“India Lives in its villages”, said Mahatma Gandhi. Literally and from the social, economic and political perspectives. The statement is valid even today and could well prove prophetic even for years to come. Around 70% population of India is rural. The nation’s economy has been agriculture centered for centuries. This system continues to be so even after the unveiling of the structural adjustment programme. So we can say that Rural Development is the feature of Indian economy.

Prior to independence there has been several experiments in rural development which comprises of Martandam Rural Reconstruction Experiment (1921), The Gurgaon Experiment on Self Help, Self Respect and Mutual Help (1921), Constructive programmes of Mahatma Gandhi-Antodaya (1925), the Baroda Rural Reconstruction Movement (1932), The Firka Development Scheme-Madras (1946) The Mazdoor Manzil-Nilokheri Attempt (1947) the Etawah Pilot Project (1948) and so on.

While Mahatma Gandhi’s Constructive programme aimed at developing a wholesome pattern of Rural life and work emphasizing the role of people themselves, the first large scale govt. financed intensive rural development programme was the Etawah Pilot Project (1948) in Utter Pradesh This project brought respectable changes in and caused in substantial increase in agricultural production. Rural Development is the key area of focus in India as the real India lives in villages. In order to develop India, the development of rural areas as well as development of rural people comes first. The period at present is the period of development and rural development had always been the major concern of any country. In order of development of the nation rural areas and rural society needs special concern. For the economic development of a nation rural development as well as rural social development is of foremost importance. India being welfare state views welfare of people as its foremost obligation. Rural development not only deals with development of rural areas but also with the overall improvement in standard of living such as fresh air, safe drinking water, shelter, good health facilities and livelihood for survival. India got backwardness, poverty, underdevelopment, and unemployment, lack
of adequate infrastructure facilities and industrial base, poor health, under production as ancestral property from Britishers with independence. This was the reason that the task of rebuilding the shattered economy and eradicate the poverty and uplift the standard of living was a very difficult task. Rural development is a holistic concept encompassing both natural and human resource development in an integrated manner. It aims at (1) increasing the opportunities of all rural people in respect of health, knowledge and skill development, income and participation in decision making, (2) creating a conducive environment in reducing social and economic inequalities and conflicts and, (3) bringing all present and potential natural resources to most optimal use, ensuring their conservation and development.

In India a majority of population lives in rural areas hence rural development had been the abiding concern of all the five-year plans. The Govt. of India started a number of programmes for the upliftment of rural societies /communities. It started countrywide community development programme on 2nd October 1952. Thereafter keeping in view the social & economic development of rural masses as well as area development programme for the infrastructure development of the rural areas. Since independence programmes and schemes has changed keeping in view the need of people and affected categories. Keeping in view the vastness of the country and diversity of demography and geography such as growing population, categorization of population into many barriers such as caste, creed, sex, education and growing need of employment, shelter etc. Old schemes have been closed and new schemes have been formulated to accelerate the pace of development and reduce the poverty. The basic purpose to find out in this study is the management aspect of the rural development programme i.e. Planning, Organizing, directing and controlling. The planning is done by the rural development department in consultation with planning commission after pilot study and requirements verification and need assessment of the society. The state departments are doing organizing by manning the staffs necessary for the execution of the programmes. Central Rural development department executes its schemes through the rural development department of the states. Implementation of the programmes are done by the Community development
Blocks in the fields with the help of three tier Panchayati Raj system with the direction of central as well as state rural development department. Control or monitoring is done by the state Accountant General department through Audits, central govt, through mid term evaluations and post evaluation with the help of NGOs and other certified agencies.

For the integrated rural development of the rural people being the major concern of Government launched the IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme) in 1978 for creating self employment base in India and open up small people enterprise for self sustainability. The major concern in reducing the poverty is to provide the people with better employment opportunity whether outside or self-employment in order to make him self-dependent. The latest breakthrough in the way of making rural poor self dependent through self employment is with the SGSY (Swaranjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana)-launched on first April 1999. Through SGSY the rural poor are associated into homogeneous self help groups for taking up economic activity of their own choice and earn a living. These self-help groups (SHG) are so organized on mutual trust that they not only are helping themselves but also the other needy poor of the area.

The present research is broadly focused on studying the management of rural development programmes in India and study of Swaranjayanti gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) in Himachal Pradesh specifically in detail. The present study has been divided into five chapters.

The first chapter deals with the introduction of Rural Development in India in which different aspects of development has been dealt. The progress we have achieved so far in the areas of rural upliftment and overall development has been discussed in detail. Hereafter in this chapter we will discuss management of rural development and poverty alleviation programmes. This sub part of the chapter will focus on Management in the rural development programmes reach the real seekers of the development. We will thereafter study the brief concept of planning in rural development, the organizational structure of Ministry of rural development at central level. Direction as well as Implementation of rural development programmes since
independence. We will also have a review over the various rural development and poverty alleviation programmes.

In the second chapter we will make a review of related literature, need of study, objectives, scope and research methodology. Here we will discuss the need and purpose of the study and the objectives behind the present study.

We will discuss in third chapter about Himachal Pradesh in general, a brief review and rural development in Himachal Pradesh. Various rural development programmes being implemented at present by state government will also be discussed. We will also discuss in brief the structure of rural development machinery at State, District, Block and Panchayat level, the lowest level in the democracy. In this chapter we will also examine achievements made under Swaranjayanti gram Swarojgar Yojana in Development Blocks under study.

In the fourth chapter we will analyze the impact of SGSY on poverty alleviation in the Development Blocks under study. Here all the impacts of implementation of the programme in these four blocks will be studies and the achievement of objectives will also be got verified.

In the fifth chapter the researcher have tried to analyze the observations and reach out important conclusion which would be helpful for further study by researchers as well as the practitioners of rural development for improvement in implementation as well as policy makers so as to make some improvements in the present programme for the benefit of population at large.

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