

RURAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES OF INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

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ABSTRACT

There are no universally acceptable approaches when it comes for rural development. The term “rural development” means “over all development of rural areas” which includes improving the quality of life of rural people by way of providing them electricity, safe drinking water, education, health benefits, sanitation, communication and information technology, infrastructure etc. Rural development has been the most important issue in all discussions, when it comes to the economic development of the developing countries. Rural India comprises 73 percent of the country’s population but its share in the total national income is less than 45 percent. A country like India which is considered to be one of the powerful nations along with USA and China, it’s very unfortunate that rural areas of India are still deprived when it comes to development. And that’s why this has been the biggest reason for the huge flow of man force shifting from rural to urban cities. Though government has initiated a number of schemes for the upliftment of the rural areas and communities but still there are certain lacuna’s which are supposed to be looked forward. There are several schemes which are initiated by the Indian government, some of which have been successfully completed and some are still going on.

Keyword: development, Village , Population, Rural, PPP

Introduction

India is a country which is well known for its villages and its development goes hand in hand with the development of its people. India is the second largest country of the world in terms of population after China but, still there is uncertainty in the economy of the country, due to the lack of the employment opportunities and development in the agricultural sectors.

Development of the rural areas has always been the concerns of the countries, but when it comes to the Indian context, it appears that, people just don’t care. Two- third population of the country still lives in villages which are not developed and its backwardness, is somewhere affecting the economy of the country.

Though India is being considered as the agricultural country but still its farmers, who earn their bread and butter from farming, supports the country in a larger way, are lacking far behind in terms of education, technology, production, occupation etc. And it has not only made them extremely backward but has also increased the gap between rich and poor.

And it is a well known fact that those countries which are purely agricultural countries are not even progressing in the agricultural sector because , despite of the maximum man force whose livelihood depends on agriculture are involved in farming not because of the remuneration which they get but due to non availability of other employment opportunities for them.

As more than half of the population of the rural areas are not even educated, and they are facing many more problems when it comes to facilities such as infrastructure, technology, drinking water, health, transport etc.

Earlier, their illiteracy prevented them from taking advantage of the government schemes.

For the development of the rural sector, it requires a vast amount of funds from the government. And it is only the government which can bring change in terms of economic sustenance. But a single approach won't be effective. In fact, rural development is the combination of the various factors. Rural development is necessary so that it can equally participate in the national development of the country and can contribute its share for economic development.

The policy makers in most of the developing countries have recognised the importance of the agriculture and started implementing a host of programmes in order to achieve its objectives, while some of the countries have achieved impressive results but some of the countries are still struggling with the persistent problem of rural under development¹.

Concept of Rural Development:

For India, rural development has been the integral part of the nation for its socio- economic and political development. The problem is not merely to develop rural areas, but the problem is to develop the rural communities, which are living their lives in ignorance and poverty, and are not even identified in Gross National Product or even in Per Capita Income. The state objective should be to reconstruct the rural economy, so that the income flowing from it should automatically be distributed equally.

¹ Dr. Narendrasinh B. Chauhan, Rural Development, (Jan. 02, 2016, 11:28 am), www. Aau.in/sites/.../unit%204%20RURAL%DEVELOPMENT.pdf

Development of rural areas includes not only infrastructure, electricity, technology but also the awareness of their surroundings, understanding of their problems, opportunities for better life, in order to uplift the quality of life of its population.

Rural Development Planning in India:

During the Eleventh five year plan, the resources for the rural development programmes in the areas of Housing, Employment and livelihood, were substantially increased, as compared to the initial allocations. Even moderate increase in resources for these programmes is proposed in the Twelfth plan over this high base of substantial budgetary support for these programmes.

PPP in Education:

A scheme for setting up to 2,500 schools under twelfth five year plan, with its main object for providing a world class education to those children who cannot afford to pay tuition fees and who are under privileged. The scheme can help to provide education for about 40 lacs students out of which 25 lacs will be from underprivileged class.

These types of school should be taken as the opportunities for the non-governmental players, for providing world class education to the children from low income families².

PPP in Health Care Service:

There are various states which are trying to provide health care through different programmes or models. So, even Planning Commission is also under the process of providing such schemes which require setting up the hospitals at various District Headquarters. The main object of these hospitals is to create a health care mechanism along with the speciality hospitals, in order to meet the health issues of poor. It is expected by the scheme which is rolled out by the government, that there should be 200 beds in the district level hospitals which have the population of about 8-10 lacs and 300 beds for 20 lacs population. This scheme will actually help those families, who are economically disadvantaged, and especially those who are covered under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY)³.

Water:

Water is one of the important resources which should be managed effectively. Water is needed for irrigation, without water supply there can be no crops, so it should be utilised in a proper manner. So it is the responsibility of the state government to provide water for irrigation. But nowadays there has

² Twelfth Five Year Plan 2012-2017, Vol 1, Rev 96 (2013)

³ Id. at 97

been shortage of water supply, so in this situation it is necessary to provide farmers the modern water, so here is the state government's duty to provide farmers water by modern saving technology in a subsidized rate, especially in those regions where groundwater has gone down due to the excessive exploitation. By using water saving technology there can be improvement in the irrigation practices, shifting from high water intensive cropping pattern to low water consuming one.

The Twelfth year also looks after the projects which are ongoing in a stronger way. And it proposes that new projects will also be undertaken if it is required. Since 1992, there has been decline of capacity of the individual State government. While financial capacity has been look forward through Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP)⁴. But, before sanctioning new projects, the ongoing projects will be assessed and it will also be taken into consideration whether the particular State is capable enough or not.

In order to access the impact of the AIBP, the government took the initiation for evaluating the AIBP, which was conducted by IIM Lucknow. They carried out a survey of 10 irrigation projects. The study revealed that there is a huge gap between the irrigation potential created and utilised in these projects, and the major reasons are low water discharge, insufficient water distribution, and unequal water distribution to the farmers located in different points. State governments are also facing various problems such as to finance the recurring cost of irrigation and to collect water charges. These issues are actually creating lot of impact in the economy of the country.

Migration:

It has been easily noticeable that there has been uneven economic development of rural and urban areas because of which a huge man force is getting migrated from rural to urban places or cities. As per capita consumption is much lower in rural areas in comparison to urban areas. It is well known that agriculture is the backbone of the country and the decline of the public investment has affected drastically the productivity, profitability and sustainability of farmers, which have resulted in the suicides of thousands of farmers in the country.

Size of Holdings:

The uneconomical size of holdings actually restricts the farmers from adopting new techniques for farming. It being the state subject, it is the duty of the state to provide facilities like investment in irrigation, transport, storage, new techniques, market, electricity, water etc.

⁴ id. at 96

Though central government also invests in these areas but it actually depends upon the interest of the state government.

However, agricultural development doesn't mean rural development. Rural development means development which comprises of education, health, safe drinking water, social empowerment, their active participation in decision making, infrastructure etc.

Panchayati Raj:

It is necessary to discuss the role of panchayati raj in the rural development. In order to develop the rural areas, it is important to strengthen panchayati raj and empower Gram Sabha for effective functioning of Gram panchayats. Government has provided reservation for women in panchayats which is been highly misused by powerful for promoting its own interests. Women are being used by the male members as proxy. Rural areas needs development in the following major areas which are education, electricity, roads, healthcare, technology in order to improve income and employment opportunities which will in future control the flow of man force in urban areas.

The development of rural areas and the rural communities are not just in papers; in fact the Government of India has started a list of schemes for upliftment of rural areas. Some of the schemes are Pradhan mantra Gram Sadak Yojna, Bharat Nirman, Indira Awaas Yojna, National Social assistance Programme.

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJNA (PMGSY)

Pradhan mantra Gram Sadak Yojna is completely central sponsored yojna which was launched on 25th December 2000, in order to provide road connectivity to all rural areas in the country. Its main aim is to connect to all such places where there is a habitation of 500 people of population or above and 250 persons in above hills, deserts and tribal areas⁵.

BHARAT NIRMAN

A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the then President of India, announced in 2005 the major business plan for rebuilding rural India, and he called It "*Bharat Nirman*". On 28th February 2005, the Finance Minister of the country Mr. P. Chidambaram in his budget speech identified that construction of roads in order to provide connectivity to the rural areas is one of the six components of "*Bharat Nirman*'. In his speech he further mentioned that a total of 59564 habitations are proposed to be

⁵ Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India,(Jan.03,2016, 01:12am),pmgsy.nic.in/pmgss12.asp

provided connectivity under “*bharat nirman*”, and this would involve construction of 1,46,185 Kms of rural roads and it even involves upgradation of 1,94,130Kms of existing rural roads⁶.

Apart from providing road connectivity to the rural areas,”Bharat Nirman” also aimed of providing basic amenities to the rural areas such as safe drinking water, housing, electricity, telecommunication and information technology.

INDIRA AWAAS YOJNA (IAY)

Indira awaas Yojna is the flagship of the Ministry of Rural Development. Its main aim is to provide assistance to the BPL (below poverty line) families, who doesn't have shelter. It provides assistance for constructing a safe and durable shelter. India actually gained momentum to provide “shelter to all” when it signed a “Istanbul Declaration on Human Settlement” in 1996, recognising the basic need for human being and for its healthy physical, psychological, social and economic well being. These approaches actually lead to provide basic amenities such as infrastructure, sanitation, drinking water, electricity etc. This yojna has also recognised the fact that houses do not only provide shelter but it actually gives a person a sense of security.

NATIONAL SOCIAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME (NSAP)

National Social assistance Programme is a welfare programme which has been administered by the Ministry of rural development. This programme is been implemented in both rural and urban areas. This programme objective is to take step towards the fulfilment of Directive Principle of State Policy which is enshrined in the Indian Constitution, and which enjoins upon the state to undertake within its means a number of welfare measures. These policies are intended to secure for citizens adequate means of livelihood, raise the standard of living, improve public health, provide free and compulsory education for children etc. In fact article 41 of the Indian Constitution, directs the state to provide assistance to the citizens in case of unemployment, old age, sickness, disablement etc. In accordance to that, Government of India on 15th August 1995 included the National Social assistance Programme and it is completely central sponsored.

NSAP comprises of various other schemes such as National Old Age Pension Scheme, National Family Benefit Scheme, and National Maternity Benefit Scheme etc.

National old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS)

This scheme is also known as Indira Gandhi National Old age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS). This scheme covers Indians who are 60 years and above and who live in below poverty line. In

⁶ Union Budget,(Jan.14,2016,03:20pm),indiabudget.nic.in/ub2005-06/bs/speech.htm

this scheme, beneficiaries aged 60-79 years receives a monthly pension of Rs 200 and those who are 80 years or above receives monthly pension of Rs 500.

National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS)

Under this scheme a grant of Rs 5000 is granted to the family, if its primary bread earner dies due to the natural cause and Rs 10,000 is granted to the family whose bread earner died in an accident. The Primary bread earner under the scheme can be male or female, and he /she should be the one whose income contributed substantially to the total household income. The family is eligible to get the grant under this scheme if its primary earner was more than 18 years and less than 65 years of age. But recently the grant to the family whose primary bread earner died out of natural cause has been increased from Rs 5000 to Rs 10,000. So the amount given to the family for the death of its bread earner in both the cases i.e. natural or accidental is same.

National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS)

Earlier under this scheme Rs 300 was provided per pregnancy i.e. up to two live births to the families which were below poverty line (BPL). But the assistance under the NMBS which was Rs 300 has now increased to Rs 500 per pregnancy.

NMBS which was earlier being implemented by the Rural Development but now it has been assigned to the Department of Family Welfare to become part and parcel of the population stabilization programme from 2001.

Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS)

In February 2009, Government of India introduced a new scheme for widows, who are living below poverty line and are of the age group of 40-64 years are eligible for the amount Rs 200 per month per beneficiary. Present status is that the widows aged 40-59 years are entitled for the monthly pension of Rs 200.

Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS)

Under this scheme people who are suffering from multiple disabilities between the age group of 18-64 years and who lives below poverty line, are eligible to take benefits of Rs 200 per month per beneficiary. Present status is that the person suffering from multiple disabilities between the age group of 40-59 are now entitled for the monthly benefit of Rs 200.

Conclusion

The above mentioned schemes are some of the schemes which are helping India to develop as a whole by developing its rural areas.

Rural India is deprived of development when it comes to infrastructure, socio- economic and political front. To deliver all round development, government initiated various schemes. Though these schemes have proved to be a significant development for rural India but still more is required to be done. Though schemes are completing its target but still the sustainability and the quality is the thing which is need to be checked.

Upliftment of the rural India should be the target of every government which comes in power because without the Rural development there is no possibility for India to become develop.

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