CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION
This chapter presents introductory aspects of rural development such as introduction, concepts and definitions of rural development, objectives of rural development, importance of rural development, rural development in the pre-independence era, rural development in the post-independence era, rural development programmes, rural development during the plan period, approaches to the rural development, and the like. India is a vast and second most populous country in the world. India lives in its village as maintained Mahatma Gandhi. The statement is valid even today literally and from the social, economic and political perspective and could well be proved prophetic for years to come. To say realistically, according to 2011 census more than 70 percent of India’s population is in rural. In other words, in India 75 per cent of the population live in 576 lakh villages. This amounts to over 750 million people, more than the combined population of all the developed countries of the world without Japan and south Korea.

The nation’s economy has been agriculture centered for centuries and it continuous to be so even after the unveiling of the structural adjustment programme. However, a big part of the population has been leading an uncertain economic life due to non-synchronization of employment opportunities in agriculture sector because of the fast growing population and huge increased attention is desired to improve a lot of this population. Right from the inception of independence, a number of efforts have been made by the state to free the people from the clutches of poverty and to eliminate the socio-economic and political inequalities with the idea of evolving an egalitarian society in a democratic setup. Keeping the above facts in view rural development has become one of the most debated issues among the academicians as well as planners of the third world countries in general and India in particular.

Rural development in the context of developing country is essentially an attempt in improving living conditions of the rural poor. During 1950s and early 1960s development policies in the third world centered on growth maximization. The poor were expected to gain from the trickle down of the resulted from over all rapid growth Rural development has been a major concern of our policy planners since 1950 s.

Development of rural areas and rural people has been the central concern of development planning in India. Rural India which encompasses three fourths of the countries population is characterized by low income levels, not even adequate to ensure
the quality of the life compatible with physical well being. By the late 1960s, it was
realized that the benefits of rapid growth were not ultimately reaching the target groups.
It was also noticed that the impact of rapid growth widened the gap between the poor and
the rich.

This called for a change in the concept and strategy of rural development. During
the early 1970s, such terms as ‘redistribution with growth’ ‘growth with social justice’
appeared. The idea of people’s participation in the process of development was also
emphasized by the scholars. The change of emphasis made on rural development is more
broad based. But the socio-economic structures that lie at the root of inequitable
distribution of power and resources were not taken into serious consideration by the
scholars.

According to the Tendulkar committee about 37 percent of those who are
depending upon agriculture and non-agricultural activities live below the poverty line.
That poverty is now considered as the rural poverty by the planners, economists
academicians and the like. The term rural poverty is opposite of the term rural
development. It implies lack of development, or under development, and therefore the
knowledge of its measures is an important for a researcher moreover, rural poverty is a
world wide problem. It exists in both developing and developed countries of the world.
Over one billion people in the world are estimated to be living in poverty. For more than
15 per cent of rural poor people, poverty is a chronic condition. Agricultural wage
 earners, small and marginal farmers and casual workers engaged in non-agricultural
activities, constitute the bank of the rural poor. Such a high incidence of poverty is
highly uneven among the different regions of the world, among the countries within
those regions, and among localities within those countries. Nearly half of the world’s
poor live in south Asian region and it accounts for roughly 30 per cent of the world’s
population. Alleviation of poverty has been an important objective of rural development
policies and programmes all over the world including India.

The central and state governments have been implementing various development
schemes for the welfare of the country. It has been the constant endeavor of planners to
give adequate thrust to rural development as the sector directly related to agriculture still
the main stay of living for majority of India’s population.
It is a well-recognized fact that agriculture alone is not capable of meeting challenges of unemployment and poverty reduction of the country. India like most developing countries has been adopting rural development programmes through various public policies since Independence. Rural development has become the foremost task of public policy. In contemporary political analysis, rural development deals with formulation and implementation of the public policies and programmes which provide the general welfare to the public in democratic society.

Poverty in rural India is the result of many factors. Some are man-made and others are due to natural calamities. It is man-made because of the faulty distribution of factors of production and nature-made because of the vagaries of nature. Poverty in India has been increased till the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan and percentage of people living below the poverty had been rising at an alarming rate. Removal of poverty and unemployment were the crucial components of the strategy for growth with equity and they were explicitly stated objectives of the Sixth Five Year Plan.

India is presently rated among the first ten industrialized nations of the world; but the dimension of her rural sector cannot be minimized or overlooked. The incidence of poverty is much higher in villages than in urban area which it self is a signal for taking early remedial action.

**Concepts and Definitions of Rural Development**

Rural development is a holistic concept encompassing both natural and human resources development in an integrated manner. It aims at; (i) increasing the opportunities of all rural people in respect of health, knowledge, and skill development, income and participation in decision making (ii) creating a conducive environment in reducing social and economic inequalities and conflicts and (iii) bringing all present and potential natural resources to most optimal use, conservation and development.

Many social scientists, while giving the concept of rural development, have emphasized on effective participation of the rural people in achieving the objective of fuller utilization of available physical and human resources, and, thus, higher incomes and better living conditions. Mosher terms it as 'popular participation' and says that “the need for popular participation should be recognized from the beginning."
The study of "Policies and Programmes for Rural Development" a new concept of integrated development has assumed a new significance in the field of rural reconstruction programme, in view of the growing interest in the behavioural study of developmental administration. One of the major changes that has occurred during the post-Independence period is a remarkable change in the field of rural development, which in turn reflected the socio-economic development and the dynamics of public policy in a contemporary political system.

Rural development as a broader concept is concerned with the development of the rural economy as a whole. It is a holistic concept rather than a sequential one. It is equally concerned with rural poverty, unemployment, the development of infrastructure like roads, transport, power, insurance and banking, development of cottage industries, encouraging traditional crafts and industries providing decent and cheap houses for the poor and the depressed classes.

Various other concepts of rural development have been propounded by various authors in the post-Independence period. The former Union Finance Minister, C.Subramaniam, who put forward the thesis of rural development at the All-India Science Congress, Waltair 1976, viewed it as a "systematic scientific use of all our natural resource and as part of this process enabling every person to engage himself in a productive and socially useful occupation and earn an income that would meet at least the basic needs."

Development may be defined as an activity or process of both qualitative and quantitative seeking change in the existing systems, aiming at immediate improvement of living conditions of the people or increase the potential for the betterment of living conditions in future until recently, the concepts "development" and "economic growth" were used interchangeable now-a-days, a clear distinction is made between the two concepts. Development is abroad concept which also embraces growth. Development off course both quantitative and qualitative aspects economic growth is mainly concerned with the quantitative aspects of development. For example, producing more farm output by way of extensive cultivation is an indication of growth, as well as producing more output by way of increasing yield per hectare by means of new farm technology. However, in the latter case, some authors prefer the "economic progress" implying increasing productivity per head. Development has many dimensions and
includes qualitative changes in social economic, political, cultural, environmental and the like aspects. Development is a continuous and an ever going process attempting to improve all aspects of society.

Development ultimately means development of man and therefore, it is to be judged by what it does to him. In the rural areas, a good number of people for over several years lived a life of dependence or almost complete slavery. Because of abject poverty and consequent under development or social stagnation, people lose faith in themselves and in their potentialities for development and remain without active participation in social economic cultural and political life. It motivates them to think freely about progressive ideas. Development should result in reduction of dependency on external resources, increased self-reliance, confidence in their own strength and potentialities for development spirit of natural respect and collective effort.

Rural Development is to complex to define in precise and clear terms. It is concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standards of the people by providing adequate and quality social services and other minimum basic needs and ultimately improving the overall quality of rural life. Rural development has been defined differently by different writers from time to time. It is practically impossible to enumerate all the definitions given to rural development. However, some of the important and comprehensive definitions are given here under.

In the words 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. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants, and the landless”. In other words, ‘Rural Development is a comprehensive programme of activities which includes agricultural growth, development of economic and social infrastructure, village planning, public health, education, functional literacy and communications, and the like. In this way we may say that Rural Development connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improving the quality of life of rural people.

Uma Lele, a sociologist, defines rural development as “improving living standards of the masses of the low income population residing in rural areas and making the process of rural development self-sustaining”. In this definition we find that there is
an emphasis on improvement of standard of living of the poor through opportunities for
better utilization of their physical and human resources.

The rural development sector policy paper of the World Bank (1975) observed
that rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a
specific group of people the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development
to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas.

Rural development, therefore, should be viewed as strategy designed to liberate
the rural poor from the age-old bondage of degraded life and to awaken and activate the
entire rural population in the process of achieving and sharing of higher levels of
production. Anker gives the following working definition of rural development
"strategies policies and programmes for the development of rural areas and the
promotion of activities carried out in such areas (agriculture, forestry, fishery, rural crafts
and industries, the building of the social and economic infrastructure) with the ultimate
aim of achieving a fuller utilization of available physical and human resources, and, thus,
higher incomes and better living conditions for the rural population as a whole,
particularly the rural poor and effective participation of the latter is the development
process".

From the above definition we can deduce the following important elements
1. there should be full utilization of available physical and human resources in rural
areas with functional linkage;
2. development of agriculture and allied activities is necessary;
3. there should be again development of rural industries.
4. it should aim at higher incomes and better living conditions of rural population
and
5. the focus of development should be on rural poor with their effective
participation in the development process;

The World Bank definition of rural development is based inherently on an
operational approach constrained by the practicalities of allocating local resources over a
wide spectrum of countries ensuring maximum economic returns to them. In a seminar
on approaches to rural development in Asia, discussions were centered around a
definition of "Rural development as a process which leads to a continuous rise in the
capacity of the rural people to control their environment accompanied by a wider distribution of benefits resulting from such control. This definition is composed of three important elements.

i. rural development should be viewed as a process of raising the capacity of the rural people to control their environment. Which it includes all aspects of rural life-social, economic, cultural and political.

ii. rural development as process should continuously raise the capacity of the rural people to influence their total environment enabling them to become initiators and controllers of change in their environment rather than being merely the passive objects of external manipulation and control and

iii. rural development must result in a wider distribution of benefits accruing from development and the participation of weaker sections of the rural population in the process of development.

G.Partha Sarathy opines that "the critical element in the rural development is improvement of living standards of the poor through opportunities for better utilization of their physical and human resources. In the absence of this, utilization of rural resource has no development self-sustaining not only implies the mobilization of capital and use of technology for the benefit of the poor but this active involvement in the building up of institutions as well as in functioning of these.

Michael Todaro views that "Rural development encompasses improvement in the levels of living, including employment education, health and nutrition, housing and a variety of social services decreasing inequality in the distribution of rural incomes and in rural urban balances in incomes and economic opportunities and the capacity of the rural sector to sustain and accelerate the pace of these improvements.

Rural development has been one of the most formidable and fundamental aspects of India's developmental efforts. The concept of rural development since the 70s has undergone a change wide and has become more comprehensive.

OBJECTIVES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Since rural development is a preferred condition, the approaches and strategies of rural development adopted in various countries are reflected of the national needs. The policies and programmes for rural development is a strategy for the improvement in the
socio-economic and political life of the people with special emphasis on the rural poor.

In a democratic society there are three goals of development. They are

1. raising community solidarity;
2. raising agricultural needs; and
3. institutionalization of equality.

In order to accomplish the said goals, the following are the main objectives that are set for rural development:

i. to ensure extension of the principles of cooperation and every effort to be made to make rural people credit-worthy, and providing certain basic amenities-like drinking water, electricity, specially for productive purposes, connecting villages to marketing centers and facilities for health care and education and the like.

ii. to generate maximum possible employment opportunities in the rural areas especially for the weaker sections of society through the establishment of rural industries with emphasis on village and cottage industries so as to enable them to improve their standard of living.

iii. to lead rural people from the chronic under-employment to full employment.

iv. to secure the full development of all the, material and human resources of the rural areas

v. to maximize production in agriculture and allied activities in rural areas through the use of modern technology and improved scientific knowledge, to raise the socio-economic status of those families who have adopted agriculture as their profession.

In short, rural development aims at all round development of rural economy with more, emphasis on socio-economic amelioration of rural people.

Scope of Rural Development

Social consciousness among the rural poor to the development of cottage village industries. So the need for rural development in India has become apparent. The critical areas of development and the inter linkages amongst the different elements or dimensions of development have to be carefully identified and an appropriate strategy has to be evolved. An attempt is made here to indicate some of the broad areas of rural development which need an integrated approach.
Creating Social Consciousness

The first step in the process of rural development is the creation of social consciousness among the rural poor about the different hindrances to their development, the ways and means of overcoming them, their rights and duties in the community in which they live, progressive aspects of their traditions, their own strengths and potentialities to develop themselves. This type of consciousness among the rural people about social reality would pave the way for awareness of many possibilities for the development. Formal and non-formal education would help to create social consciousness apart from it certain effective short term measures need to be taken to create social conciseness and awareness. Among others mass media like slide shows on specific programmes, films with social development themes, cultural programmes with relevant themes can be used. The rural people must be educated to think for themselves to identify the ways and means for their own development, thus paving the way for collective decision-making and collective action.

Collective decision making and action

When people in rural areas face problems and begin to discuss these and take action jointly, the movement towards development has well begun. However, collective decision making depends upon the sympathy towards others, helping attitude, collaborative attitude of sharing the gains of collective work and the ability to face problems and explore the means of solving them. For effective collective decision and action certain norms have to be developed to govern general behavior. Individuals who do not follow norms must be made answerable to groups. In other words, there must be some mechanism of implementing the collective decisions and the norms established in the groups and the communities. This calls for dedicated village leadership.

Committed Village Leadership

Rural development cannot be achieved by allocation of funds and role of government officials alone. It is a process that should come from within and it cannot be imposed. It is only through the honest and dedicated leaders of the village. That villager can motivate and give proper direction. Rural and community development programmes should not be tools for political parties for propaganda and promotion of their political interests. There should be a separate cadre for dedicated and honest rural leadership with genuine interest in the development of rural India with democratic ideas.
Use of Science and Scientific Knowledge

Use of science and scientific knowledge is essential for rural development in several ways. Through sciences and scientific reasoning, the illiterate and ignorant rural poor can be convinced of the casual relationship between events and their knowledge and awareness helps better understanding of social relationships, reduces the hold of prejudices and superstitious beliefs. With scientific knowledge, one can improve one's own work skills and reduce the drudgery of human muscles. Science helps to use appropriate technology for rural development and higher levels of productivity from all sectors. Further, science has helped people wherever it is used constructively to solve a wide range of problems from fighting deceases and increasing longevity of life to improvement of living conditions through higher levels of production of various necessities of life. It is necessary on the part of scientists to communicate relevant discoveries in various sciences to people in rural areas, through an appropriate media.

Development of agriculture and allied activities

Rural development is not a synonymous with agricultural development, yet agricultural development is critical for meeting the growing demand of food and raw material and for creating more employment opportunities in the rural sector. Therefore, agriculture and allied activities should be developed as more rewarding pursuits with focus on higher productivity. The average yield per hectare of most of the crops in India is lower than the yield achieved in some states and also in a few areas within a particular state. This disparity between high and low yields is an indication of both backwardness as well as potentiality for achieving higher productivity. There is a steady increase in the growth of agriculture. For the steady growth, proper and prudent use of land by small and marginal farmers is of much importance Japan could produce from her small holdings significantly higher levels of productivity or yield per hectare.

Provision of Subsidiary Occupation and Incomes

The small and marginal farmers, the land less poor and similar such rural poor with out any asset must be helped to have gainful employment through dairy farming and other subsidiary occupations. Dairying may be developed as the main occupation for some apart from serving as a supplementary occupation.
Development of Village and Cottage Industries:

The unemployed and underemployed masses in rural areas must be employed gainfully through the development of village industries and other non-farm enterprises. Local resources such as raw material, capital and the like must be identified and mobilized properly to village industries suitable in the given locality. This measure should receive immediate attention so that there would not be any further pressure on land and the rural poor are helped to secure gainful employment.

This would require the development of various skills and setting up of industries in the rural areas. Several programmes of rural development have stressed the development of non-agricultural skills in rural areas. It calls for technical and mechanical skills which are essential for the development of rural industries and for evolving appropriate technologies for rural areas⁹.

Importance of Rural Development

Promoting the socio-economic life of people living in rural areas has become a priority item on purely selfish grounds. The political parties in general and the ruling party in particular have to approach the villagers to seek their votes unless there is an appreciable record of work done by the party in power, it is bound to face rejection at their hands. Besides, new markets will have to be developed for what is being produced in the country. Otherwise, there will hardly be any incentive for raising and diversifying production. The purchasing power of the rural sector must appreciably improve so that the demand for goods and services increases. Roads will have to be constructed and the communication system must be improved so as to link rural areas to commercial and business centers. It is, therefore, in the interest of business and industry, the rural areas be developed.

Historically, the rural urban dimensions in India have always remained favorable to cities and towns. The rural areas have remained almost entirely without civic amenities and comforts. One has only to visit a school or a dispensary in a village and a town to see for one self how big the difference is. Not unnaturally, a child in a rural area grows up under a load of accumulated deprivations. While occupational patterns and demography result in differences, several ingredients of development are common to both the town and the village. Medical and educational facilities, transport, civic and social amenities are the concerns of all people regardless of whether they inhabit villages
or cities. At present, the infrastructural facilities are mostly concentrated on bigger cities while rural areas are singularly devoid of them. As a result, the people from villages are migrating in large numbers to the cities in search of a better life.

The rural socio-economic pyramid ought to be reasonably comparable with the urban one. It should not require much effort to establish that the horizontal divisions are less sharp in the case of rural society. Even more important, the total height of the pyramid is much lower- rural society does not have equivalents of the top upper middle, or even middle strata of urban society. The fact is that the top echelons of rural society would be equivalent to the lower middle of urban society. This introduces a dangerous imbalance in the polity. As a result villages, are becoming duller and duller and unsuitable for the pursuit of careers and professions.

The overcrowding in cities should be an eye-opener to the national policy makers. Indeed the only alternative to extreme pressure on bigger cities and their strained infrastructure is to develop rural areas. At the same time one should be careful that rural development does not mean that people living away from cities and towns are given second-rate facilities-those which may not be acceptable to the city dwellers themselves. There was a talk some time ago, of barefoot doctors for rural India. If cities have well equipped clinics and specialized medical facilities, why should villages accept a barefoot doctor. Further more, India’s chronic problem is that of unemployment and under employment\(^9\).

The Japanese Experience

India could derive some lessons from Japan which, too, once faced the problems that India encounters at present namely the poverty or poverty trap in rural areas. The Japanese farmer was at one time the poorest in the society. Landholdings were small and were further fragmented with the passage of time under the law of equal inheritance which prevailed in the country at that time.

This law was good at a time when the population was smaller and land was abundant, but a time came when it become counter-productive. One of the earliest steps taken under the Meiji Restoration was the installation of the law of primogeniture as the mode of inheritance. Indeed, for quite some time under the tokugawa rule, this had been the unofficial practice, and the land’s further fragmentation was prevented by making the
eldest son inherit the father’s property. Besides, certain land reforms were carried out in the country. Above all, the government abolished the feudal system, the burden of which was heaviest on the farmer. The land revenue taken from him was exorbitant, leaving very little for him. Yet, the farmers in a clan would decide to raise productivity so that their surplus was maximized. A competitive spirit was thus engendered in these groups of farmers, which was conducive to productivity. 

**Historical Perspectives of rural development in India**

The functions of rural development in India were assumed by the government in the context of recurrent famines, but in the beginning, they did not have any legal sanctions behind them. In the first few decades after 1858, some district officers sized, when in the midst of famine, the food grain stocks and thus controlled the market to ensure their distribution among the needy. All this was done without any apparent legal sanction, motivated, as the action purely was, by a determination to control profiteering and alleviate rural suffering. Rural development thus began as a humanitarian act, and the practice was not backed by any executive or legal sanction in the beginning. Legality and legitimacy was provided later. Rural development as a function of government initially began ‘as a search for an alternative to laissez – faire, as B.B Misra observes. It thus emerges that the British interest in rural development was a by-product of colonial economy plus welfarism.

The case for rural development is thus formidable. It is also true that the need for rural development had been emphasized by the national political leadership even under the colonial rule. The Indian National Congress was committed to rural poverty amelioration programmes since 1920 when Mahatma Gandhi emerged as leader to guide the destiny of the country. When India achieved Independence in 1947, bold and determined steps were taken by the Government in the field of rural development. So one of the earliest actions of the Government of Independent India was to initiate wide ranging measures for rural betterment on a nation wide basis. To this date, the Central Government has launched nearly forty country wide programmes in the field of rural development.
Rural Development in the Pre-Independence Era

Long before Independence, in the thirties, Rabindranath Tagore thought of rural development and launched a programme centred at Shanti Nikethan in Birbhum district of West Bengal. Tagore's interest was in the all-round development of the village people, economically, educationally and aesthetically. Mosher writes that Tagore aimed at inducing each villager to work to the limit of his capacity, and to help his fellowmen. Tagore believed in both self-help and mutual help and was one of the first to recognize the need for a change in the outlook of villagers as pre-condition for improvement. He, therefore, urged that every villager and his family should be educated. Community action and collective endeavour, based on the intelligent and informed participation of all the members of the community, he realized, were essential for improving the condition of the villagers.

Around this time, another rural development programme in India was launched by Mahatma Gandhi. He was concerned simultaneously about the plight of persons in rural India and about developing a wholesome total pattern of rural life and work. The Gandhian approach to rural welfare emphasized the role of the people themselves in any constructive programme. The goal was an improvement of the inner man and the development of a sound morality. According to him self-help was the first step towards moral advancement. Hence, the material advancement of the village was for him, merely the means to solving the social and economic problems of the villagers, but he was interested primarily in proving a moral and spiritual background for such secular activities as might be undertaken.

(i) The Servants of Indian Society,
(ii) Rabindranath Tagore's Rural Reconstruction Programme,
(iii) Mahatma Gandhi's Rural Reconstruction Programme,
(iv) Work of Christian Missionaries and
(v) Daniel Hamilton's Health and Education Programme.

Besides, some isolated community development projects were also started under the initiative of prominent peoples like Dr. Spencer Hetch of Y.M.C.A. in Kerala, F.L. Brain, the Deputy Commissioner of Gurgaon and V.T. Krishnamachari in Baroda.
i. The Servants of Indian Society

The Servants of Indian Society was formed in 1905 by Gopal Krishna Gokhale to carry out rural reconstruction work. He established a number of centers in many states for ameliorating the plight of rural masses. The activities of those centres include establishment and smooth working of maternity homes, child welfare camps, poultry rearing campaign, introduction of improved agricultural methods, and encouragement of cottage industries and the like. These centers also imparted training in agriculture, animal husbandry, and textile weaving, and the like to the rural masses.

ii. Rabindra Nath Tagore's Rural Reconstruction Programme

In 1921, Rabindranath Tagore with an object to reconstructing the rural community formed a group of dedicated and devoted workers in Santiniketan, the Institute of Rural Reconstruction. The main objectives of reorganization in rural community institute were to:

a. assist the villagers in solving their own problems,

b. take their problems to classroom for study and then offer their Solution to the villagers,

c. develop resources and land credit to them

d. reach them better methods of growing crop and vegetables and encourage them to learn and practice arts and crafts and bring home the benefit of associated life, mutual and common endeavor.

In short, the main objective of the RabindraNath Tagore's programme was to develop self-reliance and self-respect in the village communities, revival of ancient culture and the adoption of modern methods and techniques to have physical and socio-economic uplift and progress.

iii. Rural Reconstruction Programme of Mahatma Ghandhi

There was much similarity between Gandhi's rural reconstruction programme and that of Tagore's. Inspired by Gandhiji's ideas, the Indian National Congress have 'charkha' a prominent place in its programmes. With the impact of Gandhiji's ideas, All India Spinners Association was formed in 1923 to finance and direct the sale of Khadi through its various production centres and sale depots. Its aim was to have
one or more handloom centers in each village to make the villagers self-sufficient in cloths. In 1934, an All India Village Association was formed for the revival and encouragement of various dead and dying industries. The Association established training centre at Sewagram to impart training in the basic crafts. Besides, other activities in the field of rural development; like communal unity, removal of untouchability, full utilization and development of local resources, a self-sufficient village economy, improvement in the condition of animals especially of cows and reorganization of the working of Goshalas and the like were also undertaken.

iv. contribution of Christian missionaries in India towards Rural Reconstruction

Various Christian Missionaries in India have contributed in the field of rural development, but their contributions remain confined to their own followers. These missionaries mainly worked in three fields, viz., education, health and rural reconstruction. The National and Provincial Christian Councils formed Rural Service Committees in 1946 to look after rural reconstruction work which was carried out by their workers and Missions. These Committees established a number of rural reconstruction centers. The most important being those of Martandam in Madras and Ushagram in Bangalore. The mission established educational institutions and hospitals all over the country. Majority of them were located in rural areas.

No doubt, the Christian Missionaries worked to spread their religion, but even their contribution in the field of rural development can not be underestimated.

v. Efforts of individuals in India in the field of Rural Development

Like Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi, some other individuals too made efforts in the field of rural development. F.L. Brayne, the then District Magistrate prepared "The Gurgaon Scheme". In 1927. Mr. Brayne started the rural development work with the help of multi-purpose Village Level Workers (V.L.W.) and being the district Magistrate had the full cooperation of the government. He viewed rural reconstruction as "nothing more or less than the revival of the old-fashioned virtues of hard work, thrift, self-respect, self-control, self-help, mutual help and mutual respect." According to him, uplift is a mass movement, a combined assault, and no area, no part of life and no method of attack can be neglected, if the
goal is to be accomplished in a desired manner. This programme covered the following areas:

i. Institutional framework,
ii. Rural sanitation,
iii. Agricultural development,
iv. Education,
v. Cooperation,
vi. Social reforms, and

Out of his experience in rural development, he suggested the establishment of an institutional agency comprising experts in relevant areas, who could train and educate a large number of devoted workers and masses. In his exemplary experience, Brayne was most successful in motivating the village communities on the one hand and in channelising the energy of devoted workers on the other, in the process of development.

An elaborative and ambitious scheme was envisaged by the Maharaja of Baroda in 1927 at the instance of V.T. Krishnamachari in the surrounding village of Kosambha in Navasari District of Gujarat. The economic contents of the programme, however, outweighed its social contents because it was postulated that the economic development was possible only by augmenting agricultural production, because agricultural development precedes social development. In the light of this thinking, all the programmes were directed towards the development of agriculture. While evaluating the impact of the scheme, which continued till 1951, the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (I.C.A.R.) observed even with this limited objective the scheme is laudable and needs to be continued in a suitably amended form, until the work of rehabilitation is completed.

The erstwhile government of Madras also embarked upon the Firka Development Programme in thirty-four Firkas (selected regions) selected from the backward areas, by allocating a special fund of rupees four crore including rupees one crore allocated for the uplift of Harizans. The programme was founded on Gandhian Concept of Village Swarajya which laid emphasis on self-help, mutual help and on a self-reliant village economy. The basic objective of the scheme was
"to organise the villagers for a happier, more prosperous and fuller life in which the individual villagers will have the opportunity to develop both as an individual and as a unit of well-integrated society". The basic postulates viz., participation of rural people and utilization of local resources of the Gandhian ideology were introduced in the programme to attack the rural problems from within and without. However, it was merged with National Extension Service during 1953-54.

A proto-type mini community development project was too launched in September 1948, in a village Etawah of Uttar Pradesh under the dynamic leadership of Albert Mayer. The objectives of this project were:

1. to see that the degree of productive and social investment as well as of initiative, self-confidence and cooperation can be achieved in the village of a district not being the beneficiary of any set of special circumstances and resources such as hydroelectric development or large scale industry.

2. to ascertain how quickly these results may be obtainable, consistent with their being permanently a part of people's mental, spiritual and technical equipment and outlook after the special pressure is lifted, and

3. to see whether these results if attainable could be had at a cost in material and personnel which would be within the reach of the state by existing departments and agencies.

In the process of integration of social and economic development, the Etawah Project had evolved its own special administrative pattern from which an idea of "multipurpose workers" emerged. Later on, it was adopted in community development programme. Another significant contribution of this project was that it was felt to have a spatial and functional integration of different aspects of the programme with a view to achieve the desired ends, and Gram Sewak was made a multifunctional agency. These programmes encouraged the national government and served as model for country-wide programme of community development. The Grow More Food Enquiry Committee headed by V.T. Krishnamachari, the originator of Baroda Project designed the blueprints of the future programme of community development for the consideration of the Government. Subsequently, the Planning Commission incorporated the programme of community development in the first Five Year Plan.
Rural Development in the Post Independence Era

Rural development has become a major concern of our policy makers since 1950s. In 1952, the Community Development Programme (CDP) was launched. It was a multipurpose, open-ended programme of rural reconstruction. It was based on the philosophy that rural life was an organic whole and no improvement in any sector was possible unless an attack was made on all sectors simultaneously.

The CDP failed to achieve the desired results primarily because of the lack of people’s initiative and participation. The Balwantray Mehta Committee felt the need for introduction of democratic institutions at the grass root level to be known as Panchayat Raj institutions to ensure people’s participation in the implementation of rural development programmes.

Development efforts in the rural India at the time of independence were largely discrete and lacked an integrated approach. Though several Government departments, covering rural development, were making efforts for the uplift of rural masses, yet functional integration was lacking. The cooperative sector supplied only credit ignoring the allied aspects like input supplies, marketing and storage and the like, mean while, the All India rural Credit Survey report suggested the immediate need for integration of these functions in the cooperative movement.

Soon after the attainment independence rural development was accorded highest priority in Government policies and programmes. Over the years,” rural development emerged as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of specific group of people, the rural poor. It involves extending benefits of development to the people living in rural areas.

In 1951, Vinoba Bhave started the Bhoo dan Movement (gift of land movement) in Pochampalli (Telangana in AP). The essential characteristic feature of this movement was that surplus lands were to be donated by the landlords and redistributed to landless peasants thus imbibing the concepts of sharing and egalitarianism. The birth of the Gramdan Movement took place in Mangroth village in Uttar Pradesh in 1952. This movement gained its momentum during Vinoba Bhave’s padayatra (Man on foot) through Orissa in 1955 when 26 Gramdans were received. The major achievement of these movements was that they secured a large amount of land as voluntary donations
with out restoring to any force. The major limitation of Bhoodan Movement was that most of the lands donated under Bhoodan were rocky, barren or were under litigation. The Bhoodan and Gramdan movements were affected by redtapism and lack of cooperation from the bureaucrats which resulted in delays in the transfer of land to the land less.

After Independence, the Government has launched many schemes for rural development. A number of rural development programmes with varying approaches have been launched from time to time. Beginning with multi-purpose and comprehensive programmes of community development (1952), the trend shifted to Agricultural Development Programmes like Intensive Agricultural District Programme (ADP), Intensive Agricultural Area Programme and High Yielding Variety (HYV) later programme for the neglected areas and groups such as small farmers development agencies and the like were launched. However, a significant turn and serious effort was made in 1976 to tackle the twin problems of rising rural unemployment and poverty through systematic, well integrated and scientifically oriented approaches under Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP). IRDP aimed at raising the level of living of the poor by giving them income generating assets and access to credit and other inputs. The third phase was the beginning of the integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP).

The Central and State Governments have been implementing various developmental schemes for the welfare of the weaker sections of the country. The planners of Indian economy have been making a constant endeavor to give adequate thought to rural development since the rural sector is directly related to agriculture and it is the main stay of living for millions of people in India.

The focus has never shifted from developing the country’s vast tracts of rural lands where majority of the population exists.

Rural Development efforts during the plan era

The colonial government had created a planning board that lasted from 1944 to 1946 where private industrialists and economists published three development plans in 1944 where there were several references to agriculture and allied areas. But it was only when the formal plans were kicked off in 1950s (1951-55) that agriculture including projects that combined irrigation and power generation, received priority.
In the second Five Year Plan (1956-60) an importance was given to industry particularly the heavy industries of the public sector.

The Third Five Year Plan (1961-65) was aimed at to raise substantially. The national per capita income while expanding the industrial base and rectifying the neglect of agriculture in the previous Plan. It aimed at the growth of national income at a rate more than five per cent a year and self sufficiency in food grains.

However, the planning process was disrupted in the mid 60s owing to the war with China which affected agricultural growth and industrial production while defence expenditure increased. Mid way through the Third Plan, it was cleared that the goals of the Third Plan Period were far from being achieved. War with Pakistan in 1965 and successive droughts accentuated the situation.

There was an immediate move to revolute the Plan Policies and immediate attention centered on increasing agricultural growth. Agriculture was once again put on the scanner. The sector was to be expanded largely through the supply of inputs to take advantage of new high yielding seeds that had come into the picture.

The Fourth Five Year Plan (1965-73) among many things continued to give adequate importance to agriculture, including irrigation which received 23 per cent of public outlays.

The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-78) was in effect for only one year providing guidance to investments. The Sixth Five Year Plan (1980-84) allocated 24 per cent of public sector development funding to irrigation next only to energy which was given 29 percent. The major objective of Plan was to increase employment especially in the rural areas and reduce the level of poverty. The rural poor were given cows, bullock carts and handlooms.

The Seventh Five Year Plan (1985-89) gave greater importance to energy and social sector at the expense of industry and agriculture. The Eighth Five Year Plan (1992-96) was affected by changes of government and by growing uncertainty over what role planning could perform in a liberalized economy. It had proposed among many things that agriculture and rural development be given priority. To bridge the rural urban
divide the allocation of funds for rural development programmes has been hiked to Rs76, 774 crore for the Tenth Five Year Plan period as against Rs42, 874 crore during the Ninth Five Year Plan period.

However, the momentum came from the successive plans, the Ninth (1997-2001) and Tenth Five Year Plans (2002-2007) for rural development. The period saw fresh initiatives as well as continuity of earlier ones.

Community Development Programmes

The first step toward elimination of poverty, injustice and inadequacies prevalent in socio-economic system and for providing better quality of life to rural masses was the introduction of community development programme. It visualized a multi pronged effort at total development of rural life.

During the first three plans (1951-65) the development strategy was geared more towards quickening the pace of overall growth diversification of economy and reduction of inequalities in private wealth and income. The measures taken during this phase halted the growth in incidence of poverty. The slow rate in attaining the reduction in rural poverty gave rise to skepticism about the efficacy of "trickle down" possess to speedily arcade mass unemployment and poverty bordering on destitution. But no one could ignore the gains made during this period and this impact on the poverty stricken rural masses. One of its major achievements was the elimination of major famines that continued to afflict the country right up to independence.

The next phase in evaluation of rural development strategy began in early seventies when it was realized that small farmers, marginal farmers and agricultural labour were not getting their due share from development programmes. In addition there was growing regional in-balances as some areas with favourable agro-climatic and resource endowments advanced rapidly than other. In order to specifically benefit the poor and development of back ward areas a series of programmes both area specific and beneficiary oriented were introduced.

An assurance of a basic minimum living standard for every one has been the central concern of development policies and Indian plans. To achieve this, over the years, particularly since the sixth, five year plans the country has evolved a vast array of
poverty alleviation programmes accounting for one sixth to one fifth of public sector outlays by mid 1990’s. Broadly speaking these programmes can be divided into five broad groups.

**Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP)**

No doubt, the community development was initiated with the aim of promoting all round development of rural areas, but it could not achieve desired results, particularly, in the field of agricultural production. In fact community development programme failed to register any appreciable increase in agricultural production with the inevitable consequence that India was compelled to import more food grains to feed its growing population.

Consequently, there was greater concentration on improving productivity per acre than on extending the acreage. A second Ford Foundation team assisted in planning the Intensive Agricultural District Programme popularly know as “Package programme”. This team in its report published in November 1959 entitled suggestions for ten point programme to increase food production made several recommendations pertaining to agricultural production.

Subsequently, the suggestions except that of incentives were approved by the Government of India and the Intensive agricultural district Programme move from an idea to an action in 1960. The programme was included in the Third Plan. According to this plan, in pursuance of this proposal the Intensive Agricultural District Programme has been taken up to begin with increase in agricultural production in selected areas and to suggest new innovations and combination of practices which may be of value elsewhere. The implementation of IADP was, thus, a new dimension in the direction of modernizing Indian agriculture which had suffered a severe set back in the earlier years. The selected districts were mainly dependent upon rains for their irrigation needs. Similarly, the second condition that selected districts should have minimum natural hazards too was prevalent due to frequent droughts and famines. The third and very important condition neither was too nor fulfilled for the cooperatives in the selected districts failed to provide much needed credit support to intensive agricultural district programme. The expert committee for the assessment and evaluation of IADP described the programme as “Path Finder” and “Pace Setter” for the whole agricultural development comprising a three tier
system of the dynamic type in which each tier was constantly trying to move from lower
to higher level of technology.

High Yielding Variety Programme

The drought years of 1964–66 were really a harrowing experience but out of this
 crucible emerged the focus on the utilization of high yielding varieties, representing the
 need mix of the research results and farm application. The evolution of high yielding
 varieties of seeds marks a turning point in the modernization of traditional Indian
 agriculture. According to draft outline of the Fourth Plan, it is necessary to make greater
 use of modern methods of production and bridge the gap between demand and
 production by the application of latest advance in the science of agriculture.

Although an improved strategy in agricultural development in the IADP and IAAP
 was already working in the country, the fundamental departure in the new agricultural
 technology was the introduction of intensive cultivation. Using high yielding variety
 seeds backed by more and better plant nutrients, effective plant protection and adequate
 water supply. In the new agricultural strategy a three dimensional approach towards
 agricultural development was adopted, which consisted of high yielding programme,
 adoption of modern chemical technology and food grains price support policy. This
 programme envisaged a super intensive type of agriculture development based on
 package principles, involving high factors inputs on new varieties, capable of giving very
 high yields. Development takes place through higher incomes, associated with reduction
 in unemployment and inequality of income distribution

Small Farmers Development Agency

The objective of the scheme was to make available to small farmers credit to
 enable them to make use of the latest technology to practice intensive agriculture and
 diversify their activities.

Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labour Programmes

Under this scheme families were to be assisted with subsidized credit support for
 agricultural and subsidiary occupation like dairy, poultry, fishery, piggery rearing and
 horticulture operations and the like
Drought Prone Area Programme

A rural works programme was started in 1970-71 in areas which were chronically affected by drought with the principal objective of organizing permanent works for scarcity relief and to generate adequate employment through labour intensive schemes such as major, medium, and minor irrigation works, soil conservation, afforestation and village and district roads necessary to open up the area for agricultural production. In the fourth five year plan, this programme was re designated as Drought Prone Area Programme.

Command Area Development Programme

This programme relates to the development of adequate infrastructure facilities like roads, market complexes and the like in areas commanded by the irrigation projects.

Training for Rural youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)

The national scheme was centrally sponsored and launched on 15th August 1979. The objective of the TRYSEM programme was to impart vocational training to rural youth in the age group of 18-35 years with necessary skills and technologies to enable them to become self-employed. These people are assisted under IRDP after the completion of the training.

Cash Programme for Rural Employment

The primary objective of the programme was to generate additional employment through a network of rural projects of various kinds, which are labour intensive and productive. A Project in each block was to provide employment to 100 persons on an average continuously over working seasons of 10 months in a year. Another project was to produce works or assets of durable nature in consonance with the local development plans.

Food for Work Programme

The Government of India started the Food for Work programme in 1977-78 for achieving the twin objectives of employment generation and development of sound economic and social infrastructure in rural areas. The emphasis under the programme was on the construction of civil works of a permanent nature as that it would contribute
to the mitigation, is not the total eradication of the scarcity condition in the areas concerned.

**National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)**

The NREP was launched in October, 1980 and became regular plan programme from April 1981. With the Sixth Five Year plan (1985), the Food for work programme has been restructured as the NREP. The important objective in providing employment was the creation of durable community assets for strengthening the rural infrastructure.

**Minimum Needs Programme (MNP)**

The concept of minimum needs programme emerged and crystallized out of experience of the first four five year plans. The MNP which was introduced in the fifth plan for the first time and was continued in Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Five Years plans was not only directed towards the alleviation of poverty and in assisting to economic growth. The components of MNP are (1) Elementary Education (2) Rural Health (3) Rural water supply (4) Rural Roads (5) Rural Electrification (6) Housing Assistance (7) Environment improvement in urban slums (8) Nutrition and (9) Adult Education.

**20 Point programme**

The 20 point programme was introduced in August 1996. Actually the MNP prepared the ground for the new 20 point programme of Sri Rajiv Gandhi the then prime minister of India. The main components of 20 point programme were dry land agriculture development and agriculture land ceiling, Enforcement of minimum wages to Agricultural labourers, rehabilitation of Bonded labourers, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes development programmes, Rural Water Supply, Rural Electrification, Social Forestry, alternative energy sources, rural health, Women and Child welfare, universal Elementary education, Expansion of Public Distribution System (PDS) and promotion of small and village industries and the like.

**Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP)**

This programme was introduced on 15th August 1993 with the objective of (a) improving and expanding employment opportunities for the rural landless with a view to provide employment to at least one member of every landless house hold up to 100 days in a year (b) Creating durable assets for strengthening the infrastructure so as to meet growing requirements of the rural economy. Midway through the sixth five year plan the
RLEGDP was revamped. It was started with a dual objective of expanding employment opportunities of rural areas and providing sharper focus on the land less labour house holds, which constitute the hard core of the people below the poverty line.

**Employment Assurance Scheme**

The employment Assurance scheme primarily aimed at providing assured employment of 100 days of manual work to the rural poor who are in dire need of employment and seeking it. The secondary objective was the creation of economic infrastructure and community assets for sustained employment generation. Understandably, the work under the scheme is taken up during lean agricultural season, when the work and job opportunities diminish depressing the wages in the farming sector. Nearly 40 million persons are registered and over 13000 million Mondays of employment have been generated under this scheme. The ministry has addressed the problem of shelter of weaker sections of society in rural areas, particularly SC/ST and freed bonded labourers through Indira Aawas Yojana which is in operation since 1985-86. Under the scheme dwelling units are provided free of cost to people living below the poverty line. The scheme also sought to reduce gender inequality and empower women by providing them with the allotment of houses in the name of female members of the beneficiaries house hold. Alternatively houses were under this scheme allotted in the joint name of both husband and wife.

**Area-Specific Programmes**

For the economic development of areas characterized by adverse agro-climatic factors and poor resources endowment two area specific, programmes namely Drought prone area programme and desert development programme are in operation. Under DPAP the development on water shed basis. People's participation in planning and development is ensured under this scheme DDP is specifically formulated for the development of Hot Sandy arid areas, Hot (NON-Sandy) arid areas and cold arid areas.

Access to safe and adequate drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities have been recognized as a basic need to accelerate the pace of making available portable water in rural areas through a technology mission known as Rajiv Gandhi National Drinking water mission has been provided nearly to 54 crore rural population.
The national social assistance programme came into exist from 15th August 1995. The programme has three components.

- National Old Age Pension Scheme
- National family Benefit Scheme and
- National Maternity Benefit scheme

In providing social assistance to poor house-hold, NSAP aimed at ensuring minimum national standards in addition to that the states are currently providing or might provide in the future. The NSAP is implemented in state/UTs through Panchayats and municipalities. The panchayats are Municipalities are encouraged to involve voluntary agencies to extend benefits to the poor house holds for whom they are intended.

Land Reforms

In an agrarian economy, the surest indicator of well being is land ownership. Access to education and economic opportunity go hand in hand to eradicate landlessness and poverty. As such, land reforms have been an agenda of rural reconstruction since independence. The objectives have been to break the old feudal socio-economic structure of land ownership, eliminative exploitation by providing security of tenure and regulation of rent for tenants and share croppers bring direct contact between the tiller and the state and give social and economic status to the landless by redistributive measures. These have been considered to be vital elements for modernization and increased productivity in agriculture. Land ceiling is an effective instrument for reducing disparities in ownership of land and bringing about an egalitarian society parties in ownership of land and bringing about an egalitarian society.

Gandhiji, the father of nation, in 1946 had remarked that Indian independence must begin at the bottom and every village ought to be a republic. To realize Gandhiji’s dream India introduced three tier Panchayat Raj systems in free India to enlist the people’s participation in rural reconstruction.

The passage of the constitution 73rd Amendment Act 1992 marks a new era in federal democratic set up towards social and political empowerment of people Consequent upon the enactment of the act, almost all the states and union territories except a few have enacted their legislation and complicated the elections in their respective states/ UTs. As a result, there are about 2, 25,000 panchayats at village level,
5700 panchayats at the intermediate level and 450 panchayats at the district level in the country. These panchayats are being named by about more than 3 million elected representatives of panchayats at all levels. In the Ninth Five year plan, the Panchayat Raj bodies in rural areas have been directly involved in development process people involvement via their elected representatives, has been realized through genuine decentralization. The Panchayat Raj institutions have been functioning as effective institutions of local self government and they prepare plan for economic development and social justice and implement them.

Wasteland Development

National waste land development board was made responsible for the development of waste land in non forest area aimed at checking land degradation; putting such waste lands in the country into sustainable use and increasing bio-mass availability specially fuel wood and fodder.

The National Wastelands Development Board (NWDB) has adopted a mission to approach for enlisting people's participation harnessing science and technology for planning and implementation of waste lands development.

The department of waste lands development of the ministry of Rural Areas and employment is implementing the following schemes to tackle the degradation of lands, restoration of ecology and to meet the demand of fuel wood and fodder:

- Integrated waste lands development project [IWDP] scheme.
- Support to NGOs/VAS.
- Technology development extension and training scheme
- Investment promotional scheme and
- Waste land development task force.

The development of rural areas and improving the social and economic conditions of the people continues to be the central focus of development planning in India. Significant achievements have been the made in health, education, agriculture, science and technology thus improving the quality of life of an average Indian.

Decentralization of powers and responsibilities convergence and enforcement of accountability of government and the private sector to people's needs of the fundamental
issues. A favorable and enabling environment has been created by the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments. They provide for decentralized decision-making through direct elections to local bodies and empower them to assume development responsibilities for subjects which touch the lives of people.

India's destination and the road ahead is clear. High rate of population growth has slowed down progress on all fronts and will continue to do so even thought fertility decline is now believed to be wide spread. Policy and action was focus on five important. Issues relevant to human development vize (i) imbalances and basis in investment (ii). Impact of social expenditure; (iii). Decentralization of development responsibilities (iv). Convergency in programmes and action and (v). Accountability for use of public resources.

Substantial additional resources were to be needed to meet the basic needs of millions of people even with optional utilization of currently available resources. India's external pastiness was accorded highest priority to the human development needs of the country and its large resource requirements in determining the quantum and kind of development assistance. Coordination of external assistance by the government and coordination among international development pastiness can help to capitalize catalytic advantages of development cooperation.

**Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)**

The JRY was launched in April 1989. The JRY was formed by merging together NREP and RLGEP. The major objectives of the JRY are; (i) generation of additional gainful employment for the unemployed and under employed youth in the rural areas. (2) creation of productive community assets for direct and continuing benefits to the target groups and (3) strengthening of rural economic and social structure which will lead to rapid growth of rural economy and steady rise in the income level of the poor. The target group of the JRY was the people line below the poverty line. The JRY programme aimed at providing wage employment at least one member of each poor rural family for 50-100 days in a year throughout the country. One special feature of the scheme was that 30 per cent employment generated was to be reserved for women.
Jawahar Gram Samriddhi Yojana (JGSY)

The JGSY was launched in April as the restructured version of the erstwhile Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY), which was itself initiated on 1-04-89 by merging two pre-existing separate wage employment programmes—the National Rural Employment programme (NREP) and the Rural Labour Employment Guarantee programme (RLEG). The JRY, like its predecessors the NREP and RLEG was initially designed as a programme for direct employment generation through the creation of various types of durable assets in the rural areas. Some of the infrastructure assets such as irrigation and water conservation works were created and expected much contribution from them towards form productivity in rural areas so as to generate indirect employment, suppose if more irrigation facilities are created the intensity of irrigation increases thereby the demand for labour increases. However, this type of indirect employment creation was not the main consideration to enhance the durable assets in the short term. For example, construction of school building may improve the quality of education and thus increase productivity in rural areas and thus generate indirect employment.

Self-Employment programmes for the Rural Poor: from IRDP to SGSY

Promotion of self-employment Programmes for the rural poor has long been an important element in the overall employment strategy. The integrated Rural Development programme (IRDP) was started in 1980-81 and became a major instrument IRDP was designed to identify beneficiaries below the poverty line and to take up some form of self-employment as a means of generating additional income which might take the household above the poverty line. Eligible beneficiaries below the poverty line were identified by the district Rural Development Agency (DRDA) and assisted through a combination of capital subsidy provided by the government plus credit provided by the commercial banks, the banks were supposed to ensure that credit is extended only to projects which are commercially viable.

Over the years a number of subsidiary and allied programmes evolved under the umbrella of IRDP such as the training of Rural Youth for self-employment (TRYSEM), the development of Women and children in the rural areas (DWCRA), and the million wells scheme (MWS). All of which were introduced in the 7th plan, period where as the
Ganga kalyan Yojana (GKY) was introduced in 1997, and in more recently the Supply of Improved Tool kits to Rural Artisans (SITRA), was introduced in 1992.

In 1999 all rural self-employment programmes were merged into the Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) in order to ensure greater integration of the programmes at the implementing level, but it is worth reviewing the limitations of the earlier IRDP, revealed by numerous independent evaluations. It should be noted that these assessments are based on studies of the working of IRDP prior to the recent restructuring of the programme, and some of these deficiencies in any have been overcome.

- Beneficiaries were often not of the targeted group and subscribes and loans were appropriated by non-poor individuals. This vitiates the effectiveness of targeting though it does not by itself negate the employment generating effect.

- The average investment per family was often low to generate additional income on the scale needed to take families out of poverty. This investment amounted to Rs.7889 at the beginning of the Eighth plan. It had risen to Rs.16, 753 at the beginning of the Ninth plan, but because of inflation the increase in real terms was not very substantial. The inadequacy of the investment that projects were not viable and therefore did not generate sustainable employment.

- The projects selected were often not viable because the beneficiaries were typically not in a position to choose viable project and manage them. A variety of problems including access to raw materials or lack of markets for their production remain unresolved. The assessment of viability by commercial banks was generally perfunctory because banks typically regarded IRDP lending more as a social compulsion than as normal commercial banking activity.

- The target driven approach to IRDP lending meant that banks engaged in mechanical lending to meet targets. For some time, IRDP became a scheme for distributing miler animals without regard for whether feed or veterinary care would be available, or whether the milk off take could be assured. The same animal was often sold over and over again to new IRDP loans. Over time a variety of tertiary activities became eligible for financing but the quality of lending did not improve significantly. A bank branch gave 20 loans for setting up shops in a village of 143 households.
• There is evidence of massive leakage and corruption. Beneficiaries receiving loans often have to bribe the officials of banks the district administration and this situation is accepted by beneficiaries because there is in any case an impression that bank loans under IRDP do not have to be repaid. The recovery rate form IRDP loans was low as 32 per cent in 1999-2000 whereas other micro credit programmes implemented thought NGOs such as the Rashtriya Mahila kosh have recovery rates of 90 per cent.

• TRYSEM was designed as a training scheme linked to IRDP in the hope that the provision of training would help to ensure project viability. However, only 3 per cent of IRDP beneficiaries actually received training under TRYSEM. What is more disturbing only 23 per cent of those trained under TRYSEM received assistant from IRDP. The training imparted was not related to the capacity or aptitude of the trainees nor to demand for the respective skills. Many TRYSEM beneficiaries viewed the programme simply as a means of receiving a stipend during the training period and not as a way of developing genuine skills which would help in self-employment.

• SITRA provides artisans with a kit of improved hand tools. The financial limit for the value of tools is Rs.2000 of which the beneficiary pays 10 per cent the rest being covered by a subsidy. The scheme is reportedly well received by beneficiaries.

• DWCRA is another sub-component of IRDP which aimed at improving the living condition of women. It encourages collective work in the form of group activities which are known to work better. The nature of the programmes varies from state to state but it has worked very well in some states such as Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Tripura and Gujarat. In Andhra Pradesh, DWCRA is essentially a programme implemented through self-help groups. The group approach creates more opportunities for better employment. Watershed development, which generates more employment, is also being encouraged in Andhra Pradesh.

The number of families assisted through IRDP has declined steadily from around 3.7 million per year in the seventh plan to 2.2 million in the Eighth plan and further to 1.8 million per year in the first two years of the Nineth Plan. A large part of he
explanation lies in the fact that the total size of the investment required for viable projects has increased whereas the total resources available under the programme have not increased commensurately.

From 1980-81 when the programme began, to 1989-90, the programmes has assisted 53.5 million families which is almost equal to the total number of rural poor families in the country. If the programmes were really able to achieve its objectives of raising assisted families out of poverty, it would have achieved complete elimination of poverty in rural areas! It has clearly not done so far all the reasons documented above. As noted above, some elements of IRDP e.g., SITRA and DWCRA are working well, but the programmes as a whole have suffered from serious deficiencies. The restructuring of IRDP into SGSY is definitely a step in the right direction and may lead to improve performance in future.

Swarna Jayanthi Gram Swaraj Yojana (SGSY)

The SGSY was launched in April 1999 in all the districts under DRDA by the government of India with an objective to establish a large number of micro-enterprises in rural areas with a particular focus on the vulnerable groups among the rural poor of which the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes account for 50 per cent followed by 40 per cent women and 3 per cent the disabled.

The objective of the SGSY is to bring the assisted poor families (Swarozgaris) above the Poverty Line by providing them income-generating assets through a mix of Bank Credit and Governmental Subsidy. Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana aims at establishing a large number of micro-enterprises in the rural areas, building upon the potential of the rural poor.

Despite efforts made over the past few decades, rural poverty in India continues to be significant. While the anti-poverty programmes have been strengthened in successive years and while, in percentage terms, poverty levels have reduced from 56.44 per cent of India’s population in 1973-74 to 37.27 per cent in 1993-94, the number of rural poor has more or less remained static and is estimated to be about 244 million persons. The effect of such a large percentage of poor on the country’s development is not difficult to appreciate. Quite obviously, we need to redress the situation quickly. It is
in this context that the self-employment programmes assume significance for, they alone can provide income to the rural poor on a sustainable basis.

To begin with IRDP was the only self-employment programme. Beginning with Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), a number of allied programmes have been added over the years such as Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA), and Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY). The multiplicity of programmes, being viewed as separate programmes in themselves, resulted in a lack of proper social intermediation, absence of desired linkages among these programmes inter se and the implementation being more concerned with achieving individual programme targets rather than focusing on the substantive issue of sustainable income generation. To rectify the situation, Governments have decided to restructure the self-employment programmes. A new programme known as “Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana” (SGSY) has been launched from April 1999. This is a holistic programme covering all aspects of self-employment such as organisation of the poor into self help groups, training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing. SGSY will be funded by the Centre and the States in the ratio of 75:25.

**Salient features of Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana**

- **Swarnjayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana** was launched with an aim to establish a large number of micro-enterprises in the rural areas, building upon the potential of the rural poor. It is rooted in the belief that the right support can be successful producers of valuable goods/services.

- The assisted families (henceforth known as Swarojgaris) may be individuals or groups (Self-Help Groups) emphasis will be on the group approach.

- The objective under SGSY is to bring every assisted family above the poverty line in three years.

- Towards this end, SGSY was conceived as a holistic programme of micro-enterprises covering all aspects of self-employment, viz., organization of the rural poor into Self-Help Groups and their capacity building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure build up, technology, credit and marketing.
• In establishing the micro enterprises, the emphasis under SGSY is on the cluster approach. For this, 4-5 key activities will be identified for each block based on the resources, occupational skills of the people and availability of markets. Selection of key activities will be with the approval of the Panchayat Samitis at the block level and the DRDA/ZP at the District level. The major share of SGSY assistance will be in activity clusters.

• SGSY will adopt a project approach for each key activity. Project reports will be prepared in respect of identified key activities. The banks and other financial institutions will be closely associated with and involved in preparing these project reports, so as to avoid delays in sanctioning of loans and to ensure adequacy of financing.

• The existing infrastructure for the cluster of activities will be reviewed and gaps will be identified. Critical gaps in investments will be made under SGSY subject to a ceiling of 20 per cent (25 per cent in the case of North Eastern States) of the total programmes allocation for each district. This amount will be maintained by the DRDAs as ‘SGSY-Infrastructure Fund’ and which can also be utilized to generate additional funding from other sources.

• The effort under SGSY is to cover 30 percent of the poor in each block in the next five years through an efficient programme. In planning of the key activities, care would be taken to ensure that the maximum number of Panchayats are covered without jeopardizing the quality of the programme.

• SGSY will also focus on Group approach. This would involve organization of the poor into Self- Help Groups(SHGs) and their capacity building. Efforts would be made to involve women members in each SHG. Besides, exclusive women groups will be continued to be formed. At the Block level, at least half of the groups will exclusively women groups. Group activity will be given preference and progressively, majority of the funding will be for Self-Help Groups.
• The Gram Sabha will authenticate the list of families below the poverty line identified in the BPL census. Identification of individual families suitable for each key activity will be made through a participatory process.

• SGSY is a credit-cum-subsidy programme. However, credit will be the critical component in SGSY, subsidy being only a minor and enabling element. Accordingly, SGSY envisages a greater involvement of the banks. They will be involved closely in the planning and preparation of projects, identification of activity clusters, infrastructure planning as well as capacity building and choice of activity of the SHGs, selection of individual Swarozgaris, pre-credit activities and post-credit monitoring including loan recovery.

• SGSY will seek to promote multiple credit rather than a one-time credit 'injection'. The credit requirement of the Swarozgaris will be carefully assessed. They will be allowed and, in fact, encouraged for increasing their credit intake over the years.

• SGSY will seek to lay emphasis on skill development through well-designed training courses. Those, who have been sanctioned loans, will be assessed and given necessary training. The design, duration of training and the training curriculum would be tailored to meet the needs of the identified activities. DRDAs will be allowed to set apart up to 10 per cent of the SGSY allocation on training. This would be maintained as ‘SGSY - Training Fund’.

• SGSY will ensure upgradation of the technology in the identified activity clusters. The technology intervention will seek to add value to the local resources, including processing of the locally available material from natural and other resources for local and non-local market.

• SGSY will provide for promotion of marketing of the goods produced by the SGSY Swarozgaris. This would involve providing of market intelligence, development of markets, consultancy services, as well as institutional arrangements for marketing of the goods including exports.
• Subsidy under SGSY will be uniform at 30 per cent of the project cost, subject to a maximum of Rs. 7500. In respect of SC/STs, however, this will be 50 per cent and Rs. 10,000 respectively. For Groups of Swarozgaris (SHGs), the subsidy would be at 50 per cent of the cost of the scheme, subject to a ceiling of Rs. 1.25 lakh. There will be no monetary limit on subsidy for irrigation projects. Subsidy will be back-ended.

• SGSY will particularly focus on the vulnerable groups among the rural poor. Accordingly, the SC/STs will account for at least 50 per cent of the Swarozgaris, women 40 per cent and the disabled 3 percent.

• SGSY will be implemented by the DRDAs through the Panchayat Samithis. The process of planning, implementation and monitoring would integrate the banks and other financial institutions, the PRIs, NGOs, as well as technical institutions in the district. DRDAs will be suitably revamped and strengthened.

• 15 per cent of the funds under SGSY will be set apart at the national level for projects having a far reaching significance and which can also act as indicators of possible alternative strategies to be taken up in conjunction with other departments or semi-government or international organizations. This would include initiatives to be taken in the individual districts or across the districts.

• Funds under the SGSY will be shared by Central and State Governments in the ratio of 75:25.

• The central allocation earmarked for the States will be distributed in relation to the incidence of poverty in the States. However, additional parameters like absorption capacity and special requirement will also be taken into consideration during the course of the year.

**Approaches to the study of Rural Development**

Approaches to the study of rural development in the country have undergone several changes since the community development programme. The first even nationwide attempt for rural development initiated during 1952. A brief review of these
approaches would facilitate the understanding of the policy emphasis from time to time and their implications on the rural scenario.

**Multipurpose Approach**

The Community Development programme was initiated with the objective of this programme was all round development of the country side through active participation of the villagers. The objective to provide gainful employment through creation of useful durable Community assets. The programme was also aimed at undertaking specific activities for village development with active cooperation of villagers and government agencies. But this programme has achieved only marginal success mainly due to the following:

a) conflicts and contradictions between various interest groups of the rural community
b) Extreme bureaucratization in the process of implementation and
c) Absence of clearly defined priorities of central planning.

**Institutional Approach**

In order to ensure the participation of rural masses in rural development activities Panchayat Raj Institution was introduced in fifties. However, Panchayat Raj could not live up to the expectation of the rural marks due to a host of reasons. In fact, it was not given a chance to serve as the vanguard of development in village India. Except Gujarat and Maharashtra, it was not given an opportunity to decide on development activities and take up their planning and implementation work on a sizable scale. The special development programmes like SFDA, DAAP and the like, were kept out side the orbit of Panchayat Raj. The most undesirable consequence of this institution was that the ruling elites and vested interests got control over the institution and able appropriated whatever benefits accrued from development programmes.

**Sectoral Approach**

During late fifties, there was realization that improvement of rural masses was absolutely difficult sans agricultural transformation. Hence, areas with favorable irrigation and climate condition were identified introduced intensive cultivation under intensive Agriculture district programme. Then came green revolution in the seventies. No doubt, these programmes increased agricultural production in areas with resource
potential. But these programmes led to regional disparity in terms of development and deprived the small holders who lacked the basic input of capital.

**Target Group Approach**

The failure of tackling the problems of the poor overtime led to launching of programmes specifically for these groups. Thus Small farmer’s Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Laborers Development Agency (MFALDA) were introduced during fourth plan. This was in fact a major policy break through in the country’s rural development effort. Subsequently, DWCRA (Development of Women and child in rural areas) was identified as one such programme. The basic objective of this programme was to make the existing occupations of the target groups viable with the support of credit and subsidy. However, over time MFALDA was marginalized and all activities were central around SFDA which again suffered due to lack of institutional coordination. Moreover, only the landed peasantry and some times large holders through manipulation got benefited from SFDA.

**Area Development Approach**

In order to offset the regional imbalances created due to earlier development approaches programmes of total resource development of regions with specific problems (land, water, and live stock, human resource) were launched. These included Drought prone Area programme, Watershed Development Programme, Desert Development Programme and Triple Area Development Programme. In spite of encouraging results in many areas, this programme could not make the desired headway due to lack of comprehensive policy for total development of the region, coordinated approach at implementation level, back ward and forward linkages in programme implementation and the like.

**Integrated Approach**

Assetlessness was identified as one of the core problems of rural poor to improve their economic condition assets and resources were transferred to the poorest among the poor. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched during sixth plan with the merger of SFDA and MFALDA. Financial support has been extended to the identified families to acquire productive assets, technology and skills for economically viable activities. However, the programme has been criticized on several counts like problems related to cooperation from relevant departments/ agencies. In the selection of
viable schemes, sub-critical investments, premature removal of assets by beneficiaries and other malpractices and the like.

Multi-Proanged Approach

With the multi-pronged approach adopted by the ministry through a wide range of programme identification of specific gaps and remedial measures and by improving the effectiveness of the delivery system it is fervently hoped that major milestones on the long path of development of rural areas would be achieved.

All round development is possible with the unstained cooperation and active meaningful participation of the people synergy among all the stake holders because we are all partners in the development and economic reconstruction.

Employment Generation Approach

The second component of the sixth plan strategy for poverty alleviation was through providing additional employment opportunities to the rural poor and the landless. To this end, programmes like National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and rural land less employment guarantee programme (RIEGP) were introduced. During eighth plan, these programmes were merged together to form Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) with main objectives of generating additional gainful employment for the unemployed and under employed persons, both men and women. Here, again the implementation of the programme faced constraints like panchayats' reluctance to adopt participatory process constrained access of the villagers to information ineffective maintaining system and the like.

Various approaches in rural development efforts in the country, thus, provide an impression that during our journey in rural development, the increasing emphasis was on growth with social justice. The focus of rural development initially shifted from whole village community to weaker sections, then from weaker sections to target groups based on mainly land holding criterion and finally from target groups to the poorest purchases economic criterion guided by poverty line consideration.

Rural Development is the number one challenge before developing nations like India. Rightly so, development of rural areas have been the main thrust of planners and policy makers ever since independence. While the IRDP is still in operation for pat...
decades, other programmes have also been started to increase employment and provide basic amenities to the rural poor. However, the results are not very encouraging. It is often said that there is a communication gap between those who run the programme and the beneficiaries. Often the poor who came from lowest strata of society are not even aware of the programme meant for them. Thus, the study was conducted in order to:

i. Assess extent of awareness of rural poor about development programmes meant for them

ii. Know the effort made by farmers to acquire information

iii. Find out first into sources of farmers about rural development programme, rural development has become a challenging task and the painless and policy makers are exclusively emphasized the development of rural areas in the developing India.

Rural Development is an interminable process. Even the partial success of a set of programmes takes rural society forward, changing its comforts in the process; and this itself begets its own peculiar problems to resolve which new measures are devised and put into operation. Rural development is, thus, continuous in its conception. With only a change in content or a shift in emphasis of its various ingredients showing a variation over a period of time.

Summary

The nation's economy has been agriculture centered for centuries and it continuous to be so even after the unveiling of the structural adjustment programme. According to the Tendulkar committee about 37 percent of those who are depending upon agriculture and non-agricultural activities live below the poverty line. Poverty in rural India is the result of many factors. Some are man-made and others are due to natural calamities. It is man-made because of the faulty distribution of factors of production and nature-made because of the vagaries of nature. Poverty in India has been increased till the end of the Fifth Five Year Plan and percentage of people living below the poverty had been rising at an alarming rate. The critical areas of development and the inter linkages amongst the different elements or dimensions of development have to be carefully identified and an appropriate strategy has to be evolved. India could derive some lessons from Japan which, too, once faced the problems that India encounters at present namely the poverty or poverty trap in rural areas.
Long before Independence, in the thirties, Rabindranath Tagore thought of rural development and launched a programme centred at Shanti Nikethan in Birbhum district of West Bengal. Rural development has become a major concern of our policy makers since 1950s. In 1952, the community Development Programme (CDP) was launched. It was a multipurpose, open-ended programme of rural reconstruction. It was based on the philosophy that rural life was an organic whole and no improvement in any sector was possible unless an attack was made on all sectors simultaneously. It was only when the formal plans were kicked off in 1950s (1951-55) that agriculture including projects that combined irrigation and power generation, received priority. The integrated Rural Development programme (IRDP) was started in 1980-81 and became a major instrument. IRDP was designed to identify beneficiaries below the poverty line and to take up some form of self-employment as a means of generating additional income which might take the household above the poverty line. Approaches to the study of rural development in the country have undergone several changes since the community development programme. The first even nationwide attempt for rural development initiated during 1952. A brief review of these approaches would facilitate the understanding of the policy emphasis from time to time and their implications on the rural scenario.
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