

Rural Development & role of different programmes in welfare of rural community

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Introduction:

Rural development has always been an important issue in all discussions pertaining to economic development, especially of developing countries, throughout the world. In the developing countries and some formerly communist societies, rural mass comprises a substantial majority of the population. Although millions of rural people have escaped poverty as a result of rural development in many Asian countries, a large majority of rural people continue to suffer from persistent poverty. The socio-economic disparities between rural and urban areas are widening and creating tremendous pressure on the social and economic fabric of many developing Asian economies.

- Rural Development is a process of bringing change among rural communities from the traditional way of living to a progressive way of living. It is also expressed as a movement for progress.
- Rural areas can have an agricultural character, though many rural areas are characterized by an economy based on logging, mining, oil and gas exploration, or tourism.

Lifestyles in rural areas are different from those in urban areas, mainly because limited services are available. Governmental services like law enforcement, schools, fire departments and libraries may be distant, limited in scope, or unavailable. Utilities like water, sewer, street lighting and garbage collection may not be present. Public transport is sometimes absent or very limited people use their own vehicles, walk or ride an animal.

A society or community can be classified as rural based on the criteria of lower population density, less social differentiation, less social and spatial mobility, slow rate of social change, etc. Agriculture would be the major occupation of rural area.

Need and Importance of rural development

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Rural development is a national necessity and has considerable importance in India because of the following reasons.

1. To develop the rural area as a whole in terms of culture, society, economy, technology and health.
2. To develop living standard of rural mass.
3. To develop rural youths, children and women.
4. To develop and empower human resource of rural area in terms of their psychology, skill, knowledge, attitude and other abilities.
5. To develop infrastructure facilities in rural areas.
6. To provide minimum facility to rural mass in terms of drinking water, education, transport, electricity and communication.
7. To develop rural institutions like panchayat, cooperatives, post, banking and credit.
8. To provide financial assistance to develop the artisans in the rural areas, farmers and agrarian unskilled labour, small and big rural entrepreneurs to improve their economy.
9. To develop rural industries through the development of handicrafts, small scaled industries, village industries, rural crafts, cottage industries and other related economic operations in the rural sector.
10. To develop agriculture, animal husbandry and other agricultural related areas.
11. To restore uncultivated land, provide irrigation facilities and motivate farmers to adopt improved seed, fertilizers, the package of practices of crop cultivation and soil conservation methods.
12. To develop entertainment and recreational facility for the rural mass.
13. To develop leadership quality of the rural area.
14. To improve rural marketing facility.

Rural Development Programmes

Rural Developmental Programmes of Pre-independence Era

- ***Shantiniketan attempts***

Started: Rabindranath Tagore in collaboration with Leonard. K in 1921 at sriniketan in Bengal

Objectives: Studying and analysing rural problems, using them in action and helping villages to develop their resources.



Activities: Popularising health co-operatives, better seed and manures, cottage industries and organizing village meals.

- ***Gurgaon Attempts***

Started: F.L. Brayne in Gurgaon district of Punjab state in 1920.

Objectives: Increasing farm yields, stopping overspending in social functions. Improving health standards and home improvement and women welfare.

Activities: Irrigation, afforestation, composting, cattle improvement, women's education and discouragement of heavy spending on social function, etc.,

Shortcomings: Use of authority, untrained field workers discontinuity of work and limited planning.

- ***Marthandam Projects***

Started: Spencer hatch in then Travancore state in 1921.

Objectives: Rural reconstruction to bring about complete upward development towards more abundant life for rural people spiritually mentally, physically, socially and economically through self-help and expert counsel.

Methods: Counseling farmers on economy and self-help, demonstrations, working through trained leaders, developing village organizations and rural surveys.

Activities: Agriculture, cottage industries, Community programmes, Bee-Keeping, poultry farming, etc.

- ***Sevagram Project***

Started: it was started by Gandhiji in 1933.

Objectives: Upliftment of under privileged people and village regeneration.

Activities: Organizing training centre for cottage industries, communal harmony, prohibition/removal of untouchability.

Limitations: High personal and moral standards which were difficult to achieve by common people.

- **Post early independence Programmes (1947-53):** Firka Development Madras Government 1948; Etawah Pilot Project Albert Mayor 1948; Nilokheri Experiment S.K. Dey 1948; Community Development Programme (CDP) Government of India 1952; National Extension Service (NES) Government of India 1953

- **Other Rural Development Programmes:** FFW (Food for Work) Programme – April 1977; (IRDP) Integrated Rural Development Programme- 1978-79; (RLEGP) Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme- 15 August 1983; (JRY) Jawahar Rozgar Yojana- April 1989; (IAY) Indira Awas Yojana- January 1996; (SGSY) Sawaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana- 1997; Annapurna Yojana-April 2000; (PMGSY) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana – 15 august 2000; (SGRY) Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana- 2001-02; Swajaldhara – 2002; (PURA)Providing Rural Amenities in Rural Areas- January 2004; Bharat Nirman- 16 May 2005; (MGNREGA) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act- 2005; (PMJDY) Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana
- **Food for Work Programme:** The FFW programme was launched by the government of India in April 1977 on an ad hoc basis as a non-plan programme aimed at eradication of hunger and poverty and for the creation of community assets in rural areas by providing employment for rural poor, particularly during the period of slack employment of the year.

Objectives:To generate additional gainful employment to unemployed in rural areas with a view to improving their income and nutrition. Creation of durable community assets by utilizing the surplus food grain.
- **IRDP (Integrated rural development programme):**

IRDP was launched in 1978-79 aimed at providing income generating assets and self-employment opportunities for the rural poor.

Objectives:To provide assistance to families below the poverty line (BPL) to enable them to attain an income level above the poverty line.
- **TRYSEM (Training of rural youth for self-employment)**

A centrally sponsored scheme TRYSEM was launched by the government of India, Department of Rural Development on 15 august 1979, TRYSEM was facilitating a component of IRDP.

Objectives:To provide technical skills to the rural youth from families below the poverty line to enable them to take up self-employment in the broad fields of agriculture and allied activities, industries, service and business activities.
- **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**



It is also known as NREGA. The National Rural Employment Guarantees Act-NREGA Launched on 2nd February 2006 as a momentous initiative towards pro-poor growth. For the first time, rural communities have been given not just a development programme but also a regime of rights. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (NREGA) guarantees 100 days of employment in a financial year to any rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work.

- **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**

Rural Road Connectivity is not only a key component of Rural Development by promoting access to economic and social services and thereby generating increased agricultural incomes and productive employment opportunities in India, but it is also as a result, a key ingredient in ensuring sustainable poverty reduction. Notwithstanding the efforts made, over the years, at the State and Central levels, through different Programmes, about 40% of the Habitations in the country are still not connected by All-weather roads. It is well known that even where connectivity has been provided, the roads constructed are of such quality (due to poor construction or maintenance) that they cannot always be categorized as All-weather roads. With a view to redressing the situation, the Government has launched the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana on 25th December 2000 to provide all-weather access to unconnected habitations. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme. 50% of the Cess on High Speed Diesel (HSD) is earmarked for this Programme.

Objectives: The primary objective of the PMGSY is to provide Connectivity, by way of an All-weather Road (with necessary culverts and cross-drainage structures, which is operable throughout the year), to the eligible unconnected habitations in the rural areas, in such a way that all Unconnected Habitations with a population of 1000 persons and above are covered in three years (2000-2003) and all Unconnected Habitations with a population of 500 persons and above by the end of the Tenth Plan Period (2007). In respect of the Hill States (North-East, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttaranchal) and the Desert Areas (as identified in the Desert Development Programme) as well as the Tribal (Schedule V) areas, the objective would be to connect Habitations with a population of 250 persons and above. The



PMGSY will permit the Upgradation (to prescribed standards) of the existing roads in those Districts where all the eligible Habitations of the designated population size have been provided all-weather road connectivity. However, it must be noted that Upgradation is not central to the Programme and cannot exceed 20% of the State allocation as long as eligible Unconnected Habitations in the State still exist.

Conclusion:

A number of programmes have been operating in the country aimed at improving the economic conditions of the rural poor. None of these programmes covered the whole country, though a large number of blocks in the country had more than one of these programmes operating simultaneously in the same area for the same target group. This territorial overlap combined with the different funding patterns of these programmes, not only created considerable difficulties in effective monitoring and accounting, it often blurred the programme objectives. In practice, therefore, these programmes were reduced to mere subsidy giving programmes shorn of any planned approach to the development of the rural poor as an inbuilt process in the development of the area and its resources. It was, therefore, proposed that such multiplicity of programmes for the rural poor operated through a multiplicity of agencies should be ended and be replaced by one single integrand programme operative throughout the country. The programme was to be called the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). Of the 350 million people below the poverty line in the country, around 300 million lived in the rural areas, possessing little or virtually no assets. They needed to be enabled to acquire productive assets and/or appropriate skills and vocational opportunities and then backed effectively with services to increase production and productivity. If through special programmes of specific beneficiary oriented assistance this group could be brought above the poverty line a major impact would be secured on the overall economic levels of the country.

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