Chapter-1
RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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Chapter 1

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

1.1 INTRODUCTION

India lives in the villages unless we reconstruct, improve and develop them, India will perish. Gandhiji said "If India is not to perish, we have to begin with lower rung of ladder. If that was rotten all work done at the top or at the intermediate rungs was bound to fail". The agrarian character of the Indian economy and to which such pointed attention was drawn by Mahatama Gandhi continues to be true to this day inspite of the industrial development that has taken place in the last decades since independence. The industrialization has not made any substantial difference to the proportion of the population that lives in the village.

The importance of rural development looked at broadly as such, is further intetified by the fact that poverty, the eradication of which is the supreme objective of all development efforts has the widest incidence in rural areas. It is the landless rural labour that forms the largest reservoir of poverty in the country and is source of urban poverty too. Industrialization can to an extent reduce the incidence of poverty, specially urban poverty but to have this effect, industrialization not only
has to be labour-intensive, but perhaps more importantly mass based. The latter characteristic, namely mass-base, can be acquired by production of goods & services of mass consumption, sustained by steady increase of the purchasing power of masses, resulting from additional employment created by the labour intensity of the industries concerned. Indeed it is only such mass base that can ensure continued expansion of industries leading to a level of industrialization commensurate with the size and population of the country.

Around sixty five percent of the State's population is living in rural areas. People in rural areas should have the same quality of life as is enjoyed by people living in sub urban and urban areas. Further there are cascading effects of poverty, unemployment, poor and inadequate infrastructure in rural areas on urban centres causing slums and consequential social and economic tensions manifesting in economic deprivation and urban poverty. Hence Rural Development which is concerned with economic growth and social justice, improvement in the living standard of the rural people by providing adequate and quality social services and minimum basic needs becomes essential. The present strategy of rural development mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-
employment. The above goals will be achieved by various programme support being implemented creating partnership with communities, non-governmental organizations, community based organizations, institutions, Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRIs) and industrial establishments, while the Department of Rural Development will provide logistic support both on technical and administrative side for programme implementation. Other aspects that will ultimately lead to transformation of rural life are also being emphasized simultaneously.

The Government's policy and programmes have laid emphasis on poverty alleviation, generation of employment and income opportunities and provision of infrastructure and basic facilities to meet the needs of rural poor. For realising these objectives, self-employment and wage employment programmes continued to pervade in one form or other.

As a measure to strengthen the grass root level democracy, the Government is constantly endeavoring to empower Panchayat Raj Institutions in terms of functions, powers and finance. Grama sabha, NGOs, Self-Help Groups and Panchayat Raj Institution have been accorded adequate role to make participatory democracy meaningful and effective.

In the ultimate analysis, it is rural development in the broad sense of the term that holds the key to all economic progresses, industrial or
agrarian, urban or rural. There is no basic conflict between rural and urban interest, between industry heavy or light and agriculture. The conflict is really between the elite and the masses and this conflict exists as much in urban areas between the urban elite and the urban poor, as in the rural areas between the rural elite and the rural masses. There is indeed a constant struggle between the rich and the poor to divert investible resources for the benefit of their respective groups. In the struggle between the rich and the poor, it is the former who are better organized and more articulate and who therefore, prevail. This applies as much too urban as to rural areas. Therefore, there is no basic distinction between the urban and rural.

1.2 PEOPLE’S PARTICIPATION IN THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The approach to rural development followed so far has been essentially bureaucratic rather than participatory. Rural development plans have been prepared at the national and state, headquarters and passed on to local level offices of the government for execution. Involvement of the local people has been rather limited. Consequently there has a mismatch between what the people wanted and what they got from the government.

Studies of Indian Planning experience have thrown up numerous
cases of planners giving uniform or stereotype schemes which are not suited to local needs or resources in several areas. According to one study, a large number of lower caste marginal farmers were provided with a superior breed of buffaloes in a Rajasthan village, but they could not maintain these animals as they failed to produce the dry and green fodder. Some of them, therefore, sold these animals to the higher caste big farmers. In other cases, loans and subsidies were given to some farmers for digging, open wells and bore wells but electricity could not be provided for the pump sets. Whether it is rural development programme, the dead uniformity which has occurred in the name of national planning has proved highly unproductive. The interest at the higher level has been increasingly to get at the quick numerical results which are easy to report, add up and publicise in one form or another with too little attention to the true impact on the conditions of the people.

The reliability of data and information procured through government machinery has also quite doubtful. There have been numerous examples of inefficiency arising out of non-availability or unreliability of data. Their deficiencies are neglected more particularly at micro levels.

Involvement of local people in schemes of rural development is expected to result on better planning and decision making because the local people have a better awareness of their needs. Maximum impact
with minimum cost should be the aim. Moreover, implementation may also be better as a result of more realistic planning and greater involvement of people. Further, this may reduce delay and ensure easy accountability. It is also expected that decentralization will lead to a more equitable regional development. Every area will receive some minimum attention.

Another advantage of involving local people in planning for rural development is that it helps to raise the levels of their consciousness of their rights and responsibilities, which in turn tends to facilitate social change. Involvement of the people in the planning process may also provide them with an opportunity for advancement on the bases of self-help and mutual cooperation thus, augmenting developmental effort. Over the years, a tendency has developed to depend on government for every developmental activities. Works which used to be under taken by the village communities themselves are now expected to be done by Government – Departments. People seems to have lost all initiative and enterprise. However, if they are given the over all responsibility for planning and deciding their own development then they take up some works with their own efforts and resources. Several such activities can be identified e.g. construction of compost pits in household, maintenance of village roads, adult education programme elementary hygiene and so
Several questions however, do arise with regard to participation of people in rural development. At what level and stage in the planning process can local public opinion be used in a most effective manner. How far should one depend on such opinion? How can it be ensured that people’s involvement does not result in the plan becoming simply a list of demands from a narrow local perspective? What degree of involvement is desirable and feasible?

Most of the answers to these questions would vary from state to state depending upon social, political and administrative set up in each. Sometimes there may be variations even within a state. Direct involvement of the people as a whole is possible only at the level of villages where all the adults can assemble together for discussion. At higher levels, such as a block or a district, discussion can be held only through their representatives.

People’s participation is feasible at several stages in the planning process. There can hardly be a better agency than the people themselves for the collection of data and information. This can be done by the village as a whole or group in their meetings and recorded by village official or by the educated among the villagers themselves. Village meetings provide a good forum for verification of data and information.
Information collected through this method is expected to be more accurate than that collected by paid employees appointed either by Government or by research institutions.

Apart from the collection of data and information there is also a scope for involvement to the people in other aspects of planning. The views of the public would be specially useful at the stage of formulation of objectives, and laying down of priorities of the plan, as these would ensure that objectives and priorities are related to the felt needs and problems. The people may be ignorant or unaware of different choices available for development programmes. Their participation in planning can be more effective if necessary details are also presented before them by some planning team consisting of experts, including local level experts. Widespread publicity and extension of education may be necessary to enlighten the public about the problems of local development, types of projects and nature of benefits available. Attempt should be made to make the people aware of the responsibilities as well as feasibility of raising their standard of living by making use of local resources. The people should also be informed of the social and institutional factors which might be responsible for sub-optimal production. This may prompt them to devise measures for overcoming the constraints and bringing about social change. The village meetings, if
held frequently, would provide a good forum for such education and awareness. This can be supplemented by efforts of the planning team at the block, district levels.

Public participation by way of discussion in open assemblies in village may be equally useful in identification, formulation, selection and locations of schemes of local importance like those relating to provision of drinking water, health centre, School building etc. Controversies which usually arise in such cases are expected to be better resolved at village level meetings.

Another area in which public participation may be very useful is that of monitoring and evaluation of projects programmes. The information provided by the people on the progress of a project would also help in identifying the problems and constraints in implementation.

Thus, people's participation in planning would be beneficial at every stage of planning and such as setting of goals, determination of strategy and priorities, formulation of schemes, collection of data and information, monitoring and evaluation.

The recommendations of public may have either advisory of mandatory status. People's participation becomes more meaningful and effective when the people become the real planner at village levels. In this case the role of government and its planning team would be facilitate
the performance of people’s function’s more efficiently by providing funds, advice or any other technical inputs and by creating facilities for the success of the plan formulated by creating facilities for the success of the plan formulated by the people. In other words, the people would plan and the government would play a supportive role. However, it would be better if the comments of the planning team are obtained before considering schemes or plan for approval. This would ensure that public involvement does not result in the plan becoming a more list of demands from a narrow local perspective. It would also keep the size of the plan within the limits of available funds and resources.

The views of the public would be especially useful at the stage of formulation of objectives and laying down at the stage of priorities of the plan, as this would ensure that the objectives and priorities are related to the felt needs and problems. Their participation in planning can be more effective if alternatives with necessary details are also presented them by some planning team.

Several experiences in involving people in planning rural development have been made in an isolated manner by a few voluntary agencies. What is now needed is that state government should immediately take up at least the first step in the direction of people’s participation in rural development. In view of this centre has decided to strengthen
Panchayat Raj Institutions. Both decentralization and democracy are the accepted principles on Indian Political Thought. The main aim of Panchayat Raj institution are to create institutions at the village, block and district level to provide opportunities for self expression and political representation at these levels to mobilize the public support and local resources for the development of the programmes and to decentralize decision making and thereby allow experience, needs and aspiration to have full play in planning and implementation of programmes. In the present socioeconomic setting, the participation of people is guaranteed in the Panchayati Raj.

Thus the Panchayati Raj Institutions can play a very important role in obtaining people’s participation in rural development programmes. The coordination of these institutions is, therefore, of immense importance.

Now let us discuss the rural development bureaucracy.

The most striking administration in no valions made by the rural development right at the beginning were principally three: development block as unit of administration, village level worker as a joint agent of all and development commissioner as the coordinating body functioning at the state level.

The district which varies in size from 1500 to 700 sq miles and whose population may on an average, be round 1.5 million, has
traditionally renamed the lowest a unit of administration in India. Rural development has carved out a new level, namely the development block and in the process has shifted the government so to say, closer to the villages. A development block is a small territorially compact area of nearly 100 villages with a population of 50,000 to 60,000 vgenerally.

The draft outline of First Five Year Plan (1951) carried the idea forward and made the firm recommendation in favour of carving out a block of fifty or sixty villages with a population of about 25,000 to 30,000.

The First Five Year Plan put the seal of approval on the concept of the block. It recommended that official concerned with agriculture, animal husbandry, cooperative and panchayats, health and education, must integrate their programmes in terms of the requirements of the population of the block and work together as a team with the extension officer who may be – the sub – collector or where the sub divisional system is not developed another officer closely associated with the district administration.1

Successive move had favoured the creation of a small unit of development administration addressing itself to the integration of various programmes in term of area covered by it. What is more, it was revenue officer who was there as heading the block. This is how development

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1 The First Five Year Plan - Planning Commission 1952, page 137
administration has been sought to be integrated with the revenue administration in India. Thus integration has been prompted by the thought that development departments themselves nurtured a feeling of not being very effective without the active assistance of the revenue administration. In Indian Society especially in the rural areas, the revenue bureaucracy enjoys a high status and people listen to it with difference, which makes it effective in its work.

The second innovation made by the rural development administration is the village level worker. This functionary was first conceived in December 1946 by the architect of the Etawah Pilot Project, Albert Mayer and put in to the field in 1948 when the pilot project was started. The practice hitherto had been that each department had its own representatives in the village. The farmer had thus to deal with several functionaries for that to him was the same problem. This created a measure of confusion, particularly for the farmers. Second, these village level functionaries functioned separately and in almost water tight compartments. They made no attempt to coordinate their respective programmes or actualities or to relate them to the requirements of the farmer. He did not know whom to listen and what to adhere to. Third the bottom level functionary was to till paid and ill equipped to be able to inspire the cultivator and sustain his confidence. The village level worker
is a consolidation of all them and is the joint representative of several departments. Besides, he is trained industrial capable of solving many of the farmer's day-to-day problems in the initial stage itself and, where necessary he obtains expert advice from the higher level to which he is linked.

The development commission at the state headquarters who coordinates the developmental progress of different departments and expedites their implementation, is another innovation of development administration in India. The Planning Commission has recommended the setting up of their functionary at the very start of the community projects in India though UP has a development Commissioner right from 1946.

These above three may be identified as the most outstanding innovations made by rural development programmes. This does not imply that no other change in administration has been made. Many specialists have been recruited and the number of specialists has been recruited and the number of specialists required to push rural development programmes, too has been on increase.

1.3 THE CONSTITUTION AND THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Let us discuss the Constitutional frame work of the rural development, within which it operates. Rural development is the direct
responsibility of the states in India, the Central Government’s role being indirect except in the Union Territories. Agriculture, the major ingredient of rural development is item 14 in the state List of the Indian Constitution, animal husbandry item 15, land item 18, forest item 19, fishes item 21, water including irrigation and canals item 17, roads and other means of communication item 13, and public health item 6, while electricity and education are in the concurrent list, this subject to control and regulation by both levels of government. Rural development, in short it is the direct charge of state Governments in India. But we should not interfere that the Central Government is unimportant for rural development. Any such view would be misleading. In India, it is the Central Government which has provided professional leadership, drive and even momentum to rural development.

1.4 ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY OF THE CENTRE

A full fledged ‘Ministry of Rural Development’ is there at centre to take care of rural development programme. This ministry was originally named as Ministry of Rural Reconstruction which in 1962 was renamed as Ministry of Rural Development, was set up in 1977. Earlier it had the status of a department in the central Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation. The Ministry of rural development is the nodal ministry in the area of rural poverty particularly among the small and marginal farmers,
land less labour and rural artisans. It charge include land reform, village and cottage industries, rural roads, town and country planning in rural areas, elementary and adult education, rural electrification, rural water supply, housing for land less rural people and nutrition programmes besides, it coordinates the various component of rural development for the rural poor including schedule castes and scheduled tribes. In addition to this ministry, there are four other ministries partially concerned with facts of rural development: Social Welfare, Health and Family welfare, Works and Housing and Home Affairs.

The widespread concern for rural development shown by the Central Government has helped in keeping the subject within the priority zone of the state governments. The centre’s financial support for the various schemes have greatly helped the states in going ahead with them.

1.5 STATE LEVEL ADMINISTRATIVE MACHINERY

We can conclude that it is the state government which has direct responsibility for the administration of rural development programmes. As rural development embraces numerous functions — such as Agriculture, cooperation, animal husbandry, public health and education — and as all these functions are performed by different departments, the rural development administration engages the attention of several departments of the state government.

As agriculture is the major even dominant component of rural development efforts thus responsibility of coordinating departmental
actualities falls on the department of rural development headed by a secretary who is normally a member of Indian Administrative Services (IAS). Above him is the development Commissioner for Agriculture and rural development. The state of UP for instance set up the department of Agriculture Production and Rural Development in 1964 which integrate the departments e.g.

1. Agriculture
2. Cooperation
3. Community development
4. Panchayati Raj
5. Animal husbandry
6. Fisheries
7. Cane development
8. Minor irrigation
9. Tube well etc.

As rural development acts across several state level department, the office of the development Commissioner exists in most states for this task. UP has set up such functionary as early as in 1946. The development Commissioner is appointed from the IAS and is the super

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2 U.P. Abolished this post in 1946 and created the post of an Agricultural Production Commissioner.
head of the rural development programme in the state.  

1.6 DISTRICT LEVEL ADMINISTRATION

The district administration at the district as well as sub district level actually determines the success or failure of rural development programmes. A district is put under the charge of district collector who has overall responsibility for the implementation of various schemes and programmes. The district collector is the Chairman and he is charged with the responsibility of implementing the rural development programmes in the district.

1.7 BLOCK LEVEL ADMINISTRATION

Each block has functionaries of the entire technical department engaged in rural development programmes (known as extension officers) and headed by a coordinator, known as Block Development Officer (BDO). As already discussed, the concept of block level administration is one of the organizational innovations of rural development planners in India. This machinery has remained intact over the years and has been the implementing agency of successive village development programmes. As regards functions of BDO, he functions as:

a. Head of office

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3 M.Zaheer and Jado Gupta- The Organization of the Govt. of U.P. New Delhi, S. Chand & Co. 1970, Page 277-278.
b. Captain of a team of extension officers at the block level

c. Secretary of the Kshetriya Panchyat Samiti

1.8 VILLAGE LEVEL ADMINISTRATION

Village level worker commonly known as V.L.W. or Gram Sevaks or Village development officer. He is at the tail end of rural development administration and he remains directly in touch with the farmers and other in the village. He is in fact a multipurpose functionary capable of rendering services of the first aid variety to villages. He explains schemes and Programmes of rural development. He also reports on the progress of schemes to the block. He has a heavy workload of many sorts.

Thus we can say that there today exists a considerably enlarged machinery of administration to plan and execute rural development programme. Although it is not wrong to say that that the administrative machinery of rural development is traditionally revenue one, but there are also many new additions and enlargements made since the commencement of community projects in India.

Among the above agencies the role of district planning committee is major one and we shall now discuss its work in detail. As we know that seventy fourth amendment to the Constitution makes mandatory for every state to constitute at district level District Planning Committees. The
states are now engaged in implementing the various mandatory provisions of the constitutions relating to these provisions of the constitution relating to these provisions of the constitution to these amendments. We shall discuss here certain critical issues relating to district planning in context of the constitutional provisions relating to District Planning Committee. It draws largely from the Karnataka Panchayat Raj Act 1993.

While the constitution has made it mandatory for the states to constitute the District Planning Committees, the details such as composition of the District Planning committees and its functions etc. are left at the Legislatives of the states to make the provision for.

This can be clearly understood from the wording of the clause (i) and (ii) of article 243 ZD which is quoted below

1) There shall be constituted in every state at the district level a District Committee to consolidate the plans prepared by the Panchayats, and to propose a draft development plan for the district as a whole

2) The legislature of a State, may by law make provisions with respect to

a. The composition of the district planning Committee
b. The manner in which the seats in such committee shall be filled Provided that not less than fourth fifth of the total number of members of such committee shall be elected by and from amongst the elected members of the Panchayat and the Municipalities in the district in proportion to the ration between the population of the rural areas and of the urban areas in the district.

c. The functions relating to district planning which may be assigned to such committees

d. The manner in which the chair persons of such committees shall be chosen.

The District Planning Committee (D.P.C.) is expected to consolidate the development plans prepared by the Panchayats and the Municipalities in the district. Linking development plans prepared by the Rural and Urban bodies is extremely important. For one reason, the dependence of rural areas on adjoining urban areas and vice versa has increased over the years. Take the example of milk, consumption is an important part in the dietary habits of urban population the need is hardly met by the production from urban areas. Almost all the milk production is in rural areas. Dairy development through programmes such as Swarn
Jayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojna and similar other programmes meant keep
the urban market in focus.

1.9 ROLE OF STATE

The draft district development plan prepared by the DPC will have
to be forwarded to the state government as per clause (4) of Article 243
ZD which needs as follows:

(4) The Chairperson of every District Planning Committee shall
forward the development plan as recommended by such
committee to the government of the state.

Two points need to be taken note of in this context. First is that the
constitution does not clarify as to what the state government ought to do
with the development plan prepared by the DPC? It will be advisable for
the state Panchayat Raj legislations to provide for a systemic link
between development plan prepared and forwarded by the DPC on the
one hand and the development plan of the state on the other before the
latter is finalised and presented to the Planning Commission.

The second issue is that an element of professionalism has got to
be brought in the constitution and functioning of DPC. According,
constitution of the DPC should provide for inclusion of research
institutions available in the area, senior technical officers of various
organizations working in the area, financial instructions, and so on. This
should not dilute the impact of democratically elected representatives in the DPC.

1.10 WORKING PATTERN

The planning process could be either towards down or bottoms up. In many ways, most states have so far been following the first process, which provides advantage speed and efficiency. The latter process is democratically more acceptable and makes the planning more realistic. However, the problem in following the procedure to planning from grassroots upwards are many folds. These include generation of vast popular demands disproportionable to available resources, lack of adherence to a time schedule and consequent frustration among people as well planning agencies. However, a careful mix of both the process can provide the best of both, viz., more satisfaction to the people, better, utilization of resources and also timely and accurate preparation of plan. Certain broad national goals such as provision of minimum needs, universal literacy facilities for women and weaker sections etc. are to be made mandatory for every level of planning. Also the quantum of assistance available from state and central budget to the Panchayat and other agencies has got to be indicated so that the plan is not unduly initiated. At the same time, the various agencies including the local bodies should be encouraged to raise resources from non budgetary
source also.

A strict time schedule has to be prescribed for holding the deliberation for preparation of plans at various levels starting from the Gram Sabha upwards.

Such time schedule will have to be prescribed by the State Government will a view to enabling it to consolidate the various district development plans well in time before proceeding to the Centre for presenting the State Plan to the Planning Commission.

Involvement of masses, various sections of society, popular leaders, educational and research institutions is very essential. Such all round involvement would go a long way in making the democratic planning process at district and sub-district levels effective and acceptable.

1.11 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The objectives of the proposed study are:

(i) To study the various village development schemes (to find out the schemes started for the village development schemes)

(ii) To study the financial status of the VDS

(iii) To study the progress of various VDS

(iv) To study the loopholes of VDS

(v) To suggest the measures to make successful VDS
1.12 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The present study is based on secondary data. Secondary data will be collected from various government reports, and concerned department, magazines, journals etc. The various evaluative studies and programmes run by government and non government agencies have been put for analysis and to find out the impact of VDS- Books, Journals periodicals bulletins etc. will be also used to fulfill the objective of the research.

The source of secondary data of the VDS are the rural development ministry of India and department of the rural development U.P. provisional report of the census of India 2011 is also used for the study.

However some personal interviews will also be taken to find out the effectiveness of the village development schemes. General statistical tools are used in the study.

1.13 HYPOTHESIS

The study will be conducted keeping view with the hypothesis that village development schemes will play important role in the rural development. However due to several loopholes these schemes could not fulfill the objectives for which these have been started.