

CHAPTER - 1

Introduction

“India lives in its villages” - Mahatma Gandhi

1.0. Introduction

The term rural development is the overall development of rural areas to improve the quality of life of rural people. And it is a process leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor. The rural developmental programmes intend to reduce the poverty and unemployment, to improve the health and educational status and to fulfill the basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing of the rural population. To improve the conditions of rural people, Government of India launched some schemes through the planning commission of India such as 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), etc. All these schemes are aimed to reduce the gap

between rural and urban people, which would help reduce imbalances and speed up the development process.

Rural development has always been an important issue in all discussions pertaining to economic development, especially of developing countries, throughout the world. In the developing countries and some formerly communist societies, rural mass comprise a substantial majority of the population. Over 3.5 billion people live in the Asia and Pacific region and some 63% of them in rural areas. Although millions of rural people have escaped poverty because of rural development in many Asian countries, a large majority of rural people continue to suffer from persistent poverty. The socio-economic disparities between rural and urban areas are widening and creating tremendous pressure on the social and economic fabric of many developing Asian economies. These factors, among many others, tend to highlight the importance of rural development. The policy makers in most of the developing economies recognize this importance and have been implementing a host of programs and measures to achieve rural development objectives. While some of these countries have achieved impressive results, others have failed to make a significant dent in the problem of persistent rural underdevelopment.

Rural areas are sparsely settled places away from the influence of large cities and towns. Such areas are distinct from more intensively settled urban and suburban areas, and also from unsettled lands such as outback or wilderness. People live in village, on farms and in other isolated houses. Rural areas can have an agricultural character, though many rural areas are

characterized by an economy based on logging, mining, oil and gas exploration, or tourism. Lifestyles in rural areas are different from those in urban areas, mainly because limited services are available. Governmental services like law enforcement, schools, fire departments, and libraries may be distant, limited in scope, or unavailable. Utilities like water, sewer, street lighting, and garbage collection may not be present. Public transport is sometimes absent or very limited; people use their own vehicles, walk, or ride an animal. A society or community can be classified as rural based on the criteria of lower population density, less social differentiation, less social and spatial mobility, slow rate of social change, etc. Agriculture would be the major occupation of rural area.

Development refers to growth, evolution, stage of inducement or progress. This progress or growth is gradual and had sequential phases. Always there is increasing differentiation. It also refers to the overall movement towards greater efficiency and complex situations.

Rural development designates the utilization of approaches and techniques under one single programme, which rally upon local communities as units of action. It provides a large umbrella under which all the people engaged in the work of community organizations, community progress and community relation.

Rural Development (RD) is a process, which aims at improving the wellbeing and self-realization of people living outside the urbanized areas through collective process. According to Agarwal (1989), rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life

of rural poor. The United Nations defines Rural Development , as Rural Development is a process of change, by which the efforts of the people themselves are united, those of government authorities to improve their economic, social, and cultural conditions of communities in to the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to national programme. Rural Development is a process of bringing change among rural community from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. It is also expressed as a movement for progress.

1.1. Scope and Importance of Rural Development

Rural development is a dynamic process, which is mainly concerned with the rural areas. These include agricultural growth, putting up of economic and social infrastructure, fair wages as also housing and house sites for the landless, village planning, public health, education and functional literacy, communication etc. Rural development is a national necessity and has considerable importance in India because of the following reasons.

- i. About three-fourth of India's population live in rural areas, thus rural development is needed to develop nation as whole.
- ii. Nearly half of the country's national income is derived from agriculture, which is major occupation of rural India.
- iii. Around seventy per cent of Indian population gets employment through agriculture.
- iv. Bulks of raw materials for industries come from agriculture and rural sector.

- v. Increase in industrial population can be justified only in rural population's motivation and increasing the purchasing power to buy industrial goods.
- vi. Growing disparity between the urban elite and the rural poor can lead to political instability.

1.2. Need of Rural Development

Rural development is a national necessity and has considerable importance in India because of the following reasons.

1. To develop rural area as whole in terms of culture, society, economy, technology and health.
2. To develop living standard of rural mass.
3. To develop rural youths, children and women.
4. To develop and empower human resource of rural area in terms of their psychology, skill, knowledge, attitude and other abilities.
5. To develop infrastructure facility of rural area.
6. To provide minimum facility to rural mass in terms of drinking water, education, transport, electricity and communication.
7. To develop rural institutions like panchayat, cooperatives, post, banking and credit.
8. To provide financial assist to develop the artisans in the rural areas, farmers and agrarian unskilled labor, small and big rural entrepreneurs to improve their economy.

9. To develop rural industries through the development of handicrafts, small scaled industries, village industries, rural crafts, cottage industries and other related economic operations in the rural sector.
10. To develop agriculture, animal husbandry and other agricultural related areas.
11. To restore uncultivated land, provide irrigation facilities and motivate farmers to adopt improved seed, fertilizers, package of practices of crop cultivation and soil conservation methods.
12. To develop entertainment and recreational facility for rural mass.
13. To develop leadership quality of rural area.
14. To improve rural marketing facility.
15. To minimise gap between the urban and rural in terms of facilities availed.
16. To improve rural people's participation in the development of state and nation as whole.
17. To improve scopes of employment for rural mass.
18. For the sustainable development of rural area.
19. To eliminate rural poverty.
20. To solve the problems faced by the rural mass for their development.

1.3. Problems in Rural Development

1. Traditional way of people's thinking.
2. Poor understanding.
3. Low level of education to understand developmental efforts and new technology.

4. Deprived psychology and scientific orientation.
5. Lack of confidence.
6. Poor awareness.
7. Low level of education.
8. Existence of unfelt needs.
9. Personal ego.

1.4. Agricultural Related Problems

1. Lack of expected awareness, knowledge, skill and attitude.
2. Unavailability of inputs.
3. Poor marketing facility.
4. Insufficient extension staff and services.
5. Multidimensional tasks to extension personnel.
6. Small size of land holding.
7. Division of land.
8. Unwillingness to work and stay in rural areas.

1.5. Infrastructure Related Problems

Poor infrastructure facilities like water, electricity, transport, educational institutions, communication, health, storage facility etc.

1.6. Economic Problems

1. Unfavourable economic condition to adopt high cost technology.
2. High cost of inputs.
3. Underprivileged rural industries.

1.7. Social and Cultural problems

1. Cultural norms and traditions.
2. Conflict within and between groups, castes, religions, regions, languages.

1.8. Leadership Related Problems

1. Leadership among the hands of inactive and incompetent people.
2. Malafied interest of leaders.
3. Biased political will.

1.9. Administrative Problems

1. Earlier, majority of the programmes were planning based on top to bottom approach and were target oriented.
2. Political interference.
3. Lack of motivation and interest.
4. Unwillingness to work in rural area.
5. Improper utilization of budget.

1.10. Methodology

So far the methodological aspect of the study is concerned it relates to the methods adopted in selection of the study area, drawing the sample respondents, schedule-cum- questionnaire used in collecting the desired information both at macro and micro levels to arrive at analytical conclusion. The methodological details containing the research design, methods and tools and the analytical procedures, etc. have been outlined in sub-sections as below.

1.11. Research Design and Sampling Procedure

The universe of the study is Saharsa District of Bihar which comprises of 10 blocks. A multi stage stratified random sampling design has been used for the bottom unit of the sample. At the first stage sampling, 4 blocks has been selected namely Sonbarsa, Simri Bakhtiarapur, Banma Itahari and Kahara. The second stage sampling, four villages from each of the blocks were selected. At the third stage, 50 respondents has been selected from each sample villages for the intensive study.

1.12. Research Procedure

The research procedure followed for the study consisted of the methods used in the collection of relevant evidences and information as secondary data from the state level, District level, Block level, Cooperative Societies, Panchayats and NGOs in the sampled area. The primary data were obtained from the sampled respondents. The survey method was used for collection of primary data as this method was found to be the most appropriate and feasible for descriptive type of study like the present one. The primary data were collected directly from the sampled respondents by visiting their premises several times to obtain required relevant information like their family structure, occupation, their assets, investment, expenditure incurred in farming, etc. with the help of specific and pre-tested schedule-cum-questionnaire.

1.13. Plan of the Study

The object of the present work is to study and evaluate the impact of rural development efforts in Saharsa district of Bihar, which comprises the

Kahara, Nauhatta, Mahishi, Saurbazar, Sattarkataiya, Sonbarsa, Patarghat, Simri Bakhtoyarpur, Salkhua and Banma Itahari CD Blocks. The study has been organized in five chapters. Firstly, introductory one dealing with the significance of the study, review of literature, objectives, hypothesis, methodology and limitations and layout of the report. The first chapter entitled “Rural Development Before and After Independence” presents the rural development programs of pre and post-independence in India. The third chapter entitle “The Economy of Saharsa District” gives detailed information about the study area Saharsa District comprising with state of Bihar. The forth chapter entitled “Social Factors and Physical Facilities in Saharsa District delineate the social factors in sampled area Saharsa district with the physical facilities in Saharsa district. The fifth chapter entitled “Poverty, Land and Income distribution in Saharsa District deals the poverty, land and income distribution in Saharsa district. The sixth chapter entitled “An Evaluation of Rural Development Planning of the Government in Saharsa” evaluates the rural development programs of the Government. And lastly Conclusion and Suggestions presents the summary, conclusion and recommendation for the sampled area.

As per the schedule prepared the data is collected from the households. After tabulating and analysing the data, an attempt is made to study the infrastructure facilities created in those villages, the socio-economic position of households and the income pattern of the villages in order to assess the impact of poverty on those villages, further, an attempt is made to assess the minimum needs of the villages and also to suggest the per capita

expenditure to provide some minimum needs to the villages such as drinking water, drainage system and septic latrines.

One of the forms of technical assistance for the economic development of backward region is in depth study of their problems with a view to diagnosing their character and suggests appropriate remedies for their problems. This study is based on the data of investigation. In the collection, analysis and interpretation of the material, the aim has been to make an objective analysis of rural poverty in a backward region. The work is original in so far as originality means independent evaluation of problems. But the extent of information and guidance derived from various sources has been considerable and is indicated at appropriate places. I should feel amply rewarded if I have succeeded in elucidating with some precision the various aspects and difficulties of the rural problems which are inherent in the process of rural development in any backward area.

1.14. The Issues

Rural Development and Poverty Alleviation have been on the national policy agenda for more than 65 years. The importance of reduction in poverty and provision of other basic needs has been emphasised in all the five-year plans since independence particularly since the Fifth Five Year Plan. Despite efforts made over the past few decades, rural poverty in India continues to cause concern. The antipoverty programmes have been strengthened in successive years and poverty levels have come down from 56.44 per cent of India's population in 1973-74 to 37.24 percent in 1993-94. However, the number of rural poor has more or less remained static, which

has remained around 244 million people. The adverse effects of such a heavy incidence of poverty on the country's development are obvious. In this context, the self-employment programmes assume significance for; they alone can provide income to the rural poor on a sustainable basis. Earlier the multiplicity of programmes IRDP, TRYSEM, DWCRA, MANREGA etc. being viewed as separate programmes in them, resulted in a lack of proper social intermediation and absence of desired linkages. To rectify the situation, the Government decided to restructure the self-employment programmes. A new programme SGSY was launched on 1st April, 1999. This program covers all aspects of self-employment such as organisation of the poor into self-help groups, training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing. This programme aims to develop a large number of micro-enterprises in the rural areas, building upon the potential of the rural poor. The emphasis is given on the cluster approach, in which 4-5 key activities will be identified for each block based on the local resources. Another programme Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) has also been restructured and streamlined as a comprehensive version of the erstwhile JRY. The primary objective of the JGSY is one of creating a demand driven community village infrastructure. This comprises building up durable assets at the village level and thereby enables the rural poor to enhance their opportunities for sustained employment. The secondary objective is the generation of supplementary employment for the unemployed poor in the rural areas, particularly during the lean seasons.

In the past, where poverty levels were much higher in developing regions, the environmental degradation was not much pronounced. Now that poverty levels are declining significantly in percentage terms, it does not sound appropriate to attribute environmental degradation to poverty. Evidently, there are other factors at play, which deserve one's attention. Development per se has a seamy side in terms of environmental degradation. Development projects may be environmentally destructive. There are cases of destructive development, which aggravate poverty and contribute to environmental degradation at the same time. In spite of many instances of the possibility of conflict between development and environment concerns, growing regions cannot ignore negative externalities, which will aggravate poverty in the same region. The evaluators of Government, Research Institutions, Universities, and individuals have adopted some yardsticks to quantify the positive aspects of various rural development and poverty alleviation programmes, to the neglect of the negative aspects. By then the perception of planners was of a limited focus, and issues of environmental concerns did not surface much in evolving the methodologies of evaluation. It has been rightly contended that a large number of studies on Rural Development are mechanical in nature, committed to mere collection of facts and figures and their presentation relate to positive externalities of the various programmes. Such studies fail to analytically outline and unfold the integrated functioning of the village economy from environmental perspective. Now it is increasingly realised that a holistic study of a village development is a prerequisite to tackle the problem development and

environment. Hence, it is warranted to probe into the impact of the Rural Development programmes at various levels from environmental perspective.

Bihar is the northern State in Indian subcontinent. The total geographical area constitutes about 130 lakh hectares. The population of Bihar in 2001 is 6.05 per cent of the country's population. The decadal growth of population in the State continuously declined from 22.3 per cent in 1961-71 to 11.19 percent in 1991-2001. However, the density of population has steadily increased from 316 persons per sq. km. in 1971 to 478 persons per sq. km. in 2001. The level of poverty in Bihar is 35 per cent during 1993-94, which could not be appreciated. In view of the facts stated above, the present study would focus the emerging issues in Bihar with special reference to Rural Development in environmental perspective.

1.15. Limitations of the Study

The non-availability of some relevant books and information in the field of this study and the difficulty of obtaining literature and other published and un published material from places elsewhere in India have been a handicap. Further, it has been difficult to collect accurate and reliable household and village information in the 16 sample villages from the illiterate and ignorant villagers, who do not maintain records of their own social and economic activities.

It may be said that securing correct data and information by a single individual from the households of 16 sample villages scattered in four Community Development Blocks is infinitely more difficult than finding

the proverbial pin from the hey-rick. This forms the crux of the whole problem, while willingness to give data is none too abundant, very rarely the informants are capable of giving the required information since they do not maintain any records of the events. The memories may betray them beyond their control. Sometimes, the information kept for the family administrative purposes, bristles with bias and several imperfections. Yet no effort has been spared to gather as much relevant material as possible from various sources.

And so, It can be say that the present study, being an empirical one, has certain in-built limitations such as: (i) It was not possible to cover entire area in view of time constraint and resource constraint. (ii) The respondents were mostly illiterate and shy and also in some cases they were disinterested. (iii) The investigation has been carried out only in four Blocks and four panchayats of Saharsa District, therefore, the general acceptability of the results have its own limitation.(iv) Primary survey research method of data collection is based on recall of memory because the small businessmen as well as other farmers of the district were not maintaining the records. So it cannot be free from its biases particularly in case of literate and semi-literate respondents.

