

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT AND DIMENSIONS**

---

The effort to define 'rural' is not new. To define rural development, rural education or rural infrastructure, it is necessary to define rural first. 'According to Whitaker (1982), 'rural' was first used by the U.S. Bureau of the Census in 1874 when it was defined as indicating the population of a county exclusive of any cities or towns with 8,000 or more inhabitants. Modified over the years, by the 1980 census, a specific definition for rural had been dropped. Instead, the urban population is now defined as all persons living in urbanized areas and places of 2,500 or more located outside urbanized areas; all population not classified as urban constitutes the rural population' (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983).

'The term rural means an area which is characterised by non-urban style of life, occupational structure, social organisation and settlement pattern. 'Development' is defined in terms of technological or industrial development. But development of rural people means raising the standard of their living (Singh, 2003). Prof. Caiden says 'nobody really knows what the word development stands for any more. Economists identify with economic productivity; sociologists with social change or social differentials, political scientists with democratisation, political capacity or expanded Government; administrators with bureaucratisation, optimum efficiency, performance or capacity to assume all burdens'.

According to Fred Riggs development is a movement towards freedom to choose goals and ability to realise them. H. Crops define rural development as a 'process through collective efforts, aimed at improving the well-being and self-realisation of people living outside the urbanisation area'. Mishra and Sunderam define rural development as not merely development of rural areas but also the development of quality of life of the rural masses into self-reliant and self-sustaining modern little communities. According to the quoted definition of Robert Chambers 'rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless'.

According to the paper of World Bank, rural development is ‘a strategy to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, the rural poor including small and marginal farmers, tenants and the landless’. Mahatma Gandhi’s view - ‘India is to be found not in its few cities but in its 70, 00,000 villages. But town dwellers have believed that India is to be found in its towns and the villages were created to minister to our needs. We have hardly paused to enquire if those poor folk get sufficient to eat and clothe themselves with and whether they have a roof to shelter themselves from sun and rain’. The concept of rural development is at top agenda and remains the main concern in national politics of the developing countries, because about 69 per cent population reside in rural areas and even in developed countries the rural areas cannot be ignored.

In fact the problem of improving the lives of 69 per cent population of rural areas assumed greater importance because of its explosive nature and vast number of people belongs to below poverty line. Logically urban area can neither develop without rural development. Soon after independence Government of India started its plan for planned growth with specific and clear objectives. The emphasis became more marked to achieve regional development, eradication of poverty and reducing disparities between urban and rural sector and within each sector itself. It has been experimented with number of rural development programmes with different goals, policy, logistics and approaches at different point of time. Various rural employment programmes were undertaken in order to develop infrastructure as well as to provide employment in the villages.

## **2.1. RURAL DEVELOPMENT: PRE-INDEPENDENCE VIEW**

It has been well said ‘to know present, know the past, to change the present, reflect the past on to the future’. Therefore we should know the earlier efforts made by our Central Government and State Government for the development of rural areas in our country/state. The concept of rural development is not new. The improvement of the village life and development of rural economy are the chief concern and bigger challenge before the nation. Prior to the independence, the problem had received attention and well understood by the people like Rabindranath Tagore, F.L. Brayne, Spencer Hatch, Mahatma Gandhi, V.T. Krishnamachari and many others.

### **2.1.1. Shantiniketan: Rabindranath Tagore (1921)**

Tagore's Shantiniketan, was the first systematic attempt towards this direction. Tagore is mainly known as philosopher and poet but he was also an educationalist, musician, actor and rural reformer. In all fields he had his own distinct style of work and left mark individually. It is strange to note that the great poet who mainly lived in his own world of ideas was a pioneer and originator of village uplift movement in India. In early nineteenth century Tagore first came in contact with village life when the management of ancestral Zamindari was handed to him. Then he saw poverty, life and suffering of people from close range and came to realize the solution for national regeneration was to be found in elevating the rural masses.

Tagore had few broad principles for rural reconstruction. He had no detail plans, for him removal of unhappiness was more important than the removal of poverty. So, he was very much worried about the joyless life of villagers and greatly differed from Gandhiji for whom the eradication of poverty was the first and leading problem. Helplessness of people is another aspect of village life which worried the poet and he wanted the people to stand in their own feet and cease to look others for help. To achieve this he believed in educating people and not in giving charity. He laid much stress on the principle of self-help in rural programme and on proper training of worker in various rural problems.

He believed that if work is done continuously within a limited area, its impact would emit outside and spread broadly. In 1908 he started his first experiment in rural reconstruction at Sialadaha (Bangladesh) and at Patisar (Rajashtan). In these two experiments the initiatives was from the poet and villagers and were only agreed to his suggestions. He was not happy with his early attempts and wanted to make more broad and intensive experiment in rural reconstruction. Therefore he started an Institute of Rural Reconstruction at Shantiniketan (Birbhum District) in 1921. Shantiniketan is a region where soil is poor, limited land, declining in cottage industries, conservative people, suspicious, poor and unhealthy. To rebuild such region was a difficult task. Shantiniketan Institute had four main departments:

*Village Welfare Department* - the activities under this department was divided under three heads. (i) Education - educational activities of the department were confined to opening

night schools, brati-balaks (Boys Scouts) and arranging lectures on rural and general problems. (ii) Sanitation and health - malaria was a great problem around Shantiniketan, about 80 per cent of the total deaths were due to it and it is also responsible for the decline in population and low birth rate. At first stage to fight against this disease, dispensary was set up at the expense of institute entirely; villagers did not try to help dispensary but they demanded medical services. So, the above service was discarded and a new Health Cooperatives scheme was set up in 1932. The Health Cooperatives was cooperative society of the villagers for providing medical facilities to them at reasonable rate. Each society maintained a dispensary with a qualified doctor and a compounder. (iii) Agriculture and industries - through demonstration better farming methods were shown to the farmers for improving agricultural production, seeds were distributed and to increase income of the villager's cottage industries were introduced. Credit cooperative societies were organised and poultry was developed.

*Agriculture Department* - these department tried to solve the diverse agricultural associated problems of the district as best as it could. Storage facilities were formed and commercial crops were introduced. Agriculture department demonstrated better methods of farming to improve fertility of soil. Special emphasis was laid on the selection of seeds, fertilizer and crop rotation, conservation of moisture and use of better equipment within the reach of the peasants. Beside land associated problem the agriculture department also tried to solve the problem related with poultry, cattle-breeding, fodder growing and vegetable gardening. Thus it tackles the blazing agricultural problems of the area and tried to resolve as much as it could under the conditions.

*Industries Department* - the chief objective of the industries department was to restart decaying cottage industries. It experimented with huge number of industries e.g. carpentry, embroidery, tailoring, weaving, book-binding, leather works etc. Industrial department had three aspects of work - production, training and marketing and extension. The main aim was to train young men engaged in various vocations so that they earn their livelihood from their respective crafts and established workshops for industries to help local artisans by providing raw materials and purchasing the finished products in cash by the institute. Thus the institute also offer employment to the workers, trained new hands and helped them to reconcile their life.

*Education Department - Shiksha-Satra* was a scheme of primary education introduced by Shantiniketan for rural reconstruction. The aim of this scheme was to offer freedom of growth to the child and field for self-expression in which life finds both happiness and training. There was no prescribed course, textbook, timetable and examination. It was a modified model of old ashram education where children lived with their teacher, washed their clothes, cooked meals, swept rooms, tended gardens. They lived with nature and studied nature. In girls school besides the three R's they were trained cooking, gardening and needlework.

### **2.1.2. Gurgaon Experiment: Frank Lugard Brayne (1927)**

F.L. Brayne was appointed as the Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon (Punjab) in 1920. He made an extensive tour in the district and saw at close range of ignorance and poverty of rural masses, his work did not end by sending his report to the Government like other officers. He verifies detail of a scheme and put it into practice with all means. It took seven years to achieve genuine result. Since then the scheme has become famous by the name of 'Gurgaon Experiment' (1927).

In the words of Mr. Brayne, the aim of the experiment was to 'jerk the villager out of his old groove, convince him that improvement was possible, and kill his fatalism by demonstrating that climate, disease and pests could be successfully fought'. The Gurgaon experiment was four-fold programme. It aims to (i) improve the farming (ii) reducing wasteful customs (iii) improving health and (iv) setting the home right - i.e. educating the women. Brayne's aim was not to make people rich but to make them happy like Tagore. In his scheme, stress was laid on agricultural production by adopting improved methods, he gave attention to develop the breed of cattle and emphasized programme in improving sanitation and public health.

Mr. Brayne also dedicated his attention to women's education and used school teachers to extend his ideas. Brayne's programme was a huge success and claimed that a 'new India had begun in Gurgaon'. The immediate results of Gurgaon in the field of animal husbandry, agriculture, cooperation were impressive, but it was short-lived programme. Within few months of Brayne's departure scheme neglected and failed down.

### **2.1.3. Marthandam: Spencer Hatch (1928)**

Dr. Spencer Hatch undertook a programme almost at the same time as Brayne, at Marthandam formerly in Kerala and now in Tamil Nadu. This programme of rural development was experimented at and around Marthandam under the support of young Christian men's association. He was mostly interested in social aspects of rural areas and later on his efforts were built up in partnership with Christian church with special reference to juvenile delinquency (behaviour) among children. The selected area for intensive work was about 112sq.miles, comprising of 46 villages. It had a population of 45,000 persons out of which 24 percent were Christians, 72 per cent Hindus, and remaining 4 per cent consisted of Muslims and others.

The main objectives of Marthandam rural reconstruction were five fold, namely mental, spiritual, physical, economic and social. The programme was simple and inexpensive. All the experiments were perfect and planned at 'Rural Reconstruction Centre' before being demonstrated to the villagers. The method of work was self-help and intimate expert guidance. The chief media of propaganda used by the centre were rural exhibitions, dramas, inter-village competitions and demonstrations. Marthandam rural reconstruction was aimed at 'complete development - a wholly new and happier order'. The programme was comprehensive and the formula was 'self-help with intimate, expert counsel'. Except education and advice nothing is given free to the villagers. Marthandam consequently this programme seems to have limited influence and remained largely of the Christians, by the Christians and for the Christians.

### **2.1.4. Sevagram: Mahatma Gandhi (1931)**

Gandhiji idea of rural reconstruction was experimented at Sevagram and his case was different from earlier rural reformers, such as Tagore, Brayne and Hatch and they never engrossed the attention of the whole country and more or less they remained localized. He started All India Spinners Association (1925) and All India Village Industries Association (1934), with a view to reducing the chronic underemployment and unemployment in the village. In his assorted activities he never forgot rural India and its appalling poverty, whose aim was to revive the dying village industries, propagate khadi to work for all round village development.

In order to have first hand information of village work he settled in Segwan and later he named Sevagram, a small village of 600 people near Wardha in April 1936. The village lacked in many basic facilities and requirements. At the age of 67 Gandhiji concentrated on village work and chose to stay in one roomed bamboo and mud hut. Gandhi's work began by sweeping the village lanes and advised the people to use a common place for latrines because sanitation was the basic factor for village upliftment. To learn spinning he asked to send their children to school.

Few industries were started in the village for providing work to people in their leisure hours under the support of All India Village Industries Association. To give them practical demonstration in order to improve agricultural techniques a part of ashram land was brought under cultivation with new crops. Small hospitals and dairies were also started. But the villagers were doubtful in the beginning and gradually the attitude of the villagers started changing for better. After that Gandhiji being preoccupied due to political problems could not devote more time for village work.

Gandhi's concept of rural reconstruction involved all-round development of rich and puissant life bringing into full and active play of all the resources of individual and envisages a society based on self-supporting and self-governing villages. It does not aim to abolish old village life, where necessities of life are available to all and where all enjoy, political, economic and social freedom as a result of hard work and cooperation within the individual of the society. So it is termed as 'Swaraj' - a complete emancipation because in such units of society the individuals do not depend upon any authority for the satisfaction of their basic daily needs.

#### **2.1.5. Baroda Plan: V.T. Krishnamachari (1933)**

V.T. Krishnamachari was trying to experiment in Baroda almost at same time of Sevagram. He was the Dewan of Baroda State and outlined the detailed plan of rural development during his charge of office. He attempts that rural development should be made in such a manner that improvement takes place in all its aspects of rural life. He believed that to raise the standard of villagers, it is necessary to create a desire of hope in them to that level of living. He emphasised the need for developing village leadership in order to continue the effort initiated by an agency.

The plan stressed on comprehensive improvements of programme related with all aspects of rural life. It also documented the role of panchayats as local leader and promoters of change, schools and cooperatives as centres of activities. V.T. Krishnamachari believed that programme of rural reconstruction was necessary to increase supplementary activities to promote agricultural production and that programme must be a part of broader programme. True that these earlier attempts were not called 'Community Development' or 'Rural Development' but in essence their aim was the same i.e. helping people to help themselves, which are the fundamental principle of Rural Development' (Setty, 2002).

Many of these earlier experiments come to an end when the directing hands were withdrawn, but still they give an idea about the way and their defects. Before independence the development plan created disparities and large number of its people remained unaffected by experiment. Thus, wide local and regional variations are created in most of the area. 'These imbalances can be corrected, as the planning commission has emphasized through grass root level or micro-level planning based on available local resources and the village community'(Planning Commission, 1969).

'Planning means management of men and materials available for achieving desired results. So, planning is pre-requisite for any desired goal, without which development cannot take place in right manner and in right direction' (Singh, 2003). For balanced development in a systematic way, it is essential to develop the deprived rural areas in the main stream development. Since independence, the planning was implementing as an approach to drag out the country from all kinds of problems and backlog. Present structure of rural development is being constructed on the remnants of such earlier experiments. Later on our national plan approach could be realised as it was not equally balanced and conquered by wholly economic and sectoral considerations.

The lack of integrated and harmonized approach towards development and planning appeared as the most powerful and visible reasons that accepted to poor development. Recently, all over the world rural development has been recognised as an indispensable measure of economic development. In simple way rural development means the development of the rural areas and may be broadly defined as outside the urbanised areas.

## 2.2. RURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH FIVE YEAR PLANS

In 1947 when India achieved freedom after British rule new era had begun for Indian population. The independent India had initiated a planned policy right from the beginning and number of efforts has been made by the country to free the nation from poverty and to eradicate socio-economic inequalities. Since then economic development of the country has been the prime subject of our planners. In this direction Five Year Plans laid the foundation for large scale public funded developmental activities in the country. The planning commission set out the four long term objectives of planning which are as under:

- To increase the production to the maximum possible extent so as to achieve higher level of national and per capita income.
- To achieve full employment.
- To reduce inequalities of income and wealth.
- To set up socialistic society based on equality and justice and absence of exploitation (Dutt and Sundaram, 2010).

According to the Planning Commission of India 'planning is not a one for all exercise for a five year period, it requires a constitutional watch on current or incipient trends, systematic observation of technical, economic and social data and adjustments of programmes in light of new requirements' (Krishnamachari and Venu, 1977). In order to grab these goals an inclusive development approach is needed, because most of the Indians are living in the villages and their upliftment will only make prosperous India. Accordingly rural development is assessed in terms of reduction of poverty in various forms in a society. Development strategies under Five Year Plans basically concentrated on achievement of high growth, reduction of poverty, food insecurity, social inequity and unemployment. The Five Year Plans stress on the role of rural institutions in achieving these developmental goals and suggest measures for building up the institutional strengths. Shifts in policy and paradigms that have taken place during last five and half decades in India's rural development are explained below with reference to Five Year Plans.

*First Five Year Plan (1951-56):* the targeted aim of First Five Year Plan was large scale agriculture production. In those periods nearly 43 per cent of country's geographical area was devoted to agricultural practices. Plan aimed to introduce land policy even though its

implementation had considerable regional disparities. To increase the employment opportunities and expand social services in wider scale was one of the main objectives of the plan. This could raise national income and a stable improvement in the living standard of the people over a period of time.

Rural reconstruction experiments of pre-independence era had generated the enthusiasm to adopt 'the whole village development' approach in 1950s. As an outcome an extension system was set up to provide support to farming community and coordinate all activities of rural life with active participation of people. During this Plan Community Development Programme (CDP) was introduced in 1952 which focus on the use of scientific knowledge in agriculture and allied activities and preparation of micro-level plan with people-participation.

'Development of three basic democratic village institutions - the school, the co-operative and panchayat was the core component of CD strategy (Rao, 2005)'. The main objective of CDP was to mobilize the local manpower and make coordinated effort of raising whole level of rural life. About 15 per cent of the plan funds were allotted for agriculture (including CDP) during this phase. Due to limited capacities and inadequate preparation of local administration and institutions resulted in limited out comes. CDP have very poor performance in education, health, housing rural communication and social welfare. But the creation of CD blocks was an effective measure in taking the Government close to the people. It also aims to increase the rate of investment from 5 per cent to about 7 per cent of the national income and completed its course on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1956.

*Second Five Year Plan (1956-61):* during this period foundations were laid for the emergence of democratic pattern of society. Institutional reforms constituted the main plank of this phase. Introduction of village and small scale industries provided non-farm employment in rural areas especially for the broad based agriculture and rural development. The prime focus of Second Plan was Co-operative farming with local participation. During this plan Khadi and Village Industries Programme, Housing Project Scheme, Multi-Purpose Tribal Development, Blocks Programmes and Package Programmes were launched. It stressed that the benefits of economic development should add more to the relatively less privileged sections of the society and there should be a progressive reduction in disparity. Main aim of the Second Plan were, to increase about

25 per cent in the national income, speedy industrialisation with particular emphasis on the development of heavy industries aimed at a large expansion of employment opportunities to reduce inequalities of wealth and income. In this plan the necessity was felt to improve local initiative like extension of health and educational services.

*Third Five Year Plan (1961-66):* almost same objectives of second plan was taken into consideration and totally devoted to improvement in agricultural production. Some progress was made in the field of public health, backward classes and tribes and houses for low income group. Priority was given to Applied Nutrition Programme, Rural Industries, agricultural development with different specific way like High Yielding Variety Programme, Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP) were introduced by involving district-level planning. It led to qualitative and quantitative changes in development perspectives. The HYV seed was introduced to manage the food crisis. Government had given much more focus on effective implementation of agricultural programmes for increasing production, efficient marketing and effective public distribution system in rural areas.

*Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74):* the development programmes initiated in 1970s, were aimed at minimising the inequalities and reduce poverty. It gives emphasis to the need for redesigning socio-economic institutions for establishing justice. Special Area Programmes like Drought Prone Area Programme, Tribal Area Development Programme, Pilot Project for Tribal Development, Cash Scheme for Rural Employment and Programme for Women and Primary Scheme Children were started for the development of backward areas. With a view to reduce imbalance, the need for regional as well as district-level plans were emphasised during this Plan Period. It aimed to raise the living standard of the people through programmes and at the same time it intended to promote equality. The plan laid emphasis on improving the condition of vulnerable handicapped and other weaker sections of the society especially through the provision of education and employment.

*Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79):* during Fifth Five Year Plan multi-level approach was adopted. The Minimum Need Programme (MNP) introduced in 1974 focusing on primary education, primary health, drinking water supply, supplementary nutrition, rural electrification, rural roads, and public distribution system brought about some improvements in the quality of life of rural people. The concept of Marginal Farmers and

Agricultural Labourers (MFAL), Hill Area Development Programme, ICDS, Food for Work Programme, Whole Village Development Programme, Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched to eradicate poverty in rural areas. The focus was given to eradicate poverty and attainment of self-reliance through promotion of higher rate of growth.

*Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-85):* with the implementation of Sixth Five Year Plan a drastic change in Indian planning is noticeable. During this decade welfare concerns were reflected to greater extent in agriculture and rural development policies of the country. Rural development receives separate plan allocation for the first time in planning history. The Plan emphasized on strengthening the socio-economic infrastructure in rural areas and initiatives were taken to reduce disparities through the Integrated Rural Development Programme, National Rural Development Programme, PM's New Twenty-Point Programme, National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP).

It also introduced the location-specific planning with the aim to raise productivity through the strategy of growth with social justice and providing employment to the rural people. During this period Intensive and Integrated Rural Development Programme was started at the block level. In the light of high poverty and huge unemployment, the development perspectives of the eighties laid greater emphasis on reduction of poverty and removal of unemployment and underemployment as well as improving the efficiency of infrastructure in diverse sectors of the economy.

*Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-90):* in Seventh Five Year Plan, the NREP and RLEGP were merged into a single wage employment programmes called Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY). The Indira Awaas Yojana and Million Wells Scheme were also launched during this plan. It stressed on new approach to create skill-based employment opportunities and raising productivity under different schemes. Special programmes for income generation through creation of assets, endowments and land reforms were formulated for the involvement of the people at the grass roots level. Main objective of 7<sup>th</sup> Plan was to build self-reliant economy, to establish a social system based on equity and justice to reduce socio-economic differences. All these poverty alleviation programmes, coupled with improved sectoral performance led to a steep fall in rural poverty from 53 per cent in 1977-78 to 39 per cent by 1987-89.

*Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-97):* early 1990s witnessed enthusiastic reforms globally in economic sector. Thus, one may find the decade engaged with gradual liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation also in Indian economy. In the rural context, a major paradigm shift was revitalization of the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and Government of India had made 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments act for the emergence of PRI. Through PRI active participation of women in developmental process and their empowerment in rural areas was envisaged and *Gramsabha* provides an opportunity to face democracy to the people. In 8<sup>th</sup> Plan Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) and National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) was added. The Plan emphasized to build rural infrastructure through people participation. A priority was given to roads, minor irrigation, soil conservation and social forestry.

*Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002):* the main objective of Ninth Plan was agriculture and rural development with view of generating employment. In Ninth Plan the major rural Development programmes the IRDP along with the allied programmes of TRYSEM, DWCRA and MWS have been merged into the Swaranyanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), while the JRY has been redesigned as Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY). Annapurna Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana - Gramin Awaas (PMGY-GA) and Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) has been launched. The changes were made to encourage the process of nation-building through decentralised planning. This plan laid stress on a genuine power towards decentralisation and people's participation in the planning process through institutional reforms. It emphasised on strengthening of Panchayat Raj and civil society groups to promote accountability, transparency and responsibility in development process. 'Ninth Plan onwards agrarian reforms, considered as an intervention to poverty alleviation and sustainable rural development, were brought back in practice (Pant, 2003)'.

*Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07):* the 10th Five Year Plan aimed at transforming the national economy into the fastest growing on the basis of GDP growth during the last decade. The 10<sup>th</sup> Plan initiated Bharat Nirman for rural roads creating better rural infrastructural facilities. Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) was introduced for good quality education. It also started the process of sustainable use of land and waste land reclamation for agriculture. The Tenth Plan has strategically been re-stressed in the following thrust areas:

- Greater access to potable drinking water, better roads, educational infrastructure particularly for primary education and extension of quality health services. Uninterrupted availability of power to agriculture and revitalisation of the irrigation network.
- Generation of additional employment opportunities in the private sector by promoting investment, improving marketable vocational skills with widespread use of information technology.
- Upliftment of underprivileged sections by enhancing beneficiary-oriented social security programmes, as well as specific employment generating programmes to increase their income and improve the quality of life.
- Strengthening the process of rural renewal by greater thrust to schemes for reaching out quality facilities to rural population.

During 10<sup>th</sup> Plan focus was given to generate quality employment and reduction in poverty. The experience of the schemes during the 9<sup>th</sup> Plan is the foundation upon which the further policy was laid. Wage Employment Programmes, Infrastructure Development Programmes, Rural Housing, National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) has been continued during the 10<sup>th</sup> Plan as well. Similarly the programmes which help in creation of basic infrastructure at village level which provide houses to the shelter less and social security to the poorest of the poor has also continued. In 10<sup>th</sup> Plan the entire existing rural housing programme has merged into a single integrated programme and it has to be implemented throughout the country on a uniform basis. According to this plan 30 per cent of the elected members of PRIs have to be women.

*Eleventh Five Year Plan (2007-12):* the major emphasis of the plan was on social sector, including agriculture, education and rural development. The plan aims to reduce the level of poverty by 10 percentages by generating 70 million new employment opportunities and ensuring electricity connection to all villages. The plan also proposes to raise investment on infrastructure sector including irrigation, drinking water and sewage from 5 per cent of GDP in 2005-06 to 9 per cent by 2011-12. Programme like Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGRS) was introduced to provide more relief to rural poor, ensure inclusive growth, to give greater incentives for infrastructure and sustainable development in villages. Government has drawn a comprehensive plan to improve education sector and efforts are made to retain mid-day

meals till class VIII. In Sikkim Panchayats prepared 11<sup>th</sup> plan and passed their respective plans in Gram Sabha's and forwarded to the DPCs for consolidation and submitted to the Development Planning, Economic Reforms and NECA Department in 2006. Gram Planning Forum prepared these Plans which consists of all elected Gram Panchayat members, concerned Zilla member, all village level line departments functionaries and 5 experts who were nominated in Gram Sabha'(RMDD Govt. of Sikkim, 2008).

### **2.3. PLANS AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES**

After mid-sixties, Government of India decided to change the concept and meaning of 'rural development'. Earlier rural development was known as agricultural development and community development covering the entire population of rural areas. However, rural development is viewed narrowly as a strategy design to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of rural people. Rural development involved both socio-political and economic development of rural areas as part of the modernisation of the entire society and distribution mechanism of overall development.

While policy makers and the development community have widely used the phrase 'rural development', what constitutes rural development seems to have changed significantly over time. How did the concept of 'rural development' evolve over time in the past 3 decades? What does 'inclusive rural development' mean? Addressing these two basic interrelated questions is important to put the issues relating to inclusive rural development in perspective. During the last 3 decades the concept of rural development has changed significantly. Rural development was synonymous with agricultural development until 1970s and hence focus was given to increase agricultural production.

This focus has been determined primarily by the interests of industrialist to extract surplus from the agriculture sector to support industries. The stated objective was to promote smallholder agriculture with the focus on rising agricultural production. Over time this agriculture-centric concept of rural development undergoes changes. According to Harris, by the early 1980s, the World Bank defined rural development as 'a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people the rural poor'. With the concept change in economic development, the rural development has begun to use in a broader sense and it is more precise. In recent years improved concerns of economic growth on the environmental aspects have also influenced the changes.

Present concept of rural development is very different from that used before. The concept now includes a measurement of changes in the quality of life, environmentally safe living condition, improvement in nutrition and health, transport and communication, education and reduction in inequalities between gender and income. Now there seems to be a widespread accord that the ultimate objective of rural development is to improve the quality of life of rural people. This makes it necessary to go beyond the cause which influence the quality of life and hence inclusiveness of rural development.

Inclusive rural development is a more precise concept than the concept of rural development. In broad terms, inclusive rural development is about improving the quality of life of all members of rural society (Fig: 2.1). More specifically, inclusive rural development covers three different but interrelated dimensions. The first is the economic dimension that encompasses providing both capacity and opportunities for the poor and low-income rural households in particular to benefit from the economic growth process in such a way that their average incomes grow at a higher rate than the growth of average incomes in the sector as a whole.

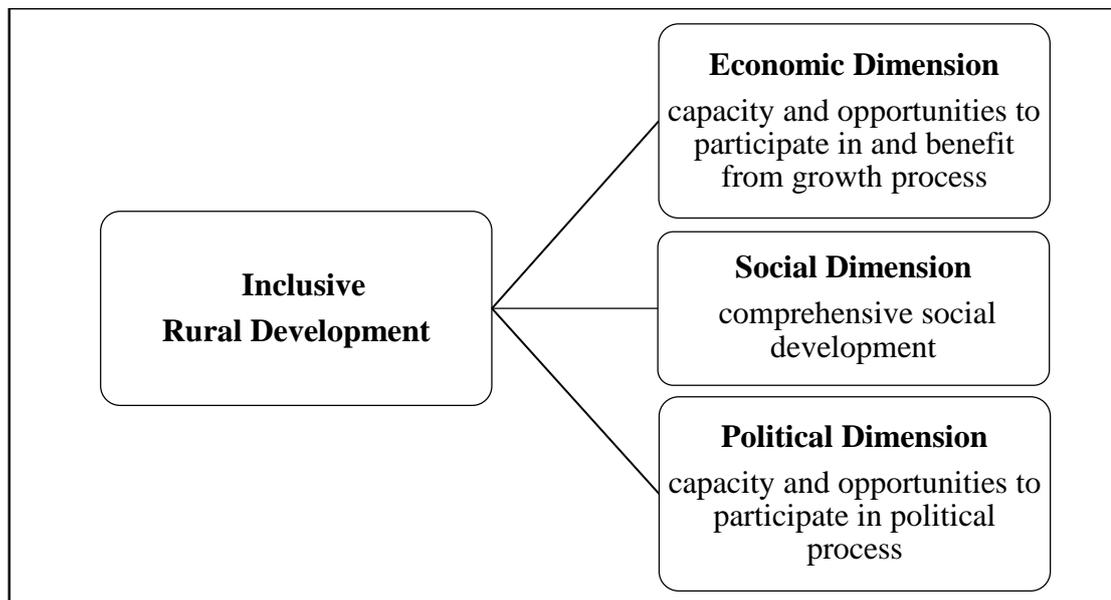


Fig: 2.1 (Source: Fernando, 2008)

Economic dimension also includes measures to reduce intra and inter-sectoral income inequalities to reasonable levels. Second is the social dimension of supporting social development of poor and low-income households and disadvantaged groups, eliminating inequalities in social indicators, promoting gender equality and women's empowerment, and providing social safety nets for vulnerable groups. Third is the

political dimension of improving opportunities for the poor and low-income people in rural areas, including women and ethnic minorities, to effectively and equally participate in the political processes at the village level and beyond compared with any other categories of the population within and outside the rural areas. If the rural-urban relationship is to be corrected then the rural development is unavoidable. So, rural development is flexible concept, multi-dimensional process, deeper in impact, wider in scope and every one interprets in their own way, but the broad accord is that more importance should be specified to development activities which mostly concern with the rural areas to enhance the quality of life of rural poor.

‘Presently, the development challenges before rural development process include achieving sustainable economic growth, alleviating poverty, providing essential economic and social services to the underprivileged sections, building up necessary infrastructure, creating employment opportunities, improving administrative governance, providing justice and the most significant of all, developing human capital resources’ (Sisodia, 2007). To struggle with these challenges, the planner and policy makers are stressing that Indian planning policy and development plan should be focused on the expansion of agricultural production, livestock, labour based, construction and housing, cottage and agro-processing industries, export, information technology and telecommunication.

All of these have strong potentials to create jobs and self-employment opportunities at grass roots level. Through development plan the primary mission of Government is to improve the standard of living of its rural poor. In this condition, the most sustainable and effective means of reducing rural poverty and economic growth would be the core concern of the Government. To achieve these goals, the effective implementation of each programme need political determination, social commitment and practical group effort among different ministers, stakeholders and other line departments.

Keeping in overall view of development 73<sup>rd</sup> Constitution Amendment Act, 1992 has given the approval to set up a three-tier structure of the Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs), enabling them to assume the responsibility of self-governing institutions at micro-levels of administration for decentralised planning and management. The core objective of decentralization is to enable people to decide on matters pertaining to their day to day life through the institution of panchayats. ‘In Sikkim the concept of Panchayat Raj is not extraterrestrial. In earlier period the State was almost entirely concerned with urban

affairs and neglected the rural poor, who were allowed to run their affairs themselves. However, the modern State has taken excellent interest in rural affairs due to the emergence of political consciousness among the rural masses. Nevertheless, the State had their own councils of traditional panchayats called '*panchayats*' in Nepali language and '*gyeme*' (village leader) in Bhutia language. The traditional panchayats were not concerned with the welfare activities of the areas and they were mainly concerned with the trial of petty village cases which were referred to them by the judicial authorities.

The number of members of the panchayats were not fixed and nor were they permanent. They usually consisted of five people or '*paanch*' as the name suggested. The first recorded attempt to establish panchayats in Sikkim was made in 1948, immediately after the abolition of Zamindari and Addas under the landlords. The leaseholder system was dropped and people obtained right to pay direct tax of land to the State. A trigonometrical survey was made of all lands and land rent assessed on the basis of this survey. The Sikkim Panchayat Act of 1965 was promulgated to consolidate and improve the laws relating to the panchayats in State to assist rural development and enable by all communities involvement at the village level.

The first Panchayat elections were held in 1966 under the supervision of the Chief Secretary who was the Chief Election Officer and the Land Revenue Secretary to the Sikkim Government. In 1982, a new act was enacted which created the constitution of the Zilla or District Panchayat. Sikkim Panchayat Act 1993 was enacted and notified on 18 October 1993. This act follows the guidelines laid down by the constitution 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment Act, 1992 for the constitution of Panchayat in the State. The first election under this Act was initiated in 2002-03 with devolution of specific function, transfer of enhanced grants and posting of suitable manpower to the panchayats.

The term of panchayats is 5 years, from the date of first meeting of the newly nominated panchayat members. Sikkim follows a two-tier system of Panchayati Raj with the Zilla Panchayat at the District level and Gram Panchayat at the village level. The panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) of Sikkim are empowered to function as 'institutions of self Government', enhancing their power to plan and implement various schemes of economic development and social justice under Article 243G of the constitution of India. Though, various developmental programmes are targeted towards the backward and weaker sections of society. Generally they do not get adequate representation in the

development process, with a view to involve the backward and weaker sections of the society in daily developmental activities. The Sikkim Panchayat Act, 1993 provides reservation seats for the Women, Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes of the State are made in accordance with their population in both tiers of the PRIs. It ensured direct involvement of women in position of decision making; elected women representatives are slowly bringing change in rural society by bringing women, child and social related issues to the forefront.

Further the Rural Management and Development Department (RM&DD) is of firm opinion that the panchayats can fulfil their responsibilities as institutions of self governance if decentralization is patterned between namely the three (Fs) functions, finances and functionaries. Thus, it has been ensured that the decentralization is made through legislative action rather than administrative orders. The Panchayats of different levels should be aware of the funds which are to be placed at its clearance. This is an important requirement for every tier of the PRIs to prepare plans of their respective areas. The gram and zilla plans are consolidated by District Planning Committees (DPC) and forward to State planning board for combining in State annual plan.

Strict monitoring and evaluation of the funds devolved to Panchayati Raj Institutions are done by State Level Vigilance and Monitoring Committees. In order to identify the beneficiary oriented alleviation schemes and transparent governance the full power has been given to the ward and *gramsabha*. Opportunity is provided to the people to voice their desire. Sikkim Panchayat Act of 2005 was amended to add a provision for one-third reservation for women in the quorum of a gram and ward Sabha to ensure active participation of women in all decision making. In 2012, 50 per cent reservations are provided for women for the post of Gram Panchayat, Zilla Panchayat, Up-Adhyaksha and Adhyaksha. Sikkim being a part of India for less than 40 years has also made name for itself as one of the best managed States in India.

On 24, April 2012 Union Government has ranked Sikkim State as the best State in the country in the category of its outstanding performance in strengthening and developing the Panchayati Raj institutions. In December 2002, Sikkim was added in the North Eastern Council, which was a major achievement for the State and it also gives an access to central funds allocated for incentive programmes in the region. It not only helps Sikkim to build up financial support for its agricultural and industrial set up but also

enhances its human capital. Government has mapped out a developmental plan for long-term strategy of achieving 100 per cent literacy, employment generation and poverty eradication, improving the livelihood, youth empowerment and sustainable health. In order to bottom-up development the Government decentralized power to local communities and women are viewed as absolute component of programme. So the wheels for achieving the goal for the development of State, various leaders and bureaucrats from various departments and civil societies have been involved in the formulation of development programmes. In order to achieve targeting goal and to eradicate poverty various anti-poverty programmes have been launched by the Central and State Government from time to time. Some of these programmes are as under:

*Programmes on Minimum Basic Needs*

- Public Distribution System (PDS)
- Rural Water Supply Programme
- Rural Sanitation
- Rural Electrification

*Self-employment Programmes*

- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- Training for Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)
- Development of Women and Child in Rural Areas (DWCRA)
- Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

*Wage Employment Generating Schemes (WEGS)*

- Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)
- Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY)
- Employment Assurance Schemes (EAS)
- National Food-for-Work Programme (NFFWP)
- National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS)

*Social Welfare Oriented Programmes (SWOP)*

- National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)
- Aam Admi Bima Yojana (AABY)
- Rashtriya Swashtya Bima Yojana (RSBY)
- National Old Age Pension Scheme
- National Family Benefit Scheme
- National Maternity Benefit Scheme

- Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS)
- Balika Samridhi Yojana
- Early Child Care Scheme
- National Handicap Aid Programme
- National Widow Grants in Aid Scheme

*Rural Housing Schemes*

- Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY)
- Mukhya Mantri Awaas Yojana (MMAY)

*Special Area Programme*

- Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP)
- Desert Development Programme (DDP)

*Programmes on Education*

- Schemes for Scholarship for Primary Education
- Mid-Day Meal Scheme
- Adult Education or Neo-Literate Programmes
- Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)

*Other Programmes*

- Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking Water Mission
- Backward Region Grant Fund (BRGF)
- State Rural Business Hub (SRBH)
- Rural Produced Marketing Centre (RPMC)
- Sikkim Renewable Energy Development Agency (SREDA)
- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)
- Model Village

## **2.4. WOMAN EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMMES**

Government of India has launched several schemes for the welfare of the girl child and to reduce discrimination against the girl child. The State Government has also implemented some of this plan for further development of the masses. Sikkim Women's Commission was formed on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2001. The Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005 was implemented in the State in 2007 and thereafter the Sikkim Commission for Protection of Child Rights was set up in January 2008. Sikkim Government has been made compulsory to mention the name of the mother along with

father in all official documents. All benefits are provided in the name of the mother of the family. Since 7<sup>th</sup> November, 1995, women are provided with maternity facilities. Women labourers during post-natal period are given leave and Rs.30 as maternity allowance. Nowadays, this amount has been raised to Rs.500. Prerna Yojana provides additional facilities to girls in the field of education. Balika Samridhi Yojana was introduced in 1997. Under this program Rs.500 is deposited in the name of a girl child of a BPL family born on or after 15<sup>th</sup> August 1997. Laghu Pariwar Yojana was launched on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1997, for the sake of the girl child. The program seeks to delay the marriage of girls till she reaches appropriate age and also encourages them to maintain adequate space between childbirths and to encourage them to pursue higher education.

Kishore Shakti Yojana was first launched as a pilot project in the North district in 2000-01 and extended to other districts from 2005-06. This programme seeks to provide proper nutrition and health care for girls between the ages of 11-18 years. This scheme also provides vocational and capacity building training. Grant of Rs.10, 000 is being provided to widows. Bidawa Punarbibhaha Yojana was started in 1995, under this scheme a cash incentive of Rs. 10,000 is given to those persons who marry widows. Swayamsiddha Yojana was started with the aim of achieving holistic socio-economic development of women. Under this program rural women are trained to save money and they are also made a part of the local planning process. There are 988 Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) centres in Sikkim. The Centre is under the care of one Anganwadi worker and helper; it takes care of children below 6 years of age. The children are given preschool education along with other related services. In addition, expecting women and nursing mothers are also given care.

The Hot Meal programme was launched on 14th August 2009 by Chief Minister of Sikkim for ICDS attending children from the age of 3 to 6 years, where they are fed with hot meals, milk and Take Home Ration (THR). 'Mamtalaya' was set up in 1997 at Sichey near Gangtok. It provides shelter, health facilities, counselling services and vocational training for helpless women. About 115 crèches have been opened all over the State to look after the children of working women. These crèches are managed by the NGOs and grants are regularly provided to them by the Government. Sikkim Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Rules, 1990 has been notified under the Prevention of Immoral Trafficking Act 1956, for the safeguard of women and children against any form of

exploitation. The State Government has enforced the Protection Act in 2005 for Women from Domestic Violence. The Act endeavours to provide both Civil and Criminal remedies without too many procedural hassles making it accessible for the aggrieved women to approach the system and obtain relief. It provides quick and easy remedy to a victim of domestic violence. Small Family Scheme is a State program launched in 1997, which aims to rise the age of marriage of girls and reduce the family size to a maximum two children per family. Girls of 13 years are registered under the scheme, Rs. 8000 per beneficiary is deposited in the State Bank of Sikkim for a period of 8 years, when the girl reaches 21 years of age she becomes eligible for first incentive of Rs. 2000, If she marries only after attaining 22 years of age then additional Rs. 500 paid to her. If she marries only after 23 years of age again additional Rs. 1000 is paid to her.

On the basis of above brief assessment it can be said that there is clear paradigm shift in rural development planning in India as well as in Sikkim. Rural Development is the nodal division for subjects relating to implementation of various rural development programmes, employment generation in rural areas, poverty eradication, development and management of resources, watershed and degraded land towards enhancing the absorptive capacities of the people. Most of the governmental initiatives are designed to improve the quality of life of the people. Eradication of poverty and provision of basic minimum services are the fundamental elements of any developmental strategy. Developmental process cannot be sustainable unless it leads to visible improvement in the related areas. Alleviation of rural poverty has been one of the primary objectives of planned development in India.

Even since the inception of planning policies and programmes have been designed and redesigned with this aim. It is clear that rapid employment expansion, good health, education, water supply, sanitation, infrastructure and communication facilities will be essential for poverty reduction. Good governance in the states is crucial for prosperous development of the nation. Since from Vedic age, the rural village was the basic unit of administration and it has been still continuous and may remain in future as a land of village communities. India's national economy is mainly rural in character and very high proportion of its population still lived in rural areas. Rural development is therefore an urgent and extreme necessity in India and will be continued to be so in an upcoming.

## REFERENCES

- Bhatt, S.C. and Bhargava, G.K., (2005), '*Land and People of Indian states and union territories*', Vol. 36, Kalpaz publications, pp. 177-200.
- Chambers, R., (1983), '*Rural Development: Putting the Last First*', Longmen, London, p. 147.
- Fernando, N.A., (2008), '*Rural Development Outcomes and Drivers*', Asian Development Bank, pp. 4-6.
- Joshi, S., (1999), '*IRDP and Poverty Alleviation*', Rawat Publication, pp. 12-47,
- Krishna, M., (2003), '*Poverty Alleviaion and Rural Poor*', Mittal Publications, pp. 69-117.
- Krishnamachari, V.T. and Venu, S., (1977), '*Planning in India: Theory and Practice*', Orient Longman, New Delhi.
- National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development., (2010), '*Statistics on Women in India 2010*', pp. 115-120.
- Pant, K.C., (2003), '*India's Development Scenario*', Academic Foundation, New Delhi.
- Pant, S.K and Pandey, J., (2004), '*Social Development in Rural India*', Rawat Publication, pp. 42-55.
- Planning Commission Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74)., (1969), '*Guideline for the Formulating of District Plans*', Government of India, pp. 229-30.
- Planning Commission., (1952), '*First Five Year Plan*', Government of India, New Delhi.
- Planning Commission., (1956), '*Second Five Year Plan*', Government of India, New Delhi.
- Planning Commission., (1961), '*Third Five Year Plan*', Government of India, New Delhi.
- Planning Commission., (1969), '*Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74)*', Guideline for the Formulating of District Plans, Government of India.
- Rao, H., (2005), '*Broad Based Agriculture and Rural Development: An Over view*', India Rural Development Report, National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad, pp. 3-57.
- RMDD., (2008), '*Panchayati Raj in Sikkim*', Govt. of Sikkim, pp. 11-13.
- Setty, E.D., (2002), '*A new approaches to Rural Development*', Anmol Publication Pvt. Ltd, pp. 1-38

- Singh, G. K., (2003), '*Administration for Rural Development Programmes in India*', Abhijeet publication, pp. 1-7, 68-101.
- Singh, K., (2009), '*Rural Development Principles, Policies and Management*', Sage Publications, pp. 198-220.
- Singh, K.K. and Ali, S., (2000), '*Encyclopaedia of Rural Planning and Development*', Vol. I.II.III, Sarup and Sons, pp. 15-40.
- Sisodia, Y.S., (2007), '*Rural Development Macro-Micro Realities*', Rawat publication, pp. 1-3, 39-43.
- Upadhyay, H.C., (1991), '*Modernization of Rural Development*', Anmol Publication, pp. 241-244.
- World Bank., (May 1975), '*Rural Development*', Sector Policy Paper, p.3.