



## Rural Development Programmes Through Poverty Alleviation In India

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**ABSTRACT**

Rural Development in India is one of the most important factors for the growth of the Indian economy. India is primarily an agriculture-based country. Agriculture contributes nearly one-fifth of the gross domestic product in India. In order to increase the growth of agriculture, the Government has planned several programs pertaining to Rural Development in India. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and diary are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. Rural development in India has witnessed several changes over the years in its emphasis, approaches, strategies and Programmes. It has assumed a new dimension and perspectives as a consequence. The Government of India have been initiated by through several plans and measures to alleviate poverty in rural India, there still remains much more to be done to bring prosperity in the lives of the people in rural areas. At present, technology dissemination is uneven and slow in the rural areas. Good efforts of organizations developing technologies, devices and products for rural areas could not yield high success. Experiences of many countries suggest that technological development fuelled by demand has a higher dissemination rate. However, in India, technology developers for rural areas have been catering to needs, rather than creating demand. There is no industry linkage machinery to create demand-based-technology market for rural communities. Propagation of technology/schemes for rural development is slow and there is a lacking in wider participation of different stakeholders. The government, panchayats, village personals, researchers, industries, NGOs and private companies to not only help in reducing this imbalance, but also to have a multiplier effect on the overall economy.

**KEYWORDS**

Rural Development, Programmes, Agriculture, Industry

**INTRODUCTION**

Rural Development in India is one of the most important factors for the growth of the Indian economy. India is primarily an agriculture-based country. Agriculture contributes nearly one-fifth of the gross domestic product in India. In order to increase the growth of agriculture, the Government has planned several programs pertaining to Rural Development in India. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and diary are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. Rural development in India has witnessed several changes over the years in its emphasis, approaches, strategies and Programmes. It has assumed a new dimension and perspectives as a consequence. Rural development can be richer and more meaningful only through the participation of clientele of development. Just as implementation is the touchstone for planning, people’s participation is the Centre-piece in rural development. People’s participation is one of the foremost pre-requisites of development process both from procedural and philosophical perspectives. For the development planners and administrators it is important to solicit the participation of different groups of rural people, to make the plans participatory.

**Aims and Objectives**

Rural development aims at improving rural people’s livelihoods in an equitable and sustainable manner, both socially and environmentally, through better access to assets (natural, physical, human, technological and social capital), and services, and control over productive capital (in its financial or economic and political forms) that enable them to improve their livelihoods on a sustainable and equitable basis. The basic objectives of Rural Development Programmes have been alleviation of poverty and unemployment through creation of basic social and economic infrastructure, provision of training to rural un-

employed youth and providing employment to marginal Farmers/Labourers to discourage seasonal and permanent migration to urban areas.

**Role and function of the Government**

The Government’s policy and programmes have laid emphasis on poverty alleviation, generation of employment and income opportunities and provision of infrastructure and basic facilities to meet the needs of rural poor. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is the apex body for formulating policies, regulations and acts pertaining to the development of the rural sector. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and diary are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy. The introduction of Bharat Nirman, a project by the Government of India in collaboration with the State Governments and the Panchayati Raj Institutions is a major step towards the improvement of the rural sector. The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 was introduced by the Ministry of Rural Development, for improving the living conditions and its sustenance in the rural sector of India. The Ministry of Rural Development in India is engaged in legislations for the social and economic improvement of the rural populace. The ministry consists of three departments viz., Department of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources and Department of Drinking Water Supply. Under the department of rural development, there are three autonomous bodies viz., Council for Advancement of People’s Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) and National Rural Road Development Agency (NRRDA). The objective of the ministry can broadly be elaborated as to encourage, promote and assist voluntary action in the implementation of projects for the enhancement of rural prosperity, strengthen and promote voluntary efforts in rural development with focus on injecting new technological inputs, act as the national nodal point for co-ordination of all efforts at generation and dissemination of technologies relevant to

rural development in its wide sense and assist and promote programmes aimed at conservation of the environment and natural resources.

However, various ministries in the central government are engaged directly or indirectly for implementation of many programmes and schemes for the development of rural areas like Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Family Welfare, New and Renewable Energy, Science and Technology, Women and Child Development and Tribal affairs etc. In addition, to strengthen the grass root level democracy, the Government is constantly endeavouring to empower Panchayat Raj Institutions in terms of functions, powers and finance. Grama Sabha, NGOs, Self-Help Groups and PRIs have been accorded adequate roles to make participatory democracy meaningful and effective.

### Strategies and programs for rural development

The rural economy is an integral part of the overall Indian economy. As majority of the poor reside in the rural areas, the prime goal of rural development is to improve the quality of life of the rural people by alleviating poverty through the instrument of self-employment and wage employment programmes, by providing community infrastructure facilities such as drinking water, electricity, road connectivity, health facilities, rural housing and education and promoting decentralization of powers to strengthen the Panchayati raj institutions etc. The various strategies and programs of the Government for rural development are discussed below:

**Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP):** First introduced in 1978-79, IRDP has provided assistance to rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods. Subsequently, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Tool Kits to Rural Artisans (SITRA) and Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) were introduced as sub-programs of IRDP to take care of the specific needs of the rural population.

**Wage Employment Programs:** Anti-poverty strategies, like assistance to the rural poor families to bring them above the poverty line by ensuring appreciable sustained level of income through the process of social mobilization, training and capacity building. Wage Employment Programs have sought to achieve multiple objectives. They not only provide employment opportunities during lean agricultural seasons but also in times of floods, droughts and other natural calamities. They create rural infrastructure which supports further economic activity. It encompasses Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY) and National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) etc. NREGA is an act of parliament. It is not merely a scheme or policy. It aims at enhancing the livelihood security of the people in rural areas by guaranteeing hundred days of wage employment in a financial year, to a rural household whose members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. The objective of the Act is to create durable assets and strengthen the livelihood resource base of the rural poor.

**Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS):** EAS was launched in October 1993 covering 1,778 drought-prone, desert, tribal and hill area blocks. It was later extended to all the blocks in 1997-98. The EAS was designed to provide employment in the form of manual work in the lean agricultural season. The works taken up under the program were expected to lead to the creation of durable economic and social infrastructure and address the felt-needs of the people.

**Food for Work Program:** The Food for Work program was started in 2000-01 as a component of the EAS in eight notified drought-affected states of Chattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Uttaranchal. The program aims at food provision through wage employment. Food grains are supplied to states free of cost. However, lifting of food grains for the scheme from Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns has been slow.

**Rural Housing:** Initiated in 1985-86, the IAY is the core program for providing free housing to families in rural areas. It targets scheduled castes (SCs)/scheduled tribes (STs), households and freed bonded laborers. The rural housing program has certainly enabled many BPL families to acquire pucca houses. The coverage of the beneficiaries is limited given the resource constraints. The Samagra Awas Yojana (SAY) was taken up in 25 blocks to ensure convergence of housing, provision of safe drinking water, sanitation and common drainage facilities. The Housing and Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) has extended its activities to the rural areas, providing loans at a concessional rate of interest to economically weaker sections and low-income group households for construction of houses.

**Social Security Programs:** Democratic decentralization and centrally supported Social Assistance Programs were two major initiatives of the government in the 1990s. The National Social Assistance Program (NSAP), launched in August 1995 marks a significant step towards fulfillment of the Directive Principles of State Policy. The NSAP has three components: a) National Old Age Pension Scheme (NOAPS); b) National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS); c) National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS). The NSAP is a centrally-sponsored program that aims at ensuring a minimum national standard of social assistance over and above the assistance that states provide from their own resources. The NOAPS provides a monthly pension of Rs. 75 to destitute BPL persons above the age of 65. The NFBS is a scheme for BPL families who are given Rs. 10,000 in the event of the death of the breadwinner. The NMBS provides Rs. 500 to support nutritional intake for pregnant women. In addition to NSAP, the Annapurna scheme was launched from 1st April 2000 to provide food security to senior citizens who were eligible for pension under NOAPS but could not receive it due to budget constraints.

**Land Reforms:** In an agro-based economy, the structure of land ownership is central to the wellbeing of the people. The government has strived to change the ownership pattern of cultivable land, the abolition of intermediaries, the abolition of zamindari, ceiling laws, security of tenure to tenants, consolidation of land holdings and banning of tenancy are a few measures undertaken. Furthermore, a land record management system is a pre-condition for an effective land reform program. In 1987-88, a centrally-sponsored scheme for Strengthening of Revenue Administration and Updating of Land Records (SRA & ULR) was introduced in Orissa and Bihar.

### Science and Technology for rural development

Ministry of Science and Technology plays a pivotal role in promotion of science & technology in the country. The departments has wide ranging activities ranging from promoting high end basic research and development of cutting edge technologies on one hand to serving the technological requirements of the common man through development of appropriate skills and technologies on the other. Appropriate rural technology focuses mainly on those technologies which are simple and within the reach of the ordinary people for their own benefit and the benefit of their community and harness the local or regional capacity to meet local needs without increasing dependence on external factors. A large number of governments, public and private non-government organizations are involved in developing technologies for rural areas. However, these technologies have hardly touched the lives of the rural population. Apparently, the problem lies not only in the generation, diffusion and adoption of technologies but also in poor documentation. Recently, efforts have been made by several organizations like NRDC, CAPART, TRCS, NIRD, DST, DBT, CSIR, ICAR, KVKs and other voluntary organizations etc. to bring out a compendium of technologies for rural areas for wide information dissemination and public awareness. A brief account of technologies which are low cost, energy-efficient and environment-friendly as well as appropriate and sustainable for application in rural areas is presented in the Appendix I.

### Government schemes focusing on Science and Technology are:

**S&T Application for Rural Development (STARD):** Aims at facilitating development of promising S&T based field groups and innovative technologies related to rural development.

**S&T for Women:** To promote research, development and adaptation of technology, improve the life, working conditions and opportunities for gainful employment of women especially in rural areas.

**S&T Application for Weaker Sections (STAWS):** Aimed at the development of economically weaker sections of the society in rural and urban areas.

**Tribal sub-plan:** Aims at improving living conditions of scheduled tribes based on sustainable science and technology activities

**Special Component Plan (SCP):** Aims at improving the lot of the poor sections of SC community through intervention of Science & Technology.

### RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Swaraj- India first indigenous tractor to facilitate mechanized agriculture.

- Value addition through post-harvest technologies like essential oil / menthol production.
- Cheapest water purification technology including terracotta purification disc, portable arsenic detection kit, ultrapore membrane-based purifiers for removing virus & bacteria.
- Over 365 technologies passed on to the rural masses through publications, training sessions, etc.
- Construction of around 30,000 dwelling units
- using cost-effective construction technologies.

Rural Development is the main pillar of Nation's Development. In spite of rapid urbanization, a large section of our population still lives in the villages. Secondly, rural India has lagged behind in development because of many historical factors. Though, the 11th Plan began in very favorable circumstances with the economy having grown at the rate of 7.7 per cent per year in the X<sup>th</sup> Plan period, there still exists a big challenge to correct the developmental imbalances and to accord due priority to development in rural areas. Ministry of Rural Development is implementing a number of programmes aimed at sustainable holistic development in rural areas. The thrust of these programmes is on all round economic and social transformation in rural areas, through a multi-pronged strategy, aiming to reach out to the most disadvantaged sections of the society.

### Target and strategy of the XI<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan (2007-2012)

Adequate provision has been made for the state share in continuing Centrally Sponsored Schemes like Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SAGSY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Integrated Waste Land Development Programme (IWDP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Mid Day Meal Scheme, DRDA Administration and National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS).

Besides these, World Bank aided DPAP project is being implemented in 14 districts for the last 6 years. Support for this will continue under the second phase of the scheme in the eleventh plan. Similarly, M.P. Rural Lively hood Programme (MPRLP) is being implemented with the help of Department of International Development (DFID). Water and Land Management Institute (WALMI), DRDA Administration Yojana, Gokul Gram and Godan Yojana and community development programme are proposed to be continued into the XI<sup>th</sup> Plan.

Besides these, the State Government is supporting 5 new schemes namely, State Rural Road Connectivity Scheme, C.M. Rural Housing 90 Scheme, Master Plan Scheme, SGSY scheme, Training IEC scheme and Sutradhar scheme.

As a successor to Rashtriya Sum Vikas Yojana (RSVY), Backward Regional Grant Fund (BRGF) scheme will be implemented in 24 of the 48 districts.

### National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)

State of Madhya Pradesh has been the frontrunner in implementation of this scheme. NREGS was launched in 18 districts of M.P. from 02.02.06. The central share of the scheme is 90 per cent. The objective of the scheme is to provide a minimum of 100 days unskilled employment to adult members of rural families. 44.19 lakh families have registered, out of which 44.10 lakh families have been provided job cards.

During the financial year, 1, 48,229 works have been sanctioned upto 31.12.06, out of which 74,185 works have been completed and 74,044 works are in progress. Of the total sanctioned works, 1, 11,327 works are of water conservation, while 22,593 are of rural connectivity. In this scheme, a provision of Rs. 282.29 crores and Rs. 1998.82 crores has been provided for the annual plan 2007-08 and 2007-2012.

The target man-days for the year 2007-08 is 2,600 lakhs and for the XI<sup>th</sup> five year plan, it is 17,300 lakh man-days.

### M.P. Rural Livelihood Programme (MPRLP)

An amount of Rs. 23.15 crores was available in the scheme for the year 2006-07 as per previous balance and other receipts in which state share is Rs. 0.49 crores out of which upto November 2006 Rs. 22.42 crores spent which is 96.05% of total available fund. For the year 2006-07 the target for livelihood programme is 25,000 families against which upto November 2006, the achievement is 16,700 families and the percentage is 66.80.

For the year 2007-08, Rs.31.40 crores ceiling is proposed in which Rs. 0.80 crores is state share. Hence, accordingly for the XI<sup>th</sup> five year plan ceiling is proposed for Rs. 224.80 crores.

For the year 2007-08, the target is 80,000 families, hence, accordingly for the XI<sup>th</sup> five year plan the number of beneficiaries is 3.20 lakh families.

### District Poverty Initiatives Program (DPIP)

The DPIP programme, which focuses its activities in over 53 Blocks in 14 districts of MP, will alleviate poverty by improving the capacity and opportunities for poor and disadvantaged people with special focus on women. The project period is 5 years. The overall project cost is Rs. 600 crores out of which World Bank loan would be Rs. 500 crores and the remaining amount will come from the Government of Madhya Pradesh and from rural communities as their contributions during project implementation.

### Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana is being implemented in the state with effect from 25.12.2000. For the proper monitoring and implementation of the scheme, M.P. Rural Road Development Authority was formed. The objective of the scheme is that by the end of X<sup>th</sup> five year plan, all villages having more than 500 habitants should be linked with major roads having 12 months connectivity. A distance of 26,544 km long road construction works were sanctioned upto September 2006 out of which 11,153 km roads constructions completed. A number of 2,115 villages having more than 1,000 habitants and 576 villages having 500 habitants are linked with 12 month connectivity roads. Now this scheme is included in Bharat Nirman Scheme from 2006-07 onwards. Under this scheme, new and upgradation of 48000 km roads is proposed. By the end of 2009, all villages having 1000 habitants will be connected with newly constructed roads.

Rs.100 crores allocated for the year 2007-08 and for the XI<sup>th</sup> Five year plan, an amount of Rs. 500 crores is proposed. The state government target for the year 2007-08 is 4,000 kms and for the XI<sup>th</sup> five year plan 20,000 km accordingly.

### New Schemes proposed under the XI<sup>th</sup> plan

Some new schemes viz., State Rural Road connectivity, State Rural Housing, State SGSY, Training, Master Plan and Sutradhar are proposed for XI<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan period. The provision made under new schemes for 2007-12 is Rs. 18,110.60 lakhs and for 2007-08 is Rs. 6,720.00 lakhs. Scheme-wise activities have been described briefly as follows-

**State Rural connectivity:** Under PMGSY, the construction of all-weather roads is not permitted if the villages are less than 500 meter away from the main route/road. Such left out roads and bridges will be covered and connected under the scheme with state support. During annual plan 2007-08, a provision of Rs. 25 crores has been made to construct such missing links.

**Mukhya Mantri Awas Yojna:** In spite of the scheme being under Bharat Nirman, as against nearly 38 lakh houseless families in the state, annual allocation under Indira Awas Yojna is only about 46,000. At this rate, it will take about nine decades to fulfill the existing need. The State Government has decided to flag off the Chief Minister Rural Housing Scheme. The main objective of the scheme is to provide housing to the houseless SC/ST families. During annual plan 2007-08, a provision of Rs. 32 crores has been provided for constructing 12,800 houses.

**State SGSY:** To strengthen the SHG movement, it has been decided to constitute SHG Federations on the basis of activity and the geographical location. Rs. 5 crores and Rs. 18 crores have been proposed for Annual Plan 2007-08 and XI<sup>th</sup> five year plan 2007-12 respectively.

**Training IEC Scheme:** A New scheme will be initiated from 2007-08 for the training on project implementation and its monitoring. For this scheme, during 2007-08, Rs. 0.1 crore is proposed.

**Working Plan for Water Storage:** It is a plan on the basis of a survey of the catchment areas and flow of water direction. On the basis of watershed specificities, identification and cost estimation of the probable water harvesting structures is done. On the basis of this study, the master plans have been prepared for all the districts of the State. On the basis of the master plan, works of nature of pond deepening and renovation, check dam construction and other watershed activity will be taken up in a planned and systematic manner in 14 districts not covered by NREGS and BRGF. For the implementation of works, according to the Master Plan, an outlay of Rs.5 crores is proposed for the 2007-08.

**Sutradhar Yojana:** The establishment of the kiosks has been planned to facilitate access in rural areas to electronic communication and information and government schemes and Programmes. These kiosks will facilitate provisioning of up to date information about Centre/State Government organizations and schemes. For this scheme, Rs. 0.1 crore is proposed for the annual plan 2007-08. An outlay of Rs. 7, 17,783.60 lakh for the XI<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan is proposed. Out of this, Rs. 18,110.60 lakh is proposed under new state schemes. An outlay of Rs. 1, 29,196.60 lakh is proposed for Annual Plan 2007-08, of which Rs. 6,720.00 lakh has been allocated for new schemes.

### Conclusion:

Although concerted efforts have been initiated by the Government of India through several plans and measures to alleviate poverty in rural India, there still remains much more to be done to bring prosperity in the lives of the people in rural areas. At present, technology dissemination is uneven and slow in the rural areas. Good efforts of organizations developing technologies, devices and products for rural areas could not yield high success. Experiences of many countries suggest that technological development fuelled by demand has a higher dissemination rate. However, in India, technology developers for rural areas have been catering to needs (with small im-

provement), rather than creating demand. There is no industry linkage machinery to create demand-based-technology market for rural communities. Besides, there is also an imbalance between strategies and effective management programmes. Propagation of technology/schemes for rural development is slow and there is a lacking in wider participation of different stakeholders. An ideal approach may therefore, include the government, panchayats, village personals, researchers, industries, NGOs and private companies to not only help in reducing this imbalance, but also to have a multiplier effect on the overall economy.

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