Rural Development Programmes in India

Introduction: Rural development has been one of the major objectives of development planning in India. The concept ‘rural development’ has been interpreted in two ways. In a narrow sense, it refers to development of rural areas through the development activities based mainly in the rural areas such as agriculture, animal husbandry, village crafts and industries, rural infrastructure, technology and innovation, etc. The broader view of rural development is not only large in scope and coverage but also with respect to its approach to the problem. Its focus is directly on the wellbeing of the people in rural areas. In broader sense it includes changes in social, political, economic, cultural, technological and structural aspects with a view to improving the quality of life of the rural people. Rural development is a multi-dimensional concept involving a multi-disciplinary approach. The concept has been defined in various ways. Desai defined it as “an approach which by better utilization of local resources and by creating infrastructural facilities for economic and social development, aims at improving the quality of life of the rural population, especially the rural poor, by creation of expanded employment and income opportunities for them”. World Bank defined it as “a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people- the rural poor”.

Approaches to rural development

- **Multipurpose approach**: This approach was based on the principle that rural development is not a unilateral but a multidimensional phenomenon. It is not only the matter of establishing line and order but also overall development of rural areas. Hence, the Community Development Program was started in 1952 which aimed at developing to the fullest extent, the material and human resources of an area through the cooperative and multipurpose efforts of people and the active help of the state.

- **Democratic decentralization approach**: This approach was based on the principle that people’s participation in policy making and implementation of programmes is essential for rural development. For this purpose, Panchayati Raj institutions were introduced in 1959. This approach finally shaped by 73rd constitutional amendment in 1992-93 and its main focus was to achieve maximum fruits of social justice. It signified decentralization of administration and democratic participation.

- **Trickle down Approach**: This approach was based on the philosophy that development of center will enhance the periphery. It means development from top to bottom. Under this approach, various heavy industries and mine industries are established in remote areas. But this approach seems to be failed in 1970s when it is realized that the aim is not achieved. Actually, the rural development programmes, in its early phase, were based on state’s assumption that economic growth will reach the rural poor automatically through the trickle-down effect.

- **Target Group Approach**: It was realized that in spite of large attempts, the rural development programmes couldn’t remove inequalities in income of rural communities
and as such they didn’t improve the conditions of rural poor. As a corrective measure, some special schemes of small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, rural women and children were introduced. For the target groups, two sets of measures were contemplated. The first set of measures was in the sphere of land reforms and second aimed at the generation of employment poultry farming, dairy farming and other supplementary schemes. For the development of women and children various schemes such as CPWPC, ICDS, and DWCRA were introduced with a view to provide them supplementary income, generating opportunities and social awareness.

- **Area Development Program Approach:** This approach was based on the principle that we should adopt different policies for the upliftment of different areas because they have different geographical and cultural specific identity. In rural development programmes, special attention was given to different areas with specific problems and as such area development approach was adopted viz. DPAP, CADP, HADP, TADP, DADP, etc.

- **Integrated Rural Development Approach:** The concept of integrated rural development seeks to correct most deficiencies of conventional approaches to rural development. Integrated rural development, besides incorporating all the elements of rural development, it places great emphasis on the distributive aspects of development. This approach was based on the principle of the integration of different sectors as education, agriculture, healthcare, cottage industries, small scale industries, etc. under the scheme to overall development of rural people.

**Rural Development Programmes**

- **Laws in the form of land reforms:** Enforcing Zamindari abolition, land ceiling, tenancy reforms, land redistribution, cooperatives, scale down of debts, consolidation and reconstruction of extremely fragmented and sub-divided units of land.

- **Community Development Programmes:** The CDP program started out in 1952, first organized effort to undertake the task of rural development was described as ‘magnacarta’ of hope and happiness of two-third of India’s population. Greater administrative efforts were given the emphasis on rural structural and institutional fraction through CDPs.

- **Panchayati Raj Program:** Panchayati Raj institutions were established in 1950s and after recommendation of different commissions (Balwant Raj Mehta, Ashok Mehta) it has been taken constitutional roots in 1993, through 73rd amendment of the constitution. This institution has generated structural transformation in rural society and empowered weaker sections of society such as SCs, STs, OBCs and women. It also speeds up the new stage of three tier structural relationship between people and civil administration through block, sameeti and district level.

- **IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programmes):** IRDP differs from other rural development programmes mainly on the ground that it is based on the assumption of
creation of assets and skills which along with credit provided are expected to generate a permanent flow of income for the beneficiaries identified as poorest of the poor. Secondly, it covers a wide range of activities: minor irrigation, dairy development, animal husbandry, animal powered transport, petty industries, services and business.

- **Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment**: The main thrust of TRYSEM scheme which is an integral part of the IRDP is on equipping the rural youth from families below poverty line with necessary technical and entrepreneurial skills to enable them to take up self-employment in the field of agriculture and allied activities, industries, service and business activities.

- **Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas**: Under the program of DWCRA, income generating opportunities to women belonging to rural poor families are provided to enable them supplementing their family income. Since its inception up to February 1996, over 31,000 groups have benefited in which 5.18 lakhs women get help.

- **Navodaya Vidyalaya Yojna**: To provide quality education free of cost to the promising children, especially of rural setting, Government of India has evolved a scheme under New Education Policy (1986) in which residential co-education Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya, are being established in each district. The objective behind establishing these is to provide equal opportunities learning and to reach a better institution for excellence and for national integration.

- **Rural Employment**: Rural employment measures began with NREP in 1980 which was followed by RLEGP in 1983. Both NREP and RLEGP were merged into one programme called JRY (Jawahar Rojgar Yojna) in 1989. Huge amount of money is invested in this programme. Now, Government of India has introduced NREGS in 2006. It provides employment to one adult member of every household in all the districts of India for 100 days in a year.

**Other Programmes**:

- 20 point programme in July 1975 with a slogan ‘Garibi Hatao’.
- Food for work programme in 1977 which aims to provide employment to underemployed during the slack season in the form of grain.
- Antyodaya Yojna: It was started by Rajasthan on 2nd October, 1977 but it was taken by Central Janta Government in 1978. This idea takes five of the poorest families from each village and helps them in economic betterment.
- PMAGSY (Pradhan Mantri Gramin Swarojgar Yojna): It focuses on integrated development of selected 100 villages with the criteria of having at least 50% population of SCs.
- Bharat Nirman Yojna: It was started out in 2005 with six elements or targets; housing, irrigation, drinking water access, rural roads, electrification and telephony.
- National Food Security Act: It came into picture on 5th July, 2013 with objective of providing subsidized food grains to households who are living below poverty line. It
provides 5 kg. Grains per person per month to two third of the rural population with division: 2 kg wheat per person per month and 3 kg rice.

- National Rural Health Mission: It was started out in April 2005 covering 18 states having weak health indicators. It provides all kind of facilities and monitoring to these selected states for improvement on health grounds.

- National Rural Livelihood Mission: It came in to picture on June 2011 by the Ministry of Rural Development for self-employment of poor people by organizing them under Self Help Groups (SHGs). It is a major project under poverty alleviation programmes.