

RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES AND BENEFICIARY GROWTH IN INDIA

Dr.V.Sujatha

Lecturer in Economics

M.Kutumba Rao

Lecturer in Economics, The Hindu College, Machilipatnam, Andhra Pradesh

Email id: sujathavepuru@gmail.com

Introduction

The concept of rural development is not new to India; rather it deals back to country's ancient civilization. It received the attention of Gandhiji, Tagore and many others much before independence. Hence, it has two components: rural and development in which rural denotes an era which is characterized by non-urban style of life, occupational structure, social organizations and settlements pattern, where as development means qualitative as well as quantitative socio-economic change. In the Indian context, rural development assumes greater significance as 68.84 percent (according to 2011 census) of its population live in rural areas. India adopted economic growth with social justice as proclaimed objective of the planning process under rural development.

Some of the important Rural Development Programmes initiated by the Government were discussed below:

1. **Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):** The Integrated Rural Development Programme is one of the largest micro-enterprise programmes in the world, having reached about 50 million borrowers since its inception in 1979. It seeks to raise the incomes of poor beneficiaries to a level above the poverty line by requiring the banks to extend loans to them for the purchase of assets and by subsidizing 25 to 50 percent of the cost of the assets. It is a centrally sponsored scheme being implemented on a 50:50 basis by the centre and the states.
2. **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G):** Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) was started with effect from 1st April, 2016 and is in line with the Government's commitment of providing 'Housing for All by 2022' with improved scheme architecture and robust delivery and monitoring mechanism. The Ministry envisages to construct 1 crore houses in rural India at enhanced unit assistance of Rs 1.20 lakh in plain areas and Rs 1.30 lakh in difficult areas/hilly states/IAP districts by 2018-19 under PMAY-G
3. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):** MGNREGA aims at enhancing livelihood security of the households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year. The allocation of Rs.48,000 crore for the FY 2017-18, is the highest ever allocation for MGNREGA. During 2017-18 so far, 4.35 crore households have been provided employment in 156 lakh works. In the process, 160 crore person days of employment have been generated. Out of the total employment, 54 percent have been generated for women, well above the statutory requirement of 33 percent. Under Mission Water Conservation, 2264 water stressed blocks have received special attention for Natural Resource Management including water harvesting and water conservation.
4. **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):** The primary objective of PMGSY is to provide connectivity by way of all-weather roads. The programme also has an up gradation component with a target to upgrade existing rural roads in order to ensure full farm to market connectivity. PMGSY-II aims to cover up gradation of existing selected rural roads based on a criterion to make the road network vibrant. Development of Rural Hubs and growth centers are crucial to the overall strategy of facilitating poverty reduction through creating rural infrastructures. Growth centers/rural hubs provide markets, banking and other service facilities enabling and enhancing self-employment and livelihood facilities. Road length of 17330 km has been constructed by covering 4817 habitations during the year 2017-18 (April to October, 2017). PMGSY has also approved the proposals for all the remaining habitations to be connected and it is expected to attain almost 100 percent connectivity by March, 2019.
5. **National Social Assistance Programme: (NSAP):** NSAP comprises of five sub-schemes namely Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS), Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme (IGNWPS), Indira Gandhi National Disability Pension Scheme (IGNDPS), National Family Benefit Scheme (NFBS) and Anna-purna Scheme. The schemes of NSAP are implemented both in urban and rural areas, by the Social Welfare Department in the States. The National Social Assistance Programme covers 3.20 crore beneficiaries include about 2.40 crore old age pensioners, 70.43 lakh widow pensioners and 10.32 lakh pensioners with disability.

6. **Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission:** Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) seeks to reach out to 8-9 crore rural poor households and organize one woman member from each household into affinity based women SHGs and federations at village level and at higher levels.
During 2017-18 (as on October 2017), 683 additional blocks have been covered under "Intensive" implementation strategy of DAY-NRLM bringing the cumulative total to 4330 blocks. During the year 2017-18 so far, over 56 lakh households have been mobilized into 4.84 lakh SHGs. More than 33 lakh Mahila Kisans have been covered under Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) in 17 States, to empower women in agriculture and enhance their participation and productivity in agriculture based livelihoods.
7. **"Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY)"** : It has been initiated as a sub scheme under DAY-NRLM to provide an alternative source of livelihoods to members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) under DAY-NRLM by facilitating them to operate public transport services in backward rural areas and to provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services (e-rickshaws, 3 and 4 wheeler motorized transport vehicles) to connect remote villages with key services and amenities. The sub-scheme will be implemented in 250 blocks in the country on a pilot basis for a period of 3 years from 2017-18 to 2019-20.
8. **Promotion of rural enterprises:** Start Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) is a sub-scheme of DAY-NRLM designed to support rural youth to take up local entrepreneurship. As on date, 7,800 enterprises have been promoted across 17 States. It is expected that SVEP will support an additional 25,000 entrepreneurs during the year 2018-19.
9. **Deendayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY):** DDU-GKY is a placement linked skill-training programme and is uniquely placed to empower rural poor youth with employable skills and facilitate their participation in regular labour market. It is currently being implemented in 28 States. DDU-GKY has over 566 Training Centers in 674 Projects, in partnership with over 310 Project Implementing Agencies conducting training across 39 sectors, and over 329 job roles (as on 31.10.17).
10. **Rural Self Employment Training Institutes (RSETIs):** At present RSETIs are offering training in more than 56 vocations classified under major areas like agriculture, processing, product manufacture and general EDP. During 2017-18 (as on 31.10.17), 7,897 candidates have been trained under Project LIFE MGNREGA by RSETIs. 9,200 candidates have been credit linked under thrust programmes of PMO while 3,519 candidates have been credit linked under PM MUDRA Yojana by the RSETIs. 586 RSETIs are functioning across the country. Over 25.24 lakh unemployed youth have been trained under RSETIs, out of which, about 16.64 lakh have been settled (from 1.4.2008 up to 30.11.2017). Against a target of skilling 3.97 lakhs candidates in FY 2017-18, 2, 34,692 candidates have been trained and 1, 55,174 settled.
11. **Shyama Prasad Mukherjee RURBAN Mission:** The Government approved the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM) with an outlay of Rs. 5142.08 crores on 16th September, 2015 with the objective to transform rural areas into economically, socially and physically sustainable spaces. Under this Mission, 300 clusters in rural areas, across 29 States and 5 UTs, with latent potential for growth are to be identified, following clearly enunciated methodologies in the framework of implementation.
12. **Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY):** Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 11th October 2014 with the objective of creating model Gram Panchayats in all parts of the country. The development of SAGY Gram Panchayats takes place under the guidance of Hon'ble Members of Parliament through the convergence and implementation of existing Government Schemes and Programmes without allocating any additional funds. The Hon'ble Members of Parliament have adopted 1241 Gram Panchayats under SAGY as on 18th December 2017. As per data updated on the SAGY website till 18th December 2017, Gram Panchayats identified under SAGY have completed 19951 projects and 7152 (15.3 percent) projects are in progress.

Other Rural development programmes introduced in the Post independence Era:

1. **Etawah Pilot Project (1948):** Seeking a better life for the village by villagers themselves.
2. **Community Development Programme (1952):** promoting better living for the whole community in the rural areas
3. **National Extension Service (1953):** To have a wider coverage at less cost and more of people's participation.
4. **Intensive Agriculture District Programme (1960-61):** To increase the income of the cultivator, economic resources and potential of the village.
5. **Area Development Programmes (1966):** Development of specific areas such as Hills, Deserts, Border areas
6. **Draught Prone Area Programme (1970):** To minimize the adverse effects of drought on production of crops, livestock and productivity of land, water and human resources ultimately leading to drought proofing of the affected areas.
7. **Small Farmers Development Agency (1969):** To identify problems of small farmers, ensure that farmers secure loans from Cooperative Banks and they have access to seeds, fertilizers etc
8. **Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (1971):** To provide employment to 1,000 persons in every district during 10 months in a year.
9. **Command Area Development Programme (1976):** To improve the utilization of created irrigation potential and optimizing agriculture production and productivity from irrigated agriculture

10. **Special Life-stock Production Programme (1974-75):** To produce improved livestock and to augment the availability of good quality of animals to those who are interested in rearing the cross bred heifer calves.
11. **Food for Work Programme (1977):** To create additional employment in rural areas on works of durable utility to the community, with the use of surplus food grains available in the buffer stock for payment as wages.
12. **Employment Assurance Scheme (1993):** To provide about 100 days of assured casual manual employment during the lean agricultural season, at statutory minimum wages.
13. **Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (merger of IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA and Million Wells Scheme) (2001):** Holistic program of micro-enterprises covering all aspects of self-employment which include organizing rural poor into self-help.
14. **Sarv Siksha Abhiyan:** It was pioneered by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Bajpayee, and was launched in 2000. It is an attempt to provide an opportunity to all children between 6 and 14 years of age to get free education which is also a basic fundamental right. The state and the central government share the expenses of this project.
15. **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY):** AAY was launched by the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 2000. It aimed at providing food grains to around 2 crore people at subsidized rates. As per the scheme, Below Poverty Line (BPL) families were provided 35 kgs of food grains.
16. **Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA):** PURA is a strategy for Rural Development in India which was proposed by former President APJ Abdul Kalam. PURA proposes that urban infrastructure and services should be provided in rural areas to create opportunities outside the cities. This will also prevent the migration of youth from the rural areas to urban areas.
17. **Prime Minister Rural Development Fellows Scheme (PMRDF):** PMRDF is a scheme initiated by the Ministry of Rural Development, implemented in collaboration with State Governments. It has dual goals of providing short-term support to the district administration in the underdeveloped and remote areas of the country and develops competent and committed leaders and facilitators who can serve as a resource for a long-term.
18. **Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY):** SGRY was launched in 2001 to provide employment to the poor. It also aimed at providing food to people in areas who live below the poverty line and improving their nutritional levels.
19. **Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):** This is a National Mission for Financial Inclusion to ensure access to financial services, namely, Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner.
20. **Atal Pension Yojana (APY):** It is one of the Social Security Schemes in the insurance & pension sector launched by the Govt. of India for all Indians to provide a defined pension between Rs. 1,000/- to Rs. 5,000/- depending on the contribution & its period.
21. **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao:** Save girl child, educate a girl child is a personal campaign of the Government of India that aims to generate awareness and improve the efficiency of welfare services intended for girls.
22. **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan (2018)** is flagship programme of Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) that aims to enrich Rural India. The scheme aims to link higher education institutions with set of at least five villages, so that they can contribute to economic and social betterment of these village communities using their knowledge base.

Conclusion:

The term "rural development", in its broad aspect connotes overall development of rural areas to improve the quality of life of rural people. Rural development interventions create a healthy ground for the upliftment of the rural people by yielding various employment opportunities and infrastructure facilities. For uplifting the rural sector of our country, the Ministry of Rural Development and the Government of India in coordination with Department of Rural Development and Department of Land Resources have been carrying forward various schemes. These schemes are formulated to benefit the citizens of rural India who will eventually become the pillars of Indian Economy in the long run. Although the role of these organizations are highly pro-people but the extent of benefits to the beneficiaries are not as effective as it is required. The Employment opportunities provided by rural development programmes and schemes are helpful to alleviate the poverty but the sustainability of this employment through skill development should be ensured through management of these rural development organizations.

Therefore, a strict plan for execution and monitoring of the programmes initiated by these organizations is required so as to benefit the rural people from top to lower level management to disperse a smooth inter and intra communication among the employees and beneficiaries. In order to be effective, rural development requires establishment of transparent policies to help rural development organizations to demonstrate, both internally and externally to meet requirements of the community in which it operates.

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