

RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYAT RAJ IN INDIA

Shujat Akhter Rafiqi*

Abstract

The main objective of rural development is to remove poverty and fill the widened gap between the urban and rural people in terms of basic facilities. The government has been trying to uplift rural communities in terms of political and socio-economic conditions and says: said, 'Rural poverty alleviation has been the primary concern in the economic planning and development process of the country ... rural development embraces the entire improvement in the overall quality of life in the rural areas can be achieved through eradication of poverty in rural areas.' Keeping this view in mind the government has been introduced various development schemes, especially the development of agriculture in rural areas. In order to get the fruitful result from these programmes the PRIs were made active and occupied the most prominent place promotion of real democracy. This research paper will contextualize rural development and the steps taken by government of India for rural development and the role of PRIs in rural development.

Key words: Rural, poverty, economic, programme, development.

*** PhD Research Scholar (Public Administration)Maulana Azad National Urdu University
Hyderabad**

Introduction

The concept of development gained its name after the World War II. Econometrics define development as the growth of per capita gross national product (GNP). This view has been criticised by many experts and they state that development does not only means growth in income but the satisfactorily growth is social and political factors in planning also. Thus the 'development' is an inclusive process.

According to the concise Oxford dictionary of current English 'development' means 'a stage of growth and advancement' and a 'full grown state'.(oxford dictionary 1995)

In the present day, it has been termed as a 'multidimensional process consisting major changes in social structures, popular attitudes and national institutions and acceleration of economic growth, the reduction of inequality and the eradication of poverty.(Tadaro 1983). The term development is not so precise that a single definition can be provided to understand its meaning, different scholars have clarified about its greater meaning: Rosentein Rodan, a well known expert in economic development has emphasised that 'national development objectives relate not only to a rate of growth, but also to income distribution and other social goals. (Rosenstein Rodan 1969).

Leopold Laufer has stated;

Development "means dams and factories, roads and canals, soil improvement, universities, secondary Schools, sanitation, research and a multitude of other activities and achievements. But above all, development means people because the economic and social development is due to of people preparedness and activation. (Leopold 1967)

The world Bank has set six parameters for a community to be called as developed these are: absence of poverty, low mortality rate of children and pregnant mothers, primary education for all, gender equality, environment protection with sustainable development.

Dubley Seers recognised the political dimensions and suggested three conditions for development: participation in government ; belonging to a nation that is truly independent, both

economically and politically; adequate educational levels(especially literacy), his design was the challenge towards the view that development not only means the GNP per capita but all dimensions of society.(quoted by Misra 2008)

Other scholars define development as a cultural criterion which means the emergence of new social image. The other degrees of development are the freedom in making choices about one's own life, degree of mental satisfaction i.e. the mental peace, etc. thus development means the equality in the income per capita and better standard of life for both urban and rural people. It has been realised that the rural population is neglected which shows the inequality in wealth distribution of state particularly in rural areas.

Rural Development

Over the years, rural development has been designed to improve the economic and social life of a particular group of people i.e. rural poor. It creates an opportunity for the rural population to get the benefits for development in rural livelihood. Rural development as a concept connotes the overall development of rural areas with a sense to improve the quality of life of rural people. Thus it is a multidimensional concept that includes the development of agriculture and allied activities such as, village and cottage industries and crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities and more over human resources in rural areas.

Rural development as a 'method', wants the involvement in all development programmes and as a 'process' modernization of traditional culture by the application of science and technology, so that the quality of life of rural people would be improved (Sindaram 1997). Social scientists and researchers have defined the term rural development according to their experience and observation from developed countries in which I.S. Hooda, termed the 'rural' as a rural society or an area marked off by villages lying outside the jurisdiction of municipal corporations or committees and are classified not as urban areas. He states that the rural society socio-economic structure is different from urban society and is based on religious beliefs and traditional values. Its economic structure is related to its social structure. (Hooda 1997).

Micheal P. Tadaro clearly determines the dimensions of rural development as rural development encompasses the improvement in levels of living, including employment, education, health and nutrition, housing and a variety of social service; decreasing inequality in the distribution of rural income and in rural- urban balances in income and economic opportunities; the capacity of the rural sector to accelerate and sustain the flow of these improvements. Further he has described the key attitudes of rural development such as, livelihood and income generation; infrastructure development; human development; empowerment.

World Bank on the other hand has described rural development as a means of improving the socio- economic life of a specific group of people called rural poor, that includes; small farmers, tenants and landless. Further states that the rural growth is widely shared with private competitive agriculture and agri-business which is the main source of growth upliftment. (World Bank 1995) Likewise the World Bank's view , the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) has given six important criteria of rural development viz, drawing the entire rural labour force into the mainstream of economic activities; realizing the creative energies of the rural people, checking the migration of rural people towards cities, participation of women in rural development process, improving the dignity of life for rural population and all round development of rural population by tapping the abundant man power.(Sharma 1977).

Rural Development in India

India as the second largest populated country in the world in which 75% of total p[population live in villages and most of them belong to below poverty level and does not have basic facilities like drinking water, proper irrigation, toilets, electricity, roads etc. so the emphasis was given towards the rural development and the government have tried to eradicate these issues related to rural areas but still the results are undesired. In ancient India the concept of rural development could be found and the village was termed as the basic unit of administration and development. The concept of village can be traced in Vedic and later Vedic literature. In Manu, the Hindu law giver has mentioned that the village is the fundamental unit of administration with its own officers and organisations. In the ancient civilization like Harappa and Mohanjadaro after their excavations the well developed town planning was found.

In British period, the Manchester Cotton Supply Association improves the Agriculture in India and recommended for the special department of Agriculture in each province in British India. (Battacharya 1985). In 19th century, Christian missionaries played an active role in rural regeneration by providing land, employment in factories and workshop to their converts. In this period the economic standards of the rural farmers were improved by adopting the system of *Takkari* loans to farmers. Lord Curzon established a Research Institute and Agricultural college, where the scientific methods were used for agricultural development in India. (Maheswari 1985). In September 1920, the non-cooperation resolution approach for rural development in which hand- spinning and weavers in every house were provided. The spinning wheel economy was adopted by Mahatma Gandhi was the first popular exercise in rural development in India. The use of *khadi*, promotion of village industries, eradication of untouchability, provision of basic and adult education prohibition, women's uplift and the propagation of the national language were included in rural development.

Rabindranath Tagore set up the Sriniketan Institute for Rural reconstruction in 1921, the objectives of the institute was making the rural people self- reliant and self- respectful. The Firka Development Scheme was operated under the supervision of T. Prakasam and the Pilot project of Albert Mayer in Etah, Nilakari expermentr of S.K.Dey and the Baroda, Bombay and Bihar state rural development programmes.

Rural Development in Independent India

In the modern Indian context, the rural development is defined as integrated development of area and the people through optimum development and utilization of local resources- physical, biological and human and bringing necessary institutional, structural and attitudinal changes by effective service delivery which encompasses the economic field in agricultural, allied activities, rural Industries and the establishment of required social infrastructure and services in the areas of health, nutrition, sanitation, housing, drinking water and literacy with the aim of improving the quality of life f rural poor (Patel 1985). Satya Sundra identifies some aspects of rural development in Indian context as;

1. Changing in attitude of rural people towards development or transformation of village community.

2. Establishment of local self government.
3. Provisions for basic needs such as drinking water, health care, better sanitation, housing and employment.
4. Promotion of communal harmony and unity, literacy, education and cultural activities.

After independence, different initiatives were made for rural development for rural development in each five year plans since 1951. The ministry of Rural Development was set up for this purpose which is a nodal department of two international organisations viz., the centre on Integrated Rural Development of Asia and Pacific (CIRDAP) and the AFRO-Asian Rural Development Organisation (AARDO). The ministry consists of the following three departments:

1. Department of Rural Development
2. Department of Land Resources
3. Department of Drinking Water Supply.(Barik 2015)

The policies were classified into seven categories based on the problem area like land policy, price policy, policy of development of backward areas, policies for upliftment of weaker sections, forest policy, input policy, supporting services policy and policies for organisation and administration of rural development. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1980, government of India defines rural development as development of rural areas through activities relate to the production of goods or provision of services in rural areas and the promotion of Cottage and village industries, small scale industries and handi craft and other crafts. In every five year plan Government of India advocated the fresh policies for rural development. In First Five Year Plan 1951-1956 focus was given on community development through the agency known as National Extension Services. The Second Five Year Plan (1956-61) introduced cooperative farming and local people's participation in development. The Third Five Year Plan (1961-66) introduced *Panchayati Raj* – the three tier system of democratic decentralization. Three Annual Plans (1966-68) for agricultural yields by introducing new chemical fertilizers. The fourth Plan (1969-74) introduced “growth Centre Strategy” for development of selected areas of regions. These programmes were location specific activities. Some other programmes were; Drought Prone Area Programme, Crash Scheme for rural employment etc. The Fifth Plan (1974-79), CADP was introduced by construction of field water channels for irrigation, the *Warabandi* system of water management, Minimum Needs Programme for helping rural poor by introduction programmes like elementary education, rural

health, rural water Supply, rural roads, rural electrification and nutrition. Some other programmes were Twenty point programme for rural employment, food for work programme introduced in 1977, integrated Rural Development Programme, Training of Rural Youth for self employment, *Antyodaya*- identifying Anthdoya families and laying emphasis on economic criterion for selection of families without consideration of caste, colour and religion.(Singh, Abha Lakishmi & Fazal 1998). The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85) emphasises on socio-economic infrastructure in rural areas, alleviating rural poverty and reducing regional disparities, National Rural Employment Programme for creating a wide variety of community asserts, Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme. Seventh Five Year Plan(1985-90), Integrated Rural Energy Planning Programme-regarding energy planning exercise in rural areas, Indra Awas Yogna to provide greater aid for making houses in rural areas, Biogas Development Programme, Rural Sanitation Programme, Jawahar Rojgar Yigna for promoting minor irrigation, rural roads, house site construction, school/community building, social forestry etc. Eight Five Year Plan(1992-1997), Crop production Oriented Programmes, Rajive Gandhi National Drinking water Mission, Technology Development Extension & Training investment Promotion Scheme, National Social Assistance Programme, Integrated Waste lands Development Programme, Rural Sanitation Programme. The Ninth five year plan (1997-02) implemented programmes like, *Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojna* – this programme is the restructured form of the Jawahar Rozgar Yojna and aimed for improving the quality of life of the rural people by providing employment. *Employment Assurance Scheme*, *Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojina*- Popularly known as SGSY, It was launched in 1999 by merging IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, SITRA, GKY. The aim of the programme was to bring the assisted poor families above the poverty line in three years, by providing them income generating asserts through a mix of bank credit and subsidy provided by the government. Tenth Five Year plan (2002-07) introduction of *Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna* launched in 2000 its primary objective was to provide connectivity by way of an all-weather road, to connected habitations in the rural areas. *Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojna*, its aim was to provide food security and improve nutritional levels. *National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2004* for employment to at least one adult per house hold in rural areas. It was included in the constitution of India under article 41. The Act also contributed the other important objectives such as infrastructural development, social equity, environmental protection

and empowerment of women. In terms of the Act, every house hold shall have a right to at least 100 guaranteed employments every year for at least one adult. In Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007–2012), two rural development programmes were formulated Bharat Nirman Programme and flagship program to provide opportunities to improve living conditions as well as livelihoods. The objectives of Bharat Nirman Programme were Creation of average rate of irrigation, rural roads connectivity for rural development and poverty alleviation in India, rural electrification, pure drinking water etc. The flagship programs included National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), Integrated Child development services (ICDS), Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Mid-Day- Mill (MDM), National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP), Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC), Backward Regions Grant Fund (BRGF). The BRGF has replaced the Rastriya Sam Vikas Yojana (RSVY). In Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012–2017) the Government of India launched the other programmes for uplift of the poor classes like village self- sufficiency scheme, Member of Legislative Assembly Constituency Development Scheme, Integrated Sanitary Complex for Women, Clean Village Campaign and Rural Sanitation, Capital programme of Infrastructure Development by rural local Bodies, Construction of village Administrative Officers Office Buildings, Rejuvenation of water Bodies and Rain Water Harvesting in Rural Areas etc.(Bhende & Yatanoor 2017)

Rural development through PRIs

The 73rd amendment recognised the local self government by providing the constitutional status to Panchayat Raj. The panchayati Raj department takes the responsibility of implementing the development activities including district plans in rural areas and make them accountable through administrative control. The objective of the panchayat raj include organising common men the process of developing themselves through their own efforts, thus to enhance their capacity and self-reliance. This ensures the citizen Participation in political process and service delivery of local public goods in rural areas like, potable drinking water, general sanitation, primary health, elementary education, maintenance of public properties, etc. rural development programmes are being implemented through the Panchayati Raj and Rural development department at state level and by the Zila Parishads in District levels, majority of the works are implemented by PRIs and other government agencies in rural areas like PED, PHED, Forest, soil conservation etc and NGOs. Thus the role of panchayati Raj institutions is of two folds, enhancing citizen

participation in development through elections and decision making in *Gram Sabha* and other is effective services delivery in rural areas.

Conclusion

The concept of 'development' gains its new vision after the World War II and use of modern technology for economic growth. The developed countries start providing aids to the developing countries for their development. The emergence of international organisations like World Bank and IMF also provide funds for the developing countries and made certain condition for aid utilization in which the main focus was on the changing approach in public sector of developing countries to make them more transparent and effective by modification in laws and infrastructure. The concept of democratic decentralization was advocated for devolution of power to the local people and their involvement is political process to make the decision in policy implementation and planning process which is the main essence of democracy. To achieve the goals of development assigned by the international donor agencies, the governments of different developing countries start developing their Political and administrative set up, India as a donor acceptor also made changes in the public sector institution for efficient service delivery and empowerment of people. For involvement of political process at grassroots levels India enhanced the local self government known as *Panchayati Raj*. The objective of this system was the effective people's participation in development process both in political process and in socio-economic development by administrative control over development programmes formulated by government.

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