Summary

During the post-world War II era, development theorist became increasingly dissatisfied with the way traditional concepts of development emphasized growth and neglected important issues related to distributive justice and other dimensions of development. The interest in rural development is partly an offshoot of such disenchantment and also an account of the growing realization of the centrality of rural development in facilitating the process of overall development. Rural development is a multi-dimensional concept to improve the quality of life of rural poor. After independence, India has experimented and implemented many rural development programmes to develop her largest group of people, i.e., ‘rural poor’. Since 1960s, several studies have been done to analyze the achievements and failures of rural development programmes and levels of rural development. It is significant to note that the majority of the rural development programmes failed to achieve their desired objectives and goals. Most of the programmes reflect some common problems and reasons behind their failures due to the policies and implementation strategy adopted specially the lack of coordination between government machineries and non-government organizations. Still the wrong selection of beneficiaries, i.e., the target group (BPL and SCs) as well as controversial rural poor identification criteria are being adopted by the government which had been a core cause of such failures in the past. However, all these problems are significant and well visible, but there is hardly any effort to explore serious latent causes behind the failure of rural development programmes. The present study is an effort to evaluate some of these latent causes which are very much responsible for such failures. This study area is selected for three prime factors: (i) it lies in the Kosi Project, (ii) a backward rural block, and (iii) comparatively poor growth of livelihood in this Maithil culture block. The prime objective of this research is to analyze some of the rural development programmes, i.e., MANREGS, IAY, SHGs and others particularly. The levels of rural development and achievements of rural development programmes have been dealt with to suggest some measures to eliminate such problems in Raghopur Block.
Raghopur Block is one of the eleven blocks of district-Supaul, situated in the Kosi plain of north Bihar stretching from 26° 29’ 68” N to 26° 30’ 34” N and 86° 83’ 37” E to 86° 84’ 24” E. It is known for its backwardness and flood vulnerability. Because of the plain region the block is characterized by almost a levelled and uniform topography. In the past, the topography of the block had been affected by the ravages of floods but after construction of the River Kosi Barrage and several embankments, the area is now free from ravages of Kosi and the sandy tracts are being reclaimed. The than area of waste land, full of Kans and Pater (Jungles), lying in the area have been largely reclaimed and are yielding crops. The block is characterized by the sub-tropical monsoonal climate. It is a part of Maithili speaking region or so called Mithilanchal. The Block consists of 18 Panchayats and 58 Villages with an area of 21167 hectares (211.67 Sq. Km). The area comprises 215643 persons (2011) of which male populations share 51.54 per cent. The growth of population is very high, i.e., 34.30% (2001-2011) compared to the national average (17.64%). In 2011, the average density of population was 10 persons per hectare (Census of India, 2011). Only about 47% population are literate, whereas, 67% households are below poverty line. This block is completely dependent on rural economy or livelihood. More than 75 percent of working population are engaged in agricultural activities (Census data, 2011), whereas, about 73% of the total land is under arable land in the block. 86.67% households have marginal and small landholdings.

The present research is basically of applied nature as the outcome of the research may be applicable by the programme-makers and planners for prosperous and sustainable rural development. This study is the analysis of the current situation of different rural development programmes, their comparative description and their achievements towards unbiased local resource distribution and utilization for holistic upgradation of rural system. Side by side, it also tried to explore such latent holes existing in the rural system which causes emasculation of rural development programmes in their proper implementation, smart functioning and desirable result according to their potentialities.
The present study is the result of intensive field work and personal observations. The study is based on both primary and secondary data sources. However, the use of secondary data has been made by collecting from: Census of India, Ministry of Rural Development, Directorate of Census Operation (Bihar), BPL Census, District Statistical Hand Book, B.D.O. Office, NIRD and other government and non-government sources. On other hand, peoples’ participation and their attitudes towards the performance of programmes have been analyzed on the basis of information collected through field survey after selection of samples. 15 villages (25% of total villages) have been considered as sample villages for field survey on the basis of stratified random sampling based on ‘a Six-Step Composite Rank Index Method’. Finally, 519 households have been randomly selected from different age groups, social groups, gender wise, and religion at required proportion for the intensive field survey. An appropriate Household Schedule and Village Schedule have been designed for primary data collection from selected households at village level. Both the schedules were well equipped with simple and systematic questions. Some important information have also gathered through interviews and group discussions. After data collection, they have been processed for analysis and resulting with the help of suitable statistical methods (Z-Score, Composite Index, Headcount Index, S.D., etc.), and computer software like, ArcGIS 10.2, ArcMap 10.2, IBM SPSS Statistics 20, MS Office 2013, Map Info and Paint. All the work have been done by the researcher himself.

The present study comprises of six chapters. Chapter first deals with the concepts of rural development and rural development experiences before and after independence in India. It also includes, review of literature and research methodology adopted for the present research including research questions, objectives, hypotheses, sample design and designing of respondents for primary data collection, and tools and techniques (statistical methods and computer software) used for collection, processing and analysis of data. Rural development became a planning concern as it became clear that the strategies adopted in our nation remained largely ineffective in alleviating poverty and inequalities in rural areas. It became increasingly clear that apart from an effort to increase agricultural and industrial production, it was also necessary to address directly the problems of housing, education, health services and employment and to attack the
problem of poverty in rural area. Therefore, the increasing interest in rural development is a result of the realization that a systematic effort is necessary to create better living conditions in the rural areas where the vast majority of the populations of developing countries reside. In case of India rural development has been one of the important objectives of policy and planning since Independence, though there were some individual efforts towards this before Independence. The notion of rural development has been conceived in diverse ways by researchers and scholars ranging from thinking of it as a set of goals and programmes to a well-knit strategy, approach or even an ideology. Through the relevant literatures, I realized that its scope and content are nebulous and do not have well-accepted analytical boundaries. There is no single universally acceptable approach towards development. Whatever be the differences in conceptualizing the notion of rural development, there is a widely shared view that its essence should be poverty alleviation and distributive justice oriented economic transformation. Strategies are necessary to progress towards rural development since it is a long-term process. According to Harriss (1982), “the expression ‘rural development’ may also be used, however, to refer to processes of change in rural societies, not all of which involve action by governments only but also local peoples participation in their own transformation”. The rural development programmes, designed for the socio-economic transformation of the lives of millions in India, has passed through an interesting evolutionary process. Different types of experiments and series of strategies have been tried to uplift the rural masses from poverty, morass and depression in the past with different degrees of success and failure. This is how, through trial and error, serious efforts have been made to enrich the contents of the rural development programmes from time to time; but the goal of emancipating the masses from the shackles of poverty, hunger, frustration and diseases does not yet appear to be in sight. Relentless efforts and other strategies, therefore, need to be tried to attain the desired objectives.

The second chapter provides the description of geographical background and analysis of the different bases of rural development. Physical background (extent, physiography and climatic conditions) and cultural background (Maithil cultural and Kosi project) have been discussed under geographical background. The block is covered by the
unconsolidated alluvial sediments. The alluvial deposits may be classified into two
groups, i.e., older alluvium and newer alluvium. The recent or newer alluvium
occupying most part of the block consists of silt, sand and clay. Time to time deposits
left by the turbulent Kosi have affected the fertility of the soil but progressive
implementation of the Kosi project has turned the area into veritable granary. The
general slope of the block is from North to South. Further, agricultural economy and
rural industrial bases have been analyzed followed by infrastructure and other social
facilities (Education, Medical, Drinking water, Drainage, Communication,
Transportation, Banking and Marketing, Health and Nutrition and Electricity and Power
Supply) available in the block. It has been observed that a spatial and social groupwise
variation exist in terms of infrastructure and social facilities available in the block. The
major social groups (Dalits and OBCs) need economic (job opportunity, financial
assistance, income assets, etc.) as well as social (Housing, education and health) support
in the villages of Raghopur Block. The drainage system of the study area is not very
rich. Although there are two canals and few nalas across the block but there is the
absence of continuity in their flow. The canals are the part of Kosi project. There are
also some evidences of old stream of Kosi in the form of dilapidated streams also called
‘Dhar’ in local language. But the Dhar is not much convenient for irrigation. There is
the lack of drainage facilities in eastern part of the block. There are some low level
water logged area locally known as ‘Choor’ particularly brought in use for Fish and
Makhana cultivation. This block is completely dependent on rural economy or
livelihood. More than 75 percent of working population are engaged in agricultural
activities (Census data, 2011). The status of agriculture here determines the level of
rural development. Marginal and Small land holdings are the biggest characteristics of
rural livelihood due to massive population pressure. About 94 percent of the total land
holdings are of marginal size, whereas the medium and large sized holdings are almost
absent in the block. The arable land shares about 73 % of total land while the forest
shares just insignificant (0.16 %). The uncultivable land is about 20%, while cultivable
wasteland is only 7.28 %, which reflects very low potential for future arable land
expansion. Therefore, the only scope for agricultural development is the vertical
expansion, i.e., increasing the intensity of agricultural land by supporting agricultural
infrastructures like cost effective irrigation, use of HYV seeds, improving farm technology and extension works.

The third chapter comprising three sections deals with population growth and distribution, population characteristics and identification of rural poor in Raghopur. The population characteristics have been assessed with reference to sex ratio, literacy, and working population with occupational structure. The rural poor have been identified on the basis of head count index (based on BPL data 2010). In 2011, the population of Raghopur block reached to 215643 persons with the decadal growth of 34.30 per cent during 2001-2011 (Census of India, 2011). The growth of population is very high compared to the national average (17.64%) and relatively high to the district (29%) and state level (19%). The density of population of the study area accounts for 10 persons per hectare which is also higher than the national density. In 2011, about twenty per cent population of the study area belongs to infant group (0 to 6 ages). Scheduled tribes population is very negligible (only 0.08% in 2011) in the area, whereas about 14.50 per cent population falls under the category of Scheduled castes population in the block. The share of SC population increased very marginally during the decade of 2001 to 2011 (only 0.59%). The 15th Official Census data of India, 2011 reveals the population characteristics much associated with poor in Raghopur Block. Sex-ratio of the block is same to the national average, i.e., 940 after census data, 2011. The level of literacy is very poor in the block (46.56%) which is far behind to the national average that is about 74 percent (Census of India-2011). Although, the absolute number of working population in the block has been increased during the years 2001-11 by 14180 persons but, the percentage of working population has been decreased by five percent. In 2011 census data, 39 percent of total block population are working population which was 44 percent in 2001 (Census of India, 2001). The condition of poverty in Raghopur Block is too worse. Out of 45600 households 30753 households are Below Poverty Lines (BPL), which is 67.44 percent of total households. Of total BPL households (30753) 7677 are of SCs (24.96%). This figure of the block reflects that the poverty in the block is very deep rooted. There is much variation in the distribution of poverty amongst the panchayats.
Chapter fourth analyses the spatial pattern of level of rural development and their effecting factors in detail. To measure the level of rural development in Raghopur Block, eight major factors followed by nineteen indicators and forty-five variables have been adopted. All the variables have been arranged on a single scale of measurement by applying standardization method (Z-Score). Further, the standard score of all the variables of a factor have aggregated to find out the standard score of each eight factors. Finally, a composite Z-Score has been calculated to measure the levels of rural development and its spatial variation. It is analyzed that out of eighteen panchayats of the block, ten panchayats (55% of total) are characterized by low level of development, while five panchayats (28 % of total) fall under the moderate level of development and only three panchayats (17 % of total), i.e., Simrahi, Piprahi and Karjain dominated their significance with high level of development. The major cause behind this variability are the difference in availability of advance infrastructure, employment opportunities, agricultural facilities and self-willingness of rural poor. Disparities also exist due to the poor quality of Panchayati Raj Institutions. Some villages are very backward in terms of agricultural development, education, health care facilities, road connectivity and availability of other basic infrastructure while few are rapidly growing as a market and service center of the region. Simrahi, Karjain and Piprahi are the best example of such growing centers. Due to high availability of socio-economic facilities (schools, primary health care centers, hospital, market, banking and others), strong transport linkages (metalled roads and railways) and developed infrastructure (electricity, roads, availability of modern goods and services etc.), these centers are highly significant not only for this block but also for the surrounding block as well. The NH 57 (East-West Corridor) and N.H. 106 increased the functional potentiality of these panchayats cum market center in last 15 years. On the other hand, the reason behind the low level of development of most part of the block is lack of infrastructural facilities (irrigation, educational, metalled road, health care etc.), poor accessibilities of basic functions needed for their development (market, banking, advance agricultural tools and techniques etc.), disparity in land holdings, poor utilization and management of local resources (land and labour), lack of awareness and will power among people and at a great extant the un-qualitative Panchayati Raj Institutions in the block. Negligible
practices of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations) is also responsible for their backwardness in the block. The lack of coordination between real beneficiaries ‘rural poor’ and administrators or implementers of the programmes and policies creates a great loop-hole in their level of development.

An appraisal of rural development programmes in the form of their objectives, achievements and problems have been discussed in the **fifth chapter**. Three major rural development programmes running in this block, i.e., Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS), Indira Awash Yojana (IAY), and Self Help Groups (SHGs), have been taken into consideration for an appraisal. Although, the programmes have gained some achievements but they failed to achieve their prime objectives (removal of poverty, and equality in resource distribution especially of land). Failures of these programmes have caused mainly due to high level of corruption, poor implementation, less peoples participation, low level of public awareness, poor will power and many others. About 77 percent beneficiaries of MNREGS, 72 percent beneficiaries of IAY and 83 percent beneficiaries of SHGs are unsatisfied with the performance of the programmes respectively in terms of their impact over the living standard of their respective beneficiaries. Overall about 77 percent of the beneficiaries of rural development programmes are not satisfied with the achievements of the programmes in this block. It is interesting to know that the level of satisfaction is higher among the beneficiaries of IAY than that of the MNREGA which is the highest employment generating program and which also do claim as most effective rural development programme for rural poor. This interesting fact highlights the two possible reasons of being so. **The first reason is** that the nature of most of the beneficiaries seems to be greedier than of cooperative type and because of this, they generally advocate those programmes and policies which provide them easy and direct access to their greed. The same happen in the case of IAY where beneficiaries under this scheme get a well of 70 thousand rupees for construction of their houses in the plain region with their own preferred design. Once, they receive their amount of housing grant, they generally use this grant for other purposes rather than for housing without having a fear of any punishment for such misuse of government grant by them because there is no provision of any punishment for misuse of government grant, which should be. This
fearless chance of misuse of grant by the beneficiaries without any work done is not possible in the case of MNREGS where wage is provided instead of any grant to the beneficiaries only after the work is done by them. This casual difference between the approaches of help to rural poor make the beneficiaries of IAY more satisfactory than that of the MNREGA. The second reason is the implementation of MNREGS in this block which is not properly taken by the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Programming officer of MNREGS, and it causes a gap in the objectives and achievements of this largest rural development programme in this area.

All the three programmes mostly have affected the poor social groups (SCs and OBCs) at different pace and have little bit tried to reduce the social inequality by providing them employment opportunity, enhancing their assets and developing their means of livelihood. Among the beneficiaries from all the social groups SCs and OBCs are more satisfied as compared to other households of BPL (BPL HHs from General Group) in case of MNREGS and IAY, while, in case of SHGs the beneficiaries from BPL households belonging to general groups are more satisfied (34%) as compared to others. The study finds that the rural poor, i.e., households below poverty line (BPL) are the real beneficiaries of rural development programmes in Raghopur Block.

Finally, chapter sixth deals with the development strategies, suggestions and recommendations for planning and implementation of rural development programmes in the block. The increasing role of local level planning and development, local governance (PRIs, i.e., Panchayati Raj Institutions)) and NGOs in the planning and implementation of rural development programmes is a part of recent strategy for rural development. However, these strategical part of development still require a great improvement in their approaches and practices for better implementation of development plan. An attempt has been made for the spatial organization of infrastructure and other social facilities to remove the existing spatial disparities, so that, a sustainable rural development can be achieved. One service center, two market centers, eight well equipped central villages with road connectivity, few institutions and a hospital have been proposed for future growth of Raghopur. For transparent and accountable implementation and effectiveness of rural development programmes few major suggestions have been provided by both the beneficiaries of programmes and the
researcher. It has been suggested that for satisfactory achievements of programmes it requires: a qualitative PRIs, regular meeting of beneficiaries at panchayat level for their suggestions, active participation of NGOs, and, increasing people’s participation and cooperation. Finally, a model for development strategy has been proposed for Raghopur Block-2021, to provide development issues, policies and institutions by coordinating PRIs, Government and NGOs with overall ‘people’s participation, cooperation and devotion’. A summary followed by a selected bibliography and a few appendices have been marked at the end of the work. A few photograph plates have been provided at different suitable places in order to illustrate the rural development in the study area.