CHAPTER III

RURAL DEVELOPMENT: CONCEPTS AND STRATEGIES

The previous chapter have discussed in detail the profile of Mizoram covering from the oldest period till the present time, its location, area, its boundary, physical features, flora and fauna, population, literacy, economy of the state, its historical and political development and also mentioning the outbreak of famine due to the flowering of bamboo and a separatist movement resulting into insurgency in the region. The social life of the people, religion, music, festivals which includes the different festivals that the Mizo celebrate such as Mim Kut, Pawl Kut, Chapchar Kut, dresses of the Mizo’s were also discussed. The profile of Aizawl district and the socio-economic profile of the sample households have also been discussed.

The present chapter discuss the meaning, nature, elements, and objectives of rural development both from the theoretical perspective and from the point of view of the Indian situation. Different models of rural development such as the Modernization theory, the Dependency theory, the Rosenstein-Rodan theory of the Big push, the Leibenstein’s critical minimum effect thesis, the Gunnar Myrdal thesis of spread and backward effect, the Human Capitalist model of development and the Gandhian model of rural development have been discussed keeping in view the ground realities of rural India and that India cannot adopt to any particular models of rural development. In the later part of the chapter the strategies adopted for rural development in India has been discussed.
3.1 Rural Development: Nature and Concepts

Development implies overall positive change in the physical quality of life. This positive change for the better encompasses economic as well as social aspects. Therefore, development not only calls for economic growth but also the equitable distribution of the gains made from economic growth. Development implies growth with justice. It means an improvement in the quality of life through better health, education, housing and overall material and social welfare. The basic elements of development are:

- Removal of inequality and poverty
- Increase in material welfare of the people
- Increase in social well-being (education, health, housing, etc.)
- An equitable distribution of gains of development among different groups of people in a region or country
- An enhancement in technology and the capacity to produce a wider range of goods and services in the country leading to a better quality of life
- Building institutional structure which permit participation in decision making at all level, equalization of opportunities for development and removal of disparities

It was assumed that development depends primarily on economic growth and would automatically occur if economic growth took place. This view of development has been criticized on the ground that it ignores the distribution of the gains from growth and also how the growth has been achieved and at what costs. An increase in production of what in a country do not automatically mean that there has been better distribution of what has been produced. Though the production of food grains has grown since independence, this does not imply that every Indian gets enough to eat. It is
necessary to understand the difference between the concepts of economic growth and development. Growth is, therefore, a sustained expansion in the productive capacity of an economy leading to sustained rise in its Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Development, on the other hand, is a sustained improvement in material welfare, particularly for those who are poor and afflicted by poverty, illiteracy and poor health conditions. Development is, therefore, a qualitative concept involving a qualitative improvement in the general standard of living in a country or economy.

The term rural development is a subset of the broader term development. However, development is a universally cherished goal of individuals, families, communities and nations all over the world. Development is also natural in the sense that all forms of life on planet earth have an inherent urge to survive and develop. Rural development has emerged as “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 rural population who seek a livelihood in the rural areas”. Rural development is “a process which leads to a continuous rise in the capacity of rural people to control their environment accompanied by a wider distribution of benefits resulting from such a control”. SK Sharma defines rural development as consisting of strategies, policies and programmes for the development of rural areas (agriculture, forestry, fisheries, rural crafts, industries, supply of social infrastructure housing, village planning, public health, education) with the ultimate aim of accelerating the agricultural production, properly utilizing available physical, natural and human resources and achieving higher income and better living conditions for the rural population as a whole, particularly the

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57 Asian Centre for Development Administration (ACDA) gave a comprehensive definition of rural development in the context of Asian countries.
rural poor and effective participation of the latter in the development process with the ultimate aim of creating conditions for self-sustained growth. Esniger defines rural development involves a process of transformation of the traditionally oriented rural culture towards an acceptance of a reliance on science and technology. Rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor people women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless. The term rural development connotes overall development of rural areas with a view to improve the quality of life of rural people. In this sense, it is comprehensive and multidimensional concept and encompasses the development of agriculture and allied activities, village and cottage industries, crafts, socio-economic infrastructure, community services and facilities and above all, the human resources in rural areas. Rural development can be conceptualised as a process, a phenomenon, a strategy and a discipline. As a process, it implies the engagement of individuals, communities and nations in pursuit of their cherished goals over time. As a phenomenon, rural development is the end result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. As a strategy, it is designed to improve the economic and social well-being of a specific group of people, that is, the rural poor. As a discipline, it is multidisciplinary in nature, representing an intersection of agricultural, social, behavioural, engineering and management sciences.

The term rural development may be used to imply any one of the mentioned definitions. The definitions reflect basically the following facts:

60 Robert Chambers (1983), *Putting the last first*, p.147
• Rural Development should be viewed as a process of increasing the capability of people residing in rural areas so as to become the initiators, decision makers, planners and controllers managers of change in their environment rather than remaining as passive objects of external manipulation and control.

• Rural Development is multi-dimensional process including all aspects of rural life which includes economic, social, cultural, political and educational development.

• The concepts of Rural Development reflect participation of all people including the underprivileged and weaker sections in the development process. The focus is the rural poor.

• The benefits that accrue from the application of science and technology in the field of Rural Development should reach all section of the people in the rural areas including the weaker sections.

• The capacity of the people including their knowledge, skill and attitude of rural people should undergo constant change resulting in sustainable development of the people and areas.

• Rural development insists on maximum utilization of local physical and human resources in rural areas with functional linkages.

• Development of agriculture, allied sector, rural industries and social sector should get due attention.

To put it precisely, Rural Development is a process of empowering the powerless in the rural areas with the ultimate aim of promoting their quality of life based on maximum utilization of locally available resources through self-help process paving the way for sustainable development. Thus, rural development can be defined as a process leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor. In addition to economic growth, this process involves changes in popular attitudes and even in customs and beliefs. In a nutshell, the process of rural
development should represent the entire gamut of changes by which a social system moves away from a state of life perceived as unsatisfactory towards a materially and spiritually better condition of life.

3.2 Basic Elements of Rural Development:

Whatever the geographic location, culture and historical stage of development of a society, there are at least three elements which are considered to constitute the true meaning of rural development. They are:

- **Basic Necessities of Life:** people have certain basic needs, without which it would be impossible for them to survive. The basic necessities include food, clothes, shelter, basic literacy, primary health care and security of life and property. When any one or all of them are absent or in critically short supply, we may state that a condition of absolute underdevelopment exists. Provision of basic necessities of life to everybody is the primary responsibility of all economies, whether they are capitalist, socialist or mixed. In this sense, we may claim that economic growth is a necessary condition for improvement of the quality of life of rural people, which is rural development.

- **Self-respect:** Every person and every nation seeks some sort of self-respect, dignity or honour. Absence or denial of self-respect indicates lack of development.

- **Freedom:** it refers to political or ideological freedom, economic freedom and freedom from social servitude. As long as a society is bound by the servitude of men to nature, ignorance, other men, institutions and dogmatic beliefs, it cannot claim to have achieved the goal of development. Servitude in any form reflects a state of underdevelopment.
3.3 Indicators of Rural Development:

The ACDA identifies the following indicators of Rural Development:

- Change in agriculture productivity.
- Change in rural employment, unemployment and under employment situation in rural areas.
- Changes in distribution of wealth and income to be determined in two ways (a) changes in the income of different income groups. (b) Changes in ownership of land.
- Changes in degree of mobility in the local class structures as reflected in the allocation of position of status and power on the basis of achievement and in the removal of barriers to have access to public facilities.
- Welfare indicators such as changes I literacy, schooling, mortality rate, life expectancy, rural roads, electrification and level of nutrition.
- Availability of credit facilities from financial institution.
- Changes in values, beliefs and attitudes of the people.

3.4 Objectives of Rural Development:

The ultimate goal of Rural Development is to raise the quality of life of the people in rural areas. To realize this goal, Rural Development has multiple objectives: more production, more employment, equitable distribution of income and emphasis on rural poor. The specific objectives are:-

- Raising the standards of living of people in rural areas.
- Abolishing poverty in rural areas and improving the quality of life of the people.
- Development of both farming and non-farming activities so as to generate gainful employment.
- Changing the attitude of the rural people towards transformation of village community.
• Provision of social infrastructure such as drinking water, health care, education, sanitation, housing, road, electrification etc.
• Maximum utilization of local resources without adversely affecting the environment.

3.5 MODEL OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT:

There are several models of rural development in vogue at present and also many perspectives or viewpoints. A theory is expected to perform mainly two functions, namely, explanation and prediction of a phenomenon. There is no universally acceptable model or theory of rural development, which can explain the existing phenomenon of rural development and predicts its future course. What we have is a hypotheses and propositions that constitute higher level generalization in the field of development. Rural development is a subset of development; the hypotheses of development also apply to rural development as well.

➢ The Modernisation Theory:

The dominant arguments of the capitalist school are embodied in what is known as the Modernisation Theory or the Free World model of development. Scholars who contribute to the growth and development of this theory comprised economists, sociologists, historians and anthropologists and the determinants of development identified by them included both economic and non-economic factors. The essence of the theory was the transfer of western technology and rationality, without changing class structure as a means of development, and removal of all
social and ideological obstacles to such a process. The theory was based on several assumptions, some of which are:

- Application of western science and technology in order to increase production is essential for achieving development.
- The process of development can be delineated into a series of stages, and all societies pass through those stages.
- In the process of development, traditional social and political institutions are replaced by modern ones.
- Traditional feudal forms of political will be replaced by democratic forms of governance.

In the context of rural development, modernization theory offers quite a few useful insights such as the inevitability of the use of modern technology for increasing agricultural production and the need for replacing traditional feudal institutions by new democratic ones for a shift towards greater scientific temper and secular values and norms. However, the theory has lost much of its appeal due to its failure to predict and explain many economic phenomena. The theory did not foresee the adverse environmental impacts of the capitalist model of development and its unsustainability. Yet another reason for the failure of the modernization theory to be relevant in the context of developing countries like India, and that is the non-existence of implementation of rules and controls aimed at preventing private companies from dominating their domestic markets. In the free market, such rules and controls are effectively implemented and hence they tend to even out the distribution of income and wealth.

61 Alavi and Shanin (1982), *Introduction to the Sociology of Developing Societies*, p.2
The Dependency Theory:

The failure of the Modernization theory to explain the growing inequalities, poverty, violence and military coups in the newly independent nations in Africa and Asia, forced development scholars to ask new questions and seek new answers, using an alternative paradigm. The intellectual foundation of the new paradigm was rooted in the ideas of Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and other Marxist thinkers. Marx and Engels believed that the process of social change was not gradual and evolutionary, as assumed by the Modernization theory. The Marxists saw class struggle as the engine of social change and development. They argued that imperialism, rather than being a benign political outgrowth of European civilisation was an exploitative system of economic, social and political relations. The systems changed the colonised nations into cheap inputs to production in the capitalist nations, as well as markets for their products. This arrangement always worked to the advantage of the imperial power. The main arguments of the Dependency theory are:

- The developed countries could not have achieved the level of development that they have, without the systematic exploitation of the developing countries.
- The process of development passes through a series of stages is an illusion. Developing countries cannot attain development following the path adopted by developed countries, so long as the exploitative world system exists.
- Countries that are now poor were not so to begin with, rather they have been forced into the stage of underdevelopment by a global system of capitalist exploitation.
- Developing countries can develop only by snapping their links with the developed countries.
The basic argument of the theory that the underdevelopment in developing countries is the result of development in the developed countries was falsified by the experience of the East Asian tigers. These Tigers were initially dependent on the developed countries, but in course of time they became highly developed and competitive, that is, they moved from the periphery to the core. Besides, the theory did not consider the role of several internal factors, such as excessive population growth, underdeveloped human resources, shortage of natural resources and class struggle, in explaining the existence of underdevelopment. In the context of rural development, we could say that the theory provides useful caveat that while identifying the determinants of rural development, we should critically examine various inter-sectoral linkages and interactions, and determine whether they are beneficial to rural people or not. If not, necessary policy measures should be taken to make the linkages and interactions beneficial to the rural people.\(^{63}\)

➢ **Rosenstein-Rodan’s Theory of the Big Push:**

According to this theory, there is a minimum level of resources that must be devoted to a development programme, if it is to have any chance of success. Launching a country into self-sustaining growth is a little like getting an aeroplane off the ground. There is a critical ground speed which must be passed before the craft can become airborne. The essence of this theory is proceeding bit by bit will not add up in its effects to the sum total of the single bits. A minimum quantum of investment is a necessary, though not sufficient, condition for success.

The theory identifies three different kinds of indivisibilities, which may be considered the main obstacles to the development of developing

countries. These are the indivisibility in the supply of social overhead capital, the indivisibility of demand and the indivisibility in the supply of savings. The theory argues that a big push in terms of a high quantum of investment is required to scale the economic obstacles to development created by these three kinds of indivisibilities, and the external economies to which they give rise. This implies that that the development process is a series of discontinuous jumps and each jump requires a big push. Besides, there may finally be a phenomenon of indivisibility in the vigour and drive required for successful development policy. Isolated and small efforts may not add up to a sufficient impact on growth. An atmosphere of development may only arise after a critical minimum level of investment has been reached.  

Leibenstein’s Critical Minimum Effort Thesis:

The central idea of Harvey Leibenstein’s thesis is that in order to attain sustained secular growth, it is essential that the initial stimulant to development be of a certain critical minimum size. According to Leibenstein, economic backwardness is characterized by a set of interrelated factors, which have a certain degree of stability at their small equilibrium values. The actual values are different from the equilibrium values, because the economy is always being subjected to stimulants or shocks. The stimulants have a tendency to raise per capita incomes above the equilibrium level. But in backward economies, long term economic development does not take place because the magnitude of stimulants is too small. In other words, efforts to escape from economic backwardness be they spontaneous or forced, are below the critical minimum which is needed for sustained growth.

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64 Katar Singh, *Ibid*, p.64
For small values of the stimulant, the generated income depressing factors are, in the long run, more significant than the induced income-raising forces, but the reverse is the case with high values of the stimulant. As such, persistent capital accumulation above a certain minimum rate would eventually permit development. The need for a minimum effort arises to overcome internal and external diseconomies of scale, to overcome income-depressing obstacles, which may be generated by the stimulants to growth, and to generate sufficient momentum in the system so that the factors that stimulate growth continue to play their role.

Leibenstein’s thesis is more realistic than Rosenstein-Rodan’s big push theory. Giving big push to the programme of industrialization all at once is not practicable in underdeveloped countries, while the critical minimum effort can be properly timed and broken up into a series of smaller efforts to put the economy on the path of sustained development. This theory is also consistent with the concept of decentralised democratic planning, to which India, and most developing countries are wedded. Therefore this paradigm provides good clues as to the quantum of investment that is absolutely essential to make a programme take-off.

- **Lewis Model of Economic Development:**

  W. Arthur Lewis model is based on the fact that in many developing countries, there exists large reservoirs of labour whose marginal productivity is negligible, zero or even negative. This labour is available in unlimited quantities at a wage equal to the subsistence level of living, plus a margin sufficient to overcome the friction of moving from the subsistence sector to the capital sector, which may be called subsistence plus wage. As the supply of labour is unlimited, new industries can be set up and the
existing ones can be expanded without limit at the ruling wage rate. The capitalist sector also needs skilled workers. But Lewis maintains that skilled labour is only a temporary bottleneck and can be removed by providing training facilities to unskilled workers.

Since the marginal productivity of labour in the capitalist sector is higher than the ruling wage rate, there results a capitalist surplus. This surplus is used for capital formation, which makes in investment by the capitalists’ raises the marginal productivity of labour, which induces falls to a level equivalent to the ruling wage rate. This process goes on till the capital-labour ratio rises to the point where the supply of labour becomes inelastic. Some critics have pointed out that Lewis’ optimism concerning development by absorption of disguised unemployment from agriculture is unfounded, because it is not possible to transfer a large number of workers permanently and on a full time basis from agriculture to industry, without a drop in the agricultural output, that is, the marginal productivity of the labour in agriculture is not zero.

Lewis model seems to provide a good framework to understand the process of economic development in labour surplus developing countries like India. Its basic premise is that labour productivity in agriculture must increase substantially in order to generate surplus in the form of food to be used for development of the non-farm sector, and to release the surplus labour from agriculture for meeting the growing needs of the non-farm sector. However, the relevance of the model is constrained by a number of factors. First, labour unions may push the wage rate up as labour productivity increases, and keep the rate of profit and rate of capital formation lower than expected. Second, the capitalist employers may use the surplus for speculative or non-productive purposes instead of ploughing it back for development purposes. This is, in fact, what has been happening these days in India and other developing countries. Third is, in fact, what
has been happening these days in India and other developing countries. Third, to meet their rising expectations, rural people may consume more and save less than predicted by the model, and thereby dampen the pace of development.

➢ **Gunnar Myrdal’s Thesis of Spread and Backwash Effects:**

Gunnar Myrdal highlights low levels of income in most of the non-Soviet countries in the world, and international disparities in income, wealth and investment. Myrdal finds the theoretical approach inadequate to grapple with the problems of inequality. In his opinion, in normal case, a change does not call forth countervailing changes, but, instead, supporting changes which move the system in the same direction as the first change, but much faster - the principle of circular and cumulative causation. As a result of such circular causation, a social process tends to move faster. A social process can be stopped by introducing new exogenous changes in the system.

Myrdal also emphasises the role of non-economic factors in development, and highlights the backwash effects of growth brought out by the free play of market forces. The clustering of labour, capital, goods and services in certain localities and regions leave the remaining areas, mostly rural, more or less in the backwaters and accentuate regional inequality. Concentration of firms, capital and talented individuals in certain localities at the expense of surroundings areas lowers the level of economic development below what it would have been, if growth points had never emerged.

Against the backwash effects there are, however, certain centrifugal spread effects of expansionary momentum from the centres of economic expansion to other regions. Empirical evidence shows that backwash effects are neutralised by spread effects only at a high level of development. At low
levels of development, the spread effects are either very weak, or just strong to cancel the backwash effects in both cases is poverty and stagnation.

➢ **The Human Capital Model of Development:**

This model emphasises the importance of human capital investment in the process of economic and social development. By human capital, we mean acquired mental and physical ability through education, training, health care and pursuit of some spiritual methods like yoga or meditation. The acquisition of human capital is largely through the investment of human effort and money. The simplest and most important of this type of model is a schooling model, which relates economic development to schooling. The classical and neoclassical economists did not explicitly include both physical and mental effort. It was Theodore Schultz who elaborated the concept of human capital and explicitly considered the investment in human capital as an important determinant of economics of human capital. Subsequently, quite a few other scholars got interested in the economics of human capital, especially the economics of education and a large number of studies were conducted on the subject. The model considers the totality of human potential and emphasises the need to harness it for the good of the people. It respects peoples’ culture and religion and social values and structures. It is more applicable to countries like India than any other model. The Human Capital approach to rural development is based on the following three assumptions:

- Human physical and mental capabilities are partly inherited and partly acquired, and they vary from individual to individual, that is, the classical assumption of a homogenous labour force does not hold.
• Human capital directly contributes to development through its positive effect on productivity and through reduction in resistance to the diffusion of new technologies in the economy, especially in the rural sector.

• Human resources are inexhaustible and are available in plenty in all developing countries of the world, including India. If properly developed and utilised, human resources can contribute significantly to development.

➢ The Gandhian Model of Rural Development:

Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, popularly known as Mahatma Gandhi, played the leading role in securing India political Independence from the British, through organising and mobilising Indian people from all walks of life in a peaceful and non-violent manner. He is, therefore, rightly called ‘The Father of the Nation’. Gandhiji’s approach to India’s rural development was holistic and people centred. It was rooted in his conviction in the tenants of truth, non-violence and the goodness of human beings. Influenced as he was by Tolstoy, Ruskin and the teachings of the Gita, he placed more emphasis on moral and spiritual values than economic motives as a means of overall development. Unlike the western concept of development, the Gandhian concept of development attaches more importance to the question of relationships between individuals and economic micro-groups. According to this theory of development, micro-groups such as village communities in turn interact with society at large. The Gandhian view of development also visualizes a smaller role for the state in the development process. The village at the local level would be the focal point of economic development in the Gandhian scheme. In this situation, it was visualized that the role of the individual would be brought into play thereby leading to overall development of the individual as well as
the society at large. Decision making at the local level through institutions such as panchayats also plays a key role in the Gandhian scheme.

Basic values and premises underlying the Gandhian Model of Development:

- Real India is found not in cities, but in its villages
- The revival of villages is possible only when the villagers are exploited no more. Exploitation of villagers by city dwellers was violence in Gandhiji’s opinion
- Simple living and high thinking, implying voluntary reduction of materialistic wants and pursuit of moral and spiritual principles of life.
- Dignity of labour-everyone must earn his bread by physical labour and one who labour’s must necessarily get his subsistence
- Preference to the use of indigenous products, services and institutions
- Balance between the ends and the means. Gandhiji believed that non-violence and truth could not be sustained unless a balance between the ends and the means was maintained.

After going through the above mentioned models of rural development, it may be concluded that India being a vast country or a subcontinent, cannot adopt any single model of rural development. Depending upon time, places and persons we have experimented with different model in different parts of the country. The main issue is the all-round progress of the rural areas including uplift of the rural population in the country. In order to achieve this objective, the policy makers, planners, the executive, the civil society and the citizens at large have subscribed to different model keeping in view the ground realities in rural India.
3.6 Rural Development Strategies in India

In the Indian context rural development assumes greater significance as 68.8 per cent of its population still live in rural areas. Most of the people living in rural areas draw their livelihood from agriculture and allied sectors, and poverty mostly persists here. At the time of independence around 83 per cent of the Indian population were living in rural areas. Accordingly, from the very beginning, our planned strategy emphasized rural development and will continue to do so in future. Strategically, the focus of our planning was to improve the economic and social conditions of the underprivileged sections of rural society. Thus, economic growth with social justice became the proclaimed objective of the planning process under rural development. It began with an emphasis on agricultural production and consequently expanded to promote productive employment opportunities for rural masses, especially the poor, by integrating production, infrastructure, human resource and institutional development measures. In India, the rural poor can be divided into three main categories: those with land, those with skills and those without land and skills.

During the initial stages of Community Development program (CDP), a holistic approach to develop agriculture, infrastructure and basic facilities in the villages was adopted. It was assumed that as the process of development progress, it would take care of each and every category of the rural population. During 1960s, when the CDP was gaining momentum, the country was faced with food crisis and, therefore, the entire rural development effort was directed to the development of agriculture. As a result, we achieved green revolution towards the end of that decade and the country gained self-sufficiency in food production. While this event was most welcome, it was not without side-effects. The farmers with small and marginal holdings did not gain from the green revolution and they remained...
poor. The benefits of agricultural development did not percolate to the large numbers of agricultural labourer either. Introduction of modern farm technology and use of modern factory made equipment rendered a large proportion of rural artisans jobless. The overall situation was that a visible disparity between the rich and the poor emerged. There were many reasons for this situation. Some of the important ones are:

- Modern farming being cost intensive, the small and marginal farmers could not adopt modern farm-technologies due to the lack of credit facilities and thus remained poor.
- The green revolution was confined to agro-climatically rich areas, while the other regions remained backward.
- Intensive farming did increase the absorption of labour, but it was proportionately too low as compared to the supply of manpower in the labour market due to population explosion.
- There was no appreciable growth in the non-farm sector to absorb surplus labour from the farm sector.
- There was no attempt for upgrading the skills of artisans in the job market. This resulted in vast unemployment among them.

In order to counter these maladies of the development process, a series of special rural development programs as corrective measures were introduced during the early seventies. The most important among them which directly focused on the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourer and rural artisans, was Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), introduced in 1973-74. In 1974-75, Marginal Farmers and Agriculture Labourers (MFAL) Agency program was also introduced to take specific care of the marginal farmers, the rural artisans and the agriculture Labourers. The MFAL, which was similar to SFDA, was merged with SFD in 1976. Though SFDA was supposed to take care of all categories of the rural poor, it mainly concentrated on those with land assets and neglected
labourer, causing serious problems of unemployment among them. Unemployment was severe among the asset-less and the skill-less poor in the villages.

To provide relief to the rural poor, who mainly depended on the daily wages, a Crash Employment Programme was introduced in 1974-75 in selected districts followed by another wage employment programme called Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Programme (PIREP). It was introduced during 1975-76 in the blocks which had chronic unemployment problems. These programmes emerge with two distinct characteristics: programme for self-employment, mainly focused on those with assets and/or skills, and programme for wage employment targeting those who did not have any source of income other than their physical labour. During 1978-79, SFDA and the beneficiary oriented element of all other programme were merged into one and a new programme for self-employment called Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was introduced in 2000 blocks, initially with a provision to bring 300 blocks under the programme every year. Similarly, all programmes aimed at wage employment were merged and brought together under the Food for Work programme. In 1980, IRDP was expanded to all the blocks in the country and simultaneously the Food for Work Programme was also reorganized as the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) and extended to all the blocks of the country.

In order to upgrade the skills of the rural artisans and also develop skills among those without any skill, a sub-programme of IRDP called Training of Rural Youth for Self-Employment (TRYSEM) was introduced in 1981. Though the provision of covering 40 per cent of women under IRDP and TRYSEM was already there, a new programme called Development of Women and Children in Rural areas (DWCRA) was introduced on a pilot basis in 50 selected districts, again as a sub-programme of IRDP. Towards the end of the eighties, DWCRA covered all the districts
of the country. The main purpose of DWCRA was to organize the poor women into groups and help them in self-employment by providing them income generating activities.

In the case of wage employment it was realized that NREP was not able to provide the minimum guaranteed wage employment to the rural labourers, a programme fully financed by the ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, called Rural Labour Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEG P) was launched in 1983 with universal coverage.

The year 1987 was the worst drought year of the century and the small and the marginal farmers suffered most. For relieving them from the vagaries of the monsoon, a programme called Jeevan Dhara (later named Million Wells Scheme-MWS) with hundred per cent subsidy to the small and marginal farmers, belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes mainly was introduced.

The NREP and RLEG P with similar objectives caused overlapping and therefore, the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India decided to merge these two into one programme in 1989. It was named Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) and the villages’ panchayats were assigned the task to implement it.

Again, to supplement the wage employment efforts, a new programme called Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was introduced in about 1700 blocks with chronic unemployment problems during 1992-93. Later EAS was extended to cover all the blocks of the country during 1996-97.

During 1991-92 another programme for self-employment with specific focus on rural artisans was introduced. It was called Supply of Improved Tool-Kit to Rural Artisans (SITRA). In 1994-95, a minor
irrigation programme called Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY) was introduced for those small and marginal farmers who were not eligible under MWS. While MWS was a fully subsidized programme, GKY was partly subsidized.

Since the target group for all the self-employment programme was the same and the procedure of selection of beneficiaries was also more or less the same, the multiplicity of the programme created a number of problems in their execution. The more troublesome ones were as follows.

- Due to multiplicity, many influential persons were able to get the benefit of more than one programme at the cost of many poor families.
- Since considerable amount of subsidy was involved, in some cases hundred per cent subsidy (MWS & SITRA), it encouraged the involvement of middleman and local leaders and even senior politicians in the selection of beneficiaries resulting in considerable number of non-eligible families taking the benefits of these programmes.
- Lack of proper planning was another cause of low performance.
- Poor recovery of loans made banks reluctant to advance loans causing significant setback to these programmes.
- Marketing of the produce by the beneficiaries was also a major problem which led to the failure of a large number of income generating schemes taken up by the beneficiaries.

Keeping the above factors in mind, the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India, decided to restructure the self-employment and wage employment programmes during the Ninth Plan period. Several anti-poverty Programmes have been restructured to enhance the efficiency of the Programmes for providing increased benefits to the rural poor. Self-Employment Programmes were revamped by merging the IRDP, DWCRA, SITRA, TRYSEM, the GKY and MWS into a holistic self-employment scheme called Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana. Also,
JRY was redesigned and named Jawahar Gramin Rozgar Yojana (JGSY) on April, 1999. In 2001, however, JGSY and EAS were also merged into a single programme called Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY).

Keeping in view the needs and aspirations of the local people, Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) have been involved in the programme implementation and these institutions constitute the core of decentralized development of planning and its implementation. The Ministry vigorously pursue with the State Governments for expeditious devolution of requisite administrative and financial powers to PRIs as envisaged under 73rd Amendment Act of the Constitution of India. On 25th December 2002, under Drinking Water Sector, a new initiative 'Swajal Dhara' empowering the Panchayats to formulate, implement, operate and maintain drinking water Projects was launched. In order to further involve PRIs in the development process, a new initiative 'Hariyali' was launched by Hon'ble Prime Minister on 27th January, 2003. Hariyali was launched to strengthen and involve Panchayati Raj Institutions in the implementation of watershed development programmes namely Integrated Wasteland Development Programmes (IWDP), Drought Prone Areas Programme (DPAP) and Desert Development Programmes (DDP).

Realizing that empowerment of rural women is crucial for the development for rural India, a women's component is introduced in the programmes for poverty alleviation to ensure flow of adequate funds to this section. The Constitutional Amendment (73rd), Act 1992 provides for reservation of selective posts for women. The Constitution has placed enormous responsibility on the Panchayats to formulate and execute various programmes of economic development and social justice, and a number of Centrally Sponsored Schemes are being implemented through Panchayats. Thus, women Members and Chairpersons of Panchayats, who are basically new entrants in Panchayats, have to acquire the required skill and be given
appropriate orientation to assume their rightful roles as leaders and decision makers. Imparting training to elected representatives of PRIs is primarily the responsibility of the State Governments/Union territory Administrations. Ministry of Rural Development also extends some financial assistance to the States/UTs with a view to improve the quality of training programmes and to catalyse capacity building initiatives for the elected members and functionaries of PRIs.

The Eleventh Plan saw injection of huge resources from the Union Budget to the rural and farm sector. This thrust formed the substance of the Bharat Nirman Programme. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has provided a major foundational support.

Rural development is an important challenge. It involves people and natural resources with a focus on people. Rural describes an area that is dependent socially, culturally and economically on natural resources—land, water, timber, minerals, mountains. In this context, development implies change within a community determined through a democratic process. Rural Development then, consists of activities to identify and to resolve local concern of public interest in communities strongly influenced by natural resources. In this public policy context, rural development focuses on citizen’s participation, leadership development, problem identification, analysis, decision making, resolution and evaluation, all of which are necessary to deal with the issue at hand.

**Rural Development Strategies in Mizoram:**

Mizoram is an economically backward state. It does not produce food crops enough to meet the needs of the people. One of the many reasons is that of the slow growth rate of industrialization. Industrialization plays a
vital role in economic development of any region. At present 70 per cent of the population are engaged in agriculture. According to 2011 census, 60.66 per cent of the total work forces are engaged in the primary sector of the economy, while the state is far away from self-sufficiency in food grain production. The traditional shifting cultivation is no longer desirable for the farmers to support their rapidly increasing population and their growing needs due to the decreasing returns. Besides, there are hardly any plain area except Champhai, known as the rice bowl of Mizoram, and a few other areas where cultivation can be taken up with scientific methods, tools and on permanent basis. Due to poverty and lack of technical knowledge, the unskilled labourers in rural areas cannot move from traditional practice to modern technique which results into increase unemployment in the state.

Agro-based product like ginger, chilly, oranges etc., are grown intensively throughout the state, the farmers are forced to sell the products to outsiders at cheap rates as most of the products are perishable and also there are no sufficient facilities like cold storage and other facilities available in the state. Poor infrastructural facilities of market, market support, bad conditions of road networks and communication system especially during rainy seasons, absent of railway transport, irregular power and water supply, etc., are the other factors hindering the introduction of high capital intensive methods of production. Capital, technical knowledge and entrepreneurial spirit which are the backbone of development are not available in the state.

Uncertainties in the procurement and shortage of essential raw materials and construction materials from outside the state are another drawback on the way of development. Moreover, there is no proper coordination among various agencies in proper implementation of the development programmes. Poor accountability and lack of vigilance on the part of administration leads to underutilization and misappropriation in
finance. Subsequently, the state cannot optimally reap the fruits of various plans and policies announced by the government\textsuperscript{66}.

The British ruled the area and kept it more or less as a pocket of exotic tribal culture. Only concessions were made by the British rulers to the Christian Missionaries to develop their base. The territory has remained cut off from the main current socio-economic and political changes in the country not only during the British regime but also after India’s Independence for many years. Later, out of demand for regional autonomy within the Indian framework made by the tribes in North-East India, the Mizo’s also obtained the District Council Administration in 1952 which proved inadequate for accommodating all of their aspirations. Thus, the administrative and political exclusion by the British imperialist as well as the neglect of the economy and cultural evolution by the post-independent Government of India resulted in a feeling of separation, parochialism and alienation wounding the sentiments of a section of the Mizo’s very badly, who triggered off an armed revolt in the mid-sixties and persisted in protracted political strife. The government of Assam and India took to police and military action and other violent and repressive measures to curb the Mizo rebels’ movement without understanding the sentiments involved.

Immediately after Indian Independence from the British rule, the Government of India introduced different Rural Development Programmes to make a frontal attack on poverty that was looming large in the different parts of India\textsuperscript{67}. The noble idea behind the introduction of Rural Development Programmes was to provide socio-economic well-being to rural poor. However, the public have lost faith in these development programmes due to lack of sincerity in the process of implementation of the programmes. The politicians have always been charged by the people that

\textsuperscript{66} Baharul Islam Laskar (2010). \textit{Industrialization in Mizoram: Problems and Prospects}, p.94
\textsuperscript{67} RN Prasad (1987), \textit{Government and Politics in Mizoram 1947-198}, p.xi
they are using these schemes not necessarily for eradication of poverty but as a political weapon for searching vote and giving favour to their party men at the time of selecting the beneficiaries of the schemes. This unfair selection of the beneficiaries of the Schemes on party consideration has tremendously demoralized the rural poor.

Rural development started with a focus on agricultural development in Mizoram. Agriculture is the main occupation of the Mizo people through the practice of Jhum cultivation. Jhum cultivation also known as slash and burnt method is widely practised by the people resulting in shifting from one place to another in search of land for jhum cultivation and also depending on the availability of Jhum areas. The old and primitive system of agriculture lacked a systematic attempt at agricultural development and is also a danger to the surrounding environment. The British missionaries experimented in different kind of cash crops and cereals. Potato cultivation and rubber plantation were experimented upon. Terraced cultivation was also tried, but it was not successful because of the lack of financial support, administrative coordination and technical guidance. Jhum cultivation continued as a dominant feature of the rural economy. Rural activities remained confined to basket weaving, animal rearing and collecting things from the jungle. It was observed in the administrative report of 1933-34 that the progress of agricultural work in the Lushai district was very slow mainly because of the scarcity of water and due to the fact that, with the exception of a few places, there were no arable lands, no available places for making water canal irrigation, nor were there suitable places for cattle grazing.

With the introduction of Community Development programme after Independence, nine community development blocks were created in 1953. The community development blocks strive to, eliminate poverty, to create

68 Kalpana Das (2004), *Rural Development in Mizoram* p35
69 Kalpana Das, *ibid*
70 Government of Mizoram (2010), *Rural Development Department, Citizen Charter*, p,1
self-reliance among rural people and to uplift the standard of living of different communities in the rural areas, to popularize improved breeds of live-stock and the poultry at domestic level by selling better breeds to villagers at subsidized rate, construction of community halls, construction of play grounds, construction of village roads, steps and culverts, construction of inter village paths, construction of water points, construction of urinal sheds.

Agricultural sector received attention with the creation of community development blocks in the district with the introduction of three types of agricultural schemes such as Normal schemes, Development Schemes under article 275 of the constitution, and the grow more food schemes. Attention was mostly concentrated on the development of agriculture during the first two five year plans (1951-61) in Mizoram. Special emphasis was given in the areas of minor irrigation, soil conservation, wet paddy cultivation, land reclamation, fisheries and the community projects. Land reclamation work was executed by the agriculture department whereas other development work was taken up through the community development blocks in the district. Emphasis was given to the development and marketing of agricultural products during the Third Five year plan (1961-66).

During the fourth plan (1969-74) also, priority was given to agriculture and allied activities, including cooperation and community development. However, the entire programme during the fourth five year plan suffered serious setback which disturbed all planned development process due to the outbreak of Insurgency in Mizoram. An outbreak of insurgency in 1966, during which development works could not be implemented. Another problem that the regions face during this time is that the road condition which makes it difficult for transporting goods and other

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71 Li anzela, *Economic development of Mizoram*, p.112-113
72 Li anzela, *ibid*
supply. In the absence of development in other sectors such as agro-based industries and other allied manufacturing and tertiary sector, agriculture continued to be the main occupation of the people of Mizoram.

During the fifth five year plan (1974-79) agriculture, community development and rural development were given top priority. With the commencement of the sixth five year plan (1980-85) the community development blocks were entrusted to implement the IRDP besides carrying out their other assigned tasks.

While rural development programmes are introduced with good intention, the poor quality of materials used by the implementing agencies clearly highlights the unsatisfactory implementation of the programmes to cater to the socio-economic needs of the rural poor. Besides, immense illiteracy and ignorance have made the people unaware of the resources at their disposal to check manipulation of developmental funds by the officials at different levels. A slow pace of development in the rural areas is the manifestation of the weakness of the administration in implementing the programmes for the benefits of the rural poor.

Though abundant developmental funds have been pumped into the rural areas in the name of rural development, there is, however, little progress worth citing in the rural areas of the state. Though there are various trustworthy non-governmental organizations in the state to facilitate the effective implementation of the developmental programmes in the rural areas, the officials of the government have failed to get them involved in the process of implementation of the aforesaid programmes. Hence, moral and lifestyle of the people in the rural areas have been degenerated resulting in the increase of migration from the rural areas to the urban centres in search of easy livelihood which has never been possible to be realized in the rural areas.
This chapter discussed the meaning rural development, nature, dimensions, and elements, issues which reflect the process of empowering the powerless with the ultimate aim of promoting their quality of life based on maximum utilization of locally available resources and participations of all people including the underprivileged and weaker sections in the development process and discussed the problems of rural development both from theoretical perspective and the Indian context. Rural development should be viewed as a process of increasing the capability of people residing in rural areas so as to become the initiators, decision makers, planners, controllers and managers of change. Different models of rural development have been discussed. In the later part of the chapter the strategies adopted for rural development in India since Independence have been discussed.