

Need of Rural Development in India for Nation Building

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Abstract

There are no universally accepted approaches to rural development. It is a choice influenced by time, space and culture. The term rural development connotes overall development of rural areas 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, human resources in rural areas. As a phenomenon, rural development is the end-result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, social, cultural and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social well-being of a specific group of people – the rural poor. As a discipline, it is multi-disciplinary in nature, representing an intersection of agriculture, social, behavioural, engineering and management sciences (Katar Singh 1999).

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 comprise a substantial majority of the population. Over 3.5 billion people live in the Asia and Pacific region and some 63% of them in rural areas. 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.

Key Words : Rural development, Nation Building, Development

Introduction

These factors, among many others, tend to highlight the importance of rural development. The policy makers in most of the developing economies recognize this importance and have been implementing a host of programs and measures to achieve rural development objectives. While some of these countries have achieved impressive results, others have failed to make a significant dent in the problem of persistent rural underdevelopment.

Rural - Is an area, where the people are engaged in primary industry in the sense that they produce things directly for the first time in cooperation with nature as stated by Srivastava (1961).

Rural areas are sparsely settled places away from the influence of large cities and towns. Such areas are distinct from more intensively settled urban and suburban areas, and also from unsettled lands such as outback or wilderness. People live in village, on farms and in other isolated houses. 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 than 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.

Development: It refers to growth, evolution, stage of inducement or progress. This progress or growth is gradual and had sequential phases. Always there is increasing differentiation. It also refers to the overall movement towards greater efficiency and complex situations.

Rural development designates the utilization of approaches and techniques under one single programme, which rally upon local communities as units of action. It provides a large umbrella under which all the people engaged in the work of community organizations, community progress and community relation.

Rural Development (RD) is a process, which aims at improving the well being and self realization of people living outside the urbanized areas through collective process. According to Agarwal (1989), rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of rural poor.

The United Nations defines Rural Development as: Rural Development is a process of change, by which the efforts of the people themselves are united, those of government authorities to improve their economic, social and cultural conditions of communities in to the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national programme. Rural Development is a process of bringing change among rural community from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. It is also expressed as a movement for progress.

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 simple concept which is more complex to define. Rural development is a multi-dimensional concept, which involves all kinds of development in rural areas through collective governmental and voluntary agencies' efforts in our country, where the majority of the population dwells in villages; national development becomes almost synonymous with rural development. India cannot shine without the shining of rural India.

After independence a number of development programmes were started to change the scenario in the rural areas. Government has initiated, sustained and refined many rural development programmes under different five year plans. Whopping funds expended, yet alleviation of poverty has remained a distant dream. Rural poverty is inextricably linked with low rural productivity and unemployment, including under-employment. There is a basic issue of providing livelihood security, basic entitlements to the rural population. Infrastructural gaps require to be filled and connectivity with urban areas requires to be strengthened. Therefore the core of rural development strategy is to provide both self and wage employment, water supply, proper sanitary and health care measures and education.

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Rural Development in India

In the Indian context rural development assumes greater significance as 72.22 per cent (according to the 2001 census) of its population still live in rural areas. Most of the people living in rural areas draw their livelihood from agriculture and allied sectors (60.41 % of total work force), and poverty mostly persists here (27.1 % in 1999-2000). At the time of independence around 83 per cent of the Indian populations were living in rural areas. Accordingly, from the very beginning, our planned strategy emphasized rural development and will continue to do so in future. Strategically, the focus of our planning was to improve the economic and social conditions of the underprivileged sections of rural society. Thus, economic growth with social justice became the proclaimed objective of the planning process under rural development. It began with an emphasis on agricultural production and consequently expanded to promote productive employment opportunities for rural masses, especially the poor, by integrating production, infrastructure, human resource and institutional development measures.

During the plan periods, there have been shifting strategies for rural development.

- The First Plan (1951-56) was a period when community development was taken as a method and national extension services as the agency for rural development.
- Co-operative farming with local participation was the focus of the Second Plan (1956-61) strategy.
- The Third Plan (1961-66) was the period of re-strengthening the Panchayati Raj System through a democratic decentralized mechanism.
- Special Area Programmes were started for the development of backward areas in the Fourth Plan (1969-74).

- In the Fifth Plan (1974-79), the concept of minimum needs programme was introduced to eradicate poverty in rural areas.
- There was a paradigm shift in the strategy for rural development in the Sixth Plan (1980-85). The emphasis was on strengthening the socio-economic infrastructure in rural areas, and initiatives were taken to alleviate disparities through the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
- During the Seventh Plan (1985-90), a new strategy was chalked out to create skill-based employment opportunities under different schemes.
- Special programmes for income generation through creation of assets, endowments and land reforms were formulated for participation by the people at the grassroots level.

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

- About three-fourth of India's population live in rural areas, thus rural development is needed to develop nation as whole.
- Nearly half of the country's national income is derived from agriculture, which is major occupation of rural India.
- Around seventy per cent of Indian population gets employment through agriculture.

- Bulks of raw materials for industries come from agriculture and rural sector
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- Increase in industrial population can be justified only in rural population's motivation and increasing the purchasing power to buy industrial goods.

- 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.

The specific objectives are:



India is a country of villages and about 50% of the villages have very poor socio-economic conditions. Since the dawn of independence, concerted efforts have been made to ameliorate the

living standard of rural masses. So, rural development is an integrated concept of growth and poverty elimination has been of paramount concern in all the consequent five year plans. Rural Development (RD) programmes comprise of following:

- ❖ Provision of basic infrastructure facilities in the rural areas e.g. schools, health facilities, roads, drinking water, electrification etc.
- ❖ Improving agricultural productivity in the rural areas.
- ❖ Provision of social services like health and education for socio-economic development.
- ❖ Implementing schemes for the promotion of rural industry increasing agriculture productivity, providing rural employment etc.
- ❖ Assistance to individual families and Self Help Groups (SHG) living below poverty line by providing productive resources through credit and subsidy.

Mahatma Gandhi, was probably the first among our leaders to promote rural development in India. On March 30, 1946 at the Prayer meeting at Urulikanchan before leaving for Delhi for final negotiation with the British, Gandhiji reiterated that we cannot retain power in Delhi without developing rural India. His concept of rural development meant self reliance with least dependence on outsiders. The Swadeshi Movement was launched through spinning and weaving to promote Khadi. This also provided livelihood to the rural people. The point is that, inspite of many programmes launched earlier and presently what, real impact, quantitatively and qualitatively these have on the progress and prosperity of rural area. We have to evaluate each programme, funds involved therein and the result derived there from.

Conclusion

The most challenging task is to see whether the funds have been properly utilized. The implementation is to be properly checked to bring the required result. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in sub urban and urban areas. Further there are cascading effects of poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure in rural areas on urban centres causing slums and consequential social and economic tensions manifesting in economic deprivation and urban poverty. Hence Rural Development which is concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential. The present strategy of rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment.

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