

Prospects & Challenges of Rural Development in India



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Abstract

Rural development is a multidimensional concept that has been analyzed based on two perspectives: a narrow and comprehensive approach. In narrow terms, rural development refers to the development of rural areas through various programs such as agriculture, animal husbandry, rural handicraft and industry, changes in rural infrastructure, etc. Rural development from a larger point of view means social, political, cultural, technological and structural changes for qualitative progress in the lives of rural people.

Rural development is not only limited to changes in the agricultural system and the means and relations of agricultural production, but in the rural perspective, the processes of development are included in the periphery of rural development in all aspects of social, economic, cultural, technological, structural.

The role of the state has been considered important in the rural development strategy. Efforts have been made to upgrade rural life on the basis of private or collective efforts of villagers, efforts of voluntary organizations, without the intervention of the state, these efforts can be included in the periphery of rural development. But the role of the state is considered important in the planned rural development format. The strategy of rural development in India has been changing at different stages. The reason for this is that the attitude towards rural development has been changing.

Taken as a picture of the social transformation in the villages of India, the paper is an informative article on the theme of rural development in India, its prospects and challenges before it.

Keywords: Prospects, Challenges, Rural Development, Social Change, Transformation, Nuclear families, individualism, fundamentalists.

Introduction

India is a country which is characterized by its villages that number in lacs. In economic and development terms, it is identified as a developing nation where the process of development has started, but still far away from the complete development. Overall development of the country is impossible but for the development of rural areas or the villages.

According to the World Bank (1975), "Rural development is a strategy to upgrade the economic and social life of a particular group - the rural poor." According to Basant Desai (1988) also defined rural development in the same way, saying, "Rural development is an approach by which the better use of regional resources and the construction of infrastructural facilities to improve the quality of life of the rural population. Their socio-economic development is done and efforts are made to increase their planning and income opportunities.

According to Krapp (1992) described rural development as a process aimed at improving the lives of people living outside the urban area through collective efforts and self-reliance. According to John Harris (1986) stated that rural development is a policy and process that has emerged in the specific perspective of the new strategy of planned development of the World Bank and United Nations Institutions.

Under the Five Year Plans, much grant is sanctioned for the rural development, and several schemes are launched, but the rural development is too far from completion, and hence, India seems to be too far away from enjoying the status of being a developed nation. The bitter truth is that despite all the claims of the governments, the Indian villages situated in all the states, are far from development, and even some very important facilities are denied to the villagers there.

Plans are made, money is spent, and the development is shown in records, but the situation more or less remains the same as before. If we compare the current state of rural development with other countries, we are able to realize that we are far behind in the field of development.

About two per cent of people in rural areas of developed countries and even in many developing countries depend on agricultural productivity. Rural areas are mostly based on primary resources. In countries like America, Japan, only two percent people depend on agriculture, while in India, about 55 percent people depend on agriculture.

Report of NSSO (National Sample Survey Organization) reveals that among those who have left the agriculture sector, very few have gone to the manufacturing sector, and most of them have gone to the service sector. The reason is that there is a lack of technical education required for the development and growth of rural economy in India.

The result is that the people fail to get enough income from farming, and hence, a large number of the poor rural people are forced to live as marginal farmers. Having a very low income that fails to fulfill the needs of their family, they seek other sources of income. The migration from villages to cities is increasing to get modern facilities.

Rural households in India accounted for 53 percent of the total expenditure on consumption of food items during 2011. In this, 10.8 percent was spent on grains and its replacement, 8 percent on milk and milk products and 6 percent on vegetables. In the non-food category, cooking fuel and lights accounted for 8 percent, clothing and footwear 7 percent, medical expenses 6.7 percent, travel and other consumer services 4 percent and consumer goods accounted for 4.5 percent.

Average cereal consumption per person per month was 11.2 kg in rural India and 9.2 kg in urban India. Estimated cereal consumption per person per month in 18 years from 1993-94 to 2011-12 (which does not include foodgrain in the processed food purchased) from 13.4 kg to 11.2 kg in rural India and 10.6 kg to 9.3 in urban India. Kilograms have fallen.

As far as corporatization of agriculture is concerned, its purpose is to earn profits. If the corporate find profits in this sector, they will come forward. With the advent of corporate in retail, it was hoped that farmers would get good price for their produce. It was being said that they would open centers in every village and would buy directly from there, but in reality this is happening rarely. Most of the companies are buying agricultural products from urban mandis.

There is a need to create better infrastructure for farmers to get better prices for their produce. It has a wide impact on farming. The picture of rural development can change due to the establishment of power system. We do not pay attention to non-food commodities. The emphasis is mostly on wheat, rice etc. Less attention is paid to cash crops. In this case the picture of the villages can be changed by providing adequate government help.

Review of Literature

Bunker Roy (1981), in the book entitled *Industry and Rural Development in India*, discusses the possibility of rural development in India in the context of the industrial growth and development. The author suggests that rural development can be speedy only with the opening of new industries in the rural areas.

Shirin Madon (1991), in her Ph. D. thesis entitled *The Impact of Computer-Based Information Systems on Rural Development: A Case Study in India*, concludes that organisational and human factors play a critical role in the effective usage of computer-based information systems for development planning. Adoption of the new technology in decentralised planning appears to depend on user-involvement and flexibility at the local level, rather than a rigid top-down, centralised approach. It is advocated that an understanding of the complex context/process interaction is crucial if information technology is intended to play a meaningful role in managing development.

D. Gangopadhyay, A.K. Mukhopadhyay & Pushpa Singh (2008), in their study entitled *Rural Development: A strategy for poverty alleviation in India*, surveys that the present strategy of rural development in India mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment.

Rama Mani (2009), in *Sharing best practices in rural development - Case studies of few success stories in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh*, reports that in the post independent era, Government of India committed itself to bringing about a rapid and sustainable development in rural India through various programmes. Over the years, the thrust of the rural development programmes have been on the all-round economic and social transformation of rural areas, through a multipronged strategy, aimed at reaching out to the most disadvantaged sections of the society. In the past five decades and more, many rural development programmes have been launched. The aim of these programmes have been to cover all the facets of rural life such as agriculture, animal husbandry, roads (communication facilities), health, education, housing, employment and nutrition. Accordingly, all the programmes since independence have covered one facet or the other for improving the life of three- fourths of the Indians who live in the villages.

The government-pioneered projects from time to time have changed in approach and strategy. These shifts in the policy decisions have been taken on the basis of experiences from existing programmes and to reach out to the last person in the last row. However, it has been realised that most of the policy decisions have been taken with a macro perspective and a very little attention has been paid to the micro level issues.

Ramesh Subramanian & Masilamani Arivanandan (2009), in *Rural Development through Village Knowledge Centers in India*, survey that since

1984, developmental efforts have gained much stronger focus, coinciding with the gradual liberalization of India's economy coupled with the above-mentioned growth of India's IT sector. Today there is increasing emphasis on narrowing the "digital divide" by bringing IT developments, especially telecommunications and the Internet to rural areas. Telecommunications technology is considered to be a vehicle to bring economic development to rural India, which in turn would enable further telecommunications use and development.

Ravi Chopra (2012), in *Greening Rural Development in India*, examines the potential contribution to environmental sustainability of the schemes administered by the Ministry. In specific it looks at:

Improving quality and carrying of eco systems including, water in surface bodies, aquifers and soil profile and arresting degradation of natural resources

Enabling sustainable livelihoods, based on sustainable use of natural resources

Strengthening ecosystem resilience to enable them to recover from extreme weather events and cope with climate change

Reducing the ecological footprint of interventions through efficient use of energy, material, natural resources and increased use of renewable materials.

The report recommends measures needed to achieve green, including measuring and tracking, the use incentives and the building of capacities.

Farooq Ahmad Ganjee (2014), in his study entitled *A Case Study of Rural Development Programmes In India*, wrote that the Rural development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic welfare 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 India.

Sonal Singh and Bhaskar Bhowmick (2015), in their research paper on the title *An Exploratory Study for Conceptualization of Rural Innovation in Indian Context*, investigated three factors of rural innovation. The identified factors are represented as 'knowledge sharing for economic efficiency', 'new learning for economic scale up', and 'new skill development for economic scope'. The factor-knowledge sharing for economic efficiency is represented by integration of new ideas and learning help to give better way to solve the problems; new skill help in better utilization of resources, sharing of information and knowledge help in decision making

for change and new learning practice creates comfort level with change. The factor- learning for economic scale up is represented by conversion of new ideas into action creates new opportunities and new learning practices involve more people in the new process/practice. The factor- new skill development for economic scope is represented by sharing of information and knowledge create new entrepreneurial spirit and new skill development help in creation of entrepreneurial opportunity.

Objectives of the Study

1. Producing the picture of Rural India
2. Producing reflections of the rural transformation
3. Tracing the various fields where rural transformation is taking place
4. Being familiar and pointing out the ongoing trends of rural development
5. Exploring the causes of rural transformation and rural development
6. Learning about the approach to the ongoing rural transformation and rural development
7. Having an idea about the effects of rural development
8. Bringing forth the effect of the rural development on the original face of the villages
9. Mirroring the effect of the rural development on the family system
10. Studying the effect of the rural development on the traditions and institutions

Hypothesis

1. India is a country of villages where more than two-thirds of its total population belongs to its villages that are in lacs in number
2. The Indian villages are the specific identity of India and its culture that have made the Indian culture the crown-culture in the world
3. Rural development has changed the picture of the villages
4. Rural development is being made on a war-footing with a view to linking the villages and their inhabitants to the globalizing world
5. Rural development has opened new vistas for the inhabitants of the villages for education and career
6. Rural development allows the rural man and woman to enjoy a better life through the changed modes of living full of the colours of modernity
7. Rural development facilitates the life of the people
8. Rural development allows the rural folk to have urban-facilities at door
9. Rural development is a step in the field of women empowerment
10. Rural development is appreciated by the enthusiasts, while it is condemned by the fundamentalists.

Methodology

The study serves as a review article for which the contents were borrowed and derived from the suitable-found researches and studies that were made from time to time in India and abroad. The process began with the author's keen interest in rural India, rural culture and rural change. It led him to observe and capture the spirit of rural development. It

is only then that the passion of the author resulted into working out the theme of rural development in the research paper. Then, after deciding the title that could express the author's bent of mind and his own perspective, specific objectives for the study were set. The hypothesis formulation formed the basis to enable him to proceed in the field of research and to test the formulated hypothesis. The research design that was framed for the study helped him work steadily on the theme keeping in view and mind the set objectives and working hypothesis. Then, the data that had already been collected and classified from the secondary sources, were classified in accordance with the nature of the study. Then the step of interpretation was undergone followed by the findings.

Findings

1. Rural development is a universally approved process of improving the quality of life and economic welfare of the rural people who dwell in the various villages all over the world.
2. The computer-based information systems play a vital role in development planning
3. Degradation of natural resources and their unauthorized exploitation should be checked and controlled for the sake of sustainable rural development
4. In India, in the post-independence era, the speed of rural development is much faster than in the pre-independence era
5. Rural development and industrial growth are inter-related, and therefore, there is an utmost need of industrial development in the rural areas for the betterment of the rural population
6. The ongoing rural development in India witnesses its focus on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment
7. There are three major factors that bring about rural development through innovation. They are- 'knowledge sharing for economic efficiency', 'new learning for economic scale up', and 'new skill development for economic scope'.
8. IT sector is playing a dominant role in the success of the rural development in India through making prompt documentation of files relating to various aspects of rural development.
9. The picture of villages in India is changing fast through the rural development
10. There is a significant difference between what is targeted and what is actually done in the context

of governmental schemes meant for the rural development of India

11. Under the rural development, construction of roads, railway lines, government buildings, over-bridges, flyovers and underpasses is being made in order to link the people of the villages to the cities
12. Under the rural development, accessibility to the transport facilities, tele-communication facilities, internet facilities, and other urban facilities is being made
13. Rural development is bringing the rural India closer to the main stream of development
14. Rural development, in practice, is lagging behind
15. Rural development is facing several challenges at present
16. Rural development is paving a smoothening path for the survival of the villagers in India.

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