



Indian Policies and Programmes Regarding Rural Development

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Introduction

Urgency and intensity of the rural development planning in India started with the slogan of the great leader of the nation Mahatma Gandhi in the year 1920 as it was a most neglected aspect of the British rule in India. Next to it Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, in the night of August, 14th-15th, 1947 declared that destiny of the villages of India, meaning development of India, depends on the development of villages. This historic phrase was meant for the teeming millions inhabiting some 700.000 villages. The nation, at this time, was engaged in drafting a constitution for its government and in preparing its First Five Year Plan as it was important to institutionalize the political aspirations of the people of India and ensure their simultaneous socio-economic development.

After independence in 1947, a large number of planning strategies was started in each five year plans. In the year 1952 the community development plan at block level was started for 5.000 blocks with great success and enthusiasm and it is still going on but the achievement was not the one desired and the much cherished aim of eradicating poverty remained on the same platforms. This programme was related to the nationwide programme for rural improvement.

The history of rural development programmes

1. Community Development Programmes (1952).
2. National Extension Service (1953).
3. Khadi and Village Industries Programmes (1957).
4. Village Housing Projects Schemes (1957).
5. Multipurpose Tribal Development Blocks Programme (1959).
6. Package Programme (1960).
7. Intensive Agricultural District Programme (1962).
8. Applied Nutrition Programme (1962).
9. Rural Industries Projects (1962).
10. Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme (1964).
11. High Yielding Variety Programme (1966).
12. Farmers Training and Education Programme (1966).
13. Well Construction Programme (1966).
14. Rural Works Programme (1967).
15. Tribal Development Block (1968).
16. Rural Manpower Programme (1969).
17. Composite Programme For Women and Pre School Children (1969).
18. Drought Prone Areas Programme (1970).
19. Crash scheme for Rural Employment (1971).
20. Small Farmers Development Agency (1971).
21. Tribal Areas Development Programme (1972).
22. Pilot projects for tribal development (1972).
23. Pilot intensive rural employment programme (1972).
24. Minimum needs programme (1972).
25. Command areas development programme (1974).

26. Hill area development programme (1975).
27. Special livestock production programme (1975).
28. Food for work programme (1977).
29. Desert development programme (1977).
30. Whole village development programme (1979).
31. Training rural youth for self employment (1979).
32. Integrated rural development programme (1979).
33. National rural employment programme (1980).
34. Prime ministers new 20 point programme (1980).
35. Development of women and children in rural areas (1983).
36. Rural landless employment programme (1983).
37. National rural employment programme (1984).
38. Indira awas yojana (1985S).
39. Jawahar rojgar yojana with its components:
 - a) Indira Awas Yojana.
 - b) Development of Women and Children in rural areas.
 - c) Million Wells Scheme.
 - d) Pilot project on Dry Land Farming.
 - e) All India Coordinated Dryland Farming Research Project.
 - f) Central and Arid Zone Research Programme (Institute).
 - g) Wasteland Reclamation and Rural Development Programme.
40. Panchayati Raj (village level administrative unit) and rural development (1992).
41. Food for work Programme (1977) continued (1993).
42. Sarvshiksha Abhiyan (Continued after (1980).
43. Minimum Needs Programme (1999) continued (2002).
44. Prime Ministers Road Development Programme (1998).
45. Command area development Programme continued (2002).
46. Community Development Programme continued (2004).
47. Second Green Revolution Programme-based on Value addition and cash crops (2005).
48. Prosperity connectivity Programme.
50. One hundred Days work Programme (2004).

Many of the programmes are repeated even after a gap of 35 years because the results could not be achieved in a satisfactory manner. These Programmes are 1-Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and 2-Marginal farmers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agency (MFLDA) which was started in 1971 following the recommendations of All India Rural Credit Review Committee (1969). The objectives of the Programme were to assist them through improving agricultural technology and to diversify the farm economy through subsidiary activities like Animal Husbandry, Dairying, horticulture etc. The agencies provide a subsidiary of 25% to small farmers and of 33,5% to marginal farmers and agricultural labourers.

Up to March, 1980 the agencies had identified 16,7 million beneficiaries of whom 8 million were assisted. Out of these assisted, 6,1 million or 75% were helped to acquire access to improved agricultural practices (supply of inputs and implements and field demonstration). The remaining 1,9 million beneficiaries were helped to acquire assets like milk cattle, sheep, poultry etc., minor irrigation facilities and village industries units.

Success and implementation of the programmes so far

Till 1975 various programmes started but desirable success could not be achieved. Research and innovation could not reach from lab to the fields, i.e., to rural areas development programme started but benefit could not reach to the farmers except only deficit and food self sufficiency was achieved till 1991. Other programmes in a large number remained confined to only labourites such as soil conservation, afforestation, rural employment, health programmes etc. The targets to achieve full literacy till 1985 with 5% margin, to eradicate rural poverty with a 5% margin, to provide full employment with 5% margin remained a big dream and were postponed till 2020. The impact of economic development in tribal areas, hill areas and remote areas is being observed in such a way that they feel themselves as the major victims and

deprived with whatever the development has taken place in achieving the success even on basic food items development. Still these areas are not free from chronic food deficit mal and under-nutrition, unemployment in the rural sector, landlessness small and marginal farming units with 88% of the total household (i.e., less than one hectare of land/ household).

Due to an overall failure of the development of rural areas, the unplanned migration in the urban sector and towns has reached such an extent that urban poverty in the country is more or less equal to the rural poverty; otherwise the gap of rural urban poverty was more than 10% i.e., 35% rural poverty and 25% urban poverty.

The problem of small and marginal landless farmers' labourers, agricultural labourers, and youth unemployment is going to take a serious turn, i.e., social chaos and large scale unrest among these people. It has already taken a platform of 'Naxalities Movement' as their basic support is from such deprived class of people and till 2002 these political groups including 'Maoist' were effective in only 56 districts of India along the belt of north Bihar state, Bengal state, Jharkhand state and overall along the eastern Coastal districts. If a drastic economic change is not made to the situation in the rural areas, they may turn to be chaotic and may cause the emergency of a new political system is possible in the near future.

Adaptation of strategies for rural development

1. The success of the Rural Development Programmes depends on the wilful and effective participation of the people concerned.
2. the academic institutions and research bodies should be associated both at the level of planning and implementation.
3. Better participation of women in the programme should be given top priority to control the high level financial corruption.
4. It is also desirable to consider coordination and integration of various anti-poverty programmes to offer more benefits to the poorest of the poor. The poorest of the poor may be provided with wage employment in the first instance and later they may be brought under self employment scheme.
5. The identification of the beneficiaries is the major problem in the rural areas. Proper beneficiaries, proper amount and proper time are the major constraints for the success of the programmes.
6. There is a general dissatisfaction with the administration regarding the financial deal such as subsidies, bank loans etc. A large portion of it is being misappropriated by the government, bank officials and middlemen
7. Development Programmes are not known by the rural poor as the literacy level is very low. The Local rural administrative authority is also corrupted.

However, there is a need to improve the proper evolution of the programme at grass root level.