

THE ROLE AND IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN INDIA'S RURAL DEVELOPMENTS: AN OVERVIEW

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Abstract

Rural developments are the root causes of the total infrastructures developments in Indian context, its growth will impinge on people to progress in terms of social, economical and political. According to Mahatma Gandhi rural developments are the vertebrate of the every country, in which specifically he said that India shall be able to develop its people's life through the rural developments. Without this developments entire country will seem as a handicapped and ugly because, prime minister to village administrators are elected by the village people, whose life should taken care by the government of India through strengthening local government administrations.

Keywords

Rural development, Administration, India's development, Village developments and Good governance

Introduction

The grassroots units of local self government have been considered as instruments of socio-economic development in rural India. Involvement of people at the grassroot level is the most important means of bringing about socio-economic development. Panchayat Raj is defined as institutional expression of democratic decentralization in India. Decentralization of power to the Panchayats is seen as a means of empowering people and involving them in decision-making process. Local governments being closer to the people can be more responsible to local needs and can make better use of resources. The democratic system in a country can be ensured only if there is mass participation in the governance. Therefore the system of democratic decentralization popularly known as Panchayat Raj is considered as an instrument to ensure democracy and socio-economic development.

Mahatma Gandhiji explains the theory of m.k.Gandhi and panchyat Grama Swaraj (Panchayat Raj) as follows:

“My idea of village swaraj is that it is a complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity. Thus every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation and playground for adults and children. The government of the village will be conducted by a panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum

prescribed qualification. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary and executive combined to operate for its year of office. Here there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. The individual is the architect of his own government. The law of non-violence rules him and his government. He and his village are able to defy the might of a world. For the law, governing every villager, is that he will suffer death in the defence of his and his villages' honour”.

A.R.Desai, while analyzing the need for the study of Panchayat Raj in sociology, pointed out that Land Reforms, Cooperatives, Panchayati Raj and Community Development Movements are supposed to be four solid pillars on which a prosperous, dynamic and genuinely democratic rural social system is attempted to be built by the government of independent India.

Panchayati Raj is also claimed as a real democratic political apparatus which would bring the masses into active political control from below, from the vast majority of the weaker, poorer sections of rural India.

The constitution of Panchayati Raj is not the sweet will of the state government. It is the result of the provisions made in Indian constitution. The Directive Principles of State Policy lays down that the state shall take steps to organize village panchayats to enable them to function as units of self government.

The objective of constitution of Panchayati Raj was mainly two-fold: (i) decentralization of power and (ii) development of villages. Yet another reason for the creation of Panchayati Raj was to seek the cooperation and participation of masses of people in the national reconstruction and development.

In recent years, a sincere effort has been made to activate the panchayati raj institutions towards integrated rural development. To achieve this goal, it is legitimate on the part of the Panchayat Raj officials that they should perceive the rural problem correctly, motivate themselves in that direction and mobilize the public interest towards rural reconstruction.

Rural Development

The term '*development*' refers to "the process of (1) a general improvement in the levels of living, together with, (2) decreasing inequalities of income distribution, and (3) the capacity to sustain continuous improvements overtime. A great deal of literature is available on rural development, and strategy for rural development. But the basic theme of all such studies pertains to the question of development of India's rural community. The magnitude of the task of rural development with a view to alleviating poverty, eliminating unemployment, reducing inequalities and increasing productivity as well as consumption and literacy level, etc. demands organisational and institutional efforts on the widest possible scale. A location specific planning and intensive utilisation of local resources are required for a more efficient implementation of development programmes in rural areas. In all these respects Panchayati Raj institutions have a significant role to play.

The three primary goals of rural development are raising agricultural and rural productivity, raising community solidarity and institutionalization of equality.

Rural development primarily implies generalised increases in (1) rural labour productivity resulting in growing income, and (2) rural employment opportunities sufficient to absorb large number of new entrants into the rural local labour force. Agricultural development is required for the simple reason that in most developing countries practically all the rural population depends on agriculture for employment, education, health and nutrition, consumption including food, housing, and such services as water supply, electricity, transportation, entertainment, police and fire protection, and so forth”.

Rural development is a strategy, designed to improve the economic and social life of people in villages. It calls for the extension of the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek livelihood in the rural areas: the small and marginal farmers, tenants and the landless. It also involves optimum utilization of the natural and human resources of a given area for the enrichment of the quality of life of its population. Rural development constitutes a basic campaign for faster economic development.

The concept of rural development encompasses wider government initiative and rural development spectrum today. It is a process of modernization and mobilization of rural societies and its transition from traditional isolation to integration with national economy for faster economic development and welfare of common masses. Viewed thus, the objectives of rural development consist of (a) improved productivity, increased employment and higher income for weaker sections as well as the minimum acceptable levels of food, shelter, education, health, etc., (b) a decreasing inequality in the distribution of rural income and in rural-urban imbalances in income and economic opportunities, and (c) the capacity of rural sector to sustain and accelerate the pace of improvements overtime.

Thus, the main aim of rural development is to break the vicious circle of poverty through economically better and improved production, reasonable distribution and better living standards and balanced development among the various sections of rural population. It is not to be defined merely in terms of economic outputs, or indicators like increase in agricultural income as social indicators of development cannot be ignored. Real rural development should always reflect improvement in the standards of living of the poor.

Indian experience and experiment of rural development reveals the utilization of a number of changing strategies. Realizing the utmost need for extension and development services in rural areas, in the post-independence period, the government of India has initiated a number of programmes so as to solve the chronic problems of the villages. Guy Hunter (1977) has rightly remarked that there may not be any other developing country in the world which over the past 33 years has invented and, put into practice various measures in the field of rural development plans which spread over different fields like agriculture, industry, trade, commerce, education both general and technical, social welfare, transport, communications, etc. The basic objective behind all programmes implemented by the government of India was an integrated development of the farmers, the agricultural labourers and the rural artisans and to improve their standard of living by means of reducing poverty, raising productivity and increasing employment opportunities.

Conclusion

In all in all developments of the rural development, village panchyat administration have played much significant role .Its role and activism seems to be increased day by day in over all rural development in Indian context .Development and changes have taken place in India's rural development owing to village panchyat effective and efficient administration .Still its needs lot of financial energies to do rest of newly coined assignments from state and central side.

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