“RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY”

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Abstract:

India is a land of villages. A vast majority of its people depend for their livelihood on farm and non-farm activities. In the 21st century also rural people are suffering by most of the basic problems. Rural development is the main pillar of the nation’s development. Development of rural area means not only the aggregate development of the area but also development of the people living in rural areas. The objectives of development include sustained increase in per capita output and incomes, expansion of productive employment and greater equity in the distribution of the benefits of growth, rural development, over the years, has emerged as “a strategy designed to improve the economic, social and cultural life of a specific group of people living in rural areas”. The problems of rural development is a complex one. A number of rural development programmes have been formulated by the Government and the industry, voluntary agencies, etc. to improve the living standards of the rural poor as well as bringing back the glory to the village economy.

Key words: Livelihood, aggregate development, per capita output, productive employment, distribution

Introduction:

Rural development has a long history in India. Rural development is the main pillar of the nation’s development. Because India lives in its villages, and while the cities have grown immensely over the last 20 years, rural areas have not seen that kind of development. For India’s economy to be strong, the rural economy needs to grow. Rural areas are still plagued by problems of malnourishment, illiteracy, unemployment and lack of basic infrastructure like schools, colleges, hospitals, sanitation, etc. This has led to youth moving out of villages to work in cities. This could be compared to the brain drain from India to US. Our villages need to grow in tandem with cities and standard of life has to improve there for inclusive growth to happen. If rural India is poor, India is poor. 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 country.

**Definition**: The Rural Development Sector policy Paper of the World Bank observed that “Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people-the rural poor.”

In a seminar on approaches to rural development in Asia, according to this, “Rural development as a process which leads to a continuous rise in the capacity of the rural people to control their environment accompanied by a wider distribution of benefits resulting from such control.”

**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.

**Objectives**:

- To know the meaning and importance of the rural development.
- To know the present scenario of the rural areas.
- To know the fundamental problems of the rural areas in India.
- To know the problems eradicating programmes or present rural development programmes of India.

**Methodology**:

The paper is based on secondary sources i.e., books and internet.

**Importance of the rural development**:
Rural development is necessary not only because an overwhelming majority of the population lives in villages but also because the development of rural activities is essential to accelerate the pace of overall economic development of the country. Rural development has assumed greater importance in India today than in the earlier period in the process of development of the country. The Ministry of Rural Development places importance now on health, education, drinking water, housing and road so that the quality of life in rural areas improves and the fruit of economic reform are shared by all sections of the society.

- Rural development is essential to improve the standard of living of the rural people.
- To change the present scenario of the remote places and to improve the village communication.
- To give an effective and standard education to the rural children.
- Creates new employment opportunities and to improve villagers with their own efforts.
- For improvement of infrastructure and basic facilities.
- Mainly for eradicate the poverty.

**Rural Development in India:**

With this concept of Rural development in view, the initial attempts at rural development were to set up an administrative infrastructure which would devise and implement development programmes. The Community Development Programme initiated in 1952 and the setting up of the Panchayati Raj Institutions were the first measures undertaken with the objective of co-ordinated rural development. In the post-independence period, the government is engaged in bringing about rapid and sustainable development and socio-economic transformation in rural India. It has an integrated perspective towards improving the quality of life of rural poor and ensuring equity and effective people’s participation.

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.

### Population (in Crore)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>102.9</td>
<td>121.0</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>74.3</td>
<td>83.3</td>
<td>9.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>37.7</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census 2011

- For the first time since Independence, the absolute increase in population is more in urban areas that in rural areas. Rural – Urban distribution: 68.84% & 31.16% Level of urbanization increased from 27.81% in 2001 Census to 31.16% in 2011 Census. The proportion of rural population declined from 72.19% to 68.84%

### Literacy Rates (in %)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2001</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>64.8</td>
<td>74.0</td>
<td>+9.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>68.9</td>
<td>+10.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>79.9</td>
<td>85.0</td>
<td>+5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Census 2011

- The improvement in literacy rate in rural area is two times that in urban areas.
- The rural urban literacy gap which was 21.2 percentage points in 2001, has come down to 16.1 percentage points in 2011.
Sources: 2011 Census

**Present Rural Problems In India:**

As we know, the 60-70% of rural population in India lives in primitive conditions. India is a country of villages and still about 50% of the villages are don’t have basic facilities. Government has implemented more programmes and policies, but some of the backward villages or remote places are not getting any benefit from that programmes. It happens due to corruption, lack of political awareness or any others. Fallowings are the most popular and dangerous problems in rural areas.
1. In 21st Century, there is no electricity supply in many villages.

2. Now also many rural peoples using primitive methods of cooking, living and farming and they have trust on these methods.

3. By using primitive cook stoves, around 300,000 death / year takes plan due to pollution.

4. 54% of India’s population is below 25 years and most of them live in rural areas with very little employment opportunities.

5. Literacy is the major problem in rural development programme.

6. The poor extension linkage causes slow growth of rural development.

7. Untrained, unskilled, inexperienced staff in extension linkage cannot provide satisfactory help to rural peoples.

8. Every one want to go to the cities, so that rural people’s remains as ignores part by the policy makers also.

9. Privatization concept is useful for rural development but, government not praying much attention to this aspect.

10. Policy makes prepared policies, programmes for betterment of rural people but, if these programmes are not implemented very well then have no used.

Present Rural Development Programmes In India :

1. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME(1952)

2. SWARNJAYANTI GRAM SWAROZGAR YOJANA(1999-2000)

3. SGSY SPECIAL PROJECTS

   - INSTALLATION OF HYDRAMS
   - MARKETING OF RURAL GOODS
   - GOLD MINES PROJECT
MILCH LIVESTOCK IMPROVEMENT
RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH DIVERSIFICATION IN AGRICULTURE
SELF RELIANCE THROUGH SERICULTURE AND DAIRY DEVELOPMENT
GREEN GOLD
INTENSIVE DAIRY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
SKILL DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL YOUTHS THROUGH GRAMEEN LABS

4. NATIONAL RURAL EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE SCHEME (2005)
5. INDIRA AWAAS YOJANA (1985)
6. ATAL AWAAS YOJANA
7. NATIONAL FAMILY BENEFIT SCHEME
8. WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
   DROUGHT PRONE AREA PROGRAMME
   DESERT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
   INTEGRATED WASTELANDS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME
9. TOTAL SANITATION CAMPAIGN PROJECTS
10. MAHILA MANDAL PROTSAHAN YOJANA

Conclusion:
I want to conclude with a great saying of the Swami Vivekananda as,

“The real India lives in the villages. Unless we are able to uplift the tribals and the backward classes, India faces a dark future.”

Rural India needs a new social contract in which there will be a reliable infrastructure supplied at commercial prices rather than given for free. 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 suburban 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.