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## **Defining Rural Development in India**

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*This is a review paper related with Rural Development in India. This paper highlights the conceptualization of Rural Development in India. It also evaluates that rural development is a multidimensional in nature and comprehensive in scope.*

### **KEY WORDS:**

*Rural Development, Concept, Defining, Government, Social Multidimensional, Overall Development.*

### **CONCEPT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT;**

Rural development is an elastic concept and as a specific context of development, it has been explained by various authors and experts in different ways. These explanations differ in the context of region, time and economy. It is a concept whose contents have been of great variation.

‘Rural’ is differentiated from “Urban” in terms of its geophysical location, spatial distribution of households based on kinship and close interactions between individuals and families. The word “Rural” refers to all aspects of that area and of the activities and institutions within it, in which people live in villages, small towns or other relatively dispersed population. The word ‘development’ refers to quantitative as well as qualitative change which applies only when seen against something at a particular time. Rural development is a sub-process of change aiming at the socio-economic transformation of a traditional society into modern one.

To understand easily the concept of rural development, it is better to review the objectives of rural development. According to Yadav R.K.(1980), the objectives of rural development are:

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- (a) Increase in production and productivity.
  - (b) Equity
    - (i) In access to opportunities to earn
    - (ii) In access to public services,
    - (iii) In access to productive inputs:
    - (iv) Gainful employment;
  - (c) Self-reliance;
  - (d) People's participation in development process;
  - (e) Ecological balance, i.e. Proper Management of physical resources such as land, water and forest.”

According to Lahiry A. (1995), the rural development should address itself to the following objectives:-

1. The improvement of human resources through inputs of education, health care, sanitation and hygiene, ensured supply of potable water and other facilities.
2. Development of infrastructure through roads means of transport and communication, power etc.
3. Development of production potential: -
  - (a) The most important sector of production is naturally agriculture. There is still vast potential in it through such improvement as leveling of land, proper water management, crop rotation, better seeds, organic pesticides and manures.
  - (b) Forests give us a rich variety of their products which can be systematically exploited for the benefit of people.
  - (c) Development of orchards and vegetable gardening can provide both income and employment to the youth of the villages.
  - (d) Dairy and poultry farming have great scope of development. These should be located in villages in preference to towns.
  - (e) Other productive activities which can be beneficial to the villagers: Flower and Plant Nurseries, bee keeping, fisheries, village arts, to name a few.
  - (f) Villages are best places for agro-based industries and food products. With a little training and the provision of the necessary technology. Various food products can be

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produced in villages and marketed in towns. These should rather be made exclusive domain of rural sector.

- (g) There are various other products which are exclusively produced in villages for the use of villagers, such as leather goods, earthen utensils, carpentry works, with a little help, these goods can find market even in towns and cities.
4. Marketing research and facilities for marketing. So many projects have failed because proper marketing research has not been done before starting a production unit. With proper marketing research the products can find a steady market in near and even faraway places.
  5. The villagers must be assured of first claim over the resources of their area. To give an example, “Tendu” leaves of the forest are auctioned to the highest bidder. The village laborers earns only the villagers can earn much better profits. At present the profits got to a few only.
  6. A really integrated approach is necessary in rural development.

The concept of rural development was born in the context of agriculture and it remained, for a long time, conterminous with agricultural development in India. For example, the Royal Commission of Agriculture (1928) gave the interpretation to rural development like this; “We cannot too strongly state our conviction that the directorship of agricultural advances must in a very great degree depend upon the suitability of the officer appointed.”

The concept of rural development had received the attention of Gandhiji, Tagore and other before independence. Tagore’s Santiniketan was perhaps the first systematic attempt in this direction. Gandhian concept of development had its source of inspiration from villages having their own resources directed to meet their optimum needs. Gandhiji was of the view that the process of development of the Nation must begin from its villages.

The Ashridge conference on social development (1958) defined rural development, “as a movement designed to promote better living for all in the whole community with the active participation and initiative of the community.”

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According to UN Report (1996), “Rural development has come into international usage to connote the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united to those of governmental authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions in the life of the nation and to relate them to contribute fully to national programs.”

If development was to occur, it was supposed to be manifested as planned changes in the economy (in agriculture or industry or the capital infrastructure supporting either one) and, to a lesser extent, in the social services of the nation state (especially education and public health). In the 1960s, the goal of rural development all over the world was based upon planned economic growth.

The concept of rural development, since 1970s has undergone a change and has become more comprehensive, it has become more confining in its interpretation. Since the seventies, rural development has begun to be viewed in terms of the contribution it makes to the reduction of poverty, in equality and exploitation.

“Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people the rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless (World Bank, 1975).” The World Bank paper argues that the provision of improved food supplies and nutrition together with basic services such as health and education not only contribute to the physical well-being of the rural people but also raise their productivity and ability to contribute to the national economy. The objectives of rural development, according to the World Bank, are not restricted to any single department but spread over several and the resultant mix serves to raise agricultural output, create new employment, improve health and education, and expand communications. Providing housing etc. Thus, the World Bank defines rural development in terms of an improvement of the economic and social life of the poor.

Rural development is a process through collective efforts aimed at improving the wellbeing and self-realization of people living outside the urbanized areas. The ultimate target of rural development is people and not infrastructure.

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Lata (1975) defined “Rural development in terms of raising standard of living of rural people.” Rural development has been defined by Sharma and Malhotra (1977) “as a systematic approach aiming at total development of the area and the people by bringing about the necessary institutional attitudinal changes and by delivering a package of services through extension methods to encompass not only the economic field, i.e., development of agriculture, rural industries, etc., but also the establishment of the required special infrastructure and services in the areas of health and nutrition, education and literacy, basic amenities, family planning etc. with an ultimate objective of improving quality of life in the rural areas.” The focus of rural development should be on: -

- (i) Preservation of ecological integration with a view to providing a continuous supply of life supporting resources;
- (ii) Efficient and appropriate land use;
- (iii) Healthy living conditions;
- (iv) An aesthetically pleasing environment;
- (v) Effective socio-economic and governmental institutions;
- (vi) Improved human welfare in terms of minimum economic and social level;
- (vii) Physical structure adopted and landscape of pleasing design;
- (viii) Comprehensiveness that is the full range of physical biological and human factors in ruins.

Mishra and Sunderam (1979) define “Rural development as not merely development of rural areas but also the development of quality of life of the rural masses into self-reliant and self-sustaining modern little communities. Rural development is therefore development of rural areas in such a way that each component of changes in a desired direction.” “Rural development hence means development of the rural areas in such a way that social, economic, technological and natural components of rural life changes in a desired direction within the framework of the national goals and objectives and without prejudice to the development of urban areas of the country.”

Rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people poor rural women and men to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need. It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless.”

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“Changes in emphasis and contents of rural development programs confirm that rural development is a dynamic concept. The post-World War-II era, i.e. 1950 laid emphasis on agricultural innovations and extension. In 1970s, the emphasis shifted to action against poverty. The Fabian endeavor to instill equity issue in rural development finally gave way to the concern for structural adjustment in 1980s.

Concept of rural development in India is normally based on rural development programs of Government. So, it is better to review the rural development programs for easy understanding of the concept. The earlier definitions of rural development assumed the village to be a homogenous entity but this myth was exploded under the impact of the first set of programs undertaken for rural development. The community development programme launched in 1952 was primarily designed to increase agriculture production with improvement in health, hygiene, education and communication. Later, as recommended by Mehta Committee in 1957 three tier Panchayati Raj system was introduced and entrusted with the planning and development functions which included agriculture and allied activities, rural industries, education, public works, public health and sanitation etc.

In 1972, the Planning Commission Task Force on Integrated Rural Development observed that, after careful consideration, we have belatedly decided to take what might be considered rather restricted view of the expression ‘rural development’. We have chosen to equate it with agricultural development in the widest sense so as to embrace besides crop husbandry, all the allied activities. The Area Development Programs during fifth five year Plan were started such as Drought Prone Areas Programme (1973), Hill Area Development Programme (1974-75), Command Area Development Programme (1975) and Desert Development Programme (1977-78).

The minimum needs programme was launched during Fifth Five Year Plan (1974-79) covering components, Elementary Education, Adult Education, Rural Health, Rural Water Supply, Rural Road, Rural Electrification, Rural Housing, Environmental, Improvement of Urban Slums, Nutrition, Rural Domestic Cooking, Energy, Rural Sanitation and public Distribution system (latter three components included by seventh Five Year Plan). According to A paper of Government of India, Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation (1978).” Rural Development encompasses both the spatial and functional integration of all relevant programs bearing on increased agricultural production and also



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the reduction of unemployment underemployment and provisions of gainful employment among the rural people.”

The concept of rural development itself as integrated rural development was spelt out in the revised draft of Sixth Five Year Plan (1978-83) and integrated rural development programme was started. The rural employment programs for poverty alleviation were started, such as Rural Manpower Programme (RMP 1964-65), Crash scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE 1971-72), Pilot Intensive Rural Employment Project (PIREP 1972-73), Training for Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM 1979-80), Food for Work (1977-78), National Rural Employment Programme (1980-81), Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP 1983-84), JawaharRozgarYozna (JRY 1989-90), Million well Scheme (1989-90), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Supply of Improved Toolkits to Rural Artisans (SITRA 1992-93), Prime Minister RozgarYozna (1994-95), Swarnjayanti Gram SwarozgarYojna (SGSY 1999-2000), MNREGA(2006) etc.

The health hygiene and sanitation programs were started such as the National Malaria Control Programme, National Leprosy Control Programme, National Family Planning Programme (all these programs were launched during first five year plan), National Water Supply and Sanitation Programme (1954-55), National Tuberculosis Programme (NTP 1962-63), Village Water Supply Programme (1961-66), Accelerated Rural Water Supply Programme (ARWSP 1972-73), Community Health Volunteers Scheme (1977-78), National Programme for Control of Blindness (1976-77), Expanded Programme of Immunization (EPI 1978-79), National Watershed Development Project for Rain fed Area (1983-84), Universal Immunization Programme (UIP 1985-86), Technology Mission for Drinking water in Village and Related Water Management (1986-87), Central Rural Sanitation Programme (CRSP 1986-87), Rural Drinking Water Scheme (1996-97), reproductive and Child Health (RCH 1997-98), Pulse Polio Programme (1997-98), Total Sanitation Campaign (TSC 1999-2000), Hand Wash with Soap Programme or Health in your Hands Programme (2003-2004), National Rural Health Mission(2005), National Drinking Water Programme(2009), PMSSY(2010) etc.

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The Education Programs were started such as National Adult Education Programme (NAEP 1978-79), Scheme of Non-Formal Education (NFE 1979-80), Operation Black Board (OBS 1987-88), ShikshaKarmi Project (SKP 1987-88), Nation Literacy Mission (NLM 1988-89), MahilaSamakya (MS 1991-92), LokJumbish (1992-93), National Programme of Nutritional Support/Mid-day Meal Scheme (1995-96), Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS 1997-98), SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA 2000-2001) , Saakshar Bharat(2009) etc.

Many other welfare-oriented programs were started such as Indira AwasYozna (1985-86). Annapurna Scheme (1999-2000), Pradhan MantriGramodayaYozna (2000-2001), Janshree Insurance Scheme (2000-2001), Pradhan MantriSadakYozna (PMGSY 2003-2004), RAY(2010) etc.

“Rural Development is a process leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor. In addition to economic growth, this process typically involves changes in popular attitudes and in many cases even in customs and beliefs. In nutshell, the process of rural development must represent the entire gamut of change by which a social systems moves away from a state of life perceived as unsatisfactory towards a materially and spiritually better condition of life. It is a choice that is influenced by time, space and culture.” (Katar Singh 1986).

“Rural development is the development of rural areas through the extension of irrigating facilities; improvements in the techniques of cultivation; expansion of electricity; constructions of school buildings; provision of education facilities, health care, road; etc.” (Tiwari and Sinha, 1988)

According to Maheshwari (1996), “In the field of rural development, it is of critical importance to remember that man is only one of the inhabitants of the earth, animals, birds, reptiles, plants and trees have an equal right to exist and this posture of humility on the part of man must be continually emphasized in rural development. Rural development with a silent spring is too deadly a concept to comprehend, much less to operate.”

“Rural development is a multidimensional process which includes the development of social-economic conditions of the people living in the rural area, and ensures their participation in the process of development for complete utilization of physical and human resources for better living



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conditions. It extends the benefits of development to the weaker and poorer sections of rural society. It also enhances both the capacity and capability of administrative and social economic development agencies and agricultural marketing units working in the rural areas” (Hoshiar Singh, 1995)

“Rural development is a growing inter-disciplinary and cross-cultural field. Being a multi-disciplinary field, the study of rural development evolved with conceptual influences from a variety of established disciplines (i.e. economy, geography, management, sociology, psychology, political science, health, biology, engineering and so on)”, (Joaquin L Gonzalez III 1997). “Rural development is an all-round development of traditional rural society into a modern one by bringing about socio-economic reforms and planned progress. Rural development involves optimum utilization of the natural and human resources of a given rural areas for the enrichment of the quality of life of its population.”

“The overall goal of rural development is to liberate the energies of the rural people especially the poor, so that they can realize their potential and thus improve their capacity as well as commitment to development, organize and govern themselves towards the attainment of a higher quality of life for the individual and for the entire community.” (Ratnam K, 2000)

“Rural development has come to be reckoned with as a ‘Sine qua non’ for national development and social welfare. The question is not merely one of development of rural areas but of the overall development of rural communities to dispel ignorance and poverty and assist the process of creating self-reliant and self-sustaining modern little communities. The increased income has to be so distributed as to result in a significant diminution of inequalities of income and wealth in Indian Society.” (Joshi, 2000).

According to Verma (2003), “Rural development is a highly complex and sophisticated subject which needs a multidimensional approach in which various components such as agriculture, industry, education, social life, culture, social justice have to be taken care of. Rural development is an absolute and urgent necessity for the overall development of the country. As an integrated concept for growth, social justice and poverty alleviation, it continuous to be one of the major planks of our development plans.”

As we have come to conclusion that the concept of Rural Development has changed from time to time and from one author to another author. Thus rural development is a multidimensional in nature and comprehensive in scope. It can be defined as integrated development of the area and the people through optimum development and utilization (and conservation where necessary) of local resources-physical, biological and human and by bringing about necessary institutional, structural and attitudinal changes by delivering a package of services to encompass not only the economic field, i.e. agriculture, allied activities, rural industries, but also establishment of required social infrastructure and services in the area of health and nutrition, sanitation, housing, drinking water and literacy, with the ultimate objective of improving quality of life of rural poor and the rural weak . The use of information technology and e-service has changed the dimension of rural development.

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