

SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT

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ABSTRACT

Rural development usually refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. India is emerging as a major power economy and there are signs of prosperity in our cities and urban centers. Unfortunately, our development is lost. The villagers are unable to march in the urban areas of rural India. About 70 percent of the total population continues to live in rural India, with no tangible impact. More than two-thirds of the people are not getting the benefit of economic development. In critical sectors like agriculture, infrastructure development and community and social services, and rural development as a whole, our performance is not commendable. In the rural areas agriculture is the main source of livelihood to the people. There is a direct relationship between agriculture production, income and the demand for industrial goods. People living in the rural areas have to struggle to earn wages or are forced to migrate to urban areas. The migration pattern varies with the region, opportunities and socio-economic status of the families.

KEYWORDS: Rural, Sustainable Development, Indian Economy.

INTRODUCTION

The people lives in rural areas are majorly depends on agriculture. The rural agricultural production & consumption process plays a predominant role in developing the Indian economy. The major objective of rural development is to increase farm productivity, for achieving rapid economic transformation, increasing profits to farmers and to increase the household outputs of selected agricultural products. The present article majorly focused on the various rural development strategies in field of agriculture, starting from management of land, labor and natural resources to the effective harvesting etc. sustainable development is focus on these entire activities for rural development.

Purpose of Sustainable Rural Development

The major Purpose of the rural development programs are:

- a. Enhanced the production and productivity in the rural areas.
- b. Maintain the growth of villagers with a greater socio-economic equity.
- c. Improvement in the ecological environment so that it may be conducive to growth and happiness.
- d. Develop broad based community participation in the process of development.

The Government is taking responsibility for uplifting the rural and the economically poorer regions. There is lot of public spending to improve the infrastructure, water and sanitation in these areas. However, these efforts are disparate, fragmented and piecemeal and not much improvement has been achieved in most of the villages.

There is a need for designing and building Smart Villages which are independent in providing welfare services and employment and yet well connected to the rest of the world.

A Village is a bundle of dozens of services delivered effectively to the residents and businesses in an efficient manner. These services could be location specific depending on the demography of the village and occupations of the residents.

These services such as Power, Water, Buildings, Retail, Health care, etc. were built several decades ago. New designs, technologies and management models should be used to upgrade the existing ones and in building the new ones. This requires standardization, use of IT and sensor networks.

Requires strategy, integrated planning and above all monitoring and execution of the activities using appropriate governance models Almost 70 per cent of the Indian population lives in villages. Therefore it is natural that for 'inclusive' development, the Government must focus on them. We must give top priority to the development of 'smart villages' preserving the sustainability of villages will positively impact cities in the long run.

In recent times, more cases of farmers' suicides due to crop failure have been reported. Even after 70 years of independence, we do not lack a 'support and guidance system'; nor do we have professional counseling for farmers. Many of them have no secondary source of income this is a major lacuna. The lack of job opportunities in villages coupled with less remunerative farming (except in the case of large land holdings) compels village youth to migrate to cities. There, many of them do not enjoy a reasonable quality of life because they manage to get only subsistence jobs. The migration is also unidirectional as they continue to live in cities in the hope of landing better jobs. In the long term, this leads to desertion from villages, dilution of village culture, reduced land under cultivation and, consequently, farm output. In the cities, uncontrolled migration adds to pollution, traffic problems, crime, and over burdening of civic amenities and infrastructure.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To find out the various initiatives initiated by the Government in the past
2. To study the steps taken by the government to improve the areas like agriculture, technology, education and infrastructure under rural development.
3. To ensure distributive Justice and equalization of opportunities in the society.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study is theoretical in nature and the required material for the study is collected through secondary sources like books, journals, reports.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Pre-Independence Experiments in Rural Development

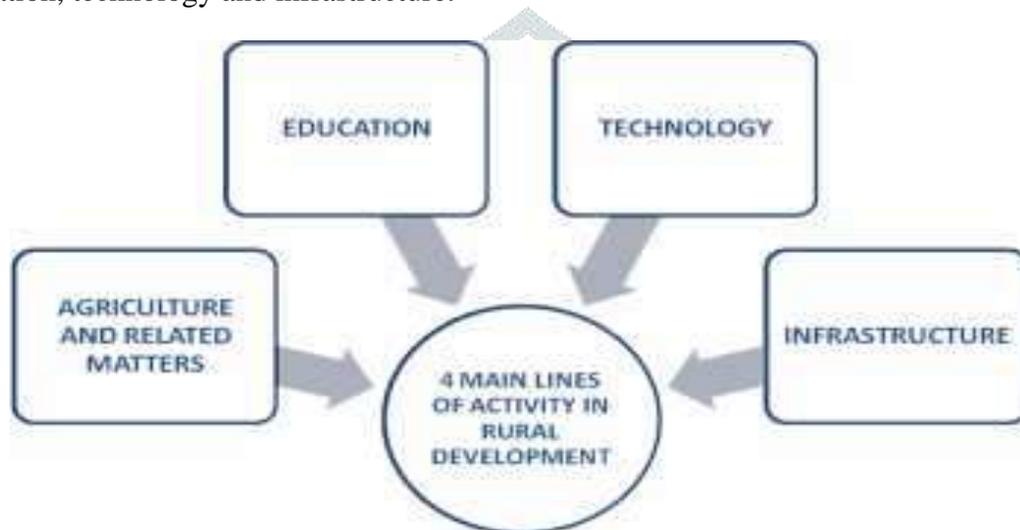
Prior to the independence in 1947, various individuals and institutions made experiments in rural development from time to time. The model village in Sunderban (Bengal) by Sir Daniel Hamilton in 1903, the Sriniketan experiment of Thakur Rabindranath Tagore in 1920, Brayne's Gurgaon experiment in 1921, 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.

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.

Agriculture Includes

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

B. 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:

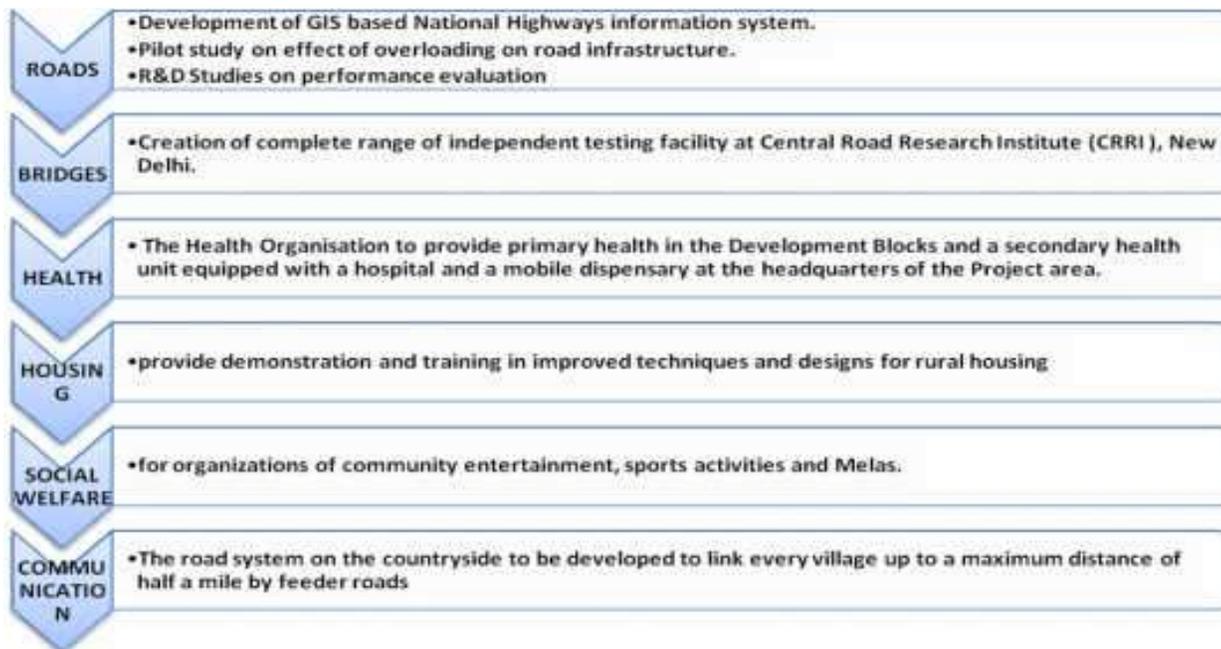
Supplementary Employment and Training: The unemployed and the under-employed persons in the village community be provided with gainful employment to such extent as is possible, by the development of cottage and small-scale industries. The training of farmers, village level workers, project supervisors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

C. 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.

D. 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.

Rural Development Schemes in India

The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) spearheads the country's efforts to reduce poverty in the rural areas. Until recently, its work was divided among three departments: (i) Department of Rural Development (ii) Department of Land Resources (iii) Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation. In July 2011, the Department of Drinking & Sanitation was converted into a separate ministry, the Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation.



The MoRD website states, “This Ministry’s main objective is to alleviate rural poverty and ensure improved quality of life for the rural population especially those below the poverty line.” Towards this end, it sponsors scores of development programmes, big and small, influencing ‘various spheres of rural life and activities, from income generation to environmental replenishment.’ A small number of programmes of the two ministries – MoRD and MDWS, however, account for a substantial share of the expenditure on rural development. Primarily, these include the following:

- 1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS):** This aims at enhancing the livelihood security of people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year to a rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
- 2. National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM):** The basic objective of the National Rural Livelihood Mission is to create efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor that enable them to increase their household incomes through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. It plans to cover 70 million households living below the poverty line (BPL) in rural India.

3. Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWDP): The main objectives of the IWDP are to restore ecological balance in a watershed by harnessing, conserving and developing degraded natural resources such as soil, water and vegetative cover, and thereby, help provide sustainable livelihoods to the local people.

4. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY): This scheme provides financial grants to rural BPL families and action for construction of houses and up-gradation of existing unserviceable kutcha houses.

5. National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP): The goal of this scheme is to provide adequate safe water for domestic uses on a sustainable basis.

6. Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA): The Total Sanitation Campaign, now renamed as the Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, assists Gram Panchayats to achieve comprehensive sanitation coverage.

ROLE OF NGOs AND SHGs IN SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Voluntary social services have been an integral part of the socio cultural and religious ethos of our society from ancient times. The objective has been to increase human capacities by promoting noneconomic factors such as education, health and nutrition, which in turn would speed up the process of economic development. The role of NGOs is both co-operative and complementary to the state.

The existence of NGOs assumes importance in the context of rural settings, as living conditions have deteriorated. State-NGO partnership alone cannot resolve all the socio-economic problems; hence it has to be in co-ordination with all agents of social change, i.e., the state, local self governments, the corporate sector, academics and civil society groups.

NGOs can play a significant role in strengthening local self government by facilitating interaction and co-operation with state departments and also acting as catalysts to effectively implement various departmental schemes. The role of voluntary agencies in the development of rural areas can be to supplement efforts of government for the upliftment of the poor and needy disseminate information about development schemes and programmes of the government to rural people.

Make people aware of the consequences of female feticides and imbalance in sex ratio. Mobilize financial resources from the community. Help in upgradation of skills of rural youths for self-employment opportunities, facilitate the formation of self-help groups and micro-finance. Ensure protection of women and children's rights and abolish ills of child labour and, make available technologies in a simpler form to the rural poor.

SHGs: When individuals, on their own initiative, act in a conglomeration to meet their individual and common needs with the primary focus on self-reliance, it can be called a Self Help Group (SHG). The benefits of self-help groups are based on cooperation rather than competition. They provide benefits of economies of scale, cost effective alternatives for different financial services, collective learning, democratic and participatory culture and a firm base and platform for dialogue and co-operation.

SHGs develop from a common binding force, common need, interest and concern, especially for the rural poor. It is this common binding force, which makes SHGs function more efficiently. The effectiveness of SHGs would be considerably enhanced if a symbiosis could be worked out between them and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). The key to this is the integration of SHGs with the democratically elected and empowered panchayats. There is urgent need to work out a mechanism that will allow the SHGs and the PRIs to work in coordination and establish a system of supporting each other's work.

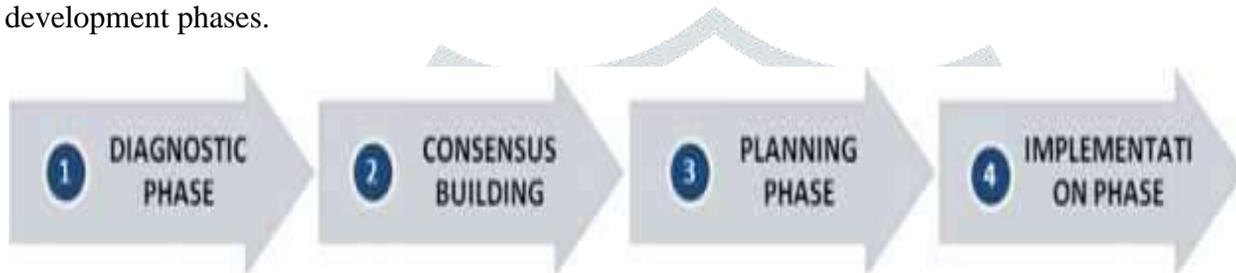
SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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.



ISSUES IN SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Some key issues have emerged from the studies, as follows:

Goals for rural development: The prejudices of various institutions range from traditional, such as the need to increase employment, reduce rural poverty and improve infrastructure, to a new agenda, including building social capital, tackling gender imbalances, local Including enterprise, supporting organic agriculture. And improve monitoring and evaluation.

The role of the environment: Sustainability is still not a major objective of rural development policies nor the institutions that administer them. Many institutions have not yet recognized an environmental agenda for these policies or are struggling with long-term environmental limitations or trade-offs inherent in a sustainable development approach.

Social Values: There is a growing sense that it is necessary to involve local people more directly in policy making, without knowing how this can be done in practice. Many organizations recognize the need to strengthen consulting and partnerships but most experience to date suggests that this has not yet translated into policy planning and implementation.

There is a widespread feeling that a new agenda and style change requires more institutional adaptation than ever. Institutional revival is seen as important by many actors who are most committed to an integrated and sustainable rural policy.

Rural-urban interface: The need to coordinate a broad range of policies affecting rural areas is beginning to be recognized by the country.

Distribution, reproduction and administration: Despite the goal of the Agenda 2000 reform to achieve administrative simplification of measures for rural development, all national reports show in the rural development framework remain very complex.

CONCLUSION

As discussed above, the Government of India is taking several steps for sustainable rural development. But still there are many flaws in this process. Removing these flaws or problems will accelerate the process of sustainable rural development in India. The role of governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs and SHGs) in this regard is indeed commendable. But much remains to be done. If we all work in this direction with undivided attention then we can definitely achieve success. Hence there is a great need to follow effective rural development strategies to improve the quality of life in rural areas, self-employment to sustainable rural people and to benefit farmers for improving the Indian economy.

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