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RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN INDIA – A STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The Rural development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is considered as a “Silver Bullet” for eradicating rural poverty and unemployment, by way of generating demand for productive labour force in villages. It provides an alternative source of livelihood which will have an impact on reducing migration, restricting child labour, alleviating poverty, and making villages self-sustaining through productive assets creation such as road construction, cleaning up of water tanks, soil and water conservation work, etc. For which it has been considered as the largest anti-poverty programme in the world. In this paper, based on the secondary data, an attempt has been made to comprehensively understand the development effort to rebuild the rural life and livelihood on the basis of various secondary data.

Keywords: India; Rural Development; Development; Development Projects.

INTRODUCTION

In India, out of total population of 125 crores, 83.3 crores live in rural areas (Census of India, 2011). Thus, nearly 70 per cent of the India’s population lives in rural areas. These rural populations can be characterised by mass poverty, low levels of literacy and income, high level of unemployment, and poor nutrition and health status. In order to tackle these specific problems, a number of rural development programmes are being implemented to create opportunities for improvement of the quality of life of these rural people. The term rural development is the overall development of rural areas to improve the quality of life of rural people. And it is a process leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people especially the poor (Ramesh, 2012). The rural developmental programmes intend to reduce the poverty and unemployment, to improve the health and educational status and to fulfil the basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing of the rural population. To improve the conditions of rural people, Government of India launched some schemes through the planning commission of India such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Rastriya Sama Vikas Yojana (RSVY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), etc. All these schemes are aimed to reduce the gap between rural and urban people which would help reduce imbalances and speed up the development process.

India is a country of villages and its development is synonymous with the development of the people living in rural areas. India is a vast and second most populous country of the world. (According to the 1991 census, 74.28 per cent population of our country reside in the country side). But a big part of this population has been leading an uncertain economic life due to non-synchronization of employment opportunities in agriculture sector because of the fast growing population. Rural development has been receiving increasing attention of the governments across the world. In the Indian context rural development assumes special significance for two important reasons. First about two thirds of the population still lives in villages and there cannot be any progress so long as rural areas remain backward. Second, the backwardness of the rural sector would be a major impediment to the overall progress of the economy. India is predominately an agricultural country and farming is their main occupation. In terms of methods of production, social organisation and political mobilization, rural sector is extremely backward and weak. Moreover, technical developments in field of agriculture have increased the gap between the rich and poor, as the better off farmers adopted modern farm technology to a greater extent than the smaller ones. The all India Rural Credit Review Committee in its report warned “If the fruits of development continue to be denied to the large sections of rural community, while prosperity accrues to some, the tensions social and economic may not only upset the process of orderly and peaceful change in the rural economy but even frustrate the national affords to set up agricultural production.

For India, 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



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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, labour, policies on economic growth and social justice. Rural development has attracted the attention of the economists right from the Mercantilist era and Adam Smith down to Marse and Keynes, yet they were mainly interested in the problems which were essentially static in nature and largely related to a western European framework of social and cultural institutions. Their interest in the economics of development has been stimulated by the wave of political resurgence that swept the Asian and African nations after Second World War and thought to promote rapid economic development coupled with the realization on the part of the developed nations that ‘poverty anywhere is a treat to prosperity everywhere’. As Meier and Baldwin have remarked “A study of the poverty of nations has even more urgency than a study of the wealth of Nations.” The Economists differ on its definition as someone says increase in the economy’s real national income over a long period and some says about the increase in the per capita real income of the economy which are not convincing as it lacks of human welfare.

RECENT GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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.

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.

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.

MGNREGA: THE HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

In the post-Independence period, the Government wanted to uplift the socioeconomic condition (SEC) of their people who mainly depended upon forest products and daily labour. Another important component of the governmental perspective was to settle the rural population as agriculture population. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005, guarantees 100 days of employment in a financial year to any rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work. The Act has come into force with effect from February, 2006 in 200 districts initially and later on, it was extended to all the rural districts of India from the financial year 2008-09. MGNREGA has come after almost 56 years of experience of other rural employment programmes, which include both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and those launched by State Governments. These comprise the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) 1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) 1993- 99. Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) 2001; National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) 2004. Among these programmes, the SGRY and NFFWP have been merged with NREGA in 2005.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

We can know the deepness of poverty in India. We find components to alleviate poverty. We can measures to poverty on the basis of absolute and relative criteria. We can know where and how the poverty alleviation programmes are to be implemented. We can measure and identify poverty in rural area. Government can review the alleviation programmes implemented by them, know the present situation regarding the monetary position of our country, by support of the study. Govt. machinery can identify the practical difficulties raised while implementing poverty alleviation programme. Hidden and concealed poverty of rural masses can be



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identified, measured and steps could be taken accordingly to alleviate poverty. In this way, this study would be immensely important to planners, administrators, policy-makers, Government machinery, Reserve Bank of India, academic community, researcher, future researchers, students and the people as well.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the rural development programmes in India.
2. To understand the government schemes and programmes in India.
3. To analyze the rural development and function of the government.

METHODOLOGY

The present study based on secondary data. The data was collected books, journals, articles, news papers, government reports, internet etc.,

ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE GOVERNMENT

The Government's policy and programmes have laid emphasis on poverty alleviation, generation of employment and income opportunities and provision of infrastructure and basic facilities to meet the needs of rural poor. The Ministry of Rural development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and diary are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. The introduction of Bharat Nirman, a project by the Government of India in collaboration with the State Governments and the Panchayati 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 in the rural sector of India. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is engaged in legislations for the social and economic improvement of the rural populace. The ministry consists of three department's viz., Department of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources and Department of Drinking Water Supply. Under the department of rural development, there are three autonomous bodies viz., Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) and National Rural Road Development Agency (NRRDA).

However, various ministries in the central government are engaged directly or indirectly for implementation of many programmes and schemes for the development of rural areas like Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Family Welfare, New and Renewable Energy, Science and Technology, Women and Child Development and Tribal affairs etc. In addition, to strengthen the grass root level democracy, the Government is constantly endeavouring to empower Panchayat Raj Institutions in terms of functions, powers and finance. Grama Sabha, NGOs, Self-Help Groups and PRIs have been accorded adequate roles to make participatory democracy meaningful and effective.

Although concerted efforts have been initiated by the Government of India through several plans and measures to alleviate poverty in rural India, there still remains much more to be done to bring prosperity in the lives of the people in rural areas. At present, technology dissemination is uneven and slow in the rural areas. Good efforts of organizations developing technologies, devices and products for rural areas could not yield high success. Experiences of many countries suggest that technological development fuelled by demand has a higher dissemination rate. However, in India, technology developers for rural areas have been catering to needs (with small improvement), rather than creating demand. There is no industry linkage machinery to create demand-based-technology market for rural communities. Besides, there is also an imbalance between strategies and effective management programmes. Propagation of technology/schemes for rural development is slow and there is a lacking in wider participation of different stakeholders. An ideal approach may therefore, include the government, panchayats, village personals, researchers, industries, NGOs and private companies to not only help in reducing this imbalance, but also to have a multiplier effect on the overall economy.

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY)

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. 2. 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. Bharat Nirman 3 the President of India, in his address to Parliament on 25th February, 2005, announced a major business plan for rebuilding rural India



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called Bharat Nirman. The finance minister, in his Budget Speech of 28th February, 2005, identified Rural Roads as one of the six components of Bharat Nirman and has set a goal to provide connectivity to all habitations with a population of 1000 persons and above (500 persons and above in the case of hilly or tribal areas) with an all-weather road. A total of 59564 habitations are proposed to be provided new connectivity under Bharat Nirman. This would involve construction of 1,46,185 Kms of rural roads. In addition to new connectivity, Bharat Nirman envisages upgradation/renewal of 1,94,130 Kms of existing rural roads. This comprises 60% upgradation from Government of India and 40% renewal by the State Governments.

GRAM UDAY SE BHARAT UDAY ABHIYAN

Improve rural livelihoods and promote rural development Strengthen the Panchayati Raj across the country Increase ‘social harmony’ Create Awareness-information regarding agriculture schemes will be shared foster farmers’ progress.

National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD & PR), an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Rural Development, is a premier national centre of excellence in rural development and panchayati raj. It builds capacities of development functionaries, elected representatives, and other stakeholders through inter-related activities of training, research and consultancy. Originally established as National Institute of Community Development in 1958 at Mussoorie, the Institute was shifted to its Hyderabad Campus in 1965 and renamed as National Institute of Rural Development in 1977. Recognising the need for more focus on strengthening Panchayati Raj system and Capacity building of Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) functionaries, as per the decision of the General Council of the Institute, the name of NIRD has been changed as National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD & PR) w.e.f December 4, 2013. The Institute is located in the serene rural surroundings of Rajendranagar in a campus extending 174.21 acres about 15 km away from the historic city of Hyderabad. The National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD & PR) celebrated its golden jubilee year of establishment in 2008.

CONCLUSION

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. Rural Development in India, 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 programs pertaining to Rural Development in India. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and diary are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. Rural development in India has witnessed several changes over the years in its emphasis, approaches, strategies and programmes. It has assumed a new dimension and perspectives as a consequence. Rural development can be richer and more meaningful only through the participation of clientele of development. Just as implementation is the touchstone for planning, people's participation is the centre-piece in rural development. People's participation is one of the foremost pre-requisites of development process both from procedural and philosophical perspectives. For the development planners and administrators, it is important to solicit the participation of different groups of rural people, to make the plans participatory.

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