Chapter - I

INTRODUCTION

- Indian Rural Scenario
- Concept of Rural Development
- Evolution of Rural Development Programmes in India
Indian Rural Scenario :

The natural and human resources can play an important role in the growth of the national economy. It is needless to say that India is a rich country in both of them. The availability of such resources have the ability to generate more production and employment opportunities. But due to lack of their proper utilisation and exploitation, the country remains as backward as it was. Gandhiji also rightly observed that the proper utilisation of human resources in production and decentralisation of productive process can help wipe-out unemployment and poverty—the main problems of rural India. The experience during the last 45 years of independence reveals that the country is still suffering from acute problem of hunger, poverty, unemployment, underemployment, illiteracy etc. So one can remark that India is neither developed nor underdeveloped but a backward country in comparision to others.

'India lives in villages'. The total population of the country is 844 million of which nearly 625 million (74 percent) live in rural areas. It deserves mentioning that
The percentage of rural population in comparison to total population has been gradually declining but it is very insignificant. In the year 1901 the percentage of rural population was nearly 89, which came down to 74 in the year 1991. The trend of population growth in rural areas will become more clear from the Table -1.1

Table -1.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census Period</th>
<th>Population (in million)</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1901</td>
<td>213</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1911</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>109</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981*</td>
<td>525</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>625</td>
<td>219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (i) Census of India for respective years.
Note*: As there was no Census in Assam in 1981, the figure includes the projected population.
It is found that during the census period (1901 to 1991) the total population has gone up by 631 million which increased the rural population by 387 million.

Nearly 85 percent of the rural population and 70 percent of total population of our country depends on agriculture and allied activities for their livelihood.\(^1\) Again agriculture as primary sector has contributed a significant share to the total economy of our country. The performance of first four years of the Seventh Five Year Plan shows that this sector has contributed nearly 35 percent to the national income of our country.\(^2\) In respect of workers engaged in agricultural sector it is found that during the period of 1951 to 1991 the total number of agricultural workers has increased from 98 million to 179 million. However, the percentage of agricultural workers to total workforce has slightly declined from 71 P.C. to 64 P.C. during this period. Thus, it reveals that only 36 P.C. of total workers are engaged in sectors other than the agricultural sector. Table-1.2 shows the figure of both total workers and agricultural workers during the period of 1951 - 1991.

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\(^1\) Singh Ram Chandra - Impact of Community Development on Agriculture P-1

Table 1.2


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Census period</th>
<th>Total Population (in million)</th>
<th>Total workers (in million)</th>
<th>Agricultural workers (in million)</th>
<th>P.C. of agricultural workers to total workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>361</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>71 P.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>439</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>70 P.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>548</td>
<td>180</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>69 P.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>685</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>65 P.C.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>844</td>
<td>281</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>64 P.C.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Census of India 1981 and 1991 Volume 1

It is interesting to note that during the last 40 years, total population of the country increased by 483 million of which the total number of agricultural workers increased only by 81 million.

The tremendous increase of population and their dependence on agriculture have naturally created a great pressure on agricultural land. The idea will be more clear from the figures in Table - 1.3.
Table - 1.3

Number and Areas of Agricultural Land Holding

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total number of Agricultural land holding. (in 000)</td>
<td>44354</td>
<td>50765</td>
<td>57070</td>
<td>88830</td>
<td>97731</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Areas (in 000 hectares)</td>
<td>135267</td>
<td>133482</td>
<td>125689</td>
<td>163790</td>
<td>163913</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Area per holder (in hectares)</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>1.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (i) Agricultural Census for 1980-81 and 1985-86.  

From the above table it is seen that gradual increase in population has increased the pressure on agricultural land and as a result the land holding has come down to 1.68 hectares per holder which was 3.05 hectares in 1953-54. Population explosion is mainly responsible for the growth of major problems viz -unemployment, underemployment, poverty, etc. in our country. A large number of people are still living below the poverty line without their minimum basic needs. However, the percentage of rural population who live below the poverty line in rural areas is much higher than urban population. The Table -1.4 gives a clear picture
of rural and urban population who live below the poverty line.

Table - 1.4

Percentage of Population Below Poverty Line

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas</th>
<th>Year 1972-73</th>
<th>Year 1977-78</th>
<th>Year 1984-85</th>
<th>Year 1989-90</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>54.09</td>
<td>50.8</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>28.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>41.22</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>27.7</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All India</td>
<td>51.49</td>
<td>48.1</td>
<td>37.0</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: (i) 6th Five Year Plan (1980-85)
(ii) 7th Five Year Plan (1985-90)

It is also observed that the percentage of rural poverty has been gradually decreasing, but still it is higher than the urban areas. Thus the scenario of rural India testified that the development of the village economy is the backbone of our national economy. Gandhiji also felt that without the development of village economy 'Swarajya' would be meaningless and so he said - 'Go to the villages and busy yourself, not as master or benefactor but as their humble servants'. Let them know, what to do and how to change their model of living from your daily conduct and way of living'.3

After the independence of our country, the Government of

3. Harijan, November 1934.
India realised that 'Rural Development' is the basic component of our national economy and so more emphasis has been given to it in all Five Year and Annual Plans.

**Concept of Rural Development:**

'Rural Development' is a process of improvement of rural structure, with the help of modern ideology and thought. The process is so designed that it can reduce or gradually eliminate the poverty with sustained increase of productivity and income of the rural poor. As per World Bank paper 'Rural development is a strategy to improve the economic life of a specific group of people the rural poor. It involves extending the benefit of development to the poorest among them who seek livelihood in rural areas. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless'.

The Eighth Plan document also states 'rural development has been confined to a direct attract on poverty through special employment programmes, area development programmes and land reform'. However, rural development is not understood as merely removal of poverty in the rural areas. Krishnamurti has also rightly observed that 'alleviation of poverty alone can not define the overall rural development'. In real sense rural development means

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5. 8th Five Year Plan, Volume II. P-27.

all round development in both economical and non-economical sectors for better lifestyle of the rural people. The Eight Plan further reiterates that 'it implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. Increased participation of people in the rural development process, decentralisation of planning, better enforcement of land reform and greater access to credit and inputs go a long way in providing the rural people with better prospects for economic development. Improvement in health, education, drinking water, energy supply, sanitation and housing coupled with attitudinal changes also facilitate their social development'.

Chamanlal, while dealing with the planning aspect of rural development wrote, 'Rural development is a process of developing and utilizing natural and human resources, science and technology, institutions and organisations, Government policies and programmes for upliftment of rural economy'. The aim of developing and utilising such resources is to increase production, employment opportunities as well as other infrastructural facilities, viz. health, education, drinking water, road and communication etc, in rural areas. Hence, the aims and objectives of rural development is pre-determined. 

7. Ibid, P-23.
multi sectoral and multi-objective process of rural development has aimed to integrate the rural poor into the social, political and economic life of the country'. Of course, rural development does not mean more development of rural people. It means the fulfillment of the basic needs of the rural poor (viz. food, cloth, drinking water, education etc) so that they can have a better way of life. Thus considering the different definitions presented for rural development, we can summarise it as under -

'Rural development is a process of economic, social and infrastructural development in rural areas, with the help of some specific programmes and schemes, which will give the rural poor a better standard of living.' The content and coverage of rural development is being presented in the following Chart-1.1.

Evaluation of Rural Development Programme in India:

Before the independence of our country (on 15th August, 1947) the British Government did not give any importance for the development of rural India. The so called Government was more interested to spread their religion and

Chart I: Rural Development—Content & Coverage

Economic Development

Agriculture
Fisheries
Horticulture
Farm Forestry
Social Forestry

Social Development

(Additive MNP-to Eco. Dev.

Poverty Alleviation
Rural Industries
Cooperation (People's Participation)
Banking

Area (CADA)
People (SF, MF, TD, SC, Lab to Land T&V)

Index
CADA: Command Area Development Agency
SF: Small Farmer
MF: Marginal Farmer
TD: Tribal Development
SC: Scheduled Caste
T&V: Training & Visit
IRDP: Integrated Rural Development Programme
NREP: National Rural Employment Programme
RLEGP: Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme
TRYSEM: Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment
DWCRA: Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas
SLPP: Special Livestock Production Programme
SLBP: Special Livestock Breeding Programme
DPAP: Drought Prone Areas Programme
DDP: Desert Development Programme
ICDS: Integrated Child Development Services
PDS: Public Distribution System

Infrastructure/
Amenities/Facilities
(Supportive
to Socio-Economic Development)

Education primary, adult, continuing
Social Welfare
Health & Family Welfare
Nutrition
Housing
Shelter to Shelterless

Water supply
Road
Market
PDS
Rural Energy
exploit the economy of India in their own way. Some leaders like Gandhiji, Robindranath Tagore, Jay Prakash Narayan etc experimented in this direction for the upliftment of the rural poor during the pre-independence era.

The first phase of rural development was started in India with the formation of co-operative societies during 1895. Various types of co-operative societies viz. agricultural credit, marketing, milk societies etc were formed with a view to developing the rural economy. However, this co-operative movement did not succeed as its benefits were enjoyed by the affluent class rather than the poor. Later some benevolent leaders formulated a few projects for rural development, which are discussed below —

Gurgaon Project:

The first experiment for all round rural development was started by F.L. Brayne, a Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon district (Haryana) in 1920, under the name 'The Gurgaon Scheme'. He believe that the principles viz. - village organisation, mass education, leadership and spirit of service and duty towards fellowmen, would help to achieve the broad objectives like rural sanitation, agricultural development, education, family welfare, co-operatives and social reform etc. He introduced three strategies —


(a) School of rural economy to train the villagers in the line of agriculture, co-operative, public health etc.

(b) Domestic school of economy to train village women for family and child welfare.

(c) Health association to run the health centre properly which also gave training to local women for midwifery.

But it was mainly confined to small areas and there was no co-ordination between agricultural activities and market strategy.

Shantiniketan Project:

In the real sense, Rabindranath Tagore the dedicated Philosopher was the first Indian who started the rural development programme at Shantiniketan (West Bengal) in 1921. He was associated by an English man Leonard Elmhirst. The greatman gave more stress upon sanitation, malaria, drinking water, creation of society, provision of relief at the time of flood and famine, education, improvement of cultivation and self-employment to rural artisans. Rabindranath Tagore organised the Rural Reconstruction Centre (RCC) with four major departments viz. - Agricultural Department, Village

Welfare Department, Industry Department and Education Department. Under this project about 40000 people were organised who belonged to 80 villages over a period of time.

Even though the project was not practically scientific in nature and lacked an economic approach, yet it was quite active till the initiation of Community Development Programme (CDP) in 1952.

Marthandam Project:

In 1921 the 'Young Mens' Christian Association' (YMCA) started some social welfare programmes in Marthandam of Kanyakumari district (Kerala), under the leadership of Dr. Spencer Hitch, for reconstruction of rural areas. These rural development programmes were known as the 'Pillars of Policy'. The programme included spiritual economic, physical, social and mental development of village community. However, due to more emphasis on allied activities of agriculture and less importance to cultivation, it could not achieve the expected result in the field of rural development.

Baroda Project:

The founder of the project was Raja Sir T. Madhavaro, a Minister of State of Baroda, who started some

social welfare measures in his State. However, it became more effective when V.T. Krishnamachari, Diwan of Baroda, started Rural Reconstruction Centre (RCC) at Kosala in 1932. The aim of the project was to change the agricultural pattern, improvement of standard of living, development of village leadership and adult education. Under this project strategies like improving sanitation, providing drinking water, establishment of co-operatives, health and educational institutions, training for cottage industries and distribution of improved seeds were emphasised.\textsuperscript{16} It was one of the best projects which initially covered 10 villages and then was extended to 35 villages and finally it covered 100 villages. However this programme was not successful due to lack of financial help from the Government and ultimately had to be closed down due to the closure of the Rural Reconstruction Centres (RCCs).

Sevagram Project:

Mahatma Gandhi the father of our nation had started this rural development project in 1936 at Sevagram, a village near Wardha (Maharastra). Indeed the rural development programme received more importance and support for the first time, as Gandhiji himself was involved with it.\textsuperscript{17} Gandhiji's

\textsuperscript{16} Memoria C.B. - Ibid, P-829.
\textsuperscript{17} Kashyap C.L. Management and Planning of Rural Development in India. P-45.
philosophy of rural development was all round development of individual-in-society, which he called 'Sarvodaya' and thereby he desired to attain 'Swaraj' (Self-Government). He felt that 'true democracy can not be worked by twenty men sitting at the centre. It has to be worked from below by the people of every village. Therefore, he implemented a 18 point programme for self-sufficiency of village economy as well as of village community. Some of the major activities included in these programmes were development of Khadi and Village Industries, village sanitation, basic education, status of women in the society, development of regional language, securing economic equality, protection of the Kisan, organisation of industrial labourers, tribal welfare, and mental and physical development of students. A large number of devotees of Sabarmati and Sevagram Ashrams devoted their times for these works. Even then, this programme did not succeed due to the high ideology of Gandhiji and his devotion to the movement for independence. Of-course Gandhiji's philosophy has a significant contribution in the formulation of the Community Development Programme in India.

Firka Project:

On the basis of Gandhiji's ideology of 'Gramsawaraj' Firka (group of villages) Development Project was started at Madras Presidency Town in 1946. The aim of the project was 'to create among the rural population a burning

desire for a higher standard of living. The project gave more emphasis on decentralisation of rural development plan in a systematic manner, which lead the individual and society to self-sufficiency for their livelihood. The main drawback of the programme was that the area of operation was confined only to few blocks.

Nilokheri Project:

This project was started under the leadership of S.K. Dey in 1948 for rehabilitation of refugees who were deported from West Pakistan. Later under this project these refugees were integrated with the development of 100 villages (Majdoor Manzil villages) in the Kurnal district of Punjab and some essential facilities were provided to them. The facilities include school, hospital, vocational and technical institutions for training, veterinary, agriculture extension service etc.

Sarbodoi Samaj Project:

After the death of Gandhiji on 30th January, 1948, Vinoba Bhave organised Bharat Sarva Seva Sangha and Sarbodoi Samaj to influence the village people for self-reliance and

19. Planning Commission, Govt. of India, Five year Plan, A Draft outline, P-82.
As these organisations were based on Gandhiji's ideology so they included all activities viz. village sanitation, development of village industries, education, women and children welfare etc which have been mentioned earlier in the Sevagram Project. In 1951 Vinoba Bhave with Jaiprakash Narayan had started the Bhoodan Movement to wipe out poverty from the rural areas and to bring 'Swaraj' to the village community.

Etawah Project:

This is known as the 'Pilot Project' of rural development, since it led to the formulation of the Community Development Programme (CDP) in India. An American architect, Albert Mayer, who was a soldier in India during the 2nd World War, developed the model for the project. He made survey the rural areas of Uttar Pradesh for three months and appointed four specialists viz. a labour and village planner, an Agriculture Extension Officer, an Agriculture Engineer and a rural industries specialist for the development of the project model. The project first started its works in Mahewa village of Uttar Pradesh in 1948.

20. Mukherjee P.N. - Sarvodoi After Gandhiji - Contradiction and change in Contemporary Crisis and Gandhi, Ramashary Roy (ed.). P-239.

model emphasised the development of socio-economic factors for all round community development. The project covered a large number of villages and finally merged with the National Extension Service Block (NESB). But due to lack of targets and proper co-ordination with agricultural and industrial sectors, the programme could not be successful.

Thus a number of dedicated leaders and voluntary agencies made an attempt to develop the rural economy/community before independence. But most of the programmes could not succeed due to lack of Govt. support, public co-ordination, adequate staff and well-defined objectives.