

Rural Development and Its Scope In India

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Rural Development is an integrate part of country's socio-economic development. The goal of rural development is the enrichment of the quality of human life in rural areas accompanied by bridging the rural gap through provision of all amenities.

Concept of Development:

Development may be defined as an activity or process of both qualitative and quantitative change in the existing systems, aiming at immediate improvement of living conditions of the people or increase the potential for betterment of living conditions in the future. Development covers both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Development is a broad concept which also embraces growth. Development covers both quantitative and qualitative aspects. Economic growth is mainly concerned with the quantitative aspect of development. Development has many dimensions and includes quantitative changes in social, political cultural, environmental, aspects etc. Development is a continuous and unending process of attempting to improve all aspects of society.

Development ultimately means development of man and therefore, it is to be judged by what it does to him. In the rural areas, a good number of people for several years lived a life of depending or almost complete slavery. Because of miserable poverty and consequent underdevelopment or social stagnation, people lose faith in themselves and in their potentialities for development and remain without active participation in social, cultural and political life. It is important to bring them out of this insensibility and doubtfulness and to motivate them to think freely about

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progressive ideas. Development should result in reduction of dependency in external resources, increased self-reliance, confidence in their own strength and potentialities for development, spirit of mutual respect and collective effort.

Rural development, therefore, should be viewed as a strategy designed to liberate the rural poor from the age old bondage of degrade life and to awaken and activate the entire rural population in the process of achieving and sharing the high levels of production.

1. Anker¹ gives the following working definition of rural development

"Strategies, policies and programmes for the development of rural areas and the promotion of the activities carried out in such areas (agriculture, forestiy, fishery, rural crafts and industries, the building of the social and economic infrastructure) with ultimate aim of achieving a fuller utilization of available physical and human resources, and thus higher incomes and better living conditions for the rural population as a whole, particularly the rural poor; and effective participation of the latter is the development process."

In this definition some important elements can be identified.

- (i) There should be full utilization of available physical and human resources in rural areas with functional linkage;
- (ii) Development of agriculture and allied activities is necessary;
- (iii) There should be again development of rural industries;
- (iv) It should aim at higher incomes and better living conditions of rural populations; and
- (v) The focus of development should be on rural poor with their effective participation in the development process.

2. In a seminar on approaches to rural development in Asia² discussions were centered around a definition of rural development as a process which leads to a continuous rise in the capacity of the rural people to control their environment accompanied by a wider distribution of benefits resulting from such control” This definitions is composed of three important elements:

- (i) Rural development should be viewed as a process of raising the capacity of rural people to control their environment. Environment does not mean only agricultural or economic development. It includes all aspects of rural life-social, economic, cultural and political.
- (ii) Rural development as a process should continuously raise the capacity of the rural people to influence their total environment enabling them to become initiators; and controllers of change in their environment rather than being merely the passive objects of external manipulation and control; and
- (ii) Rural development must result in a wider distribution of benefits accruing from technical developments and the participation of weaker sections of the rural population in the process of development.

3. Development needed to be conceived as a dynamic process, directed towards transforming the entire society enmarking together its economic, social, political and administrative aspects for an all round, balanced upward change.³

Rural development programme in India in its beginning, was based on the community development approach combing its welfare aims and social economic changes through self-help and self reliant techniques. The philosophy of rural community

development had its origin in the pre independence struggle for political freedom. The committed leadership had a vision of all round development in making village India only self —reliant but also self sufficient. Our first rural development programme had started as a comprehensive self-help movement embracing education, health, agriculture and cottage industrial development providing community facilities in the early fifties, “It was conceived as a peoples programme, mobilizing their energies, resources and labours, for the general social upliftment of all⁴ In this approach national extension (NES) was the means through which delivery system was operated and was supposed to extend all services including finance and technical know-how to common people. This multi-purpose approach was based on the principle of all sided development. The bureaucratic administration hence was extend to the village level in early fifties as such government apparatus in close alignment with the rural elites and new born leaders coming primarily from the middle class families did not deliver the goods to the people. Thereafter various social legislation and economic policy helped the bureaucratic administration to consolidate and strengthen as every new development programme was fitted to the structural set-up the rural mass being alienated gradually, all the social reform what ever radicalism may have in them could hardly touch the people.

OBJECTIVES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The main objectives of rural development are as follows:

1. Increase in agricultural output and productivity.
2. Supply of capital resources.
3. Creation of employment opportunities.
4. Income redistribution and:
5. Raising the living standards of the rural population

I. Raising agricultural productivity:

One of the spectacular advances with regard to increasing agricultural output and productivity has been the introduction of high yielding varieties of seeds and the provisions of special technical and environmental inputs, such as, fertilizers, irrigation, etc. known generally as green revolution it has certainly increased agricultural output and productivity. However, it has income inequalities in rural areas. It is therefore, necessary to keep in mind the unintended consequences of green revolution a revolution that influences only a part of the agricultural production process efficient use of land and water resources. It is well known that, depletion and erosion of soils, the haphazard cutting of woods and forests and the advance of deserts have affected agricultural production badly in many parts of the country.

Similarly, while in many places underground water remains untapped for agricultural purposes, in other places this is being depleted rapidly. It is therefore, necessary to think of appropriate measures that will vary from one place to another for improving efficiency in the use of scarce land and water resources.

II. Capital resources:

It is also well known that agriculture is the last sector to received new capital investments. Thus there is the need to promote capital flow into agricultural production activities.

However, there is enough evidence to suggest that a massive flow of capital in the rural areas has sometimes produced massive social and economic maladjustments and led to unemployment through mechanization.

III. Employment Generation:

While it is quite evident that a programme of rural development must emphasize the creation of employment

opportunities, it is not clear which of the employment generating devices is more fruitful. Such measures as labour intensive agricultural techniques, public works for infrastructure using manpower intensively, rural industrialization etc, have been employed to generate employment. There is also the question of the most appropriate sector where employment generating capacities can be built so that the burden of increasing manpower on agriculture can systematically be reduced. After all most of the employment generating measures, such as public works for constructing roads, etc. must come to an end when enough roads have been constructed. Small scale rural industries and large scale industries have to be well thought out.

IV. Income redistribution:

Experience shows that even of aggregate per capita income increases, distribution of income between regions and social classes become more unequal. In order to prevent the income gap to widen and to reduce income inequality rural development strategy must specifically design measures to benefit the marginal farmer, the landless labourer, and the migrant seasonal works.

V. Raising Living Standards:

Lastly, if the goal of the rural developments is to raise the living standards of the rural population, it must aim at more and higher incomes. Higher incomes do not necessarily and automatically mean a better standard of living for the rural population in terms of material well being, nutrition, education, security, leisure, mental health and social integration. Education for consumption and better living is as important as training and incentives for increasing production. This requires the definition of collective rather than individual goals, of communal rather than personal improvements, of Social rather than Private interest.

SCOPE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The need for rural development in India is apparent. The vertical areas of development and the interlinking as among the different elements or dimensions of development have to be carefully identified and an appropriate strategy has to be evolved.

An attempt is here made to indicate some of the broad areas of rural development which need an integrated approach.

1. Developing Social Consciousness:

Step in rural development is one of the first development of social, the first consciousness of people about the different hindrances to their development, the ways and means of overcoming them, their rights and duties in the community in which they live, progressive aspects of their traditions their own strengths and potentialities to develop themselves. Formal and non-formal education would help to create social consciousness. Apart from it, certain effective short term measures need to be taken to create social consciousness and awareness. The rural people must be educated to think for themselves the ways and means of their own development, thus paving the way for collective decision making and collective action.

2. Collective decision making and collective action:

When people in rural areas face problems and begin to discuss these and take action jointly, the movement towards development has well begin. However, collective decision making depends upon the sympathy towards others, helping attitude, collaborative attitude of sharing the gains of collective work and the ability to face problems collective decision and action, certain norms have to be developed to govern general behavior. Individuals who do not follows norms must be some mechanism of implementing the collective decisions and the norms established

in the groups and the communicates. This calls for dedicated village leadership.

3. Dedicated Village Leadership:

Rural development cannot be achieved by allocation of funds and role of government officials alone. It is a process that should come from within and it cannot be imposed. It is only through the honest and dedicated leaders of the village that villagers can be motivated and proper direction can be given. Rural and community development programmes should not be tools for political parties for propaganda and promotion of their Political interest. There should be a separate cadre of dedicated and honest rural leadership with genuine interest in the development of rural India with democratic ideals.

4. Use of Science:

Use of science and scientific knowledge is essential for rural development in several ways. Through science and scientific reasoning, the literate and ignorant rural poor can be convinced of the causal relationships between events and their knowledge and awareness helps better understanding of social relationship, reduces the hold of prejudices and superstitious beliefs with scientific knowledge, one can improve work skills and reduce the hard labour of human muscles. It is necessary for the scientists to communicate through appropriate media, relevant discoveries in various sciences to people in rural areas.

5. Development of agriculture and allied sector:

Even through rural development is not synonymous with agricultural development, yet agricultural development is critical for meeting the growing demand for food and raw material and for creating more employment opportunities in the rural sector. Therefore, agriculture and allied activities should be developed as more rewarding pursuits with focus on higher productivity. The

average yield per hectare of most of the crops in India is lower than the yield achieved in some states and also in a few areas within a particular state. This calls for:

- a) Acceleration in the land development programmes,
- b) Land reforms, particularly tenancy reform.
- c) Assured availability of water with proper water management.
- d) Better access to institutional credit at reasonable interest rate,
- e) Improvement of agricultural work skills through intensive extension services, backed by intensified area specific agricultural research,
- f) Efficient delivery system, leading to easy supply of modern inputs to all,
- g) Efficient marketing system with assured remunerative price, and
- h) Effective administering of the different development schemes so as to remove structural bottlenecks, if any, and tap the potential for higher productivity among the poor.

6. Provision of subsidiary occupations and incomes:

The small marginal farmers, the landless poor and similar such rural poor without any asset must be helped to have to gainful employment through diary farming and other subsidiary occupations. Dairying may be developed as the main occupation for some, apart from serving as a supplementary occupation.

Development of dairying calls for:

- a) Adequate fodder supply,
- b) Marketing facility with remunerative price for milk and milk products.

- c) More intensive veterinary facilities in rural areas by taking “clinic to the cow” to remote villages and improving the milk yield and genetic make-up of total cows and buffaloes. Through adequate institutional credit, weaker sections must be helped to earn through dairying, poultry, sericulture, etc.

7. Development of Cottage and Village Industries:

The unemployed and underemployed masses in rural areas must be gainfully employed through the development village industries and other non-farm enterprises. Local resources in terms of raw material, capital, etc. must be identified and suitable village industries must be started. These measures should receive immediate attention so that there would be no further processor on land and rural poor are helped to secure gainful employment.

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