Chapter 4:

CONCEPT, MEANING AND DEFINITION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT
CHAPTER - IV
CONCEPT, MEANING AND DEFINITION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

4.1 Concept of Rural Development:

The word 'Rural' means an area which is marked by non-urban style of life, occupational structure, social organization and settlement pattern. Rural is noticeably agricultural, its settlement system consists of villages or homesteads; Socially it signifies greater inter dependence among people, more deeply rooted community life and a slow moving rhythm of life built around nature and natural phenomenon; and occupationally it is highly dependent on crop farming, animal enterprises, tree crops and related activities.

The term 'Development' means quantitative as well as qualitative change. Since it means change, which has meaning only when seen against something at a particular time, it carries a meaning which is not only relative but also subjective. Only a given type of quantitative cum-qualitative change is considered to be development in a positive sense. If the change is not of appreciable quality, and quantity, it is either mal-development or negative development.

In the same sequence of thinking, rural development, would essentially mean desired positive change in the rural areas-both in a quantitative as well as qualitative sense. Thus rural development is an areal-concept. It is a complete term which means a variety of elements (Social, Economic, Technological and Natural) of human life and activities.

Rural development means noticeable changes in all these components. But such changes should take place in a mutually supporting relationship so as to generate organic and optimum development. Organic development is one which maintains a healthy relationship among the various elements or components of a system.

The concept of rural development was borne in the context of agriculture and for a long time it encompassed agricultural development. Since 1970s, the concept has become more definite in its interpretation and it is being regarded as a design to improve the economic and social life especially, by extending benefits of development to the poorest, small farmers, tenants and landless. Now, rural development is not exclusively restricted to any single activity or area, it travels many or all areas which anyway affect upgrading, enlisting and petrifying improvement of transformation in socio-economic lives of rural
people. Rural development means overall improvement of the quality of life for rural people. It is about reduction of poverty, increasing productivity, providing basic services like health, education, drinking water, sanitation, extending infrastructure, attempt to reverse distorted land distribution and ownership and host of other aspects redressing inequality, exploitation and deprivation in any conceivable sense. The general credence is that for breaking the 'interlocking log-jam' and disadvantages, it will surely require attacking several barriers through concerted action and multi pronged strategy.

Rural development as a concept for planning and executing changes in rural areas is based on the assumption, that production increases and social improvements are not mutually exclusive, but on the contrary, are mutually strengthening. The relation between the two is complemented so heavily that development on one front cannot proceed beyond a point, without a simultaneous or prior change in the other. Another trend in rural development is the special emphasis on the weaker sections of the society, i.e. the rural poor, not merely for improving their level of living, but also to bring about a greater degree of their involvement in the development process.

4.2 Meaning of Rural Development:

Meaning of development is growth or evolution, stage of advancement. In the context of rural background it means developing better physical, social and economic conditions of a specific group of people, the rural poor living in the rural areas. This group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless. Improving the living standard or well being of the people providing them security and basic needs like food, shelter, clothing and employment; making the rural areas more productive and less vulnerable to natural hazards like poverty and exploitation; giving them mutually beneficial relation and ensuring them, that development is self sustaining, involving the mass of people with little disruption of traditional customs and administrative decentralization.

4.3 Definition of Rural Development:

Rural development can be defined as “an integrated development of the area and the people through optimum development and utilisation of local resources-physical, biological and human and by bringing about necessary institutional, structural, and attitudinal changes of rural public.”

The ultimate objective is of improving quality of life of ‘rural poor’ and the ‘rural weak’ of our country. Thus rural development is the means to the “process of improving
basic needs, increasing productivity and employment facilities and developing potentials of rural resources through integration of spatial, functional and temporal aspects”.

Development of rural area means, development of the people living in rural areas through implementation of various rural developmental schemes. The objectives of development includes sustained increase in per capita output and incomes, expansion of productive employment and greater equity in the distribution of the benefits of growth. Rural development over the years, has emerged as “a strategy designed to improve the economic, social and cultural life of specific group of people as well as living in rural areas”. Increased employment, higher productivity, higher income as well as ensuring minimum acceptable levels of food, clothing, shelter, education and health in the main objectives of rural development.

Thus, rural development means, development of infrastructure. “Rural development must constitute a major part of development strategy if a larger segment of those in greatest need are to benefit.”

4.4 Multiple Objectives of Rural Development:

More production, more employment, more equitable distribution of income and emphasis on the rural poor. Local-level planning is then a tool to translate these objectives into concrete programmes in a local area. The efficacy of local-level planning for rural development will depend on the extent of decentralization of decision-making, planning, administration and budgeting to the local level.

A substantial measure of decentralization to the local levels in a country would necessarily involve the reinforcing of local level government and other development institutions. The adjustments needed, would vary significantly from country to country. Unless the functional aspects of rural development projects are completely delegated to the lower levels of government, problems would arise with regard to overlapping functions of central and local government departments. Almost unanimous on the need for strong planning and executive machinery for rural development at the local level. Local level planning has its great merit, when it is carried out within “manageable unit areas”, as it would enable the identification of the basic inter-relations between the different components of rural development and help in evolving the most appropriate strategy suited to each area. At the same time, local-level management would provide the flexibility needed to modify programmes, as conditions become better understood or as
circumstances changes. Other advantages of local level planning for rural development are:

(a) ensure local participation and evoke local enthusiasm,
(b) make local distribution of resources possible,
(c) establish closer correspondence between the resources endowment and potentials of an area and the contents and magnitude of development programmes taken up therein,
(d) establish greater complementarities between inter-dependent programmes falling within the sphere of different departments and
(e) obtain feed-back in terms of field level experiences for making the planning process at the other hierarchic levels more realistic and effective.

The changing policy objectives and development compulsions before the developing countries are now quite clear. The logic of local level planning as the instrument of state intervention for rural development, within the larger frame work of multi-level planning seems almost compelling. This underlines the case for devising appropriate national guidelines for an effective Local-Level-Planning for rural development by individual countries, so that some ways of quickly reaching the new development goals and integrating the National Planning Priorities and the felt needs of local communities may be explained and systematically acted upon.

4.5 Characteristic of Rural Development:

Agriculture is the back bone of Indian economy about 72.2 % in 2001 census, of its population lives in rural areas, mainly dependent on agriculture. In order to meet food, fuel, firewood and fibre requirement of ever increasing population, it is essential to develop a system through which most of these needs of the people are met from the resources available within the village ecosystem as far as possible, without disturbing it’s the environmental and ecological balance.

Many Programmes / Plans such as IRDP (Integrated Rural Development Programme); DDP (Desert Development Programme) ; DPAP (Drought Prone Area Programme) ; ITDP (Integrated Tribal Development Programme) ; NREP (National Rural Employment Programme) ; SFDA (Small farmers Development Agencies) ; MFAL (Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Agencies) ; TRYSEM (Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment) etc. have been developed and implemented for raising socio-economic status of the rural people, but most of them have not made any remarkable progress. The most logical and scientific approach of rural development should be based on
management of natural resources through scientific and sustainable basis involving the whole ecosystem in its totality.

4.6 Strategy For Rural Development:

The word strategy refers to the dynamic process by which a programme is aligned with the organizational structure to meet the demands of the environment. Strategy must be so designed, as to ensure the desired results are created by the implementation of programmes.

A strategy for rural development must be recognized by the following three points, such as:

a) The rate of transfer of people out of low productivity agriculture and related activities into more rewarding pursuits has been slow; and, given the relative size of the modern sector in most developing countries, it will remain slow.

b) The mass of the people in rural areas face varying degrees of poverty; their position is likely to get worse, if population expands at unprecedented rates, while limitations continue regarding availability of resources, technology, and institutions and organizations.

c) Rural areas have labour, land and at least some capital, which, if mobilized may reduce poverty and improve the quality of life.

Rural development recognizes, however that improved food supplies and nutrition, together with such basic services as health and education, can directly improve the physical well-being and quality of life of the rural poor, and indirectly enhance their productivity and their ability to contribute to the national economy.

A strategy for rural development aimed at raising growth rates and distribution, the finite of growth more fairly implies greater interaction between the modern and traditional sectors, especially in the form of increased trade in farm products, and in technical inputs and services.

The objectives of development include sustained increases in per capita output and incomes, expansion in productive employment, and greater equity in the distribution of the benefits of growth. In other words, it means that people should have an adequate income to improve their living standards on a continuing basis.

A programme of rural development must embrace a wide range and mix of activities, including projects to raise agricultural output, to improve health and education, to expand communications and to improve housing. It also includes improvements in
rural infrastructure and rural environment. Villages should be connected with all weather roads, assured with safe drinking water throughout the year, have proper sanitation, facilities for the treatment of diseases as well for the development of healthy habits, education—including adult education, increase their sense of awareness of better living and a good life. Paul and Subramaniam have suggested a set of six strategy proportions.

i) “The weaker sections of the population are likely to benefit from a programme when its service is designed to meet the carrying needs of beneficiary groups through a process of adaptation over time, where necessary”.

ii) “The stronger the vertical and horizontal linkage in a programme service, the greater the chances that the programme will benefit the weaker sections”

iii) “The weaker sections are likely to benefit from a programme when its service is so designed that its appropriation by others is rendered difficult or unprofitable.”

iv) The more participative process of identification of the intended beneficiaries, the greater the chance that the programme benefits will reach them.

v) The lower the technological and institutional barriers to entry in the design of a programme, the higher the livelihood that the weaker sections will benefit from its service.

vi) The stronger the participation of the poor beneficiaries, or their organizations in the planning and implementation of the programme, the higher the probability of the benefits for the weaker sections.

4.7 Approaches to Rural Area Problems:

Rural development is the ultimate analysis which involves the provision of opportunities for optimum utilisation of human resources in rural areas. Human resource development in its turn can take place only if there is adequate nutrition and working opportunities available for the rural masses.

Approaches to Rural Area Problems are –

i) Need for appropriate analytical methodology in identifying local area problems.

ii) Field survey and primary data collection, secondary sources, tertiary sources, application of remote sensing methods, photographs, and other scientific methods.
iii) Mapping and generalizations – at a meaningful rural base unit levels; use of cybernetic tools, computer analysis, effective analysis of census data, etc.

iv) Preparation of detailed questionnaires for specific rural areas; specification and identification of areas by type in resource analysis and problem solving models.

v) Tabular representation of rural area’s problems, generalizations and use of hypothetical models; testing of available developmental theories.

vi) Analysis of unique social and cultural problems related to the developmental theories, in specific regions and areas.

4.8 Approaches to Integrated Rural Area Development:

i) Historical perspective of rural development and planning in different regions and countries.

ii) Rural Planning, a multi faceted problem in relation to: organisation of rural space, basic rural unit for using resources efficiently, easy availability of land resources, population, land-use models, organisation of rural people, rural labour, increasing the rate of participation of both the people and resources in development and production.

iii) Policy for developing uplifting the lifestyle of the farmers; improving the social agricultural infrastructure; farmer’s organisation, multi-purpose farmer’s co-operatives, their regional integration with road, electricity, irrigation system etc., progressive elimination of gaps in the new system of agricultural development; attempts at spatial integration in functional co-ordination of settlements and agro-distributional schemes at micro-level.

iv) Policy of rural industrial development - integration of farming and industries, farmer’s industrial co-operatives and industrial enterprises, absorbing rural labour in expanding agro-industrial, agro-urban sectors and creating opportunities for food-processing and non-food crop processing modules; developing rural base units and their centres, locations of market towns and marketing facilities and institutional network of agro-urban communities, planning for integrated growth of rural-urban areas as a further step of growth; introduction of appropriate modern scientific technology.

v) Modernization of rural society and cultural policies and planning for transfer of loyalty and values from traditional technology to modern technology, rural centres as modernized centres, scope of intermediate or appropriate technology,
increasing relationship between education, social planning, development from caste and class to community consciousness, group responsibility, evolving training, knowledge of diffusion, Communication systems, rural health, improvement schemes together with family planning schemes.

vi) Planning of village, rural living space, rural housing and other rural buildings, institutional building and spatial units, consolidation of space, organizing institutions and construction of schemes for conservation of rural space resources, and also beautifying rural landscape.

vii) Cost and benefit analysis of rural development and planning at micro-level under the ensured polices framing for the achievement of desired goals, phasing of rural development planning in long-term perspective.

References:

- **Chaudhuri Dr. Mr.** (1986): *Methods and Concept in Geography, Indian Economic Geographic Study*, Calcutta.
- **Chisholm Michael** (1962) : *Rural Settlement and land use; an essay in Location.*, Hutchinson, London.


• Industrial Progress and Rural Development in West Bengal (1990), Department of Information & Cultural Affairs, Government of West Bengal. Calcutta.


• Mishra, H.N. (1987): *Rural Geography Heritage* New Delhi,


60