

Government Schemes for Rural Development of India

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Abstract: Traditionally, agriculture has been a major sector of the Indian rural economy and rural employment. A shift in the structure of production and business from agricultural to more productive non-agricultural sectors is considered an important source of economic growth and transformation in the rural and overall economy. However, till date there seems to be no serious attempt to understand the analysis of transition in rural economy of India. Although urbanization is increasing, Indian society is predominantly a rural society. The majority of people in India live in rural areas (69 percent as of 2011 census). They earn their livelihood from agriculture or related occupations. The Economic Survey of India 2022-23 reports that 65% of the country's population lives in rural areas and 47% depend on agriculture for livelihood. This paper attempts to measure the initiatives taken by the government to accelerate the process of rural development through the Rural Development Program in India.

Keywords: Rural Development, Rural Economy, Rural Development Scheme, Indian Government,

Introduction: The percentage of India's population living in rural areas was 80 percent in 1960 and by 2007 it was more than 70 percent. By the year 2021, the same proportion was 65 percent. At present, 47 percent of the population depends on agriculture for livelihood. This makes it clear that it is imperative for the government to focus on rural development to achieve holistic development of India. The Government of India is putting more emphasis on improving the quality of life in rural areas to ensure more equitable and inclusive development. The main objective of the Government's involvement in the rural economy is to transform the lives and livelihoods of rural India through active socio-economic inclusion, integration and empowerment. Mahatma Gandhi once said that the real progress of India is not only the growth and expansion of industrial urban centers but the real progress of India is primarily the development of villages. The idea that the development of rural areas is at the heart of the overall development of the country is still relevant today. One wonders why rural development should be given so much importance when cities are rapidly developing around us with big industries and modern information technology hubs. The answer can be that agriculture is the main source of livelihood in rural areas and two-thirds of India's population depends on agriculture which is not productive enough for them. A third of rural India still lives in poverty. Therefore, if we want to achieve real progress of our country, we have to see a developed rural India.

What is Rural Development?

Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas. It aims to improve the well-being and self-realization of people living outside urbanization through a collective process. Rural development is a policy designed

to improve the economic and social life of the rural poor. Rural development means improving the standard of living of people living in rural areas. This development is done by providing job opportunities and good education. Development is very important to grow the economy of a country. Panchayati Raj system has been introduced for rural development. It is a three-tier structure of Indian administration.

Significance of Rural Development: Rural development is important not only for the majority of the population living in rural areas but also for the overall economic development of the country. Today, rural development is considered to be more important in the country's development process than earlier. The policy is aimed at achieving increased productivity, greater socio-economic equality and aspiration, and stability in economic and social development. Rural development seeks to sustainably improve the lives of socially and environmentally disadvantaged people. This natural, physical, human, technological and social capital is maintained through improved access to assets and services as well as control over productive capital (in its economic, financial and political forms), enabling them to strengthen their standard of living in an equitable and sustainable manner through rural development programs mainly based on basic social and economic. The focus is on reducing poverty and unemployment by establishing infrastructure, training unemployed youth in rural areas, and providing employment to marginal farmers and labourers. Bridging the gap between local administrative bodies and central authorities to improve financial communication. Moreover, rural development seeks to empower panchayats to implement policies formulated by executive officers, experts.

Government Schemes for Rural Development: Various ministries of the Government of India are implementing various development schemes not to increase profits but to maximize the welfare of rural people. Some schemes like National Rural Livelihood Mission, MNREGA, Bharat Nirman etc. are implemented by the government for the rural development of India. Some important schemes related to rural development are mentioned below.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM): NRLM aims to provide opportunities for gainful self-employment and skilled labor employment to economically weaker households, thereby providing them with sustainable and diversified livelihood options. It is the world's largest initiative to improve the quality of life of the poor. The Mission seeks to achieve its objectives by investing in four key components viz., (a) promoting and strengthening the social integration of rural poor women and self-managed and economically sustainable community organizations; (b) financial inclusion; (c) sustainable livelihoods; and (d)

access to rights through social inclusion, social development and convergence.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGA): Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme was notified on September 7, 2005. The Scheme aims at enhancing livelihood security of households in rural areas of the country by providing at least one hundred days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household. MGNREGA is a powerful instrument for ensuring inclusive growth in rural India through its impact on social protection, livelihood security and democratic empowerment.

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin: Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G) was launched on 1 April 2016. PMAY-G aims to provide all homeless families and families living in crude and dilapidated houses with fixed houses with basic amenities. PMAY-G addresses the rural housing shortage and fills the housing shortage in rural India, contributing significantly to the mission of "Housing for All". Minimum size of houses under PMAY-G is 25 square meters including dedicated area for hygienic cooking. By 27 September 2022, 2.00 crore houses have been constructed out of the total target of 2.72 crore.

Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin: To focus on cleanliness, the Prime Minister of India launched the Swachh Bharat Mission on 2 October 2014. Under the mission, all villages, gram panchayats, districts, states and Union Territories of India declared themselves "Open-Defecation Free" (ODF) by 2 October 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, by constructing 100 million toilets in rural India. To ensure that open defecation free behavior is sustained, no one is left behind and solid and liquid waste management facilities are available, the mission is moving towards the next phase of SBMG i.e. ODF-Plus.

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana: In May 2016, Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MOPNG), introduced the 'Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana' (PMUY). Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana was launched to save women and families from consumption of unhealthy fuel by providing clean cooking fuel in the form of LPG. This scheme is designed to protect the health of women by curbing the health problems caused by consumption of fossil fuels and other fuels used for cooking. Apart from this it also reduces deaths due to impure fuel and controls respiratory problems due to consumption of unhealthy fuel. Apart from promoting women's health, the scheme also seeks to empower women in rural India by issuing connections in the name of women of households.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY): PMGSY aims to provide single all-weather road connectivity to all eligible unconnected settlements in rural areas of the country of designated population size (500+ in plains, 250+ in North Eastern and Himalayan states). The program also has an upgradation component for those districts, where all-weather road connectivity has been provided to all eligible settlements of designated population size. The program has been launched in three phases and the latest third phase was launched on July 10, 2019 for the integration of 1,25,000 km through roads

connecting rural agricultural markets, high schools and hospitals and major rural links.

Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana: The scheme was launched in November 2014 to improve the quality and reliability of electricity supply in rural areas. Creation of basic electricity infrastructure in villages/hamlets, strengthening and augmentation of existing infrastructure and metering of existing feeders/distribution transformers/consumers are envisaged to improve the quality and reliability of power supply in rural areas.

Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY): Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana is a village development project launched by the Government of India in October 2014. Under this scheme, each MP will take responsibility for developing the physical and institutional infrastructure of the village. Under SAGY, it is envisaged to implement existing government schemes and programs in a convergent manner and develop Gram Panchayats by pooling community and private resources. SAGY aims to turn Mahatma Gandhi's holistic and organic vision into a reality based on the current situation – three model villages will be selected and developed by March 2019, followed by five such model villages (one per year) by 2024.

Conclusion: Indian governments are implementing many rural development programs to address various issues, improve rural people, create incentives. The main objectives of the Government's rural development programs are to eradicate poverty and reduce unemployment, improve health and provide food, shelter and clothing to the rural population. MGNREGA, Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana- Gramin (PMAY-G), Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) etc. are all national schemes launched by Indian government. A country as vast and diverse as India needs to implement broad-based comprehensive social policies backed by adequate and equitable financial resources for equitable development. In order to ensure that the desired results of the social sector development schemes are achieved, the participation of the people at the grassroots level of the administration is essential and is being actively pursued by Indian government. Technology can be a great enabler to ensure connectivity of government schemes to connect the rural peoples.

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