale cottage industries. And also he said the government should bring technology and market to the rural areas so that people may be economically benefited.

2.3 Khadi and Agriculture:

Gandhiji emphasized on development of Khadi which included cotton growing and other activities upto the weaving and washing of the cotton. Gandhiji gave importance to the centralization of production, and distribution of agricultural products at village level to be economically stable. He emphasized on importance of livestock and cooperative farming.

2.4 Education and Economy:

Education in the Gandhiji's view is the mode of transformation of a simple village into model village. He gave more emphasis on primary education in the villages. He gave importance to skill based education and science and technology. He emphasized on economic equality in the society with no conflict between the rich and the poor.

2.5 Community and Social Welfare:

Gandhiji's idea of true progress lies in the economic development and social justice with improvement in the living standard of the rural poor and providing basic services in the villages. Gandhiji's strategy of rural reconstruction was based on village swaraj and swadeshi movement.

2.6 Swaraj:

Gandhiji took the Swaraj movement for the political awareness, social upliftment, economic growth and, moral rights of the poor and downtrodden people in the country. In Gandhi's view, swaraj was not only to gain political freedom but also to gain true swaraj i.e, self rule and liberation. Gandhiji in his slogan of swaraj said that there should be use of different means to attain swaraj like:

(a) Use of Non Violence and Satyagraha with self sacrifice to drive the Britishers out of the country.

(b) Use of self control is the best means to win the real freedom when the socially privileged classes have self control and there will be equality in the society irrespective of caste, religion, sex etc.

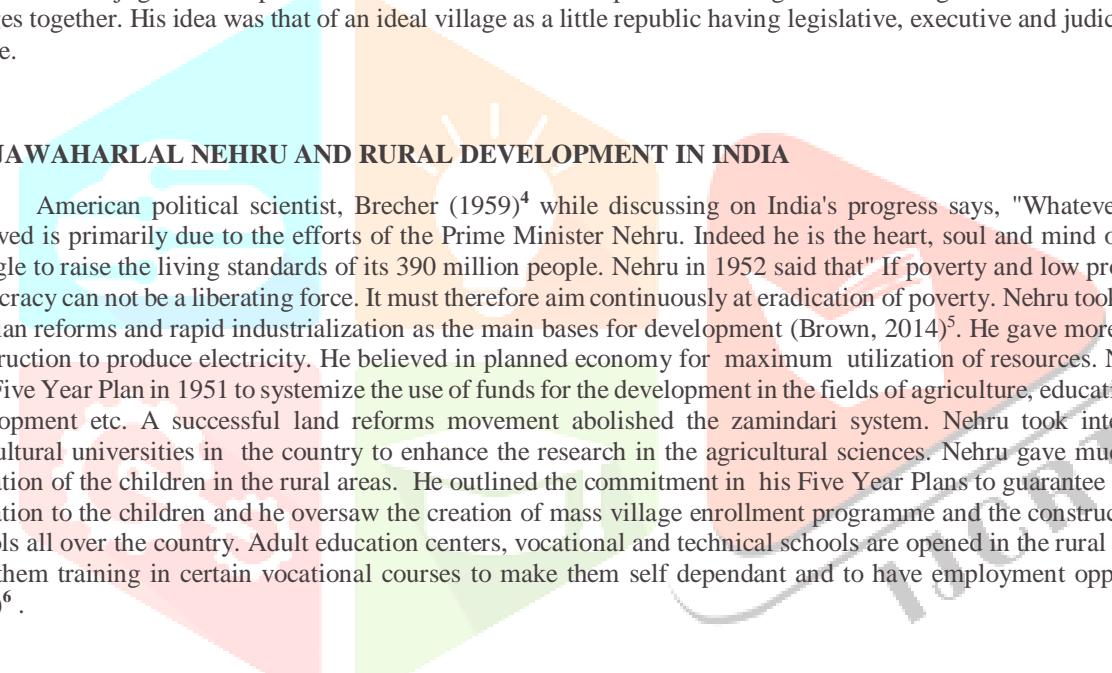
2.7 Gram swaraj:

Gandhiji gave the slogan of ideal village as a little republic which can fulfill the needs of the people in the village itself. He was of the view that a village should be self-sustained with all round development with capacity building as a top priority.

2.8 Gram Panchayat:

Gandhiji gave more prominence to the devolution of power at village level to bring administration and development in villages together. His idea was that of an ideal village as a little republic having legislative, executive and judiciary powers with the people.

III. JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA



American political scientist, Brecher (1959)⁴ while discussing on India's progress says, "Whatever progress has been achieved is primarily due to the efforts of the Prime Minister Nehru. Indeed he is the heart, soul and mind of India's heroic who struggle to raise the living standards of its 390 million people. Nehru in 1952 said that" If poverty and low progress continues, the democracy can not be a liberating force. It must therefore aim continuously at eradication of poverty. Nehru took up land distribution, agrarian reforms and rapid industrialization as the main bases for development (Brown, 2014)⁵. He gave more importance on dam construction to produce electricity. He believed in planned economy for maximum utilization of resources. Nehru introduced the first Five Year Plan in 1951 to systemize the use of funds for the development in the fields of agriculture, education, health, industrial development etc. A successful land reforms movement abolished the zamindari system. Nehru took interest in establishing agricultural universities in the country to enhance the research in the agricultural sciences. Nehru gave much importance to the education of the children in the rural areas. He outlined the commitment in his Five Year Plans to guarantee free and compulsory education to the children and he oversaw the creation of mass village enrollment programme and the construction of thousands of schools all over the country. Adult education centers, vocational and technical schools are opened in the rural areas for the adult to give them training in certain vocational courses to make them self dependant and to have employment opportunities (Agarwal, 2008)⁶.

3.1 Nehru's specific rural programmes:

Nehru was more concerned about rural employment and so believed in small scale industries and cottage industries in rural areas which provided employment to the rural youths. During his tenure, 55 community development projects were launched covering about 300 villages and major emphasis was given on agriculture production. In 1953, National Extension Programme was launched covering more rural areas including dry regions of the country. The Community Development Programme covered the whole country in 1960s and its main focus was to uplift the rural poor, rural connectivity, rural health facilities, housing and employment and also improving of rural education sector.

IV. JAYAPRAKASH NARAYAN'S APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Jayaprakash Narayan being a political activist visualized India as a nation where both political and social structure needed reconstruction. He was in favour of giving more power of decision to rural areas, providing the rural areas basic amenities of life and providing ways of exposure of the rural youth to the outer world by providing skill based education to them. He gave rural development a prime place because he thought that true development will be expressive when our rural areas will have the avenues of employment for the youths there.

4.1 Emphasis on rural industrialization:

Jayaprakash Narayan laid much emphasis on rural reconstruction by establishing the small industries in the rural areas. He saw that small scale industries have hardly entered the rural areas. He was of the view that small agriculture based industries are to be built in the rural areas to avoid urban exploitation and also a source of income can be created for the people in the villages. He gave certain suggestions for rural development through rural industrialization. Some suggestions were (Prasad, 2017)⁷,

(a) To make rural industrialization commission as an apex body in decision making

(b) Maintenance of certain social values like self management and self equality and avoidance of exploitation of poor by the rich in the rural areas. He believed in maintaining of a balance between employment, efficiency and social values which can lead to development with right social fabric. For the development of rural industrialization, he suggested that:

(a) The Planning commission should initiate studies into all such possible industries which can be operated in the rural areas.

(b) Research should be taken up to improve manufacturing technology in the rural industries. He thought of intermediate technology which may not be expensive but would be more profitable and productive in nature which the ruralites can use easily on less expenses.

(c) He emphasized on non conventional sources of energy due to lack of electricity in rural areas. He was of the view that rural youths should be trained in different skills so that they can be employed in these industries.

According to Lal (2015)⁸, Jayaprakash Narayana had a deep thought on rural planning and rural reconstruction. He gave more emphasis on different areas of development which are the corner stone of rural development in India. He advocated for the following:

- (a) Equitable land ownership and distribution system
- (b) Enhancing agricultural production by the use of technology
- (c) Development of rural industries
- (d) Administrative and political decentralization
- (e) Reforms in Education
- (f) Eradicating Caste ridden society through different awareness programmes

Jayaprakash Narayana professed the freedom of thought, equality and social change. He professed social change in India through his 'Total Revolution' concept for overall development. He said total revolution is combination of seven revolutions which are Social, Economic, Political, Ideological, Educational and Spiritual.

4.2 Decentralized Economy:

According to Bimal Prasad, "He emphasized for the decentralized economy for the development of rural areas". He thought that,

- (a) The economy must be labour intensive and there should be use of small machines
- (b) There should be maximum utilization of local resources for the regional development
- (c) Industrialization should be linked with agriculture. The villages should be developed as Agro-Industrial communities
- (d) Gave importance to Panchayat Raj Institution in enhancing rural economy.

V. VISION OF APJ ABDUL KALAM ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The scientist and politician Avul Pakir Jainulabdeen Abdul Kalam played a great role in the missile development programme of India. He remained President of India from 2002 to 2007. His vision for developing India (Kalam & Rajan 1998)⁹ in all sectors during his tenure in politics is remarkable particularly with respect to the rural development in the country. Abdul Kalam's views on rural India based on the following:

- (a) Technology should be used for agriculture and food processing for doubling the production
- (b) Development of rural infrastructure is the primary need and providing electricity to rural areas through different sources like solar and hydro energy
- (c) Development of health care system and expansion of education to the backward rural areas
- (d) Increase the communication technology and also promotion of e-governance in the rural areas and his vision for development of India was based on the following five points:

- (a) Competency and Efficiency in every sector of development
- (b) Talented Manpower
- (c) Double the growth rate of GDP
- (d) Sustainable rural and urban development
- (e) Expansion of education in rural areas and eradication of poverty

VI. CONCLUSION

Mahatma Gandhi emphasized on improving the living standards of the rural poor by providing food, shelter, employment, education and involving people in planning and development through their participation in decision making and through decentralization of local administration. Jawaharlal Nehru was of the view that economic development of villages is the basic need. He gave more prominence to agriculture, cottage industries, educational development, rural connectivity to enhance rural economy and employment. Jayaprakash Narayan was a critic of decentralization because he thought that people become passive recipients of power. He was of the view that power should be evolved from bottom to the top. He thought that in present India that villages need to be reorganized in proper communities. He followed communitarian democracy in which power lies with the local people. Abdul Kalam gives preference to building of village infrastructure and providing the facilities which are there in urban areas. His thought of modern India was based on the transfer of research and technology to rural areas so that production would be increased and employment would be generated. He emphasized on poverty eradication and bridging the gap between rural and urban areas. Thus, the leaders views on the development of India was a complex, whole of all the factors which are necessary for a society to walk on the road of development was based decentralization of economy, governance and promotion of education in rural areas in recent years.

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