

Need of Rural Development in India for Nation Building

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ABSTRACT

The paper focuses on Rural Development in India. Rural areas are also known as the countryside or a 'village' in India. Rural development still remains the core of the overall development of the country. India is a country of villages and about 50% of the villages have very poor socio-economic conditions. Rural development is a term that concentrates on the actions taken for the development of rural areas to improve the economy. The paper deals Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), NABARD, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) and Rural Development Organizations in India.

Keywords: Rural, development, Panchayat, village, population, growth programme, agriculture, economic, infrastructure and organization

INTRODUCTION

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 as an integrated concept of growth and poverty elimination has been of paramount concern in all the consequent five year plans. Rural development programmes comprise of provision of basic infrastructure facilities, in the rural areas like schools, hospitals, roads, drinking water and electrification etc. There is also an urgent need to improve agriculture productivity in the rural areas. Villages are also to be provided social services like health and education for socio-economic development schemes are to be implemented for promotion of rural industry, increasing agriculture productivity and providing rural employment like assistance is to be provided to the individual families and their Self Help Groups (SHG) living below poverty line by providing productive resources through credit and subsidy.

India is a country of villages where about 75% of the population resides. A typical Indian village is characterized by abject poverty. Most of the villages have low levels of productivity and lack of basic amenities. There is lack of literacy, primary education and women's participation into social activities. There is high infant mortality ratio and high population growth rate in the rural areas of India. The lack of infrastructure and the basic minimum services has led to a large-scale exodus of the rural population from villages to cities. The government has made several policies to ameliorate the plight of the rural masses but it has not been able to do much in the right direction.

Gandhiji desired to establish the panchayats in Indian villages which would function as "mini republics" for their self-sustenance. He believed that "Indian independence must begin at the bottom-panchayats having full powers-every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its own affairs." However, after independence; the issue of rural empowerment was ignored. In 1952, the Community Development Programme was launched to seek people's participation and involvement in the field of rural reconstruction, but it failed to accomplish the desired results. The main cause of this failure was the absence of a governing body at the village level to coordinate with the state for implementation of the development programmes. The states favoured the setting up of Panchayati Raj Institutions and by 1959; the states of Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh introduced the three-tier system. The system operated at district, block and village level with an organic link among them. By the mid 60's the other states also adopted the Panchayati Raj.

Panchayati Raj system could not be successful mainly because of the purported lack of political will. Political leaders thought that the decentralization of powers and the rural development could lead to a general indifference towards them. Hence, the bureaucracy, by restricting resources, red tapism and corruption, thwarted the success of the Panchayati Raj.

Failure of land reforms in villages led to the control of Panchayats, by the rural elite, comprising landowners, money-landers, etc. The political parties also began to strengthen their bases at the grass root level and thoroughly politicized the Panchayati Raj system. All these led to the decline of the Panchayati Raj system and it failed to act as “agencies of development”.

In the absence of sufficient rural development, several socioeconomic infirmities overpowered the villagers. Some of these are illiteracy, child labour, exploitation of women, poor housing, lack of primary health care facilities, poor sanitation, unavailability of potable water and poor income from fragmented land holdings. According to the World Bank Report, one in every four persons living in abject poverty across the world is an Indian. The poor have not benefitted from the economic reforms. A survey has found that two thirds of the total numbers of illiterate persons are the women. In a nation of one billion, almost 8 per cent children have been denied primary education. In rural areas specially, the primary education suffers from poor infrastructure, roofless and boardless schools, which also accounts for poor enrollment and high dropout rate. Whereas the children are usually exploited as child labour, the adults continue to suffer as unorganized labour. Those working as marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans have found it impossible to get rid of their poverty. “The purpose of RIDF is to promote innovation in rural & agricultural sector through viable means. Effectiveness of the program depends upon many factors, but the type of organization to which the assistance is extended is crucial one in generating, executing ideas in optimum commercial way. Cooperative is member driven formal organization for socio-economic purpose, while SHG is informal one. NGO have more of social color while that of PRI is political one. Does the legal status of an institute influences effectiveness of the program? How & to what an extent? Cooperative type of organization is better (Financial efficiency & effectiveness) in functioning (agriculture & rural sector) compared to NGO, SHG & PRIs” (Vrajlal K. Sapovadia 2007)

The government launched the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) throughout the country on October 2, 1980. The aim of the programme was to provide self-employment opportunities to the rural poor living below the poverty line. Under this programme, a national scheme for Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) was also launched to benefit the youth in the age group of 18-35 years. Artisans were also provided the tool kits to start their work. To strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institution, the Parliament passed the 73rd amendment in December, 1992, giving them the constitutional status. The government also undertook the gigantic task of land reforms and about 21.39 lakh hectare of land was distributed among the 54.60 lakh landless and marginal landholders. To strengthen the Panchayati Raj Institution, the Parliament passed the 73rd amendment in December, 1992, giving them the constitutional status. The government also undertook the gigantic task of land reforms and about 21.39 lakh hectare of land was distributed among the 54.60 lakh landless and marginal landholders. “NABARD’s refinance fund from World Bank and Asian Development Bank to state co-operative agriculture and rural development banks (SCARDBs), state co-operative banks (SCBs), regional rural banks (RRBs), commercial banks (CBs) and other financial institutions approved by RBI. While the ultimate beneficiaries of investment credit can be individuals, partnership concerns, companies, State-owned corporations or co-operative societies, production credit is generally given to individuals” (<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/>)

The National Literacy Mission was launched in 1988 with an intention to bring about total literacy by 2005. The mission seems to be progressing well. Most of the marginal farmers have taken to dairying and have become a part of the White Revolution in India. Gujarat is the success story of cooperative dairying which has enabled a large number of villagers to improve their lot. The government has provided loans at low rates of interest to the rural entrepreneurs to start their own small-scale industries. “The Ministry of Rural Development, a branch of the Government of India, is entrusted with the task of accelerating the socio-economic development of rural India. Its focus is on special rural grants for health and education, piped filtered drinking water programs, public and affordable housing programs, public work programs and grants for rural roads and infrastructure. It also provides special grants to rural local bodies” (en.wikipedia.org)

The rural development in India is one of the most important factors for the growth of the Indian economy. India is primarily an agriculture-based country. Agriculture contributes nearly one-fifth of the gross domestic product in India. In order to increase the growth of agriculture, the government has planned several programmes pertaining to the rural development in India. “Recently in 2007–08, NABARD has started a new direct lending facility under 'Umbrella Programme for Natural Resource Management' (UPNRM). Under this facility financial support for natural resource management activities can be provided as a loan at reasonable rate of interest. Already 35 projects have been sanctioned involving loan amount of about Rs 1000 crore. The sanctioned projects include honey collection by tribal’s in Maharashtra, tussar value chain by a women's producer company ('MASUTA'), eco-tourism in Karnataka” (Kulkarni, Mahesh, 2010)

The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry and dairy are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. “The department run three national-level schemes: Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

for rural roads development, Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) rural employment and for rural housing, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana It handles the administration of District Rural Development Agency (DRDA), and has three autonomous organizations under it” (en.wikipedia.org)

The introduction of Bharat Nirman, a project set about the Government of India in collaboration with the State Governments and the Panchayat Raj Institutions is a major step towards the improvement of the rural sector The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 was introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development for improving the living conditions and its sustenance’s in the rural sector of India.

CONCLUSION

Recently, the Government has launched or renewed a number of rural development schemes, for example, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana, the Annapurna Yojana and Sworn Jayanti Gram Swa-Rozgar Yojana. With the new political vigour let us hope that the poverty and illiteracy will soon be eliminated from the villages of India. Rural development means an action plan for the economic and social upliftment of rural areas. Economic dimension encompasses providing both capacity and opportunities for the poor and low-income households in particular, benefit from the economic growth.

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