

INDIAN AGRICULTURE POLICIES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN POST INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

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Abstract:

India, since independence has made a significant progress in rural development with an integrated approach towards improving the quality of life of the rural poor and by ensuring equity and effective people's participation. The thrust of rural development programs has been to make a frontal attack on poverty through special employment generation programs, productive asset transfer through institutional credit and subsidy programs and programs of rural housing, drinking water and sanitation. Social security programs were designed for providing assistance to the destitute and poor families. The Government has undertaken various programs for development of wastelands, desert and drought prone areas and land reforms in the country. Assistance and encouragement to voluntary agencies and training of functionaries of rural development forms part of the emphasis on accelerated rural development. After the independence, community development assumed high priority. A pilot community development project was launched in 1948 through the Etawah Project. Later in 1952, the Government of India launched 55 Community Development Projects, each covering about 300 villages or a population of 30,000. These programs were multi-dimensional but the major emphasis was placed on agricultural production, as the areas selected for launching the project were located in irrigated areas or where the rainfall was assured. In 1953, the National Extension Service Project was launched with similar objectives to cover larger areas, including the dry regions. This project of three-year duration, demarcated the blocks of 150-300 villages as manageable units for initiating community development programs.

Key Words: Rural Development, Indian Policies, Government.

INTRODUCTION:

Rural development has been an integral part of nation's socio-economic development. Rural development can no longer be identified with mere increase in Gross National Product or even per capita national income. The increased income should be distributed so as to result in significant diminution of inequalities of income and wealth. Every rural family should have its reasonable share in the generation of GNP and sharing increased per capita income. Integrated rural development means optimum utilization of natural and human resources of a given rural area for the enrichment of the quality of life of its population.

Optimum utilization emphasizes production, distribution, employment, upliftment of rural poor above poverty line and environmental harmony. Rural economic activity is considered in the context of market economy and the inadequacy in the supply of capital and skills in the rural areas. Integrated rural development considers the links of the rural area concerned with its market relations, the two-way mobility of capital, labor, policies on economic growth and social justice.

PEOPLE PARTICIPATION AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

Integrated development of rural and undeveloped areas has been an issue of concern throughout the world. In Indian context the thrust of each Government activity since freedom has been to empower marginalized segments of society but the approach has suffered from over exposure and under implementation. There has been plethora of case studies on the causes of under development but practically at grass root level an impactful and effective solution to generate a widespread transformation is still awaited. One aspect that is emphatically appearing from the studies is lack of awareness, information and initiative among the unprivileged segments of the country. Even the Knowledge Commission reiterated vital need of formation of knowledge society by empowering the masses through assisting them identify and utilize knowledge in resource generation. The masses need to be trained to cope with new situation by fulfilling information needs linking to their priorities and possibilities. Another outcome of developmental studies is that the rural poor have little or no participation in their own developmental efforts which has appeared as a critical bottleneck in initiating and sustaining development of underdeveloped areas. The impact of non-participation is lack of control of the common masses on their own environment which has been the major concern in front of grassroots empowerment. The starting point for development cannot be anything else other than the people themselves. The developmental efforts have often concentrated on physical and economic factors, while the human element is ignored.

POST INDEPENDENT REFORMS IN INDIA:

1. ***Community Development Program [1952] and National Extension Services [1953]:*** With the launching of Community Development Program and establishing a network of National Extension Services in the villages a beginning was made to create awareness among rural communities of the potential and means of development. This institutional infrastructure at grass-root level facilitated abolition of intermediary landlords system and implemented land reforms that enabled farmers to adopt technologies in agriculture.
2. ***Panchayati Raj [1959]:*** Panchayati Raj was created on October 2, 1959 on the recommendations of Balvantray Mehta Study Team (1957). The team had suggested a scheme of democratic decentralisation for streamlining the Community Development programme (1952), which had been introduced to bring about a silent revolution in rural society by awakening the dormant forces of progress in it. The scheme provided for a three tier structure of Panchayati Raj with the Gram Panchayat at the base, the Panchayat Samiti in the middle and Zila Parishad at the top. The Panchayati

Raj underwent the phase of development (1959-1964), the phase of stagnation in (1964-1971) and the phase of decay (1971- 1977). The phase of its revival started in 1978. And resulted in the enactment of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act (1992). The phase of development in fact had started after the submission of the Report by the Balvantray Mehta Study Team in 1957. The first step in that direction was its approval by the National Development Council. This was followed by the Conference of the Ministers of Local Self Government of various states at Hyderabad. It was resolved to accept the scheme of democratic decentralization suggested by the Team and approved by the Council. However, it was also decided that every state should have the freedom to adopt the scheme as per its requirements. But there should be democratically elected and organically linked bodies at the village, the block and the district levels. Moreover, there should be a genuine decartelization of powers to the Panchayati Raj institutions. Rajasthan was the first states to introduce it on October 2 1959 By 1962, the Panchayati Raj had been set up in almost all the states of Indian Union. This happened because the Congress party was not only ruling in the centre but also in all the states India except Kerala. Another reason was the support to the Panchayati Raj by the then Prime Minister of India and the leader of the Congress party, Jawaharlal Nehru. The credit for it should also be given to S. K. Dey, the first Union Minister of Community Development, Cooperation and Panchayati Raj (1957-1966). It was he who had convinced Nehru on the necessity of Panchayati Raj for the success of parliamentary democracy in India. He was of the view that the Gram Sabha should be linked with the Lok Sabha for this purpose. The phase of stagnation started in 1964 after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru because his successor as Prime Minister, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri did not share Nehru's enthusiasm for democratic decentralisation. Moreover he had to give priority to increase in agricultural production on account of the food shortage. The growth of the Panchayati Raj remained stagnant during 1964-1971.

3. ***High Yielding Variety Programme [1960]:*** Green revolution has been the most spectacular success story from India which made the country self reliant in foodgrain production. The success is manifestation of futuristic vision, faith, courage and the sincere efforts on the part of the scientists and the Government of the day. One choice before the country was to go for spread of new seeds of high yielding varieties (HYV) of wheat and rice. Dr. M. S. Swaminathan is one of the main architects of Indian Green Revolution, which started in 1960s and pulled the country from pawl and gloom of hunger and malnutrition and saved millions of lives.

RECENT RUNNING GOVERNMENT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

1. ***Indira Awaas Yojana [1995]:*** IAY is a flagship scheme of the Ministry of Rural Development to provide houses to the poor in the rural areas. The objective of the Indira Awaas Yojana is primarily to help construction/upgradation of dwelling units of members of Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, freed bonded labourers, minorities in the below poverty line and other below poverty line non-SC/ ST rural households by providing them a lump sum financial assistance.

2. **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana [2000]:** Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched on 25th December 2000 as a fully funded Centrally Sponsored Scheme to provide all weather road connectivity in rural areas of the country. The programme envisages connecting all habitations with a population of 500 persons and above in the plain areas and 250 persons and above in hill States, the tribal and the desert areas. According to latest figures made available by the State Governments under a survey to identify Core Network as part of the PMGSY programme, about 1.67 lakh Unconnected Habitations are eligible for coverage under the programme. This involves construction of about 3.71 lakh km. of roads for New Connectivity and 3.68 lakh km. under upgradation.
3. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act [2005]:** The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (MNREGA) was notified on September 7, 2005. The objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.
4. **National Social Assistance Programme [1995]:** The National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) then comprised of National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS). These programmes were meant for providing social assistance benefit to the aged, the BPL households in the case of death of the primary breadwinner and for maternity. These programmes were aimed to ensure minimum national standards in addition to the benefits that the States were then providing or would provide in future. Thus, presently NSAP now comprises of the following five schemes:- (1) Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS): Under the scheme, BPL persons aged 60 years or above are entitled to a monthly pension of Rs. 200/- up to 79 years of age and Rs.500/- thereafter. (2) Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS): BPL widows aged 40-59 years are entitled to a monthly pension of Rs. 200/-. (3) Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS): BPL persons aged 18-59 years with severe and multiple disabilities are entitled to a monthly pension of Rs. 200.
5. **National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS):** Under the scheme a BPL household is entitled to lump sum amount of money on the death of primary breadwinner aged between 18 and 64 years. The amount of assistance is Rs. 10.000. (5) Annapurna: Under the scheme, 10 kg of food grains per month are provided free of cost to those senior citizens who, though eligible, have remained uncovered under NOAPS.
6. **PURA [2004-05]:** PURA aims to achieve a holistic and accelerated development of compact areas around a potential growth centre in a gram panchayat (or a group of gram panchayats) by providing livelihood opportunities and urbanamenities to improve the quality of life in rural areas. It recognizes the rapid growth potential of rural India if enhanced connectivity and infrastructure are provided. The rural population would then be empowered and enabled to create opportunities and livelihoods for

themselves on a sustainable and growing basis. Aajeevika Skills: is the skill and placement initiative of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India (MoRD). It evolved out of the need to diversify incomes of the rural poor and to cater to the occupational aspirations of their youth. The programme's focus is on skilling and placement in the formal sector for rural youth who are poor.

7. ***Aajeevika Skills [2009]:*** Its origins in the 'Special Projects' component of the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY). Besides helping to reduce poverty, it rides on the hopes and aspirations for a better quality of life in large sections of the rural poor. Aajeevika Skills aims to skill rural youth who are poor and provide them with jobs having regular monthly wages at or above the minimum wages. Skilling and placement under Aajeevika Skills involves eight distinct steps i. Awareness building within the community on the opportunities. ii. Identifying rural youth who are poor iii. Mobilising rural youth who are interested. iv. Counselling of youth and parents. v. Selection based on aptitude. vi. Imparting knowledge industry linked skills and attitude that enhance employability.
8. ***Watershed Development (Revised– 2001):*** The Watershed approach has conventionally aimed at treating degraded lands with the help of low cost and locally accessed technologies such as in-situ soil and moisture conservation measures, afforestation etc. and through a participatory approach that seeks to secure close involvement of the user-communities. The broad objective was the promotion of the overall economic development and improvement of the socio-economic conditions of the resource poor sections of people inhabiting the programme areas. Many projects designed within this approach were, at different points of time, taken up by the Government of India. The Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and the Desert Development Programme (DDP) were brought into the watershed mode in 1987. The Integrated Wasteland Development Programme (IWDP) launched in 1989 under the aegis of the National Wasteland Development Board also aimed at the development of wastelands on watershed basis. The focus of these programmes has, with the advent of the Department of Land Resources (DoLR) shifted to the enhancement of the viability and quality of rural livelihood support systems.
9. ***HARIYALI [2003]:*** New projects under the area development programmes shall be implemented in accordance with the Guidelines for Hariyali with effect from 1.4.2003. The main objectives are: Objectives Harvesting every drop of rainwater for purposes of irrigation, plantations including horticulture and floriculture, pasture development, fisheries etc. to create sustainable sources of income for the village community as well as for drinking water supplies. Ensuring overall development of rural areas through the Gram Panchayats and creating regular sources of income for the Panchayats from rainwater harvesting and management.
10. ***National Horticulture Mission [2005]:*** To promote holistic growth of the horticulture sector through area based regionally differentiated strategies, the National Horticulture Mission (NHM) was launched in the country, during the Xth Plan with effect from 2005-06. The scheme has enhanced horticulture production, improved nutritional security and income support to farm households and others; has

established convergence and synergy among multiple on-going and planned programmes for horticulture development. The scheme has also helped in generating employment for skilled and unskilled persons, especially unemployed youth.

- 11. Support to State Extension Programmes for Extension Reforms [2005]:** The scheme was launched in May, 2005 with an objective to support State Governments efforts to revitalize their extension system. The scheme promotes a decentralized farmer-driven and farmer-accountable extension system through a new institutional arrangement for technology dissemination in the form of Agriculture.
- 12. Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana [2007]:** To provide benefits to the farmer community, the Ministry of Agriculture has launched the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) during the Financial Year 2007-08 to encourage the States to invest more towards agriculture and allied sectors so as to achieve 4% annual growth. This would help in increasing the production and productivity. The Ministry has envisaged an outlay of Rs.25,000/- crore for the 12th Five Year Plan. The scheme requires the States to prepare District and State Agriculture Plans for creation of such infrastructure, which are essential to catalyse the existing production scenario for achieving higher production. The scheme provides adequate flexibility and autonomy to the State Governments in selection, planning and implementation of project under this new flagship scheme.
- 13. National Food Security Mission [2007]:** Understanding the importance of food security, the National Development Council in its 53rd meeting held on 29th May, 2007 adopted a resolution to launch Food Security Mission comprising of rice, wheat and pulses to increase the production of rice by 10 million tons, wheat by 8 million tons and pulses by 2 million tons by the end of Eleventh Plan. Accordingly National Food Security Mission has been launched since Rabi 2007 with a financial outlay of Rs. 4882 crore (Eleventh plan period).
- 14. Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana [2009]:** To improve the present status of women in Agriculture, and to enhance the opportunities for her empowerment, Government of India has announced “Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana” (MKSP), as a sub component of the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) and decided to provide support to the tune of Rs. 100 crore during 2010-11 budget. The primary objective of the MKSP is to empower women in agriculture by making systematic investments to enhance their participation and productivity, as also create and sustain agriculture based livelihoods of rural women. Conclusion: The sustainable development intervention in the rural areas largely depends on the successful and effective implementation of rural development programmes. Since independence the country has formulated various rural development programmes and has restructured and revamped them envisaging their wider outreach and acceptability. However, the issues, challenges and concerns relating to the implementation of the rural development programmes have remained more or less the same. The need of the hour is the convergence of all development interventions at the grass-root level so as to enhance necessary infrastructure in the backward regions and ensure capacity building and skill up-gradation.

- 15. Atal Pension Yojana:** is a government-backed pension scheme in India targeted at the unorganised sector. It was originally mentioned in the 2015 Budget speech by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in February 2015. It was formally launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 9 May in Kolkata. As of May 2015, only 20% of India's population has any kind of pension scheme, this scheme aims to increase the number.
- 16. Deen Dayal Upadhaiya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana:** It is a Government of India Project launched in 2015 to engage rural youth specially BPL and SC/ST segment of population, in gainful employment through skill training programmes.
- 17. Digital India Programme:** Aims to ensure that government services are available to citizens electronically and people get benefited from the latest information and communication technology launched in 1 July 2015.
- 18. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikash Yojana:** is a skill development initiative scheme of the Government of India for recognition and standardisation of skills launched 16 July 2015.
- 19. Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra:** Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Pariyojana' is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. Of India, to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendra's known as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra. Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra (PMBJK) have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs launched in 1 July 2015.
- 20. Standup India:** The objective of the Stand-Up India scheme is to facilitate bank loans between INR 10 lakh (INR 1,00,000) and INR 1 Crore (INR 10,000,000) to at least one Scheduled Caste (SC) or Scheduled Tribe (ST) borrower and at least one woman borrower per bank branch for setting up a greenfield enterprise. This enterprise may be in manufacturing, services or the trading sector. In case of non-individual enterprises at least 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or Woman entrepreneur. Loans can be applied online through the Standup Mitra or Udyami Mitra portals launched 5 April 2016.
- 21. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana:** Launched 1 May 2016 to provide free LPG connections to women from below poverty line families.

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