CHAPTER-4

IMPACT AND CONSTRAINS OF THE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

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India with an area of 3.28 million sq. Km is the seventh largest country in the world. In population, which has already crossed the billion mark, it is next only to China,\(^1\) The democratic set up combined with its billion population gives the country the unique status of being the largest democracy in the world. India is a Union of 28 States/Provinces and 7 Union Territories. Each state is further divided into districts. There are approximately 600 districts in the country. Each district is further divided into smaller administrative units called development Blocks or Talukas. There are about 6001 Blocks in the country. A block may have urban as well as rural areas. While the urban areas consist of towns, the rural areas consist of villages. There are more than 6,00,000 villages in India.

There are three levels of government: the Central Government, the State or Provincial Government and the Local Government. Each of these governments is elected by the people at the national, state and local level. The Central or Union Government, head-quartered at New Delhi has the mandate to administer subjects listed in the Central List. The Central List includes subjects that cut across state boundaries and cover the interests of the entire nation such as Defense, Foreign Affairs etc. The Central Government is also responsible for administering the 7 Union Territories.

Each State or Province is administered by a State Government which is head-quartered at the state capital. The state governments are empowered to take decisions on subjects listed in the state list. The state list includes subjects that cut across boundaries of local governments and also other state-level issues. The local government, also called local self-governing bodies or Panchayati Raj Institutions. There are two types of local government: urban local bodies and rural local bodies. The urban local bodies are local governments of urban areas and consist of municipalities and municipal corporations. The rural local bodies consist of a three-tier Panchayat system: District Panchayat or Zilla Parishad, Block Panchayat and Village Panchayats.
The most important landmark in the history of Indian Rural Development efforts was the setting up of an organisation called Community Projects Administration in March, 1952. The main thrust of the organisation was to administer community development programmes at grass root level. The organisation and its programmes underwent many transformations. In an effort to accord higher priority to Rural Development, Department of Rural Development was constituted in October 1974 as a part of Ministry of Food and Agriculture. However, it was realised that for a sustainable development, Rural Development has to be more holistic and all encompassing, that includes not only agriculture development but also the economic betterment of the people, a better and higher quality of life and social transformation. This realisation led to several transformations to the originally conceived Department of Rural Development, in terms of mandate, status and name.

Today, the erstwhile Department of Rural Development has been elevated to the status of a Ministry and has been re-named as Ministry of Rural Development. The high order of budgetary outlay for Rural Development Programmes (Rs. 13,670 crore in 2002-2003 as against Rs. 12,265 crore in 2001-2002 and Rs. 9,760 crore in 2000-2001) aptly demonstrates the importance that the Government has accorded to Rural Development. Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD): The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is the apex institution at the level of Central Government with the mandate to formulate policies and design & implement a number of programmes that are aimed at bringing about a 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 in the process, to reach out to most disadvantaged sections of the society. Besides MoRD, other Ministries and departments at Central Government level such as Education, Health, Agriculture, Small-Scale Industries etc. also contribute significantly to the Rural Development process in India.

**Department of Rural Development (DRD):** DRD focuses on implementing schemes for poverty alleviation through the generation of self-employment and wage employment (generated through the creation of rural infrastructure such as schools,
tree plantations etc.), provision of housing and minor irrigation assets to rural poor, rural roads etc.5

**Department of Land Resources (DoLR):** DoLR focuses on the development of Land as a resource. In particular, it implements schemes to increase the biomass production by developing the wastelands of the country. Besides the development of Land, the Department also focuses on Land Reforms including the maintenance of Land Records. It also undertakes development of desert and drought prone areas of the country.

**Department of Drinking Water Supply (DDWS):** Provision of Drinking Water Supply and extension of Sanitation facilities to rural poor are the main components of the activities of this Department.

State Rural Development Department: Besides the MoRD, every state or province also has a department called the State Rural Development Department (SRD). SRD has a mandate similar to that of the MoRD but confined to its own province. A state may launch its own RD programmes or jointly fund the programmes launched by MoRD, Government of India. Like MoRD the roles of SRDs are restricted to the formulation of policies & programmes relating to Rural Development, providing funds for the programmes, and monitoring & evaluation of the programmes.

**District Rural Development Agency (DRDA):** DRDA is the principal organ at the district level that is vested with the responsibility of overseeing the implementation of various anti-poverty programmes. The DRDAs are expected to effectively coordinate with the line departments, the PRIs, the banks and other financial institutions, the NGOs, technical institutions etc. with a view to gathering the support and resources required for poverty reduction effort in the district. More recently, the DRDA have been brought under the official purview of District or Zilla Panchayats (ZP).

**Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs):** As stated earlier, PRIs are the local self-governing bodies, consisting of elected representatives from rural areas. With more and more stress on Democratic Decentralisation, PRIs are being assigned a crucial role in the implementation of most of the Rural Development programmes. In particular, they are entrusted with responsibilities such as preparation of plans for
economic and social development, implementation of schemes, identification of families Below Poverty Line (BPL), identification of beneficiaries under different schemes etc. to name a few.

**Training Institutions:** Keeping in mind the importance of training and research for the successful design and implementation of Rural Development programmes, training institutions have been created at the national and provincial levels. The National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad is an autonomous organisation under the aegis of the MoRD. It is the country's apex body for undertaking training, research, action research and consultancy in rural development sector.

While through its research activities, it attempts to assist the Ministry in policy formulation and choice of options in rural development, through training activities (trainings, workshops, seminars etc.), it facilitates rural development efforts by improving the knowledge, skill and attitudes of RD functionaries. Besides the above activities, NIRD is also involved in a number of other activities such as providing consultancy services, information dissemination through publications etc. In addition to NIRD, every province has a State Institute of Rural Development (SIRD) for imparting training to RD functionaries in the state and also to elected representatives of PRIs.

**Other Allied Agencies:** Besides the above institutions, which form the core of Rural Development, a number of other agencies also contribute towards rural development and poverty alleviation. Primary among them is the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART) with the mandate to promote voluntary action (through grass root voluntary organisations) and propagate appropriate rural technologies for the benefit of the rural masses. In addition, banks and other financial institutions, line departments, technical institutions etc. also supplement government's efforts by extending their support in the form of finances, technical know-how etc.
Government of India follows a comprehensive and yet a fairly simply strategy to bring about development in rural areas. There are three important components of the strategy:

**Focus:** The focus of rural development is all encompassing and not only individual, group or family oriented benefits but also community assets mainly in the form of infrastructure such as roads, drinking water facilities, schools etc. Thus, as on today, the beneficiaries of rural development schemes include individuals, groups (Self Help Groups), families and village. Similarly, the benefits of rural development schemes have come to include financial benefits in the form of loans, subsidies etc. to individuals, groups etc. but also assets to families (houses, sanitation facilities), villages (community assets such as drinking water and sanitation facilities, roads, schools etc.).

**Instrument:** The instrument or the means used to bring about rural development is through programmes or schemes launched either at central, state or local government level. Some of the major schemes launched by MoRD and under implementation are:

- **Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY):** During the lean agricultural season and also during the period of natural calamities such as drought, flood etc., many of the rural poor are left with no means of employment and subsistence. This scheme aims to provide gainful wage employment and food security to the rural poor, particularly during these periods, and in the process develop rural infrastructure that is in line with the people's aspirations.

- **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):** The existence of All-Weather roads in rural areas has been identified as a critical link for the progress of rural areas. Accordingly, this scheme envisages connecting every habitation through good AllWeather roads by the year 2007.

- **Rural Housing:** In an effort to achieve the goal of 'Housing for All the Government of India has launched three major programmes:

  - **Indira Awaas Yojana,** which is a flagship scheme of the Ministry to facilitate construction of houses for the rural poor.
Credit Cum Subsidy Scheme, where assistance is provided for housing for those who are not so poor.

Innovative Stream for Rural Housing, which is a strategy of the Ministry to transfer appropriate technologies, materials and designs so as to enable rural people to build cost-effective, environment friendly houses for themselves.

Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY), a self-employment programme where assistance is given to poor families living below poverty line for taking up self-employment.

Integrated Wastelands Development Programme: This programme seeks to develop wastelands in an integrated manner after taking into consideration the land capability and site conditions with due consideration to the needs of the local people.

**Drought Prone Areas Programme:** An area development programme, it attempts to tackle the special land-related problems faced by those fragile areas that are constantly affected by severe drought conditions.

**Desert Development Programme:** The main objective of this programme is to mitigate the adverse impacts of desertification and combating desertification.

**Hariyali:** This is a new initiative where in all of the above ongoing area development programmes would be implemented through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).

Technology Development, Extension & Training (TDET): The main objectives of the scheme is to (a) operationalise cost effective waste land development technologies, (b) disseminate research findings about such technologies, (c) evaluate impact for replication in other areas and (d) promote awareness about such technologies.

**Rural Water Supply Programme:** In an attempt to provide sustained, safe and quality drinking water to rural habitations, the Government of India has launched the following schemes:

**Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP):** The objectives of this programme are to ensure access to safe, sustained and quality drinking water to rural habitations.
Swajaldhara: This scheme is an attempt by the government to ensure community participation in all aspects including planning, implementation, operation and maintenance of drinking water assets so that long term sustainability of these assets are ensured.

In addition to the above programmes, the Ministry also undertakes the following activities on a regular basis:

**Below Poverty Line (BPL) Survey:** Periodically (almost every five years), the Ministry conducts a survey (100 %) of rural families to identify families living Below Poverty Line Survey (BPL). These families become potential beneficiaries of the multitude of schemes sponsored by the Government.

**Habitation Survey:** Periodically (every five years), the Ministry conducts the Habitation Survey (which is again hundred percent) to identify facilities (or the lack of it) for drinking water supply and sanitation in rural habitations.

**Implementation Strategies**

The programmes or schemes launched by the governments at various need to be implemented at the grass root level. One important paradigm shift that has taken place in implementation strategy is the shift to decentralisation. Earlier, the entire strategy from policy formulation, design of schemes to implementation was centrally administered (either at Government of India level or at state government level) with little or no participation from the rural people themselves.

However, with the 73rd Amendment of the Constitution, there has been a paradigm shift in the strategy for Rural Development. The focus has now shifted to decentralisation through speedy and effective devolution of financial and administrative powers to the locally elected bodies called Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). This paradigm shift in focus is due to the recognition by the government that the rural people are the best judge of their needs and aspirations and hence solutions to their problems must also emerge from the villages itself.
The 73rd Amendment of the Constitution provides for a three-tier structure for PRIs—Village Panchayat (Gram Sabha), Intermediate/Block Panchayat and District Panchayat. Also, the Village Panchayat has been given Constitutional status so that it is recognised as a general Assembly of villagers with regular elections to Panchayats every 5 years. In order to enable effective decentralisation, the Ministry is vigorously pursuing with the State Governments to expedite the devolution of necessary administrative and financial powers to PRIs. Today, PRIs are undertaking the implementation of many of the programmes sponsored by Government of India and State Governments.

The entire implementation strategy is simplified and presented below:

1. **Policy Formulation:** Based on the needs and aspirations of the rural people, identified through various impact and need assessment studies, MoRD and SRDs formulate policies that favour rural development.

2. **Programme Design:** Programmes/schemes are designed by MoRD and SRDs with the aim to realise their respective policies. Generally, the policies and programmes of SRDs attempt to fill the gap that may exist in MoRD’s policies and programmes and the state specific requirements.

3. **Fund Allocation:** Funds are allocated to each programme. In the case of MoRD sponsored programmes, funding may be either 100% from MoRD or it may be shared between MoRD and SRD according to a pre-specified ratio. In the case of SRD sponsored programmes, the funding is 100% from ISRD budget.

4. **Fund Disbursement:** Funds are disbursed (as per the installment plan of the scheme) to the programme co-ordinating agency. In most of the cases, DRDA is the co-ordinating agency. DRDAs co-ordinate with the implementing agencies as well as with other allied agencies such as banks, line departments, technical institutions to ensure that the programme is implemented successfully.
5. **Programme Implementation:** PRIs and NGOs which are usually the implementation agencies at the grassroots level receive funds from their respective DRDAs and implement the programmes as per the guidelines.

6. **Monitoring & Evaluation:** Both MoRD and SRD place special emphasis on Monitoring and evaluation of the programmes in view of the substantial allocation of funds to these development programmes. A comprehensive multi-level, multi-tool system of monitoring and evaluation is adopted.

During the course of survey of the sample households for the study in Anand and Kheda districts, some shortcomings in implementation of various programmes for eradication of poverty were noticed. These shortcomings can be listed below:

- The selection of beneficiaries for these programmes was not properly done;
- The programmes were not given due publicity in villages;
- The infrastructure required for proper implementation of various schemes under these programmes was found to be inadequate;
- The attitude of local leaders of all selected villages was found to be totally indifferent;
- There were distinct variations in the level of poverty in different regions of the district;
- The administration who are suppose to be the main agency for implementation of these programmes were found to be utterly apathetic;
- Even the design of these programmes was found to be poor. This resulted in the fact that these programmes did not trickle down to the actual beneficiaries.
Keeping in view the main objectives of this study, poverty line was demarcated in the present study with the help of the following two approaches:

- Minimum Needs Approach

- Caloric Requirement Approach

Minimum expenditure on essential items like food, clothing and housing was taken into account in the minimum needs approach. This approach has been tested at the micro-level. According to this approach, expenditure per capita per month came to Rs. 99 for the rural areas and Rs. 104.10 for the urban areas at the 1980-81 prices. This has been treated as poverty line for the study. Taluka-wise poverty line was also demarcated in the study. Method of estimating poverty used in this study differs from the commonly used method. On the basis of minimum needs approach, it was found that 21.77 per cent households were living below poverty line. It was also found that 22.19 per cent rural households and 16.00 per cent urban households were below the poverty line.⁷

Calorie requirement approach was also tested for comparing the results. According to this approach, the average per capita per day minimum calorie requirement came to 2845.48 calories for the rural workers and 2506.48 calories for the urban workers. Taluka-wise minimum calorie requirement was also calculated. On the basis of this approach, it was found that 11.13 per cent of households were living below poverty line. It was also found that 12.53 per cent rural households and 4.00 per cent urban households were found to be below poverty line.⁸

Comparing the results of the two approaches with the findings of other studies done on poverty, it was found that the minimum needs approach is closer to the findings of other research studies. It can now be concluded that food alone cannot be considered as the only variable to compute the poverty line but variables like clothing and housing are also important to be taken into Consideration. These three main components of individualized poverty were considered and discussed in the present study.
Regression technique was employed to identify the factors which influenced the level of per capita consumption expenditure in a particular household. Regression results indicated that per capita consumption expenditure was an important factor in influencing the level of per-capita actual diet, per capita difference of actual diet and balanced diet, per capita caloric content, per capita difference of calorie content and calorie requirement of a household. The per capita consumption expenditure in turn was affected by the loans the households had taken from indigenous money-lenders like the Mahajans or Shahukars. Social and financial backwardness of the households, their illiteracy and lack of awareness of facilities offered by Government and other agencies are other factors which affected the poor. It was found that lack of sources of irrigation, big sizes of family, more dependence on the heads of households, absence of other sources of economic activities, joint family system, unemployment, illiteracy among landless and agricultural laborers were the major contributory factors for existent of poverty to the extent it in the region.

Demographically, both rural and urban poor had joint and large sized families. The poor families were also found to have larger number of children. The phenomenon of joint families, with old members and a larger number of children living in household results into a high ratio of dependents to earners in the poor households. The poor households were mostly headed by illiterate persons. Further, it was found that a scheduled caste or a scheduled tribe family was likely to be living in poverty more often than others. Muslim households were also living in poverty. Members of the poor households were found mostly farmers, agricultural laborers and landlines laborers. This study also showed that poverty has resulted in increasing numeric of tuberculosis patients, handicaps and blinds, etc.

This study indicated that the poor resort to the following methods to cope with their poverty

(i) Consumption of inferior quality of food items;
(ii) Curtailment or non-consumption of certain items; and
(iii) Borrowing money to meet their current consumption deficit
Majority of poor families were found consuming cheap quality of wheat and Bajra, makai. Many poor are also found to forego the consumption of certain items like fruits and vegetables.

Most of the poor families reside in inferior quality of houses such as sheds, hut-Kuchcha houses. Most of the poor families either did not wear full dresses or if they wore at all the same were-of inferior quality or were even torn.

Any programme for the eradication of poverty should include social awareness in the region. The factors like health education and social awareness should be taken into account while formulating programmes for the eradication of poverty in the region. Only the government can provide these facilities in the society to enable the people to avail of them. The individuals, therefore, should be enabled to reduce the expenditure on health care, education and social customs. In this regard, government has a vital role to play through enhancing expenditure on these items of social welfare.

Per capita monthly expenditure of the sample households on medical care, education and social customs was analyzed on the basis of categories of per capita consumption expenditure with the help of Lorenz curves. These three variables when tested with the help of regression analysis in relation to per capita consumption expenditure showed significant relationship. These variables have been taken into account while suggesting measures for welfare of society as a whole in this study.

It was found that the per capita expenditure on medical care is higher in rural areas than in urban areas. It was also found that the per capita expenditure on education is lower in rural areas than in urban areas in most of the categories of per capita consumption expenditure. Rising trend of per capita expenditure on social customs was found in various categories of per capita consumption expenditure groups in both the rural and urban areas. It was also observed through Lorenz curve that ten degree of inequality of expenditure on social customs was much higher than the expenditure on medical care and education. Further, the degree of inequalities of per capita expenditure on medical care was much higher in the rural areas than in the
urban areas. Inequalities of per capita expenditure on education were more in rural areas than in urban areas.

The Government of India after Independence did take positive step; first of all to identify the poor and then to eradicate the individual poverty in the society. Several schemes like, Antyodaya, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Rural Landlines Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP), National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), land Reforms. Twenty Point Programmes Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal farmers and Agricultural Labourers (MFAL), Special Animal Husbandry Drought Prone Area Programme, (DPAP), Desert Development Programme, Tribal Area Development Programme, Rural Growth Centers, Samagr Gram Vikas and Minimum Needs Programme were launched.9

A study of the households in the sample area showed that though these schemes had to some extent provided some relief to the poor, yet nothing significant had been achieved. This is mainly because of the reason that the Government has been found wanting in playing a vital role for eradication of collective poverty. Unless effective steps are taken to literate the poor and to educate them towards their health care and to prompt them to discard those traditional social customs which drain out their meager income, the problem of poverty will remain.

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REFERENCE BOOKS


3. Ibid, p.3.


5. Reserve Bank of India, Evaluation study of the IRDP


