

# Study on Strategies and Approaches for the Rural Development Programme

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## ABSTRACT

This study paper's primary goal is to comprehend the methods and tactics required to promote the development of rural communities. There are many areas that require development Programme in rural areas are MGNREGS, PMSY, NOAP, SGSY, etc. a few of these. Better livelihood opportunities would become available to rural residents when these locations saw development. Additionally, it is critical to raise awareness among rural residents and assist them in appropriately obtaining the benefits of any initiatives and strategies developed by the government, NGOs, and other agencies. The primary topics that have been analysed and examined the strategies and approaches for the rural development.

**KEYWORDS:** Rural, MGNREGS, NOAP, NGO, Government

## INTRODUCTION

According to the Asian Centre for Development Administration (ACDA., 2004), “a process which leads to a continuous rise in the capacity of rural people to control their environment accompanied by a wider distribution of benefits resulting from such control is rural development”. The rural development sector policy paper of the World Bank (1975) observed: “rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people – the rural people. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. The group includes small-scale farmers, tenants, and the landless”. Further, the World Bank defined rural development as “improving the living standards of the masses of the low-income population residing in rural areas making the process of rural development self-sustaining”. According to World Bank, “Rural Development is a strategy to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor, including small and marginal farmers, tenants, and the landless.” At the time India attained independence, it presented a picture of poverty, malnutrition, poor standards of public health and

mass illiteracy. The development of rural communities is the ultimate outcome of the transactions between physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. The approaches and the strategies need to be designed to bring about improvements, primarily in the living conditions of the individuals, belonging to deprived, marginalized and socio-economically backward sections of the society. To promote the development of rural areas, it is necessary to represent an intersection between agricultural, social, managerial, behavioural and engineering sciences (Kapur, 2019).

## DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES OF RURAL AREAS

When acquiring an understanding of rural development approaches and strategies, it is essential to acquire an efficient understanding of areas in rural communities, which are in a backward and underdeveloped state and which need to be improved. When the individuals are involved in the implementation of strategies and approaches, then they need to be aware of major objectives of rural individuals. Some of the notable features of the rural

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economy in the Rural development include the following:

### 1. Excessive Dependence of Agriculture on Monsoon

India has 159.7 million hectares of arable land, the world's second-largest after the US. As 60% of the agricultural area is rain-fed, agriculture is still heavily monsoon-dependent. In addition, tube wells and open wells are the main sources of irrigation to 61% of the net irrigated area, which is indirectly dependent on rainfall for groundwater recharge. Therefore, in most parts of rural India, agricultural production is uncertain. Natural calamities such as droughts, floods, hailstorms, and cyclones put agriculture at a high risk and uncertainty point. Unfortunately, crop insurance coverage is extremely limited.

### 2. Large-scale Unemployment and Underemployment

The population in rural areas grew faster than the opportunities for employment. Irrigation development has been insufficient and, thus, employment in agriculture is stagnating. There has been very slow growth in non-agricultural occupations. As such, the strain on land is rising, resulting in large-scale unemployment and underemployment. Agriculture is seasonal in nature and is mostly rain-fed, rural people do not get jobs throughout the year, resulting in the underemployment problem. Because the surplus labor is required to be employed in agriculture, there is the hidden unemployment problem in which marginal value output (MVP) of labor is zero. (Chand et al, 2017)

### 3. Capital Deficiency

The ability of rural people to save money is poor due to low income, and therefore the savings potential is also low. The rural sector is lacking resources but is overcrowded with human labor, thereby leading to a low ratio of capital-labor. The flow of agricultural institutional credit is small and often for consumption purposes is diverted. Due to economic reforms and capital diversion from production to current spending on cost and product subsidies, public investment in agriculture has declined over the past two decades.

### 4. Low Levels of Technology and Productivity

In addition to low investment rates, the prevalence of illiteracy among rural people is also responsible for introducing low technology levels in rural areas, both in the agricultural as well as non-agricultural sectors. As a result, productivity levels are low per unit of land, labor, and capital in terms of yield and return. Therefore, crop and milk yield rates are low in India compared to countries like Japan, China, and Israel, and this is due to the lack of high-tech and other inputs being applied. (Yesaidth, 2008)

### 5. Lack of Infrastructure

The lack of adequate economic and social services is one of the main reasons for the backwardness of rural areas. Economic infrastructure refers to facilities for power, transportation, and communication, which in rural areas are inadequate. Social infrastructure refers to educational and health facilities such as school buildings and hospitals, which in rural areas are also not properly accessible. Compared to urban areas, the lack of proper infrastructural facilities is primarily responsible for the slow rate of economic and social development in rural areas. (Datt and Ravallion,1998).

### STRATEGIES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development is a complex process focusing mainly on rural areas. The important parameters playing a vital role in rural development include agricultural growth, socio-economic infrastructure, healthcare sector, education, employment, communication, etc (Singh, 1986). In the Indian context, the scope of rural development involves the following:

#### A. Developing social consciousness

Rural people need to be aware of the situation in which they live, the reasons for their present backwardness, their strengths and weaknesses, their rights and responsibilities, and their development potential. These understandings alone can generate an impulse for development among rural people. This could be done through a formal and non-formal system of education. In order to create social awareness among rural people, short-term initiatives need to be implemented. In this way, the use of mass media and ICT would be beneficial.

#### B. Collective decision-making and collective action

To take up the development initiative, it is important to encourage collective decision-making and collective action among rural people. It is important to impart the true spirit and practices of democracy in the minds of rural people so that they develop norms for taking collective village-level decisions implementing the same for the community as a whole. This collective action is needed to take advantage of various development schemes such as MGNREGS, PMSY, NOAP, SGSY, etc. Unless the whole panchayat of the village is unified, such programs cannot be efficiently enforced.

#### C. Dedicated village leadership

Committed village leadership is needed to achieve rural development. Village governance must work exclusively in accordance with democratic ideals and be open in its work and remain accountable to the public. The village leaders must promote consensus

among all the key stakeholders on issues related to their village's growth. When elected to the village panchayat, all voters should be treated equally and work for the overall village development. Systematic efforts are needed to build the capacity of rural leaders to make effective use of the development schemes to improve such leadership.

#### **D. Use of scientific knowledge**

The use of science has been an important part of our daily lives. Scientific knowledge is essential in order to properly understand the causal relationship between different events and eradicate the ill practices of superstitions from the minds of rural people. Scientific knowledge is also important if new technologies are to be implemented to achieve higher efficiency and profits. It also helps to spread modern technology quicker. Therefore, scientific knowledge helps to fight the disease and improve the quality of life of rural people, thereby raising their standard of living.

#### **E. Development of agriculture and allied activities**

Focusing on the development of agriculture and related activities is necessary in order to provide the current labor force with employment and in the future to absorb surplus labor. With the aid of new technology, emphasis should be placed on raising productivity levels.

- Acceleration of land development programs including redistribution of smallholdings.
- Effective implementation of land reforms
- Extension of irrigation facilities and promotion of on-farm water management practices
- Availability of quality inputs such as crop, chemical fertilizers, and plant protection materials.

#### **F. Promotion of cottage and village industries**

Promoting the cottage and village industries along with agriculture and related activities is important in order to absorb the increasing labor-power and provide them with employment. Cottage industries need to be established in rural areas as branch occupations so that rural people can make productive use of themselves and earn extra income. To encourage small producers of village industries to start new industries, adequate security and incentives are required. These initiatives should include access to institutional credit, the availability of raw materials and the guaranteed demand for their goods by establishing adequate linkages with government and non-governmental organizations and ongoing programs for rural development.

#### **G. Promotion of non-farm activities**

It is also essential to encourage small businesses and services in rural areas in order to provide rural youth with jobs effectively. Emphasis should be put on agri-business whereby ties could be formed with rural producers and the supermarkets in urban areas, in order to benefit both rural producers and urban consumers, as well as to provide productive jobs for many small entrepreneurs and others. In addition, rural youth should be encouraged to learn skills to provide various services such as electricians, pump set mechanics, vehicle mechanics, drivers, plumbers, and so on. The focus should also be given on digital and information technology services such as radio and television mechanics, computer operators, telephone operators, Xerox machine operators, desktop printing workers, market information providers, and so on, which are increasing at a tremendous rate in small towns to employ rural youth in a profitable way.

#### **H. Development of infrastructure**

To encourage different industries and service activities in rural areas, the development of both economic and social infrastructure is important. Construction of road and rail networks, communication facilities, power supply, warehousing, storage, and processing facilities should be the priority. At the same time, attempts to develop social services such as schools and hospitals, community centers, etc. should be made. Infrastructure development would increase employment opportunities in rural areas, thus helping to some degree to stop migration to urban areas.

#### **I. Provision of basic amenities**

Improving basic amenities in rural areas such as accommodation, safe drinking water, sanitation, and drainage facilities is also important in order to improve rural people's quality of life. Providing safe drinking water along with adequate sanitation and drainage facilities would also help to reduce the incidence of communicable diseases such as diarrhea, cholera, malaria, encephalitis, etc. which claim a number of lives each year.

#### **J. Adoption of an integrated approach**

An integrated approach is required to undertake various activities mentioned above at the community and household level in order to achieve overall improvements in the living standards of the rural people. It is also important to ensure that rural people will continue to improve their quality of life in the future.

## **K. Interdependence between rural and urban sectors**

It must be noted that it is not possible to achieve rural development in isolation. The interdependence between rural and urban sectors must be founded on sound lines whereby people living in rural and urban areas are in harmony. In offering various goods and services, including new technology and equipment, the urban sector must extend support. In addition to certain other goods and services required by urban people, the rural sector must supply the food grains and raw materials. In order to promote economic and social development in the country as a whole, both rural and urban sectors must expand at the same time.

## **APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN INDIA**

In accordance with the changing policies of the Government of India, the Five-Year Plans adopted different approaches for bringing about rural development in India. After independence, under the planning process focusing on rural re-construction, followed the Gandhian ideology with its foundations on principles concerning voluntary effort, self-help, cooperation and gram swaraj (village self-reliance). These principles of Gandhian ideology were relevant in pre-Independence era. The policymakers needed to frame strategies for helping the country to get rid of the problem of the shortage of food grains and its self-sufficient production. Also, the problems of over-population and unemployment did not seem to solve easily. However, 90 percent of the population lived in rural areas, the government had to focus more on rural development. During the planning period, approaches including Multi-Purpose Approach, Sectoral Approach, Area Approach, Target Group Approach, and Integrated/Holistic Approach, were critically evaluated. This helped the policymakers to understand the impact of a particular approach would have on rural development within a particular time period. (Chatterjee, 2011)

### **A. Multi-Purpose Approach**

The efforts towards rural development began in the early fifties with the adoption of the multi-purpose approach. This approach focused on activities like agriculture, irrigation, animal husbandry, housing, sanitation, health, transportation, communication, small scale industries, women welfare, and rural employment. In 1952, two programmes were introduced, namely, Community Development Programmes (CDP) and National Extension Service (NES). CDP was a holistic approach but did not perform quite well.

**The impact of CDP was short-lived because it was ineffective in the complex society of India. It faced various criticisms, listed as follows:**

- The gap between rich and poor widened.
- The basic necessities of rural people were not even touched.
- It did not succeed in bringing the modernization process through social education,
- The people took no interest in the programme due to a lack of awareness.

Despite the criticism levied against CDP and NES, it cannot be denied that the program added a new dimension to the change process and created community awareness to address community issues. The multi-purpose approach was a major approach, laying the foundation stone for rural India's upliftment.

### **B. Sectoral Approach**

The sectoral approach was based on the Critical Minimum Efforts thesis from Leibenstein, which includes concerted efforts to push growth rates in specific economic sectors. He states that underdeveloped countries face the problem of unemployment leading to poverty. To attain a sustained growth and to become more developed, it is necessary for the economy to receive stimulus for growth over a period of time exceeding a certain minimum size. For sustainable development, critical minimum efforts have to be made in different sectors so as to boost the overall economy of the country.

The foodgrains remained a problem even by the 1960s. The strategies for finding such areas that can yield higher agriculture production can be helpful in curbing the problem of shortage of food grains. Instead of expanding the acreage, the focus was given on enhancing agricultural production per acre. Under the sectoral approach, two programmes were launched, namely, Intensive Agriculture Development Programme (IADP) and Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP) in 1960 and 1963 respectively.

Both of these programmes contributed greatly to agricultural development. In respect of rural scenario, nearly all the programmes have put a major focus on agriculture because of its greater impact on rural development. These programmes led to a remarkable increase in overall agricultural output and productivity per hectare, but at the cost of economic equality and social justice.

### C. Area Approach

The policymakers felt that relying only on a particular approach for a vast country like India was not a good move towards rural development. It was evident that the approaches adopted earlier increased the growth rate in prosperous regions rather than in backward regions. Thus, an area-specific approach was needed for reducing interregional disparities. This approach would promote all-round development in socioeconomic backward areas. The area approach adopted under the Fourth Five Year Plan by the government focused on the development of rural areas specifically in hilly areas, deserts, drought-prone areas, and tribal areas.

The government launched different area-specific programmes, during the Fourth Five Year Plan, include Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP, 1970), Tribal Area Development Programme (TADP, 1972), Hill Area Development Programme (HADP, 1974-75), Command Area Development Programme (CADP, 1975) and Desert Development Programme (DDP, 1977-78).

### D. Target Group Approach

Though different area approach programmes have been running successfully and contributed a lot to the rural development, especially in the economically backward areas, more benefit was provided to those with a higher socio-economic background as compared to the class of small farmers, marginal and landless laborers. The fourth Five Year Plan brought the ideas of bringing target-specific schemes to demolish poverty and create various job opportunities and thus bringing economic equalities among the groups.

The rural development programme was redefined in order to bring some changes in the existing schemes so that the social and economic life of specialized groups can be alleviated. Thus, for serving the marginal and small farmers, and landless laborers, Small Farmer Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers Development Agency (MFALDA) were formed.

This approach of targeting certain groups yielded better results. Through these schemes, information flow was organized and administrative arrangements were also improved

### E. Integrated/Holistic Approach

As per the review from CDP, economic growth cannot be considered as a sole factor for the development of rural areas or for uplifting the lives of rural people. Intentionally designed pro-poor strategies, strategies oriented with the welfare of the people, and coordinated rural-based schemes can lead

to the eradication of poverty and unemployment. This fact led the policymakers to adopt the integrated/holistic approach after the completion of the Fifth Five Year plan.

For overcoming the drawbacks of the approaches adopted earlier and for improving the living standards of the people of rural areas, an integrated/holistic approach was launched for rural people in 1978-79. Various rural programmes were launched under an integrated approach and clubbed under a single programme, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). IRDP, based on the Gandhian concept, focused on improving the overall status of poor people. Several programmes which were launched under IRDP include Training Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) and Jawahar Rozgar Yojna (JRY).

### CONCLUSION

The primary objective of acquiring understanding in terms of rural development approaches and strategies is to recognize the effective contributions that they make towards leading to effective growth and progression of rural communities. Generating information in terms of rural development objectives is the first and foremost aspect. The components of rural development policy are, Developing social consciousness, Promotion of cottage and village industries, Interdependence between rural and urban sectors, Adoption of an integrated approach, Promotion of non-farm activities, Development of agriculture and allied activities, Dedicated village leadership training programs. But the conditions of poverty, and scarcity of resources are proving to be major impediments within the course of achievement of the desired objectives. Hence, the main purpose of other strategies is to form the overall rural environmental conditions in such a manner that would lead to effective growth and development of individuals and communities.

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