Chapter 6:

OBJECTIVES AND IMPORTANCE OF
RURAL DEVELOPMENT
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6.1 Importance of Rural Development:

Rural development is necessary not only for an overwhelming majority of the population living in villages but the development of rural activities is essential to accelerate the pace of overall economic development of the country. Rural development has assumed greater importance in India today than in the earlier period in the process of the development of the country. It is a strategy package seeking to achieve enhanced rural production and productivity, greater socio-economic equity, and aspiration, balance in social and economic development. The primary task is to mitigate the hunger of about 70 percent of the rural population, providing adequate and nutritious food. Then follow an adequate provision of clothing and footwear, a clean house in a clean environment, medical care, recreational facility, education, transport and communication.

6.2 Aims of Rural Development:
The need of the hour is that rural development should aim at:

- Removal of unemployment;
- Reduction in under-employment;
- Improve the standard of living;
- Adequate income for nutritious food;
- Sufficient clothes;
- Availability of soft drinking water;
- Hygienic living conditions;
- Satisfactory educational facilities for learning;
- Suitable medical facilities for treatment;
- Proper house to live in;
- Appropriate socio-cultural activities to enrich oneself;
- Adequate all-weather roads for better communication.

To fulfill these requirements commitment and desire for development is essential. A
strong commitment to rural development policies at the national level is required for an effective implementation of the varied programmes for rural development at micro-level.

6.3 Objectives of The Rural Development:
The objectives laid-down were in the Sixth Plan (1980-85) period for Rural development are –

(i) To improve productivity and thereby the income of the rural poor;
(ii) To ensure enlarged employment opportunities at a faster pace;
(iii) To achieve the removal of unemployment and a significant reduction in under employment;
(iv) To ensure an appreciable rise in the standard of living of the poorest sections of the population; and
(v) To provide some of the basic needs of the people -- clean drinking water, elementary education, health care, rural roads etc.

6.4 Goals of India’s Five Year Plan and Twenty Point Programme:
It is quite true that since independence public interest in rural development has increased significantly. To carry the benefits of development to India’s villages and improving their living standards, particularly of those living below the poverty line, has been a goal of India’s Five-year Plan and the 20-point Programme. Such as :-

- **Make special efforts to increase production of pulses and vegetable oil seeds**:
The Production Strategy in every block will include the following approaches :
  i) Introduction of pulses and oilseeds cultivation in all irrigated crop rotations.
  ii) Improve the productivity of pulses and oil seeds grown under rainfed conditions through steps such as better moisture conservation, a more scientific plant yield and post harvest technology.
  iii) Improve the management of pulses and oilseeds grown in mixed cropping systems.
iv) Facilitate the productivity of perennial oilseeds like coconut and oil palm, oil yielding trees like neem, mahua, sal etc. and annual oilseeds like ground-nut, mustard, syabean, sunflower, and linseeds in addition to enhance the extraction and utilisation of oils extracted from rice bran, cottonseed, mango kernel, maize, etc.

- **Implement agricultural land ceiling, distribute surplus land and complete compilation of land records by removing all administrative and legal obstacles**:
  
  If enforcement of these laws will be facilitated, then surplus land can be taken over and distributed among landless persons, particularly those belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.
  
  Compilation and updating of Land Records is necessary not only for the effective implementation of land reforming measures but also to enable flow of credit to small landholders.

- **Increase irrigation potential, develop and disseminate technologies and inputs for dry land agriculture**:
  
  In the Sixth Plan, the strategy for providing irrigation to farmers all over the country has five components, namely
  
  I. Conservation of rain water in farm ponds,
  
  II. Utilising the ground water potential,
  
  III. Harnessing the surface water resources,
  
  IV. Utilising the surplus water in rivers.
  
  V. Intensifying R&D efforts particularly in solar desalination.

- **Supply drinking water to all problem villages**:
  
  Safe drinking water is a basic need. The objective of this item is to ensure safe drinking water in villages, suffering from chronic scarcity or those with unsafe sources of water.
  
  During the Sixth Plan the effort will be to cover all the identified problem villages with at least one source of safe potable water available throughout the year.
  
  The needs of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe population in the rural
areas will be given due priority in the implementation of this programme.

- **Strengthen and expand coverage of integrated rural development and national rural employment programmes**: The beneficiaries under this programme will be assisted in utilising productive assets acquired with the subsidy and loans for various rural activities such as dairying, poultry, piggery, sericulture, fisheries, village and cottage industries and trade. and services through integrated support by way of credit, technical assistance including training, supply of inputs and marketing facilities.

   Special organisational arrangements, are also being made at the district and block levels for the effective implementation of this programme. A high proportion of the beneficiaries under the programme will belong to Scheduled Caste, and Scheduled Tribes.

   The National Rural Development Programme will remove the drawbacks of the earlier Food for Work Programmes and provide a permanent and scientific foundation. So that durable assets will benefit to the local population.

   The effective execution of this programme will not only raise the income levels of rural labour but would also stabilise the level of wages of agricultural labourers.

   Effective implementation of IRDP and NREP will make a considerable dent on rural poverty. Steps are being taken to streamline the delivery systems, so that the weaker sections of the community derive full benefit from the programmes designed to assist them. Voluntary action will be promoted and special efforts will be made to ensure satisfactory credit flow to women’s occupations.

- **Allot house sites to rural families who are without them and expand programmes for construction assistance to them**: To provide relief to the weaker sections of the rural community, a scheme for the provision of house sites to landless agricultural workers was introduced in 1972-73 under the Central programme of special welfare schemes.

   The programme received impetus after its in-corporation in the earlier 20-points programme.
It will be ensured that all the landless families are provided with house sites by March 1985 and the programme of construction assistance is expanded.

- **Rehabilitate Bonded labour:**

  Legislation for abolition of bonded labour was passed in 1976. Efforts were thereafter initiated for identification, freeing and rehabilitation of bonded labour in different states.

  The provision in the central plan is for giving matching grant assistance to the state Governments for implementing the approved schemes. Continuous notice is being kept with the concerned state Governments to monitor the progress of enforcement of this programme, identify and suggest appropriate measures.

- **Review and enforce effectively minimum wages for agricultural labour:**

  Minimum wages for agricultural workers are fixed both by the central and the state Government/Union Territories. The state Government/Union Territories have been advised from time to time to ensure timely revision of minimum wages in agriculture and also to strengthen the machinery for enforcement so that the statutory minimum wages are actually paid to workers.

  An important method of enforcing the payment of minimum wages is the effective performance of the National Rural Employment Project.

- **Pursue vigorously programmes of afforestation, social and farm forestry and the development of bio-gas and other alternative energy sources.**

  The forest area of our country is about 22.8 percent of the total land area, as against an optimum of 33 percent prescribed by the National Forest Policy the existing inadequate forest area is unable to meet fully the needs of the country. To induce all states to take up social Forestry Programme, two centrally sponsored schemes were introduced during the 5th Five year Plan, viz. (I) Mixed Plantations on common lands, and (ii) Reforestation on degraded forests and raising of shelter belts.

  Realising the urgency and need for conservation of energy, a National Bio-gas Development Project has been launched under the Sixth Five year Plan, in which ten
lakhs of family size bio-gas plants and 100 community bio-gas plants were contemplated.

- **Accelerate Programmes for the development of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes:**

  Article 46 of the Constitution lays down as Directive principle that “the state shall promote with special care educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people and in particular of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and shall protect them from social injustices and all forms of exploitation. It has also decided that the major thrust of development would come from the state plans and targeted Scheduled Caste families will be assisted to cross over the poverty line.

- **Promote family planning on a voluntary basis as a people’s movement:**

  The population of India has doubled itself since independence, from 34.2 crores in 1947 to 100 crores in 2001. It is obvious that a further increase in population at the present rapid rate will nullify all the gains of our developmental efforts.

  So, Family Planning is essentially a people’s movement. The people now realise the benefits of a small family. The Government’s role is to educate them in the methods of contraception so that they are motivated to accept, on their own any one of them. Trained Government personnel have been deployed in all rural and urban medical institutions in the country for educating and motivating the people. Service facilities and supply of contraceptives are being expanded in both rural and urban areas to enable the people to adopt any method of their choice including sterilisation, IUD, conventional contraceptives and oral pills.

- **Accelerate Programme of welfare for women and children and nutritional programmes for pregnant women, nursing mothers and children, specially in tribal, hill and back ward areas:**

  The sixth plan for the first time includes a separate chapter on women and Developmental Programmes for the social and economic upliftment of women will receive greater attention. Legal sanction as well as public opinion will be mobilized against evil practices like dowry. In additions, priority attention will be given to
expand facilities for the improvement of education, health and nutrition for both women and children.

In spite of expansion of the health infrastructure and educational programmes in the country, the knowledge about health, nutrition, child rearing practices continues to be quite low; particularly in rural areas. Infant mortality is very high among lower socio-economic groups. For tackling these problems a scheme of Integrated Child Development Services was formulated and initiated during 1975-76. The scheme aims to provide a package of services consisting of (i) supplementary nutrition; (ii) immunisation; (iii) health check-up; (iv) allied services; (v) nutrition and health education, and (vi) non-formal education to children of the age group of 3-5 years. Functional literacy programme for young girls and mothers has also been taken up in these blocks to promote non-formal education that is functionally relevant to child care, nutrition and health education. Programme for supply of safe drinking water will also make a contribution to this objective.

- **Improve the environment of slums, implement programmes of house building for economically weaker sections, and take measures to arrest unwarranted increase in land prices**:

  A scheme of Environmental Improvement of Slums was launched in 1972 under the Central Programme of Special Welfare Schemes.

  The facilities that would be provided are water supply, effective water drainage, paving of streets, street lighting and provision of community latrines.

- **Spread universal elementary education for the age-group 6-14 with special emphasis on girls and simultaneously involve students and voluntary agencies in programmes for the removal of adult illiteracy** -

  Article 45 of the Constitution promises free and compulsory education for all children in the age group 6-14 years by 1960. The emphasis will be on enrolling children of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and landless labour, especially girls. Appropriate incentives such as free books, stationary, uniforms, attendance, scholarships etc. will be given to the children of the weaker sections, particularly girls.

  The quality of education at the elementary stage will be improved, schools are to be provided with suitable buildings and adequate equipments. Curriculum will have to
Elementary education has been included as an integral component of the minimum needs programme and its success will depend on its linkages with several developmental activities.

- **Continue strict action against smugglers hoarders, and tax evaders and check black money** -

  The Government will intensify its action against anti-social elements like speculators, hoarders, black marketers as well as smugglers. The administration of various administrative as well as legislative measures such as the Essential Commodities Act, the prevention of black-marketing and maintenance of Essential Supplies Act, etc. will be tightened. Tax administration will be tightened to curb tax avoidance and tax evasion and the use of unaccounted funds.

  During 1981, the Income Tax Department took several steps to counter tax-evasion in the country like – (i) intensification of search operations; (ii) Stepping up of survey operations; (iii) strengthening of the direct tax laws through incorporation of appropriate provisions, etc.

- **Improve the working of public enterprises by increasing efficiency, capacity utilisation and generation of internal resources** -

  The public sector today embraces a wide spectrum of economic activities like manufacturing and mining, transportation, trading and marketing, project consultancy, general contracting, etc. It plays a commanding role in the development of vital industries like steel, atomic energy, mining, petroleum, chemicals and fertilizers and heavy engineering. It has also entered into areas of consumer goods like textiles and newer fields like electronics.

  Public sector enterprises have multiple goals such as the achievement of national self-reliance, import substitution, reduction of regional and social imbalances, stability of prices, etc. There is need for substantial improvement in the working of the central and state Public sector undertaking, particularly railways, posts and telegraphs, electricity Boards, and transport corporation. The prospects of rapid growth are critically dependent on the ability of public undertaking to generate resources. There is need to improve management practices so as to impart a greater concern for optimal utilisation of capacity and higher levels of efficiency. Modern techniques of Project monitoring and construction management will be introduced to
avoid slippages in time schedules and cost escalation. Delegation of authority will be promoted. Greater involvement of workers will be fostered.

What ever may be the individual objective of rural development, the one and only objective at rural development is to raise the living standards of rural people.

- **Maximise Power generation, improve the functioning of electricity authorities and electrify all villages.**

In the sixth five year plan, the cumulative commercial losses for the five year period for the State Electricity Boards were estimated at Rs. 4400 crores. In view of the massive investment in the Power Sector, it is necessary to take effective steps to reduce substantially the losses of the State Electricity Boards and improve their efficiency. The major effort will have to be improve the existing low plant load factors of the thermal power stations, reduce slippages in the commissioning of the new units and improve managerial efficiency of the Electricity Boards. The State Electricity Boards have a crucial role to play in implementing the power programme in the sixth plan by proper utilisation of capacity, removal of managerial and other deficiencies.

- **Substantially augment universal primary health care facilities, and control of leprosy, T.B. and blindness.**

The country has made notable progress in the health sector after the beginning of planning. A number of serious epidemics which used to take a heavy toll on human life, like plague and small-pox, have been eliminated. The incidence of malaria has been greatly reduced. The incidence of leprosy and tuberculosis is however, still high. There is a good deal of preventable blindness in the country due to nutritional deficiencies disease or cataract. Morbidity rates on account of nutritional deficiencies, water borne diseases and environmental causes are also still high.

An integrated approach to the health problems through preventive, promotive and curative measures along with effective linkages with other programmes like safe drinking water supply, improvement in sanitation, nutrition, education has, therefore, been adopted under the sixth plan. The rural health infrastructure is being strengthened and remodelled. For every 1000 people in villages there will be a trained Health Guide who will provide health education to the people, including family planning, treat minor ailments and refer cases requiring attention of a doctor to the nearest Primary Health Centre.
A programme for control of leprosy is being implemented as a centrally sponsored schemes funded by the centre on 100 per-cent basis.

Under the current programme of control of preventable blindness on account of disease, nutritional deficiency or cataract.

- **Liberalise investment procedures and streamline industrial policies to ensure timely completion of projects. Give handicrafts, handlooms, small and village industries all facilities to grow and to update their technology.**

The research and developmental work that is being carried out by the various all-India boards and organisations will be directed towards evolving appropriate technology, reduce drudgery without affecting employment and improve the earnings of artisans. A number of process-cum product development centres, regional design and testing centres, small industries service and craft institutes and a council for Advancement of Rural Technology have been set up for the development and provision of technological back-up.

Emphasis will be given to the achievement of the production and employment targets for villages and small industries set in the Sixth Plan for 1984-85, especially in sericulture, carpet weaving, etc. Action has been initiated for revival of sick industrial units, setting up of a National Handloom Development Corporation and of co-operative spinning mills and ancillarisation and ‘nucleus’ plant programmes.

- **Expand the public distribution system through more fair price shops, including mobile shops in far-flung areas, shops to cater to industrial workers, students hostels and make available to students text-books and exercise books on a priority basis and to promote a strong consumer protection movement.**

Considerable stress has continued to be laid on the expansion of the public distribution system to make essential consumer goods available at reasonable prices to all, particularly the vulnerable sections. At present food grains, sugar, kerosene, edible oils, soft coke and controlled cloths are being distributed through fair price shops.

The public distribution system is to be so developed that it remains a permanent, reliable and efficient feature of the national economy. The system will, therefore, be expanded and strengthened, so as quickly to cover all areas in the country, particularly rural areas as well as the backward, remote and inaccessible areas.
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