



A study on the development effort to rebuild the rural life and livelihood

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Abstract

In India, the concept of rural development dates back to the Vedic era; it is not a new concept. Rural development entails the reconstruction of every realm of human life, including a person's social, political, and economic circumstances. A country's development is primarily divided into two main sections: urban and rural. As a result, both areas' redevelopment is very much required. India focuses mostly on urban development instead of rural development. As a result, the government and local administration has formulated initiatives to improve the standard of living of rural inhabitants. The government has acknowledged the demands and has enacted development planning activities via Five Year Plan period. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is regarded as a "Silver Bullet" for eliminating rural poverty and unemployment by creating a market for productive labour in rural areas. It offers an extra source of income, decreasing migration, limiting child labour, eradicating poverty, and making villages self-sufficient via the establishment of productive assets such like public infrastructure, water tank cleaning, soil and water conservation work, and so on. Thus, it is regarded as India's greatest anti-poverty initiative. On the basis of secondary data, an attempt is made throughout this article to get a thorough understanding of the ongoing development projects undertaken to redevelop rural life and livelihood.

Keywords: Rural development, Employment Guarantee Act, self-sustaining, Development projects

Introduction

"India is contained in the villages, just as the entire cosmos is contained in the self." Mahatma Gandhi.

Even after working on rural development for more than sixty years, India is still grappling with the issue of rural development. Rural India is home to almost 70% of the country's population.^[14] People in our nation are constantly challenged with poverty, illiteracy, unemployment, exploitation, poor health, unequal income distribution, and other issues.^[16] Given all of this, do you believe India will ever be classified as a developed country? Our country's five wisdoms, Sovereign, Socialist, Secular, Democratic, and Republic^[12], make it unique, but is it all we desire from it? Rural parts of the country are those that are distinct from the realm of metropolitan cities, where princes and princesses predominate. One is heaven, while the other is damnation. People in urban regions live such opulent lives that they toss their leftover food into the trash without any second thoughts, just imagine the condition of rural people they go without food for days, their plight are much more pitiful.^[13] The lives of rural people are vastly different from those of city dwellers. Many elements of contemporary life, such as education, power, infrastructure, health, and respect, are missing in rural areas.^[10]

The expression "rural development" refers to the general development of rural areas in order to improve rural people's standard of living. It is also a process that leads to long-term improvements in the quality of life of rural residents, particularly the impoverished (Ramesh, 2012). The goal of rural development programmes is to eliminate poverty and unemployment, enhance health and education, and meet the fundamental requirements of the rural people, such as food, housing, and clothing. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Rastriya Sama Vikas Yojana (RSVY), Indira Awas Yojana (IAY), Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), Integrated Tribal Development Project (ITDP), Pradhan

Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), are some of the schemes the Indian government has launched through the planning commission of India for improving the living conditions of rural people. All of these programs attempt to bridge the gap between rural and urban populations, therefore reducing inequalities and speeding up the development process.

Conceptual framework of rural development

Development: It relates to growth, evolution, inducement stage, or advancement. This progression or growth is gradual and occur in stages. There is always an increasing degree of difference. It also refers to the general trend toward more efficiency and dealing with more challenging circumstances.

Rural Development (RD): is a collaborative practice that attempts to improve the well-being and self-realization of individuals living outside of metropolitan areas. Rural development, as per Agarwal (1989), is a program aimed at improving the economic and social conditions of the rural population.

Scope and importance of rural development

Rural development is a dynamic process that focuses mostly on rural regions. Agricultural development, the construction of economic and social infrastructure, fair pay, housing and housing sites for the landless, village planning, public health, access to education and functional literacy, communication, and other issues are some of them. Rural development is a national priority and is extremely important in India for the reasons listed below.

1. Because around three-fourth of India's population lives in rural regions, rural development is essential for the country's overall development.

2. Agriculture, which is a significant source of employment in rural India, generates over half of the country's national revenue.
3. Agriculture employs around seventy percent of the Indian population.
4. Agriculture and the rural sector provide the majority of raw resources for several industries.
5. The willingness of the rural population and the increase in buying capacity to acquire industrial goods are the only reasons for the increase in industrial population.
6. Increasing disparities between the urban elite and the rural people might lead to political unrest.

Rural development schemes in india

The primary goal of the rural development programme is to improve the economic and social well-being of people living in rural areas. The Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) is in charge of the country's efforts to alleviate rural poverty. Its responsibility was previously divided across three departments: I Department of Rural Development (ii) Department of Land Resources (iii) Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation. (SOMETHING MISSING)

1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS): This scheme attempts to improve the economic stability of people in rural regions by providing a rural household whose adult members volunteer to undertake unskilled manual labour a hundred days of pay employment in a financial year. (Budgetary allocation: INR 33,000 billion in 2012-13)

2. National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM): The National Rural Livelihood Mission's main goal is to provide efficient and productive organizational platforms for the rural poor, allowing them to boost their average incomes via sustainable livelihood enhancements and better financial services. It aims to reach 70 million rural Indian households living below the poverty line (BPL). (Budgetary allocation: INR 3,563 billion in 2012-13)

3. Integrated Watershed Development Programme (IWDP): The IWDP's major goals are to assist reestablish ecological balance in a watershed by harnessing, preserving, and developing damaged natural resources including soil, water, and vegetative cover, as well as to help provide local people with sustainable livelihoods. (Budgetary allocation: INR 2,744 billion in 2012-13).

4. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY): This programme provides financial assistance to rural BPL families and the relatives of military personnel killed in action while constructing new homes and the upgrading the existing unfit kutcha huts. (Budgetary allocation: INR 9,966 billion in 2012-13)

5. National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP): The scheme's objective is to produce enough clean water for residential usage on a long-term basis. (Budgetary allocation: INR 10,500 billion in 2012-13)

6. Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan (NBA): The Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan, formerly known as the Total Sanitation Campaign, facilitates Gram Panchayats in achieving total sanitation coverage. (Budgetary allocation: INR 3,500 billion in 2012-13)

Mgnrega: The historical overview

The government intended to improve the socio-economic condition (SEC) of the people who were mostly reliant on forest products and everyday labour in the post-independence period. Another major aspect of the government's strategy was to reclassify the rural population as agricultural. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act of 2005 promises each rural household with adult members ready to undertake unskilled manual labour 100 days of employment in a fiscal year. The Act went into effect in 200 districts in February 2006, and it was eventually expanded to all rural districts in India beginning in the financial year 2008-09.

MGNREGA follows almost 56 years of experience with various rural employment programmes, including both Centrally Sponsored Schemes and State-Led Initiatives. These comprise the National Rural Employment Programme (NREP) 1980-89; Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) 1983-89; Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) 1989-1990; Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) 1993-99. Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) 1999-2002; Sampoorna Grameen Rojgar Yojana (SGRY) 2001; National Food for Work Programme (NFFWP) 2004. Among these programmes, the SGRY and NFFWP have been merged with NREGA in 2005.

Mgnrega: Mixed success so far

Because of corruption or incompetence, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MG-NREGA) has been in the headlines. This year, the nation has spent close to Rs 40,000 crore, yet many urban middle-class individuals and opinion leaders are unsure what to make of it. Despite varied results, the rights-based system has proven to be a game-changer in rural India. The plan has been more effective in areas having powerful people's movements or civil society groups, as well as districts with responsive and proficient district administrations. The rural poor have been seeking salaries that are tied to inflation in many locations. They use the example of business and government, where incomes rise in lockstep with inflation. Thousands of men and women in Rajasthan have come to the streets to demand salary revisions, separate work measurements for each worker, and prompt wage payment. They are also asking that corrupt officials and politicians be prosecuted.

Farmers have borne the cost of any new employment since wage payments under the NREGA are delayed; farmers must pay labourers who perform work for them. Furthermore, they must bribe the sarpanch in order to acquire the job. The corruption circle including the sarpanch, panchayat secretary, block CEO, and sub-engineer is quite nasty. Today impoverished people's condition in our nation is one of zero-credibility and humiliation for us. If the situation remains the same, we will become prosperous in some fields but remain impoverished in others.

Mgnrega: The present status

A lot of scholars have sought to research the MGNREGA and its shortcomings in depth.

^[4] Addressed corruption in rural employment programmes in Orissa, India, and how it has persisted under the NREGA. As per ^[7], a system of regular and continuous flow of authoritative information is necessary, as opposed to sporadic reports and research based on individuals' and

groups' initiative. The government must resolve issues, amend policy directives, and give operational instructions at the district, block, and village levels to enhance implementation. The government needs to take the initiative, be proactive, organize institutions and groups, and effectively use the media. Several lakhs of government servants, panchayat functionaries, elected officials, NGOs, and community organizations are involved in NREGS. They perform a vital part, yet they were unprepared for the mission. In reality, NREGS is a national critical initiative that has been overlooked. Despite the fact that the Ministry of Rural Development is the central nodal ministry, every relevant department and agency must be involved. [1] Presented several key suggestions. At all levels, even at the block level, full-time experts devoted to MGNREGA were deployed. A countrywide drive for capacity development, involving government and non-government training institutes, is necessary at the Gram Panchayat level to build up a huge cadre of properly trained grass-root workers.

[9], a government servant who worked on the scheme's implementation, argues that allocating 4% of programme expenditures to administrative and professional assistance is still too little, and fails to realize that a programme of the size of MGNREGA needs substantial professional support.

According to [5], the successful implementation of the MGNREGA in the Pati block of Orissa (India) goes beyond the inhabitants' ability to assert their rights. The high levels of participation with the programme in terms of design, implementation, and monitoring illustrate this.

According to [8], a social audit conducted in Andhra Pradesh (India) discovered that certain individuals claimed they had not been reimbursed for the work they had done in specific villages. When the payments from the passbook were compared to the payments from the job card, it was revealed that the job card did not contain the inner pages that recorded the work performed by each employee; the job card was therefore incomplete.

The MGNREGA should be a support system for the poorest of the poor, enabling, encouraging, and empowering them to stand on their own. In its current structure, the MGNREGA risks becoming just another subsidy programme which becomes a financial burden on the country (The Economic Times, 2009).

Rural development is urgently required. It strives to improve the well-being and quality of life of the rural poor through a communal effort, as well as the development of rural regions. The analysis reveals that, while this initiative is intended to improve the living conditions of people in rural areas, it has a number of flaws. Therefore, thorough the study of literature, it is evident that further anthropological research is needed to fully comprehend the socioeconomic impact of the MGNREGA programme on rural India.

Programmes launched by the government for the rural development

"When villages flourish, the country prospers; if villages sink, the country sinks," Gandhiji said, underlining the importance of village development for the transformation of the country. Poverty and unemployment are two of India's biggest issues. [11] Through state governments, the Department of Rural Development has launched a number of programmes in rural regions for poverty reduction, employment opportunities, rural infrastructural facilities,

and the availability of essential minimum services. [2] The importance of rural development has been recognized by policymakers, who have implemented a variety of programmes and initiatives to accomplish objectives of rural development. The very first systematic attempt at rural development was the Community Development Programme. The programme commenced on October 2, 1952, and emphasized on the overall development of rural regions, including almost all aspects of rural life including agriculture, animal husbandry, roads, communication facilities, health, education, housing, employment, and nutrition. [15] Many programmes have been implemented since then, including the following: [3]

1. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):

Since rural roads are fundamental for economic growth and poverty reduction in villages, the government created the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, a 100 percent Centrally Sponsored Scheme. By the end of the Tenth Plan Period, the initiative aims to connect all disconnected habitations in rural regions with a population of more than 500 people with good all-weather roads.

2. Swarjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY): [6]

It is the sole self-employment programme for rural destitute people. The Yojana, which went into effect on 1.4.1999, was conceived as a holistic programme addresses various aspects of self-employment such as the organization of rural poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their institutional capacity, training, activity cluster planning, infrastructure development, financial assistance through bank credit and subsidy, and marketing support, among others.

3. Rural Housing (Indira Awaas Yojana):

One of the most fundamental necessities for human life is housing. Therefore, one of the primary operations of the National Rural Employment Program, which began in 1980, was house construction. In 1998, India's government proposed a National Housing and Habitat Policy, with the purpose of offering "Housing for All" and fostering the construction of 20 lakh additional housing units (13 lakh in rural areas and 7 in urban areas), with a focus on long-term benefits for the poor and disadvantaged. Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), Credit Cumulative Subsidy Scheme for Rural Housing, Innovative Scheme for Rural Housing and Habitat Development, Rural Building Centers, Equity Contribution by Ministry of Rural Development to HUDCO, and National Mission for Rural Housing and Habitat are some of the programmes that are being implemented.

4. DRDA Schemes:

A new nationally supported system, DRDA Administration, was launched on April 1, 1999, to strengthen the DRDAs and make them more professional and effective, on basis of the suggestions of an inter-ministerial committee known as the Shankar Committee. The strategy is intended to replace the previous practice of allocating a percentage of programme money to administrative costs. A separate allocation has been established to cover the administrative costs of the DRDAs, who are required to administer and implement the programmes efficiently.

5. Training Schemes: Training has become more crucial in rural development activities related to various poverty

alleviation programmes. Considering training, research, and development are all intertwined, policymakers and programmers must continue their education. The National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD) has organized training programmes, conferences, seminars, and an international programme to help with this. In addition to this, a number of training and research institutes dealing with rural development concerns have received substantial funding.

6. Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):

^[17] In March 1976, the Centre announced the initiative as a key government tool for poverty alleviation. Its major feature was to allow chosen households to escape poverty in a certain amount of time by engaging in self-employment in industries such as agriculture, horticulture, animal husbandry, weaving and handicrafts, as well as services and commercial operations.

7. Food for Work Programme (FWP): The then-Janata government introduced this initiative in 1977 with the goal of providing work to unemployed/underemployed rural people during the slack period. The labourers were compensated in kind, in the form of food grains.

8. National Rural Employment Programme (NREP):

This is a revamped FWP programme with the goal of increasing job possibilities in rural regions by using excess food grains. This programme was designed specifically for rural residents who relied heavily on wage work but had no other source of income during the lean agricultural season. This programme was later combined with Jawaharlal Nehru Rozgar Yojana (JRY).

9. Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP):

Some governments, such as Maharashtra and Gujarat, have designed specific programmes to boost job possibilities for people living in rural areas, particularly landless people.

10. Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY): With the union of the NREP and the RLEGP in April 1989, this programme was born. This programme was designed to give at least one member of each impoverished family (BPL family) with a job for 50 to 100 days a year in a location close to their home. Approximately 30% of the positions in this scheme were designated for women. Village Panchayats were in charge of implementing the plan.

11. Antyodaya Yojana: The Hindi term antyodaya is made up of two words: ant, which means bottom or end, and udaya, which means progress. As a whole, it denotes the growth or well-being of a person at the bottom of the queue (lowest level), i.e. the poorest of the poor.

12. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS):

^[18] After independence, various plans and programmes were established from time to time for the development of rural society, notably for the socio-economic condition of the rural poor, but the rewards of these programmes only reached a small fraction of these people. It was estimated that roughly 70% of the rural population still lacked access to basic commodities. A new project was set up and legislation was adopted under the

name of the "National Rural Employment Guarantee Act" (NREGA) to provide benefits to rural people. It provides 100 days of employment to any rural household whose adult members are willing to undertake unskilled manual labour over the course of a fiscal year. The Act went into effect in 200 districts at first, and was progressively expanded to additional regions designated by the Central Government.

Problems faced for rural development in India

1. The financial, physical, and managerial resources allocated to the implementation of rural development initiatives are absolutely insufficient.
2. Better execution of rural development projects can only be assured if individuals in charge of actual implementation are fairly compensated, adequately trained, and sufficiently motivated. However, this has not yet transpired.
3. It is becoming increasingly clear that the goals of one programme clash with those of others, and that there is no formal mechanism in place to reconcile them. As a result, many initiatives completely fail to meet their objectives. They also have an impact on other initiatives.
4. In many instances, rural development tools are not adequately picked, and their levels do not correspond to the goals they want to achieve. This wastes important public resources and causes unnecessary delays in accomplishing the goals.
5. Honesty, hard work, assisting others, thrift, and other similar characteristics contribute to socioeconomic development indirectly. This component of development has received less attention in the Indian setting.
6. Ritual observance, a lack of sensible economic decisions, large sums of money spent on marriage, birth, or death rites, the existence of the caste system and the joint family structure in rural regions, and illiteracy are some of the reasons impeding rural development in India.
7. Political parties play an important role in rural development. However, no democratic political party has played this function effectively thus far. Today political parties are directed more by party interests than by national interests.

Conclusion

Individuals in rural regions should have the same quality of life as people in suburban and metropolitan areas. Moreover, the cascading impacts of poverty, unemployment, and poor and inadequate infrastructure in rural regions on urban areas are causing socioeconomic tensions that emerge as economic distress and urban poverty. The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is regarded as a "Silver Bullet" for reducing rural poverty and unemployment in Indian communities by creating demand for productive labour force. It offers an additional source of income, that will have an influence on lowering flow of migrants, limiting child labour, eliminating poverty, and allowing villages self-sustaining thru the creation of productive assets like road construction, water tank cleaning, water and soil conservation work, and so on. As a result, it has been dubbed the world's largest anti-poverty initiative. So because the program will be in effect for an undetermined

amount of time and will be expanded in terms of scope and geographical coverage, there will be various obstacles, such as non-homogeneity in its efficacy, region-specific inequalities and consequences, and so on. Because of this, a few non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have previously conducted several polls. They are, however, limited to one or two districts and, more significantly, focus on systemic flaws rather than investigating the impact of their programmes on recipients.

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