



## Rural Development Is the Tool for Nation Building in India – Some Realities

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### ABSTRACT

*There are no universally accepted approaches to rural development. It is a choice influenced by time, space and culture. The term rural development connotes overall development of rural areas to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept, and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities, village and cottage industries and crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities and, above all, human resources in rural areas. As a phenomenon, rural development is the end-result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, social, cultural and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social wellbeing of a specific group of people – the rural poor. As a discipline, it is multi-disciplinary in nature, representing an intersection of agriculture, social, behavioural, engineering and management sciences (Katar Singh 1999). Rural development has always been an important issue in all discussions pertaining to economic development, especially of developing countries, throughout the world. In the developing countries and some formerly communist societies, rural mass comprise a substantial majority of the population. Over 3.5 billion people live in the Asia and Pacific region and some 63% of them in rural areas. Although millions of rural people have escaped poverty as a result of rural development in many Asian countries, a large majority of rural people continue to suffer from persistent poverty. The socio-economic disparities between rural and urban areas are widening and creating tremendous pressure on the social and economic fabric of many developing Asian economies.*

**KEYWORDS :** Rural development, Nation Building, Development

### Introduction

Livelihoods perspectives have been central to rural development thinking and practice in the past decade. But where do such perspectives come from, what are their conceptual roots, and what influences have shaped the way they have emerged? This paper responds to these questions with an historical review of key moments in debates about rural livelihoods, identifying the tensions, ambiguities and challenges of such approaches. A complex archaeology of ideas and practices is revealed which demonstrates the hybrid nature of such concepts, bridging perspectives across different fields of rural development scholarship and practice. Yet, in arguing that livelihoods perspectives are important for integrating insights and interventions beyond disciplinary or sectoral boundaries, the paper also touches on some of the limitations, dangers and challenges. In particular, the paper highlights the problems arising from a simplistic application of synthetic frameworks which have come to dominate certain aspects of applied development discussion and practice over the past decade. Looking to the future the paper identifies a number of core challenges, centred on the need to inject a more thorough-going political analysis into the centre of livelihoods perspectives. This, the paper argues, will enhance the capacity of livelihoods perspectives to address key lacunae in recent discussions, including questions of knowledge, politics, scale and dynamics.

Any basic search of literature or development project material will uncover numerous mentions to livelihoods approaches, perspectives, methods and frameworks. A mobile and flexible term, 'livelihoods' can be attached to all sorts of other words to construct whole fields of development enquiry and practice. These relate to locales (rural or urban livelihoods), occupations (farming, pastoral or fishing livelihoods), social difference (gendered, age-defined livelihoods), directions (livelihood pathways, trajectories), dynamic patterns (sustainable or resilient livelihoods) and many more. Livelihoods perspectives start with how different people in different places live. A variety of definitions are offered in the literature, including, for example, 'the means of gaining a living' (Chambers 1995, vi) or 'a combination of the resources used and the activities undertaken in order to live'.<sup>1</sup> A descriptive analysis portrays a complex web of activities and interactions that emphasises the diversity of ways people make a living. This may cut across the boundaries of more conventional approaches to looking at rural development which focus on defined activities: agriculture, wage employment, farm labour, small-scale enterprise and so on. But in reality people combine different activities in a complex bricolage or portfolio of activities. Outcomes of course vary, and how different strategies affect livelihood pathways or trajectories is an important

concern for livelihoods analysis. This dynamic, longitudinal analysis emphasises such terms as coping, adaptation, improvement, diversification and transformation. Analyses at the individual level can in turn aggregate up to complex livelihood strategies and pathways at household, village or even district levels.

These factors, among many others, tend to highlight the importance of rural development. The policy makers in most of the developing economies recognize this importance and have been implementing a host of programs and measures to achieve rural development objectives. While some of these countries have achieved impressive results, others have failed to make a significant dent in the problem of persistent rural underdevelopment. Rural - Is an area, where the people are engaged in primary industry in the sense that they produce things directly for the first time in cooperation with nature as stated by Srivastava (1961).

### History of NGO's

International non-governmental organizations have a history dating back to at least 1839 It has been estimated that by 1914, there were 1083 NGOs. International NGOs were important in the anti-slavery movement and the movement for women's suffrage, and reached a peak at the time of the World Disarmament Conference. However, the phrase "non-governmental organization" only came into popular use with the establishment of the United Nations Organization in 1945 with provisions in Article 71 of Chapter 10 of the United Nations Charter for a consultative role for organizations which are neither governments nor member states—see Consultative Status. The definition of "international NGO" (INGO) is first given in resolution 288 (X) of ECOSOC on February 27, 1950: it is defined as "any international organization that is not founded by an international treaty". The vital role of NGOs and other "major groups" in sustainable development was recognized in Chapter 27 of Agenda 21, leading to intense arrangements for a consultative relationship between the United Nations and nongovernmental organizations. Tate of the world", rising in periods of growth and declining in periods of crisis It has been observed that the number of INGO founded or dissolved matches the general "s Rapid development of the non-governmental sector occurred in western countries as a result of the processes of restructuring of the welfare state. Further globalization of that process occurred after the fall of the communist system and was an important part of the Washington consensus.

Globalization during the 20th century gave rise to the importance of NGOs. Many problems could not be solved within a nation. In-

ternational treaties and international organizations such as the World Trade Organization were centred mainly on the interests of capitalist enterprises. In an attempt to counterbalance this trend, NGOs have developed to emphasize humanitarian issues, developmental aid and sustainable development. A prominent example of this is the World Social Forum, which is a rival convention to the World Economic Forum held annually in January in Davos, Switzerland. The fifth World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil, in January 2005 was attended by representatives from more than 1,000 NGOs. In terms of environmental issues and sustainable development, the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 was the first to show the power of international NGOs, when about 2,400 representatives of NGOs came to play a central role in deliberations. Some have argued that in forums like these, NGOs take the place of what should belong to popular movements of the poor. Whatever the case, NGO transnational networking is now extensive.

**Rural** areas are sparsely settled places away from the influence of large cities and towns. Such areas are distinct from more intensively settled urban and suburban areas, and also from unsettled lands such as outback or wilderness. People live in village, on farms and in other isolated houses. Rural areas can have an agricultural character, though many rural areas are characterized by an economy based on logging, mining, oil and gas exploration, or tourism. Lifestyles in rural areas are different than those in urban areas, mainly because limited services are available. Governmental services like law enforcement, schools, fire departments, and libraries may be distant, limited in scope, or unavailable. Utilities like water, sewer, street lighting, and garbage collection may not be present. Public transport is sometimes absent or very limited; people use their own vehicles, walk or ride an animal. A society or community can be classified as rural based on the criteria of lower population density, less social differentiation, less social and spatial mobility, slow rate of social change, etc. Agriculture would be the major occupation of rural area.

#### Development

It refers to growth, evolution, stage of inducement or progress. This progress or growth is gradual and had sequential phases. Always there is increasing differentiation. It also refers to the overall movement towards greater efficiency and complex situations. Rural development designates the utilization of approaches and techniques under one single programme, which rally upon local communities as units of action. It provides a large umbrella under which all the people engaged in the work of community organizations, community progress and community relation.

**Rural Development (RD)** is a process, which aims at improving the well being and self realization of people living outside the urbanized areas through collective process. According to Agarwal (1989), rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of rural poor.

#### The United Nations defines Rural Development as

Rural Development is a process of change, by which the efforts of the people themselves are united, those of government authorities to improve their economic, social and cultural conditions of communities in to the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national programme. Rural Development is a process of bringing change among rural community from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. It is also expressed as a movement for progress. Scope and Importance of Rural Development Rural development is a dynamic process, which is mainly concerned with the rural areas. These include agricultural growth, putting up of economic and social infrastructure, fair wages as also housing and house sites for the landless, village planning, public health, education and functional literacy, communication etc. Rural development is a simple concept which is more complex to define. Rural development is a multi-dimensional concept, which involves all kinds of development in rural areas through collective governmental and voluntary agencies' efforts in our country, where the majority of the population dwells in villages; national development becomes almost synonymous with rural development. India cannot shine without the shining of rural India.

After independence a number of development programmes were started to change the scenario in the rural areas. Government has in-

itiated, sustained and refined many rural development programmes under different five year plans. Whopping funds expended, yet alleviation of poverty has remained a distant dream. Rural poverty is inextricably linked with low rural productivity and unemployment, including under-employment. There is a basic issue of providing livelihood security, basic entitlements to the rural population. Infrastructural gaps require to be filled and connectivity with urban areas requires to be strengthened. Therefore the core of rural development strategy is to provide both self and wage employment, water supply, proper sanitary and health care measures and education.

#### Rural Development in India

In the Indian context rural development assumes greater significance as 72.22 per cent (according to the 2001 census) of its population still live in rural areas. Most of the people living in rural areas draw their livelihood from agriculture and allied sectors (60.41 % of total work force), and poverty mostly persists here (27.1 % in 1999-2000). At the time of independence around 83 per cent of the Indian populations were living in rural areas. Accordingly, from the very beginning, our planned strategy emphasized rural development and will continue to do so in future. Strategically, the focus of our planning was to improve the economic and social conditions of the underprivileged sections of rural society. Thus, economic growth with social justice became the proclaimed objective of the planning process under rural development. It began with an emphasis on agricultural production and consequently expanded to promote productive employment opportunities for rural masses, especially the poor, by integrating production, infrastructure, human resource and institutional development measures.

#### During the plan periods, there have been shifting strategies for rural development

- The First Plan (1951-56) was a period when community development was taken as a method and national extension services as the agency for rural development.
- Co-operative farming with local participation was the focus of the Second Plan (1956-61) strategy.
- The Third Plan (1961-66) was the period of re-strengthening the Panchayati Raj System through a democratic decentralized mechanism.
- Special Area Programmes were started for the development of backward areas in the Fourth Plan (1969-74).
- In the Fifth Plan (1974-79), the concept of minimum needs programme was introduced to eradicate poverty in rural areas.
- There was a paradigm shift in the strategy for rural development in the Sixth Plan (1980- 85). The emphasis was on strengthening the socio-economic infrastructure in rural areas, and initiatives were taken to alleviate disparities through the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).
- During the Seventh Plan (1985-90), a new strategy was chalked out to create skill-based employment opportunities under different schemes.

Special programmes for income generation through creation of assets, endowments and land reforms were formulated for participation by the people at the grassroots level.

#### Rural development is a national necessity and has considerable importance in India because of the following reasons

- About three-fourth of India's population live in rural areas, thus rural development is needed to develop nation as whole.
- Nearly half of the country's national income is derived from agriculture, which is major occupation of rural India.
- Around seventy per cent of Indian population gets employment through agriculture.
- Bulks of raw materials for industries come from agriculture and rural sector.
- Increase in industrial population can be justified only in rural population's motivation and increasing the purchasing power to buy industrial goods.
- Growing disparity between the urban elite and the rural poor can lead to political instability. The main objective of the rural development programme is to raise the economic and social level of the rural people.

## Conclusion

The most challenging task is to see whether the funds have been properly utilized. The implementation is to be properly checked to bring the required result. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in sub urban and urban areas. Further there are cascading effects of poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure in rural areas on urban centres causing slums and consequential social and economic tensions manifesting in economic deprivation and urban poverty. Hence Rural Development which is concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential. The present strategy of rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment.

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