CHAPTER-4

Centre Government Contribution to Rural Development

In simple terms, “Development means more of the good things in life”. In other words “Development means improving the quality of life in all its aspects including improving the physical environment for the man”.29

After all man strives on hopes and wishes, constantly bearing in mind the idea that is contained in the lines of the English poet A.H. Clough that “If hopes were dupes, fears may be liars.”30 His hopes are naturally for better life and better facilities. This is possible only through development. “How we shall live in a world without belief in development is perhaps the key development question.”31

The idea of rural development has emerged out of the basic concept of development discussed herein. Some of its aspects shall be accepted in the subsequent sections. It is very important here to say in a few words that rural development means, improving the quality of life of rural people and their surroundings.” It involves the farm sector” as well as the non-farm sector” activities of rural areas. This idea of “development and rural development was definitely not there when the concept of welfare state took its birth.

30 Ibid.
31 Apter, Davie, “Introduction of Political Analysis, pub. N. Delhi, 1981, P. 469
Therefore, the idea in itself and more shows the emphasis put on it, it is welfare state phenomenon”.

In all the three camps of the world mentioned earlier, there is a keen desire for development of man, of society and of environment, though the method, the strategy and the way may differ. Therefore, it is not wrong to say, “Development in itself is changed into an ideology”^32

Thus, it can be well said that it is development, to a great extent, for the two worlds, and for the third one it is rural development to which all the attention and energy is directed. It has rightly been pointed out by the United Nations' Centre for Regional Development, Japan, if development must be redefined as an attack on the main evils of the day — diseases, illiteracy, malnutrition, slums, inequality and unemployment, main battles have to be fought and won on the rural front.

The villages are the soul of India, and Rural India is a treasure of the essence of Indian customs and culture. But it is lagging behind in terms of development because of many historical reasons. In order to correct the development imbalances the Government of India is implementing a number of programmes and schemes aimed to bring about changes in rural areas.

We identify the fact that solutions to the problems of under development in rural India need to emerge from the people in their areas. In the last few

years, there has been a pattern-shift in the strategy for rural development with a focus on decentralization through speedy and effective devolution of financial and administrative powers to the Panchayati Raj Institutions. A strategic pro-poor policy in terms of which the rural poor are treated as a resource rather than as a burden, whose ideas and experience are now necessary parts of the development strategy, has been adopted. As such, the stress has been shifted towards participation of people through Panchayati Raj Institutions and self-help groups in the planning, implementation and performing of the programmes.

The spirit of willingness and meaningful participation of the people in the development process can only be possible, if the rural people in general and Panchayati Raj functionaries in particular are adequately aware of the nature and content of Rural Development Programmes. Accordingly, Govt. is making concerted efforts to spread information and messages about Rural Development Programme through most of the available modes of communication. The information regarding various Rural Development Programmes is easy to understand, as it is conveyed in easy and communicative language. It will be a great assistance in communicating the information on Rural Development Programmes to the target groups of the Programmes in rural areas.
Rural Development: A Challenging Task in India

Rural Development has become a challenging task in India for the various reasons like over-centralization in planning, over-bureaucratization in implementation, and fragmentation at the field level which leads to over dependence of the people on the Government.33

In spite of the stress on rural development for nearly five decades, economic development has remained a difficult task owing to the problem of resource transfer from rural India, which is also responsible for worsening poverty in rural areas.

- The approach to Rural Development has, over a period of time, remained ad-hoc in nature. The Government has been making programmes to cater to the specific needs of different sections. What is conveniently forgotten is that benefits cannot flow on a lasting basis unless the rural areas are developed. Failure to realize this simple truth led to mismatch between financial targets and physical targets.

- Our entire model of development is urban biased, whereas 70% of our population lives in the rural area. The production of basic things takes place in the cities and towns even a simple thing like soap is produced in the urban areas. One reason that is generally

---

33 B.N. Sahay, Approach to Rural Development in the ninth plan, Kurukshetra, April, 1997, P.31
given for this urban bias is that the rural areas are lacking in minimum infrastructure facilities. It is true that development of infrastructure in rural areas may not take place so long as villages are not treated as centers of production, which has been the root cause responsible for growing regional disparities in terms of development.

The rural India suffers from unfavourable power system, as the land and other productive assets are heavily concentrated in the hands of a few people. As a result, the programmes meant for the poor are really helping the rich. The anti-poverty schemes devised for the benefit of the poor are availed by the rich. Institutions like Co-operatives meant for the poor, are dominated by the rich and powerful, that has been revealed by various studies and reports.

The rural poor suffer on account of weak bargaining power. They certainly need industrial support, but it is not available. The Panchyati Raj Institutions remained almost paralytic for a long time and failed to help the rural poor in meeting the required needs.

The image of our rural development strategy is faulty one, and much importance is given to the Government agencies. It is wrong to think that rural development is the responsibility of the
Government. The rural problems are very huge in dimensions, and difficult in nature in such a way that no single agency is potent enough to solve them.

In the area of rural development, the concept of self-help has been totally rejected. The programmes and schemes have been implemented in such a way that the rural poor show their interest only in subsidies, not in the real development of the areas wherein they live. The active participation of the people in the implementation of rural development programmes has been rejected, as the rural people are interested in sharing benefits, not responsibilities.

The Government has been initiating specific schemes since the advent of the twentieth century for the benefit of the rural poor, but they have proved failure in strengthening the regional economy, as the schemes make the work co-ordination difficult. The emergence of new institution like District Rural Development Agencies and District Industrial Centers has failed to alter the situation.

Rural Development needs a holistic approach. It is not possible to lift the weaker sections above the poverty line by a single dose of financial assistance. The rural poor need some inputs and services, which have to be given at the right time and in the right sequence.
Even after the Ninth Five Year Plans, India has not been successful in eliminating poverty and others problems of rural areas. The fact remains that whatever growth has been taking place that has been upset by an ever-increasing population, which has already crossed the mark of one billion.

It is again found that 60 percent of our rural population is still not in a position to have an access to the available rural technologies owing to lack of basic infrastructure, inadequate utilization of natural resources and ineffective mechanism for transfer of technology to improve productivity and generate employment.

Lack of education in the rural areas prevents them from participating in rural development programmes.

Inadequate efforts to upgrade the skills of rural people.

Lack of proper prospects for marketing to sale their products.

Lack of co-ordination among the users, technology developers and management system.

Poor communication among planners, administrative officers and users.

Lack of infrastructure in rural India.
Suggestions

- The government should adopt a positive and long run approach towards rural development to benefit all the sections of the rural society.
- More modern industries should be set-up in the rural areas to generate jobs and products to cater to the local needs.
- Equitable power should be distributed among the villagers to alleviate poverty.
- More powers should be delegated to the Panchayat Raj Representatives to carry out the development activities.
- Besides government agencies, non-government agencies should be patronized to cover the vast area of problems.
- The concept of "Self-Help should be evolved out to increase more and more active participation of the villagers in the rural development.
- The government should initiate the schemes, which can facilitate co-operation between the government agencies and rural folks.
- A holistic approach should be adopted to uplift the poor section of rural society by giving more financial aids and subsidies.
• Family planning should be effectively implemented by offering more incentives to the people who opt family planning.

• Natural resources should be tapped optimally.

• Special trainings should be imparted to rural folks to boost their participation in development programmes.

• Special training arrangement should be made to upgrade the skill of rural people.

• Opening local markets should facilitate marketing of rural products.

• Co-operation should be established among the users, technology developers and management system.

• Communication among planners, government officers and users should be facilitated.

• Adequate development infrastructure should be made available in the rural area.

_Gandhiji’s Views about Rural Development_

India has a very little experience in the field of rural development. It carried out a number of unsuccessful experiments, but they provided a valuable understanding of the difficult rural problems.

Mahatma Gandhi called upon us in 1948 to pay special attention to the development of villages. Though he was not an economist in the academic
sense, his views on villages have gained importance with the passage of time. For Gandhiji rural India is real India, therefore, the nation cannot prosper so long as the conditions in villages are not improved.

Under his schemes of reconstruction of the villages, Gandhiji advocated a self-sufficient village economy and self-reliant village community and whole utilization of local resources for the development of rural areas.  

Gandhiji talked of self-sufficient village units. Villages themselves must produce all the essential goods and services, which they need. This can provide enough work to the rural people. Gandhiji visualized decentralized planning with local participation.

The basic principles of village Swaraj are: supremacy of man, physical labour, equality, trusteeship, decentralization, Swadeshi, self-sufficiency, co-operation, Satyagraha and equality of religions.

Gandhiji felt that cities and villages should have equal opportunities of employment, and comparable facilities and social services should be made available to all without any kind of discrimination. Man will be the center of this kind of the new strategy.  

35 P.M. Bara, Gandhian Model of Rural Development, Khadigamodhyog April, 1994. P.