



SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT - INITIATIVES TAKEN BY GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Neeru Singhal* Yuvika Singh**

*Agrasen University, Baddi.

**Chandigarh Group of Colleges, Landran.

Abstract

Rural development aims at the quality of life that is the key factor of sustainable growth in the effectiveness of the agricultural production. To achieve enhanced production and productivity in the rural areas there must be a spatial balance in the social and economic development. So the main target of the sustainable rural development is to bring about improvement in the ecological environment so that it may lead to growth and happiness and to encourage the community participation in the process of development. Here the objective of our study is to find out various programmes undertaken by the Government of India for the rural development and currently what steps are taken by them to improve the areas like agriculture, technology, education and infrastructure. Several poverty alleviation programmes have been launched by the central government for the rural poor, comprising small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and rural artisans such as IRDP, NREP, TRYSEM, RLEGP, JGSY, Antyodaya Programme, DDP, DWCRA, PMRY, JPRGY, etc. Sustainable Rural development is a sequence of four, clearly identifiable development phases: diagnostic (or explorative) phase, a phase of political negotiations (consensus building), the planning phase and the implementation phase. This paper also throws light on the challenges that are being faced by the Government in the rural development.

Keywords: Rural Development, Poverty Alleviation Programmes, Sustainable Rural Development, Challenges Faced by the Government.

Introduction

1. What is Rural Development?

Rural development is the combination of two words 'rural' and 'development'. Rural means "open land" and includes all persons living outside urban area and who live on farm. Thus agriculture is generally the main occupation in rural areas. While on the other hand Development refers to the growth, evolution, and stage of inducement or progress.

The economic contribution of agriculture to India's GDP is steadily declining with the country's broad-based economic growth. Still, agriculture is demographically the broadest economic sector and plays a significant role in the overall socio-economic fabric of India.

India is predominantly an agrarian country. Agriculture is the predominant livelihood occupation and the rural population is largely dependent upon it. A large part of this rural population (more than 200 million) is still living below the poverty line and is the focus of rural development programmes.

Every government after the Independence of the country in 1947 has committed itself to rural development. So we can say that rural development is a process of transformation from traditionally oriented rural culture towards an acceptance and reliance on science and technology or we can say that rural development as an improvement in the living standard of the masses of low-income population residing in rural areas and making the process of self-sustaining. Rural development can be defined in several ways but for all practical purposes it means helping the poor people living in the villages in their economic development.

Objectives of Rural Development Programme

The major objectives of the rural development programs are:

- To achieve enhanced production and productivity in the rural areas.
- To bring about a greater socio-economic equity.
- To bring about a spatial balance in social and economic development.
- To bring about improvement in the ecological environment so that it may be conducive to growth and happiness, and
- To develop broad based community participation in the process of development.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To find out the various programmes initiated by the Government in the past.
- To study the steps taken by the government to improve the areas like agriculture, technology, education and infrastructure under rural development.



3. Literature Review

Pre-Independence Experiments in Rural Development

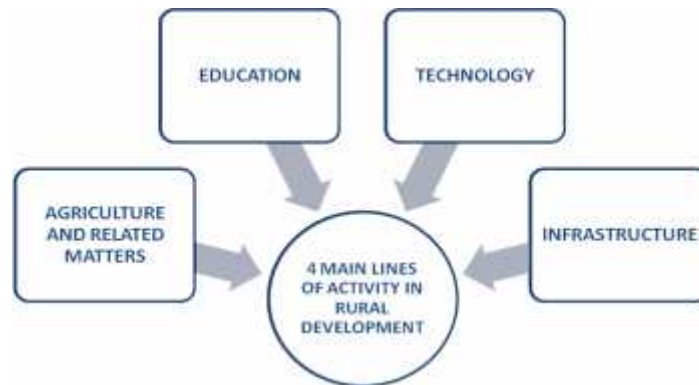
Prior to the independence in 1947, various individuals and institutions made experiments in rural development from time to time. The model village in Sunderban (Bengal) by Sir Daniel Hamilton in 1903, the Sriniketan experiment of Thakur Rabindranath Tagore in 1920, Brayne's Gurgaon experiment in 1921, Krishnamachari's Baroda Reconstruction Movement in early 1930s, Gandhiji's experiment in Champaran (1971) and Sevagram in 1936, and The Firka Development Scheme in Madras State in 1946 are a few prominent initiatives that had substantive bearing on the future rural development programmes. The information available on these early projects is scanty and is mostly based on the recollections of the social workers involved in these experiments.

Post-Independence Rural Development Programme Etawah Project (1948-52)

Several experiments in rural reconstruction undertaken by official and nonofficial agencies in the past contributed towards new thinking about reorganizing the setup for rural development. Albert Mayer's Etawah project of 1947-48 for Rural Planning and Development played a key-role and can be regarded as a forerunner of the Community Development Projects in India. After an initial period of trial and error lasting over a year and a half, an administrative pattern was evolved which, for the first time facilitated extension activities to percolate to the village level. The activities of different development departments were channelized through one common agency and the concept of a multipurpose Village Level Worker emerged.

4. Four Main Lines of Activity in the Rural Development

The activities considered important for rural development can be divided into the Agriculture and related matters, Education, technology and infrastructure.



a) **Agriculture and Related Matters:** The programme includes reclamation of available virgin and waste land, provision of commercial fertilizers and improved seeds, promotion of fruit and vegetable cultivation, improved agricultural technique, supply of technical information, improved marketing and credit facilities, provision of soil surveys and prevention of soil erosion, encouragement of the use of natural and compost manures and improvement of livestock.

b) Agriculture Includes

- **Irrigation and Water Supply:** The programme include provision of water for agriculture through minor irrigation works, e.g., tanks, canals, surface wells, tube-wells, etc.

c) **Education:** The community projects to provide for social education, expansion and improvement of primary and secondary education. Vocational and technical training to be emphasised in all the stages of the educational programme. Education includes:

- **Supplementary Employment and Training:** The unemployed and the under-employed persons in the village community be provided with gainful employment to such extent as is possible, by the development of cottage and small-scale industries. The training of farmers, village level workers, project supervisors and other personnel to be carried out for skill up-gradation.

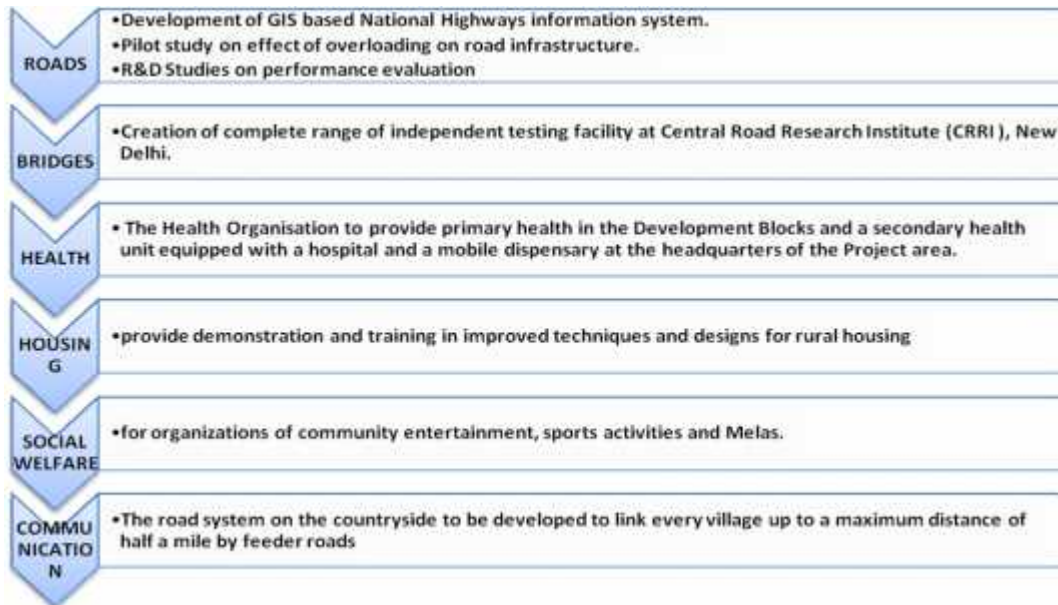
d) **Technology:** Most of the technology development that takes place for rural areas is carried out with an aim to keep it simple so that the devices can be made in rural areas itself. Technological area includes:



- **Nimbkar Agricultural Research Institute (NARI):** It has developed an extremely efficient kerosene lantern capable of giving light output equivalent to a 100 W light bulb.
- **Core Support to Science and Technology Based Field Groups:** The groups are engaged in developing cost effective technological solutions in farm as well as nonfarm sectors ranging from natural resource management, housing, renewable energy, agriculture & post harvest processing.

e) **Infrastructure:** To upgrade rural infrastructure, the Government has formulated a proposal for providing the road connections to more than 38,484 villages above 1000 population and all 20,867 habitations above 500 populations in hilly and tribal areas.

Some of the Ongoing Major Schemes are as Follows



5. Poverty Alleviation Programmes Initiated by the Central Government in the Past

Several poverty alleviation programmes have been launched by the central government for the rural poor, comprising small and marginal farmers, landless labourers and rural artisans. They are as follows:

1. **IRDP:** The Integrated Rural Development Programme signifies a programme for improving the living standards of the poorest of the poor living in rural areas and for making the process of rural development self-sustaining. Initiated in 1978-79, the programme was extended to all development blocks in the country in 1980-81.

2. **NREP:** National Rural Employment Programme was launched in October, 1980 as a centrally sponsored scheme on 50:50 sharing basis between centre and states. Generating additional gainful employment opportunities, creating durable community assets and improving the overall quality of life in rural areas constitute the three -fold objectives of the programme.

3. **TRYSEM:** The scheme of Training Rural Youth for Self- Employment was initiated in August, 1979, with the primary objective of providing technical skills to the rural youth to enable them to seek employment in fields of agriculture, industry, services and business activities.

4. **RLEGP:** Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme was launched on 15th August, 1983 to generate additional employment in rural areas particularly for the rural landless workers. Under this scheme employment is given to at least one member of every landless family upto 100 days in a year.

5. **JRY:** Jawahar Rozgar Yojna was launched in April, 1989. It is pre-eminently a wage employment programme. Under the scheme, it is expected that at least one member of each poor family would be provided with employment for 50 to 100 days in a year at a work place near his / her residence.



6. JGSY: The Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana is the restructured form of Jawahar Rozgar Yojna. This scheme is in operation from 1999. It is implemented only at the village level to create village infrastructure and generates employment opportunities to alleviate poverty.

7. Antyodaya Programme: Antyodaya means the welfare of a person standing at the end of the queue. In other words, the programme is oriented to uplift the poorest of the poor in the countryside. So far as the operation of this programme is concerned, every year five poorest families of every village are identified and selected. Efforts are made for the economic betterment of these families.

8. DPAP: The Drought-Prone Area Programme was launched at the time of the mid-term appraisal of the Fourth Five Year Plan for drought prone areas. Reducing the severity of the impact of drought, stabilising the income of the weaker sections of the rural community and restoring the ecological balance constitute the basic objectives of the programme.

9. DDP: The Desert Development Programme was launched in 1977 – 78 on the recommendation of the National Commission on Agriculture in the hot desert areas of Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat, and the cold desert areas of Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh. It was a central sector scheme with cent per cent financing by the centre.

10. FFWP: The Food for Work Programme was launched in April, 1977. It aimed at making wage payment in food grains at subsidised prices to the ruralites living below the poverty line.

11. DWCRA: The scheme of Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas was introduced in 50 districts in 1982-83. The major thrust of DWCRA is to improve the socio-economic status of rural women through the creation of income-generating activities in a district on a self-sustaining basis.

12. EAS: The Employment Assurance Scheme was launched in 1983 and expanded in phases to cover the whole country in 1996. It aims at providing 100 days of employment to two members of a rural family in a year.

13. SGSY: The Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana was launched in April 1999 replacing earlier programmes like the IRDP, the TRYSEM etc. This programme is instrumental in the setting up of a large number of industries through bank credit and subsidy. It plays an important role in enabling the poor families to rise above the poverty line in three years.

14. PMRY: The Prime Minister's Rozgar Yojana is a self-employment programme for the educated unemployed youth. This programme has been implemented since October 2, 1993 to provide employment opportunities to the educated unemployed youths in the country.

15. JPRGY: The Jai Prakash Rozgar Guarantee Yojana has been launched in 2002 to provide employment guarantee to the unemployed in the most distressed districts of the country.

16. NSAP: The National Social Assistance Programme was conceived by the central government to provide social assistance to poor households. The programme came into force from 15th August 1995 and includes three schemes as its components such as National Old Age Pension Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme and National Maternity Benefit Scheme.

17. Rural Housing Scheme: Indira Awas Yojana was launched by the government in 1985. Under this scheme house is given free of cost to SC/ST families and free bonded labourers.

6. Activities Under Process by the Government in Various Areas

Agriculture and Rural Development

- Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA).
- District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) Administration.
- Rural Development Activities in North Eastern Region.
- Watershed Development Programmes.
- Integrated Wastelands Development Programme.
- Drought Prone Areas Programme.
- Desert Development Programme.
- Integrated Watershed Management Programme.
- North-Eastern Region.



Education

- **The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):** Legal guarantee for one hundred days of employment in every financial year to adult members of any rural household willing to do public work-related unskilled manual work at the statutory minimum wage of Rs. 120 per day in 2009 prices.
- **Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana:** Providing additional wage employment and food security, alongside creation of durable community assets in rural areas.
- Empowerment of Women.
- Scheduled Caste Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan.
- Information, Education and Communication.
- International Cooperation.
- E-Governance Activities.

Technology

- Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART)
- Training Division
- Telecom connectivity constitutes an important part of the effort to upgrade the rural infrastructure. Under the Bharat Nirman Programme, it will be ensured that 66,822 revenue villages in the country, which have not yet been provided with a Village Public Telephone (VPT), shall be covered. Out of the above villages, connectivity in 14,183 remote and far flung villages will be provided through digital satellite phone terminals.

Infrastructure

Programmes such as Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), National Scheme on Welfare of Fishermen, Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) and Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC) play an important role in the infrastructure development.

7. Sustainable Rural Development

Sustainable Rural Development is improving the quality of life for the rural poor by developing capacities that promote community participation, health and education, food security, environmental protection and sustainable economic growth, thereby enabling community members to leave the cycle of poverty and achieve their full potential.

This can be achieved by documenting lessons-learned in the field on practical solutions to challenges facing the rural poor. Sharing these lessons in a systematic framework so that underserved villagers receive the critical information on development activities they need to begin improving their difficult lives.

The Process

The dynamics of development processes reveal that rural development is a sequence of four, clearly identifiable development phases.



Key Themes Found in Sustainable Rural Development are:

- Community Participation
- Water and Sanitation
- Health and Hygiene
- Poverty Reduction & Disease Control
- Food Security and Agriculture
- Greater survival prospects for mothers and their infants
- Education & Equal Opportunities for Women
- Conservation and the protection of natural resources and the environment
- Economic Growth and Infrastructure Development
- Science & Technology



- Policy & Administration

8. Challenges Faced by the Government in Rural Development

- The financial, manpower and managerial resources devoted to the implementation of rural development programmes are utterly inadequate.
- It is being increasingly observed that the objectives of one programme conflict with those of others, and there is no perfect mechanism for reconciling them. Consequently, many programmes utterly fail in fulfilling their objectives.
- In many cases, instruments of rural development are not properly selected, and their levels are not consistent with the objectives they seek to achieve. They result in the wastage of valuable public resources, and unnecessary delays in achieving the objectives.
- The political parties, today, are guided more by party interests rather than by national interests.
- Better implementation of rural development programmes can be ensured only if those responsible for actual implementation are paid reasonably well, appropriately trained, and sufficiently motivated. But this has not been done as yet.

9. Conclusion

Government of India is taking lot many steps for the rural development as discussed above. But still there are many loopholes in this process. The removal of these loopholes or problems will accelerate the process of rural development in India. The role of governmental and non-governmental organizations in this regard is, indeed, commendable. But much remains to be done. If we all work together with undivided attention in this direction we can surely achieve success.

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