# Certificate Programme on Rural Development

## Course 2

# Vision and Approaches to Rural Development

**Surya Kumar Bhuyan School of Social Sciences**
**KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

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# COURSE INTRODUCTION

This course is a 4 credit course consisting of 15 units. This course discusses the foundational visions and diverse approaches that have shaped rural development over time, particularly in the Indian context. It provides learners with a critical understanding of the evolution of rural development thinking, from Gandhian approach and community-based approaches to contemporary models focused on sustainable development and participatory governance.

Various development paradigms, government strategies, and institutional frameworks aimed at improving rural livelihoods and ensuring social justice are discussed in this course. By the end of the course, learners will be equipped with the conceptual clarity and analytical tools needed to assess rural development issues and strategies required for sustainable development.

While going through the units, you will find that unit is further divided into certain sections and sub-sections, wherever necessary, for your better understanding. Again, the units carry certain *activities* after a particular section where needed. These “ACTIVITIES” will provide you the opportunity to practically apply your own thoughts based on the knowledge gained from reading the text in a particular section. Besides, in order to give you additional information on certain relevant topics, you will find a category called “LET US KNOW” after the sections in each unit. Another category that has been included at the end of each section of a particular unit is “CHECK YOUR PROGRESS”. The purpose of this category is to help you to asses for yourself as to how thoroughly you have understood a particular section. You may then match your answers with “ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS” given at the end of each unit. The section “FURTHER READING” in each unit contains the names of a few books which you might want to consult if you are intereted in learning more elaborately about the concepts discussed in a particular unit. Furthermore, the category called “MODEL QUESTIONS” is intended to give you a hint of the type of questions you are likely to get in the examination.

# UNIT 1 : PHILOSOPHY AND VISION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## UNIT STRUCTURE


1.1 Learning objective
1.2 Introduction
1.3 Understanding the Vision of Rural Development
1.4 Philosophy of Rural Development
1.5 Meaning and Characteristics of Community Development
1.6 Programmes Undertaken under Community Development
1.7 Gandhian Approach to Rural Development
1.8 Various Principles of Rural Development According to Mahatma Gandhi
1.9 Meaning of Rural Development
1.10 Issues in Rural Development
1.11 Certain Suggestions for Rural Development in India
1.12 Meaning of Urban Development
1.13 Causes of Urbanization in India
1.14 Problems and Issues Related to Urban Employment
1.15 Let Us Sum Up
1.16 Further Reading
1.17 Answers To Check Your Progress
1.18 Model Questions


## 1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- explain the meaning of community development
- state the characteristics of community development
- explain the programmes undertaken under community development
- understand the Gandhian approach to rural development
- meaning and causes of urban development
- problems and issues related to urban employment.

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous course, you have gained an understanding of rural society— its structure, the changes it undergoes, and the nature of the rural economy. Building on that foundation, this coursewill focus on various aspects of rural development.

In this first unit of this course, we will begin by exploring the fundamental question: *Why is rural development necessary?* To address this, we will study the importance of having a clear vision of Rural development as progress is not possible without a defined direction. Following this, we will move into the Gandhian approache to rural development, including the concept of community development and its role in the overall progress of rural areas. I n this unit we will also discuss the concept of urban development and some other issues associated with it.

## 1.3 UNDERSTANDING PHILOSOPHY AND VISION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The philosophy of rural development is deeply rooted in the evolution of civilization and is not a recent concept. Though the term “rural development” gained popularity in modern times, its essence has existed for centuries as a response to the needs of society particularly to uplift the economically and socially underprivileged groups.

In India, rural development has always been linked with social welfare and the upliftment of the common people. Thinkers and reformers such as Balashastri Jambhekar, Mahatma Phule, Shri Lokahitwadi, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, Justice Ranade, and Dadabhai Naoroji contributed to shaping this idea through their writings . Their collective efforts laid the foundation for addressing rural problems and highlighted the importance of inclusive development. A significant turning point was the **Deccan Agricultural Riot of 1875**, which arose due to the severe exploitation of peasants by moneylenders, combined with rising debt, land dispossession, and agricultural distress. This event, along with devastating famines, brought rural issues to the forefront of public and governmental attention. It

highlighted the urgency of addressing rural poverty and led to increased focus on policies aimed at rural upliftment.

During the time of First Five-Year Plan of India, nearly half of the population lived below the poverty line, with around 80% of them living in rural areas. Poverty in rural areas was widespread and alarming to that extent that people were unable to meet their basic needs. The Planning Commission of India defined the poverty line based on daily calorie intake 2400 calories in rural areas and 2100 in urban areas. Those unable to meet this nutritional threshold were considered below the poverty line. This issue was further compounded by sharp disparities across states, between men and women, and among different social groups. Marginalized communities such as the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Castes, women, children, and persons with disabilities were most affected and these issues called the planned state interventions to provide relief and empowerment. By the beginning of the new millennium, about 260 million people in India lacked sufficient income to afford the basic consumption basket, and 75% of them were from rural areas. India alone accounted for 22% of the worlds poor. The persistence of such high levels of poverty posed a serious challenge to the overall progress of the nation and to global efforts toward sustainable development. Therefore, poverty eradication has remained a central focus of development planning of the country. Besides Rural Poverty other issues such as unemployment, inadequate infrastructure, and migration to cities leading to the growth of urban slums and associated socio-economic tensions. It is essential that people in rural areas enjoy a quality of life comparable to those in urban regions. Thus, rural development must focus not only on economic growth but also on social justice, aiming to improve the living standards of rural populations by providing access to basic needs and quality social services.

Thus, the vision of rural development goes beyond simply improving the economic condition of the rural poor. It aims to build a balanced, inclusive, and sustainable future for rural communities. This means addressing not just income or employment, but also enhancing access to education, healthcare, infrastructure, social equity, environmental sustainability, and local governance.

## 1.4 MEANING AND CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Community development involves a continuous process where members of a community come together and take collective action in order to generate solutions to common problems. Community wellbeing can be of any form like economic, social, environmental and cultural. Community development takes into account small initiatives within a small group to large initiatives involving a large or broader community.

The basic characteristic of effective community development is that it should be a well-planned long term process which is initiated and processed by the community members and which brings development and change in the society.

Community development being a grassroots process brings a positive impact in the communities concerned. They become more responsible and as they organise and plan together they empower themselves. This in turn reduces poverty and thus creates employment opportunities and helps in achievingsocial, economic, cultural and environmental goals.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What do you mean by Community Development?

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**Q 2:** Mention some characteristics of community development?

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## 1.5 PROGRAMMES OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development Project covers a large number of programmes to bring about the changes in the rural community.

These programmes include**:**

1. **Development of Agriculture:** Community development aims at development of the agricultural sector. These includeproviding improved seeds to the farmers as well as better irrigation facilities. Also, various other needs of the farmers are taken care of. It is only through the improvement in the agricultural sector that the overall condition of the people in the rural society can improve.
2. **Development of Communication:** construction of new roads and improving transport and com-munication facilities is another aim of community development project. This results in improvement in the rural condition and can easily move from one place to another with the improvement in means of communication and transport in rural areas.
1. **Development of Education:** The Right to Education Act ensures free and compulsory education to all children within the age group of 6 to 14. As such various centres for imparting education have been implemented. Also, libraries and reading rooms are set up for the purpose.
4. **Development of Health Services:** Community Development Project aims at providing health services in order to improve the standard of the people living in the rural areas. Facilities of medical and health services are provided along with maternity and child welfare ser-vices
5. **Employment Facilities:** Un-employment and underemployment are a basic characteristic of the rural societies. Agriculture being the only means of livelihood is subjected to seasonal factors. Thus small scale and cottage industries are set up under community development programme so that they can be self-reliant.
6. **Housing Facilities:** Provision of better housing facilities is another aim of the community development programmes. This is because people in rural areas are not hygienic andlack basic facilities.
7. **Social Welfare Activities:** Social welfare activities which aim at providing better facilities for recreation, women's education have also been under the provision of Community Development Project.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** Name some programmes under community development?

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## 1.6 GANDHIAN APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Mahatma Gandhi mentioned that "India lives in her seven and half lakhs of villages". He had a holistic approach to India's rural development. He further believed that "If village perishes, India will perish too". Gandhi focussed on truth, non-violence, moral and spiritual values. Rural development aims at development of the rural sector by improving the rural economy specially the agriculture and allied industries and also by improving the skills by putting emphasis on cottage and small scale industries.

The main focus lies in creating employment generation in the rural economies which in turn will help them to raise their standard of living. Mahatma Gandhi had an idealistic approach towards rural economy. Gandhiji's idea of an ideal social order was the concept of 'Rama Rajya'. Rama Rajya according to Gandhi is the sovereignty of the people which depends on moral authority. Rama was not viewed as a king, and people as his subjects. 'Rama' was believed to be God or a person's own 'inner voice'according to the Gandhian approach. Gandhi believed in a social order which is democratic in nature where people are supreme and this supremacy is based on moral values.

## 1.6 VARIOUS PRINCIPLES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO MAHATMA GANDHI

The Gandhian approach of rural economy was based on the principles of trusteeship, swadeshi, full employment, bread labour, self-sufficiency, decentralisation, equality, etc. Thus Gandhi's idea of an ideal

village was a comprehensive one which encompasses the different dimensions such as economic, social, political and educational which helps in the creation of an ideal village.

1. **Ideal Village:** The main focus of the Gandhian ideal social order was the village. An ideal village according to Gandhi belongs to the foreign domination of the Pre-British period. Here the villages of India were part of the federation which consists of self-governing autonomous republics.

   According to Gandhiji, every village voluntarily wishes to be a part of the federation. The central authority will coordinate the work of different village republics and to supervise the various activities like education, basic industries, health, currency, banking etc will be supervised by the central authority.

   The decisions of the central authority cannot be enforced on village republics. However the "republican' character of the villages were destroyed by the transport and economic structure initiated by the British.

   It was observed by Gandhi that the feudal chiefs practised tyranny and oppression in ancient times. But, in the purview of the Gandhian approach an Indian village without tyranny and exploitation, the ancient 'republic', serves to act as a model unit.

2. **Decentralisation:** Gandhi firmly believed that decentralisation of social and political power was the base in building up of village republics. Here the main decision-making power is not entrusted in the state and the national capital but with the village panchayat. The representatives shall be elected and constitutes a council, called the panchayat and will continue for a five year period.

   All the legislative, executive and judicial matters shall be supervised by the Panchayat. The main focus is given on education, health and sanitation of the village. The Panchayatshave the responsibility to protect and uplift the poor people particularly the 'untouchables'. Also, the various resources for managing the affairs of the villageare raised from the villages itself.

Again, the various conflicts and disputes would be resolved within the village. The panchayat has an important role to play in spreading the importance of moral and spiritual values among the rural people.Apart from supervising its own affairs, a set of volunteers will be entrusted with the duty of defending the village against any invasion in a peaceful and non-violent manner.

1. **Self-sufficiency**: Self-sufficiency at the village level is a pre-requisite so that a decentralised economy can be attained. The village should also be self-sufficient in fulfilling its basic requirements of food, clothing, and other necessities. Nevertheless, certain thing which cannot be produced in the village has to be imported.

   The village should be self-sufficient in the production of food-crops and cotton.Lands should be distributed amongst cattle for grazing and for the adults and children, a common playground. Moreover, cash crops like tobacco, opium, etc. must be producedso that they can engage in the barter system of trade where goods are exchanged in place of goods.

   There should be provision of providing of full employment to all the adults of the village so that no person is forced to migrate to towns.

   Physical labour plays an important role in the Gandhian concept of the self-sufficient village. According to Gandhi, every person must engage in some physical labour to earn his bread. Physical labour can enhance moral discipline and sound development of the mind. Gandhi said, “If all laboured for their bread then there would be enough food and enough leisure for all.”

4. **Industrialization**: Gandhiji believed that industrialization would not benefit all in general. Rather, it would help only a few and thus, will lead to concentration of economic power. Industrialization encourages competition and will lead to exploitation of the villages. Large scale production requires marketing which in turn is profit-seeking.

   Moreover, industrialization leads to the use of machines in place of manpower and hence causes unemployment. In a country like India,

the villages will get ruined with industrialisation as it will increase unemployment on one hand and also the labourers will be forced to migrate to distant urban areas.

In such a crisis, the need for the development of village and cottage industries becomes a necessity. This will create employment to meet the various needs of the villagers and thus facilitate village self-sufficiency. If machines satisfy the aims of self-sufficiency and full employment, then the villagers can use modern machines and tools to facilitate their production.

5. **Trusteeship**: Gandhiji was against the concentration and misuse of wealth. Gandhiji focussed on the principle of trusteeship which found its applicability in social and economic affairs. He propounded that all social possessions should be kept in trust. The capitalists would have accumulated wealth shall have to distribute the surplus wealth for maximising the welfare for the rest of the society.

The capitalists shall act as benefactors for the poor workers, under trusteeship. It is through this trusteeship,Gandhi proposed that there can be increasein the welfare of the labours. Also, the clash that existed between the workers and employers can be escaped. Trusteeship proposed a continuous state of equality on this world. The rich can keep only that much which is necessary for them to maintain a good standard of living. The remaining could be used for the welfare of the society. Trusteeship will thus help in eliminating economic inequalities between the wealthy and poor people. The doctrine of trusteeship did not give any scope for bloodshed and violence.

Gandhiji was not in favour of individual ownership of land. Land should be used only for the welfare of the society or community as it only belongs to the community. They should act as trustees of the land and thus donate their land voluntarily.

Hence, Gandhiji's concept of development was meant for the upliftment of the common man. He emphasised on village residents and focussed on Swadeshi craft to imported technology for the economic wellbeing of the people. Stress was therefore given on cottage and small

scale industries and on a decentralised economy.

Gandhji stressed on the integration of education, health and vocation which is of utmost necessity for the integration of rural development. He focussed on the importance of education and training known as 'Naitalim' (New training) which is required for rural reconstruction.

In conclusion it can be said that the Gandhian approach strives to bring integrated rural development to make the villages self-governed and self-sufficient without violence. This would bring ultimate development in the rural areas of India.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 4:** What are the various principles of rural development according to Mahatma Gandhi?

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## 1.7 MEANING OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development means overall improvement of the quality of life for the rural people. It is observed that almost 70% of population of India lives in villages. Again, this backwardness of the rural sector acts as a major impediment to the overall progress of the economy. India being an agricultural country and farming is their main occupation. Rural development thus aims to bring economic wellbeing to the people living in the rural areas. It aims to bring about reduction of poverty, increasing productivity, providing basic services like health, education, drinking water, sanitation, infrastructure etc. further it aims to bring equal distribution of wealth among the masses.

## 1.8 ISSUES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The key issues in rural development are:-

i. **Development of other alternate occupations besides agriculture**: It is observed that agricultural land is limited in rural areas. As such, focus should be on alternative occupations in the rural areas for the

overall development of the rural areas.

ii. **Investment in Human Capital**: Investment must be made on human capital through various skill development courses; vocational training courses so that the rural youth can be absorbed in the development of the rural areas itself.

iii. **Roads:** People in the poor communities are isolated from the main towns and cities. This is mainly because of dilapidated roads, inadequate transport facilities etc. Thus it is difficult to bring goods to the market or send children to school. Also, various emergencies in health cannot be dealt properly in rural areas.

iv. **Electricity**: It has been found that, about 19,909 villages are yet to be electrified (Progress report of village electrification as on 11-01-2015). In addition, the power quality in the electrified villages is not up to the mark in some electrified villages.

v. **Water**: The water quality of ground water is not appropriate for consumption and other purposes. Itis estimated that around 1.5 million children die of diarrhoea alone and around 17.7 million Indians are affected by water borne diseases annually. The major portion of ground water is contaminated with iron, fluoride and arsenic. These chemicals are emerging as a major concern in many habitations especiallyin the rural India.

vi. **Education, Literacy**: There exists wide gender disparity in the literacy rate in India. The literacy rates (age 7 and above) in 2011 were 82.14% for men and 65.46% for women. Again, adult literacy rates in India was 74.04% in 2011 and Youth literacy rate for the age group 15-24 was 90.2% (2015)

vii. **Poverty**: Poverty stands to be a great hindrance in the path of development specially in rural areas.

viii. **Employment**: Unemployment is a great concern in rural India. A number of youths migrate to the urban areas in search of better employment. Moreover, the population in the rural areas have been on a rise, with the Agriculture land remaining the same.

ix. **Migration to urban**: Due to factors such as more income generating

opportunities in urban areas, social as well as economic factors, better health and education facilities, more of infrastructural advantages, there has been a continuous migration of the people from the rural to urban areas of India.

x. **Land reforms**: There exist non progressive land reforms measures for the rural farmers. For this reason, the rural poor have been exploited to a great extent by the Zamindars and the big landlords.

xi. **Sanitation and Health**: There exista number of sanitation and health issues particularly in the rural areas that stands in the path of development in the rural areas. Less number of toilets, non-awareness, and drinking water quality in rural India are certain causes of concern.

## 1.9 CERTAIN SUGGESTIONS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

1. **Utilization of Local Resources**: A village is usually rich in local resources. If ways and means can be found out to extract and utilise the same, then, this will help in providing employment of the local people and also develop the village at the same time.

2. **Establishment of Rural Industries:** All the village industries come under the following broad categories

   a) Agro Based Industries(Industries of sugar, Dairy products, Oil processing from oil seeds,Pickles, Spices, Dairy etc.)

   b) Forest Based Industries(Wood and Bamboo products, Honey, etc)

   c) Mineral based industry such as Stone crushing, Cement industries, etc.

   d) Textile Industry: It includes the various steps such as Spinning, Weaving, Colouring and Bleaching.

   e) Engineering and Services: Small and medium industries which are used to produce machinery used in agriculture are included in this category, etc.

   f) Handicrafts: Bamboo/wood handicrafts, toys and other traditional

decorative products can be made by the local people of the region.

3. **Services**: Service facilities such as agriculture machinery servicing, etc can be provided by the local youths.
4. **Startups**: A number of startups can also initiated in the rural areas so that the village can be self-sufficient to meet there own needs. Also, the products produced can be marketed in the urban areas.
5. **Encourage Rural Entrepreneurship**: Various types of entrepreneurships such as Individual, Group, Cluster or Cooperative Entrepreneurship can be initiated by the people of the local community.

**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**



**Q 5:** What do you mean by rural development?

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**Q 6:** State some suggestions for rural development in India.

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## 1.10 MEANING OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Urban development refers to development in the urban areas. It comprises of various dimensions like physical, geographical, economic and social. It aims to bring about various changes and development in the society through generation of employment, bringing collection of economic and knowledge spill overs as wellas through social and cultural change. In India, more than 10% of the population live in urban areas.

## 1.11 CAUSES OF URBANIZATION IN INDIA

The main causes of urbanization in India are:-

1. Development and growth of the private sector
2. Rural-urban migration
3. The Industrial Revolution

4. Creation of more employment opportunities in the urban areas
5. Infrastructure facilities in the urban areas.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 7:** Define urban development?

.....

.....

**Q 8:** State the causes of urban development?

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## 1.12 PROBLEMS AND ISSUES RELATED TO URBAN EMPLOYMENT

### 1.12 PROBLEMS AND ISSUES RELATED TO URBAN EMPLOYMENT

The rise in the urban population in India leads to many problems relating to the standard of living of the people, environmental degradation etc. certain problems related to urban development are given below:

1. **Urban expansion**: There has been an expansion in population in the urban areas, particularly the cities. Also the economic base is not able to deal with the increasing population. In addition, the migration of the people from the rural to the urban areas has been taking place continuously which in turn has increasing the size of the cities.
2. **Overcrowding**: Overcrowding is a situation where there are too many people filled than that is desirable. It occurs because of over-population in the urban areas.
3. **Housing**: Provision of housing facility has become very difficult. The price of houses has been on an increase and cannot be afforded by the low income groups.People reside in congested houses which are devoid of proper ventilation, lighting, water supply, sewage system, etc.
4. **Sanitation**: The sanitation system is also not proper in not so developed urban localities. Also, the drainage system is also in a bad

shape. The garbage management is also a major problem in the urban areas.

5. **Environmental issues**. People are more vulnerable to risk due to the increasing man-made and natural disasters. Because of the increasing density of population there is higher risk in the urban areas.
6. **Poverty**: It is found that one third of the urban population lives below poverty line. There are disparities which exists between the people in the urban areas. There exists the problem of poverty and creating more existing conditions for the urban poor.The rate of urban inequality has been on a rise over the years.
7. **Transport**: In urban places, private vehicles are in abundance in comparison to the use of public transport. This in turn increases congestion in the roads thereby decreasing the efficiency of public transport. Also, the public transport infrastructure in not properly maintained.
8. **Unemployment**:Urban unemployment in India is a serious problem in the urban areas. About 15 to 25 per cent of the labour force living in urban areas is unemployed.
9. **Water**: The amount of ground water has been decreasing over the years.This is going to create serious problem for the sustenance of life on earth. With the increase in the size of urban population, supply of water has started falling short of demand.

In conclusion it can be said that, urbanization in India has been on an increase over the years, especially due to the migration of people from rural to urban areas. Again, it is linked to modernization and industrialization along with the sociological process of rationalization.



## 1.13 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the following points:

- Community development involves a continuous process where members of a community come together and take collective action in

order to generate solutions to common problems.

- The characteristics and programmes under community development.
- The Gandhian Approach to rural Development.
- Various principles of rural development according to Mahatma Gandhi such as Ideal village, trusteeship, swadeshi, self-sufficiency, decentralisation, equality, etc.
- Rural Development and Issues in Rural Development.
- Various suggestions for Rural Development in India.
- Urban Development and Causes of urbanization in India.
- Problems and issues related to urban employment.



## 1.14 FURTHER READING

1) B.N. Ghosh and Rama Ghosh, 'Concise History of Economic Thought'. Himalaya Publishing House.

2) H.L.Bhatia, 'History of Economic Thought', Vikas publication.

1) P.K.Dhar ,Indaian Economy , Kalyani Publications.

4) G. Datt and A. Mahajan, Indian Economy, S. Chand.
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5. Pawar, C. T. *Philosophy of rural development in India* (Chapter 1). In **Philosophy of Rural Development** (pp. 1–15). Shivaji University. http://ir.unishivaji.ac.in:8080/jspui/bitstream/123456789/1483/7/07_Chapter%201.pdf



## 1.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Community development is a continuous process where members of a community come together and take collective action in

order to generate solutions to common problems.

**Ans to Q No 2:** The basic characteristic of effetive community development is that it should be a well-planned long term process which is initiated and processed by the community members.

**Ans to Q No 1:** Programmes for agricultural development, Programmes for educational development.

**Ans to Q No 4:** Model village, Decentralization, Self-sufficiency etc.

**Ans to Q No 5:** Rural development means overall improvement of the quality of life for the Rural people.

**Ans to Q No 6:** Utilization of Local Resources, Establishent of Rural Industries.

**Ans to Q No 7:** Urban development refers to development in the urban areas. It comprises of various dimensions like physical, geographical, economic and social.

**Ans to Q No 8:** Development and growth of the private sector, Rural-urban migration.



## 1.16 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Explain the meaning of community development?

**Q 2:** State the characteristics of community development?

**Q 1:** Explain the programmes undertaken under community development?

**Q 4:** Give a brief description aboutGandhian Approach to rural Development?

**Q 5:** Explain the various principles of rural development according to Mahatma Gandhi?

**Q 6:** State the meaning and issues of rural development?

**Q 7:** Give the suggestions for Rural Development in India?

**Q 8:** Define urban development and state the causes of urban development?

**Q 9:** Explain the problems and issues related to urban employment?

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# UNIT 2 : RURAL DEVELOPMENT : CONCEPT, STRATEGIES AND APPROACHES

## UNIT STRUCTURE


2.2 Learning Objectives

2.2 Introduction

2.3 Concept and Definition of Rural Development

2.4 Strategies of Rural Development

2.5 Why is Rural Development Important in India?

2.6 Approaches to Rural Development in India

2.7 Major Financial Institutions for Rural Development in India

2.8 Some Dilemmas of Development

- 2.8.1 Rural versus Urban Development
- 2.8.2 Agriculture Versus Industrial Development
- 2.8.3 Capital Versus Labour Dogma
- 2.8.4 Autonomous Versus Induced Development

2.9 Let Us Sum Up

2.10 Further Reading

2.11 Answer to Check Your Progress

2.12 Model Question


## 2.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- explain the concept of rural development
- know the strategies of rural development
- know the needs of rural development
- explain the dilemmas of development.

## 2.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we discussed about vision and philiosophy of ural fdevelopment which provided a broad understanding of its ifoundational idea and guiding principle. Keeping that background in mind, in this unit we

will discuss about basic concept and satrategies of rural development for better understanding of its scope, dimensions and practical relevance.

## 2.3 CONCEPT AND DEFINITION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural development may be defined as overall development of rural areas to improve the quality of life of the rural people. It is an integrated process, which includes social, economic, political and spiritual development of the poor sections of the society. Rural development can be defined as, helping rural people and set the priorities in their own communities through effective and democratic bodies, by providing the local capacity investment in basic infrastructure and social services, justice, equity and security, dealing with the injustices of the past and ensuring safety and security of the rural population, especially that of women. 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.

Some of the areas which are challenging and need fresh initiatives for development in India include:

- Development of human resources.
- Land reforms.
- Development of the locality specific productive resources of each locality.
- Infrastructure development like electricity, irrigation, credit, marketing, transport facilities including construction of village roads and feeder roads to nearby highways, facilities for agriculture research and extension, and information dissemination.
- Special measures for alleviation of poverty and bringing about significant improvement in the living conditions of the weaker sections of the population emphasising access to productive employment opportunities.

As most of the people on earth live in rural areas, development in true sense cannot be expected without addressing the basic necessities of this huge population. In the era of modern science and technology, large amount of population in rural areas are still deprived of adequate nutrition, good education, proper communication, and social justice. Therefore, rural development is gaining importance in both the developed and developing countries. However, till today, there is no universally acceptable definition of rural development. As a concept, rural development is comprehensive and multidimensional. It means improving the quality of life of the people living in rural areas through agriculture and allied activities. As a phenomenon, rural development is the result of interactions between various physical, technological, economic, socio-cultural and institutional factors. For instance, if we want to develop rural area through agricultural activities, there is a need to think of changing the attitude of farmers toward modem agriculture; introduction of High Yeilding Varieties (HYV) of crops, mechanization of farming, use of fertilizers, pesticides; formation of Self Help Groups (SHGs) for microfinance; training of farmers for building capacities in modern agriculture; improvement of roads and communication system, provision of electricity, market etc. Therefore, it calls for a holistic approach of development. As a strategy, rural poor are always targeted in rural development. As a discipline, it has close relationship with subjects like agriculture and allied sciences, social sciences, health sciences, engineering and management sciences.

Rural development can be defined as an approach towards integrated development of an area and the people through optimum development and utilisation of local resources-physical, biological and human and by bringing about necessary institutional, structural, and attitudinal changes of rural public. Development of rural area means development of the people living in rural areas through implementation of various rural developmental schemes. The objectives of development include sustained increase in per capita output and income, expansion of productive employment and greater equity in the distribution of the benefits of growth. Rural development over the years has emerged as a strategy designed to

improve the economic, social and cultural life of specific group of people as well as living in rural areas. Rural development must constitute a major part of development strategy if a larger segment of those in greatest need are to benefit. So, the term development in the context of rural development can be interpreted in the following ways:

- Rural development implies development of agriculture because agriculture and allied activities are the principal economic occupation of the rural masses.
- Rural development implies economic development i.e. increase in the national and the per capita income of rural community by improving industrialisation and creating employment opportunities.
- Rural development means all round development of the rural community, which include development of agriculture and economic development along with the provision of minimum needs, poverty alleviation and eradication of unemployment. Therefore rural development means all round development of the rural community.

In modern times, rural development is not just about agricultural growth though agricultural growth is a very important dimension of rural development. Other sectors or dimensions come into play in the process of rural growth, such as health, education and economic activities outside the agricultural sector. So, rural development is multi-sectoral. It embraces a variety of different economic and social sectors. These are summarised below:

- Agriculture and natural resources – crops, livestock, fishing, forestry.
- Non-farm sector – services to agriculture (including input supply, marketing, transport, finance, agricultural processing), rural manufacturing, mining, and other rural services
- Rural infrastructure – roads, transport, energy, water etc.
- Education
- Health

## 2.4 STRATEGIES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The strategies of rural development require the action of planning in order to achieve the development in rural areas. Some important strategies of rural development are as follows-

- Provision of support to the Farmers' Groups and Associations in order to build their capacity and supporting farmer unions.
- By adopting localized way of distributing agricultural products.
- Water management for agricultural production by the usage of sprinklers and drips.
- Use of private companies for processing & marketing.
- By proper communication and quality maintenance.
- Enhancing rural micro finance services and provision of subsidies for crops.
- Strategy for provision of technology inputs to the farmers.
- Liberalization of markets and price structures.
- All weather roads to rural habitations.
- Better economic utilization of agricultural residues, by-products & recycling of wastes by the establishment of separate plants at the village levels by the support of government.
- Enhancement of linkage to farmer groups with processors and buyers for increasing the profits to the farmers.
- Pests and disease control with the usage of improved seeds, bio fertilizers, herbicides, and bio pesticides.
- Usage of advanced equipment and machinery that constitutes the technology for the plantation and harvesting of the crops that leads to decrease the labour cost.
- Agricultural productivity enhancement.
- Research and Development for agro processing technologies.
- Establishment of farmer care centres.
- Analysis of complete agricultural trade statistics includes consumption data, diseases and disease control data, Statistics on agricultural products processing and marketing, fisheries, cropping intensity etc.

- Increasing the organic farming.

The above mentioned strategies can be organised into the following broad categories-

**Agricultural Development:**

Agriculture is considered as the backbone of rural households. The agricultural sector plays an important role in India's economy and is responsible for a significant share of the Gross Domestic Product(GDP). Though the contribution of agriculture to India's GDP is currently about 27% but this sector provides employment to more than 50% of the population of India. So, development of agricultural sector is very important issue in our country.Agricultural sector plays important economic role also. It is based on the development of the food industry but it also supports the development of numerous other sectors (input industry, providers of equipment, mechanisation, packaging, transport, and numerous other services). Investing in agriculture also means investing in rural development, as it is impossible to develop villages without agricultural development.

**Development of Livestock Farming:**

Livestock sector has been considered as a back bone of Indian agriculture. Animal husbandry is a part of livestock farming and is an art of breeding and rearing animals for the benefit of human society. Animal husbandry includes cattle, buffalo, chickens, goats, pigs, horses and sheep. Livestock farming not only supplies milk, meat, and eggs but also provides raw-materials to the animal based industries which are boosting Indian traditional art and crafts by providing feathers, hooves, horns etc. and many other things. As a result India is enriched with one of the largest diversity of animal wealth in the world. So, animal husbandry is our inevitable culture with a great potential for changing rural India. There is no doubt that, appropriate implementation of scientifically designed interventions, future prospect will surely be a milestone in transforming India. It will need some smart approaches with broad vision and obvious compassion for our animals.

**Development of Small Scale Industries:**

In agro-based economy like India, small scale industries play an important role in rural development and economy of the country. The

Government of India has made various initiatives to promote and strengthen the small scale industries so that these industries may keep contributing to GDP. These industries not only contribute to GDP but also provide employment to the rural youth.

**Micro Finance as a Strategy for Rural Development:**

Micro finance or micro credit means the extension of small loans to individuals who are poor to quality themselves for traditional bank loans, as they have no assets to be offered as guarantee. The micro finance plays an important role to speed up the rural development. Micro finance enhances choices available to the poor such as an opportunity to save, acquire productive assets, and reduce the dependency on the moneylenders. It can help the vulnerable situations for building up of assets, accumulated saving etc. Micro finance can be a powerful instrument for initiating a spiralling process of growth and development in the rural areas.

**Strategy of Employment Generation for Rural Development:**

For countries like India, the employment strategy has to be based on revitalizing all segments of the rural sector. The emphasis in the last few years of developing the physical infrastructure by construction of roads, extending power and telecom facilities have some impact in generating employment, including self-employment. A strategy of development has to be evolved which can take a balanced path between modernization and employment generation for only then can the nation progress.

**Rural Infrastructure as a Strategy for Rural Development:**

Rural infrastructure is crucial for agriculture, agro-industries and overall economic development of rural areas. It also, incidentally, provides basic amenities that improve the quality of life. Infrastructure can be divided into two categories – economic and social infrastructure. Economic infrastructure includes transport, communication, energy etc. and social infrastructure includes education, research, health, family welfare, housing, water supply, sanitation etc. Bharat Nirman is a time-bound plan for action in rural infrastructure in India. Under Bharat Nirman, action is proposed in the areas of irrigation, rural housing, rural water supply, rural electrification and rural telecommunication connectivity for upliftment of the rural economy.

## 2.5 WHY IS RURAL DEVELOPMENT IMPORTANT IN INDIA?

In India majority of the population live in rural areas and major source of employment is agriculture that is why rural economy of India is sometimes called agrarian economy. Though two-third of India's population depends on agriculture but the share of agriculture to GDP is declining which is an important issue of concern. Agriculture and allied activities, like animal husbandry, dairying, forestry, as well as cottage and small scale industries offer considerable scope for labour absorption and income generation for the poverty stricken rural masses with relatively low but quick results-producing investment. Increased production in rural areas will lead to higher purchasing power in the hands of the rural people which in turn will create more effective demand both for agriculture and industrial commodities. Household and small scale industries producing consumer goods for mass consumption hold out the greatest potential for employment. The rural people are facing the problems of undulation and poverty. The people are unemployed because they lack the skills to take up opportunities in life. If the rural sector is educated and advanced, it is easier to do business and the development is high. Therefore, rural development is necessary not only because an overwhelming majority of the population lives in villages but also because the development of rural activities is essential to accelerate the pace of overall economic development of the country. Rural development has assumed greater importance in India today than in the earlier period because of the process of globalisation and the increased pace of development of the country. The needs of rural development can be summarized by the following points-

**Rural development is required –**

- To remove poverty among the rural people and to increase their income.
- To generate employment to the surplus labours in the agricultural field so that migration from rural to urban areas can be prevented.
- To raises the quality of life and environment in rural areas.
- To manage resources like land, water for agricultural production in an

effective manner.

- To produce variety of food products through agriculture.
- To improve profits for farmers.
- To supply raw materials for the industrial sector.

## 2.6 APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

The approaches to rural development in India can be divided in to the following two parts.

**I. Gandhian Approach to Rural Development (Pre-Independence Approach):** Gandhi's concept of rural development is uplift of the common man. He realised the need for integrated rural development. Education is knowledge of power and health is stamina of person and society. His approach to rural development is non - violent. It is self - governed, self – sufficient in regard to food, clothing, and shelter in rural areas through reducing the rural poverty. He focused his attention on agriculture and non – agriculture aspect of rural economy through all-round development of rural India. Rural development means maximum production of agriculture and allied activities in the rural areas, including development of rural industries and cottage industries. It gives employment opportunities in rural areas especially for the weaker sections of the community so as to enable them to improve their socio – economic status. Mahatma Gandhi's idea to develop the Indian society was based on his understanding of the society and hence, based on the village system. He further believed that India will have to live in villages, not in towns, in huts not in palaces. He was sure that empowering of the village people and strengthening the village economy were critical factors in the processes of development. Mahatma Gandhi and his economic ideas are ever relevant to economic process in twenty first century. His vision to create Indian villages prosperous and progressive is feasible through economic process.

The Gandhian model of rural development is based on some values and premises as follows:

a) Real India is found not in cities but in its villages.

b) The revival of villages is possible only when the exploitation of villages is stopped. Exploitation of villages by city dwellers was “violence” in Gandhi’s opinion.

c) Simple living and high thinking implying voluntary reduction of materialistic wants and pursuit of moral and spiritual principles of life.

d) Dignity of labour, everyone must earn his bread by physical labour and one who labours must necessarily get his subsistence.

e) Preference should be given to the use of indigenous (Swadeshi) products, services and institutions.

The most suitable model for Indian rural development is a people centred strategy, akin to Gandhian model. Various approaches have been adopted in India by the government since Independence. Under these approaches, various programmes have also been undertaken to develop the areas of rural economy of India.

**II. Modern Approaches to Rural Development (Post-Independence Approach):**

The various approaches of rural development since Independence can be categorised as follows-

- **Multi-purpose Approach:** Multi-purpose approach is concern with all round development of rural areas. It includes activities related to agriculture, animal husbandry, co-operation, irrigation, village and small scale industries, health, sanitation, housing, transport and communication, welfare of women and rural employment. The multi-purpose approach was a significant approach, which laid the foundation stone for the upliftment of rural India. Community Development Programme is an example of multipurpose approach.



**LET US KNOW**

Community Development Programmes (CDP): This programme was started in 2952. It was a multi-purpose programme with the aim of overall development of rural people of India. This programme consisted of agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, public health, education, rural industries etc.

- **Sectoral Approach:** Sectoral approach is concerned with the intensive development of selected sectors of rural economy. Important programmes under the sectoral approach includes-

**Intensive Agriculture Development Programme (2960):** In 2960, Intensive Agriculture Development Programme (IADP) and later in 2963 Intensive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP) was launched. Both IADP and IAAP constituted landmarks in the development of agriculture, indeed of the rural sector in India. The programmes placed agriculture on a qualitatively different footing with wide ranging repercussions on rural scenario.

- **Target Group Approach:** This approach is concerned with the growth of rural area with social justice for promotion of weaker section. The target group comprised of marginal and small farmers, landless agricultural labourers etc. Important programmes under this approach are as follows-

**Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA)**: This scheme was started in 2972-72 in selected districts. It was financed by central as well as state government and a provision of subsidy was made for the farmers from 25% (non-tribal farmers) to 50% (tribal farmers). Main objectives were:

a) To investigate and identify the problems of small farmers and ensure that various services reach to them.

b) To ensure that the farmers secure loans from cooperative banks.

c) To ensure that the farmers have access to other assistances such as cooperative banks, improved seeds, fertilizers and other inputs.

**Marginal Framers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agency (MAFALDA):** Marginal Framers and Agricultural Labourers Development Agency (MAFALDA) was also established with SFDA to assist the marginal farmers and agricultural labourers in maximum productive use of their small holdings and skills by undertaking animal husbandry, horticulture etc.

- **Basic Needs Approach:** The basic needs approach gives primacy to the need for a minimum standard of living of the poor as a central concern of development planning. It therefore contributes to the

formulation of a development strategy, which aims at reducing poverty and inequality, promoting growth of employment and distributive justice. The basic needs concept is a wider scope covering personal and social consumption and also human rights, people's participation, employment and growth with justice. Important programme under this approach is Minimum Needs Programme.

- **Minimum Needs Programme:** The Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) in India was introduced in 2974 during the first year of fifth plan period. The main components of MNP are: rural health, rural education, rural roads, rural drinking water, rural electrification, house sites for landless, environmental improvement in slums, and nutrition.
- **Employment-oriented Integrated Approach:** Main objectives of this approach are removal of unemployment, poverty through sectoral and area integration. This approach also aims at improving the standard of living of poor in the rural area. Some important programmes under this approach are as follows-

  i) **The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP):** Which was introduced in 2978-79 and universalized from 2nd October, 2980, aimed at providing assistance to the rural poor in the form of subsidy and bank credit for productive employment opportunities through successive plan periods.

  ii) **Training Rural Youths for Self-Employment (TRYSEM):** This scheme was launched in 2979 to provide technical skills (training) to rural youths (between 28-35 years) living below the poverty line, to enable them to seek employment in fields of agriculture, industry, services and business activities.

  iii) **Jawahar Rozgar Yojana:** The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was started with effect from April, 2, 2989. The main objective of the yojana was to provide additional gainful employment for the unemployed and under-employed persons in rural areas. The other objective was the creation of sustained employment by strengthening rural economic infrastructure and assets in favour of rural poor for their direct and continuing benefits.

iv) **Employment Assurance Scheme:** The Employment Assurance Scheme (EAS) was introduced on 2nd October, 2993 in the rural areas of 2778 blocks of 262 districts in which the Revamped Public Distribution System (RPDS) was in operation. In March, 2995 the scheme was further extended to 256 blocks out of which 233 blocks were flood prone in the States of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Assam and 23 blocks were of Jammu & Kashmir in view of the special conditions prevailing there. The primary objective of the Employment Assurance Scheme is to provide gainful employment during lean agricultural season in manual work to all able bodied adults in rural areas who are in need and desirous of work, but cannot find it.

v) **Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY):** The scheme started from 2st September, 2002. The main objective of the scheme was the generation of wage employment, creation of durable economic infrastructure in rural areas and provision of food and nutrition security for the poor.

vi) **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005:** The National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, (MNREGA) was notified on September 7, 2005. The objective of the Act is to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 200 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work.

## 2.7 MAJOR FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Rural banking institutions are playing a very important role for all-round development of rural areas of the country. These institutions play the important role in the expansion of rural institutional credit which contributes to the rural development. In order to support the rural banking sector in recent years, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) have been established in India.

**Regional Rural Banks (RRBs):** The Government of India set up Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) on October 2, 2975. Regional rural Banks plays a vital role in agriculture and rural development of India. The RRBs have more reached to the rural area of India, through their huge network. The success of rural credit in India largely depends on their financial strength. RRBs are key financing institution at the rural level which shoulders responsibility of meeting credit needs of different types of agriculture credit in rural areas.

**National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD):** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) was established in July, 2982. It is an apex body to coordinate the activities of all institutions which are involved in rural finance. NABARD provides refinance facility to state co-operative banks, commercial banks and regional rural banks which in turn provide credit to the farmers. The various functions of NABARD are Credit Functions, Developmental and Promotional Functions, Supervisory Functions, Institutional and Capacity Building etc. NABARD doesn't directly deal with the rural people but it grants assistance to the co-operative banks, commercial banks and Regional Rural Banks which give credit to the rural people. NABARD has also been playing a catalytic role in micro-credit through the channel of Self-Help Groups (SHGs).



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 2:** Define rural development?

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**Q 2:** Write two strategies of rural development.

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## 2.8 SOME DILEMMAS OF DEVELOPMENT

The study of development includes a variety of dilemmas and dogmas, such as rural versus urban development, agricultural versus

industrial development, primacy of capital versus labour, and natural/ autonomous versus induced/planned development. We shall discuss these dilemmas now one by one.

### 2.8.1 Rural versus Urban Development

On one hand, there exists in the economy a small but highly modern and developed urban subsector, which absorbs most of the material, financial, and educated and talented manpower resources. On the other hand, there is a very large but traditional and underdeveloped rural subsector, characterized by widespread poverty, unemployment and low productivity, which forms the majority of the population. In most of the developing countries, both the sub-sectors coexist.

The economic development in developed economies has been associated with the growth of urbanisation. Economists may have a tendency to consider urbanisation as the index of economic development. At the other extreme, there is another dogma rapidly emerging in many developing countries that rural development is a prerequisite for overall development and, hence, it deserves the highest priority in terms of allocation of resources. In their enthusiasm to promote the cause of rural development, the proponents of this school of thought usually tend to either disregard or underplay the linkages between the rural and the urban subsectors of the economy. What is needed is a new approach to development, which explicitly recognizes the inter-linkages and complementarity between the rural and the urban subsectors, and provides for integrating them completely.

### 2.8.2 Agriculture Versus Industrial Development

Some economists raise the argument that industrialisation alone can increase agricultural productivity resulting in modernization of agriculture. Following this dogma, many developing

countries have established highly capital-intensive and sophisticated industrial enterprises, similar to those in developed countries. Such efforts, however, have often led to bitter disappointment when the desired results failed to materialize. The contribution of such projects to development is negligible and sometimes even negative because they are built at the expense of enterprises and unable to meet the basic needs of people.

At the other extreme is agricultural development. In the initial stages of development when per capita incomes are low, agriculture alone can serve as an instrument of development and that increased agricultural productivity is a prerequisite to increased income and industrialization. The proponents of this dogma argue for allocation of more resources and attention to agriculture rather than to industry. They do not, however, realize that agriculture cannot develop alone and that the concomitant development of industry and supporting infrastructure is essential not only for the growth of the national economy but also for the advancement of agriculture itself. So, the establishment of small and less capital-intensive industrial enterprises in rural areas, along with introduction of new technology in agriculture is likely to establish linkages between agriculture and industry which is required for achieving economic development.

### 2.8.3 Capital Versus Labour Dogma

Some economists from the developed countries consider capital to be the key instrument of development. The Harrod–Domar model of growth represents a typical example of this dogma. Harrod-Domar model of growth states that capital and labour cannot be substituted for each other and that if labour is in surplus supply, capital becomes the overriding constraint on economic growth. Capital based development aims at increasing savings, redistributing income from the workers to the capitalists, granting monopoly rights to national and multinational corporations, transferring resources from the private to the public sector, increasing dependence on

foreign aid and loans, and under-pricing of capital, particularly foreign exchange for capital goods. This development may result in a number of adverse effects such as under-pricing of foreign exchange for capital goods. Excessive focus on capital disincentives development of labour-intensive technologies adapted to domestic needs and circumstances, resulting in the unemployment of labour and underutilization of other domestic resources.

Labour based development prefers to give more importance to labour rather than capital which can create more employment opportunities and due to the use labour intensive method of production which is less expensive. But to compete with developed countries an economy cannot be based fully on the labour based development. So, to attain proper development in an economy should interlink both the labour and capital based development.

### 2.8.4 Autonomous Versus Induced Development

Autonomous development is that development process which takes place naturally in any economy without the intervention of government. On the other hand induced development is that development which is induced by the government and it is the result of government intervention. Some development takes place naturally or autonomously over time due to activities of individuals pursuing their own interests, but its level and pace may not always be able to maintain a reasonably satisfactory standard of living of the people. Due to this situation government intervention becomes important. Development planning is one of the forms of intervention that has been adopted in many developing countries of the world. In fact, even the advanced countries have come to realize the need for some sort of planning or government intervention in the economic processes. However, we need to realize that planning can make a positive contribution only if it facilitates the achievement of development objectives more rapidly and more efficiently than if

development followed the autonomous processes. It is now becoming increasingly apparent that the development effort cannot be left to the government alone. It must be shared by private, cooperative, corporate and other NGOs and agencies and above all, by the people themselves. Planning by the government should complement and supplement the efforts of individuals, NGOs and other institutions as well.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** What are the dilemmas of development?

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**Q 4:** What do you mean by capital-labour dogma in development?

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**Q 5:** What is capital intensive technique of production?

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**Q 6:** What is labour intensive technique of production?

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## 2.9 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discuss the following :

- Rural development is a process of qualitative and quantitative changes to improve conditions in rural regions.
- Rural development is comprehensive and multidimensional.
- Rural development has close relationship with subjects like agriculture and allied sciences, social sciences, health sciences, engineering and management sciences.
- Main focus of rural development is on the rural poor.

- The development in any country has to face some dilemmas because of choice of problem with scarcity of wealth. The main dilemmas are rural versus urban development, agriculture versus industrial development, capital and labour dogma and autonomous versus induced development.



## 2.10 FURTHER READING

1) B.N. Ghosh and Rama Ghosh,'Concise History of Economic Thought'. Himalaya Publishing House.
2) H.L.Bhatia, 'History of Economic Thought', Vikas publication.
3) P.K.Dhar ,Indaian Economy , Kalyani Publications.
4) G. Datt and A. Mahajan, Indian Economy, S. Chand.



## 2.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 2:** Rural development may be defined as overall development of rural areas to improve the quality of life of rural people.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Two important strategies of rural development are -

- Provision of support to the farmers Groups, and Associations in order to build their capacity and supporting farmer unions.
- By adopting localized way of distributing agricultural products.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Some dilemmas of development facing by every economy are rural versus urban development, agricultural versus industrial development, primacy of capital versus labour, and natural/ autonomous versus induced/planned development.

**Ans to Q No 4:** The capital-labour dogma means dilemma of giving more preference to any one of them for development. But in reality, both labour and capital are important for development purpose because neither labour nor capital can work alone for developing an economy.

**Ans to Q No 5:** Capital intensive technique is that which uses more capital comparatively in the production process.

**Ans to Q No 6:** Labour intensive technique is that which uses more labour comparatively in the production process.



## 2.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q.2 :** Discuss the strategies for Rural Development in India.

**Q.2 :** Discuss the approaches to Rural Development in India.

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# UNIT 3 : PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL (PRA)

## UNIT STRUCTURE


3.1 Learning Objective

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Origin of Participatory Rural Appraisal

3. 4 Principles of PRA

3.5 Tools And Techniques of PRA

- 3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews For Village Profiling
- 3.5.2 Transect Walk
- 3.5.3 Timeline
- 3.5.4 Mapping and Modeling in PRA
- 3.5.5 Venn Diagram
- 3.5.6 Daily Routine Charts
- 3.5.7 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in PRA

3.6 Advantages and Limitations of PRA

- 3.6.1 Advantages of PRA
- 3.6.2 Limitations of PRA

3.7 Let Us Sum Up

3.8 Further readings

3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.10 Model Questions


## 3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- define PRA and explain its significance in rural development.
- identify the key principles and tools of PRA.
- apply PRA techniques in real-world rural development scenarios.
- understand the advantages and limitations of PRA.

## 3.2 INTRODUCTION

Community Participation is an indispensable and integral component of development initiatives at the grass roots level. However, internal motivation is extremely necessary for people to take up initiatives of development. It should not be imposed by any external agency. PRA is presently known as Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) (Narayanswamy 2009).

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) is a set of tools and methods that help local people share, understand, and examine their own lives, environment, and needs. It allows them to plan and take action based on their own knowledge and experiences. PRA was first described by Mascarenhas and others in 1991, and it has grown from earlier ideas and practices that involved working closely with communities. PRA has been influenced by many sources. One of the most important is participatory research, especially the work of Paulo Freire, who believed that people should be involved in their own learning and change. PRA also comes from applied anthropology and farming systems research, which focused on learning directly from farmers about their methods and challenges. Most directly, PRA developed from a mix of agroecosystem analysis, which is a way of looking at the relationships between farming and the environment and Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), which was used in the 1980s to quickly gather information from rural communities.

PRA and RRA have some things in common. Both focus on learning directly from local people, reducing outsider bias, comparing different sources of information (triangulation), and recognizing that different people have different experiences. But PRA goes further. It focuses on changing the role of outsiders as instead of just collecting information, they help local people do their own analysis. PRA also promotes self-awareness, responsibility, and sharing among outsiders working with communities.

One big difference between RRA and PRA is who controls the information. In RRA, outsiders usually collect and analyze the data. In PRA, local people create and use the knowledge themselves. PRA has been widely used in fields such as natural resource management (including

forests, soil, water, and wildlife), agriculture, health, food security, community planning, and in programs focused on women and marginalized groups. More than just a method, PRA is a participatory approach that values local knowledge and supports communities in leading their own development. What makes PRA especially influential is not just the set of tools it offers, but its core philosophy of participation, empowerment, and respect for local knowledge. As more development actors recognized the limitations of top-down approaches, PRA emerged as a powerful alternative that promoted community voice and action. Its origins in collaborative learning and practical experimentation continue to shape its relevance today across diverse sectors and regions.

## 3.3 ORIGIN OF PARTICIPATORY RURAL APPRAISAL

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) began taking shape in the late 1980s and early 1990s as a response to the need for more inclusive and locally grounded approaches to rural development. Although traditional social science research methods, such as questionnaire surveys, are useful for certain purposes, they can be overly time-consuming and demanding for communities with limited availability. PRA's approach marked a significant shift from extracting knowledge from communities to enabling local people to investigate, plan, and act on their own priorities. In the 1980s, PRA emerged, followed closely by PLA in the 1990s. Robert Chambers has been a key exponent of participatory approaches and the idea that the people from whom data is traditionally collected could actually be recognized as legitimate "knowers" and thus be active participants in the research process. The name PLA further emphasizes the use of the participatory process for community learning and action planning, but the philosophy and techniques of PRA and PLA are basically the same? PRA and PLA stimulate a mutual learning process in which people from outside a community, facilitate a process with people from inside the community to gather and analyse local knowledge and formulate plans for action. The approaches help the primary stakeholders, often poor or rural communities, to take control of the process, to assess local level issues, to find ways to identify and priorities problems

and challenges and to draw up practical action plans to address the challenges.

The early development and testing of PRA tools took place in countries such as Kenya, Ethiopia, and Sudan, where development practitioners and organizations were seeking more democratic and participatory ways to engage with rural populations. These early experiences proved to be highly effective, and by early 1994, PRA had already begun to spread across multiple regions. It was being actively used in Bangladesh, Botswana, Ethiopia, francophone West Africa, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Nepal, Nigeria, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Uganda, Vietnam, and Zimbabwe.

The rapid spread of PRA was largely driven by developmental professionals and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), which adopted and adapted PRA methods for use in various development programs. Over time, government departments also began incorporating PRA techniques into their planning and community engagement efforts. Furthermore, universities and research institutes started using PRA methods for participatory research and fieldwork training, involving both students and faculty. The growing interest from academic, policy, and practitioner communities helped fuel the accelerating adoption of PRA worldwide.

## 3. 4 PRINCIPLES OF PRA

PRA is guided by a set of flexible, people-centered principles that aim to put local communities at the heart of development planning and action. These principles help ensure that the process is inclusive, respectful, and truly participatory.

- Optimal Ignorance: This principle is about focusing only on the information that is truly useful and relevant. It avoids collecting too much data or being overly precise when it isn't necessary. Instead, it values smart trade-offs between how accurate, timely, and useful the information needs to be for the task at hand.
- Teamwork and Diversity: A good PRA team should include people with different backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives such as

differences in gender, culture, class, and skills. This helps create a more balanced understanding of the community.

- Avoiding Biases: PRA encourages outsiders to be aware of and challenge their own assumptions about rural people. By respecting local knowledge and intelligence, facilitators begin to genuinely understand the values, priorities, and way of life of the community.
- Triangulation: This involves cross-checking information by using different methods, sources, or people. For example, information gathered from a group discussion may be compared with what is seen during a field visit or heard from a key informant, helping improve accuracy and reliability.
- Flexibility: PRA is not a one-size-fits-all approach. The methods used should be adapted to suit the specific context, including the skills of the team, available time and resources, the topic being explored, and the cultural setting.
- Informal Communication: Instead of structured surveys or formal interviews, PRA relies on casual conversations, open-ended discussions, and creative exercises. This makes people feel more comfortable and willing to share.
- Iterative Learning: PRA values a “learn-as-you-go” approach. Goals and plans can be adjusted as new insights emerge. Teams remain open to change and continuously reflect on what is and isn’t working.
- Localization: PRA is done on-site, face-to-face, and in collaboration with the people who live there. It respects and draws from local knowledge—whether it’s technical, environmental, or social—and makes that the foundation for planning and decision-making.
- Rapid and Adaptive Learning: The process moves quickly but thoughtfully. Teams adapt their methods as needed, experiment with different tools, and stay open to unexpected opportunities or findings.
- Empowerment and Participation: PRA focuses on enabling local people—not just to provide information—but to lead the analysis, make decisions, and take control of their own development processes.
- Visual and Inclusive Methods: PRA often uses visual tools such as maps, diagrams, or calendars that are easy to understand and use,

even for people who may not be literate. This helps include everyone in the process, regardless of education level.

- Sharing and Transparency: All information gathered is shared openly with the community. Nothing is kept secret. This builds trust and ensures that people see the value of their participation.
- Respect for Local Time and Culture: PRA activities are designed to fit the rhythms and customs of the community. This means being flexible with timing and respecting local festivals, routines, and practices.
- Reversing the Role of Experts: In PRA, outsiders are not seen as experts with all the answers. Instead, they are facilitators who support the community in analyzing its own situation and finding its own solutions.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What is the main difference between PRA and RRA?

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**Q 2:** What are the key principles of PRA?

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## 3.5 TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES OF PRA

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) includes a wide range of tools and methods designed to help community members and other stakeholders share, analyze, and improve their knowledge of local life, livelihoods, and conditions. These methods support collaboration, learning, and planning in specific community settings.

### 3.5.1 Semi-Structured Interviews For Village Profiling

One of the essential tools in PRA is the semi-structured interview with key informants, used to collect basic information about a village. Once the PRA team has built rapport and done an initial

visit to the community (reconnaissance), the first important step is to understand the village as a whole. Semi-structured interviews are a key method for gathering in-depth information about the village's geographical layout, population, soil and land features (edaphic conditions), farming practices, and socio-economic aspects.

To do this, the team conducts 3–4 rounds of informal interviews with 8–10 key informants people who have deep knowledge of the village. These may include local officials, elected leaders, influential community members, women representatives, and individuals from different occupations. A flexible interview guide or checklist is used to ensure important topics are covered, while still allowing open conversation. The goal is to collect broad and reliable data, which will also serve as a baseline especially when PRA is being used as part of a larger development project, such as village adoption or program planning. To ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data, the team must cross-verify (triangulate) the information with other available sources, such as government records, previous studies, or local reports. A basic template can be used for these interviews, but it should be adapted based on the specific goals and context of the PRA exercise.

### 3.5.2 Transect Walk

A transect walk is a key PRA method used to understand the spatial and ecological layout of a village, especially for natural resource management. It provides a cross-sectional view of different land zones, comparing features such as land type, usage, ownership, soil quality, vegetation, crops, problems, and opportunities.

The walk is conducted along three planned routes, two along the village boundaries and one through the center, accompanied by key informants from the community. Along the way, the team identifies and discusses features like uplands, lowlands, ponds, roads, fields, forests, and residential areas. Observations are recorded and visualized in a transect diagram with highlands on the

left and lowlands on the right. A transect matrix is then prepared, detailing aspects such as soil types, crops, water sources, trees, animals, local interventions, and challenges. Seasonal or previously grown species can also be noted. Though the main focus is on natural resources, social factors—such as caste, gender, and access to resources—can also be included based on the PRA's objectives. The transect walk complements a resource map by offering a side-view of village zones and supports planning and decision-making. Unlike a historical transect, which shows changes over time, this method captures the current state of the area.

### 3.5.3 Timeline

Time line is an important PRA method quite commonly used to explore the temporal dimensions from historical perspective. Time line captures the chronology of events as recalled by local people. It is drawn as a sequential aggregate of past events. It thus provides the historical landmarks of a community individual or institutions. The important point to note here is that it is not history as such but events of the past as perceived and recalled by the people themselves. Applications The time line method helps: To learn from the community what they consider to be important past events. To understand from the community the historical perspective on current issues. To generate discussions on changes with respect to issues you are interested in, e.g., education, health, food security, gender relations, economic conditions, etc. To develop a rapport with the villagers, since a discussion about the past of the village can be a good non threatening and enjoyable starting point

### 3.5.4 Mapping and Modeling in PRA

Mapping and modeling involve the creation of visual representations that help communities understand their environment and conditions. These maps are made by the local people

themselves, which not only improves their awareness of their surroundings but also encourages collective learning and decision-making. These tools can reflect physical, social, environmental, or risk-related features of the area.

**a. Social Maps**

Social maps focus on the community's social layout—showing households, population distribution, caste or class divisions, land use patterns, and infrastructure like roads and schools. These maps help in identifying key social structures, networks, and the relationships within the village. They are useful in understanding who lives where, how communities are organized, and where services are concentrated or lacking.

**b. Resource Maps**

Resource maps highlight the natural and physical resources available in a community. These include details on land types, water sources, vegetation, forests, soil types, minerals, and sometimes infrastructure like wells, irrigation systems, or markets. These maps help understand how resources are accessed, used, or managed, and reveal inequalities or issues in distribution.

**c. Topical Maps**

Topical maps are theme-specific and focus on particular sectors such as health, education, agriculture, or infrastructure. For example, a topical map might show all the schools or health centers in an area, or detail the types of crops grown and their seasonal patterns. These maps help in sectoral planning and analysis, offering a focused view of services and opportunities in specific areas.

**d. Hazard Maps**

Hazard maps are used to identify areas at risk from natural or human-made hazards such as floods, droughts, landslides, or industrial pollution. These maps help communities visualize vulnerabilities and prepare for risk management. By mapping danger zones, communities can plan safer housing, farming, or emergency response strategies.

These different types of maps in PRA not only promote awareness and dialogue but also serve as essential tools for participatory planning, monitoring, and resource management. They enable local people to document their knowledge, share insights, and work together to improve their environment and well-being.

### 3.5.5 Venn Diagram

A Venn diagram is used in PRA to show key institutions, organizations, and individuals connected to the community. Each is represented by a circle—the size shows their importance or influence, and the distance or overlap shows the closeness of their relationship with the community. It helps identify decision-makers, understand power dynamics, and explore connections or gaps in support systems.

### 3.5.6 Daily Routine Charts

Daily routine charts show the daily activities of community members, often by gender. They help analyze how time is spent, identify workload patterns, and understand gender roles. These charts are useful for planning meetings, introducing new activities, and discussing mobility and time spent away from home.

### 3.5.7 Focus Group Discussion (FGD) in PRA

In PRA, a Focus Group Discussion (FGD) is a participatory method that brings together a small group of people, usually 5 to 10 individuals from similar social, occupational, or cultural backgrounds to discuss a specific issue or topic relevant to their community. It is a qualitative tool used to explore people's knowledge, perceptions, experiences, and ideas. The group size may vary depending on the complexity of the topic and the level of interaction expected.

FGDs are guided by a facilitator, who introduces the topic, asks open-ended questions, and encourages active participation

from all members. In PRA, the focus is not just on collecting information, but also on creating a space where local voices are heard, perspectives are respected, and collective analysis is promoted. FGDs can help identify community needs, validate findings from other PRA tools, and inform planning or decision-making.

## 3.6 ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS OF PRA

### 3.6.1 Advantages of PRA

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) offers several significant advantages that make it a valuable tool for community-based development and planning. One of its key strengths is its ability to help identify the genuine needs and priorities of the local population. Since PRA is based on direct engagement with community members, it ensures that the issues being addressed are those that matter most to the people themselves—not just to external agencies or experts. This relevance enhances the effectiveness and impact of any development intervention.

Another advantage is the decentralization of decision-making and responsibility, allowing local people to take charge of their own development. By involving communities in the planning, execution, and monitoring of activities, PRA encourages a sense of ownership and accountability, which is essential for long-term sustainability. Additionally, this process helps in the mobilization and motivation of local development workers. When community members see their knowledge being respected and their efforts making a difference, it fosters enthusiasm and commitment.

PRA also helps in building stronger linkages between communities and external development institutions such as government departments, NGOs, or research organizations. It acts as a bridge, making development initiatives more collaborative and responsive to local conditions. Furthermore, PRA emphasizes the use of local resources and knowledge, which not only reduces costs

but also makes projects more culturally appropriate and rooted in existing practices. This often leads to the mobilization of internal community resources, such as labor, materials, and informal institutions, strengthening the community's capacity to manage its own affairs.

Finally, because the solutions generated through PRA are community-driven and adapted to local contexts, they are often more sustainable and widely accepted. Development activities are more likely to continue beyond the involvement of external agencies, ensuring long-term impact and self-reliance.

### 3.6.2 Limitations of PRA

Despite its many benefits, PRA also has certain limitations that can affect its implementation and outcomes. One of the primary challenges is the availability of specialists from various disciplines who can work together and integrate local knowledge with technical expertise. PRA requires a diverse team that can collaborate with community members while respecting their insights, and assembling such a team can be difficult, especially in remote or resource-constrained areas.

Another significant limitation lies in the attitudes of external facilitators or development professionals. PRA demands a fundamental shift in mindset—professionals must be willing to learn from rural people, value their knowledge, and encourage their active participation in decision-making. This shift can be difficult, particularly for those used to top-down, expert-led approaches. Resistance to such changes can limit the effectiveness of PRA processes. In practical terms, there are often logistical challenges, such as the lack of suitable accommodation and infrastructure in rural areas. Facilitators may face difficulties in staying for extended periods, which are often necessary to build rapport and carry out participatory exercises effectively. Additionally, limited funding can hinder the scope of PRA activities. Financial constraints may prevent the

procurement of necessary materials, the involvement of experts, or adequate follow-up. Time is another major constraint. Due to the in-depth, participatory nature of PRA, it can be time-consuming, and it may not be feasible to conduct comprehensive exercises in multiple villages within a single season. This limits the geographical spread of the intervention and may reduce its scalability.

In conclusion, while PRA is a powerful tool for community-centered development, it must be applied with sensitivity, proper planning, and adequate resources to overcome its limitations and ensure meaningful and lasting results.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** List any three PRA tools and explain their uses.

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**Q 4:** What are the advantages of PRA?

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## 3.7 LET US SUM UP

- PRA is a participatory approach that empowers rural communities to analyze their conditions and plan development interventions.
- It relies on principles like participation, flexibility, and triangulation.
- Various tools such as mapping, transect walks, and FGDs help gather qualitative and quantitative data.
- While PRA enhances local ownership, challenges like time constraints and bias must be addressed.



## 3.8 FURTHER READING

1) Chambers, R. (1994). Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA): Challenges, Potentials, and Paradigms.
2) Kumar, S. (2002). Methods for Community Participation: A Complete Guide for Practitioners.
3) World Bank (1996). The World Bank Participation Sourcebook.
4) Uddin, M. N., & Anjuman, N. (2013). Participatory rural appraisal approaches: An overview and an exemplary application of focus group discussion in climate change adaptation and mitigation strategies.
5) Das, PurnenduSekhar. 2005. "Decentralized Planning and Participatory Rural Appraisal". New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company.
6) Narayanasamy,N. 2009. *Participatory Rural Appraisal: Principles, Methods and Application.* New Delhi: Sage Publications India Pvt. Ltd.



## 3.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** RRA (Rapid Rural Appraisal) is mainly extractive, where outsiders collect information from locals. PRA (Participatory Rural Appraisal) is more participatory, empowering local people to analyze and take control of their development.

**Ans to Q No 2:** The key principles of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) revolve around inclusivity, adaptability, and mutual learning. Participation emphasises on the active involvement of local people in analyzing their own situations and identifying solutions. Teamwork involves multidisciplinary collaboration. Flexibility must be adapted to suit different contexts and cultures. The concept of Optimal Ignorance

encourages focusing only on information that is necessary and useful, avoiding the overload of irrelevant data. Finally, Reversal of Learning highlights a shift in approach where outsiders do not teach but instead learn from the local community's knowledge, experience, and perspective.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Social mapping (visual representation of households), Transect walks (observing different zones), Seasonal calendars (tracking seasonal changes in livelihoods).

**Ans to Q No 4:** Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) offers several advantages that make it an effective approach for community-based development. It helps in identifying the genuine needs and priorities of the local people, ensuring that development efforts are relevant and targeted.



## 3.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Discuss the significance of PRA in rural development with suitable examples.

**Q 2:** Compare and contrast any two PRA tools.

**Q 3:** Critically analyze the challenges faced in implementing PRA.

**Q 4:** Write a brief note on the advantages and limitations of PRA.

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# UNIT 4 : EXPERIENCES AND CASE STUDIES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

## UNIT STRUCTURE


4.1 Learning Objectives

4.2 Introduction

4.3 Importance of Learning from Rural Development Experiences

4.4 Notable Case Studies of Rural Development in Indian Context

4.5 Case Studies as a Model for Policy and Practices

4.6 Let Us Sum Up

4.7 Further Reading

4.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

4.9 Model Questions


## 4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the importance of learning from rural development experiences for effective planning.
- examine notable case studies that highlight successful rural development strategies in India.
- analyze how case studies can guide the policymaking.

## 4.2 INTRODUCTION

Rural development is not only about building roads or providing jobs to the people; but it is about improving the quality of life of the people living in the rural areas. Each village has its own challenges and strengths, thus the same solution may not work everywhere. By studying the real examples from the different parts of India, we can learn what actions brought success and what mistakes to avoid. These experiences help in creating better plans that match the local needs and involve the community. Case studies are useful because they convert the practical experiences into the lessons for future development planning.

## 4.3 IMPORTANCE OF LEARNING FROM RURAL DEVELOPMENT EXPERIENCES

In India, a significant portion of the population still resides in rural areas. Despite the implementation of numerous policies and programs, rural India continues to face challenges related to poverty, unemployment, lack of infrastructure, environmental degradation and social inequality. In this complex scenario, learning from the past and ongoing rural development experiences becomes not only relevant but also essential. In this chapter we explore why it is important to document, analyze and draw lessons from rural development initiatives.

1. **Understanding Context-Specific Challenges and Opportunities**

   Every rural area has a unique socio-economic and ecological context. Development interventions that succeed in one region may not directly replicable in another without contextual adaptation. Learning from the rural development experiences helps to

   - Recognize the diverse local needs and capabilities.
   - Understand region specific constrains like water scarcity, tribal rights, market access etc.
   - Adapt models that are culturally sensitive and environmentally suitable for the region.

2. **Participatory and Inclusive Approaches**

   Successful rural development experiences show community participation as a key factor for attaining the objectives of rural development. Most of the examples of rural development projects reveal that when people are made stakeholders, development becomes more democratic and sustainable. Learning from such experiences helps to:

   - Strengthen grassroots democracy.
   - Encourage of gender equity and social inclusion.
   - Enhance trust between government and citizens.

   These inclusive practices ensure that marginalized communities such as women, marginalized groups of the society, and small farmers are

not left out of the development process.

**3. Innovation and Successful Practices**

Innovations means new or original is very important for any development process like in rural development. It may be technological, institutional, or social innovation. Documented case studies of rural development enable the governments, NGOs, and also the researchers to expand such innovations effectively and efficiently.

**4. Evidence -based Policy Making**

Practical knowledge plays an important role in policy-making. Without continuous feedback from the field, policies can become often top-down, rigid, or ineffective. Lessons from the implementation of schemes like MGNREGA or NRLM help to:

- Identify the design flaws or gaps.
- Fine-tune targeting mechanisms.
- Improve the delivery systems through digital tools, transparency, and accountability.

For example, learning from the successful use of job cards and geo-tagged assets in Rajasthan improved the overall effectiveness of MGNREGA implementation in other regions of the country.

**5. Avoiding the Mistakes**

Not all the rural development interventions succeed always. Some of the rural development plans setbacks due to inadequate planning, dominance by powerful local elites, misuse of funds, or insufficient involvement and support from the community. Learning from such failures is equally important that help us in:

- Understanding why certain approaches fail in specific contexts.
- Reformulating program design to avoid resource wastage.
- Enhancing capacity building at local governance levels.

**6. Cross-learning between States and Regions**

India's vast diversity in geography, culture, governance, and development needs creates a unique opportunity for cross-learning between the states and regions. This means that successful rural development strategies which are implemented in one area can serve

as valuable models or inspiration for other regions. By sharing the best practices, adapting them to local contexts, and avoiding known pitfalls, different regions can learn from the experiences of each other to improve their own development outcomes.

**7. Community Leadership and Local Innovation**

Different documented studies of transformation of rural areas can inspire new leadership in other rural areas. When the communities of a region see the successful examples of such areas, they become able to gain the confidence to initiate similar actions locally. Learning from such role models help to

- Motivate the youth of the country to engage in rural governance and enterprise.
- Build networks of the rural change makers.
- Bring innovation in the areas like eco-tourism, agro-processing, and skill development.

**8. Academic Research and Policy Education**

Rural development experiences play a crucial role in strengthening the academic research and policy education. Case studies and field experiences serve as rich content for teaching, training, and research in development studies, public policy, and rural management. They bridge the gap between theory and practice and help future policymakers and practitioners to:

- Understand the nuances of implementation.
- Appreciate bottom-up development processes.
- Engage critically with development discourse.

By analyzing the experiences, the students, researchers, and the policymakers can get a deeper understanding of what development means in practice and how to design more effective and inclusive policies.

Thus, learning from the experiences of rural development is very important to build a rural India that is fair, inclusive, and long-lasting. They help to improve the policies and give strength to the local communities. As rural India faces major challenges like climate change, lack of internet

access, migration farming problems etc., it is important to make learning from the past experiences for effective planning and decision-making. This way, villages will not just receive help but also take part in shaping their own future and contributing to the progress of the country as a whole.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Why is it important to learn from rural development experiences? (Answer in about 20 words)

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**Q 2:** How do rural development experiences support effective decision-making? (Answer in about 30 words)……

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**Q 3:** How does learning from experiences help in community involvement? (Answer in about 40 words)……

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## 4.4 NOTABLE CASE STUDIES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIAN CONTEXT

Since independence, rural development has remained a central pillar of national planning in India. Over the decades, rural development has undergone significant transformation in the country. From poverty alleviation and employment generation to sustainable livelihoods and participatory governance, rural India has seen several impactful interventions. This section of the chapter presents a series of notable case studies from different regions of India that highlight diverse approaches, strategies and outcomes in rural development.

1. **Ralegan Siddhi, Maharashtra: A Model of Environmental and Social Regeneration :** Ralegan Siddhi Village is located in

Ahmednagar district of Maharashtra. This village was a drought prone village struggling with poverty, alcoholism and soil degradation. The transformation began in the 1970s under the leadership of social activist Anna Hazare. The community of the village adopted a series of integrated development measures such as watershed development, afforestation, water management practices, including contour trenching and check dams. Alcohol prohibition, collective decision making through gram sabha and education initiatives also fostered social cohesion. Today, Ralegan Siddhi is recognized nationally and internationally as a model village for sustainable rural development.

2. **Hiware Bazar, Maharashtra: From Drought to Prosperity :** Hiware Bazar, also in Ahmednagar district, represents one of the most successful cases of rural transformation through community participation and water management. This drought prone village was transformed through the implementation of sustainable development strategies in the early 1990s led by Popatrao Pawar. The village focused on watershed development, water conservation, soil treatment and afforestation. Social measures like ban of alcohol, family planning, compulsory education also promoted in the village. The results have been remarkable as increased per capita income, reduced migration, increased groundwater levels and improved health and education indicators. Today, Hiware Bazar is considered as model village of India showing the power ofcollective rural action.

3. **PURA (Providing Urban Amenities in Rural Areas), Tamil Nadu :** PURA was a visionary initiative conceptualized by Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam which aimed at delivering urban-level infrastructure and services to rural areas to stem migration and promote rural entrepreneurship.PURA emphasized four kinds of connectivity which were physical, electronic, knowledge and economic. This was implemented on a pilot basis through public-private partnership and sought to integrate roads, electricity, skill training and enterprise development. Despite its mixed outcomes, PURA introduced a valuable discourse on the need for rural-urban integration and multi-sectoral

rural development.

4. **Kudumbashree, Kerala: Empowering Women through Self-Help :** Launched in 1998 by the Government of Kerala, Kudumbashree is one of the largest women's collectives in the world. This was structured around three-tier community organization- Neighbourhood Groups (NHGs), Area Development Societies (ADS) and Community Development Societies (CDS) and integrated economic development with social transformation. Kudumbashree promotes thrift and credit activities, micro-enterprises, skill development and social development programs. It collaborates closely with Panchayati Raj Institutions and enables women to actively participate in planning and monitoring local development projects. This mission has brought substantial positive effects on economic status of women, household incomes and education and healthcare indicators. Thus, this initiative goes beyond poverty alleviation and actively promotes gender justice, local governance and livelihood resilience.
5. **MGNREGA :** The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), enacted in 2005, is a landmark in rural development policy, as it legally guarantees 100 days of wage employment to every household. This scheme is a demand driven ad aims to reduce rural distress by offering social security through employment, especially in agricultural off-seasons. The program has been able to reduce migration, increase rural wage levels and create rural assets like roads, ponds etc. Women's participation through this scheme has been notably high which enhances their access to income and financial inclusion. MHNREGA also promotes decentralized planning through Gram Panchayats, making it a bottom-up scheme design.
6. **SEWA (Self-Employed Women's Association), Gujrat :** SEWA, founded by Ela Bhatt in 1972 in Ahmedabad, is one of the influential organizations in India focusing on organizing women workers of the informal sector. Though it is urban in origin, SEWA has deeply impacted rural livelihoods in Gujrat and other states of the country. The

organization offers financial services, health care, child care, insurance, housing and vocational training. The cooperative based approach of this organization has enabled rural women to access markets, enhance their incomes and build resilience.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 4:** Which initiative in Kerala empowers women through self-help groups? (Answer in about 20 words)

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**Q 5:** What is Hiware Bazar known for?(Answer in about 30 words).

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**Q 6:** What is the goal of MGNREGA? (Answer in about 40 words)

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**Q 7:** How did Ralegan Siddhi achieve success in rural development? (Answer in about 50 words).

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## 4.5 CASE STUDIES AS A MODEL FOR POLICY AND PRACTICES

Case studies are highly valuable in influencing rural development policies and informing effective practices. By capturing and examining the real-world examples of success and failure of the development effort, they provide useful and hands-on knowledge that goes beyond the theoretical concepts. These studies help to connect the policy planning and actual field conditions that enable the policymakers, practitioners, and communities to understand the real challenges and dynamics involved in rural development.

Many government policies start from small efforts at the village level. When a rural development project works comparatively well in a particular area, case studies help to record how it was done, what steps were taken, and how the local people were involved in the particular project. These real-life examples can then be used as models to create many other bigger programs for the whole state or country.

Case studies also provide rich, qualitative and quantitative evidences which can guide effective policy-making. They demonstrate how the communities respond to the interventions, what institutional arrangements work, and where the gaps exist. Such evidences help to:

- Justify the budget allocation.
- Inform the design of new schemes.
- Improve the targeting of beneficiaries.
- Revise or discontinue ineffective programs.

Again, rural realities are dynamic and diverse. Case studies show that when government programs are flexible and adjust to the local needs, they work better and achieve the targets. This helps the leaders and officials to understand that one fixed plan may not work everywhere, and they should make policies that can change based on the local situation.

For the people working in villages like field workers, NGOs, and local government staff, case studies are very useful. They act like guides and shows exactly how a project was done, who was involved, what tools were used, and what problems came up. This makes it easier for others to follow the same steps and carry out the similar successful projects in other villages.

Moreover, case studies that are clearly written and well-recorded can also show the problems like unfair treatment, poor management, or misuse of funds in the development programs. By pointing out these issues, they create awareness and encourage changes to make the system better. They also help in improving how the programs are checked and run more honestly.

Case studies are not just stories; they are the powerful tools for learning, planning, and reform. They show how real people and communities are

affected by government plans and actions. Case studies can help to connect the ideas made by the officials with the actual needs and situations of people in the villages when these are used wisely and make rural development more fair, effective, and people-friendly.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q. 8:** How do case studies help in policymaking? (Answer in about 20 words)

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**Q. 9:** What can policymakers learn from failed rural development projects? (Answer in about 30 words)

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**Q. 10:** Why are case studies useful for field workers and NGOs? (Answer in about 40 words)

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## 4.6 LET US SUM UP

- A large part of India still lives in rural areas and faces persistent issues like poverty, unemployment, infrastructure gaps, environmental problems, and social inequality. Learning from the past and ongoing rural development efforts is essential for improving outcomes.
- Each rural area has its own unique social, economic, and environmental conditions. Learning from experiences helps understand regional needs,constraints like water scarcity or lack of market access, and how to implement culturally and environmentally suitable strategies.
- Successful rural initiatives show that active participation of local communities is crucial.

- Policies are more effective when informed by real-life implementation experiences. Field learnings help identify design flaws, improve targeting, strengthen delivery systems, and bring in transparency and accountability. MGNREGA's digital reforms like job cards and geo-tagging were scaled after being tested in certain regions.
- India's diversity allows for valuable cross-learning. When one region implements a successful model, others can adapt and replicate it. This process saves time, avoids known mistakes, and increases the speed of rural development.
- Documented success stories can inspire other communities to take initiative.
- Case studies are important tools for teaching and training in development studies and public policy. They help students, researchers, and practitioners engage with real-life complexities, go beyond theory, and critically analyze what makes rural development inclusive, participatory, and impactful.
- Villages do not just need top-down help—they should be empowered to shape their own development paths. Learning from past experiences enables more participatory planning and contributes to long-term national development.
- Successful rural development examples like Ralegan Siddhi, Hiware Bazar, Kudumbashree, MGNREGA, and SEWA show how leadership, innovation, and community participation can transform local conditions. Case studies are not just stories—they provide concrete evidence and practical guidance. They help to design better programs, revise policies, prevent misuse of funds, and strengthen program implementation.
- Well-documented case studies also expose problems like corruption, mismanagement, or exclusion. They promote transparency, accountability, and reforms.



## 4.7 FURTHER READING

1) Singh, K. (2009). *Rural Development: Principles, Policies and Management.* Sage Publications.



## 4.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** It is important because real experiences help to improve future planning, avoid past mistakes and create a solution that is suited to the local needs.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Rural development experiences support effective decision making by providing practical insights, highlighting local challenges and showing successful strategies which can help to design realistic, need-based and community driven development policies.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Learning from rural development experiences shows the value of involving communities in the planning and execution process of rural development. It encourages local participation, builds trust, and ensures that development planning reflects the real needs of the people that make the process more inclusive, sustainable, and effective.

**Ans to Q No 4:** Kudumbashree is a women-led initiative in Kerala that empowers women through self-help groups.

**Ans to Q No 5:** Hiware Bazar is known for its remarkable transformation from a drought village to a model village of water conservation, afforestation, and community led rural development.

**Ans to Q No 6:** The MGNREGA aims to provide at least 100 days of wage employment per year to the rural households, thereby aims to reduce poverty and create durable rural assists like roads, ponds etc.

**Ans to Q No 7:** Ralegan Siddhi achieved rural development through

integrated watershed management, afforestation, grassroots governance and social reforms like ban of alcohol. The village became self-reliant and environmentally sustainable through strong community participation and transparent decision making under the leadership of Anna Hazare.

**Ans to Q No 8:** Case studies offer practical examples that guide effective, need based and effective policy decisions rooted in ground realities.

**Ans to Q No 9:** Policymakers can identify the planning gaps, understand the reasons for poor planning, avoid the similar mistakes, improve the community involvement and redesigning more transparent and efficient policies.

**Ans to Q No 10:** Case studies act as practical guides, showing step-by-step implementation, community involvement, challenges faced by a particular rural area, and the solutions adopted that help the field workers and the NOGs to replicate successful model in rural areas.



## 4.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Short Questions** (Answer each question in about 150 words)

**Q. 1:** What is the main goal of rural development in India?

**Q. 2:** How does community participation benefit rural development?

**Q. 3:** What services does SEWA provide to women in the informal sector?

**Q. 4:** What was the main aim of PURA model?

**Long Questions** (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

**Q. 1:** Discuss the importance of learning from rural development experiences in India.

**Q. 2:** Explain how case studies support better policy design and implementation in rural development.

**Q. 3:** In what ways can case studies of rural development contribute to academic research and training?

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# UNIT 5 : RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

## UNIT STRUCTURE


5.1 Learning Objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 The Socio-economic Contexts and Need for Rural Development Programmes in India

5.3.1 The Socio-economic Contexts

5.3.2 Need for Rural Development Programs in India

5.4 Basic Objectives of Rural Development in India

5.5 The Ideal Approach to Rural Development in India

5.6 Important Cases of Rural Development in India and the Lessons Learned

5.7 Let Us Sum Up

5 .8 Further Reading

5.9. Answer to Check Your Progress

5.10 Model Questions


## 5.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- discuss the socio-economic contexts and need for rural development programmes in India
- outline the ideal approach to rural development in India
- discuss some of the important cases of rural development in India and deliberate on the important lessons learned.

## 5.2 INTRODUCTION

India, with approximately 65 percent of its population residing in rural areas, faces significant challenges related to poverty, unemployment, and inadequate infrastructure. By examining the socio-economic context, the potential benefits of such programs, and successful case studies, this Unit highlights how targeted rural development initiatives can lead to

sustainable growth, improved quality of life, and enhanced national stability. This Unit also deliberates on rural development in India. Here, we shall discuss the need for rural development programmes in India. Then we shall discuss an ideal approach towards rural development in India. Finally, we shall discuss some of the important cases of rural development in India and deliberate on the important lessons learned.

## 5.3 THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONTEXTS AND NEED FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

Rural India is characterized by a diverse population engaged primarily in agriculture and allied activities. Despite its critical role in the economy, rural areas often lag behind urban centres in terms of development indicators. On a broader view, the challenges faced by rural communities include high poverty rates, limited access to education and healthcare, inadequate infrastructure, and environmental degradation. This section tries to evaluate the need for adopting specific development initiatives for the development of the rural populace in India. While doing this, we shall initially try to locate the socio-economic context of rural India, and then will see how certain rural development programmes can be helpful in overcoming those challenges.

### 5.3.1 The Socio-economic Contexts

- **Poverty and Unemployment:** According to the World Bank, around 22% of the rural population lives below the poverty line. Unemployment rates are high, particularly among youth, leading to migration to urban areas in search of better opportunities.
- **Inadequate Infrastructure:** Many rural areas lack essential infrastructure, including roads, electricity, and sanitation facilities. This hampers economic activities and limits access to markets and services.

- **Education and Health Disparities:** Rural areas often have lower literacy rates and limited access to quality healthcare. This affects human capital development and overall productivity.
- **Environmental Challenges:** Climate change and unsustainable agricultural practices have led to soil degradation, water scarcity, and loss of biodiversity, further threatening rural livelihoods.

### 5.3.2 Need for Rural Development Programs in India

Comprehensive rural development programs can significantly reduce poverty by creating sustainable employment opportunities. Initiatives such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) have already demonstrated success in providing wage employment and improving rural infrastructure.

Rural development programs can also promote diversification of livelihoods beyond agriculture. By supporting small-scale industries, handicrafts, and agro-based enterprises, these programs can enhance income stability and resilience against market fluctuations.

Further, investment in rural infrastructure—such as roads, electricity, and water supply—can facilitate access to markets, improve living conditions, and attract investment. Programs like the Pradhan Mantri Gram SadakYojana (PMGSY) aim to connect rural areas with urban centers, fostering economic growth.

Similarly, in the areas of education and skill development, targeted rural development initiatives can enhance access to quality education and vocational training. By equipping the rural workforce with relevant skills, these programs can improve employability and productivity.

To improve health and well-being of the rural population, rural development programs can improve healthcare access and promote health awareness. Initiatives focused on maternal and child

health, sanitation, and nutrition can lead to better health outcomes and increased productivity.

On the environmental sustainability front, sustainable agricultural practices and natural resource management are essential for long-term rural development. Programs that promote organic farming, water conservation, and agroforestry can enhance food security while protecting the environment.

From the above discussion, it is imperative that the adoption of comprehensive rural development programs is not just a necessity but an imperative for India. By addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by rural communities, these programs can lead to sustainable economic growth, improved quality of life, and enhanced national stability. The government, along with NGOs and local communities, must collaborate to design and implement effective rural development initiatives that empower individuals and foster inclusive growth. Investing in rural development is an investment in the future of India, ensuring that all citizens can contribute to and benefit from the nation's progress.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What are the major socio-economic challenges faced by rural India?

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**Q 2:** Why is rural development crucial for India's national stability and growth?

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## 5.4 BASIC OBJECTIVES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

The broad objective of rural development in India is to improve the living standards of the rural population and enhance the overall quality of

life in rural areas. However, certain basic objectives of rural development in India can be outlined as follows:

- **Poverty Alleviation:** One of the primary objectives is to reduce poverty levels in rural areas by providing employment opportunities, enhancing income levels, and ensuring access to basic services.
- **Employment Generation:** Creating sustainable employment opportunities through various programs and initiatives, including skill development, entrepreneurship promotion, and support for small-scale industries.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Improving rural infrastructure, such as roads, transportation, electricity, water supply, sanitation, and communication facilities, to enhance connectivity and access to services.
- **Agricultural Development:** Promoting sustainable agricultural practices, increasing agricultural productivity, and ensuring food security through better access to technology, credit, and markets.
- **Social Empowerment:** Empowering marginalized and disadvantaged groups, including women, Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and other minority communities, to ensure their active participation in the development process.
- **Health and Education:** Improving access to quality healthcare and education services in rural areas to enhance human capital and overall well-being.
- **Environmental Sustainability**: Promoting sustainable practices in agriculture and natural resource management to protect the environment and ensure the long-term viability of rural livelihoods.
- **Community Participation:** Encouraging active participation of local communities in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of rural development programs to ensure that their needs and priorities are addressed.
- **Access to Financial Services:** Enhancing access to credit and financial services for rural populations to support entrepreneurship and investment in agriculture and other economic activities.

- **Skill Development and Capacity Building:** Providing training and skill development programs to enhance the capabilities of the rural workforce, enabling them to adapt to changing economic conditions and opportunities.
- **Promotion of Cooperatives and Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** Encouraging the formation of cooperatives and SHGs to promote collective action, savings, and access to credit, thereby enhancing economic resilience.
- **Balanced Regional Development:** Addressing regional disparities in development by focusing on underdeveloped and backward areas to ensure equitable growth across the country.

These objectives are often pursued through various government schemes and programs, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), Pradhan Mantri Gram SadakYojana (PMGSY), and others, aimed at fostering holistic rural development in India.

## 5.5 THE IDEAL APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Based on the above discussion, we can say that an ideal approach to rural development in India must be holistic, integrating sustainability, inclusivity, and empowerment. Thus, essentially, an ideal approach to rural development in the country should include: (a) community participation and empowerment, (b) sustainable economic development, (c) infrastructure development, (d) education and skill development, (e) health and well-being, and (f) environmental sustainability. Let us discuss these points in some detail as follows:

**(a) Community Participation and Empowerment:** Community participation and empowerment are needed so that development process becomes a participatory one and also certain capacity building initiatives are undertaken for ensuring capability development of the local populace. The participatory planning can help involve local communities in the planning and implementation of development

projects. This ensures that initiatives are tailored to the specific needs and priorities of the community. Similarly, through capacity building, training and resources to empower local leaders and organizations, will enable them to take charge of their development.

**(b)** **Sustainable Economic Development:** In the rural development context, for ensuring sustainable economic development, livelihood diversification and access to credit and market are very essential. Livelihood diversification can encourage people to look beyond traditional agriculture by promoting agro-based industries, handicrafts, and tourism. This reduces dependency on a single source of income and enhances resilience. Similarly, proper access to credit and markets will facilitate access to financial services and markets for rural entrepreneurs through cooperatives and self-help groups (SHGs).

**(c)** **Infrastructure Development:** For proper infrastructure development aiming at rural development, two basic things are essential, viz., an integrated infrastructure development planning and also undertaking the projects on the public-private-partnership mode. An integrated infrastructure planning can help in developing a comprehensive infrastructure plan including transportation, electricity, water supply, sanitation, and digital connectivity. This will enhances access to services and promotes economic activities. Similarly, the adoption of public-private partnerships (PPPs) can help to mobilize resources and expertise for infrastructure development.

**(d)** **Education and Skill Development:** The rural development approach should aim at delivering quality education, with a focus on both formal and vocational training. This approach will help the rural youths equip with the skills needed for employment and entrepreneurship. Similarly, targeted skill development initiatives should be undertaken that align with local economic opportunities such as agriculture, handicrafts, and information technology.

**(e)** **Health and Well-being:** To improve access to healthcare services, there is a need to strengthen healthcare infrastructure and services in rural areas to ensure that communities have access to essential health

services. Further, awareness programs should be undertaken focusing on nutrition, sanitation, and preventive healthcare.

**(f) Environmental Sustainability:** With a long-term, sustainable development in view, rural development initiatives should ideally promote organic farming, agroforestry, and water conservation techniques to enhance agricultural productivity while protecting the environment.Involvement of communities in the sustainable management of local resources, such as forests, water bodies, and biodiversity are also ideally required.

From the above discussion, we can conclude that by fostering community participation, promoting sustainable economic practices, improving infrastructure, and enhancing education and healthcare, India can pave the way for a prosperous rural future. Collaborative efforts among government, NGOs, and local communities are essential to create a sustainable model that addresses the unique challenges faced by rural populations. The success of rural development initiatives will ultimately contribute to the overall growth and stability of the nation.

## 5.6 IMPORTANT CASES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA AND THE LESSONS LEARNED

Rural development in India has witnessed significant progress through various initiatives and programs aimed at improving the quality of life for rural populations. In this section, we shall highlight certain successful cases of rural development in India, focusing on innovative approaches, community participation, and sustainable practices. By examining these case studies, we can also draw valuable lessons for future rural development efforts.

**(a) Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**

***Overview:*** The SHG movement, initiated in the 1980s, has transformed the socio-economic landscape of rural India. SHGs are small, informal groups of individuals, primarily women, who come together to save and lend money to each other.

***Impact:*** According to the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), as of 2020, there were over 8.5 million SHGs in India, benefiting more than 100 million women. The movement has empowered women, improved household incomes, and enhanced access to credit.

**(b) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**

***Overview:*** Launched in 2005, MGNREGA provides a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of unskilled wage employment in a financial year to every rural household. The program aims to enhance livelihood security and create durable ==assets in rural areas.

***Impact:*** MGNREGA has been instrumental in reducing rural poverty and improving infrastructure. A study by the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) found that MGNREGA has significantly increased rural wages and reduced migration.

**(c) National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)**

***Overview:*** Launched in 2011, NRLM aims to reduce poverty by promoting self-employment and organization of rural poor into SHGs. The mission focuses on skill development, financial inclusion, and sustainable livelihoods.

***Impact:*** NRLM has successfully mobilized rural communities and enhanced their livelihoods. As of 2020, NRLM had formed over 7.5 million SHGs, leading to increased income and improved living standards for millions of families.

**(d) Pradhan Mantri Gram SadakYojana (PMGSY)**

***Overview:*** Launched in 2000, PMGSY aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to unconnected villages. The program focuses on rural infrastructure development to enhance access to markets, education, and healthcare.

***Impact:*** As of 2021, PMGSY has connected over 120,000 habitations, significantly improving rural connectivity and economic opportunities. Studies have shown that improved road access leads to increased agricultural productivity and market access.

**(e) Digital India Initiative**

***Overview:*** Launched in 2015, the Digital India initiative aims to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. The program focuses on improving digital infrastructure in rural areas.

***Impact:*** The initiative has facilitated access to information, services, and markets for rural populations. For instance, the Common Service Centers (CSCs) have been established to provide various digital services, including e-governance, education, and healthcare.

**Lessons Learned:** From the successful cases of rural development in India, we can derive the following important lessons:

- **Community Participation:** Successful rural development initiatives emphasize the importance of community involvement in planning and implementation. Engaging local populations ensures that programs are tailored to their specific needs.
- **Sustainability:** Programs that promote sustainable practices, such as organic farming and water conservation, not only enhance productivity but also protect the environment. Sustainable development is crucial for ensuring that rural communities can thrive in the long term.
- **Integrated Approaches:** A holistic approach that combines various aspects of development—such as infrastructure, education, health, and livelihoods—yields better results. Integrated programs can address multiple challenges simultaneously, leading to more significant impacts.
- **Capacity Building:** Empowering local communities through training and skill development is essential for enhancing their capabilities. Programs that focus on building local skills and knowledge can lead to more sustainable and self-reliant communities.
- **Policy Support:** Strong government policies and frameworks are vital for the success of rural development initiatives. Continuous support and investment from the government can help scale successful programs and ensure their sustainability.

To sum up, it can be said that the successful cases of rural development

in India demonstrate that targeted initiatives can lead to significant improvements in the quality of life for rural populations. By learning from these examples, policymakers and practitioners can design more effective programs that address the unique challenges faced by rural communities. The integration of community participation, sustainability, and capacity building will be crucial for achieving long-term rural development goals in India.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** Mention any two government schemes aimed at rural development and briefly state their objectives.

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**Q 4:** What is the role of community participation in rural development?

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## 5.7 LET US SUM UP

- India, with around 65 percent of its populace living in rural regions, grapples with substantial issues concerning poverty, unemployment, and insufficient infrastructure. Rural India is marked by its diverse demographic engaged mainly in agriculture and related sectors. Despite the sector's significant role in the economy, rural regions frequently fall deficient when compared to urban areas concerning development indices. Wider challenges facing these communities include high poverty levels, inadequate access to education and healthcare, poor infrastructure, and environmental issues.
- It is clear from the discourse that adopting comprehensive rural development programs is not merely essential but crucial for India's progress. By tackling the multifaceted challenges confronting rural

communities, these programs have the potential to foster sustainable economic growth, enhance living standards, and contribute to national stability. Collaboration among the government, NGOs, and local communities is vital to designing and executing effective rural development strategies that empower individuals and promote inclusive growth. Investing in rural development translates to investing in the country's future, ensuring that all citizens can partake in and benefit from national advancements.

- The overarching objective of rural development in India is to uplift the living standards of its rural populace and improve overall quality of life. However, some key goals for rural development include achieving in: (a) poverty alleviation, (b) employment generation, (c) infrastructure development, (d) education and skill development, (e) health and well-being and (f) environmental sustainability:
- By embracing these development objectives and implementing tailored initiatives, India can work towards ameliorating the living conditions of its rural population significantly, promoting both individual empowerment and communal prosperity. The targeted approach in rural development is imperative for the holistic progress of India, and learning from successful case studies will guide future endeavours effectively.



## 5.8 FURTHER READING

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## 5.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Rural India faces multiple socio-economic challenges such as high poverty levels, unemployment, inadequate infrastructure (roads, electricity, sanitation), limited access to education and healthcare, and environmental degradation including soil erosion and water scarcity.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Rural development is crucial because about 65% of India's population lives in rural areas. Development in these areas helps reduce poverty and migration, enhances livelihoods, boosts agricultural

productivity, ensures inclusive growth, and strengthens the national economy and stability.

**Ans to Q No 3: MGNREGA** – Provides at least 100 days of wage employment per year to rural households to enhance livelihood security.

**PMGSY** – Aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to unconnected rural habitations, improving access to services and markets.

**Ans to Q No 4:** Community participation ensures that development initiatives are aligned with local needs and priorities. It leads to better planning, ownership, transparency, and sustainability of development programs, empowering rural people and strengthening democratic governance.



## 5.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A.** Multiple Choice Questions

**Q 1:** What percentage of India's population lives in rural areas?

A) 50%

B) 65%

C) 70%

D) 75%

**Q 2:** Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a challenge facing rural communities in India?

A) High poverty levels

B) Inadequate access to education

C) Urbanization

D) Poor infrastructure

**Q 3:** What is the primary objective of rural development in India?

A) Urban migration

B) Uplifting living standards

C) Industrialization

D) Increasing urban population

**Q 4:** Which program provides a legal guarantee for wage employment in rural areas?

A) Pradhan Mantri Gram SadakYojana

B) National Rural Livelihoods Mission

C) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

D) Digital India Initiative

**Q 5:** What is one of the key goals of rural development mentioned in the text?

A) Urban development

B) Poverty alleviation

C) Industrial growth

D) Globalization

**Q 6:** Which initiative aims to improve digital infrastructure in rural areas?

A) MGNREGA

B) Pradhan Mantri Gram SadakYojana

C) Digital India Initiative

D) National Rural Livelihoods Mission

**Q 7:** What is a significant benefit of improving rural infrastructure?

A) Increased urbanization

B) Enhanced connectivity and access to services

C) Decreased agricultural productivity

D) Higher migration rates

**Q 8:** Which of the following is a focus area for enhancing rural health and well-being?

A) Urban healthcare facilities

B) Access to quality healthcare services

C) Industrial health programs

D) Global health initiatives

**Q 9:** What is emphasized as crucial for the success of rural development programs?

A) Government intervention only

B) Collaboration among government, NGOs, and local communities

C) Urban-centric policies

D) International aid

**Q 10:** Which of the following is a targeted approach in rural development?

A) Generalized urban policies

B) Tailored initiatives for specific communities

C) Nationalized industries

D) Global trade agreements

**B.** Answer the following questions in about 300 words

**Q 1:** Discuss the key challenges faced by rural communities in India. How do these challenges impact the overall development of rural areas?

**Q 2:** Explain the significance of adopting comprehensive rural development programs in India. What potential benefits can these programs bring to rural populations and the nation as a whole?

**Q 3:** Identify and elaborate on the primary objectives of rural development in India. How do these objectives contribute to improving the quality of life for rural residents?

**Q 4:** Analyze the role of community participation in the success of rural development initiatives. Why is it important for local communities to be involved in the planning and implementation of these programs?

**Answer keys to MCQs:**

1-B, 2-C, 3-B, 4-C, 5-B, 6-C, 7-B, 8-B, 9-B, 10-B

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# UNIT 6 : RURAL DEVELOPMENT DURING PLAN PERIOD

## UNIT STRUCTURE


6.1 Introduction

6.2 Learning Objectives

6.3 Rural Development during Plan Period in India

6.4 Major Rural Development Programmes in India

- 6.4.1 Integrated Rural Development Programme
- 6.4.2 MGNREGA
- 6.4.3 Jawahar Rozgar Yojana
- 6.4.4 Swachh Bharat Mission
- 6.4.5 Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana

6.5 Recent Flagship progammes of rural development in India

6.6 Progress vs Challenges

- 6.6.1 Progress Made
- 6.6.2 Challenges in Implementing Rural Development Programs in India

6.7 Let Us Sum Up

6.8 Further Reading

6.9 Model Questions


## 6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- discuss the different rural development programmes undertaken in India during the plan period,
- particularly discuss the recent flagship programs of rural development in India
- evaluate the progress of rural development programmes in India
- offer detailed discussion on certain major rural development programmes, viz., IRDP, MGNREGA, JawaharRozgarYojana, Swachh Bharat Mission and Pradhan MantriAwaasYojana.

## 6.2 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we have already discussed the case of rural development in some conceptual framework. In this Unit, we shall basically discuss the rural development programmes India undertook during the plan period, particularly since 1950s (the first five year plan) till 2017 (the end of the Twelfth FYP). In this Unit, we shall discuss the different rural development progammes undertaken in India during the plan period, with particular discussion on the major rural development programmes like the IRDP, MGNREGA, Jawahar Rozgar Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission and Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana. Thus, this Unit will provide you an overall grasp of the rural development programmes, their progress, and failures in a nutshell.

## 6.3 RURAL DEVELOPMENT DURING PLAN PERIOD IN INDIA

India's rural development initiatives have evolved significantly since independence, reflecting changing priorities and strategies to address the multifaceted challenges of rural poverty, infrastructure deficits, and economic growth. The First Five-Year Plan (1951-1956) laid the foundation for rural development in India, with a focus on agrarian reforms, land redistribution, and agricultural development. It introduced community development programs, cooperative societies, and land reforms to promote rural development and reduce poverty.

The Second Five-Year Plan (1956-1961) emphasized agricultural growth, rural industrialization, and infrastructure development in rural areas. It focused on expanding irrigation facilities, increasing agricultural productivity, and promoting rural electrification to support rural development efforts. The Third Five-Year Plan (1961-1966) continued to prioritize agricultural development and rural infrastructure with an emphasis on increasing food production and reducing rural poverty. Special programs such as the Intensive Agricultural District Program (IADP) and the Drought Prone Area Program (DPAP) were launched to address specific challenges faced by rural areas.

The Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-1974) focused on poverty alleviation, employment generation, and social welfare programs in rural areas. Initiatives such as the Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), and National Rural Employment Program (NREP) were introduced to promote rural development and improve living standards in rural communities. The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1974-1979) aimed at accelerating agricultural growth, promoting rural industries, and addressing regional disparities in rural development. It emphasized the need for land reforms, technological modernization of agriculture, and rural electrification to stimulate rural development and reduce inequality.

The Sixth Five-Year Plan (1980-1985) focused on rural development through increased investment in agriculture, rural infrastructure, and social welfare programs. It introduced programs such as the Integrated Rural Development Program (IRDP), National Rural Employment Program (NREP), and Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) to address rural poverty and unemployment. The Seventh Five-Year Plan (1985-1990) aimed at sustainable rural development, with an emphasis on environmental conservation, rural infrastructure, and human development. It focused on promoting sustainable agriculture, decentralized planning, and community participation in rural development initiatives.

The Eighth Five-Year Plan (1992-1997) focused on economic liberalization, privatization, and globalization, with an emphasis on rural development through market-led initiatives and poverty alleviation programs. It introduced initiatives such as the Swarna Jayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) and the Pradhan Mantri Gramodaya Yojana (PMGY) to promote rural entrepreneurship and infrastructure development. The Ninth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) focused on inclusive growth, social justice, and sustainable development, with a renewed emphasis on poverty reduction and rural empowerment. It introduced initiatives such as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) to promote rural employment and universal education.

The Tenth Five-Year Plan (2002-2007) focused on achieving faster,

more inclusive, and sustainable growth, with a particular emphasis on rural development, infrastructure, and human development. It introduced initiatives such as the Bharat Nirman program and the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM) to address rural infrastructure deficits and improve access to healthcare in rural areas. The Eleventh Five-Year Plan (2007-2012) focused on inclusive growth, social inclusion, and sustainable development, with an emphasis on reducing poverty, empowering marginalized communities, and promoting rural livelihoods. It introduced initiatives such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) to promote rural employment and agricultural growth.

The Twelfth Five-Year Plan (2012-2017) aimed at faster, sustainable, and more inclusive growth, with a focus on enhancing rural productivity, improving rural infrastructure, and promoting social inclusion. It introduced initiatives such as the National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) and the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) to promote rural entrepreneurship and infrastructure development. These plan periods reflect the evolution of rural development strategies in India, from agrarian reforms and infrastructure development to poverty alleviation, social welfare programs, and inclusive growth initiatives aimed at improving the lives of rural communities.

## 6.4 MAJOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN INDIA

In this section, we shall discuss four major rural development programmes in India, viz., Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) and Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

### 6.4.1 Integrated Rural Development Programme

The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was launched in India in 1978-79 and implemented from the year 1980

with the primary goal of alleviating rural poverty and improving the standard of living for the rural poor. The programme aimed to achieve this by promoting self-employment opportunities and providing income-generating assets. Targeting rural families below the poverty line, especially landless agricultural labourers, small and marginal farmers, and other vulnerable groups, IRDP provided financial assistance in the form of subsidies and bank loans for various income-generating activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, cottage industries, and small businesses.

Under this scheme, beneficiaries received a subsidy ranging from 25% to 50% of the project cost, with the remaining financed through bank loans at concessional interest rates. The implementation was decentralized, with district-level agencies responsible for identifying beneficiaries, formulating project proposals, and disbursing subsidies and credit. Training and capacity-building support were also provided to enhance beneficiaries' entrepreneurial skills and management capabilities. Regular monitoring and evaluation were conducted to assess the programme's impact, identify constraints, and suggest corrective measures. IRDP was designed to complement other rural development programs addressing various dimensions of rural poverty. Despite its efforts, the programme faced challenges such as targeting issues, leakages, delays in credit disbursement, and lack of effective monitoring and evaluation. Consequently, it was eventually subsumed under the Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) in 1999 to streamline and improve the delivery of rural development assistance.

### 6.4.2 Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) is a landmark social welfare program launched by the Government of India in 2005. Initially it was National Rural

Employment Guarantee Act and renamed as MGNERGA from the year 2009 after an amendment of the Act. Its primary objective is to provide livelihood security by guaranteeing 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to rural households, thereby addressing seasonal unemployment and poverty. The program covers all rural areas across India and applies to all adult members of rural households willing to do unskilled manual work. MGNREGA guarantees employment and provides an unemployment allowance if employment is not provided within 15 days of application. The works under MGNREGA include labour-intensive public works such as water conservation, drought-proofing, irrigation projects, and rural connectivity through road construction.

Under this scheme, wages are paid according to the notified wage rates for agricultural labourers and are directly credited to the bank accounts of the workers through electronic funds transfer. The program includes provisions for social audits to ensure transparency, accountability, and public participation in its implementation. MGNREGA promotes convergence with other rural development programs and mandates monitoring and grievance redressal mechanisms. Since its inception, MGNREGA has had significant positive impacts on rural livelihoods, poverty reduction, and rural infrastructure development, providing employment to millions and empowering marginalized communities, particularly women. However, challenges such as leakages, delays in wage payments, and implementation issues persist and require continuous attention and reform.

### 6.4.3 The National Rural Employment Programme (NREP)

It was launched in **1980** to generate wage employment in rural areas through the creation of durable community assets like roads, ponds, and wells. It aimed to support the rural poor, by providing them with work and improving their living standards. In **1989**, NREP was merged with the Rural Landless Employment

Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) to form the **Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY)**, consolidating rural employment schemes for greater efficiency and reach.

### 6.4.4 Jawahar Rozgar Yojana

The Jawahar Rozgar Yojana (JRY) was a rural employment generation program launched by the Government of India in April 1989. Its primary objective was to provide gainful employment to unemployed and underemployed rural poor, especially during the lean agricultural seasons, thereby improving their livelihood security and standard of living. Targeting rural households living below the poverty line, particularly landless agricultural labourers, small and marginal farmers, and other vulnerable sections, JRY focused on the creation of durable community assets through labour-intensive public works such as rural roads, bridges, culverts, water tanks, and irrigation channels. The program was funded through a combination of central and state government contributions, with the central government providing the majority of the funding. Although JRY did not provide a legal guarantee of employment like later programs such as MGNREGA, it aimed to ensure sufficient employment opportunities.

The implementation of MGNREGA was decentralized, with funds allocated to district-level agencies responsible for planning, execution, and monitoring of employment generation projects. Gram Panchayats and Village Employment Councils were involved in project identification, selection, and implementation. Regular monitoring and evaluation were conducted to assess the program's impact, identify bottlenecks, and suggest corrective measures. JRY was designed to complement other rural development programs addressing various dimensions of rural poverty. Despite its significant role in providing employment and creating rural infrastructure, the program faced challenges such as delays in project execution, leakages, and administrative inefficiencies. It was eventually merged

with other rural development programs and subsumed under the Jawahar Gram Samridhi Yojana (JGSY) in 1999.

### 6.4.5 Swachh Bharat Mission

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) is a flagship sanitation and cleanliness program launched by the Government of India on October 2, 2014, coinciding with the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Its primary objective is to ensure cleanliness, hygiene, and sanitation for all by eliminating open defecation, promoting solid and liquid waste management, and creating a clean and healthy environment. The mission comprises two major components: Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), which focuses on rural sanitation and aims to achieve open defecation-free (ODF) status by constructing toilets and promoting behaviour change, and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), which focuses on urban sanitation and aims to improve solid waste management, sewerage and drainage systems, public toilets, and cleanliness in urban areas. Community participation and behaviour change are emphasized, with extensive mobilization and empowerment of communities, local governments, and other stakeholders.

The mission of this programme provides incentives and awards to states, districts, and communities that achieve ODF status and demonstrate outstanding performance in sanitation-related activities. SBM encourages the adoption of technology and innovation in sanitation solutions, including innovative toilet designs, waste management techniques, and digital tools for monitoring and evaluation. Extensive awareness campaigns, communication initiatives, and social mobilization activities are conducted to promote behaviour change and raise awareness about the importance of sanitation and hygiene. Robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are in place to track progress, assess the quality of infrastructure and services, and ensure accountability and transparency. The mission focuses on sustainability by promoting

the construction of durable and eco-friendly toilets, ensuring the availability of water and sanitation facilities, and fostering community ownership and responsibility for maintaining cleanliness and hygiene. Since its launch, SBM has made significant strides in improving sanitation and hygiene outcomes in India, with millions of toilets constructed and increased awareness about sanitation and hygiene practices. However, challenges such as sustaining behaviour change, ensuring the quality of infrastructure, and addressing inequalities in access to sanitation services remain, requiring continued efforts and commitment from all stakeholders.

### 6.4.6 Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana

The Pradhan Mantri AwasYojana (PMAY) is a flagship housing scheme launched by the Government of India in June 2015. Its primary objective is to address the housing shortage in India by facilitating the construction of affordable and quality housing units for eligible beneficiaries, particularly those belonging to economically weaker sections (EWS), low-income groups (LIG), and middle-income groups (MIG) in urban and rural areas. The scheme aims to achieve “Housing for All” by the year 2022, coinciding with the 75th anniversary of India’s independence. PMAY comprises two main components: Pradhan MantriAwasYojana (Urban), which focuses on providing affordable housing to urban beneficiaries through the construction of new houses, redevelopment of existing slums, and credit-linked subsidy schemes for home buyers, and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Gramin), which focuses on providing affordable housing to rural beneficiaries by constructing new houses and providing financial assistance for housing improvements. The scheme targets different beneficiary categories based on their income levels, including EWS, LIG, MIG-I, and MIG-II. PMAY offers a Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS) for eligible beneficiaries to avail of housing loans at subsidized interest rates, with higher subsidies provided to EWS and LIG beneficiaries. The scheme

encourages the development of affordable housing projects by public and private sector entities, including affordable housing developers, state governments, urban local bodies, and housing finance institutions. Innovative construction technologies, sustainable building materials, and eco-friendly design practices are promoted to enhance the quality, durability, and affordability of housing units. PMAY facilitates online application submission and tracking for beneficiaries through its website and incorporates robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to track progress, ensure transparency, and address implementation challenges. The scheme encourages partnerships and collaboration between central and state governments, urban local bodies, housing developers, financial institutions, and other stakeholders to leverage resources, expertise, and synergies for effective implementation and scale-up of housing projects. Since its inception, PMAY has made significant strides in providing affordable housing to millions of beneficiaries across urban and rural areas. However, challenges such as land availability, funding constraints, and regulatory issues need to be addressed to achieve the ambitious goal of "Housing for All" by 2022. Till February, 2025, the government sanctioned a total of 3.34 crore houses out of which 2.69 crore houses were handed over to the beneficiaries.

## 6.5 RECENT FLAGSHIP PROGAMMES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

The Government of India has launched several flagship programs to address the multifaceted challenges of rural development. These programs aim to improve infrastructure, enhance livelihoods, alleviate poverty, and promote social inclusion in rural areas. Some of the major flagship programs of rural development in India include:

**Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA):** MGNREGA is one of the largest social welfare programs in the world, providing a legal guarantee for 100 days of wage employment in a financial year to rural households. It aims to enhance livelihood security,

reduce rural unemployment, and promote inclusive growth.

**Pradhan Mantri Gram SadakYojana (PMGSY):** PMGSY aims to provide all-weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitations in rural areas. It focuses on improving access to markets, healthcare, education, and other basic services by constructing and upgrading rural roads.

**National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM):** NRLM aims to alleviate rural poverty by promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship among rural households. It focuses on organizing women into self-help groups (SHGs), providing them with access to credit, skills training, and market linkages to enhance their income-generating activities.

**Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM):** SBM aims to achieve universal sanitation coverage and eliminate open defecation in rural areas. It focuses on building toilets, promoting behavior change, and ensuring the sustainable management of sanitation infrastructure to improve public health and hygiene in rural communities.

**National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP):** NRDWP aims to provide safe and sustainable drinking water supply to rural households. It focuses on improving water quality, ensuring equitable access, and promoting community participation in water management to address the drinking water needs of rural populations.

**DeenDayalUpadhyayaGrameenKaushalyaYojana (DDU-GKY):** **DDU**-GKY aims to enhance the employability of rural youth by providing them with market-driven skills training and placement opportunities. It focuses on sectors with high growth potential, such as healthcare, tourism, retail, and construction, thereby promoting inclusive economic growth in rural areas.

**Pradhan MantriAwaasYojana - Gramin (PMAY-G):** PMAY-G aims to provide “Housing for All” in rural areas by constructing pucca houses for homeless and vulnerable households. It focuses on improving living conditions, reducing homelessness, and enhancing social inclusion in rural communities.

**RashtriyaKrishiVikasYojana (RKVY):** RKVY aims to promote

agricultural growth and rural development by providing flexible and decentralized funding to states for agricultural and allied sector activities. It focuses on increasing agricultural productivity, enhancing market access, and promoting agri-business in rural areas.

These flagship programs represent the government's commitment to promoting rural development and improving the quality of life for rural populations in India. They address various dimensions of rural development, including infrastructure, livelihoods, sanitation, housing, water supply, and agriculture, with a focus on inclusive and sustainable growth.

## 6.6 PROGRESS VS CHALLENGES

This is the last section of the unit. In this section, we make an overall assessment on the progress made by India in the implementation of the rural development programmes and the major challenges faced.

### 6.6.1 Progress Made

Assessing the progress of rural development programs in India involves examining various indicators related to poverty alleviation, infrastructure development, employment generation, social inclusion, and human development in rural areas. Here is an overview of the progress made in key areas:

**Poverty Alleviation:** There has been significant progress in reducing poverty in rural India over the years. According to official estimates, the poverty rate in rural areas has declined steadily, although pockets of extreme poverty still exist. Initiatives like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM), and various poverty alleviation programs have contributed to poverty reduction by providing employment opportunities, promoting livelihoods, and enhancing access to social welfare schemes.

**Infrastructure Development:** Notable progress has been made in rural infrastructure development, including roads, electricity,

housing, and sanitation facilities. Programs like the Pradhan Mantri Gram SadakYojana (PMGSY), Rural Electrification Program, and Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) have contributed to improving rural infrastructure and enhancing living standards in rural areas. However, gaps in infrastructure provision persist, particularly in remote and underserved regions. Maintenance and sustainability of infrastructure remain areas of concern, requiring ongoing investment and attention.

**Employment Generation:** Rural development programs like MGNREGA have provided significant employment opportunities to rural households, particularly during lean agricultural seasons. These programs have helped in reducing seasonal unemployment, enhancing rural incomes, and improving livelihood security. Despite the success of MGNREGA, underemployment and low wages remain significant challenges in rural areas. There is a need to diversify rural economies, promote skill development, and create sustainable employment opportunities in non-farm sectors to address these challenges.

**Social Inclusion and Human Development:** Efforts to promote social inclusion and human development in rural areas have led to improvements in health, education, and gender equality indicators. Initiatives like the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA), and BetiBachaoBetiPadhao have contributed to improving healthcare access, school enrolment, and gender empowerment in rural communities. However, disparities in access to quality healthcare and education persist, particularly among marginalized communities. Gender-based violence, discrimination, and unequal opportunities continue to hinder social inclusion and human development in rural areas.

**Environmental Sustainability:** There is growing awareness of the importance of environmental sustainability in rural development planning. Initiatives promoting sustainable agriculture, watershed management, and renewable energy adoption have contributed to environmental conservation and climate resilience in rural areas.

However, unsustainable agricultural practices, deforestation, and water scarcity remain significant environmental challenges in rural India. Balancing economic development with environmental conservation requires integrated and holistic approaches to rural development.

Overall, while significant progress has been made in various aspects of rural development in India, there are still challenges to overcome and areas for improvement. Addressing these challenges requires sustained efforts, innovative approaches, and a commitment to inclusive and sustainable rural development strategies.

### 6.6.2 Challenges in Implementing Rural Development Programs in India

Implementing rural development programs in India has been fraught with numerous challenges, despite their noble objectives and potential to significantly improve the lives of rural populations. One of the primary issues is the accurate identification and targeting of beneficiaries. Often, the intended beneficiaries, such as the rural poor and marginalized communities, do not receive the benefits due to corruption, favoritism, and inadequate verification processes. This misallocation of resources undermines the effectiveness of the programs and can lead to the wrong people being selected.

Another significant challenge is the leakage and misuse of funds. Corruption at various levels, from the central to the local administration, can result in funds being siphoned off before reaching the intended beneficiaries. This not only reduces the impact of the programs but also erodes public trust in government initiatives. Delays in the implementation of projects are also a common issue, often caused by bureaucratic red tape, lack of coordination between different government agencies, inadequate planning, and insufficient capacity at the local level. These delays can lead to increased costs and reduced effectiveness of the programs.

Effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are crucial for the success of rural development programs, but many programs lack robust systems to track progress, assess outcomes, and identify issues in real-time. This makes it difficult to address problems promptly and make necessary adjustments to improve program effectiveness. Additionally, the capacity of local implementing agencies and functionaries is often inadequate. There is a lack of trained personnel who can effectively manage and implement rural development projects, leading to poor project management, inadequate supervision, and suboptimal use of resources.

Inadequate infrastructure and logistics can also hinder the implementation of rural development programs. Poor transportation networks, lack of storage facilities, and inadequate supply chains can lead to delays in the delivery of materials and services, affecting the timely completion of projects. Ensuring the sustainability of projects is another significant challenge. Many rural development projects fail to sustain their impact over the long term due to a lack of maintenance, inadequate community participation, and insufficient post-project support. This results in the deterioration of assets and infrastructure, negating the benefits of the initial investment.

The coordination between various rural development schemes is often lacking, leading to fragmented and inefficient use of resources. The absence of a cohesive strategy and integrated approach can result in duplication of efforts and reduced overall impact. Resistance to change and behaviour modification among beneficiaries is another hurdle. Many programs aim to bring about behavioural changes, such as promoting sanitation practices or adopting new agricultural techniques, but deeply ingrained traditional practices can hinder their success.

Securing adequate and sustained funding is a persistent challenge. Rural development programs often face budgetary constraints, leading to insufficient resources to cover the costs of implementation and maintenance. This can result in incomplete

projects and inadequate support for beneficiaries. Complex regulatory frameworks and policy inconsistencies can also create barriers to effective implementation. Frequent changes in policies, unclear guidelines, and stringent regulations can lead to delays and inefficiencies.

India's vast and diverse geography, along with its large and varied population, presents unique challenges. Reaching remote and inaccessible areas, addressing the needs of different demographic groups, and ensuring equitable distribution of benefits are significant hurdles. Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach, including strengthening institutional capacity, improving monitoring and evaluation systems, enhancing coordination between various programs, and ensuring adequate funding and resources. Additionally, fostering community participation and building local capacity are essential for the successful and sustainable implementation of rural development programs in India.



## 6.7 LET US SUM UP

- Post-independence rural development in India has evolved through various Five-Year Plans. First Plan (1951-1956): Agrarian reforms, community development initiated.
- Second Plan (1956-1961): Focus on agricultural growth, rural infrastructure.
- Third Plan (1961-1966): Prioritization of food production, addressing rural challenges.
- Fourth Plan (1969-1974): Emphasis on poverty alleviation, employment programs.
- Fifth Plan (1974-1979): Accelerated growth, inequality reduction.
- Sixth Plan (1980-1985): Investment focus, poverty addressing.
- Seventh Plan (1985-1990): Sustainable rural development, community participation promoted.

- Eighth Plan (1992-1997): Economic liberalization, rural entrepreneurship initiatives like SGSY and PMGY.
- Ninth Plan (1997-2002): Inclusive growth, poverty reduction, introduced NREGS, SSA.
- Tenth Plan (2002-2007): Faster growth with Bharat Nirman and NRHM for rural infrastructure, healthcare.
- Eleventh Plan (2007-2012): Social inclusion, poverty reduction, MGNREGA, RKVY introduced.
- Twelfth Plan (2012-2017): Focused on NRLM, PMGSY, enhancing rural productivity and infrastructure.
- Assessments of rural development programs in India show progress in poverty alleviation, infrastructure, employment, social inclusion, and human development. Efforts like MGNREGA and NRLM have notably decreased poverty; however, extreme poverty in some areas persists. Infrastructure improvements through initiatives such as PMGSY and SBM have enhanced living standards, yet challenges remain, particularly in remote regions.
- Employment programs address seasonal unemployment, but issues of underemployment and low wages continue. Social inclusion initiatives have improved health and education metrics, yet disparities, especially for marginalized groups, remain, alongside ongoing gender-based violence.
- Environmental sustainability is essential; sustainable agriculture initiatives exist but face challenges, including unsustainable practices. Effective program implementation is hampered by issues like misallocation of funds, corruption, bureaucratic delays, and inadequate monitoring.
- Furthermore, insufficient infrastructure, funding constraints, and ineffective coordination hinder development efforts. Engaging local communities and integrating technology are imperative for sustainable solutions.
- Comprehensive strategies addressing these multifaceted challenges are essential for achieving inclusive growth and enhancing the quality of life in rural communities.



## 6.8 FURTHER READING

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## 6.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Discuss the different rural development programmes undertaken in India during the plan period.

**Q 2:** Discuss the recent flagship programs of rural development launched by the Government in India.

**Q 3:** Make a critical assessment of the progress made in the implementation of rural development programmes in India

**Q 4:** Write shorts note: (Each in about 150 words):

(a) IRDP

(b) MGNREGA

(c) JawaharRozgarYojana

(d) Swachh Bharat Mission

(e) Pradhan MantriAwaasYojana

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# UNIT 7 : SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SDGS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


7.1. Learning Objectives

7.2. Introduction

7.3. Concept of Sustainable Rural Development (SRD)

7.3.1. Principles of Sustainable Rural Development

7.3.2. Challenges of Rural Areas

7.4. Sustainable Rural Development(SRD) Through SDGs

7.4.1. Key SDGs Directly Linked To SRD

7.5. Indian Government Initiatives for Sustainable Rural Development And SDGs

7.6. Role of Gram Panchayats In Localising SDGs

7.7. Let Us Sum Up

7.8. Further Reading

7.9. Answer to Check your Progress

7.10. Model Questions


## 7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- state the concept of Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) and its link with the SDGs.
- describe the principles and challenges of SRD.
- identify the key Sustainable Development Goals relevant to SRD.
- examine various Government of India initiatives towards SRD and SDGs.
- explain the role of Gram Panchayats in the localization of SDGs.

## 7.2 INTRODUCTION

To achieve sustainable rural development, it requires adopting integrated approaches that address the social, economic, and environmental

dimensions of development. Various key strategies like strengthening rural-urban linkages, encouraging cooperative and community-based efforts, and making strategic investments in infrastructure are important. Additionally, it is essential to ensure that rural areas have improved access to markets, modern technology, and quality education which is important in enhancing livelihoods and promoting inclusive growth.

Dear learner, in this unit we will learn about the meaning, strategies, and importance of sustainable rural development, along with its linkages to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

## 7.3. CONCEPT SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SRD)

Before going to discuss about Sustainable Rural Development (SRD), let us discuss what sustainable development is. The Sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs (Brundtland Commission, 1987). It emphasizes a balanced approach to economic growth, social inclusion, and environmental protection. The goal is to ensure long-term prosperity and well-being for both people and the planet. Thus, if we apply this concept to rural areas, then, sustainable rural development is about improving the lives of people in rural areas not just for today, but for generations to come. It means finding ways for villages and rural communities to grow and thrive without the cost of exploiting natural resources they depend on. This idea is about to make progress while also protecting what they have. True sustainable rural development looks at the bigger picture how the economy, society, and environment are all deeply connected.

Let us imagine a village blessed with dense forests, a flowing river, and fertile land and full of natural resources. Yet, the villagers struggle to improve their quality of life due to lack of proper use and awareness. The sustainable development in this case is development of the village, but it should not harm the forest or pollute the river. Instead, using these resources wisely like supporting eco-tourism, organic farming, or small-scale fisheries

can improve livelihoods. Let the river flow, keep the forest protected, but use them properly. This is the essence of **sustainable development** that benefits all without harming nature. The word Sustainable intensifies this development as holistic approach including economic viability, social equality and environmental sustainability, so that both current and future generations can live well.

As discussed above, the rural area is crucial to attaining development which must be sustainable and thus the concept of rural sustainability has gained momentum. Early research on rural sustainability mainly focused on the sustainable development of agriculture to mitigate the environmental impacts caused by intensive farming (He et al., 2020). However, the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations created the concept of Sustainable Agricultural and Rural Development (SARD) which emphasizes food security, employment, economic development, poverty alleviation, and ecosystem protection. Griggs (2013) and Zang et al. (2020) highlighted how the idea of rural sustainability has now shifted from agriculture and economy towards the more holistic concept of socio-economic integration.

Thus we can define Sustainable Rural Development as a holistic approach with aim to improve the quality of life of rural people by building capacities that encourage community participation, improve health and education, ensure food security, protect the environment, and support sustainable economic growth and thus communities can break the cycle of poverty and realize their full potential.

### 7.3.1 Principles of Sustainable Rural Development

Like Sustainable Development, Sustainable Rural Development Goal is guided by few principles, which are discussed as follows:

1. Conservation of Environment and Management: It is well known that rural areas are home to diverse ecosystems, natural resources, wetlands, forests and thus conservation is very much essential and proper management is crucial for

sustainable development of rural areas.

2. Social Inclusion and Equity: Sustainable rural development cannot be truly achieved unless every individual and group within the rural population has equal access to resources, services, and opportunities. Whether due to poverty, caste, gender, ethnicity, disability, or geographical isolation, no one should be left behind. It is seen that, in many rural areas, certain sections of society such as women, small and marginal farmers, landless labourers, tribal communities, and people with disabilities face systemic barriers that limit their participation in development processes. To address this, rural development policies and programmes must focus on removing inequalities and promoting social justice and equity.

3. Economic viability and Sustainability: Sustainable rural development isn't just about sticking to the old ways of doing things. it's about innovation and more creatively. It includes sustainable livelihoods that are rooted to local strength, economic activities that are not only viable today but can also sustain families and future generations, rural entrepreneurship and fair access to the markets for their goods and services. Rural tourism or agri-eco tourism are some emerging opportunities, which are not only examples of innovative approaches that bring new income sources, but also ways for communities to celebrate their culture, protect their environment, and welcome others to experience rural life. Such efforts show how innovation and diversification can breathe new life into villages and help them to move forward.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What do you understand by Sustainable Rural Development?

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.....

**Q 2:** List any three principles of SRD

.....

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## 7.3.2. Challenges of Rural Areas

When we talk about development in rural areas, first we need to know what the challenges they are facing. Despite being home to a significant portion of the global population and rich in natural resources, rural areas are often left behind in development efforts due to numerous challenges, which are discussed below:

1. Poverty: One of the most critical issues in rural area is poverty. Most rural people are often unable to adapt to changing economic and social conditions due to limited access to education, healthcare, skill development, credit, and infrastructure. Thus the eradication of poverty is not just a moral imperative, but a crucial step for the overall development of rural areas. When people are lifted out of poverty, they can invest in their children's education, participate in local economies, improve their health, and contribute to community development.
2. Environmental degradation and climate vulnerability: Rural areas are often more vulnerable to environmental degradation and natural hazards such as soil erosion, droughts, and floods. These environmental challenges have a direct and serious impact on the lives and livelihoods of rural communities. Majority of rural people depend heavily on agriculture as their primary source of income. In this situation extreme weather events like a prolonged drought or a devastating flood may lead to crops failure, soil fertility decline, and disrupt farming cycles, leaving rural families without income and food. These growing environmental threats raise important concerns about the long-term sustainability of rural livelihoods
3. Rural-urban migration. Youth migration from rural areas is

another significant challenge that often acts both as a barrier to rural development and as a consequence of underdevelopment. Due to a lack of job opportunities, poor infrastructure, and limited income sources, many rural youths is compelled to migrate to urban areas in search of better livelihoods. This outmigration leads to a loss of productive, working-age population in villages, which in turn weakens the rural economy and slows down development efforts. At the same time, it puts increased pressure on urban areas, contributing to overcrowding, unemployment, and strain on housing and public services in cities. To retain youth in rural areas, it is essential to create sustainable and lucrative income-generating opportunities through skill development, rural entrepreneurship, promotion of agri-based industries, and diversifying traditional sectors like agriculture, handicrafts, or tourism.

## 7.4. SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT(SRD) THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), introduced by the United Nations as a successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Integrating SDGs into rural development allows for globally comparable evaluations of rural sustainability (Lowery et al., 2020), and supports broader aims such as justice, well-being, and environmental sustainability for rural communities (Hu et al., 2022). Several SDGs directly address key areas of rural development, including poverty reduction, healthcare access, social equity, sustainable agriculture, rural industries, infrastructure, and economic growth, all of which are central to rural revitalization efforts (Fang et al., 2020, Lowery et al., 2020). However, applying the SDGs in rural areas creates challenges, especially in adapting global goals to local realities (Salvia et al., 2019). Therefore, it is crucial to adapt the SDGs to rural contexts.

### 7.4.1. Key SDGs Directly Linked To SRD

Achieving sustainable rural development (SRD) is essential for meeting the United Nations' 2030 agenda. Below are the key SDGs most directly linked to SRD.

a. **SDG1–No Poverty:** The majority of the world's poor reside in rural areas, where poverty is deeply rooted due to limited access to basic services and low agricultural productivity. Therefore, it is essential to prioritize equal access to social protection, invest in rural infrastructure, and promote viable economic opportunities. Policies and practices that support these crucial measures are very essential for achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Sustainable Rural Development (SRD).

b. **SDG2 –Zero Hunger:** Rural communities produce most of the world's food, yet they often face hunger and malnutrition. Therefore, policies and programmes must prioritize all foundational elements of **Sustainable Rural Development (SRD)** including climate-smart agriculture, soil conservation, food security, access to quality seeds and inputs, and reliable irrigation, which are important to strengthen rural livelihoods and achieve the SDGs.

c. **SDG 6–Clean Water and Sanitation:** For sustainable rural development, it is essential that rural areas are clean, disease-free, and have access to safe drinking water. Promoting community-led water supply systems, rainwater harvesting, and sanitation programmes plays a vital role in achieving these goals.

d. **SDG 4 – Quality Education:** When children receive equal access to quality education, they grow into productive adults. However, rural children are often deprived of such opportunities. Providing equal access to quality education is crucial for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals

(SDGs), which in turn promotes Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) and contributes to the overall progress of the nation.

e. **SDG 3 – Good Health and Well Being:** Good Health and Well-being is a vital Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), as no nation can progress without a healthy population. Since rural areas play a key role in the development process, the physical and mental well-being of rural people is essential for achieving Sustainable Rural Development (SRD). Providing accessible and quality healthcare services is therefore crucial to meeting SDG targets and making rural development truly sustainable.

f. **SDG 5- Gender Equality:** It emphasizes gender equality and the empowerment of women, which is vital for sustainable development. Rural women are a key asset to the nation, and their empowerment is essential for achieving Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) and attaining inclusive growth in rural areas.

g. **SDG 11 - Sustainable Cities and Communities:** SRD ensures that rural settlements are inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable, promoting access to basic services and preserving cultural and natural heritage.

Out of the 17 SDGs, some are directly related to the SRD and some are indirectly related. By prioritizing sustainable rural development, India can make significant progress towards achieving the SDGs and creating a more equitable and prosperous world for all.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** What is the main focus of SDG 3

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**Q 4:** In which SDG women empowerment is given importance

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## 7.5. INDIAN GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND SDGS

The Government of India has implemented various policies and programmes that support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to enhance inclusive and sustainable rural development. These initiatives address multiple dimensions including poverty alleviation, infrastructure, education, health, environmental sustainability and women's empowerment. SDGs, Nodal agencies and centrally sponsored schemes are mentioned in the table 7.1.

**Table 7.1 : SDGs, Schemes and their Vision**

| Goal | Schemes | Vision |
|---|---|---|
| SDG 1, SDG8 | Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA): | Enhance the livelihood security of rural households across the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. |
| | Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM | Promotes self-employment and women-led SHGs. |
| | Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP) by DAY-NRLM | Support the rural poor come out of poverty, supporting them setup enterprises and provide support till the enterprises stabilize. Encourages rural entrepreneurs with training and financial support. |
| | Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) | Dual objectives of adding diversity to the incomes of rural poor families and cater to the career aspirations of rural youth. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| SDG 6 | Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM):<br><br>Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin (SBM-G): | Ensures piped water supply to every rural household.<br><br>Aims for open defecation-free status and better sanitation. |
| SDG 2, **SDG13** | Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY<br><br>National Mission on Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)<br><br>The "Namo Drone Didi" | Promotes organic farming through clusters. Supports climate-resilient farming practices.<br><br>Empower women by hand holding them into a sustainable business model where they can increase their income by more than Rs 1 Lakh, and transforming the modern farming ecosystem with drone technology. |
| **SDG 7** | Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA)<br><br>PM-KUSUM | Promotes energy efficiency in rural households.<br><br>Provides solar pumps and energy for farmers. |
| SDG 3, SDG 4, SDG 5 | Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan<br><br>Ayushman Bharat<br><br>Beti Bachao Beti Padhao | Integrated education scheme from preschool to higher secondary.<br><br>Health coverage and wellness centres in rural areas.<br><br>Encourages gender equality and girl child education. |

Source : Ministry of Rural Development, https://www.pib.gov.in/

**Activity: Identify and Map SDG Linkages in Your Village or Locality**

- List at least 5 government schemes active in your locality (e.g., MGNREGA, SBM-G, Jal Jeevan Mission).
- Identify which SDG(s) each scheme supports.
- Draw a simple SDG–scheme linkage chart.

## 7.6. ROLE OF GRAM PANCHAYATS IN LOCALISING SDGS

India, as a participant to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 2030, is actively working towards their achievement. The Ministry of

Panchayati Raj (MoPR) is leading this effort through the **Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)** scheme. This scheme is aimed at empowering elected representatives by building their capacities to ensure good governance. It emphasizes the realization of SDGs through **participatory and inclusive local planning** at the **Gram Panchayat level**, thereby aligning grassroots governance with the national commitment to sustainable development. Thus nine themes have been identified combining 17 SDGs for action at local ( Gram Panchayat Level) as a strategic approach. These are explained in Table 7.2.

**Table 7.2: Initiatives to be taken up by the Panchayats to Localise SDGs**

| Localization of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) | Initiatives to be Taken by Panchayats |
|---|---|
| Theme1: Poverty-Free Village | • Identify poor, destitute, and vulnerable individuals;<br>• Ensure access to social protection, housing, water, sanitation, and electricity.<br>• Promote income generation via skill training, entrepreneurship, and MGNREGA.<br>• Enrol families in PDS; include children, pregnant women, and adolescent girls in ICDS.<br>• Promote breastfeeding and use of local nutritious food. –<br>• Map local MSMEs and employment opportunities |

| | |
|---|---|
| Theme 2: Healthy Village | • Monitor and maintain healthcare services and village cleanliness. - Ensure functioning of village health, sanitation, and nutrition committees; integrate health in GPDP. - Enrol vulnerable populations in health insurance schemes. |
| Theme 3: Child-Friendly Village | Facilitate transport, hostels, scholarships, uniforms, and mid-day meals. - Build girls' toilets to improve retention. - Raise awareness about child rights and RTE Act. - Strengthen Anganwadi and preschool committees. |
| Theme 4:Water Sufficient Village | Identify households without toilets; support toilet construction. - Promote solid and liquid waste management through GPDP. - Encourage community participation in water management and regulate water use. - Facilitate irrigation and appropriate water-saving techniques. |
| Theme 5: Clean and Green Village | Provide electricity to all households and public spaces. - Promote biogas systems and energy-efficient buildings. - Support solar energy and efficient cookstoves. - Conserve water bodies, sacred groves, and wetlands. - Conduct afforestation through MGNREGA. - Renovate ponds and build check-dams and bunds. - Integrate climate change adaptation in local planning. - Reduce dependence on climate-sensitive sectors. |

| | |
|---|---|
| Theme 6 : Village with Self-Sufficient Infrastructure | Assess energy needs across sectors like cooking, lighting, irrigation, and commerce. - Choose appropriate technology for WASH services. - Identify and implement schemes for infrastructure self-sufficiency. |
| Theme 7 : Socially Secured and Socially Just Village | Facilitate PDS registration and identify poor and vulnerable. - Spread awareness of schemes for the disadvantaged. - Ensure timely service delivery and plan rehabilitation for differently-abled persons.- |
| Theme 8: Village with Good Governance | Involve local skilled youth in information dissemination.<br><br>Use ICT tools for improved service delivery.<br><br>Establish Common Service Centres, citizen charters, and grievance redressal systems. |
| Theme 9: Women-Friendly Village | Panchayats can promote awareness against<br>•gender discrimination and ensure proper implementation of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojna. Panchayat can facilitate women's participation<br>• in economic activities under SHGs.<br>Panchayat can ensure that gender<br>• discriminatory practices do not take place.<br>Ensure Mahila Sabhas are conducted in the<br>• Panchayat Ensure quality nutritious food to Pregnant |

Source : Ministry of Panchayati Raj, 2021



**CHECK YOUR PROGERSS**

**Q 5:** What is PM-KUSUM ?

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## 7.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed about Sustainable Rural Development in relation with Sustainable Development Goals.

- Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) aims to improve the quality of life in rural areas while preserving environmental resources for future generations.
- SRD is directly linked to the SDGs, especially goals related to poverty reduction (SDG 1), zero hunger (SDG 2), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), and sustainable communities (SDG 11).
- Principles of SRD include environmental conservation, social equity, and economic viability.
- Major challenges in rural development include poverty, environmental degradation, climate vulnerability, and rural-urban migration.
- Several SDGs support SRD, such as SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3 (Health), SDG 4 (Education), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), and SDG 6 (Clean Water).
- Government initiatives like MGNREGA, NRLM, SBM-G, Jal Jeevan Mission, and Ayushman Bharat contribute significantly to rural sustainability and SDG goals.
- Panchayats play a vital role in localizing SDGs through theme-based planning and implementation (e.g., poverty-free, healthy, and women-friendly villages).
- Achieving SRD requires an integrated approach, involving community participation, convergence of schemes, and awareness at the grassroots level.



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## 7.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) refers to the holistic improvement of the quality of life of rural people while ensuring environmental conservation, social inclusion, and economic sustainability.

**Ans to Q No 2:**

1. Conservation of Environment and Natural Resources
2. Social Inclusion and Equity
3. Economic Viability and Sustainability

**Ans to Q No 3:** Good Health and Well-being.

**Ans to Q No 4:** SDG 5 – Gender Equality.

**Ans to Q No 5:** PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan) Scheme is aimed at ensuring energy security for farmers in India.



## 7.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** What is the importance of Sustainable Rural Development in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?

**Q 2:** Explain any three major challenges faced in achieving Sustainable Rural Development in India.

**Q 3:** List and describe any four Government of India initiatives that promote SRD and contribute to the achievement of SDGs.

**Q 4:** Discuss the role of Gram Panchayats in the localization of SDGs with special reference to the nine identified themes.

**Q 5:** What are the themes identified for localizing SDGs at the Gram Panchayat level? Name any four.

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# UNIT 8 : DEVELOPMENT OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2 Introduction

8.3 Meaning of Disadvantaged Groups

8.4 Identification of Disadvantaged Groups

8.5 Major disadvantaged Groups in India

- 8.5.1 Caste-Based Disadvantage
- 8.5.2 Religious Minorities
- 8.5.3 Gender and Sexual Minorities
- 8.5.4 Persons with Disabilities
- 8.5.5 Linguistic and Regional Minorities
- 8.5.6 Urban Poor and Slam Dwellers

8.6 Government Policies and Welfare Schemes

8.7 Key issues and Challenges

8.8 Let Us Sum Up

8.9 Further Readings

8.10 Answers to Check Your Progress


## 8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- know the meaning and identification of Disadvantaged Groups
- know the Major Disadvantaged Groups in India
- describe the Government Policies and Welfare Schemes for Disadvantaged Groups
- know the Key issues and Challenges faced by the Disadvantaged Groups.

## 8.2 INTRODUCTION

In any society, equitable development is vital for ensuring social justice and inclusive growth. However, historical injustices, structural inequalities, and socio-economic barriers have led to the marginalization of certain sections of the population, commonly referred to as **disadvantaged groups**. These groups are often denied equal access to resources, opportunities, and rights, resulting in persistent cycles of poverty, illiteracy, and social exclusion.

The concept of disadvantaged groups encompasses individuals or communities who, due to socio-economic, cultural, or physical factors, find themselves at a disadvantage in comparison to the general population. Identifying such groups is crucial for implementing targeted welfare measures and policies. In the Indian context, major disadvantaged groups include **Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), minorities, women, children, persons with disabilities, and the elderly**.

Recognizing the deep-rooted disparities faced by these communities, the Government of India has formulated a range of **policies and welfare schemes** aimed at promoting their development and ensuring their rightful place in society. Despite these efforts, various **key issues and challenges** such as discrimination, lack of education, unemployment, and inadequate implementation of schemes continue to hamper progress.

In this unit, we will discuss the **meaning and identification** of disadvantaged groups, **major categories** within India, **government interventions** designed for their upliftment, and **challenges** that persist in achieving true equality and development for all.

## 8.3 MEANING OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

Disadvantaged groups refer to segments of the population that experience a lower standard of living, reduced access to essential resources, and limited opportunities due to various systemic, social, economic, or political barriers. These groups often face discrimination, marginalization,

or exclusion from full participation in society, which affects their well-being, development, and quality of life.

The disadvantage can arise from multiple and overlapping factors, such as poverty, disability, gender, ethnicity, age, caste, religion, geographic location, or refugee status. As a result, members of these groups may struggle to access education, healthcare, employment, housing, and other fundamental rights and services.

Recognizing and addressing the challenges faced by disadvantaged groups is crucial for building a just and inclusive society. It requires targeted policies, affirmative action, and community support to ensure that all individuals have equal opportunities to thrive and contribute to society.

**Common characteristics of disadvantaged groups include:**

- Lower income levels
- Limited access to quality education or healthcare
- Underrepresentation in leadership or decision-making roles
- Exposure to social stigma or marginalization

**Examples of disadvantaged groups may include:**

- People living in poverty
- Ethnic or racial minorities
- People with disabilities
- LGBTQ+ individuals
- Women and girls (especially in patriarchal societies)
- Refugees or migrants
- Indigenous communities
- Elderly individuals in certain contexts

## 8.4 IDENTIFICATION OF DISADVANTAGED GROUPS

In every society, certain individuals or communities face systemic obstacles that limit their access to resources, opportunities, and full participation in social, economic, and political life. These groups are often referred to as *disadvantaged groups*. The process of identifying who belongs to these groups is essential for creating effective policies, targeted social programs, and equitable development strategies.

Disadvantage refers to a condition or circumstance that reduces an individual's or a group's chances of success or well-being. It may arise from poverty, discrimination, marginalization, lack of education, geographical isolation, or physical or mental disability. Importantly, disadvantage is often multidimensional and can be both visible (e.g., economic hardship) and invisible (e.g., social stigma).

**Criteria for Identifying Disadvantaged Groups**

The identification of disadvantaged groups typically relies on several interrelated criteria:

1. **Socio-economic Status**

   Poverty is a major indicator of disadvantage. This includes lack of income, inadequate housing, unemployment, and limited access to education and healthcare.

2. **Social Discrimination and Marginalization**

   Groups facing historical or systemic exclusion—such as racial minorities, indigenous peoples, lower castes, and ethnic minorities—often suffer from social stigma and reduced life opportunities.

3. **Geographical Location**

   People living in remote, rural, or environmentally vulnerable regions often lack access to infrastructure, quality education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

4. **Disability and Health Conditions**

   Physical, mental, and cognitive impairments often result in barriers to education, employment, and social inclusion, making persons with disabilities a key disadvantaged group.

5. **Gender and Sexual Identity**

   Women and gender minorities (such as LGBTQ+ individuals) frequently face discrimination, violence, and reduced access to services and opportunities, especially in conservative or patriarchal societies.

6. **Age**

   Both the elderly and children can be considered disadvantaged due to their dependency status and vulnerability to neglect, abuse, and

exploitation.

7. **Legal and Migratory Status**

Refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons, and undocumented migrants often lack legal protections, access to employment, and essential services.

**Methods of Identification**

Governments, NGOs, and international organizations use various tools to identify disadvantaged groups:

- **Census and Survey Data**: National statistics provide vital information on income levels, education, health, and living conditions.
- **Social Audits and Community Mapping**: Participatory methods allow local communities to identify their own vulnerable populations.
- **Qualitative Research**: Interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic studies reveal deeper, context-specific forms of disadvantage.
- **Administrative Records**: Data from schools, hospitals, social welfare offices, and local authorities help track service utilization and gaps.

## 8.5 MAJOR DISADVANTAGED GROUPS IN INDIA

India is marked by immense diversity—in language, religion, caste, tribe, gender and socio economic status. However, this diversity coexists with persistent inequalities. Certain communities historically and contemporarily face structural barriers that limit their access to resources, opportunities and dignity. In this chapter we survey the principal disadvantaged groups in India, trace the roots of their exclusion, and highlight the challenges they continue to face.

### 8.5.1 Caste-Based Disadvantage

(a) Scheduled Castes (Dalits)

- **Historical context:** "Untouchability" under the Hindu varna system relegated Dalits to the bottom rungs of social hierarchy.
- **Contemporary challenges:**
  - Discrimination in housing, temples and public spaces
  - Overrepresentation in low status, hazardous occupations
  - Educational and economic gaps despite affirmative action (reservations in education and government jobs)

(b) Scheduled Tribes (Adivasis)

- **Historical context:** Indigenous forest dwelling communities with distinct social systems.
- **Contemporary challenges:**
  - Displacement from ancestral lands due to mining, dams and forests' commercial exploitation
  - Limited access to quality health care, education and infrastructure
  - Cultural alienation and loss of traditional livelihoods

(c) Other Backward Classes (OBCs)

- **Definition:** A broad category encompassing socially and educationally backward castes.
- **Contemporary challenges:**
  - Intra group variation: some sub castes remain deeply marginalized
  - Competition for reserved quota fuelling new tensions

### 8.5.2 Religious Minorities

(a) Muslims

- **Demographics:** Approximately 14% of the population.
- **Challenges:**
  - Under representation in public sector employment and higher judiciary

- Low literacy rates in certain regions
- Episodes of communal violence and ghettoization

(b) Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Others

- Smaller numerically but often concentrated in pockets; face localized discrimination, especially around conversion and religious freedom laws.

### 8.5.3 Gender and Sexual Minorities

(a) Women

- **Socio economic status:** Gender gap in labor force participation, wage disparity.
- **Violence and autonomy:**
  - Domestic violence, dowry deaths, sex selective abortion
  - Legal reforms (e.g. Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act) vs. implementation gaps

(b) Transgender and Non Binary Communities

- **Legal recognition:** Supreme Court's NALSA judgment (2014) recognized transgender persons as a "third gender."
- **Contemporary challenges:**
  - Social stigma and family rejection
  - Limited access to education, health care, formal employment

### 8.5.4 Persons with Disabilities

- **Prevalence:** ~2.2% (Census 2011), likely under reported.
- **Legislative framework:** Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016
- **Challenges:**
  - Physical accessibility of public spaces and transport
  - Inclusive education and employment opportunities

### 8.5.5 Linguistic and Regional Minorities

- **Examples:** Hindi belt vs. non Hindi states; smaller language speakers in Northeast and Central India.
- **Challenges:** Cultural marginalization, limited media/public content in mother tongue, migratory labor precarity.

### 8.5.6 Urban Poor and Slam Dwellers

- **Profile:** Migrants from rural areas seeking work in cities.
- **Challenges:**
  - Insecure housing, lack of basic services (water, sanitation)
  - Informal employment with no social security

### 8.5.7 Intersectionality and Overlapping Disadvantages

- Many individuals belong to more than one disadvantaged category (e.g. Dalit women, tribal Muslims, disabled OBC).
- Compound discrimination magnifies exclusion.

## 8.6 GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND WELFARE SCHEMES

Disadvantaged groups in society often face systemic barriers that limit their access to education, healthcare, employment, and social justice. These groups typically include Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), women, persons with disabilities (PwDs), minorities, senior citizens, and economically weaker sections (EWS). Recognizing the persistent inequalities they face, governments across the world, particularly in India, have designed and implemented a range of policies and welfare schemes aimed at promoting inclusive growth, social justice, and empowerment.

**Objectives of Welfare Schemes for Disadvantaged Groups**

1. **Social Justice:** To ensure equal treatment and protect the rights of marginalized communities.

2. **Economic Upliftment:** To enhance livelihoods through financial assistance, employment, and entrepreneurship opportunities.
3. **Educational Empowerment:** To reduce educational disparities and improve access to quality education.
4. **Healthcare Access:** To improve the health and well-being of vulnerable populations.
5. **Social Inclusion:** To enable full participation in the social, cultural, and political life of the country.

### 8.6.1 Key Government Welfare Schemes

*(a) For Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs)*

- **Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme:** Provides financial assistance for education beyond Class X.
- **Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme:** Supports school-level education for SC/ST students.
- **Stand-Up India Scheme:** Promotes entrepreneurship among SC/ST and women by providing bank loans between ₹ 10 lakh to ₹ 1 crore.
- **Development of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs):** Focused interventions for tribal groups with low literacy and subsistence-level economy.

*(b) For Other Backward Classes (OBCs)*

- **National Backward Classes Finance & Development Corporation (NBCFDC):** Offers concessional loans for self-employment and education.
- **Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships for OBC Students:** Encourages school and college education.
- **Hostel Schemes:** Aimed at providing better accommodation facilities for OBC students.

*(c) For Women*

- **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao:** Aims to address the declining child sex ratio and promote education among girls.

- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** Provides financial support to pregnant and lactating women.
- **One Stop Centre Scheme (Sakhi):** Offers integrated support and assistance to women affected by violence.
- **Ujjwala Scheme:** Helps women below the poverty line access LPG connections.

*(d) For Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan)*

- **Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan (Accessible India Campaign):** Promotes universal accessibility in public buildings and transport.
- **Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme:** Supports NGOs working for the welfare of PwDs.
- **Scholarships and Skill Development:** Various initiatives to enhance employability and education for disabled individuals.

*(e) For Minorities*

- **Nai Manzil:** Education and skill training for school dropouts from minority communities.
- **Nai Roshni:** Leadership development of minority women.
- **Seekho aur Kamao:** Skill development for youth belonging to minority communities.
- **Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships for Minorities:** Aimed at increasing the literacy and retention rates.

*(f) For Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)*

- **10% EWS Reservation:** In education and government jobs for those not covered under existing reservations.
- **PM Awas Yojana (Urban and Gramin):** Affordable housing for the poor.
- **Ayushman Bharat - Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY):** Health insurance scheme for low-income families.

*(g) For Senior Citizens*

- **National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP):** Provides pensions to the elderly under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme.
- **Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana:** Free assistive devices to senior citizens belonging to BPL families.

Government policies and welfare schemes for disadvantaged groups play a pivotal role in ensuring equitable development and social justice. While several targeted initiatives have made significant strides in addressing inequalities, sustained political will, community participation, and robust monitoring are essential to translate policy into real empowerment. As societies evolve, welfare measures must adapt and expand to ensure that no one is left behind in the pursuit of progress and dignity.

**CHECK YOUR PROGERSS**

**Q 1. What are disadvantaged groups?**

.....

.....

Q.2.**How are disadvantaged groups identified in India?**

**.....**

**.....**

## 8.7 KEY ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

Disadvantaged groups are segments of society that experience systematic barriers in accessing resources, opportunities, and rights that others enjoy. These groups often include, but are not limited to, individuals based on caste, ethnicity, gender, disability, socio-economic status, religion, age, and sexual orientation. Understanding their issues and challenges is essential for building an inclusive and equitable society.

**1. Socio-Economic Marginalization**

***a. Poverty and Unemployment***

- Limited access to income-generating opportunities.

- Dependence on informal, unstable, or exploitative labor sectors.
- Intergenerational poverty cycles.

***b. Educational Disparities***

- Lower enrollment and higher dropout rates.
- Poor quality of education and lack of culturally relevant curricula.
- Limited access to higher education and vocational training.

***c. Housing and Living Conditions***

- Substandard housing, overcrowded living spaces.
- Limited access to clean water, sanitation, and electricity.
- Vulnerability to eviction and displacement.

**2. Discrimination and Social Exclusion**

***a. Caste and Ethnic Discrimination***

- Structural barriers in accessing education, jobs, and social mobility.
- Prevalence of social stigma and violence.
- Segregation in public and private life.

***b. Gender-Based Discrimination***

- Gender wage gap and underrepresentation in leadership roles.
- Gender-based violence and lack of reproductive rights.
- Cultural practices reinforcing patriarchy.

***c. Discrimination Based on Disability***

- Physical inaccessibility of infrastructure and services.
- Stereotyping and social stigma.
- Inadequate support for independent living.

***d. LGBTQ+ Marginalization***

- Legal inequalities and criminalization in some countries.
- Workplace and healthcare discrimination.
- Mental health challenges due to societal rejection.

**3. Legal and Political Barriers**

***a. Limited Legal Protection***

- Weak enforcement of anti-discrimination laws.
- Lack of awareness about legal rights and protections.
- Legal loopholes that perpetuate inequality.

***b. Underrepresentation in Governance***

- Exclusion from political decision-making processes.
- Limited access to platforms for advocacy.
- Lack of representation in law-making bodies.

***c. Bureaucratic Hurdles***

- Discriminatory practices in accessing government welfare.
- Inaccessible documentation processes (e.g., ID cards, land records).
- Language and literacy barriers in public systems.

**4. Health Inequities**

***a. Limited Access to Healthcare***

- Geographic and financial barriers to health services.
- Discrimination by medical professionals.
- Lack of inclusive and culturally sensitive care.

***b. Mental Health Stigma***

- Higher incidence of stress, anxiety, and depression.
- Lack of mental health awareness and services.
- Social taboo around mental health discussions.

***c. Nutrition and Sanitation Challenges***

- Food insecurity and malnutrition.
- Poor maternal and child health in disadvantaged communities.
- Inadequate sanitation infrastructure.

**5. Vulnerability to Violence and Exploitation**

***a. Domestic and Gender-Based Violence***

- Disproportionate impact on women and children.
- Social norms that silence survivors.
- Inadequate legal recourse and support services.



***b. Child Labor and Trafficking***

- Exploitation of children from poor and marginalized backgrounds.
- Forced labor and human trafficking.
- Lack of access to education and rehabilitation.

***c. Conflict and Displacement***

- Disproportionate impact of war and displacement.
- Statelessness and loss of identity documents.
- Challenges in refugee camps or relocation.

## 8.8 LET US SUM UP

**Disadvantaged groups** are sections of society that face systemic obstacles in accessing opportunities, resources, and rights due to social, economic, cultural, or political marginalization. They often suffer from historical injustices, discrimination, and social exclusion.

**Identification Criteria**:

- Economic deprivation (poverty, unemployment)
- Social exclusion (caste, religion, gender, disability)
- Limited access to education, healthcare, and employment
- Political under-representation
- Vulnerability to exploitation and violence

**Major Disadvantaged Groups in India**

1. **Scheduled Castes (SCs)** – Historically subjected to untouchability and social ostracism.
2. **Scheduled Tribes (STs)** – Indigenous populations with distinct cultures, often living in remote and underdeveloped regions.
3. **Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** – Socially and educationally backward, requiring affirmative action.
4. **Religious Minorities** – Especially Muslims, who face socio-economic disadvantages.
5. **Women and Girls** – Gender-based discrimination in multiple spheres.
6. **Persons with Disabilities (PwDs)** – Barriers in education, employment, and public life.
7. **Elderly** – Vulnerability due to health, financial dependence, and neglect.
8. **Transgender and LGBTQ+ Communities** – Social stigma and legal exclusion.

9. **Migrants and Urban Poor** – Lack of access to social security, housing, and basic amenities.

**Government Policies and Welfare Schemes**

**Key Schemes**:

- **SC/ST Welfare**: Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP), Tribal Sub Plan (TSP), Post-Matric Scholarship Scheme.
- **OBC Welfare**: National Fellowship, Pre-Matric and Post-Matric Scholarships.
- **Women Empowerment**: Beti Bachao Beti Padhao, Ujjwala Yojana, One Stop Centres.
- **Disability**: Accessible India Campaign, Unique Disability ID, Assistance to Disabled Persons (ADIP) Scheme.
- **Minorities**: Nai Roshni (leadership training for women), PM's 15 Point Programme, Nai Manzil.
- **Transgender Welfare**: Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act, SMILE scheme.

**Key Issues and Challenges**

1. **Implementation Gaps**: Poor execution and leakages in welfare schemes.
2. **Corruption and Bureaucracy**: Red tape delays benefits and reduces impact.
3. **Lack of Awareness**: Target groups often unaware of their rights and schemes.
4. **Social Stigma and Discrimination**: Persistent barriers in education, employment, and social mobility.
5. **Inadequate Data and Monitoring**: Hinders planning and evaluation.
6. **Urban-Rural Divide**: Rural disadvantaged groups face deeper neglect.
7. **Intersectionality**: Overlapping disadvantages (e.g., a tribal woman with a disability) not adequately addressed.
8. **Under-representation**: Inadequate voice in policymaking and governance.

6. **Cultural and Identity Erosion**

***a. Loss of Language and Traditions***

- Dominant cultures overshadowing indigenous practices.
- Assimilation pressure leading to identity crisis.
- Lack of institutional support for preserving heritage.

***b. Denial of Identity***

- Denial of tribal, ethnic, or sexual identity by states or communities.
- Forced assimilation policies.
- Suppression of minority voices in mainstream narratives.

**7. Digital and Technological Divide**

***a. Limited Digital Access***

- Lack of access to internet and devices.
- Inadequate digital literacy training.
- High cost of technology services.

***b. Exclusion from Digital Economy***

- Inability to participate in online education, work, or markets.
- Data privacy risks and surveillance of marginalized groups.
- Language and content barriers online.

**8. Policy Implementation Gaps**

***a. Ineffective Welfare Programs***

- Mismanagement and corruption in aid distribution.
- One-size-fits-all policies that don't address community-specific needs.
- Poor monitoring and evaluation systems.

***b. Lack of Participation in Policymaking***



- Policies created without consultation of affected groups.
- Absence of grassroots-level data for policymaking.
- Top-down approaches that fail to empower communities.

**Conclusion**

Addressing the key issues and challenges of disadvantaged groups requires a multi-pronged approach involving policy reforms, social awareness, legal protections, and inclusive development strategies. Empowerment of these groups is not merely a moral imperative but a societal

necessity for holistic growth.

## 8.9 FURTHER READING

1) Dey, S., & Mishra, A. K. (2020): *Rural Entrepreneurship in India: Challenges and Opportunities* (Emerald Publishing)

2) Mitra, J. & Matlay, H. (2004): *Entrepreneurship in Developing Economies* (Publisher: Routledge)

## 8.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Disadvantaged groups refer to sections of society that experience systemic social, economic, or political marginalization. They lack access to resources, opportunities, and equal participation in society due to factors like caste, gender, disability, religion, or economic status.

Ans to Q No 2 : In India, disadvantaged groups are identified based on indicators like poverty, social exclusion, educational backwardness, discrimination (caste, gender, etc.), disability, and lack of access to public services. The Constitution, census data, socio-economic surveys, and targeted welfare schemes help in this identification.

## 8.11. MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q No 1.Who are the major disadvantaged groups in India?**

**Q No 2 Why are these groups considered disadvantaged?**

**Q No 3 What are some major welfare schemes for disadvantaged**

**For EWS:**

**Q No 4What are the main challenges still faced by disadvantaged groups?**

**Q No 5 How can the situation of disadvantaged groups be improved?**



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# UNIT 9 : GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE RURAL CONTEXT

## UNIT STRUCTURE


9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Concept of Gender and Development

- 9.3.1 Meaning of Gender
- 9.3.2 Why Gender Matters in Development
- 9.3.3 Relationship between Gender and Development
- 9.3.4 Development and Gender Inequality: A Global Perspective
- 9.3.5 Gender Equality as a Development Imperative
- 9.3.6 The Role of Gender in Development

9.4 Gender and Development Issues

- 9.4.1 Education Disparity
- 9.4.2 Economic Inequalities
- 9.4.3 Health Care Access

9.5 Gender and Development History

9.6 Role of Gender in Development with Special Focus on Rural Development

9.7 Relevant Government Schemes for Rural Women

9.8 Let Us Sum Up

9.9 Further Readings

9.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

9.11 Model Questions


## 9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit will delve into critical gender and development issues, including disparities in education, economic inequalities, and healthcare access. It will also explore the history of development initiatives and their impact on gender equality.

Furthermore it will analyse the role of gender in development, with a particular focus on rural development, where gender disparities are often more pronounced.

Understanding these issues is crucial for fostering an inclusive and equitable development process. By addressing gender inequalities, societies can unlock the full potential of all their members, paving the way for sustainable and inclusive growth.

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

(i) establish a clear relationship between gender and development;

(ii) define gender and describe various components of gender and development;

(iii) analyse various indicators of gender and development (GDI, GEM)

## 9.2 INTRODUCTION

Gender and development are considered important areas in the study of social sector issues in development. Gender and development are interconnected concepts that emphasise the need to address gender-based inequalities to achieve holistic and sustainable progress in society. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, norms, and expectations associated with being male or female. Unlike biological sex, which is determined by physical attributes, gender is shaped by cultural, social, and economic factors and varies across societies and over time. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines gender as “the roles, behaviours, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women” (WHO, 2020).The World Economic Forum explains that gender is notsynonymous with women as it is commonly understood. It refers to both menand women, and to their status, relative to each other.

Development, on the other hand, encompasses more than just economic growth. It refers to the process of improving the quality of life and well-being of people through economic, social, cultural, and political advancements. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines development as a process that leads to “the expansion of people’s freedoms and opportunities, improving their well-being and empowering

them to participate in decision-making that affects their lives" (UNDP, 2019).

The historical development of societies has placed women in a distinctively disadvantageous position. Historical studies reflect that women have played a marginal role in the development of societies. However, modern development theories attribute significant participation by all sections of society, including women as a gender category, in the development process. Women constitute almost half of the human population, and their role in the development process has critical significance in the success or failure of nations.

## 9.3 CONCEPT OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

### 9.3.1 Meaning of Gender

Gender is the social dimension of being male or female. Gender identity is thesense of being male or female, which most children acquire by the age of three.Gender is not being masculine or feminine. According to the Children's HealthEncyclopaedia, "Gender identity is a person's sense of identification with eitherthe male or female sex, as manifested in appearance, behaviour, and other aspectsof a person's life". The World Economic Forum explains that gender is notsynonymous with women as it is commonly understood. It refers to both men and women and to their status, relative to each other.

### 9.3.2 Why Gender Matters in Development

For much of the 20th century, development strategies prioritized economic growth, often measured by indicators like Gross Domestic Product (GDP). However, these strategies largely ignored the social dimensions of development, particularly gender inequalities. It was only in the 1970s, with the rise of feminist movements and the emergence of concepts like **Women in Development (WID)** and later **Gender and Development (GAD)**, that the role of gender in development gained prominence. Scholars

and practitioners recognized that without addressing gender disparities, sustainable development would remain elusive.

Gender equality is not only a matter of social justice but also a critical driver of economic and social progress. According to the **World Economic Forum (WEF)**, “closing gender gaps in labour force participation could add $28 trillion to global GDP by 2025” (WEF, 2021). Gender equality enhances economic productivity, reduces poverty, and fosters a more equitable society. It also improves access to education and healthcare, leading to better outcomes for families and communities.

### 9.3.3 Relationship between Gender and Development

Gender as a concept or category has emerged to understand the complexities ofwomen’s subordination in society. The word gender does not necessarily refer towomen as a group or class of society. Rather it is used as an analytical social category to study the problems of women. The theory of development is closelyrelated to gender because of the large-scale exclusion of women from the processof development. Margaret Synder and Mary Tadesse in their book, *AfricanWomen and Development*: A History, defined women and development as follows: “Women and development’ is an inclusive term to signify a concept and amovement whose long-term goal is the well-being of society - the community ofmen, women and children”. Amartya Sen has made a compelling case for thenotion that societies need to see women less as passive recipients of help, andmore as dynamic promoters of social transformation which is supported by theviewpoint that the education, employment and ownership rights of women havea powerful influence on their ability to control their environment and contributeto economic development.

### 9.3.4 Development and Gender Inequality: A Global Perspective

Gender inequality manifests in a variety of ways, affecting numerous aspects of life. One of the most significant areas impacted is education, where girls often have less access to schooling compared to boys, which can hinder their future opportunities. In the job market, women frequently face barriers such as lower pay, fewer leadership roles, and a lack of support for balancing work and family responsibilities, contributing to significant employment disparities.

Political representation is another critical aspect, where women are often underrepresented in decision-making positions, limiting their influence on policies that affect their lives and communities. Access to healthcare can also be disproportionately skewed, with women experiencing challenges in receiving essential services due to economic, social, or systemic obstacles.

Moreover, control over resources, including land and financial assets, is frequently uneven, with cultural norms in many societies denying women equal rights to ownership and financial independence. These inequalities are especially pronounced in developing countries, where long-standing traditions and societal expectations further restrict the opportunities available to women and girls, perpetuating a cycle of disadvantage and limiting overall progress in society.

For example:

- **Education:** Girls in many countries face barriers to education due to early marriage, poverty, and societal expectations. According to UNESCO, 129 million girls worldwide were out of school in 2021, limiting their future opportunities (UNESCO, 2021).
- **Economic Participation:** Women are often concentrated in lower-paying jobs and face wage discrimination. The global gender pays gap stands at around 20%, with women earning less than men for similar work (ILO, 2020).
- **Health and Well-being:** Women's health needs, especially

reproductive health, are often neglected in policy-making. Maternal mortality remains high in many low-income countries, highlighting gaps in healthcare access.

### 9.3.5 Gender Equality as a Development Imperative

Achieving gender equality is not merely a moral obligation; it is also a strategic necessity that plays a crucial role in promoting sustainable development across the globe. Gender equality is essential for fostering economic growth, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. The United Nations has identified this issue as a priority through Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5), which specifically calls for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls, as well as the promotion of their full participation in social, economic, and political life.

In addition, the framework for measuring development has evolved. The Human Development Index (HDI), which assesses a country's overall development based on key indicators such as life expectancy, education, and income levels, has been expanded to reflect gender disparities. This is achieved through the incorporation of the Gender Development Index (GDI), which highlights the inequalities in achievements between men and women, and the Gender Inequality Index (GII), which measures the loss of achievement within a country due to gender inequality in reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market participation.

By addressing these issues, societies can promote a more inclusive environment that benefits everyone, ultimately leading to enhanced economic growth and improved quality of life for all individuals, regardless of their gender.

Research has shown that gender-inclusive policies lead to better development outcomes. For instance:

- **Economic Growth:** Countries with higher levels of gender equality tend to have higher economic growth rates. Women's

participation in the labour force boosts productivity and innovation.

- **Social Cohesion:** Gender equality promotes social cohesion and reduces conflict. Societies where women have equal rights are generally more stable and peaceful.
- **Health and Education:** Educating girls and women leads to improved family health and reduced child mortality rates. Women are more likely to invest in their children's education thereby creating a positive intergenerational effect.

### 9.3.6 The Role of Gender in Development

Gender roles encompass the behaviours, expectations, and social norms that society assigns to individuals based on their gender. These roles can differ widely not only between different countries and cultures but also within the same country, influenced by regional practices and historical contexts. For example, in many rural societies, traditional gender roles often confine women primarily to household responsibilities. This limitation is frequently a result of restricted access to education, as women in these areas may not have the same opportunities to pursue schooling as their male counterparts. Consequently, their roles are largely centred around domestic duties such as cooking, cleaning, and child-rearing. In contrast, urban areas typically present different gender roles due to a variety of factors, including enhanced access to education and professional opportunities. In cities, women are more likely to engage in economic activities, pursue higher education, and occupy positions of influence in politics and various professional fields. This shift can lead to a more egalitarian view where women and men share responsibilities and opportunities in both the public and private spheres. Furthermore, the factors that influence gender roles can include cultural traditions, economic conditions, legal frameworks, and the level of social awareness regarding gender equality. As these factors evolve, so do the definitions and expectations surrounding

gender roles, reflecting the changing dynamics of society.

A theoretical approach to development plays a crucial role in understanding the historical evolution of development theories, thinking, and policy. During the 1930s, most development initiatives largely overlooked the contributions and needs of women. The predominant focus of these initiatives was on modernization, which emphasized the assimilation of Western technology, institutions, and cultural beliefs. This understanding of development was closely intertwined with the concept of modernization; in fact, modernization was often equated with the characteristics and ideals of the Western world. As a result, elements that the Western world deemed modern—such as specific technological advancements, institutional frameworks, and belief systems—were universally accepted as the benchmark for development. This narrow perspective effectively marginalized alternative development pathways and the voices of those who did not conform to this Western-centric model.

Following the conclusion of the Second World War, the United States emerged as a prominent model for many developing countries eager to achieve modernization and economic growth. This influential model, however, often neglected fundamental issues related to equality across various social dimensions such as race, class, and gender. Leaders in these developing nations, along with Western development specialists, frequently assumed that the adoption of Western-style development policies would naturally propel their fragile economies towards sustainable growth. However, there was a significant lack of scrutiny regarding whether the resulting economic prosperity would be equitably distributed among all segments of society, including marginalised groups defined by class, race, and gender.

Ester Boserup, a pioneering economist, highlighted that many of the development projects implemented during this period unintentionally undermined the economic opportunities and autonomy of women. This neglect often manifested in the planning

and execution of development initiatives that did not take into account the specific needs and contributions of women in these societies.In response to these shortcomings, the 1970s saw the emergence of a new development approach aimed specifically at addressing the needs of women. This approach recognized the distinctiveness of women's knowledge, their types of work, their personal and community goals, and the unique responsibilities they hold, both in the household and society at large. As a result of this paradigm shift, women began to receive the acknowledgement they rightly deserved, leading to improved attention to their roles in economic development and the pursuit of greater gender equality in various realms.

The United Nation Development Program (UNDP) has emphasized gender equality and women empowerment in thefollowing five areas of development:

i) Democratic Government
ii) Poverty Reduction
iii) Crisis Prevention and Recovery
iv) Environment and Energy
v) HIV-AIDS

Approximately sixty per cent of the women worldwide live in poverty. This highlights the urgent need for nations to prioritise the empowerment of women to combat poverty and hunger. Women are vital contributors to their households, often taking on multiple responsibilities, including managing daily chores, caring for children, and overseeing the welfare of their families. In rural areas, women frequently handle livestock, cultivate agricultural land, and manage small businesses, playing a pivotal role in both local economies and food security.

The impact of women's involvement extends beyond the household, as their contributions are crucial for the broader development goals of nations. Thus, empowering women enhances their ability to participate in economic activities, which can lead to

improved living standards for families and communities as a whole.

Additionally, women's social and political participation is also critical for achieving gender equality as this can enhance their ability to engage effectively in decision-making processes at all levels. This can ensure that their voices are heard and valued in public and political spheres. Moreover, strong representation of women in politics and governance not only promotes equitable policies but also fosters a more inclusive society, further driving progress toward sustainable development and social justice.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What is gender and how does it differ from sex ?

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**Q 2:** Define development in the context of gender studies.

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**Q 3:** What is the significance of education in gender and development?

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## 9.4 GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Gender and development are deeply interconnected concepts that emphasize the importance of addressing gender inequalities in order to achieve sustainable progress within society. Gender encompasses the socially constructed roles, behaviours, and expectations that are assigned to individuals based on their perceived sex—specifically, those associated with being male or female. These roles can influence everything from personal identity to societal participation and access to resources.

Development, on the other hand, refers to a multi-faceted process that includes not only economic growth but also social well-being, human

empowerment, and overall life quality improvements. For much of the last century, development initiatives largely concentrated on quantitative economic indicators, such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while often neglecting qualitative social aspects, particularly those related to gender.

Recent insights have led to a broader understanding that genuine development cannot occur in isolation from gender equality. Gender disparities affect various dimensions of life, including education, healthcare, income, and political representation. When women and marginalized genders lack equal access to opportunities and resources, the overall potential for economic growth is hampered, leading to persistent poverty and social inequality.

Addressing these gender-based disparities is not merely a moral imperative, but also a practical necessity. By fostering gender equality, we can unlock the full potential of the workforce, enhance productivity, and stimulate economic innovation. Furthermore, empowering individuals of all genders contributes to improved social outcomes, such as reduced rates of violence, increased family well-being, and enhanced community resilience.In summary, recognising and actively working to dismantle gender inequalities is essential for creating a just society and for ensuring that developmental efforts are effective, inclusive, and sustainable.

This discussion thoroughly examines significant gender and development issues, focusing on the persistent disparities in education, economic inequality, and access to healthcare. These interconnected challenges create substantial barriers to progress and contribute to the ongoing cycles of poverty and marginalisation, with women often bearing the brunt of these inequalities. For instance, educational disparities limit women's opportunities for good jobs and financial independence, which subsequently impacts their ability to access quality healthcare. Economic inequality widens the gap between genders, leaving women with fewer resources and opportunities to improve their living conditions. Furthermore, limited access to healthcare not only affects women's physical well-being but also hinders their capacity to participate fully in society.

To foster inclusive and equitable development, it is crucial to address

these issues comprehensively. By implementing targeted policies and programs that promote gender equality, support women's education, enhance economic opportunities, and ensure access to healthcare, we can break the cycles of poverty and empower marginalized communities.

### 9.4.1 Education Disparity

Education is not only a fundamental right but also an immensely powerful tool that fosters personal development and drives societal advancement. It equips individuals with essential knowledge, practical skills, and the confidence necessary to navigate life's challenges and enhance their well-being.It lays the foundation for a better life. It enables individuals to pursue careers, make informed decisions, and participate actively in society. For women, education is transformative. It improves their ability to access healthcare, participate in the workforce, and advocate for their rights. An educated woman is more likely to prioritize her children's education, creating a ripple effect across generations. Societies that invest in education for all enjoy higher productivity, better health outcomes, and reduced poverty levels.The benefits of education extend beyond personal achievement; it plays a crucial role in promoting social cohesion, encouraging innovation, and stimulating economic growth. As such, education is indispensable for the overall development of a nation.

Despite its importance, access to quality education is not uniform across different populations. Gender disparities in education remain a pressing issue around the world, particularly in rural areas. In these regions, deeply rooted cultural norms often prioritize boys' education over girls', perpetuating inequalities. Additionally, economic hardships can limit families' ability to send their children to school, and inadequate infrastructure—such as a lack of schools or transportation—further exacerbates the situation. These barriers significantly hinder many girls' opportunities to receive an education, which can have long-lasting effects on their personal and professional

futures, as well as on the broader community's development. It is essential to address these disparities to ensure that every individual has the opportunity to benefit from education and contribute to society.

***Key Causes of Education Disparity in Education Access:***

1. **Cultural and Social Norms:** In numerous traditional societies around the world, deeply ingrained cultural beliefs place a higher value on the education of boys compared to that of girls. This gender bias stems from the perception that girls will primarily take on roles as caregivers and homemakers, while boys are expected to grow into providers and earners for their families.

   As a result, families often allocate more resources and attention to the education of their sons, believing that this investment will yield greater returns. They tend to assume that girls, upon reaching adulthood, will marry and leave their parental homes, which contributes to a diminished emphasis on their education. This disparity not only affects individual girls but also has broader implications for societal development, as it curtails the potential contributions of half the population. By undervaluing girls' education, communities miss out on the diverse talents and perspectives that educated women can bring to various fields.

2. **Economic Constraints:** Financial limitations frequently lead many families to face tough decisions regarding the education of their children. In such circumstances, boys are often prioritized over girls, largely because of deep-rooted societal norms that suggest boys will ultimately provide greater economic support for the family. This bias stems from the belief that educating boys will lead to better job opportunities and higher income potential.

   As a result, girls are often kept at home to take on household responsibilities, such as cooking, cleaning, and caring for

younger siblings. This dynamic not only limits girls' educational opportunities but also reinforces traditional gender roles that can perpetuate the cycle of inequality. Families may feel they have no choice but to sacrifice their daughters' education in favour of their sons', further embedding these societal expectations within their communities.

3. **Early Marriage and Child Labor:** In numerous regions around the world, particularly in rural areas where child marriage is widespread, many girls face the harsh reality of being pulled out of school to enter into early marriages. This practice not only curtails their educational opportunities but also limits their personal development and future prospects. Furthermore, child labour is a significant issue in these rural communities, disproportionately affecting both boys and girls. Often, they are responsible for various household chores and tasks, in addition to working in the fields alongside their families. This dual burden of work severely restricts the time and energy they can devote to their education, perpetuating a cycle of poverty and gender inequality that is difficult to break. As a result, these children miss out on the skills and knowledge that education can provide, further entrenching the societal norms that contribute to their circumstances.

***Impact on Development:***

- **Economic Consequences:** Educated women are significantly more likely to enter the workforce and pursue a variety of professional opportunities. This participation not only enables them to earn higher incomes but also contributes to the overall economic growth of their households and their nations. Higher levels of female education correlate with increased productivity, innovation, and economic stability within communities. Conversely, when girls are denied access to education, their future employment prospects become severely limited. This restriction not only impacts their personal chances of escaping

poverty but also perpetuates cycles of economic disadvantage for future generations. Investing in girls' education can ultimately lead to a more prosperous society as these women become key contributors to economic development.

- **Social Outcomes:** Education is a powerful tool that empowers women to make informed and deliberate choices about their health, family planning, and child-rearing practices. With a solid educational foundation, women gain access to critical information about healthcare and nutrition, which positively influences the well-being of their families. They are more likely to seek medical care, utilize healthcare services effectively, and educate their children about health issues, resulting in healthier families overall. Furthermore, education instils a sense of agency and self-confidence in women, enabling them to advocate for their rights and seek leadership roles within their communities. This empowerment encourages greater civic engagement, promotes gender equality, and fosters a more inclusive society where women's voices and contributions are valued. By enabling women to participate actively in community life, education helps create stronger, more resilient communities.

***Link to the Rural Context:***

Rural areas encounter distinct and significant challenges when it comes to providing quality education. Many schools in these regions often lack fundamental amenities such as clean water, electricity, and adequate classroom facilities, which can hinder the learning environment. Furthermore, the shortage of qualified teachers greatly impacts the quality of education; many educators may not have the proper training or resources to teach effectively. As a result, students, especially those in underserved communities, are at a disadvantage compared to their urban counterparts.

Girls in rural areas, in particular, face unique obstacles due to entrenched traditional gender roles. In many cultures, they are

often expected to marry at a young age, take on the responsibility of caring for younger siblings, or contribute to the family's income through work, which significantly limits their opportunities to pursue education. Even when girls manage to enrol in school, they frequently drop out before completing secondary education due to these pressures and responsibilities.

Moreover, patriarchal norms tend to be more deeply rooted in rural communities, where girls' education is sometimes viewed as unnecessary or even seen as a burden to the family. This perception diminishes the value placed on educating girls, leading to a lack of support from both their families and the community. Without robust policy interventions, such as scholarships, mentorship programs, and community awareness campaigns emphasising the importance of educating girls, these barriers can be incredibly challenging to overcome. Consequently, the cycle of limited educational opportunities continues, perpetuating gender inequality in these regions.

### 9.4.2 Economic Inequality

Economic inequality refers to the unequal distribution of income, wealth, and opportunities among different groups within society, leading to significant disparities in living standards and quality of life. While some level of inequality may be a natural byproduct of economic systems, severe disparities can hinder overall growth, social mobility, and development. This inequality often has deep-rooted systemic causes, particularly related to gender, geography, and access to essential resources. Women, especially those living in rural areas, encounter distinct challenges that further entrench these inequalities. Tackling economic disparity is vital for fostering a more inclusive and equitable society where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

***Causes of Economic Inequality***

1. **Gender Pay Gap:** One of the most prominent drivers of

economic inequality is the gender pay gap, which reflects the difference in earnings between men and women performing similar jobs. Women frequently earn less than their male counterparts due to various factors, including discriminatory hiring practices, limited access to higher-paying positions, and the persistence of occupational segregation. This gap not only contributes to lower lifetime earnings for women but also affects their retirement savings and economic stability.

2. **Occupational Segregation:** Occupational segregation occurs when women are disproportionately represented in low-paying, informal, or part-time jobs. In many rural areas, women primarily work in agriculture or domestic roles, which are typically characterized by low wages and a lack of job security and employee benefits. This concentration in low-wage sectors restricts women's earning potential and their opportunities for career advancement.
3. **Limited Access to Resources:** Women, particularly those in rural communities, face significant barriers when trying to access vital resources such as credit, land ownership, and financial services. These obstacles often stem from legal, social, and cultural restrictions that limit women's ability to secure loans, acquire property, or start businesses. Consequently, their capacity to invest in productive ventures and generate sustainable income is severely hampered.
4. **Education and Skill Gaps:** Economic inequality is exacerbated by disparities in education and skill levels. Women with lower educational attainment or limited access to vocational training often remain in low-wage jobs, trapping them in a cycle of poverty. Those who lack the necessary skills for higher-paying opportunities face additional difficulties in improving their economic status, perpetuating systemic inequalities across generations.
5. **Social and Cultural Norms:** Deeply ingrained social and

cultural norms play a significant role in perpetuating economic inequality. In many rural regions, traditional expectations pressure women to prioritize household responsibilities over professional aspirations. This limited social role not only diminishes their participation in the workforce but also reinforces stereotypes about gender roles, further complicating efforts to achieve economic equity.

To create a more balanced society, it is essential to address these interconnected factors that contribute to economic inequality, empowering individuals and fostering opportunities for all, regardless of gender or geographic location.

***Impact of Economic Inequality***

1. **Reduced Economic Growth**: A significant portion of the population unable to participate fully in the economy hampers the overall growth potential of a nation. Economic inequality prevents individuals from accessing education and job opportunities, thereby reducing workforce productivity. This stagnation not only limits innovation but can also deter investment, as businesses are less inclined to invest in environments where a substantial segment of the population lacks purchasing power and economic engagement.
2. **Poverty and Vulnerability:** The economic disempowerment of women contributes significantly to the prevalence of poverty, especially in households led by women. Many single mothers and female-headed families often face financial barriers that impede their ability to secure stable employment. As a result, they may endure chronic financial instability, making it difficult to meet essential needs such as adequate nutrition, health care, and educational opportunities for their children. This vulnerability can lead to a cycle of poverty that becomes increasingly difficult to escape.
3. **Health and Social Outcomes:** The repercussions of economic inequality extend to health and social well-being. Women who

lack financial resources frequently cannot prioritize or access essential health services. They may forgo medical care due to costs or live in environments with limited access to nutritious food, leading to chronic health issues such as obesity, heart disease, and diabetes. Additionally, children from these households may suffer from malnutrition, which can affect their physical development and cognitive functioning, further influencing their ability to succeed academically and socially.

4. **Intergenerational Effects:** The adverse economic conditions that women face can have long-lasting effects on their children, creating a cycle of poverty that persists across generations. Children raised in low-income households are often deprived of quality education and opportunities for enrichment, making it more challenging for them to break free from poverty. This lack of access to education and healthcare reduces their life choices and earning potential as adults. Consequently, the economic challenges experienced by one generation can systematically reinforce disadvantage for the next, making it imperative to address these inequalities to foster a more equitable society.

***Link to the Rural Context***

Economic inequality is particularly pronounced in rural areas, where women's economic participation is often limited due to a combination of cultural norms and inadequate infrastructure. In many rural settings, traditional beliefs may dictate gender roles, restricting women to household duties and subsistence farming. As a result, these women often find themselves engaged in agricultural practices that yield little income, barely meeting their families' needs. Moreover, they typically lack access to essential resources such as markets, credit facilities, and training programs that could enable them to diversify their income sources and improve their financial situations.

In these regions, significant gender-based barriers impede women's ability to own land and inherit property, which profoundly

deepens economic inequality. Women who do not own land face considerable disadvantages; lacking ownership limits their ability to use land as collateral for loans. This, in turn, hinders their access to financial resources that could facilitate investment in productive activities, such as starting small businesses or purchasing necessary equipment to enhance agricultural productivity. Furthermore, the absence of reliable transportation services and childcare facilities places additional constraints on rural women, making it challenging for them to pursue formal employment or entrepreneurial endeavours.

***Addressing Economic Inequality***

1. **Policy Interventions:** It is imperative for governments and policymakers to develop and implement gender-sensitive policies aimed specifically at enhancing women's access to critical resources such as credit, land, and employment opportunities. Initiatives like microfinance programs can provide women with the necessary financial support to embark on entrepreneurial ventures or improve their agricultural practices. Additionally, establishing legal frameworks that guarantee women's rights to land ownership and inheritance can significantly reduce the economic disparity between genders.
2. **Education and Skill Development:** Investing in education and vocational training for women, particularly in rural communities, is essential for improving their employability and expanding their earning potential. Educational programs should focus not only on basic literacy and numeracy but also on practical skills that align with local economic opportunities. Offering training in fields such as sustainable agriculture, handicrafts, or information technology can provide women with alternative income-generating options.
3. **Social Support Systems:** The creation of robust social support systems is crucial for enabling women to balance their

work and family responsibilities. Establishing accessible childcare services can free up women's time, allowing them to seek employment or engage in entrepreneurial activities. Additionally, promoting flexible work arrangements, such as remote work or part-time opportunities, can encourage more women to enter the workforce without sacrificing their familial obligations.

4. **Awareness and Advocacy:** Implementing community awareness programs can be transformative in challenging and changing discriminatory norms that hinder women's participation in the workforce. Advocacy efforts should focus on educating both men and women about the benefits of gender equality and women's economic empowerment. By fostering an environment that values and supports women's contributions, communities can enhance their overall productivity and growth.

Economic inequality is a complex, multifaceted issue that significantly limits socio-economic development and perpetuates poverty, particularly among women in rural areas. Effectively addressing this challenge requires targeted interventions, comprehensive policy reforms, and a transformative societal change. By empowering women economically and promoting gender equality, societies can unlock their full potential, ensuring more sustainable and inclusive growth for future generations.

### 9.4.3 Health Access Disparity

Access to healthcare is a fundamental component of building a healthy and productive society. When individuals have access to quality healthcare services, they are better equipped to work, pursue educational opportunities, and engage meaningfully in their communities. Unfortunately, significant health disparities continue to affect marginalised groups, particularly women, low-income populations, and people living in rural areas. These disparities

manifest manifolds as limited access to essential healthcare services often results in unfavourable health outcomes that not only impact individuals but also obstruct broader economic and social development.

***Why Health is Important?***

1. **Human Capital Development:** A healthy population is key to driving economic growth and development. When individuals are in good health, they tend to be more productive in their occupations, bringing their skills and talents to the workforce. This, in turn, contributes to economic stability and growth. Furthermore, healthy workers are often able to work longer hours and with greater focus, enhancing overall productivity and innovation in various industries.
2. **Education and Learning:** The link between health and education is profound. Children who maintain good health are more likely to attend school consistently and engage fully in their studies. Regular school attendance is crucial for academic achievement, as it allows students to benefit from classroom instruction, participate in discussions, and develop social skills. Conversely, children suffering from health issues may miss school frequently, leading to gaps in learning, diminished performance on assessments, and ultimately hindering their ability to succeed academically.
3. **Social Well-Being:** Health plays a significant role in an individual's social well-being. When people are physically and mentally healthy, they are able to partake in social activities, build relationships, and contribute to community life. Healthy individuals are more likely to volunteer, join community organizations, and participate in cultural events, which fosters a sense of belonging and community cohesion. On the other hand, illness can lead to social isolation and a sense of disconnection, further exacerbating mental health challenges.
4. **Poverty Reduction:** Access to comprehensive healthcare

services is crucial for reducing poverty levels. High medical expenses can quickly lead families into financial hardship, particularly if they do not have insurance or adequate coverage. By providing access to preventive care and early treatment, healthcare systems can significantly decrease the incidence of chronic diseases, which in turn lowers long-term healthcare costs. Effective healthcare reduces the risk of financial crises due to unexpected medical bills and allows families to allocate their resources toward education, housing, and other essential needs, ultimately promoting economic stability and growth.

In summary, ensuring access to healthcare is not only a matter of individual well-being but also a pivotal factor in fostering a thriving, economically stable society. Addressing health disparities must be a priority to promote equitable opportunities for all, empowering individuals and communities to reach their full potential.

***Causes of Limited Health Access***

1. **Geographic Barriers:** Many rural areas are located far from healthcare facilities, which creates significant obstacles for residents seeking medical services. The lack of nearby clinics and hospitals often forces individuals to travel long distances for basic healthcare. Additionally, inadequate transportation infrastructure—such as poorly maintained roads, limited public transit options, and lack of reliable vehicles—can further complicate access, resulting in delays in seeking care or complete avoidance of necessary medical attention.
2. **Economic Constraints:** Economic barriers play a crucial role in limiting healthcare access, particularly for those living in low-income communities. Many individuals are unable to pay for medical services, which can include not just hospital visits but also the costs of medications, medical devices, and health insurance premiums. Rising healthcare costs can place an overwhelming financial burden on vulnerable populations, preventing them from seeking the care they need and

potentially leading to serious health complications.

3. **Gender Disparities:** Gender-related barriers significantly impact women's access to healthcare. Cultural norms and social structures can impede women's ability to make independent health decisions or travel for medical care. In some rural regions, women may require permission from male family members to visit healthcare providers, which can lead to delays in obtaining essential services. Furthermore, gender-based violence and discrimination can exacerbate these barriers, creating a hostile environment that discourages women from seeking care.
4. **Lack of Awareness and Education:** A significant portion of the population suffers from low health literacy, which can result in misunderstandings about available healthcare services and the importance of preventive care. Many individuals do not know when or where to seek medical help or may underestimate the seriousness of their symptoms. Efforts to educate the community about health issues, treatment options, and preventive measures are often insufficient, leading to missed opportunities for early intervention.
5. **Shortage of Healthcare Providers:** A critical issue in rural areas is the shortage of qualified healthcare providers, including doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals. This shortage can result from various factors, including low salaries, inadequate resources, and the challenges of attracting professionals to remote locations. The limited availability of healthcare providers leads to long wait times for appointments, overworked staff, and, in many cases, an inability to meet the community's healthcare needs. Consequently, patients may delay seeking care or avoid it altogether due to frustration with the system.

***Impact and Consequences of Health Disparities***

1. **Increased Disease Burden:** When individuals face barriers

to healthcare access, there is a direct correlation to the increased burden of disease within communities. Delayed diagnoses and untreated illnesses can lead to more severe health conditions, resulting in higher rates of morbidity and mortality. This not only affects individual health but also places an additional burden on families and the overall healthcare system, which must manage more advanced cases that could have been prevented with timely care.

2. **Maternal and Child Health Issues:** Access to quality maternal healthcare services is essential for the health of both mothers and their infants. Poor access to prenatal and postnatal care can lead to increased rates of maternal and infant mortality, particularly in rural areas where healthcare resources are scarce. Women who do not receive adequate medical support during pregnancy are at a higher risk for complications, which can have lasting effects on their health and the well-being of their children.
3. **Economic Consequences:** The ramifications of limited healthcare access extend into the economic realm. Poor health can reduce an individual's capability to work effectively, leading to decreased productivity and potential job loss. Additionally, families facing significant healthcare costs—often due to chronic conditions that go untreated—may experience financial ruin, pushing them further into poverty. The economic strain of medical expenses can lead to difficult choices, such as sacrificing basic needs in order to pay for healthcare.
4. **Social Inequality:** Health disparities contribute to broader social inequalities that persist within society. Marginalized groups—including women, low-income individuals, and rural populations—often face increased health risks and poorer health outcomes. This perpetuates cycles of disadvantage, as compromised health can limit educational and economic opportunities, further entrenching these individuals in a position

of social and economic vulnerability. Addressing these disparities is crucial to promoting equity and improving overall community health.

**Health Access in the Rural Context**

Rural areas face several significant challenges that impact access to healthcare services. One of the primary issues is the lack of infrastructure, which includes poorly maintained roads and limited transportation options. This can make it extremely difficult for residents to travel to healthcare facilities, especially during inclement weather or for those without reliable vehicles.

Moreover, many rural hospitals and clinics often struggle with insufficient resources, lacking essential medical equipment and supplies that are crucial for providing comprehensive care. This shortage can lead to longer wait times for treatment, as well as a reliance on outdated methods or equipment, ultimately affecting the overall quality of care that patients receive.

In addition to these logistical challenges, cultural norms and gender roles in rural communities can significantly influence healthcare-seeking behaviour. For instance, traditional beliefs may discourage women from pursuing medical attention or limit their autonomy in making health-related decisions. This can result in delayed diagnoses and poorer health outcomes for women and their families.

Overall, addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes improving transportation, enhancing healthcare infrastructure, and fostering cultural change to encourage more equitable access to healthcare for all residents in rural areas.

***Way Forward:***

Access to healthcare is a fundamental determinant of both individual well-being and the overall health of society. Despite advances in medical technology and healthcare delivery, significant challenges continue to exist, particularly in rural and underserved areas where access to essential services is limited. Emerging

solutions, such as mobile clinics, offer a promising way to reach remote populations, providing vital medical services directly to communities. Additionally, telemedicine has gained traction as a means of connecting patients with healthcare professionals, allowing for consultations and follow-ups without the need for travel. These innovations help bridge the gaps in healthcare access. However, to effectively tackle the persistent health disparities faced by various populations, a multifaceted approach is necessary. This includes not only upgrading healthcare infrastructure, such as building more clinics and improving transportation options but also focusing on workforce training to ensure that healthcare providers are equipped with the skills and knowledge to address diverse community needs. Engagement with local communities is equally crucial, as understanding their unique challenges and involving them in the decision-making processes can lead to more effective healthcare delivery. Ultimately, ensuring equitable access to healthcare is vital not just for improving health outcomes but also for fostering social cohesion and stimulating economic development. When all individuals have access to quality healthcare, it contributes to a healthier workforce, reduces healthcare costs in the long run, and enhances the overall quality of life within society.

## 9.5 HISTORY OF GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

The relationship between gender and development has evolved over time, reflecting changes in societal norms, global priorities, and policy frameworks. The journey toward integrating gender equality into development initiatives highlights how the role of women and gender issues have been progressively acknowledged as critical to achieving sustainable development.

**1. Early Development Approaches and Gender Blindness**

In the early stages of development thinking, particularly post-World War II, the primary focus was on modernization and economic growth. Development theories such as Modernization Theory emphasized

industrialization, infrastructure development, and the adoption of Western technologies and institutions.

However, these initiatives largely ignored social aspects, including gender. Women were viewed as dependents rather than active contributors to economic progress. Development policies assumed that benefits would "trickle down" to all segments of society, including women, without explicitly addressing their unique needs.

**2. The Emergence of Women in Development (WID) – 1970s**

The 1970s marked a significant turning point with the emergence of the Women in Development (WID) approach, driven by scholars like Ester Boserup, whose work, *Women's Role in Economic Development* (1970), highlighted the marginalization of women in development processes. Boserup argued that modernization often displaced women from productive roles, pushing them into unpaid domestic labour.

- **Key Characteristics of WID:**
  - Focused on integrating women into existing development projects.
  - Aimed to improve women's access to education, employment, and credit.
  - Emphasized women's economic contributions.

  While WID helped bring attention to women's issues, it often treated women as a homogeneous group and failed to address deeper structural inequalities.

**3. Gender and Development (GAD) Approach – 1980s**

In the 1980s, the Gender and Development (GAD) approach emerged, offering a more comprehensive framework. GAD shifted the focus from women alone to the broader concept of gender relations and the social structures that perpetuate inequality.

- **Key Characteristics of GAD:**
  - Emphasized power relations between men and women.
  - Focused on transforming social, economic, and political structures to achieve gender equality.
  - Recognized diversity among women based on class, race,

and other factors.

GAD acknowledged that both men and women need to be involved in challenging gender norms and that addressing systemic inequality was essential for sustainable development.

**4. The Role of International Organizations and Conventions**

Global institutions have played a crucial role in advancing gender equality within development frameworks:

- **The United Nations (UN):** The **UN Decade for Women (1976-1985)** was instrumental in raising awareness about women's issues and promoting gender-sensitive policies. It culminated in the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for promoting gender equality.
- **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) (1979):** Known as the "International Bill of Rights for Women," CEDAW called for eliminating discrimination and ensuring women's equal rights in all spheres of life.
- **Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995):** The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing set a comprehensive agenda for women's empowerment, focusing on critical areas such as education, health, political participation, and violence against women.

**5. Gender Mainstreaming – 1990s and Beyond**

In the 1990s, gender mainstreaming became a key strategy for promoting gender equality. It involves integrating gender perspectives into all policies, programs, and projects at all levels.

- **Key Features of Gender Mainstreaming:**
  - Ensures that gender considerations are central to policy development and resource allocation.
  - Focuses on institutional change rather than isolated projects.
  - Recognizes that gender equality benefits society as a whole, not just women.

Gender mainstreaming has been adopted by various international organizations, including the UN Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank.

6. **The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Gender Equality**

The adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 marked a renewed global commitment to gender equality. SDG 5 explicitly focuses on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls. However, gender is also a cross-cutting issue that affects other goals, including those related to health, education, and economic growth.

- **Targets of SDG 5:**
  - End all forms of discrimination and violence against women and girls.
  - Ensure equal participation in leadership and decision-making.
  - Provide universal access to sexual and reproductive health.

7. **Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Policies**

Gender-responsive budgeting (GRB) is a strategy that ensures government budgets address gender inequalities. By analysing the impact of public spending on different genders, GRB helps allocate resources more equitably.

- **Examples:**
  - Investments in women's education and healthcare.
  - Support for childcare facilities to enable women's workforce participation.
  - Funding for programs that combat gender-based violence.

8. **Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Inequality Index (GII)**

To measure and monitor gender disparities, global institutions have developed specific indices that highlight inequalities in human development outcomes based on gender.

**Gender Development Index (GDI):**

The Gender Development Index (GDI), introduced by the United

Nations Development Programme (UNDP), measures the disparity in human development achievements between men and women. It uses the same three dimensions as the Human Development Index (HDI)—health, education, and income—but highlights differences by gender.

- **Components of GDI:**
  - **Health:** Measured by life expectancy at birth for men and women.
  - **Education:** Assessed by expected years of schooling and mean years of schooling for both genders.
  - **Income:** Based on gender-disaggregated per capita income estimates.
- **Significance of GDI:**
  - It provides insights into gender disparities in basic human development.
  - A lower GDI score indicates significant gender gaps, reflecting inequalities in access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities.

**Gender Inequality Index (GII):**

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is a more comprehensive measure that captures gender-based disparities in three critical dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment, and labour market participation. It highlights areas where women face disadvantages relative to men.

- **Components of GII:**
  - **Reproductive Health:** Measured by maternal mortality rates and adolescent birth rates.
  - **Empowerment:** Assessed through women's representation in parliament and educational attainment (secondary and above).
  - **Labor Force Participation:** Evaluates women's involvement in the workforce compared to men.
- **Significance of GII:**
  - A high GII score indicates greater inequality and reflects challenges such as limited access to maternal healthcare,

low political representation, and restricted economic participation.

- It helps policymakers identify areas requiring targeted interventions to reduce gender disparities.

The history of gender and development illustrates a gradual but significant shift from neglecting gender issues to recognizing their central role in achieving sustainable development. From the Women in Development (WID) approach to the Gender and Development (GAD) framework and gender mainstreaming, substantial progress has been made so far. However, sustained efforts are needed to address persistent inequalities and ensure that development benefits everyone, regardless of gender. True development can only be realized through the implementation of inclusive and equitable policies that ensure all individuals, regardless of their background, have access to opportunities and resources. This requires a commitment to addressing systemic inequalities and fostering an environment where diverse voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes. By prioritizing fairness and representation, we can create sustainable growth that benefits everyone in society, ultimately leading to a more just and cohesive community.

## 9.6 ROLE OF GENDER IN DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT

As we have already studied how gender plays an important role in the development process. It directly influences how resources are allocated, opportunities are accessed, and decisions are made within society. In rural development for instance, gender plays a transformative role by shaping outcomes at both the household and community levels. Women, in particular, are key agents of change, and their participation in development processes can lead to more inclusive and sustainable progress. Below is a detailed exploration of how gender contributes to development, especially in rural contexts:

**Contribution to Economic Growth**

Women's involvement in agriculture and small-scale enterprises is

crucial for rural economies. In many rural areas, women make up a significant portion of the agricultural workforce, contributing to food security and income generation. Despite their contributions, women often lack access to land, credit, and technology. When gender equality is promoted, and women gain access to these resources, productivity increases, leading to higher household incomes and overall economic growth. Empowering women economically also fosters entrepreneurial activities, which drive local development.

**Social and Community Development**

Gender equality enhances social development by promoting education, health, and well-being. Women who are educated and empowered make informed decisions about family planning, child-rearing, and health care. This, in turn, improves outcomes for their families and communities. Women's participation in community organisations and local governance also brings attention to issues such as water access, sanitation, and education, which are often overlooked in male-dominated spaces. Their involvement ensures that development projects are more inclusive and responsive to the needs of all community members.

**Improved Decision-Making and Governance**

Involving women in decision-making processes at the household and community levels leads to better governance and more effective development outcomes. Women bring diverse perspectives and prioritize social issues, such as education, health care, and environmental sustainability. When women participate in local councils or development committees, they advocate for policies and projects that benefit the entire community. This inclusivity ensures that development initiatives address the needs of both men and women, leading to more equitable progress.

**Enhancing Education and Human Capital**

Gender equality in education is vital for building human capital. In rural areas, where educational opportunities are limited, ensuring that both boys and girls have access to quality education is crucial. Educated women are more likely to contribute to the labour force, support their children's education, and engage in civic activities. Gender-responsive education

policies that address barriers such as early marriage and cultural norms can help bridge the education gap and empower women to become active participants in development.

**Promoting Health and Well-Being**

Gender plays a significant role in shaping health outcomes in rural areas. Women often bear the burden of caring for family members while managing their health needs. Gender-sensitive health programs that address maternal and reproductive health, as well as access to basic health care, are essential for improving women's well-being. Healthy women are better able to contribute to economic activities and community development, creating a positive cycle of growth and progress.

**Reducing Poverty and Inequality**

Gender equality is a powerful tool for poverty reduction. When women have equal access to resources, employment, and education, they can lift their families out of poverty. Gender-responsive social protection programs, such as cash transfers and microfinance such as self-help groups (SHGs), help women build financial resilience and invest in their families' futures. Reducing gender-based economic inequalities also ensures that rural communities benefit from the full potential of their population.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q 4:** What are the causes of economic inequality between genders?

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**Q 5:** How does health access disparity affect gender development?

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**Q 6:** What does GDI stand for, and why is it important?

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**Q 7:** What is Gender-Responsive Budgeting (GRB)?

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**Q 8:** What is the role of gender in rural development?

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**Q 9:** Name two policies aimed at improving gender equality in India.

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**Q 10:** What is the Gender Inequality Index (GII)?

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**Conclusion**

The significance of gender in development, especially within rural communities, cannot be overstated. Women play a crucial role in the economic, social, and political fabric of these areas, and their active involvement is vital for fostering inclusive and sustainable development. When women engage in various activities, be it entrepreneurship, agricultural production, or community leadership, they contribute not only to their households but also to the overall vitality of their communities.

Addressing gender inequalities is essential for unleashing the full potential of rural areas. By promoting women's empowerment through education, access to resources, and participation in decision-making processes, communities can create an environment where all individuals can thrive. This empowerment enables women to take on leadership roles, advocate for their rights, and influence policies that affect their lives.

Moreover, achieving gender equality is not merely an end in itself; it serves as a powerful catalyst for broader social and economic transformation. When women are given equal opportunities, communities experience improved health outcomes, increased household incomes, and enhanced community resilience. As women advance in their rights and opportunities, they often invest back into their families and communities, creating a ripple effect that fosters further development and stability.

In summary, embracing gender equality in rural development efforts is essential for unlocking new pathways for growth and fostering an equitable

society that benefits everyone. By prioritising women's participation and empowerment, we can pave the way for a more just and prosperous future.

## 9.7 RELEVANT GOVERNMENT SCHEMES FOR RURAL WOMEN

Some of the important government schemes that are relevant for rural women are:

1. **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY NRLM)**: DAY NRLM- launched in June/ 2011 by the Ministry of Rural Development,builds a strong community institutions of the rural poor, with a primary focus on women. Through village-level Self Help Groups (SHGs), it provides savings credit linkages, capacity building and convergence with other schemes. As of July/ 2025, over **10.05/ crore** rural women households have been mobilised into **90.90/ lakh** SHGs, fostering collective entrepreneurship, access to microfinance and skill training that raise household incomes and resilience.
2. **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)**: Under MGNREGA, every rural household is entitled to 100 days of wage paid, unskilled work per year, with a statutory requirement that at least one third of beneficiaries be women. This has driven female participation up to and beyond 40/ percent in many states, offering rural women stable cash income, strengthened bargaining power and assets built in their own villages
3. **Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana/ Gramin (PMAY G)**: PMAY G (launched April/ 2016) provides fully subsidised pucca houses to eligible rural poor, with women-especially widows or female-headed households—as co-owners on title deeds. This promotes women's tenure security, social status and access to credit. Studies show the scheme has delivered over **2.5/ crore** homes nationwide, significantly improving living conditions and reducing vulnerabilities
4. **Pradhan/ Mantri Ujjwala Yojana/ (PMUY & Ujjwala/ 2.0)**: Originally launched in May/ 2016 to provide deposit-free LPG connections to

women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households, PMUY has released **8/ crore** connections, thus ensuring cleaner cooking fuel and reducing drudgery. Ujjwala/ 2.0 (since August/ 2021) targets an additional 1/ crore connections, including for migrant families. As of March/ 1,/ 2025, **10.33/ crore**rural women benefit from free or subsidised LPG connections, dramatically cutting indoor air pollution and saving time

5. **Swachh Bharat Mission/ Gramin (SBM G)**: Under SBM G (launched October/ 2014), every rural household received access to a toilet, with special IEC campaigns emphasising women's safety and dignity. By late/ 2024, India declared itself open defecation free (ODF) at the rural level. Safe sanitation has reduced women's risk of harassment, improved menstrual hygiene management and enhanced school attendance among girls.
6. **Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM)**: JJM aims to supply functional household tap connections to every rural home by 2024. When homes receive drinking water on tap, women save up to 150/ minutes per day previously spent fetching water, time they can redirect to education, livelihoods or rest. As of mid 2025, over **70/ percent**of rural households have piped water access, with significant gains for women's health and productivity



## 9.8 LET US SUM UP

- **Understanding Gender and Development:** Gender plays a critical role in shaping societal progress, influencing access to resources, opportunities, and decision-making power for men and women. Development efforts must address gender disparities to ensure equitable growth.
- **Historical Perspective:** Initially, development initiatives largely ignored women, focusing instead on modernization and economic growth. Over time, approaches evolved to include gender-specific needs,

highlighting women's contributions and emphasizing equality.

- **Gender Disparities in Education, Health, and Economy:** Persistent inequalities in access to education, health care, and economic opportunities limit women's potential, particularly in rural areas, where infrastructure and societal norms exacerbate the challenges.
- **Global Indices and Indicators:** Tools like the Gender Development Index (GDI) and Gender Inequality Index (GII) help measure disparities and assess the progress of gender-focused development policies across nations.
- **Role in Rural Development:** Women's involvement in agriculture, household management, and local economies is crucial for rural development. However, traditional gender roles and limited access to resources often hinder their contributions.
- **Gender-Responsive Budgeting and Policies:** Integrating gender perspectives into policy-making and budget allocation ensures that resources address specific needs, promoting empowerment and reducing inequalities.
- **Importance of Inclusive Development:** Empowering both men and women through education, skill development, and health care not only benefits individuals but also fosters sustainable and inclusive societal growth.



## 9.9 FURTHER READING

1) Momsen, Janet Henshall (2004). Gender and Development. Routledge.

2) Boserup, Ester (1970). Women's Role in Economic Development. St. Martin's Press.



## 9.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours,

and expectations associated with being male or female, while sex is biologically determined based on physical attributes.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Development refers to the process of improving economic growth, social progress, and human well-being, with a focus on reducing inequalities, including gender disparities.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Education empowers individuals, promotes gender equality, and contributes to economic growth, social well-being, and overall development.

**Ans to Q No 4:** Causes include occupational segregation, wage gaps, limited access to financial resources, and societal norms that restrict women's participation in the workforce.

**Ans to Q No 5:** Limited healthcare access leads to higher mortality rates, reduced productivity, and poor overall well-being, disproportionately affecting women in rural and marginalised areas.

**Ans to Q No 6:** GDI stands for *Gender Development Index*, measuring gender-based disparities in human development indicators like education, health, and income.

**Ans to Q No 7:** GRB involves planning and allocating budgets to address gender disparities and promote gender equality in development policies.

**Ans to Q No 8:** Gender plays a crucial role by addressing disparities in access to education, healthcare, and economic opportunities, empowering women to contribute to rural progress.

**Ans to Q No 9:** *Beti Bachao Beti Padhao* (Save the Girl Child, Educate the Girl Child) and *Mahila E-Haat* (Women's Digital Marketplace).



**Ans to Q No 10:** GII is a measure that highlights gender-based inequalities in reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity.

## 9.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Short Answer Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words):**

**Q 1:** Explain the concept of gender and its relevance in the development discourse.

**Q 2:** Discuss the role of education in promoting gender equality.

**Q 3:** What are the key causes of economic inequality between men and women?

**Q 4:** Briefly describe the Gender Development Index (GDI) and its significance.

**Q 5:** What are the five key areas of development that UNDP has emphasised to promote gender equality and women empowerment?

**Long Answer Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words):**

**Q 1:** Examine the historical evolution of gender and development policies and their impact on women's empowerment.

**Q 2:** Discuss the challenges and strategies for addressing gender disparities in rural development.

**Q 3:** Assess the importance of healthcare access in achieving gender equality and sustainable development

**Q 4:** Evaluate the impact of education disparity on gender development and societal progress.

**Q 5:** Critically assess the effectiveness of policies and programs aimed at promoting gender equality in India.

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# UNIT 10 : RURAL CHILDREN AND DEVELOPMENT

## UNIT STRUCTURE


10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Status of Rural Children in India

10.4 Health Status

10.5 Nutritional Status

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## 10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This unit will explore the development of rural children, focusing on their unique challenges and needs. It will examine the current status of rural children in India and Assam, highlighting disparities in health, nutrition, and education. The unit will also delve into the essential requirements for addressing these issues and fostering holistic development. Additionally, it will review existing policies and programs designed to uplift rural children, analysing their effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Understanding the development of rural children is vital for achieving equitable and sustainable growth. By addressing their challenges, societies can ensure that rural children reach their full potential, contributing meaningfully to the progress of their communities and the nation.

After reading this unit, you will be able to:

(i) understand the significance of rural child development in national progress;

(ii) describe the current status and challenges of rural children in India

and Assam;

(iii) analyse the impact of health, nutrition, and education on the development of rural children;

(iv) identify the specific developmental needs of rural children and propose solutions;

(v) evaluate the effectiveness of existing policies and programs for rural children.

## 10.2 INTRODUCTION

Children are the cornerstone of any society, and their holistic development is essential for the advancement of a nation. In rural areas, where infrastructure is often underdeveloped and resources are limited, the challenges faced by children are both distinct and complex. Rural children are not only future contributors to the economy but also vital custodians of the cultural traditions and social values that shape their communities.

In India, children aged 0-14 years represent a significant portion of the population, with many living in rural areas facing unique challenges that hinder social development in areas such as health and nutrition, sanitation, education, and the rehabilitation of differently-abled individuals. A considerable number of children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, lack access to essential indicators of social development—health, nutrition, and education. However, since Independence, there have been marked improvements across these indicators. A significant decline in infant mortality rates (IMR) and maternal mortality rates (MMR) can be attributed to enhanced health services, better nutrition, widespread vaccination, and notable advancements in primary education, largely due to initiatives that have made education a fundamental right and aimed at expanding access for marginalised groups.

Programs such as the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), the Mid-day Meal scheme, and various initiatives aimed at promoting education among disadvantaged groups have significantly transformed the landscape for children. However, there remains much work to be done in the realms of health, nutrition, and education. As long as all children are not

in school, poverty will continue to foster child labour, including bonded labour, perpetuating a challenging situation for children across the country. This unit will explore the development of rural children.

In the previous unit, you were introduced to the development of women. Similarly, children require attention for their development, as they are the bedrock of any nation. According to the Census of India 2011, the total population of India stood at 1.2102 billion, with rural residents accounting for 68.727% and urban residents for 31.28%. Children represent a substantial segment of this population. As their numbers continue to rise, there is an increasing demand for resources to ensure that they do not endure hunger, remain in poverty, suffer from preventable diseases, lack educational and training opportunities, or fall victim to exploitation. A significant portion of this child population resides in rural areas, presenting unique challenges for their development.

This unit will provide an overview of the status of rural children through selected indicators, enabling a clearer understanding of their relative circumstances and the changes in their situation over time. Furthermore, we will examine the conditions of children who are engaged in work. To begin, let us assess the status of rural children in India.

## 10.3 STATUS OF RURAL CHILDREN IN INDIA

To analysethe situation of rural children we need to consider the magnitude of the child population and its age structure in rural India. Let us look into these features.

**Magnitude of Child Population**

According to the Census 2011, India's child population was 15,87,89,287that constituted 13.12% of its total population. The rural child population was11,75,85,514 that constituted 74.05% of the total child population.

**Age-Structure**

Demographers use age-structure of a population in a variety of ways. Thepercentage of children, aged 0-14 years, in the total population is computedby using the following formula:

*No. of Children (0 - 14) years/Total Population * 100*

India's population is predominantly young, which is indicative of a high birth rate. Consequently, the country needs to invest significantly in child survival and development. It has been observed that, for most age groups, the differences in population distribution between males and females are minimal. However, in the combined age groups of 0-14, 15-59, 60+, 15-64, and 65+, there are notable variations. In the age group 0-14, the male population exceeds the female population by about one percent. In contrast, for the older age groups—15-59, 60+, 15-64, and 65+—the percentage of females is higher than that of males by 0.6, 0.6, 0.6, and 0.5 percentage points, respectively (SRS Report 2018-19).

Demographers also utilize the child dependency ratio, which measures the child population (ages 0-14) relative to the size of the working-age population (ages 15-60). The child dependency ratio is calculated using the following formula:

*Child Dependency Ratio = (No. of Children aged 0-14 years / Population aged 15-60 years) * 100*

Traditionally, demographers categorize populations into age groups with a five-year interval. For planning purposes, the population can be divided into the following age groups: less than 1 year, 1-2 years, 3-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-13 years, and 14-15 years. Of these, the early childhood years (below 1 year and 1-2 years) are crucial for child survival. The 3-5 year age group is significant for early childhood stimulation programs at home and in preschool, while the 6-11 year age group is essential for primary schooling.

**Sex Ratio**

The population of India consists of 623,724,248 males (51.54%) and 586,469,174 females (48.46%), resulting in a sex ratio of 940 females for every 1,000 males. The top five states and union territories with the highest sex ratios are Kerala (1,084), Puducherry (1,038), Tamil Nadu (995), Andhra Pradesh (992), and Chhattisgarh (991). Conversely, the five states/UTs with the lowest sex ratios are Daman and Diu (618), Dadra and Nagar Haveli (775), Chandigarh (818), the National Capital Territory of Delhi (866), and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (878) (Census India 2011).

However, the fifth National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-5), conducted in 2019-20, reports that for the first time, the number of women in India has surpassed the number of men, with a sex ratio of 1,020 females for every 1,000 males. In comparison, NFHS-4, which took place in 2015-16, recorded a sex ratio of 991 females for every 1,000 males. Factors contributing to the low status of women and girls, such as the custom of dowry, often lead parents to prefer sons, which may result in the abortion of female foetuses or neglect of girls, leading to higher mortality rates among them. To improve their status, girls need access to education and training that will help them become financially independent. Additional support measures, such as shelter, should also be provided to empower girls and women.

## 10.4 HEALTH STATUS

The health status of children in India has improved tremendously over the years. One key indicator of health is the Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), which measures the number of infant deaths per 1,000 live births in children under one year of age. In India, the IMR was 146 per 1,000 live births in 1951, and this figure has fallen to 28.3 per 1,000 live births in 2019.

This decline can be attributed to the expansion of healthcare services, the organization of immunization camps, and the spread of health and nutrition education through Anganwadi Centers under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), Primary Health Centres (PHCs), and various initiatives from the government, NGOs, and international organizations. As a result, there has been a significant decrease in the incidence of vaccine-preventable diseases, with polio being nearly eliminated.

From 2015 to 2017, the IMR registered a decline from 37 to 33 at the national level. The highest IMR (47) was recorded in Madhya Pradesh, while the lowest (10) was in Kerala. Notably, the female IMR is higher than the male IMR in most states, except in Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand. The overall IMR in 2017 was reported to be 33, with rural areas exhibiting a higher IMR of 37 compared to 23 in urban areas. This discrepancy is mainly due to inadequate health facilities in rural

regions, leading to delays in accessing timely medical care.

The immunization program has been a major factor in reducing infant mortality rates. A child is considered fully immunized when they have received all the required vaccine doses for diseases such as polio, whooping cough, tuberculosis (TB), measles, diphtheria, and tetanus. Low immunization rates are often found in areas with low literacy, particularly among females, and in remote, hilly regions of the North-Eastern states, where the population is scattered, the terrain is challenging, and health infrastructure is lacking. Although health facilities exist in rural areas, they are often insufficient and face challenges such as shortages of personnel, equipment, and medications. There is significant room for improvement in the quality of health services in rural areas.

Rural health infrastructure plays a crucial role in lowering infant and child mortality rates, as well as improving life expectancy and nutrition status, even when access to services is limited and calorie consumption is low. Government programs, such as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and universal immunization initiatives, have contributed to better health and nutrition for the population. Individuals who are food-secure and receive adequate calorie intake tend to exhibit lower infant mortality rates, lower maternal mortality rates (MMR), and higher life expectancies. Female literacy and the availability of rural health infrastructure also influence mortality rates and life expectancy. A life-cycle approach should be adopted in addressing nutrition, encompassing needs from prenatal to old age.

***Mortality Rate: Understanding Infant and Child Mortality in India***

The mortality rate, often referred to as the death rate, measures the number of deaths in a given population. The early years of a child's life are crucial for growth, development, and survival. In India, poor nutrition and nutritional deficiencies have resulted in unacceptably high mortality rates among infants and children. This is assessed using the infant mortality rate (IMR) and the child mortality rate (CMR).

*Infant Mortality Rate (IMR):*

An infant is defined as a newborn baby aged between 0 and 12

months. The IMR is calculated as the number of deaths per 1,000 live births of children under one year old. In India, the IMR has consistently declined over the last decade; however, this decline is not uniformly distributed across different states or between rural and urban areas.

According to the Sample Registration System (SRS) data from the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, the national IMR in 2018 was 32. This figure is 36 for urban areas and 23 for rural areas, with males having an IMR of 22 and females at 23. Among the states and Union Territories, Kerala recorded the lowest IMR at 7 deaths per 1,000 live births, while Madhya Pradesh had the highest IMR at 48 deaths per 1,000 live births in the same year. Kerala achieved this low IMR by prioritizing human resource development and ensuring adequate health and educational facilities. In 2021, India's IMR stood at 28.771 deaths per 1,000 live births, reflecting a 3.61% decline from 2020.

*Child Mortality Rate (CMR):*

The child mortality rate, also referred to as the under-five mortality rate, indicates the number of deaths per 1,000 live births of children from birth up to but not including five years of age. This measure includes neonatal mortality (deaths within the first 28 days), post-neonatal mortality (deaths between 28 days and one year), and infant mortality. The trend for child mortality in India has shown a decline over recent decades.

According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4) from 2015-16, the child mortality rate dropped to 50 deaths per 1,000 live births for children under five years old. The corresponding infant mortality and neonatal mortality rates were 41 and 30, respectively. The male child mortality rate (MCMR) was 52, while the female child mortality rate (FCMR) was 48. Uttar Pradesh reported the highest CMR at 78 deaths, whereas Kerala achieved the lowest at 7.1 deaths per 1,000 live births for children under five years old.

There are several factors that cause infant and child mortalities in India.Such as lack of availability of doctors, huge illiteracy, poverty, neonatal infections, malnutrition of mothers, poor vaccine compliance, underage mothers etc are prominent factors.

**Health Problems among Children**

Major health issues among children in India are discussed below:

- **Gastroenteritis**- It is an infection of digestive system. The symptoms of this commonly found childhood illness are diarrhea, nausea, vomiting, tummy cramps and fever. It can cause dehydration, too. Proper medical attention is necessary if a child is suffering from this health problem.
- **Conjunctivitis-** It is caused due to inflammation of the conjunctiva which is the outermost layer of an eye and the inner surface of the eyelids. Its symptoms include redness, irritation and watering in eyes. It usually starts with one eye and gets spread to another one. Medical attention is necessary to cure the problem of conjunctivitis.
- **Scabies**- It is a skin infection caused by tiny insects called mites which burrow into skin, lay eggs and become adult, soon. Its symptoms include superficial burrows, rash and severe itching, blisters on palms and feet soles. It is highly contagious disease for children. Proper medicine is needed for children suffering from scabies.
- **Upper Respiratory Tract Infection (URTI)** - It is caused due to air pollution and vehicular emission. Its symptoms include common cold, influenza and sore throat. Tonsillitis is one of upper respiratory tract infection. So, children suffering from URTI need to avoid going into polluted air.
- **Tuberculosis-** Children aged under-two years are more prone to it. The early signs of tuberculosis are fever, chill and loss of appetite. Proper medical advice is needed for a complete cure of tuberculosis.
- **Typhoid-** It occurs due to poor sanitation. In rural India it is commonly found in children. Its symptoms include poor appetite, body-ache, problems in abdomen, lethargic body, weakness, fever, diarrhoea, headache, chest congestion and spots on abdomen. Its best prevention is proper vaccination of children at the right time.
- **Asthma-** In children, asthma usually occurs due to poor lifestyle. It can start at any age, even in an infant. The air pollution is also responsible for increasing cases of asthmatic children in India. Its

symptoms include difficulty in breathing, especially in air pollution and presence of dust particles. Such children need inhaler to regulate their breath.

- **Eczema-** It is a skin problem which occurs due to poor lifestyle. Rashescan be seen on the skin of the children suffering from eczema. Help ofdermatologist is required to be taken in this illness.
- **Anxiety-** Modern lifestyle has made children more anxious. Amongmany psychological disorders they usually suffer from, anxiety is themost common.The children suffering from anxiety are not able to control their psychological balance. It can also create eating disorders and mood disordersin the children. Parents' proper attention is necessary to stop anxiety in theirchildren.
- **Cancer-** It is one of the widely found modern-day health problem inchildren. It is deadly disease which can take child's life, too. There aremany types of cancer such as lung, skin, blood, etc. Proper medicaltreatment is necessary to cure cancer.
- **High Blood Pressure-** The poor lifestyle choices have made children tosuffer from high blood pressure. Earlier, it used to be only adulthoodhealth problem. Parents need to adopt healthy lifestyles for their childrento keep them away from this menace.
- **Diarrhoea-** It occurs due to lack of safe drinking water supply anddehydration in children. Its symptoms include fever, vomiting, loosemotions, etc. Oral rehydration solution (ORS) or simply sugar-saltsolution is quite effective in dealing with this health problem.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q 1:** Why is health considered a critical aspect of rural child development?

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**Q 2:** What are the major health challenges faced by rural children in India?

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**Q 3:** How does improving the health status of rural children contribute to national development?

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## 10.5 NUTRITIONAL STATUS

For a healthy workforce, it is crucial that children receive adequate nutrition during childhood and adolescence to support proper physical and mental development. Erratic or insufficient food availability results in unequal distribution, often impacting those who are most in need of food security. This demographic includes rural children- especially girls- adolescent females, women, individuals from Scheduled Castes (SCs), Scheduled Tribes (STs), Other Backward Classes (OBCs), landless agricultural labourers, marginal and small farmers, workers in the informal sector, the illiterate, and the impoverished. Many among them face severely compromised coping mechanisms due to recurring or singular disasters, forming the invisible hunger in India.

The Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), launched in 1975, offers a comprehensive package of services for preschool children and expectant and nursing mothers. This package includes health check-ups, nutrition services, immunization, health and nutrition education, referral services, and pre-school education. Malnutrition among children under five remains a significant concern for health authorities. It is essential to analyze various risk factors affecting the nutritional status of children in specific contexts to effectively plan control measures. Strengthening public health interventions for cases of mild malnutrition and vulnerable groups, as well as the effective implementation and evaluation of strategies at the regional level, are prerequisites for addressing malnutrition among under-five children in India (Sahu 2015, 18). The four critical components of food security are nutrition, poverty alleviation, agricultural production, and disaster mitigation.

The four critical components are:

1) Food for Work,
2) Food for Education,
3) Vulnerable group feeding and
4) Disaster Response.

A comprehensive strategy can be implemented in every village, incorporating direct interventions such as food fortification, the administration of oral doses of Vitamin A, iron, and iodine-fortified salt, as well as the promotion of vegetable and tree cultivation, including amla, in small areas around homes. The 'India-mix', enriched with essential vitamins and currently distributed through ICDS centres in select states, should be extended to all states and Union Territories. Prioritizing the elimination of hidden hunger in the shortest timeframe is essential. These programs can be designed in a campaign mode, similar to vaccination efforts against major diseases.

Existing initiatives like the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and various nutrition programs (such as ICDS, Mid-Day Meals, and Antyodaya Anna Yojana) should be leveraged to ensure outreach to those who have previously been underserved. TPDS should also include the distribution of nutritious cereals like jowar, bajra, ragi, and millets, which offer cost-effective, high-calorie, protein, and micronutrient benefits. Providing knowledge about childcare, healthcare practices, and support services should be focused on pregnant and nursing mothers to promote effective protein-calorie nutrition for young children.

ICDS should encourage greater involvement of women in managing feeding programs. It is crucial to give increased attention to appropriate supplementary nutrition for children aged 0-2, as this period represents a critical time for brain and body development, yet it is often the most neglected age group within ICDS, facing the highest levels of malnutrition. These measures can significantly enhance the health and nutrition of both infants and mothers.

**Nutritional Status of Rural Children in India**

Thomas Edison (1903) states, "The doctor of the future will give no medicinebut will interest his patients in the care of the human frame, diet

and in thecause and prevention of disease". However, we are still struggling hard torealise the true meaning of this statement, reasons of which in the Indianchildren's context will be clear to you after mapping their nutritional statushereunder.

**1) *Wasted, Stunted and Anaemic Children***

In fact, India is one of the largest producers of milk, pulses, rice, wheat,sugarcane, groundnut, vegetables and cotton worldwide but almost 38.4percent of the children aged under-five are stunted. The percentage of stuntedchildren in 2019 dropped to 34.7.Also, 7.5 percent weight is too low for their height, as per the report on 'TheState of Food Security and Nutrition in the World' (2020).Moreover, 58.6 percent children are anaemic.Anaemia is a serious concern for women too as it can be the reason formaternal and infant death or premature delivery and low birth weight.In young children, anaemia can impair cognitive development andhamper behavioural, motor & scholastic development.It increases the risk of infectious diseases.Wasted and stunted children also face many problems related to growthand development.

**2) *Malnourished Children in Different States***

As per the National Family & Health Survey-4 (2015-2016), 35 percentof malnourished children are below the age of five years.Bihar and Uttar Pradesh have the highest number of malnourishedchildren.In Madhya Pradesh, 42 percent children under-five years aremalnourished.Kerala, Goa, Meghalaya, Tamil Nadu and Mizoram have better percentage of children in term of nutritional level.The 2020 Global Hunger Index (GHI) Report by IFPRI ranked India94th out of 107 countries with a serious hunger situation.

**3) *Undernourished Children***

The joint report prepared of the Food and Agriculture Organisation of theUnited Nations (FAO), the International Fund for AgriculturalDevelopment (IFAD), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF),the UN World Food Programme (WFP) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) informs that the number of undernourished

peoplein India has decreased from 249.4 million in 2004-06 to 189.2 million in2017-19.

Further, the numbers of breastfed infants, aged 0-5 months, increasedfrom 11.2 million in 2012 to 13.9 million in 2019. The number is still notvery satisfactory.Undernutrition is most dangerous among the children aged 12 to 35months.

**4)** ***Nutritional Status during Covid-19 Pandemic***

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected children's nutritional status in many ways.Children could not get their share of mid-day meal from school, due tolock-downs.Supplementary nutrition for ICDS projects in rural areas throughAganwadi Centres also got disrupted, to a larger extent, in 2020.

A study published in the Journal of Global Health Science on July 16,2020, reveals that over 5 million children were at the risk of coming intothe category of the wasted or malnourished.It further informs that in 2020, two million children were at the risk ofbeing included in the category of severe wasting.

**Common Nutritional Problems/Deficiencies**

- ***Protein-Energy Malnutrition (PEM)***

  This malnutrition generally affects the children, aged from 6 months to 5years. Of many short-term and long-term mental and physical effects it leadsto, Marasmus and Kwashiorkar are two major diseases. Marasmus, resultingfrom prolonged starvation, muscle degeneration, thinness of limbs andabdominal wall, mainly occurs in the babies, aged below one year. Sufficientbreastfeeding is the best cure for Marasmus.

  On the other hand, Kwashiorkor occurs mainly due to the deficiency ofamino-acids. Its common symptoms include diarrhoea, mental laziness,decreased pigmentation, hair changes, etc. It usually affects children of 1 to 4years. As in the case of Marasmus, breastfeeding is quite effective in itstreatment, as well.

- ***Iron Deficiency/Anaemia***

  Iron is present in foods of animal and vegetable origins. Anaemic

childrenhave deficiency or low level of iron. To cure this, iron supplements areneeded. Anaemic children are usually weak and have low stamina. WHO'sestimates that in India anaemia prevails in 65-75% of pregnant women.

- ***Iodine Deficiency Disorder (IDD)/Goitre***

  Lack of iodine which is an important micronutrient causes Iodine deficiencydisorders. Children with these disorders have generally retarded psychomotordevelopment, speech & hearing impairments and mental retardation. IDD isprevented by a regular consumption of iodized salt.

- ***Vitamin-A Deficiency***

  Deficiency of Vitamin-A causes a preventable blindness in young childrenand high death rates of infants and young children. The foods like green andyellow vegetables and fruits, carrots, pumpkins, mangoes, papayas and redpalm oil are rich in Vitamin-A.

- ***Obesity***

  Excessive intake of calories makes a child overweight, causing obesity.Interactions between genetic, neuroendocrine, metabolic, psychological,environmental and socio-cultural factors are responsible for childhoodobesity. The adverse outcomes of obesity are hypertension, diabetes,menstrual disorders, liver disorders, depression, etc. Dietary management ishelpful in reducing obesity.

- ***Rickets***

  Occurring due to deficiency of Vitamin-D mainly in the children of the firsttwo years this disease has common symptoms like sleeplessness, pale face,diarrhea, skull deformities, bow-legs and deformities in ribs & spine. Properintake of Vitamin-D can cure it.

- ***Scurvy***

  Caused by deficiency of Vitamin-C this disease has major symptoms likeweakness, sore arms & legs, decreased red blood cells, gum diseases, changesin hairs and bleeding from skin. Supplementary intake of Vitamin-C iscrucial to cure it.

**Policies and Programmes**

Improving health and nutritional status of children is prominent for a nation.So India is also trying in every possible way to ensure good health &nutrition of its children through various policies and programmes. Let usdiscuss some of them.

- **NetSCoFAN**- Launched in 2019 by Central Ministry of Health & FamilyWelfare, it is a network of research and academic institutions working inthe area of food and nutrition.
- **Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully(SAANS**) - Launched in 2019 by the Ministry of Health and FamilyWelfare it aims to reduce child mortality caused by pneumonia.
- **Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0-** Started by theGovernment of India it aimed at accelerating the coverage of children and pregnant women in the identified districts and blocks from December 2019 to March 2020.
- **National Digital Health Blueprint-** Launched in 2019 by theGovernment of India, it aims to create National Digital Health Ecosystem which lays out the building blocks for implementation ofNational Health Stack (NHS) to make possible Artificial Intelligence inleveraging health records.
- **Poshan Abhiyaan 2018-22-** Launched by the Prime Minister, ShriNarendra Modi, in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, in March 2018, it mainly aimsto ensure holistic development and adequate nutrition for pregnantwomen, mothers and children. It is multi-ministerial convergencemission with a vision to make India free from malnutrition by 2022. TheMinistry of Women and Child Development is playing a major role in itsimplementation.
- **Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY):** It is basically amaternity benefit scheme of is a conditional cash transfer for pregnantand lactating women of 19 years & above, implemented by the Ministryof Women and Child Development in 2017. It is basically. It mainlyaims to provide conditions for safe delivery and nutrition &

feedingpractices.

- **National Crèche Scheme-** Initiated by the Ministry of Women andChild Development in 2017, it is an intervention to help workingmothers and provide protection to children, aged from 6 months to 6years.
- **Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan-** Introduced in 2016 bythe Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, it is a fixed-day strategy, inwhich on 9th day of every month every pregnant woman gets at least onecheckup in the 2nd/3rd trimester of pregnancy at the Pradhan MantriSurakshit Matritva clinics. It includes quality maternal health serviceswhich are envisaged to be provided as part of antenatal care.
- **National Deworming Day**: It was initiated by the Ministry of Healthand Welfare in the year 2015 to combat soil-transmitted infections inchildren with a dose of Albendazole to children.
- **India Newborn Action Plan (IANP**) was launched in 2014 with thegoal of eliminating single digit neonatal mortality rate and single digitstill-birth rate by 2030.
- **Mission Indradhanush** started in 2014 by the Government of India tofully immunize more than 89 lakh children who were left out ofvaccination.
- **National Health Mission (NHM) -** Started by the Government of Indiain 2013 it comprises two sub-missions: National Rural Health Mission(NRHM) and National Urban Health Mission (NUHM). It is mainlyaimed at strengthening the rural and urban health systems for improvingreproductive, maternal, neonatal child and adolescent health(RMNCH+A) and also providing equitable affordable and quality healthcare services. Its targets are to reduce MMR to 1/1000 live births, IMR to25/1000 live births and TFR to 2.1.
- **Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK**)- Launched in 2013under the National Health Mission for health screening of children aged0-18 years this programme mainly aims at detecting birth defects,diseases, deficiencies, development delays and others problems.
- **Iron and Folic Acid (IFA)** supplementation was started in 2012 by

theMinistry of Health and Family Welfare to prevent anaemia.

- **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakaram (JSSK)** was launched in 2011by the Government of India to improve infant health.
- **Janani Suraksha Yojna (JSY)** was started in 2005 under the NationalRural Health Mission to improve pregnant women's health.
- **Promotion of Infant and Young Child Breastfeeding** practices hasbeen operated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development since1993.
- **Wheat Based Supplementary Nutrition Programme** is a centrally sponsoredscheme, started in 1986, to provide supplementary nutrition tochildren and popularize wheat intakes.
- **Pulse Polio**- It is an immunisation campaign operated by theGovernment of India, since 1985, to completely eradicate polio in Indiaby vaccinating all children aged under-five years .
- **Universal Immunisation Programme (UIP**) was started by theGovernment of India in 1985 to provide vaccination to each child againstvarious diseases.
- **ICDS**- Launched in 1975 by the Government of India this programmeconsists of supplementary nutrition, immunisation, health checkups,referral and education services for the children.

  **Special Nutrition Programme (SNP)**- It was started in 1970-71 for childrenunder-6 years and expectant & nursing mothers by the Central Ministry ofSocial Welfare.

  Children are the future of a nation. When it is the matter of rural children'shealth and nutrition, infant and child mortality rates become a more seriousconcern. Rural children face various health problems for multiple reasons.Their various nutritional needs remain unfulfilled, causing a low nutritionalstatus. Also, they suffer from common nutritional deficiencies. Variouspolicies and programmes implemented for improving children's health andnutritional status have made much impact on their situation; yet, India stillhas to tread a long way ahead to make its children safe.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 4:** Why is nutrition important for the development of rural children?

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**Q 5:** What are the common nutritional challenges faced by rural children in India?

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**Q 6:** How can government programs address the nutritional needs of rural children?

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## 10.6 EDUCATIONAL STATUS

Education serves as the cornerstone of human development, marking the beginning of one's journey toward enlightenment. The Constitution of India recognizes this by incorporating the Directive Principles of State Policy, which advocate for the universalization of elementary education. Specifically, Article 45 states, "The State shall endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, for free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years."

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act of 2009, widely known as the Right to Education (RTE) Act, was enacted by the Parliament of India on August 4, 2009. This legislation underscores the significance of providing free and compulsory education to children aged 6 to 14 years, as enshrined in Article 21(A) of the Constitution's Part III. Coming into effect on April 1, 2010, this Act mandates that the State ensure access to free and compulsory education for children within this age range at local schools.

As a result, education—particularly early education—has taken centre stage and is now a priority for both Central and State governments. Following Independence, India has launched various initiatives aimed at educating children, including those from rural backgrounds. However, these efforts have largely fallen short of effectively integrating a significant number of rural children into formal schooling. This unit will explore these initiatives and the challenges faced in educating children, especially those in rural areas, while also reflecting on the initial endeavours toward the universalization of education in India.

A study conducted by National Statistical Office on *Household SocialConsumption: Education in India* as part of NSSO's 75th survey-round, heldfrom July 2017 to June 2018, provides a comprehensive analysis of femaleliteracy rates for all the States of India, considering persons aged seven yearsand above. It estimates India's average literacy rate at 77.7%; the femaleliteracy rate at 70.3% and the male literacy rate at 84.7%. Kerala tops amongthe States with the highest female literacy rate of 95.2% while Rajasthanperforms the worst with the female literacy rate of 57.6%. However, specialinnovative projects are being carried out to raise female literacy and increasegirl enrolment and retention and the Government is fully committed to thegoal of Universalisation of Elementary Education (UEE). Today, childrenneed a quality education that must:

- encourage a more integrated view of how the world operates and howdevelopment does or does not occur,
- make students more critically aware of how their actions, individuallyand collectively, will hinder or help the world in meeting challenges infuture and
- help mobilise and empower people with knowledge and skills toparticipate more actively, democratically and collectively in thedevelopment process. Let's look into the States' initiatives towards thisend.

**Initial efforts forthe universalization of Education**

Efforts to achieve universal education through legislation, programs, and policies began shortly after India's Independence. The Kothari

Commission set a target for universal elementary education in 1966, aiming to achieve this goal by 1986. However, this target was not met, and in 1986, the National Policy on Education established a new goal: to ensure that by 1990, all children aged 11 years would have completed five years of either formal or non-formal education (Mehta, 1994). Many of these targets remain unfulfilled, especially in rural parts of India.

The National Policy on Education of 1986 emphasized the Central Government's growing role in primary education. It recognized the need for a concerted effort to expand and improve basic education, including formal and non-formal education, as well as adult literacy. Specifically at the primary school level, the policy prioritized reducing disparities in enrollment for girls and students from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. To implement this policy, the Department of Education, Government of India, established a series of centrally sponsored grant schemes to support states in developing basic education. Let these be discussedhere.

- **Operation Blackboard (1986):** The scheme provides grants to theStates to construct buildings and provision for additional teachers insingle-teacher schools, requiring that half the teachers posted be women.
- **District Institutes of Education and Training (DIET), 1988:** TheDepartment of Education established a scheme to finance creation ofinstitutes of education and training in all rural districts by convertingexisting teacher training institutes and constructing new ones.
- **Total Literacy Campaign (1988):** After an unsuccessful attempt toprovide adult literacy instructions, along with vocational skills' trainingthrough formal classes, the Department of Education turned to totalliteracy campaign to increase adult literacy.
- **Minimum Levels of Learning (1989):** Inappropriately complex anddifficult primary curricula and textbooks were recognized as a barrier tolearning and a factor in pupil's decision to drop out. To address thisproblem, the Department of Education initiated a national basiccompetency in language, mathematics and social and

environmentalstudies to be taught in the primary grades, known as minimum levels oflearning.

In 1992, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) revised the National Policy on Education of 1986, advocating for an integrated approach to the development of primary education at the district level. This led to the establishment of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), the most significant initiative by the Central Government aimed at increasing enrolment, retention, and the quality of primary education.

The DPEP has focused on strengthening community and school organizations, shifting from the Operation Blackboard materials approach to providing grants for these organizations and teachers to purchase educational materials. Additionally, the program enhanced state education support efforts, which included textbook development and publication, planning and management, research and evaluation, and teacher training.

By 2001, it was reported that 46 percent of the female population and 24 percent of the male population in India, aged seven and above, were unable to read or write. There were significant disparities between different regions of the country. For instance, while the female literacy rate in rural Kerala exceeded 90 percent, only 44 percent of individuals aged seven and above in rural Bihar and 46 percent in rural Jharkhand were literate. In Rajasthan, the rural literacy rate was slightly better at 56 percent.

In many villages and urban areas, barriers to regular school attendance were particularly high for certain groups of children, such as working and street children, those belonging to Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC), and children with special needs. In Madhya Pradesh, when the DPEP was initiated, it was found that 30,000 habitations, mostly inhabited by marginalized communities, lacked access to schooling facilities. The DPEP aimed to pool together human and financial resources to bridge the gap in access to and enrolment in education.

Community participation has been a cornerstone of DPEP interventions. Under this program, new child-friendly schools and classrooms have been established, along with specific initiatives designed to reach children from disadvantaged backgrounds, with active support from the

community. The role of Parent-Teacher Associations, Village Education Committees, and other community groups has been vital in enrolling children and ensuring they attend classes regularly. These community groups have demonstrated significant potential to become catalysts for overall development within their villages.

Now, let's discuss the implementation of the Right to Education.

**Right to Education (RTE) and its Trajectory**

The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009, came into effect on April 1, 2010. This Act places an obligation on the State to provide free and compulsory education to children aged 6 to 14 years at schools in their neighbourhood. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), initiated in 2001, is the flagship program designed to implement this Act and achieve the goal of universal education.

The following are the key features of the Act:

- The Act mandates that unaided and non-minority schools reserve 25% of their seats for underprivileged children, who are to be admitted through a random selection process. The government will reimburse the fees for these students.
- It states that "no child can be held back, expelled, or required to pass a board examination until they complete their elementary education." This 'no-detention policy' was implemented to keep children in school. However, this policy was reviewed recently and was discarded with the enactment of the Right to Free and Compulsory Education (Amendment) Act, 2019.
- The Act establishes norms and standards for the Pupil-Teacher Ratio (PTR) of 1:30, school buildings and infrastructure, school working days, teachers' working hours, accessibility features for students with disabilities, provision of drinking water, and availability of playgrounds. It also stipulates the appointment of appropriately trained teachers and specifies qualifications and training standards for teachers.
- The Act outlines the duties and responsibilities of the appropriate government and local authorities to provide free and compulsory education, as well as to share financial and other responsibilities

between the Central and State Governments.

The RTE Act has successfully improved the enrollment rates for students in primary and upper primary schools. The gap in enrollment rates between boys and girls is consistently decreasing, although significant differences remain between various states, challenging the principle of 'education for all children.' Despite the increase in enrollment rates, the quality of education remains poor, with students' learning outcomes being quite dismal. Furthermore, learning deficits observed in elementary school often continue as students transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

On a positive note, there has been consistent improvement in basic infrastructure facilities in schools, including basic sanitation, drinking water, and separate toilets for boys and girls, since the RTE Act was enacted. The recently adopted National Education Policy (2020) provides a new direction by emphasizing elementary education. After decades of focused efforts, the goal of universal enrollment now appears achievable. However, there is a pressing need to prioritize the quality of education in primary and upper primary schools.

As these children will eventually join the workforce and contribute to the demographic dividend in the coming decades, it is crucial to emphasize early childhood care and education (ECCE) within the framework of the RTE Act 2009, as proposed in the National Education Policy, 2020. The policy aims to replace the current 10+2 educational structure with a new 5+3+3+4 framework. This change will include the previously uncovered age group of 3 to 6 years in the school curriculum, which is recognized worldwide as a critical stage for developing a child's learning abilities. The next decade will be instrumental in setting the stage for major structural reforms in the school system across the country. Let us hope for positive outcomes for schools that shape young minds, especially in rural areas.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 7:** Why is education vital for the development of rural children?

.....

.....

**Q 8:** What are the major barriers to education faced by rural children in India?

.....

.....

**Q 9:** How can government initiatives improve the educational status of rural children?

.....

.....

## 10.8 POLICY AND PROGRAMMES FOR RURAL CHILD

Children are one of the most valuable assets of any nation. Their development plays a crucial role in the overall progress of society, and the most effective way to nurture national human resources is by prioritizing the care of children. India boasts the largest child population in the world, and the government is actively committed to the development and welfare of these young individuals. Various policy initiatives have been implemented to support this essential cause.

**Policy Initiatives**

The National Policy for Children mandates that the government provide adequate services for children both before and after birth, as well as during their developmental stages, to ensure their full physical, mental, and social growth. Suggested measures include a comprehensive health program, supplementary nutrition for mothers and children, free and compulsory education for all children up to the age of 14, the promotion of physical education and recreational activities, special consideration for children from marginalized groups such as Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), and the prevention of child exploitation.

The Government of India has also adopted the National Charter for Children, which was developed after consulting with state governments, union territory (UT) administrations, relevant ministries and departments, and experts in the field. This charter serves as a statement of intent that reflects the government's commitment to children's rights. The National

Charter emphasizes the government's dedication to ensuring children's rights to survival, health, nutrition, a standard of living, play and leisure, early childhood care, education, protection of the girl child, empowerment of adolescents, equality, life and liberty, recognition (including name and nationality), freedom of expression, freedom of association, peaceful assembly, the right to a family, and protection from economic exploitation and all forms of abuse. It also includes provisions for the protection of children in difficult circumstances, children with disabilities, marginalized and disadvantaged communities, and child victims.

India has ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, reaffirming its commitment to the rights and welfare of children. The goal of this convention is to guarantee every child the right to survival and development in a healthy and supportive environment.

Furthermore, India participates in the Millennium Development Goals and the SAARC Conventions on Child Welfare and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children in the SAARC region.

In 2005, the Ministry of Women and Child Development developed a National Plan of Action for Children, aligning it with the goals established during the UN General Assembly Special Session on Children held in 2002, as well as the monitorable targets outlined in the Tenth Five-Year Plan and objectives set by related ministries and departments. This action plan was created in consultation with relevant ministries, state and UT governments, non-governmental organizations, and experts. The National Plan of Action includes goals, objectives, strategies, and activities aimed at improving children's nutritional status, reducing infant and maternal mortality rates, increasing enrolment ratios, decreasing dropout rates, universalizing primary education, and enhancing immunization coverage.

**Child Welfare Programmes**

Several Ministries and Departments of the government of India are implementing various schemes and programmes for the benefit of children. Some of the Schemes and programmes are as under:

**Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)** being implemented by Ministry of Women and Child Development is the world's

largest programme aimed at enhancing the health, nutrition and learning opportunities of infants, young children (O-6 years) and their mothers. It is the foremost symbol of India's commitment to its children – India's response to the challenge of providing pre-school education on one hand and breaking the vicious cycle of malnutrition, mortality and morbidity o the other.

The Scheme provides an integrated approach for converging basic services through community-based workers and helpers. The services are provided at a centre called the 'Anganwadi', which literally means a courtyard play centre, a childcare centre located within the village itself. The package of services provided are:

- Supplementary nutrition,
- Immunisation,
- Health check-up
- Referral services,
- Pre-school non-formal education and
- Nutrition and health education

It is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented through the State Governments with 100% financial assistance from the Central Government for all inputs other than supplementary nutrition which the States were to provide from their own resources. However, from the year 2005-06, the Government of India has decided to provide Central assistance to States for supplementary nutrition also to the extent of 50% of the actual expenditure incurred by States or 50% of the cost norms, whichever is less.

**Creche Scheme for the children of working mothers**

The Ministry of Women and Child Development has launched a new Creche Scheme in January 2006. The Scheme has been named as Rajiv Gandhi National Creche Scheme for the Children of working Mothers. These creches have been allocated to the Central Social Welfare Board, Indian Council for Child Welfare and Bhartiya Adim Jati Sevak Sangh in the ration of 80:11:9. The priority has been given to uncovered districts/areas and tribal areas while extending the scheme to maintain balance regional coverage. Eligibility criteria under the Revised Scheme has also been enhanced from Rs. 1800/- to Rs. 12000/- per month per family.

**Nutrition component of Prime Minister Gramodya Yojana and Nutrition Programme for Adolescent Girls** being implemented in 51 districts with additional central assistance provided by the Planning commission, directly and indirectly contribute to promoting nutrition of children. A National Nutrition Mission has also been set up with a view to enable policy direction to concerned Departments of the Government for addressing the problem of malnutrition in a mission mode.

**Reproductive and Child Health Programme**

Being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the programme provides effective maternal and child health care, micronutrient interventions for vulnerable groups, reproductive health services for adolescent etc. Some important programmes cover are:

- Immunization for children for DTP, Polio and Tetanus Toxoid for women
- Vitamin A administration
- Iron and folic Acid for pregnant women.

This programme integrates all family welfare and women and child health services with the explicit objective of providing beneficiaries with 'need based, client centered, demand driven, and high-quality integrated RCH services. The strategy for the RCH programme shifts the policy emphasis from achieving demographic targets to meeting the health needs of women and children.

**Pulse Polio Immunization Programme** being implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare covers all children blow five years. It is a massive programme covers 166 million children in every round of National Immunization Day. The other immunization programmes include Hepatitis B, DPT and other routine immunization.

Other notable programmes for child health include an universal immunization programme, control of deaths due to acute respiratory infections, control of diarrhoeal diseases, provision of essential new-born care to address the issue of the neonates, prophylactic programmes for the prevention and treatment of two micronutrient deficiencies relating to Vitamin A and iron, Anaemia control programme, Border District Cluster Strategy and Integrated Management of Neo-natal and childhood illness.

**Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan** being implemented by the Department of Education provides for school infrastructure and quality improvement in the education of the children. The specific objectives are,

- All children to be in school
- Universal retention by 2010
- Bridging all gender and social gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010.

The Government of India is committed to realizing the goal of universalization of elementary education by 2010. Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), the National flagship programme, the Government aims to provide free and compulsory elementary education to all children in the 6-14 age group by 2010.

**A National Programme for education of girls at elementary level** is also being implemented by the Department of Education for children in difficult circumstances including drop out girls, working girls, girls from marginalized social groups, girls with low levels of achievement to gain quality elementary education and to develop self-esteem of girls through a community based approach.

**Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya** is a new scheme being implemented by the Department of Educaiton, which enables opening of 750 special residential schools for the girl child belonging to SC/ST, other backward classes and minority in educationally backward blocks having low female literacy.

**Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)** launched on January 22, 2015, in Panipat (Haryana), BBBP is a tri ministerial initiative (MoWCD, MoHFW, MoE) aiming to reverse the declining child sex ratio and ensure girls' survival, protection and education. It adopts a "grassroots to glossy" approach, engaging communities, enforcing the PCPNDT Act, and strengthening welfare delivery. Over the past decade, BBBP has demonstrably improved Sex Ratio at Birth and boosted girls' enrolment in schools, laying a foundation for long term empowerment

**Mid-day meal Scheme** is also one of the important schemes of the Government to aim universal enrolment and retention of children. Under

the programmed nutrition snacks are provided to children attending schools.

**Integrated programme for Street Children**

The programme is being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. This programme aims at preventing destitution of children and facilitate their withdrawal from life on the streets. The programme is targeted towards children without homes and family ties, especially vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

**Integrated Programme for Juvenile Justice**

The programme is being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment with a view to providing carte to children in difficult circumstances and children in conflict with the law through Government institutions and through NGOs. Some special features of the scheme areas:

- Establishment of a National Advisory Board on Juvenile Justice.
- Creation of a Juvenile Justice Fund.
- Training, orientation and sensitization of judicial, administrative police and NGOs responsible for implementation of JJ Act.
- Institutional are shall be used but only as a last measure by enlarging the range of suitable alternatives.
- Financial assistance to bring about a qualitative improvement in the existing infrastructure.
- Expansion of non-institutional services such as sponsorship, foster care, probation etc. as and an alternate to institutional care.

**Child helpline**is a toll-free telephone service (1098) which anyone can call for assistance in the interest of children. Being run with the support of Women and child welfare Ministry is working in 72 cities across the country. The Shishu Greh Scheme is also being implemented by the ministry to promote adoptions within the country and to ensure minimum standards in the care of abandoned/orphaned/destitute children. Grant-in-Aid upto a ceiling of Rs. 6 lakh is provided per unit of 10 children in a Shishu Greh.

**The National Rural Health Mission,** a scheme of health Ministryseeks to provide effective healthcare to rural population including large population of children throughout the country with special focus on 18 States, which have weak public health indicators and/or raise public spending

on health from 0.9% of GDP to 2-3% of GDP. It aims to undertake architectural correction of the health system to enable it to effectively handle increased allocations as promised under the National Common Minimum Programme and promote policies that strengthen public health management and service delivery in the country.

**Elimination of Child Labour** is being implemented by the Ministry of Labour which sanctions projects for rehabilitation of working children and for elimination of child labour. Under the project-based Action Plan of the Policy, National Child Labour Projects (NCLPs) have been set up in different areas to rehabilitate child labour. A major activity undertaken under the NCLP is the establishment of special schools to provide non-formal education, vocational training, supplementary nutrition etc. to children withdrawn from employment. 150 Child Labour Projects have so far been sanctioned for rehabilitating children in the most endemic areas and 1.5 lakh children have already been mainstreamed in the special schools.

**Prevention of Offences against Children**: After wide consultations a draft Bill for offences Against Children has been prepared and circulated to the State Governments for their comments and views. After obtaining the comments of the State governments and concerned Ministries and Departments a draft has been prepared and circulated to the concerned Ministries and Departments for their comments and use.

**Child Budgeting**: The Government is also actively considering introducing child budgeting. The key objectives of the endeavour would be analyse budgetary provisions on social sector, to identify the magnitude of budgetary allocations made by the Centre/State Governments on schemes meant for addressing specific needs of children, to examine the trend in child specific expenditure etc. the main agenda for the exercise of child budgeting is to review resource allocations related to children; explore ways to increase budgetary allocations for children; assess budget utilization rates for social sector and child specific programmes, identify blockages and constraints to effective utilization; identify methods for tracking expenditure and monitoring performance to ensure that outlays translate into outcomes for children.

**Pilot projects for combating trafficking of women and children**

Three pilot projects are being implemented viz i) to combat trafficking women and children for commercial sexual exploitation under the sanction of tradition ii) pilot project to combat trafficking of women and children for commercial, sexual exploitation in source areas and iii) pilot project to combat trafficking of women and children for commercial sexual exploitation in destination areas. So far 30 projects have been sanctioned benefiting about 1500 women and girls.

Beside above said programmes and policy initiatives, a number of constitutional provisions have already made to ensure protection of dignity, rights and welfare of children. These include following:

**Constitutional Provisions**

- Article 14 provides that the State shall not deny to any person equality before the law or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
- Article 15(3) provides that, “nothing in this article shall prevent the State for making any special provision for women and children”.
- Article 21 provides that no person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.
- Article 21A directs the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may by law, determine.
- Article 23 prohibits trafficking of human beings and forced labour.
- Article 24 prohibits employment of children below the age of fourteen years in factories, mines or any other hazardous occupation.
- Article 25-28 provides freedom of conscience, and free profession, practice and propagation of religion.
- Article 39(e) and (f) provide that the State shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing to ensure that the health and strength of workers, men and women and the tender age of children are not abused and that the citizens are not forced by economic necessity to enter avocations unsuited to their age or strength and that the children are given opportunities and facilities to develop in a healthy manner

and in conditions of freedom and dignity and that the childhood and youth are protected against exploitation and against moral and material abandonment.

- Article 45 envisages that the State shall endeavour to provide early childhood care and education for all children until they complete the age of six years.



## 10.9 LET US SUM UP

- This unit highlights the importance of understanding the unique challenges faced by rural children in India, focusing on their health, nutrition, and education.
- Rural children often suffer from inadequate healthcare access, leading to high rates of morbidity and mortality.
- Malnutrition remains a pervasive issue, impacting the physical and cognitive development of rural children.
- Educational opportunities for rural children are hindered by factors like poverty, lack of infrastructure, and cultural barriers.
- Addressing these challenges requires targeted interventions that prioritize rural children's developmental needs and bridge gaps in essential services.
- Government policies and programs, such as Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and Mid-Day Meal Scheme, have been designed to improve the well-being of rural children.
- The development of rural children is crucial for breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty and fostering the overall growth of rural communities.
- A comprehensive approach integrating health, nutrition, education, and social support systems is essential for ensuring holistic development.



## 10.10 FURTHER READING


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## 10.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Health is a critical aspect of rural child development because it directly influences a child's ability to grow, learn, and thrive. Poor health can lead to high mortality rates, stunted growth, and cognitive impairments. Healthy children are better equipped to participate in educational activities and contribute to their families and communities. In rural areas, access to healthcare is often limited, making health interventions crucial for breaking the cycle of poverty and underdevelopment.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Rural children in India face several health challenges, including malnutrition, high rates of infant and child mortality, lack of immunization, poor sanitation, and limited access to healthcare facilities. Diseases such as diarrhoea, respiratory infections, and anaemia are prevalent due to inadequate nutrition and unsafe living

conditions. These challenges are exacerbated by poverty, lack of awareness, and insufficient healthcare infrastructure in rural areas.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Improving the health status of rural children contributes to national development by reducing mortality rates, enhancing productivity, and breaking the intergenerational cycle of poverty. Healthy children are more likely to attend school regularly, perform better academically, and grow into healthy adults who can actively participate in the workforce. This creates a stronger, more capable population, which drives economic growth and societal progress. Ensuring the health of rural children lays the foundation for a more equitable and prosperous nation.

**Ans to Q No 4:** Nutrition is crucial for the physical and cognitive development of rural children as it provides the energy and nutrients necessary for growth, learning, and immune function. Poor nutrition leads to issues such as stunted growth, weakened immunity, and reduced academic performance. For rural children, good nutrition is essential to breaking the cycle of poverty by enabling them to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to their families and communities.

**Ans to Q No 5:** Rural children in India face several nutritional challenges, including malnutrition, stunting, wasting, and micronutrient deficiencies such as anaemia and vitamin A deficiency. These issues arise from poverty, lack of access to balanced diets, inadequate breastfeeding practices, poor maternal health, and limited awareness about nutrition. Insufficient public health infrastructure in rural areas further aggravates these challenges.

**Ans to Q No 6:** Government programs can address the nutritional needs of rural children by providing targeted interventions such as the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS), and Poshan Abhiyaan. These initiatives aim to improve access to nutritious food, promote breastfeeding, enhance maternal and child health services, and create awareness about balanced diets. By addressing malnutrition, these programs contribute to the overall health and development of rural children, ensuring better educational outcomes

and long-term societal benefits.

**Ans to Q No 7:** Education is vital for rural children as it equips them with knowledge, skills, and opportunities to improve their lives and break the cycle of poverty. It fosters critical thinking, enhances employability, and empowers them to make informed decisions. For rural communities, educated children contribute to social progress and economic development, improving the overall quality of life.

**Ans to Q No 8:** Rural children in India face several barriers to education, including inadequate school infrastructure, lack of qualified teachers, gender disparities, poverty, and the need for children to work to support their families. Cultural factors, such as early marriage for girls, and long travel distances to schools also hinder access to education. These challenges limit their opportunities for holistic development.

**Ans to Q No 9:** Government initiatives such as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Right to Education (RTE) Act, and National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 aim to improve the educational status of rural children. These programs focus on universalizing elementary education, providing financial support like scholarships and free textbooks, and upgrading school infrastructure. By addressing these challenges, these initiatives promote inclusive and equitable education for rural children.



## 10.12 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Short Answer Questions (Answer each question in about 150 words):**

**Q 1:** Discuss the key challenges faced by rural children in accessing quality healthcare.

**Q 2:** Explain the impact of malnutrition on the overall development of rural children.

**Q 3:** Describe the role of education in transforming the lives of rural children.

**Q 4:** What are the main objectives of policies aimed at improving the development of rural children?

**Q 5:** How does the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 address the

educational needs of rural children?

**Long Answer Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words):**

**Q 1:** Evaluate the current status of rural children in India with a focus on disparities in health, nutrition, and education.

**Q 2:** Discuss the impact of inadequate healthcare and nutrition on the physical and cognitive development of rural children.

**Q 3:** Analyse the importance of addressing rural children's educational needs for achieving sustainable development.

**Q 4:** Examine the role of government policies and programs in improving the development outcomes for rural children.

**Q 5:** What are the key challenges and strategies for addressing the developmental needs of rural children in India?

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# UNIT 11 : ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

## UNIT STRUCTURE


11.1 Learning Objectives

11.2 Introduction

11.3 Meaning of Rural Technology

11.4 Meaning of Agriculture and Allied Sector

11.5 Green Revolution and Its Impact on Modern Methods of Agriculture

11.6 White Revolution and Blue Revolution- A Brief Idea

11.7 Role of Technology in Rural Development

11.8 Importance of Rural Technology in Agriculture and Allied Sectors

11.9 Issues with Use of Technologies

11.10 Let Us Sum Up

11.11 Further Reading

11.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

11.13 Model Questions


## 11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- define rural technology
- explain the role of technology in rural development
- explain the importance of technology in agriculture and allied sectors
- explain the issues with use of technologies in rural economy.

## 11.2 INTRODUCTION

Rural development is of utmost importance as development of these areas leads to upliftment of the nation. Since agriculture forms the backbone of rural India, it is necessary to modernise the traditional methods in order to increase the productivity. The agriculture and allied sector also consists

of agriculture and agriculture related activities such as livestock, forestry and logging, fishery, etc. Also the agriculture based industries have an important role to play in regard to the development of the country. The technological development is of vital importance to increase productivity, thus optimizing the output and profits. This will help in balanced regional development, thus ultimately contributing towards the economy as a whole. In a fast changing dynamic environment, the traditional technologies no longer hold good. But the use of modern technology certainly reaps higher benefits, and improves the overall quality of the products.

## 11.3 MEANING OF RURAL TECHNOLOGY

The technology used for the development of agriculture, allied and other sectors in rural areas is called Rural Technology. The technology which is selected for the development of these areas should cater to the needs of the local people and should be helpful in meeting the economic, social, cultural aspirations of the people. Most importantly the targeted beneficiaries must be able to adopt the technology in a sustainable manner.

The features of rural technology typically are as follows:

- It is usually applied in the agriculture and allied sectors
- It is generally low cost
- It is usually labour intensive
- The mode of operation is simple
- Rural technology is related to local culture.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Fill in the blanks

Rural Technology is .....related.

## 11.4 MEANING OF AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SECTOR

Before going into the discussion of rural technology, it is necessary to understand the meaning of agriculture and allied sector as these form the basis of rural areas. Agriculture and allied sector provides the main income

of the people residing in these areas; so this acts as a developing pillar for these areas and economy at large.

In Indian economy there are three sectors namely primary, secondary and tertiary. For development of rural areas primary sectori.e. the agriculture and allied sector is of the most importance. The agricultural sector consists of the art and science of crop and livestock production which are based on the natural resources. In a wider sense, agriculture comprises of the entire range of activities associated with the production of useful products from plants and animals, including soil cultivation, crop and livestock management, and the activities of processing and marketing. The allied sector consists of dairy farming, livestock management, fishery, poultry farming, mining, forestry, etc. The agriculture and the allied sector has a major role to play in the upliftment of the rural area, especially in a country like India.

## 11.5 GREEN REVOLUTION AND ITS IMPACT ON MODERN METHODS OF AGRICULTURE

The Green Revolution which started in India in the early 1960's had a positive impact on Indian agriculture. The father of Green Revolution in India is M.S. Swaminathan. It had helped to transform the poor productivity of agricultural output to higher productivity. During the early phase it had led to an increase in food grain production specially in Punjab, Haryana, and Western Uttar Pradesh but gradually it spread to many parts of the country, though not equally or at a uniform speed. The introduction of high-yielding varieties (HYV) of seeds, the increased availability of fertilizers and irrigation technique led to the increase in production to make the country self-sufficient in food grains.

Green Revolution had a major impact on the Indian economy in the following ways:

- **Increase in Agricultural Production:** Phenomenal increase in production of agricultural products could be seen due to adoption of HYV technology in the country. The production of wheat increased from 8.8 million tones in 1965-66 to 184 million tones in 1991-92. The productivity of other food grains also increased considerably. It was

71% in case of cereals, 104% for wheat and 52% for paddy over the period 1965-66 to 1989-90. The index number of productivity on agriculture (Base-1969-70) increased from 88.9 in 1965-66 to 156 in 1991-92 indicating an increase of about 100% in productivity over the period.

- **Employment:** The new agricultural technology facilitated employment to a large number of people in the agricultural sector as it made multi cropping possible.
- **Prosperity of Farmers:** With the increase in farm production the earnings of the rich farmers increased and they became prosperous. On the other hand, the poor farmers could not reap much benefit as a result of which the inequality between rich and poor farmers became more prominent.
- **Reduction in import of food-grains:** One of the major advantages of Green Revolution was the increase in the production of food-grains, as a result of which there was a considerable reduction in their imports. India thus became self-sufficient and was able to export food grains to other countries too.
- **Market oriented:** The farmers became much more market oriented as there was surplus production and they needed to link to the markets in order to sell their products.
- **Capitalistic Farming:** Big farmers having land of more than 10 hectares got maximum benefit as they could invest more in the latest technologies like machineries, fertilisers, HYV seeds etc. This encouraged capitalistic farming.
- **Industrial growth:** As a result of green revolution there was a need for different kinds of machines like tractors, harvesters, threshers, combines, diesel engines, electric motors, pumping sets, etc. Besides these, the demand for chemical fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, weedicides, etc. also increased to a great extent. So the industries took the benefits of these and manufactured on large scale basis. Different agro based industries also came up during this period.
- **Change in the Attitude of Farmers:** As a result of Green Revolution

the attitude of the Indian farmer of using conventional methods of cultivation since the early times had changed. They had tried to adapt to the dynamic changes and embraced the latest technologies. Thus, this had a positive impact and led to the development of the economy.

## 11.6 WHITE REVOLUTION AND BLUE REVOLUTION- A BRIEF IDEA

White Revolution: Verghese Kurien is known as the Father of the White Revolution in India. He was a social entrepreneur whose "billion-liter idea" Operation Flood (1970) - made India the largest producer of milk surpassing USA in the year 1998. This transformed India from a milk deficit country to a large milk producing country. This Revolution aimed at increasing the supply of Milk.

Blue Revolution: Dr. Arun Krishnan is the father of Blue Revolution in India. This aimed at increase in production of fish and marine products. This started in India during the tenure of the fifth five year plan in the year 1970 when the Central Government sponsored the Fish Farmers Development Agency (FFDA). Also, the Brakish Water Fish Farms Development Agency was set up to develop aquaculture. The Blue Revolution thus brought a revolutionised improvement in aquaculture by adopting new techniques of fish breeding, fish rearing, fish marketing, and fish export.

Further there are some more "Revolutions" as mentioned below:

1. Pink Revolution: Prawn.
2. Silver Revolution: Egg/ Poultry Productions.
3. Round Revolution: Potato.
4. Golden Revolution: Honey, horticulture.
5. Grey Revolution: Fertilizers
6. Brown Revolution: Cocoa, leather
7. Red Revolution: Meat & tomatoes
8. Black Revolution: Petroleum productions
9. Rainbow Revolution: Fruits (considered as 2nd Green Revolution)
10. Yellow Revolution: Oil seeds, edible oil, especially mustard and

sunflower.

11. Golden Fibre: Jute
12. Silver Fibre: Cotton
13. Evergreen Revolution: Overall Development of Agriculture.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 2:** Name any four Revolutions aimed at improving the agriculture and allied sector. (Answer in about 10 words)

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## 11.7 ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Technology plays a pivotal role in transforming the rural economy. Infact technological advancement is the most important factor that aids in economic development. A question might come in your mind - What is technological advancement? The answer will be - It is an improvement in the process of production, which often helps in increasing output. Technology does not only include scientific methods but some other processes too. The methods used and the processes undertaken should aim at yielding better output at minimized cost. Proper technology includes water, quality of seeds, and most importantly the use of scientific methods and tools.

In case of rural development, proper warehousing and transportation of agricultural products have an important role to play. As proper scientific methods of storage and distribution will give a better market, these facilities are extremely necessary for economic profit.

The promotion of rural technology should also focus on the basic amenities of people residing in these areas. Rural technology is important not only for strengthening our rural economy and for making it self-dependent but also for improving the quality of living of the vast rural population of the country. Then only we would be able to achieve the desired development of the country.

## 11.8 IMPORTANCE OF RURAL TECHNOLOGY IN AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SECTORS

The role of rural technology in agriculture and allied sector in generating income in Indian economy is worth mentioning. This has indeed played a big role in developing the agricultural industry. Agriculture is the main source of income for over 58% of the rural households. As per reports, agriculture, along with fisheries and forestry, is one of the largest contributors to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of India. As per the 2nd revised estimates by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the share of agriculture and allied sectors (including agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery) is expected to be 17.3 % of the Gross Value Added (GVA) during 2016-17 at 2011-12 prices.

India is the largest producer, consumer and exporter of spices and spice products. India has ranked second in the fruit producer's list in the world. It has grown faster than vegetables. The horticulture output of India is estimated to be 287.3 million tonnes in 2016-17 after the first advance estimate. In the farm and agriculture outputs, the country is in the third rank. The agricultural export, which is 10% of export commodities, constitutes the fourth-largest exported principal commodity. Also the agro industry in India is sub divided into various segments such as canned, dairy, processed, frozen food to fisheries, meat, poultry, and food grains.

The Department of Agriculture and Cooperation under the Ministry of Agriculture plays an active role and is responsible for the development of the agriculture sector in India. It manages various other bodies, such as the National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), to develop other allied agricultural sectors.

The importance of rural technology in agriculture and allied sectors are:

- **Increased output:** With the help of different technological advancements, the production has increased to a considerable extent. Due to the use of different fertilisers, pesticides, proper irrigation facilities, superior quality seeds, the output has increased. Apart from these, emphasis have been laid on the agriculture and allied sector

after various revolutions as discussed above to optimise the production capacities.

- **Economical:** The farmers with the help of technologies can cultivate with less labour, and low cost. Also less number of people can do more work in a short period of time due to the use of various technologies. The use of planters and harvesters makes the process simple. In agriculture, where time and costs are so important right from the process of production to the point of distribution, being economical both in cost and time is of vital importance.
- **Wide reach to the market:** The use of modern transportation facilities helps in making products available in markets on time. With modern transportation, consumers from distant places can get the products fresh. Modern transportation facilities help farmers easily transport fertilisers or other farm products to their farms, and it also helps to speed up the supply of agricultural products from the place of production to the place of consumption.
- **Transforming a deficit crop area to surplus crop area:** In desert areas farmers have taken help of technology to irrigate their crops. By the use of agricultural biotechnology crops can be even grown in desert areas. Most of these farmers grow rice which needs a lot of water; they manage to grow this rice using modern methods of irrigation using advanced technology. Advanced water sprinklers are being used to irrigate big farms and this helps the crops get enough water which is essential in their growth. Some farmers also mix nutrients/ fertilisers in this water, which helps to improve or increase the growth of crops in the deficit regions thus, transforming them into surplus crop areas.
- **Import substitution and Export Promotion:** Due to the use of technology, the production of agricultural produce or output has increased considerably. As a result of this increased production, the people of the country can be self-sufficient and be dependent on their own production rather than depending upon food materials imported from other countries. Besides this, the surplus can be exported to other countries as a result of which there will be earning of income,

which will eventually contribute to the national income.

- **Industrial growth:** For higher production, there will be a need of various equipment and machineries. These are to be obtained from industries. Thus this will enhance industrial growth in the regions and also ultimately lead to the development of the areas.
- **Reduction in rural poverty:** Due to promotion of modern technologies, the farmers have now changed their traditional methods and practices and embraced the dynamic changes. They have also adopted modern technologies and enhanced growth of the agricultural and allied sector. By this the per capita income has also increased. Thus the poverty level has reduced to a certain extent.
- **Sustaining the environment and future agricultural productivity:** In many parts of the country over pumping, water logging has been an acute problem and act as a hindrance to the primary activities. Through watershed management programmes, communities are involved in land planning and engages in agricultural practices that protect soils, increase water absorption and raise productivity through higher yields and crop diversification. The watershed program, allied with initiatives from agricultural research and extension, may be the most suited agricultural program for promoting new varieties of crops and improving the various farm practices.
- **Employment generation:** As a result of double cropping i.e. raising two consecutive crops on the same land within a single growing season, more persons can be engaged in the work. People can also be engaged in poultry farming, dairy farming, fishery, etc. Thus, this has been able to generate employment to a large number of people in the rural sector. There is tremendous scope of value addition and employment generation through the development of agro based industries in rural areas.
- **Impact of information technology in agriculture has played a revolutionary role:** Information Technology (IT) has a major role to play in all aspects of agriculture. Providing timely information to the appropriate person is the key to success. This helps to give timely

and exact information to the farmers, for effective and efficient decision making. Productivity can also be monitored using the technology. With the new extension of information technology initiatives like Krishivihar, i- Kisan, e-kutir, e-Sagoo, e-Chaupal, ICT models -AGROWEB, Agropedia, Agrinnovate, etc., Indian agriculture has taken a great forward leap in enhancing productivity.

The agriculture sector in India is expected to generate greater benefits in the coming years due to increased investments in agricultural infrastructure such as irrigation facilities, warehousing and cold storage, etc. Factors such as reduced transaction costs and time, improved port gate management and better fiscal incentives would definitely contribute to the growth of economic development.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** Write the full form of NDDB, CSO, GDP.

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**Q 4:** What are the various information technology initiatives to enhance agricultural productivity? (Answer in about 20 words)

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## 11.9 ISSUES WITH USE OF TECHNOLOGIES

Technology use in India is not so smooth. There are several issues or challenges that act as a barrier to use of technology in agriculture and the allied sectors. These are as follows:

- Firstly, the awareness level of technology is not equal in all parts of the country. Most of the people of the rural areas are not aware of the technological advancements. So, they hesitate to adopt new technologies. Farmers of Punjab, Haryana, Maharashtra are adopting the new technologies whereas in some states the farmers are still using the age old methods and techniques.
- The literacy rate is also low in the rural areas. The lack of basic literacy

as well as computer literacy also acts as a hindrance to the use of technology. As farmers remain ignorant due to the lack of literacy they fail to adapt to the new changes.

- Some farmers are also hesitant to accept the new technologies. For this attitude of the farmers, the agriculture and allied sector often remains backward.
- Due to lack of funds, the poor farmers are not able to purchase the technology. The cost of seeds, fertilisers, animal feeds is higher. As a result, the rich farmers grows more rich and the poor ones remains poor. There is no equal development of all classes of the farmers.
- Modern technologies sometimes cannot be used properly due to several natural calamities like flood, soil erosion, earthquake, etc.
- Frequent power cuts also act as a barrier to technology adaptation. Due to shortage of electricity technology cannot be effectively used in the rural areas.
- Due to improper transportation facilities, the products sometimes do not get a wider reach to the markets. The middlemen commission in between also makes the prices rise high but the farmers are paid less.
- Lack of proper training facilities for use of the technology and an inadequate feedback system also results in failure in making profit. Also due inadequate hygiene system different diseases are caused in pigs, hens, fishes, etc. This poses a threat to the allied sector.
- No adequate exposure visits to modern poultry farm, hatchery, agricultural fields, dairy farming, fishery, etc. also limit the knowledge of the farmers resulting in low profit.
- The over use of technology also poses a threat to the environment and leads to various pollution and degrades the environment.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 5:** Choose the correct answer

The literacy rate in India is high/low.

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## 11.10 LET US SUM UP

- Rural technology helps in increasing the productivity of the agriculture and allied sector and thus developing the economy of the country.
- The different revolutions viz, the Green revolution, Blue revolution, White revolution, etc. have positive impacts on increasing the output of agriculture and allied sector.
- The Government's steps in the Union Budget 2017 for agriculture and allied sector has been highlighted and these will definitely help in the development of the primary sector.
- Warehousing, storage, water, methods along with various other technologies play an important role in increasing the productivity and output.
- The internet technology has brought revolutionary changes in the agricultural and allied sector.
- There are different challenges or issues like low awareness level, illiteracy, lack of proper training facilities, frequent power cuts, inadequate exposure visits, improper transportation system, etc. are inherent in the use of technology in the field of agriculture and allied sector in India.



## 11.11 FURTHER READING

1) Singh, K. (2009). Rural Development Principles, Policies and Management. New Delhi: Sage Publications.

2) Sreedhar, G. and Rajasekhar, D. (2014). Rural Development in India (Strategies and Processes). New Delhi: Concept Publishing Company (P) Ltd.

## 11.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Agriculture

**Ans to Q No 2:** Green Revolution, Blue Revolution, White Revolution and Yellow Revolution.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Full forms of:

NDDB - National Dairy Development Board

CSO - Central Statistics Office

GDP Gross Domestic Product

**Ans to Q No 4:** Information technology initiatives to enhance agricultural productivity are: Krishivihar, i-Kisan, e-kutir, e-Sagoo, ICT models - AGROWEB, Agropedia, Agrinnovate.

**Ans to Q No 5:** Low.

## 11.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Very Short Questions**

**Q 1:** State the meaning of Rural Technology.

**Q 2:** Write the meaning of agriculture and allied sector.

**Q 3:** Define Blue Revolution and White Revolution.

**Short Questions** (Answer each question in about 150 words)

**Q 1:** Discuss the importance of information technology in agriculture.

**Q 2:** Why is there a need to modernise the traditional methods of agriculture? Explain.

**Q 3:** Discuss the role of technology in Rural Development.

**Long Questions** (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

**Q 1:** Write about the Green revolution and its impact on modern methods of agriculture.

**Q 2:** Discuss the role of technology in agriculture and allied sector.

**Q 3:** Write about the issues involved in use of technology in agriculture and allied sector.

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# UNIT 12 : RURAL MARKETING

## UNIT STRUCTURE


12.1 Learning Objectives

12.2 Introduction

12.3 Rural Marketing

- 12.3.1 Concept of Rural Marketing
- 12.3.2 Phased Evolution of Rural Marketing
- 12.3.3 Rural Marketing Model

12.4 Nature and Characteristics of the Rural Market

- 12.12 Opportunities of the Rural Market

12.6 Challenges of the Rural Market

12.7 An Overview of Indian Rural Market

12.8 Let Us Sum Up

12.9 Further Reading

12.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.11 Model Questions


## 12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- discuss the fundamental concepts of rural marketing
- learn about the phased evolution of rural marketing in India
- explore rural marketing model to explain the rural marketing process
- comprehend the nature and characteristics of the rural market
- explain the challenges and the opportunities of the rural market.

## 12.2 INTRODUCTION

The size of the prize in India's rural hinterlands is growing bigger than many businesses initially thought. More companies are expanding their base in India's rural markets than at any other time in history – and for good reason. The marketing battle field has shifted from the towns/cities to the villages. "Go rural" seems to be the latest slogan of the marketers.

In this connection Adi Godrej says: *"The rural consumer is discerning and the rural market is vibrant. At the current rate of growth it will soon outstrip the urban market. The rural market is not sleeping any longer. We are."*

India's vast rural market offers a huge potential for a marketer facing stiff competition in the urban markets. The rural market environment is very different from the familiar surroundings of the urban market. The current dynamics clearly necessitates sound marketing strategies for marketers trying to tap the rural market and drawing benefits from the growing rural consumption.

## 12.3 RURAL MARKETING

In a large economy like India's, rural marketing has emerged as an important and distinct internal sub-division within the marketing discipline. This sub-divison clearly highlights the differences between rural marketing and mainstream marketing.

### 12.3.1 Concept of Rural Marketing

The definition of rural marketing based on flows between rural and urban locations presumes defining the rural area. Collin's Cobuild Dictionary (2001) describes the word rural as "places far away from towns or cities". The definition of rural market that is used by the Census of India (2001) as it has advantages of relevance, simplicity and measurability. Rural is defined as that which is not Urban. And, Urban means:

- all locations with a municipality/corporation, cantonment board or a notified town area;
- all other locations satisfying all of the following criteria:
  a) a minimum population of 12,000;
  b) at least 712 percent of the male workforce engaged in non-agricultural activities; and
  c) a population density of over 400 per sq. km.

The term 'rural marketing' which was earlier used as an umbrella term to refer to all commercial transactions of rural people, acquired a separate meaning of great significance in 1990s. Prior to mid-1960s, rural marketing referred to marketing of rural goods and services in rural and urban areas and agricultural inputs in rural markets. It was considered synonymous to "Agricultural Marketing". During the period from mid 1960s to mid 1990s, the marketing of rural products received considerable attention in the general marketing framework. The formation of bodies like KVIC, GCC, APCO Fabrics and the increasing importance given by government to promote and market these products contributed to the upsurge of these products. After mid 1990s, rural marketing represented the emergent distinct activity of attracting and serving rural markets to fulfil the needs and wants of individuals, households and occupations of rural people. In 21st Century, the corporate world has finally realized that quick-fix solutions and piecemeal approaches will deliver only limited results in the rural market. A long-term commitment with the rural market is needed on the part of the organizations to explore the existing potential of this market. At the same time the focus of the marketer should not be limited to just selling product and services, rather they should set an aim at creating an environment for this to happen.

### 12.3.2 Evolution of Rural Marketing

Rural marketing as it exists today is a result of evolution over many decades. Different patterns of flow of goods and services were dominating the rural marketing spectrum at different times. These time spans were long enough to be called as different phases, which are described below:

***(i) Phase I (before 1960)*:** Rural marketing referred to selling of rural products in rural and urban areas and agricultural inputs in rural markets. Phase I was treated as synonymous to 'agricultural marketing'.

*(ii)* ***Phase II (1960 to 1990)*****:** In this era, green revolution resulted from scientific farming and transferred many of the poor villages into prosperous business centers. As a result, the demand for agricultural inputs went up especially in terms of wheats and paddies. During these period, marketing of agricultural inputs took the importance. In phase II, rural marketing represented marketing of agricultural in rural markets and marketing of rural produce in urban areas.

*(iii)* ***Phase III (post-liberalization period of the 20th century)*****:** In this phase, rural marketing represented the emerging, distinct activity of attracting and serving rural markets to fulfil the needs and wants of rural households, people and their occupations.

*(iv)* ***Phase IV (21st century)*****:** In this phase, the corporate world realized that to tap the real potential of the rural market, it needs to make a long-term commitment with this market. Its approach and strategies must not focus on just selling products and services, but they should also aim at creating an environment for this to happen. This approach has been demonstrated successfully by HUL's *Project Shakti*, ITC's *e-choupal*, AMARON Batteries' *Amaragaon campaign*, etc.

As a result of the above analysis, we are in a position to define rural marketing in the following words : "Rural marketing can be seen as a function which manages all those activities involved in assessing, stimulating and converting the purchasing power into an effective demand for specific products and services, and moving them to the people in rural area to create satisfaction and a standard of living for them and thereby achieves the goals of the organization".

### 12.3.3 Rural Marketing Model

The Rural Marketing Model (Fig. 12.1) describes a step-by-step process of execution of a rural marketing effort. This model has certain nuances, which need to be understood to attain success in the rural market.

***Source:*** Dogra & Ghuman (2012)

**Fig. 12.1 Rural Marketing Model**

The different steps for implementation of the rural marketing model are described below:

***(i) Segmentation***

A key factor for the rural market is that it is a distinct and unique market. Each of these markets has rural consumers with quite different lifestyles, socio-cultural, economic and demographic backgrounds. Therefore, the first step for implementing any rural marketing effort is to segment the rural market on the basis of select parameters that influence the demand for certain product categories.

***(ii) Lifestyle Analysis***

An organization planning to serve the rural market has to develop an understanding of the lifestyle of the consumers in different rural market segments. Lifestyle analysis is important because it broadly defines and prioritises the consumer needs in a market segment. In some cases, it may not be the buying capacity but the lifestyle of the consumers that influences the demand for a given product.

***(iii) Profiling of Rural Consumer***

The lifestyle analysis enables a business organization to develop a

generic profile of the consumers in a rural market segment. This profile should be considered while designing or modifying the marketing mix for that market. Here the regional and local organizations are in an advantageous position as they are fully aware of the consumers' profile in a rural market segment, and they can design an appropriate marketing mix to make a mark in that segment.

***(iv) Need Profile***

Analysis of the generic profile of the consumers of a rural area or market segment helps business organizations identify the needs of those consumers in general terms. A marketer can then translate these broadly defined needs in more specific terms, from the perspective of different product categories.

***(v) Selection of Target Market***

After undertaking the above steps, a business organization can judge whether it could serve the needs of a particular market segment effectively and efficiently with its present market strategy or modifies marketing mix. Once the organization finds compatibility between the consumer needs and its marketing mix in a rural market segment, then that segment can be identified and selected as its target market.

***(vi) Designing/Modifying Marketing Mix***

An organization needs to consider modifications in different elements of its marketing mix to serve highly heterogeneous rural market in India. Organizations may vary the promotional campaigns or packaging across different territories to adapt to variations in tastes and preferences of the consumers.

***(vii) Implementation***

Implementation is a major problem in rural marketing. Serving such a huge, widely scattered and highly heterogeneous territory could be a huge task for any organization. Rural marketing plans cannot be implemented with an urban mindset. Therefore, an organization needs to make a comprehensive effort and ruralize its strategy in a real sense to make significant inroads in the rural market. To have a meaningful success in the rural market an organization has to be as passionate

in implementation as it is in planning.

***(viii) Control***

The rural picture is undergoing transformation at a faster speed. Organizations striving to achieve success in the rural market need to constantly research the developments in rural territories.

## 12.4 NATURE AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE RURAL MARKET

The characteristics of the rural market not only make it different from the urban market but also justify its study as a distinct discipline. These characteristics are discussed below:

***(i) Large and Scattered Market***

India's rural market is large and scattered in the sense that it consists of nearly 712 crore rural consumers who live in approximately 6, 38, 3612 villages spread over 32 lakh square kilometer area. Nearly 1, 412,098 villages, or 23% of the total number of villages in India, have population less than 200; and another 21% have population between 200 and 1200.

***(ii) Heterogeneous market***

The rural market is not a homogeneous one. More than 20,000 ethnic groups are present in rural India, and this poses a formidable challenge to the marketer. There are approximately 24 languages and 1,642 dialects, and the dialect varies every 100 km or so, making it extremely difficult to develop a uniform promotional message.

***(iii) Income from Agriculture***

Nearly 1212% of rural income comes from the agriculture sector, hence rural prosperity depends to a great extent on agricultural prosperity. However, the recent past has witnessed a gradual reduction in the sole dependence on agriculture, as other sectors have started playing significant role in the rural economy.

***(iv) Standard of Living***

Over 70% of the rural population is employed in small-scale agricultural

and related occupations. This dependence on agriculture and natural factors has led to an acute seasonality and presence of high change element in income receipts in rural areas. This unreliability factor in case of rural income makes the rural consumers extremely conscious in their purchase behavior as they are not confident about their future earnings.

***(v) Infrastructural Facilities***

The infrastructural facilities like roads, warehouses, communication system, and financial facilities are insufficient in rural areas. Infrastructure or its inadequacy is the single most important factor that distinguishes urban and rural markets. Promotion and physical distribution thus become very difficult in the rural terrain because of inadequate infrastructural facilities.

## 12.5 OPPORTUNITIES OF THE RURAL MARKET

Recent years have seen rural markets emerging as an important growth engine in the India consumption story. With 70 per cent of India's population living in more than 6 lakh villages spread over 32 lakh square kilometres, they present a significant market opportunity. In fact despite rising urbanization, 63% of India's population will continue to live in the rural areas even in 20212.

The business environment in rural market is improving, thanks to better infrastructure and the growing number of consumers who are earning more and are buying products and services that support their aspirations. The confidence of these forces is driving the rural market. For many businesses, in today's volatile business environment,India's rural markets hold the key to future growth. Companies that recognize this enormous opportunity are stepping up efforts to gain a strong foothold in these markets.

There are quite a few reasons for the growing interest in rural markets. Their vast untapped potential, increasing income and purchasing power, improved accessibility and the increasing competition in urban markets make rural markets an attractive destination for organizations.

***(i) Untapped Potential***

The Indian rural market, with its vast size and demand base, offers ample opportunities to companies. The size of the rural economy in 2012-13 has been estimated at Rs 16 trillion (NSSO data). As mentioned earlier rural India accounts for 70 percent of India's population, 48 percent of national income, 126 percent of the total expenditure and one-third of total savings. More than 800 million people live in villages equaling 12% of the globe's population. Since most companies are since in the early stages of rural market development, therefore it is still unexplored to a great extent and thereby offers plethora of opportunities to marketers. Nearly 42 percent of rural households owned a television in 2009-2010, up from 26 percent five years earlier. Similarly, 14 percent of rural households had a two-wheeler in 2009-2010, twice the penetration during 2004-20012. To have some idea of the potential of the rural market, we can consider the following facts:

- Rural FMCG market accounts for 40 percent of the overall FMCG market in India, in revenue terms.
- Dabur generates over 40-412 percent of its domestic revenue from rural sales.
- LIC sells 120% of its policies in rural India.

***(ii) Rising Rural Prosperity***

Rural India accounts for about 120 percent of India's GDP. Per capita rural GDP has also experienced strong improvement over the last few years. Since 2000, it has grown faster than per capita urban GDP. As incomes rise, rural consumption shifts from necessities to discretionary goods and lifestyle products.

As a result of the growing affluence, fueled by good monsoon and the increase in agricultural output, rural India has a large consuming class with 41% of India's middle class and 128% of total disposable income. With increase in per capita income due to use of superior quality of seeds and fertilizers and also due to the fact that there are a lot of rural schemes introduced by the government of India for the rural

population the standard of living has improved.

The income of a large proportion of the population that resides in rural areas but which drives down to urban areas, also acts as a multiplier when one aggregates the income in the two markets. According to NCAER, the percentage of very poor families in rural India ( having an annual income of Rs.16,000 or less) had fallen from 61.4% in 194-912 to just less than 212% in 2006-07.

***(III) Less Reliance on Agriculture and Monsoon***

Agriculture now contributes 18% of India's economy from as high as 120% in the 19120s. A third of more than 900,000 farming households in the country depend on agriculture only for supplementary income, amounting to less than half of their monthly expenses, according to a survey released by the statistics ministry in December.

There was a time when market predictions were made on the basis of the state of the monsoon but this trend has changed over the years. There is a significant non-farming sector, which generates almost 412 percent of the rural wealth. Corporate India has also come a long way to live with the uncertainty of monsoon.

***(iv) Increasing Rural Consumption***

Nowhere is this phenomenon more evident than in India. From 2009 to 2012, spending by India's 800+ million rural residents reached $69 billion, some 212% more than their urban counterparts spent over the same period. And projected growth rates are simply astounding: According to recent Nielsen estimates, consumption in rural areas is growing at 1.12 times the rate in urban areas, and today's $12 billion consumer goods market in rural India is expected to hit $100 billion by 20212.It is the surge in rural consumption that that has made the rural market so attractive to the corporate. Without the surge in rural consumption, their sales in the rural market would not have been materialized. Not only has rural consumption grown substantially in recent years, but has also outplaced the urban consumption. In the two years between 2009-10 and 2011-12, spending on goods and services by rural India at Rs.3.712 lakh crore was much higher than

the urban spending (Rs.2.99 lakh crore). In growth rate of spending too, rural India was ahead of urban. The growth rate in the two-year period was 19 percent for rural India while it was 17 percent for urban India.

As per the data from the CSO, the monthly per capita rural consumption rose 18 percent in real terms in 2011-12 to Rs.707.24 from Rs.1299 in 2009-10 (at 2004-012 prices). According to Nielson more than 80 percent of FMCG products are growing faster in rural market than in urban.

***(v) Large Population***

Out of the total of 1210.2 million population in India, the size of rural population is 833.1 million (or 68.84% of the total population) and urban population 377.1 million (or 31.16%). During 2001-2011 the population of the country increased by 181.4 million and the growth of rural population has been 12.18%.

***(vi) Rural Marketing Efforts***

Many corporations are recognizing this enormous opportunity and stepping up efforts to gain a strong foothold in India's rural markets. But they are meeting with mixed results. An undeveloped transportation infrastructure, unreliable telecommunications and electricity services, inadequate distribution networks, and widely dispersed consumers make it costly to establish a profitable presence at scale. And finding partners to help identify, sell to, and service rural customers is also difficult. The growing number of companies is realizing the importance of the rural markets. To tap the rural markets, the marketing efforts of these organizations are becoming more aggressive day by day. Companies are coming up with innovative models to make the products reach the rural consumers. The increased penetration is one of the major reasons for the development of the rural market.

India's rural markets present opportunities that companies seeking to become high-performance businesses cannot afford to ignore. But the size and scale of those markets have been offset by concerns about the profitability of these markets and the durability of rural demand.

## 12.6 CHALLENGES OF THE RURAL MARKET

The growth opportunities in India's rural markets are significant. To capitalize on them, however, businesses must overcome significant sales and distribution barriers. There are vast differences between rural and urban markets, including infrastructure, business and social structure, market size and consumer behavior. Today, when companies are seriously considering of putting in efforts to tap the rural market, the challenges experienced by them can be classified into three major categories – reaching, acquiring and retaining rural customers.

**(i)** ***Reaching Rural Customers***

Rural markets are geographically dispersed and lack adequate physical and social infrastructure. As a result, the distribution of goods and services to and from villages is extremely difficult and costly. Even today, when it comes to going rural, "high cost-to-serve the rural markets" is the number one challenge.

The deficits in rural market infrastructure and lack of established supply chain networks adversely affect the service as well as the cost aspect. One of the greatest challenges for rural marketers lies in reaching out to the remotest destinations and having a number of vendors at the retailing end.

***(ii) Acquiring Rural Customers***

Today's rural consumers are better connected and more aware of products and services than many businesses realize. To acquire these consumers, businesses need to develop compelling value propositions.

As rural consumers become more demanding, companies should meet those requirements with better products and skilled sales people. The challenge these sales professionals face is to understand rural customers' needs know how to appeal to their aspirations and motivations. However, finding qualified sales staff is a major hurdle in rural markets.

***(iii) Retaining Rural Customers***

With increasing rural competition and high costs to-serve, customer

retention is emerging as a major challenge. High customer acquisition costs make it imperative for companies to increase customer retention in order to scale operations profitably. To boost retention, companies must provide satisfying experiences across the customer lifecycle and generate positive word of mouth. However, providing reliable and consistent after-sales service and optimizing the costs of a high-quality experience remain major obstacles. The wide geographic dispersion of a small number of customers drives high sales-service costs, and many businesses cannot provide a dedicated after-sales service network. Also, rural markets have limited data on consumer demographics, behaviors, preferences and perceptions, which effect in sales planning. Moreover, poor connectivity prevents companies from easily acquiring real-time and reliable sales data. That makes it difficult for them to monitor and measure key performance indicators including the number customers lost or gained.

Though the rural market offers a big attraction to the marketers, it is not easy to enter the market and take a sizeable share in a short time. Some of the other barriers in exploring rural markets are as follows:

- Low literacy levels of the rural population
- Traditional lifestyle
- Backwardness of the rural masses
- Variation in languages and dialects
- Seasonality of demand
- Banking and credit problems

Therefore, it can be easily understood that challenges in rural markets are huge and many. Companies need to design a right marketing mix to crack open the potential of the rural market.

## 12.7 AN OVERVIEW OF INDIAN RURAL MARKET

The rural market is transforming year after year, and it would be quite inappropriate to approach with a mindset about its past image. Rural consumers are particularly aspiring or striving to purchase branded, high

quality products. Consequently, businesses in India are optimistic about growth of the country's rural consumer markets, which is expected to be faster than urban consumer markets. The better networking among rural consumers and their tendency to proactively seek information via various sources to be better informed while making purchase decisions. Importantly, the wider reach of media and telecommunication services has provided information to India's rural consumers and is influencing their purchase decisions. Rural consumers in India are evolving towards a broader notion of value provided by products and services which involves aspects of price combined with utility, aesthetics and features, and not just low prices.

The hinterlands in India consist of about 6, 38,3612 villages. These villages are inhabited by about 8120 million consumers making up for 70 percent of population and contributing around half of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Consumption patterns in these rural areas are gradually changing to increasingly resemble the consumption pattern of urban areas. Some of India's largest consumer companies serve one-third of their consumers from rural India. Owing to a favourable changing consumption trend as well as the potential size of the market, rural India provides a large and attractive investment opportunity to private companies.

***Market size***

India's per capita GDP in rural regions has grown at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 6.2 per cent since 2000. The Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector in rural and semi-urban India is expected to cross US$ 20 billion mark by 2018 and reach US$ 100 billion by 20212.

***Recent Developments***

Following are some of the major investments and developments in the Indian rural sector.

- India's unemployment rate has declined to 4.8 per cent in 2017 compared to 9.12 per cent in 2016, as a result of the Government's increased focus towards rural jobs and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme.
- The Ministry of Rural Development is expecting to achieve its annual targeted length of 48,812 kilometers of rural roads by March 31, 2017

under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), which has reached a completion stage of 67.123 per cent (32,963 kms) as on January 27, 2017.

- The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) plans to provide around 200,000 point-of-sale (PoS) machines in 100,000 villages and distribute RuPay cards to over 34 million farmers across India, to enable farmers to undertake cashless transactions.
- Magma Fincorp, a Kolkata-based non-banking finance company (NBFC) plans to expand its operations in South India, with specific focus on rural and semi-urban markets to help the company grow rapidly.
- Bharti Airtel is applying for a payments bank licence and has involved Kotak Mahindra Bank as a potential investor in the venture, in a bid to tap significant revenue opportunities from the Reserve Bank of India's financial inclusion initiative. Payments banks are meant to fan out into the rural, remote areas of the country, offering limited but critical services such as money transfers, loans and deposit collection. While banks have the knowhow, telecom companies have the network, making it an ideal match.

***Government Initiatives***

The Government of India has planned various initiatives to provide and improve the infrastructure in rural areas which can have a multiplier effect in increasing movements of goods, services and thereby improve earnings potential of rural areas subsequently improving consumption.

- The Government of India has approved the proposal to construct 10 million houses for the rural population, which will require an investment outlay of Rs 81,9712 crore (US$ 12.7 billion) for the period from 2016-17 to 2018-19.
- The Government of India aims to provide tap water regularly to every household by 2030 in line with United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, requiring a funding of Rs 23,000 crore (US$ 3.127 billion) each year until the target is met.
- The Government has introduced various reforms in the Union Budget

2017-18 to uplift the rural markets. Some of the key highlights of the Budget are:

- Rs 187,223 crore (US$ 28.08 billion) has been allocated towards rural, agriculture and allied sectors.
- The Allocation for Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojana-Gramin has been increased from Rs 112,000 crore (US$ 2.212 billion) to Rs 23,000 crore (US$ 3.412 billion) in the year 2017-18 with a target to complete 10 million houses for the houseless by the year 2019.
- The pace of roads construction under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) has been accelerated to 133 kms per day as against an average of 73 kms per day during the years 2011-14.
- The allocation to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been Rs 48,000 crore (US$ 7.2 billion) in the year 2017-18, which is the highest ever allocated amount.

- The Government of India is looking to install Wi-Fi hotspots at more than 1,000 gram panchayats across India, under its ambitious project called Digital Village, in order to provide internet connectivity for mass use, as well as to enable delivery of services like health and education in far-flung areas.
- In the Union Budget 2017-18, the Government of India mentioned that it is on course to achieve 100 per cent village electrification by May 1, 2018.
- The Government of India has sought Parliament's approval for an additional expenditure of Rs 129,978.29 crore (US$ 8.9 billion), which will be used to support the government's rural jobs scheme, building rural infrastructure, urban development and farm insurance.

***Road Ahead***

As is the trend with urban India, consumers in the rural regions are also expected to embrace online purchases over time and drive consumption digitally. The rural regions are already well covered by

basic telecommunication services and are now witnessing increasing penetration of computers and smartphones. Taking advantage of these developments, online portals are being viewed as key channels for companies trying to enter and establish themselves in the rural market. The Internet has become a cost-effective means for a company looking to overcome geographical barriers and broaden its reach.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** Define 'Urban'.

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**Q 2:** How rural marketing defined before 1960?

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## 12.8 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the scenerio of Indian Rural market. India's Rural Market for consumer products and services is growing at an accelerated pace. An urban marketer interested to tap these marketing opportunities in rural India needs to develop a deeper understanding of the rural marketing ecology. Further, a marketer requires better insights on the logic of organizing marketing efforts in rural areas considering these rural specificities. Also, rural market is changing very fast and is very much different from the urban one. The marketer with an urban mindset and the image of rural India as it used to exist would be in for a surprise when he makes a serious attempt to understand the evolution of rural areas as the market of the future with all the indicators showing an upward sign.

As the space is not for too many players, those who target and tap this market first in a systematic manner and build a relationship with the consumer and the trade will be benefited.



## 12.9 FURTHER READING

1) Krishnamoorty R.(2008),*Introduction to Rural Marketing* Himalaya Publishing House.

2) Dogra B. and Ghuman K. (2012) *Rural marketing: Concepts and Practices*, McGraw Hill, 2012.

3) Mohamed (Dr.) N. S., *Rural Marketing in India: Opportunities, Challenges and Strategies*, www.alliancebschool.com.

4) Kashyap P. and Raut S.,( 20012) *The Rural Marketing Book* Biztantra Publications.



## 12.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Urban is:

- All locations with a municipality/corporation, cantonment board or a notified town area;
- All other locations satisfying all of the following criteria:
  a) a minimum population of 12,000;
  b) at least 712 percent of the male workforce engaged in non-agricultural activities; and
  c) a population density of over 400 per sq. km.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Rural marketing referred to selling of rural products in rural and urban areas and agricultural inputs in rural markets. Phase I was treated as synonymous to 'agricultural marketing'.



## 12.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Q 1:** Discuss the evolution of rural marketing over a period of time.

**Q 2:** Illustrate the different steps of the rural marketing model.

**Q 3:** Give an overview of the Indian rural market.

**Q 4:** Discuss the various opportunities and challenges in the rural market.

**Q 5:** How does the heterogeneity of the Indian rural market affect the marketing mix strategies?

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# UNIT 13 : AGRICULTURAL MARKETING AND VALUE CHAIN ANALYSIS

## UNIT STRUCTURE


13.1 Learning Objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Meaning and Definition of Agricultural Marketing

13.4 Scope of Agricultural Marketing

13.5 Significance/Importance of Agricultural Marketing

13.6 Process of Agricultural Marketing

13.7 Characteristics of a good agricultural marketing system

13.8 Function of Agricultural Marketing

13.9 Problems in Agricultural Marketing

13.10 Concept of Agricultural Value Chain

13.11 Components of the Agricultural Value Chain

13.12 Let Us Sum Up

13.13 Further Reading

13.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.15 Model Questions


## 13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- understand the meaning, scope and significance of agricultural marketing.
- process of agricultural marketing.
- good characteristics of agricultural marketing.
- functions and problems of agricultural marketing.
- concept of value chain and components.

## 13.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit is concerned with familiarising you with the basic concept of agricultural marketing and value chain analysis. They include the meaning

of agricultural marketing, the importance of agricultural marketing, the scope and process and functions of agricultural marketing as well as the problem of agricultural marketing. In the second part of the unit, we will understand the meaning of the agricultural value chain and its components.

## 13.3 MEANING AND DEFINITION OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

The term agricultural marketing consists of two words namely agriculture and marketing. Agriculture means those activities (i.e., all primary activities of production), where natural resources are used for human welfare. Generally, it is a means to growing or raising crops and livestock. Marketing means the performance or operation of various economic activities, which includes moving goods and services from the point of production to the point of consumption. Therefore, agricultural marketing consists of all activities involved in the supply of farm inputs to the farmers and the movement of agricultural products from the farms to the consumers. It includes various functions namely assembling, transportation, storing, buying, selling, standardization, grading, processing, sales promotion, etc.

According to Acharya and Agarwal, “agricultural marketing is the study of all activities, agencies and policies involved in the procurement of farm inputs by the farmers and the movement of agricultural products from the farms to the consumers.”

Thomsen states that “the study of agricultural marketing comprises all the operations, and the agencies conducting them, involved in the movement of farm-produced foods, raw materials and their derivatives, such as textiles, from the farms to the final consumers, and the effects of such operations on farmers, middleman and consumers.”

According to the National Commission on Agriculture (XII Report, 1976), “Agricultural marketing is a process which starts with a decision to produce a saleable farm commodity, and it involves all the aspects of market structure or system, both functional and institutional, based on technical and economic considerations, and includes pre- and post-harvest operations, assembling, grading, storage, transportation and distribution.”

## 13.4 SCOPE OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

The scope of agricultural marketing can be examined from five aspects namely, Producers' interest, consumers' interest, societal interest, traders' interest and Government role.

a) **Farmers' Interest:** A healthy marketing system is an incentive for the farmers to use the resources efficiently. Thus, efficient input and output marketing systems are indispensable to achieve the farmer's welfare.

b) **Consumers' Interest:** Marketing is a system that facilitates the movement of commodities from producers to consumers. Thus, it provides a scope to the consumers to choose commodities of their choice to satisfy their needs. By using the efficient methods of marketing, consumers' welfare will be achieved.

c) **Society's Interest:** Society's interest is an extension of the consumer's interest. When consumers' needs are met by effective marketing systems, it will benefit society on a large scale. Society's resources are efficiently distributed among the population in the desired direction. That is to say, people's welfare is directly influenced by the efficient marketing system.

d) **Traders' Interest:** Middlemen or Market intermediaries are those functionaries who facilitate the movement of products from producers to the ultimate consumers. They may be wholesalers or commission agents or retailers etc.

e) **Government Role:** The government has also performed certain functions, as a custodian of people's welfare. These include the procurement of food grains for the maintenance of buffer stocks and to meet the public distribution system through purchases by FCI.

## 13.5 SIGNIFICANCE/IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

After the introduction of different farm technologies such as the green revolution, blue revolution, white revolution, yellow revolution etc, India has achieved self-sufficiency in agriculture and allied sectors. Now the economy

is involved in international trade to sell the excess supplies of commodities to needy foreign countries. Farmers are producing products for international marketing. Therefore, input marketing is growing at a rapid rate. Demand for fertilizers and pesticides, improved seeds, machinery, irrigation, and farm finance are continuously increasing. All these trends in modern agriculture are increasing the scope of agricultural marketing, from the point of view of product and input marketing.

The interaction of demand and supply determined the prices for the commodities in the market. These prices act as signals to producers with regard to what products to be produced and in what quantities. Thus, marketing gives signals to increase production and ensures the availability of goods and services. If marketing is developed, demand for goods increases and as a result production of goods also increases. Due to increased production, the demand for inputs increases.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What is agricultural marketing? (Answer in about 20 words)

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.....

**Q 2:** Write two scopes of agricultural marketing (Answer in about 40 words)

.....

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## 13.6 PROCESS OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

Three processes are involved in making the availability of commodities from the producers to the ultimate consumers. These processes are namely: a) Assembling (concentration), b) Equivalisation and c) Dispersion (distribution).

**a)** **Assembling**: Assembling is the process of concentration of produce commodities from the individual farmers to the consuming markets, in sufficient quantities for efficient processing, transportation, storage

etc. There are two forms of assembling i.e., primary assembling and secondary assembling.

i) Primary assembling: In primary assembling, produce commodities are assembled in the villages and primary markets as the farmers feel it convenient in view of small quantities of produce, pressing demand for cash, lack of transport facilities, paucity of information on the prices etc., prevailing in the other markets. Village merchants and itinerant traders or merchants are the prominent functionaries in the primary assembling.

ii) Secondary assembling: Secondary assembling succeeds primary assembling. It is initially found in the producing areas and then in the consuming areas. New functionaries like commission agents join in the secondary assembling.

**b) Equivalisation**: Equivalisation is the adjustment of supply and demand as per the requirements based on the time, place and quantity. Although equivalisation tends to be confined to the wholesale markets, to some degree, it is also found in marketing channels as well. Through the process of equivalisation, the products are moved from surplus areas (i.e those areas where abundant production) to deficit areas (i.e. areas where Products/commodities are not available as per the consumption requirements of the people). In this regard, transportation should be well-developed. Thus, adjustment of quantities as per the requirements is another important aspect of equivalisation.

**c) Dispersion**: The process of transferring goods and services from producing regions to the millions of consumers via consuming markets is known as dispersion. The process of dispersion starts from the major wholesale markets.

## 13.7 CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD AGRICULTURAL MARKETING SYSTEM

The following characteristics should exist in a good agricultural system:

i) One of the conditions for an efficient agricultural marketing system is

that the government should not interfere in free market transactions. The methods of intervention include restrictions on the transportation of food grains, restrictions on the quantity to be processed or the development of processing plants, price supports, rationing, price ceilings, and so on. When these conditions are violated, inefficiency in the marketing system emerges, and commodities enter the black market.

ii) The marketing system should function on the independent, systematic, and orderly decisions of the millions of consumers and producers whose lives are impacted by it.

iii) Considering the rapid development of the urban-industrial economy, the marketing system should be capable of evolving into a complex and comprehensive marketing system.

iv) The marketing system should bring demand and supply together and should establish an equilibrium between the two.

v) The marketing system should be able to create jobs by promoting the growth of processing companies and persuading individuals to purchase more processed goods that correspond to their tastes, habits, and income levels.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** What is assembling? (Answer in about 30 words)

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**Q 4:** Write two characteristics of good agricultural marketing. (Answer in about 30 words)

.....

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## 13.8 FUNCTION OF AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

In simple terms, marketing facilitates means the transfer of ownership of the products from the producers to the consumers. In the process of

transferring the ownership from the producer to the ultimate user, several activities are performed. In this regard, marketing function can be identified as a single activity, which facilitates the movement of the product from the point of its production till it reaches the ultimate consumer. But marketing function encompasses the broad functions of concentration and dispersion. Thus, marketing functions vary for different commodities. The marketing functions are classified as:

1) Function of Transfer of Ownership
   a) Selling
   b) Buying
   c) Demand creation
   d) Price determination.
2) Function of Physical Movement
   a) Transportation
   b) Storage
3) Function of changing the form of the product
   a) Standardization and grading
   b) Packing
4) Facilitating Functions
   a) Market financing
   b) Risk bearing
   c) Market information.

**1) Function of Transfer of Ownership:**

Selling and buying are the two important functions involved in the transfer of ownership. Selling is the process of finding buyers and convincing them to buy the product at a price, where both sellers and buyers are satisfied. The process of buying involves identifying one's needs, finding the source of supply of the goods and procuring them at the right price.

a) Selling: The selling function consists of the following sub-functions:
   i) Product Planning and Development: The product which is needed by consumers should be taken into consideration in selling.
   ii) Contractual function: Contractual function involves identifying

the potential consumers for the product and initiating and maintaining contacts with them for selling the commodity.

iii) Demand creation: Once the potential consumers are identified, next we introduce various sales techniques to stimulate them. So that the targeted desired sales can be achieved.

iv) The function of Negotiation: The quality and amount of the proposed commodity, the time of transfer, the packing details, the payment method, and other criteria are some crucial considerations while selling. To prevent future disputes between the buyers and sellers, these should be carefully negotiated.

b) Buying: The process of buying involves identifying one's needs, finding the source of supply of the goods and procuring them at the right price. The following are the sub-functions:

1) The Function of Planning the Purchases: The buyers must plan their needs and undertake the purchases. Also, the buyers should survey their own markets to identify the quality and quantity of the goods that are required.

2) Contractual Function: It is the identification of the sources of supply to confirm the suppliers of a commodity so that the flow of supplies can be made continuous to the market.

3) The Function of Negotiation: The terms and conditions of purchase along with the prices are negotiated with the sellers. Once the negotiations are completed, the goods are transferred to the buyers.

c) Demand creation: When commodities are the basic requirement of the consuming section, the demand is automatically created. The need for demand creation arises for those products with which the consumers are not familiar and they are likely to consume by an act of persuasion highlighting the merits of the products through the personal approach of the salesman, advertisement through various mass media like newspapers, posters, radio, television etc.

d) Price determination: In the marketing system all the participants who help the movement of the products to the ultimate consumers should

be rewarded. This is possible by pricing the products at various stages, as they move from the farmers to the consumers. Prices are determined by the aggregate forces of demand and supply in the market.

**2) Function of Physical Movement:**

The physical movement of products from the producers to the consumers involved transportation and storage facilitates.

a) Transportation: Through transportation, products are moved from the farmer's fields to the ultimate consumers. Transportation helps in the development of markets, reduction in spatial price differences, provision of employment etc. The common modes of transportation are bullock carts, tractors, trucks, rails etc.

b) Storage: Storage is involved at various stages in the marketing. Producers, who can afford to sell the produce at a later date, store the produce. The middlemen in the process of buying and selling activity also store the produce to take advantage of the market situation. Through the commodities are stored to take the price advantages by all those concerned, storage is associated with risks as well. The sources of risk are moisture loss, loss caused by storage pests, rodents etc.

**3) Function of changing the form of the Product:**

This function facilitates that the products are available to the consumers with various specifications in the usable form and also as per the choice of the consumers.

a) Standardization and Grading: Standardization is determined on the basis of freshness, ripeness, size, weight, colour, foreign material, moisture content etc. Pyle has defined standardization as "the determination of the basic limits on grades or the establishment of model processes and methods of producing, handling and selling goods and services."

Grading means the sorting of produce into different lots having the same characteristics with respect to quality specifications. There are two types of grading: Fixed grading/mandatory grading and permissive/

variable grading.

b) Packing: Packing is an essential step in marketing. To efficiently move the product from merchants to the final users, packing is an essential component. Gunnies are the commonly used packing means for cereals, pulses, oilseeds, limes, vegetables etc.

4) Facilitating Functions: These functions include market financing, risk bearing and market information.

**a) Market Financing:**

Both the farmers as well as traders need financial assistance. Farmers find it difficult to continue the farm business with their own funds and they need a helping hand from external sources. Apart from farmers, traders also found difficulty at various stages of marketing to find their owned funds short of the requirement to purchase the stock and carry on other functions like packing, processing, storage etc.

**b) Risk Bearing:** There is always a time lag between the harvesting and final consumption. Risk is an essential part of such a situation and this is borne by the producers, traders and others involved in the marketing process. There are three kinds of risks associated with the marketing process.

i) Physical risk: It is caused during weighing, bagging, transportation, storage etc.

ii) Price risk: It arises due to price fluctuates during the same day, from week to week, from month to month and from year to year.

iii) Institutional risk: Government policies like movement restrictions of food grains, imposition of levies etc bring losses to the marketers.

**c) Market Information:**

Market information is broadly defined as the communication or reception of knowledge or intelligence. It includes all the facts, estimates, opinions and other information which affect the marketing of goods and services. The sources of market information are: new papers, Bulletin of Agricultural Prices (weekly), Agricultural Situation in India (monthly), Agricultural Prices in India (annual) etc.

## 13.9 PROBLEMS IN AGRICULTURAL MARKETING

There are various agricultural marketing problems. Let us discuss some of the problems of agricultural marketing.

**1. Large Number of Middlemen:**

Agricultural marketing is a complex process and it involves a large number of intermediaries handling a variety of agricultural commodities. The existence of intermediaries varies with the commodities and the marketing channels of the products. Because of the prevalence of the intermediaries/ middlemen in the marketing, produce received less amount of rupee.

**2. Small and Scattered Holding:**

The agricultural holdings are very small and scattered and as a result, the generated marketable surplus is very meagre (i.e. lacking in quantity or quality). Moreover, the farmers have no business awareness.

**3. Forces Sales:**

The financial obligations committed by the farmers during the production period force them to sell their product immediately after the harvest though the prices are very low. Such force sales will keep the farmers in a vicious cycle of poverty.

**4. Inadequate storage capacity:**

Inadequate storage facilities are the causes of heavy losses to farmers in many parts of the world; and resulted in serious wastage of foodstuff, and increased costs to producers. There are no scientific storage facilities for perishable products (fruits, vegetables, milk, meat, fish etc).

**5. Inadequate Means of Transport:**

One of the alarming problems of agricultural marketing is the lack of adequate transport services at a reasonable cost. Lack of transport services refers to the absence of the transport service in important agricultural marketing areas, seasonality of transport service, high freight charges due to inadequacy, and unsuitability of the existing

transport facilities for the transportation of some products like fruits, eggs, vegetables etc., from rural areas.

6. **Lack of Farmers' organization:**

The farmers are scattered over a wide area without any common organization. In the absence of such an organization farmers do not get anybody to guide them and protect their interests.

## 13.10 CONCEPT OF AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN

The concept of agricultural value chain consists of the entire process from farm production to processing, distribution and consumption. It involves multiple stakeholders including farmers, input suppliers, processors, distributors and ultimate consumers. In India, the agricultural value chain faces challenges such as low productivity, limited access to modern technology, inadequate market linkages and post-harvest losses. However, there are also significant opportunities for growth, including mechanization, cold storage facilities and value addition at different stages of the supply chain.

## 13.11 COMPONENTS OF THE AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN

The components of the agricultural value chain involve production, processing, distribution, marketing and consumption.

a) Production: The first and foremost component of agricultural marketing is production. It involves farming activities, including input supply (i.e. seeds, fertilizers) and cultivation practices. Efficient production is crucial for ensuring the quality and quantity of products.

b) Processing: After harvesting, products go to the processing stage, which enhances the value of the product. The processing stage includes cleaning, packing, and transformation of raw products into consumable goods.

c) Distribution: In this stage, logistics and transportation are involved, which ensures that products reach the market efficiently. Wholesalers and retailers the two key pillars in this process, which connect

producers to the ultimate consumers.

d) Marketing: Effective marketing strategies are essential for promoting agricultural products. The marketing process involved branding, advertising and understanding consumer preferences.

e) Consumption: Consumption is the final stage of the agricultural value chain, where consumers purchase and utilize the products. Consumer feedback can influence earlier stages of the value chain.



## 13.12 LET US SUM UP

- Agricultural marketing consists of all activities involved in the supply of farm inputs to the farmers and the movement of agricultural products from the farms to the consumers. It includes various functions namely assembling, transportation, storing, buying, selling, standardization, grading, processing, sales promotion, etc.
- The scope of agricultural marketing can be examined from five aspects namely, Producers' interest, consumers' interest, societal interest, traders' interest and Government role.
- Three processes are involved in making the availability of commodities from the producers to the ultimate consumers. These processes are namely: a) Assembling (concentration), b) Equivalisation and c) Dispersion (distribution).
- One of the conditions for an efficient agricultural marketing system is that the government should not interfere in free market transactions.
- The marketing functions are classified as:
  1) Function of Transfer of Ownership: a) Selling, b) Buying, c) Demand creation, d) Price determination.
  2) Function of Physical Movement: a) Transportation, b) Storage
  3) Function of changing the form of the product: a) Standardization and grading, b) Packing
  4) Facilitating Functions: a) Market financing, b) Risk bearing, c) Market information.
- The problem of agricultural marketing involves: large number of

middlemen, small and scattered holding, forces sales, inadequate storage capacity, inadequate means of transport, and lack of farmers' organization.

- The concept of agricultural value chain consists of the entire process from farm production to processing, distribution and consumption. It involves multiple stakeholders including farmers, input suppliers, processors, distributors and ultimate consumers.
- The components of agricultural marketing involves: production, processing, distribution, marketing and consumption.



## 13.13 FURTHER READING

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2) Mahajan, A. S. (2024). Empowering Growth: Unveiling Opportunities for Bank Financing in India's Agricultural Value Chain. *MANAGEMENT SCIENCE*.

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## 13.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1:** Agricultural marketing consists of all activities involved in the supply of farm inputs to the farmers and the movement of agricultural products from the farms to the consumers. It includes various functions namely assembling, transportation, storing, buying, selling, standardization, grading, processing, sales promotion, etc.

**Ans to Q No 2:** a) Farmers' Interest: A healthy marketing system is an incentive for the farmers to use the resources efficiently. Thus, efficient input and output marketing systems are indispensable to achieve the

farmer's welfare.

b) Consumers' Interest: Marketing is a system that facilitates the movement of commodities from producers to consumers. Thus, it provides a scope to the consumers to choose commodities of their choice to satisfy their needs. By using the efficient methods of marketing, consumers' welfare will be achieved.

**Ans to Q No 3:** Assembling is the process of concentration of produce commodities from the individual farmers to the consuming markets, in sufficient quantities for efficient processing, transportation, storage etc. There are two forms of assembling i.e., primary assembling and secondary assembling.

**Ans to Q No 4:** i)The marketing system should function on the independent, systematic, and orderly decisions of the millions of consumers and producers whose lives are impacted by it.

ii) Considering the rapid development of the urban-industrial economy, the marketing system should be capable of evolving into a complex and comprehensive marketing system.



## 13.15 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A) Very Short Questions (**Answer each question in about 30 words)

**Q 1:** Define agricultural marketing.

**Q 2:** Give the meaning of the agricultural value chain

**B) Short Questions** (Answer each question in about 100-150 words)

**Q 1:** Explain the scope of agricultural marketing.

**Q 2:** What are the good characteristics of agricultural marketing?

**Q 3:** Mention four problems of agricultural marketing.

**Q 4:** Write the components of the agricultural value chain.

**C) Essay-Type Questions** (Answer each question about 300-500 words)

**Q 1:** Discuss the functions of agricultural marketing.

**Q 2:** Explain the problems of agricultural marketing.

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# UNIT 14 : RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSION

## UNIT STRUCTURE


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## 14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- define the key concepts of rural development, communication, and extension education.
- explain the role of communication in the socio-economic development of rural communities.

- identify various communication channels (traditional and modern) used in rural development.
- describe the principles and functions of extension communication.
- differentiate between formal, informal, and non-formal communication methods in rural settings.
- analyze the importance of participatory communication and community involvement in development initiatives.
- evaluate the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in rural extension programmes.
- apply communication strategies to real-world rural development scenarios and challenges.

## 14.2 INTRODUCTION

Dear Learner, welcome to this unit on '**Rural Development Communication and Extension'**. You are about to embark on a journey to explore how communication plays a vital role in the transformation of rural societies. In a country like India—where a large proportion of the population lives in villages—effective communication is not just helpful, but essential for bringing about social and economic development.

In this unit, we will introduce you to the basic concepts of rural development, the role of communicationin facilitating change, and the purpose of extension education in rural contexts. You will learn how information, when shared effectively, can empower farmers, improve health practices, promote education, and enhance livelihoods.

By the end of this unit, you will understand:

- what rural development means and why it is important
- the different forms and channels of communication used in rural settings
- how extension services help bridge the gap between innovation and practice

This unit is designed to be interactive and reflective. You will come across self-check questions, real-world examples, andcase studies to help you think critically and apply what you learn.

Let's begin by understanding what rural development really means and why communication is its backbone.

## 14.3 CONCEPT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Rural development communication refers to the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as participatory approaches, to foster sustainable growth and improve the quality of life in rural communities. It plays a crucial role in connecting people living in rural areas with vital knowledge and resources that can help them address challenges related to agriculture, health, education, livelihood, and environmental conservation. The primary goal of rural development communication is to facilitate informed decision-making and empower rural populations to actively engage in the development process, thereby promoting social inclusion and economic progress.

### 14.3.1 Key elements of Rural Development Communication

**i. Dissemination of Information:**

A core component involves sharing accurate and relevant information on a variety of topics essential to rural life, such as modern agricultural techniques, healthcare practices, educational opportunities, technological innovations, and government welfare schemes. Effective dissemination ensures that rural residents are well-informed and can adopt improved practices to enhance their well-being.

**ii. Two-Way Communication:**

Rather than simply transmitting information from development agencies to the rural populace, rural development communication emphasizes interactive dialogue. This two-way flow of communication allows rural people to express their needs, concerns, and feedback, ensuring that development initiatives are more responsive and tailored to local contexts. Such participatory

communication fosters trust and strengthens the relationship between communities and development facilitators.

**iii. Cultural Sensitivity:**

Successful communication in rural settings requires a deep understanding and respect for local traditions, beliefs, and languages. Messages conveyed in the local dialects and shaped around cultural norms are more likely to be accepted and internalized by the community members. This sensitivity helps avoid misunderstanding and promotes the adoption of new ideas or practices without alienating the audience.

**iv. Utilization of Media :**

A diverse range of communication channels is used to reach rural audiences effectively. These include traditional media such as community radio broadcasts, printed materials like posters and pamphlets, and folk media including street theatre and dramas that engage audiences in familiar cultural forms. Additionally, modern tools such as social media platforms and mobile phone technology are increasingly being employed to enhance outreach, facilitate timely information sharing, and connect dispersed rural population.

## 14.3.2 Theories and models of Rural Development Communication

Understanding rural development communication requires a solid foundation in several communication theories and models that explain how information spreads, influences behaviour, and fosters participation in rural settings. These frameworks guide practitioners in designing effective communication strategies tailored to rural communities.

**i. Diffusion of Innovations Theory (Everett Rogers):**

This theory explains how new ideas, practices, or technologies spread within a community or social system over time. According to Rogers, adoption follows a process beginning with awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and eventual adoption or

rejection. In rural development, this theory helps identify how innovations such as improved farming techniques or health practices can be effectively introduced and accepted by rural populations. The theory highlights the roles of different adopter categories—innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards—and emphasizes the importance of communication channels, social networks, and opinion leaders in facilitating diffusion.

**ii. Two-Step Flow Model (Paul Lazarsfeld and Elihu Katz):**

This model challenges the idea that media messages directly influence a large audience. Instead, it proposes that information first flows from media to opinion leaders within a community, who then interpret and pass it on to others. In rural contexts, these opinion leaders might be respected farmers, local elders, or community leaders who help translate external information into locally relevant knowledge. This model underscores the value of interpersonal communication and the trusted role of community influencers in shaping attitudes and behaviours.

**iii. Participatory Communication Model:**

Unlike top-down communication approaches, the participatory model emphasizes dialogue, collaboration, and community involvement in the communication process. It views rural people as active agents rather than passive recipients of information. This model encourages local participation in identifying development needs, generating solutions, and evaluating outcomes. By fostering empowerment and ownership, participatory communication enhances the relevance and sustainability of rural development initiatives.

**iv. Social Marketing Approach:**

Social marketing applies commercial marketing principles to promote socially beneficial behaviours and ideas. In rural development communication, it focuses on designing campaigns that motivate behaviour change related to health, sanitation, environmental conservation, or agricultural practices. This approach

involves understanding the target audience's values, barriers, and incentives, and then crafting messages, choosing communication channels, and providing incentives to encourage desired behaviours. Social marketing aims to create lasting positive changes that improve individual and community well-being.

These theories and models provide essential frameworks for understanding how communication works within rural settings and how it can be strategically used to promote development goals. By applying these approaches thoughtfully, development practitioners can enhance the effectiveness and impact of their communication efforts in rural communities.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1 :** Define Rural Development Communication.

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## 14.4 EXTENSION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Extension in rural development is a vital educational and support mechanism aimed at enhancing the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of rural communities, particularly in the field of agriculture. It serves as a bridge between scientific research and practical application, facilitating the transfer of innovations, technologies, and best practices from experts to farmers and other rural stakeholders. Extension services are typically delivered by government bodies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), agricultural universities, and sometimes private sector entities, all working toward empowering rural populations to improve their livelihoods and promote sustainable development.

### 14.4.1 Main functions of extension in rural development

**i. Capacity Building:**

One of the primary roles of extension services is to build the

capacity of rural people through training programs, workshops, and hands-on demonstrations. This includes educating farmers on improved agricultural techniques such as crop management, soil conservation, pest control, and livestock care. Beyond agriculture, extension also equips rural residents with skills related to entrepreneurship, natural resource management, and environmentally sustainable practices, enabling them to diversify income sources and enhance their resilience against challenges like climate change.

**ii. Advisory Services:**

Extension professionals provide expert advice tailored to the specific needs, local conditions, and constraints faced by rural communities. These advisory services help farmers make informed decisions about selecting appropriate crop varieties, managing resources efficiently, and addressing problems like pest outbreaks or water scarcity. Personalized guidance ensures that scientific knowledge is adapted to the socio-economic and ecological realities of the region, increasing the likelihood of successful adoption.

**iii. Linkage Facilitation:**

Extension acts as a critical connector, linking rural populations with essential resources beyond their immediate environment. This includes facilitating access to markets where farmers can sell their produce at fair prices, helping them secure credit from financial institutions, and informing them about government schemes and subsidies designed to support rural development. By strengthening these linkages, extension services enable rural communities to participate more effectively in the broader economic system and benefit from available opportunities.

**iv. Promotion of Innovation:**

Promoting innovation is another key function of extension. Extension workers introduce new technologies, farming methods, and practices that can enhance productivity, reduce labour intensity, and improve sustainability. These may include techniques like drip

irrigation, integrated pest management, organic farming, or use of improved seed varieties. By demonstrating the benefits and guiding the adoption of such innovations, extension helps rural people stay competitive and improve their livelihoods.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 2 :** Why promoting innovation is said to be another key function of extension ?

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## 14.5 IMPORTANCE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION AND EXTENSION

Rural development communication and extension services play a fundamental role in advancing the well-being and progress of rural communities. Their significance lies in empowering individuals and groups by providing them with the knowledge, skills, and resources necessary to improve their living conditions and contribute meaningfully to development. Let us look into some of the important points as far as its significance is considered :

- **Empowers Rural Communities to Make Informed Decisions:** Access to accurate and timely information enables rural people to understand their options, evaluate risks, and choose the best courses of action in agriculture, health, education, and livelihoods. Communication channels and extension programs equip communities with the capacity to solve problems independently, thus fostering self-reliance and confidence.
- **Boosts Agricultural Productivity and Food Security:** Through the dissemination of improved farming techniques, pest management strategies, and innovations such as high-yield seed varieties, extension services enhance crop and livestock productivity. This increase in agricultural output contributes to food security by ensuring a stable and sufficient food supply for rural households and

the wider population.

- **Improves Rural Health and Education through Awareness Campaigns:**

  Health awareness initiatives delivered via rural communication platforms inform communities about nutrition, hygiene, disease prevention, and maternal and child care. Similarly, educational campaigns highlight the importance of schooling and literacy, encouraging higher enrollment and retention rates. These efforts improve the overall quality of life and create a foundation for long-term development.

- **Encourages Participation in Community Development and Governance:**

  Rural communication fosters dialogue and participation, encouraging people to engage in decision-making processes related to community welfare, resource management, and local governance. This inclusive approach strengthens democratic practices, accountability, and social cohesion, ensuring that development programs reflect the needs and aspirations of the community.

- **Bridges the Urban-Rural Gap by Integrating Rural Areas into the Broader Economy:**

  Effective communication and extension services link rural producers with markets, financial services, and government initiatives, reducing isolation and marginalization. By integrating rural economies with urban centres and national markets, these efforts promote equitable growth, reduce poverty, and stimulate rural entrepreneurship.

  Thus, we have seen thatrural development communication and extension constitute vital mechanisms for achieving sustainable transformation in rural areas. By combining educational outreach, technological innovation, and active community involvement, they empower rural populations to improve their livelihoods, health, and social conditions. Together, these approaches foster inclusive growth that benefits not only rural communities but also contributes to broader national development goals. Their continued strengthening is essential

to ensure that rural areas do not lag behind but actively participate in and benefit from the progress of society as a whole.

## 14.6 ROLE OF EXTENSION SERVICES IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Extension services play a pivotal role in promoting rural development by acting as a conduit between scientific knowledge and rural communities. They aim to enhance the capacity of rural populations to improve agricultural productivity, adopt sustainable practices, and improve their overall livelihoods. The following sections elaborate on the key aspects of extension services in the rural development context.

### 14.6.1 Concept and Objectives of Rural Extension

Rural extension refers to the organized educational efforts designed to assist rural people in improving their agricultural activities and living conditions through the transfer of knowledge, skills, and innovations. The core objective of rural extension is to empower farmers and other rural residents by equipping them with practical, relevant information that can help increase productivity, manage natural resources sustainably, and diversify income sources. Beyond agriculture, extension aims to improve rural health, education, and social welfare, fostering overall community development.

### 14.6.2 Functions of Agricultural and Rural Extension

Extension services perform multiple essential functions to support rural development as given below-

- **Capacity Building:** Providing training and skill development to farmers and rural entrepreneurs to adopt modern and sustainable agricultural techniques.
- **Advisory Services:** Offering personalized guidance based on local conditions and individual needs to solve agricultural or livelihood-related problems.

- **Information Dissemination:** Sharing up-to-date research findings, market information, weather forecasts, and government schemes with rural communities.
- **Facilitation of Technology Transfer:** Promoting the adoption of new technologies and innovations that improve productivity and efficiency.
- **Linkage Creation:** Connecting farmers with input suppliers, financial institutions, markets, and government programs.
- **Encouraging Community Participation:** Mobilizing rural populations to actively engage in decision-making and development initiatives.

## 14.6 3 Methods of Extension

Extension services employ a variety of methods to reach rural audiences effectively, each with its unique advantages:

- **Individual Approach:** This method involves one-on-one interactions between extension agents and farmers. Personalized visits and consultations allow tailored advice and direct problem-solving, which is especially useful for complex or sensitive issues.
- **Group Approach:** Farmers and rural residents often form groups such as cooperatives, self-help groups, or farmer clubs. Extension activities conducted through these groups—such as group training sessions, field demonstrations, or group discussions— encourage peer learning, mutual support and collective action.
- **Mass Approach:** To reach larger audiences, extension agents use mass communication tools such as community radio programs, posters, pamphlets, street theatre, and mobile phone messaging. These methods efficiently disseminate information widely but may lack the personalized touch of individual or group approaches.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** What is the main aim of the extension services in rural development ?

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**ACTIVITY 14.1**

Case Study: A government project in a remote village aims to promote organic farming among local farmers. However, the farmers are hesitant to adopt the new techniques due to lack of awareness and trust.

**Question:**

As a development communicator, how would you plan a communication and extension strategy to address the farmers' concerns and encourage adoption of organic farming?

## 12.7 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Effective communication strategies are essential for promoting rural development by ensuring that information, knowledge, and innovations reach rural communities in ways that are accessible, engaging, and actionable. Different communication approaches are employed depending on the context, audience, and objectives, each playing a unique role in facilitating rural progress.

**Interpersonal Communication**

Interpersonal communication involves direct, face-to-face interaction between extension agents, development workers, and rural community members. This strategy is highly effective because it allows for personalized engagement, immediate feedback, and clarification of doubts.

- **Farm Visits:** Extension agents regularly visit individual farms to observe conditions, provide tailored advice, and demonstrate new agricultural techniques or inputs. These visits build trust and enable

practical problem-solving in farmers' own environments.

- **Demonstrations:** Conducting live demonstrations on farms or community spaces allows farmers to witness new practices or technologies in action. Demonstrations provide concrete evidence of the benefits of innovations, increasing the likelihood of adoption.
- **Farmer Field Schools:** These are participatory learning platforms where groups of farmers meet regularly to collectively learn about crop management, pest control, or soil health through hands-on activities and peer discussions. This approach encourages experiential learning and knowledge sharing within the community.

**Community-Based Approaches**

Community-based communication leverages existing social structures to promote collective action and inclusive participation.

- **Self-Help Groups (SHGs):** These are small voluntary groups of rural people, often women, who come together to support each other financially and socially. SHGs serve as important communication channels for spreading development messages, mobilizing resources, and organizing training or health campaigns.
- **Panchayati Raj Institutions:** As decentralized local government bodies in India, Panchayats play a crucial role in rural governance and development. Engaging Panchayats in communication efforts ensures that development programs are aligned with local priorities and that there is community ownership. Panchayats can disseminate information about government schemes, facilitate dialogue, and oversee implementation.

**Mass Media**

Mass media remains a powerful tool to reach large rural audiences efficiently and repeatedly with development messages.

- **Radio:** Community and national radio broadcasts offer an affordable and accessible means to share information on agriculture, health, education, and social issues. Radio programs can be tailored to local languages and cultural contexts to maximize impact.
- **Television:** Educational and awareness programs on TV help visualize

new ideas, technologies, and success stories, making them more relatable. Television can combine entertainment with education through formats like dramas and documentaries.

- **Print Media:** Newspapers, pamphlets, posters, and leaflets continue to be important, especially for literate rural populations. They provide detailed information that can be referred to repeatedly and serve as visual reminders.

**Digital and ICT Tools**

The rapid advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has transformed rural communication strategies, making them more interactive, timely, and scalable.

- **Mobile Applications:** Apps designed for farmers provide real-time information on weather forecasts, market prices, pest alerts, and expert advice. These tools empower farmers to make informed decisions quickly.
- **Community Radio:** Unlike traditional radio, community radio stations are locally managed and produce content relevant to their specific audience. They encourage community participation, giving rural people a voice and platform to share their experiences and knowledge.
- **Interactive Voice Response (IVR) Systems:** IVR technology allows farmers to call a number and receive pre-recorded information or speak to experts without needing internet access. This technology is especially useful in remote areas with limited connectivity.

By integrating these varied communication strategies, rural development initiatives can ensure that information reaches diverse audiences effectively, promotes active participation, and drives meaningful change. A combination of interpersonal, community-based, mass media, and digital approaches creates a comprehensive communication ecosystem suited to the complex realities of rural life.

## 14.8 PARTICIPATORY RURAL COMMUNICATION (PRC)

Participatory Rural Communication (PRC) is a transformative approach in rural development that emphasizes the active involvement and

empowerment of rural communities in communication processes. Unlike traditional top-down communication, which often imposes external solutions, PRC prioritizes dialogue, collaboration, and shared decision-making. It recognizes rural people as experts of their own realities and fosters their participation to ensure that development interventions are relevant, culturally appropriate, and sustainable.

*Principles of Participatory Communication*

The core principles of participatory communication include:

- **Inclusiveness:** Ensuring that all segments of the community, including marginalized groups such as women, youth, and minorities, have a voice in development discussions.
- **Dialogue and Two-Way Communication:** Encouraging an open exchange of ideas rather than one-way dissemination of information, facilitating mutual learning between development practitioners and community members.
- **Empowerment:** Building the capacity of rural people to identify their problems, devise solutions, and take control of their development processes.
- **Respect for Local Knowledge and Culture:** Valuing indigenous knowledge systems, cultural practices, and social structures as vital resources in communication and development.
- **Sustainability:** Promoting ownership and responsibility among communities to maintain and continue development initiatives beyond external support.

*Case Studies of Successful Participatory Rural Communication (PRC) in Rural Development*

Participatory Rural Communication (PRC) has proven to be a transformative approach in various parts of the world, driving inclusive and sustainable development by involving local communities in the communication process. The following case studies highlight how PRC has been effectively employed:

- **Empowering Women through Community Radio – SEWA, India**

  The Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) has made

significant strides in empowering rural women by adopting participatory communication tools like community radio. Through locally produced programs, women are given a platform to voice their concerns and share experiences related to health, livelihoods, education, and legal rights. This participatory model not only fosters awareness but also builds confidence and leadership among rural women.

- **Community Mapping and Land Rights – Kenya**

  In Kenya, participatory communication was utilized through community mapping exercises among pastoralist communities. By actively engaging local people in documenting their traditional land use and mobility patterns, these communities were able to assert their rights and influence land governance. The process led to better-informed and more inclusive policy decisions that respected indigenous knowledge and practices.

- **Sustainable Energy and Skill Building – Barefoot College, Rajasthan**

  The Barefoot College offers an inspiring model of participatory development, where rural women, many of whom are illiterate, are trained to become solar engineers.Barefoot College, also known as the Social Work and Research Centre (SWRC) Tilonia, is a grassroots organization founded in 1972 by Sanjit “Bunker” Roy in Tilonia, Rajasthan, India. The training is delivered using methods that emphasize local participation and peer learning. These women, upon returning to their villages, install and maintain solar lighting systems, promoting renewable energy access and community resilience. This initiative integrates communication, education, and empowerment in a deeply participatory framework.

  These examples underscore how participatory communication not only improves the relevance and reach of development initiatives but also fosters community ownership, self-reliance, and sustainable change.

*Challenges and Limitations*

Despite its many advantages, participatory rural communication also faces several challenges:

- **Power Dynamics:** Existing social hierarchies and inequalities can influence whose voices are heard, potentially marginalizing vulnerable groups even within participatory settings.
- **Resource Intensive:** Participatory processes often require significant time, skilled facilitators, and financial resources, which may not always be available.
- **Scaling Up:** While PRC works well at the community level, scaling participatory approaches to larger populations or policy frameworks can be complex.
- **Resistance to Change:** Some development agencies and officials may be reluctant to relinquish control or adopt participatory approaches due to bureaucratic constraints or traditional mindsets.
- **Cultural Barriers:** Differences in language, customs, and literacy levels can pose obstacles to effective participation and require sensitive adaptation of methods.

Thus, Participatory Rural Communication is a powerful approach that fosters inclusive, culturally sensitive, and sustainable rural development by actively involving communities in the communication and decision-making processes. Addressing its challenges through careful facilitation and institutional support can maximize its impact and ensure that rural voices are central to their own development journeys.

*Role of NGOs and Civil Society in Rural Extension*

Non-governmental organizations and civil society groups complement government efforts by focusing on grassroots-level development and fostering community participation.

- NGOs often work directly with rural communities to provide training, raise awareness, and facilitate access to resources and markets. They play a vital role in capacity building, especially among marginalized groups such as women, tribal populations, and smallholder farmers.
- Civil society organizations advocate for rural development issues, influence policy-making, and monitor the implementation of programs to ensure transparency and accountability.
- Many NGOs employ innovative participatory approaches and

communication strategies to empower communities, promote sustainable agriculture, and improve health and education outcomes.

*Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) in Rural Development*

Public-private partnerships have emerged as an effective model to leverage the strengths of both the public and private sectors for rural development. PPPs bring together government agencies, private companies, NGOs, and financial institutions to pool resources, expertise, and technologies for large-scale rural initiatives. Through PPPs, private sector involvement can enhance the efficiency and reach of rural infrastructure projects such as roads, electrification, irrigation, and digital connectivity. In agriculture, PPPs facilitate the development of supply chains, access to markets, and value addition through processing and packaging, thereby increasing farmers' incomes. Successful PPP models often include capacity building, technology transfer, and risk-sharing arrangements that benefit both rural communities and partners.

Government schemes, NGO initiatives, and public-private partnerships collectively form a robust framework for rural development. By integrating policy support, grassroots engagement, and market-driven approaches, these efforts contribute to creating resilient rural economies, improving livelihoods, and fostering sustainable development.

*Gender and Social Inclusion in Rural Communication*

Effective rural communication must acknowledge and address the diverse social dynamics within rural communities to ensure equitable access to information, resources, and opportunities. Gender and social inclusion are critical components that shape how communication strategies are designed and implemented. Recognizing the unique needs and challenges faced by women and marginalized groups helps create more inclusive and impactful rural development outcomes.

*Empowering Women Farmers through Extension Services*

Women constitute a significant portion of the agricultural workforce in many rural areas but often face barriers such as limited access to land, credit, training, and technology. Extension services tailored to women farmers aim to bridge these gaps by providing targeted training programs,

facilitating access to inputs and markets and promoting leadership development. Empowering women through extension not only enhances their agricultural productivity and income but also contributes to improved household food security, nutrition, and overall well-being. Successful programs often involve women-only farmer groups, participatory learning sessions and initiatives that recognize and build on women's indigenous knowledge and skills.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 4 :** What is Participatory Rural Communication?

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## 14.9 EMERGING TRENDS IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMUNICATION

Rural development communication is continuously evolving to incorporate new technologies and innovative approaches that address contemporary challenges and enhance the effectiveness of outreach efforts. Emerging trends are reshaping how information is shared, how farmers engage with development programs, and how communities adapt to changing environmental and socio-economic conditions.

i. **Digital Agriculture & Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Extension**

The integration of digital technologies and artificial intelligence is transforming agricultural extension services by making expert knowledge more accessible, timely, and personalized.

- **Kisan Call Centres (KCC):** These call centres provide farmers with direct access to agricultural experts through telephone services. Farmers can seek advice on crop management, pest control, weather updates, and government schemes, bridging the information gap even in remote areas. KCC represents a scalable and cost-effective digital extension model.
- **Drone Technology:** The use of drones in agriculture is increasing, offering farmers new ways to monitor crop health, assess soil

conditions, and apply inputs like fertilizers and pesticides precisely. Drones generate real-time data, enabling targeted interventions that improve productivity and reduce environmental impact. Incorporating drone technology into extension services helps farmers make data-driven decisions.

- **AI-Powered Advisory Services:** Artificial intelligence applications analyze large datasets from satellite imagery, weather forecasts, and market trends to provide customized farming recommendations. AI chatbots and mobile apps offer interactive platforms where farmers receive tailored advice, enhancing decision-making and efficiency.

**ii. Climate-Smart Communication for Sustainable Farming**

With climate change posing serious risks to agriculture, communication strategies are increasingly focusing on promoting climate-smart practices that help farmers adapt and mitigate adverse effects. Climate-smart communication emphasizes sharing information on drought-resistant crop varieties, water conservation techniques, soil health management, and agroforestry. These messages encourage sustainable farming practices that enhance resilience to climate variability. Early warning systems and weather advisories delivered through SMS, radio, and mobile apps help farmers prepare for extreme weather events, reducing potential losses. Participatory communication approaches involve farmers in sharing local knowledge and innovations related to climate adaptation, fostering collective learning and community-based resilience.

**iii. Community Radio and Social Media for Rural Engagement**

Community radio and social media platforms have emerged as powerful tools to enhance rural engagement and participation in development processes. Local radio stations offer programs in regional languages that address agricultural techniques, health, education, and social issues. These stations serve as forums for rural voices, encouraging dialogue and cultural expression while delivering practical information tailored to community needs. Increasing internet penetration in rural areas has opened new avenues for communication.

Platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube enable farmers to share experiences, access instructional videos, participate in online groups, and connect directly with experts and markets. The interactive nature of social media fosters peer-to-peer learning and rapid dissemination of innovations and alerts, making it a dynamic complement to traditional communication channels.

Emerging trends in rural development communication leverage cutting-edge technology and inclusive media to create more responsive, participatory and sustainable development outcomes. Embracing these innovations allows rural communities to navigate challenges effectively and seize new opportunities for growth.

## 14.10 CASE STUDIES AND BEST PRACTICES

Examining successful case studies and best practices offers valuable insights into effective rural development communication strategies and extension services. These examples demonstrate innovative approaches that have positively impacted rural communities, providing models that can be adapted and replicated in diverse contexts.

**Success Stories from India**

India has been at the forefront of pioneering digital and participatory approaches to rural development communication, with several notable initiatives:

i. **Digital Green -Participatory Video Extension:** Digital Green is an innovative platform that uses community-produced videos to share agricultural knowledge among smallholder farmers. By enabling farmers to create and disseminate localized, culturally relevant content, Digital Green enhances learning, encourages peer-to-peer exchange, and promotes the adoption of sustainable farming practices. The participatory nature of this approach empowers rural communities to take ownership of the knowledge-sharing process and has led to significant improvements in crop yields and livelihoods.

Basically, Digital Green collaborates with local communities to produce short, locally relevant videos featuring farmers demonstrating best

practices, innovations, or techniques. These videos are shared through village-level screenings facilitated by trained community members. This approach combines capacity building (through peer learning), advisory services (demonstrating new practices), and participatory communication. It leverages social networks and trust among farmers to encourage adoption. Farmers are more likely to adopt practices shown by peers, leading to increased productivity, improved livelihoods, and sustainable agriculture.

ii. **e-Choupal - Market Linkage and Information Services**

Developed by ITC Limited, e-Choupal is a digital initiative that connects farmers directly with markets through internet kiosks equipped with computers and internet access in rural villages. This system provides real-time information on market prices, weather forecasts, and best agricultural practices, reducing the influence of intermediaries and enhancing farmers' bargaining power. e-Choupal has helped thousands of farmers improve their income and integrate more effectively into the agricultural value chain.

**Global Examples**

International organizations and programs also provide excellent models for rural development communication:

i. **FAO's Farmer Field Schools (FFS) - experiential learning :**

Implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization, Farmer Field Schools emphasize experiential learning through participatory group meetings where farmers collectively observe, analyze, and experiment with agricultural practices. Groups of farmers meet regularly during the crop cycle to observe their fields, conduct experiments, and discuss observations. Extension agents facilitate learning rather than instruct.This hands-on, farmer-led approach builds local capacity, encourages innovation, and improves pest management and sustainable agriculture techniques. FFS programs have been successfully adapted across multiple countries, demonstrating the scalability and effectiveness of participatory learning models.

**ii. Community Radio in Nepal — Localized Communication**

Community radio stations broadcast programs in local languages focusing on agriculture, health, and education, often incorporating call-in shows for interaction. It acts as a mass communication tool but also incorporates participatory elements by involving community members in content creation. Increases awareness, encourages behavioural change, and strengthens community identity.



## 14.11 LET US SUM UP

- Rural development communication refers to the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as participatory approaches, to foster sustainable growth and improve the quality of life in rural communities.
- Diffusion of Innovations Theoryexplains how new ideas, practices, or technologies spread within a community or social system over time.
- Two-Step Flow Modelchallenges the idea that media messages directly influence a large audience. Instead, it proposes that information first flows from media to opinion leaders within a community, who then interpret and pass it on to others.
- The participatory model emphasizes dialogue, collaboration, and community involvement in the communication process.
- Social marketing applies commercial marketing principles to promote socially beneficial behaviours and ideas.
- Extension in rural development is a vital educational and support mechanism aimed at enhancing the knowledge, skills, and capabilities of rural communities, particularly in the field of agriculture. It serves as a bridge between scientific research and practical application, facilitating the transfer of innovations, technologies, and best practices from experts to farmers and other rural stakeholders.
- Extension services play a pivotal role in promoting rural development by acting as a conduit between scientific knowledge and rural

communities.

- Effective communication strategies are essential for promoting rural development by ensuring that information, knowledge, and innovations reach rural communities in ways that are accessible, engaging, and actionable.
- Participatory Rural Communication (PRC) is a transformative approach in rural development that emphasizes the active involvement and empowerment of rural communities in communication processes.
- Kisan call centres provide farmers with direct access to agricultural experts through telephone services.
- Digital Green is an innovative platform that uses community-produced videos to share agricultural knowledge among smallholder farmers.
- Developed by ITC Limited, e-Choupal is a digital initiative that connects farmers directly with markets through internet kiosks equipped with computers and internet access in rural villages.
- Implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization, Farmer Field Schools emphasize experiential learning through participatory group meetings where farmers collectively observe, analyze, and experiment with agricultural practices.



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8) Melkote, S. R., &Steeves, H. L. (2001). *Communication for development in the Third World: Theory and practice for empowerment* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.



## 14.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1 :** Rural development communication refers to the strategic use of information and communication technologies (ICTs), as well as participatory approaches, to foster sustainable growth and improve the quality of life in rural communities.

**Ans to Q No 2 :** Promoting innovation is said to be another key function of extension. Extension workers introduce new technologies, farming methods, and practices that can enhance productivity, reduce labour intensity, and improve sustainability. These may include techniques like drip irrigation, integrated pest management, organic farming, or use of improved seed varieties. By demonstrating the benefits and guiding the adoption of such innovations, extension helps rural people stay competitive and improve their livelihoods.

**Ans to Q No 3 :** Extension services play a pivotal role in promoting rural development by acting as a conduit between scientific knowledge and rural communities. They aim to enhance the capacity of rural populations to improve agricultural productivity, adopt sustainable practices and improve their overall livelihoods.

**Ans to Q No 4 :** Participatory Rural Communication (PRC) is a transformative approach in rural development that emphasizes the active involvement and empowerment of rural communities in communication processes.



## 14.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Short Questions**

**Q 1 :** Explain the role of communication in promoting rural development.

**Q 2 :** Distinguish between formal and informal communication channels in rural settings.

**Q 3 :** Briefly describe the objectives of agricultural extension services.

**Q 4 :** How does community radio contribute to rural development?

**B. Long Questions**

**Q 1 :** Discuss the importance of extension education in empowering rural communities.

**Q.2 :** Explain how rural development communication can help in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).

**Q 3 :** Analyze the advantages and limitations of using ICT (Information and Communication Technology) in rural development initiatives.

**Q 4 :** How can communication strategies be designed to ensure effective participation of rural populations in development programmes?

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# UNIT 15 : MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

## UNIT STRUCTURE


15.1 Learning Objectives

15.2 Introduction

- 15.2.1 Meaning of Monitoring and Evaluation
- 15.2.2 Integration of Monitoring & Evaluation

15.3 Objectives and Scopes of Monitoring & Evaluation of Rural Development Program

15.4 Understanding Policy Evaluation Unit of Rural Development Program

- 15.4.1 Purpose of Evaluation
- 15.4.2 Types of Evaluation

15.4 Importance of Monitoring and Evaluation in Rural Development Programs

15.6 Public Policy of Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural Development Programs

- 15.6.1 Key components of Monitoring & Evaluation Policy
- 15.6.2 Benefits of Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- 15.6.3 Challenges in Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation Policy
- 15.6.4 Best Practices in M & E Policy
- 15.6.5 Conclusion & Suggestions

15.7 Let Us Sum Up

15.8 Further Reading

15.9 Answers to check your progress

15.10 Model Questions


## 15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to-

- explain the meaning of Monitoring & Evaluation of Rural Development

Program

- importance of Monitoring & Evaluation of Rural Development Program
- identify the challenges that implementations of M&E of Rural Development Program
- describe the various public policies about M&E of Rural Development Program in Assam.

## 15.2 INTRODUCTION

Rural development remains a cornerstone of socio-economic progress in many countries, especially those where the majority of the population resides in rural areas and depends heavily on agriculture and related activities. Rural development programs are designed to address the multidimensional aspects of poverty, unemployment, infrastructure deficits, illiteracy, poor healthcare access, and environmental degradation in rural regions. These programs aim to uplift the living standards of rural communities through interventions in agriculture, education, health, employment, water and sanitation, infrastructure, and social inclusion. However, the success and sustainability of such programs depend significantly on robust systems of Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E).

**Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E)** are indispensable components of effective rural development planning and implementation. Monitoring refers to the continuous assessment of program activities in the context of implementation schedules and the use of inputs, infrastructure, and services. It involves the regular collection and analysis of information to ensure that a project or program is proceeding as planned. Evaluation, on the other hand, is the periodic assessment of the relevance, performance, efficiency, and impact of a program in relation to its stated objectives. It provides critical insights into what works, what does not, and why, thus guiding strategic decision-making and resource allocation. In the context of rural development, M&E systems serve several vital functions. They help in tracking progress toward goals, identifying implementation bottlenecks, ensuring accountability, promoting transparency, and facilitating learning and improvement. For

instance, without effective monitoring, a rural electrification program might report the number of villages electrified but fail to capture whether the electricity is reliable or affordable for the intended beneficiaries. Similarly, without rigorous evaluation, policymakers might continue to fund ineffective agricultural extension services without understanding their limited impact on crop yields or farmer income. Given the complexity and diversity of rural development interventions, the design and execution of M&E systems must be context-specific, participatory, and adaptive. They must account for socio-economic diversity, geographic spread, cultural sensitivities and political dynamics. Furthermore, with the advancement of technology, modern M&E practices are increasingly leveraging Geographic Information Systems (GIS), mobile data collection tools, real-time dashboards and big data analytics to improve the accuracy and timeliness of information. Community-based monitoring approaches are also gaining traction, empowering local populations to participate in assessing the relevance and quality of development initiatives that affect their lives.

### 15.2.1 Meaning of Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and Evaluation (M & E) of rural development programs refers to the systematic a process of collection, analyzing and using data to track progress, assess performance, and evaluate the impact of these programs. This process is essential for ensuring that rural development programs are effective, efficient, and sustainable.

**Monitoring :** Monitoring is a crucial component of M & E that involves the continuous collection and analysis of data on program inputs, outputs, and outcomes. It helps to track progress towards achieving program objectives, identify challenges and bottlenecks and informs program managers and policymakers about necessary adjustments to improve program performance. Through monitoring, program implementers can identify areas that require improvement and make data driven decisions to optimize program implementation.

**Evaluation :** Evaluation is another critical component of M & E that involves assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact , and sustainability of rural development programs. It helps to determine the extent to which programs achieve their objectives and make a positive impact on rural communities. Evaluation assesses the impact of programs on various outcomes, including income, employment , health , education , and other relevant indicators. The insights gained from evaluation can inform policy decisions and program design, ensuring that rural development programs are effective and sustainable.

### 15.2.1 Integration of Monitoring & Evaluation

The integration of monitoring and evaluation is essential for ensuring that rural development programs are effective and sustainable. By combining monitoring and evaluation, program implementers and policymakers can track progress, assess performance and evaluate impact, ultimately making informed decisions to improve program implementation and achieve better outcomes for rural communities. This integrated approach enables policymakers and program managers to optimize resource allocation, improve program impact, and reduce poverty in rural areas.

The importance of M & E has been further underscored in the context of global development frameworks such as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which emphasize the need for measurable outcomes and evidence-based policy interventions. Governments, donors, and development partners are increasingly demanding robust evidence to justify investments and demonstrate impact. As such, M & E systems are not only tools for accountability but also catalysts for innovation, learning, and transformative change in rural development. Despite its critical importance, M & E in rural development often faces numerous challenges. These include limited institutional capacity, inadequate funding, lack of reliable baseline data, weak stakeholder engagement

and political interference. Overcoming these challenges requires strengthening institutional frameworks, investing in human resource development, fostering inter-agency coordination, and promoting a culture of results-based management. Despite its critical importance, M&E in rural development often faces numerous challenges. These include limited institutional capacity, inadequate funding, lack of reliable baseline data, weak stakeholder engagement, and political interference. Overcoming these challenges requires strengthening institutional frameworks, investing in human resource development, fostering inter-agency coordination, and promoting a culture of results-based management.

In summary, Monitoring and Evaluation are essential for the effective design, implementation, and scaling of rural development programs. They ensure that interventions are aligned with community needs, resources are utilized efficiently, and objectives are met with tangible, sustainable results. As rural development efforts continue to evolve in response to new challenges such as climate change, migration, and digital transformation, the role of M&E will only grow in significance, serving as a vital instrument for ensuring that development is inclusive, equitable, and impactful.

## 15.3 OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF MONITORING & EVALUATION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Rural development programs are designed to improve the quality of life in rural areas by addressing various challenges, including poverty, inequality, and lack of access to basic services. The objectives and scope of these programs vary depending on the specific context and needs of the rural. Rural development programs play a pivotal role in enhancing the quality of life in rural areas by addressing issues such as poverty, unemployment, poor infrastructure, inadequate health and education facilities and environmental sustainability. These programs are often complex, involving multiple stakeholders, diverse interventions, and

significant financial outlays. To ensure their effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability, Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) systems must be systematically integrated into every stage of the program cycle.

The **objectives and scope** of M&E in rural development are multifaceted and deeply interconnected, serving as essential tools for informed decision-making, resource optimization, and continuous improvement. Below is a comprehensive exploration of these dimensions.

**Objectives :**

The primary objectives of M&E in the context of rural development programmes can be categorized as follows:

**1. Tracking Progress and Performance**

One of the fundamental objectives of monitoring is to ensure that activities are being implemented as planned and within the designated timelines. M & E helps to track input delivery, process efficiency, and output generation. It answers questions such as:

- Are rural roads being constructed on schedule?
- Are farmers receiving the intended subsidies and training?
- Are health and education services reaching remote villages?

**2. Assessing Impact and Effectiveness**

Evaluation goes beyond mere tracking to assess whether the program has achieved its intended goals and objectives. It examines both the **short-term outcomes** (e.g., increase in school attendance or improved access to drinking water) and **long-term impacts** (e.g., poverty reduction, increased agricultural productivity, improved living standards). It seeks to answer:

- To what extent have livelihoods improved in targeted communities?
- Has the intervention led to sustained economic or social change?

**3. Ensuring Accountability and Transparency**

With significant public and donor funds allocated to rural development, there is an increasing demand for transparency and accountability. M&E provides evidence to stakeholders—including government bodies, funding agencies, and rural communities—on how resources

are used and what results are achieved. This fosters public trust and encourages greater citizen participation.

4. **Enhancing Learning and Improving Program Design**

   A well-functioning M&E system captures not only successes but also failures and lessons learned. This knowledge enables program planners and implementers to refine strategies, scale up effective practices, and avoid repeating mistakes. For instance, if an agricultural scheme underperforms in one district, evaluators can investigate the causes and adapt the approach before expansion.

4. **Supporting Policy Formulation and Decision-Making**

   Reliable and timely data from M&E systems is crucial for evidence-based policymaking. Evaluation results provide insights into which interventions are most effective under specific conditions, helping policymakers to prioritize investments, design new policies, and revise existing ones.

6. **Measuring Efficiency and Cost-Effectiveness**

   M&E helps assess whether resources are being used efficiently. This involves examining the relationship between inputs (funds, manpower, infrastructure) and outputs (services delivered). If two programs yield similar outcomes but one uses significantly fewer resources, evaluation findings can guide resource reallocation.

7. **Promoting Sustainable development**

   Promoting sustainable development by conserving natural resources, protecting the environment and ensuring that development is equitable and inclusive.

8. **Improving livelihoods**

   Enhancing the livelihoods of rural communities by providing access to employment opportunities, income-generating activities, and social services.

9. **Increasing access to basic services**

   Improving access to basic services, including healthcare, education , sanitation and clean water.

**Scope of Monitoring and Evaluation**

The **scope** of M & E in rural development is broad, encompassing various levels, sectors, and dimensions. It is not limited to tracking physical infrastructure or financial expenditures but includes a holistic evaluation of social, economic, environmental, and institutional aspects.

**1. Sectoral Scope**

Rural development programs typically span multiple sectors, including:

- Agriculture and irrigation
- Education and skill development
- Health and nutrition
- Housing and infrastructure (roads, electricity, water supply)
- Livelihood promotion and employment generation
- Natural resource management and environment

**2. Geographic Scope**

Rural development programs are often implemented across vast and diverse geographic areas. The scope of M&E must therefore extend to all levels—national, regional, district, block, and village. It should account for geographic variability in needs, resources, and results.

**3. Temporal Scope**

M & E spans the entire lifecycle of a rural development program:

- Ex-ante evaluation during program planning
- Ongoing monitoring during implementation
- Mid-term reviews to assess progress
- Terminal evaluations at the end of the program
- Post-project evaluations to assess sustainability and long-term impact

**4. Stakeholder Scope**

The scope of M & E includes a wide array of stakeholders:

- Government agencies and departments
- International donors and NGOs
- Local governance institutions (Panchayati Raj institutions)
- Community-based organizations and beneficiaries

Inclusive M & E systems engage all these stakeholders in the

monitoring and evaluation process, ensuring that diverse perspectives and needs are considered.

4. **Quantitative and Qualitative Dimensions**

Effective M&E involves both **quantitative metrics** (e.g., number of beneficiaries, hectares of land irrigated, literacy rates) and qualitative assessments (e.g., community satisfaction, women's empowerment, inclusiveness of the program). Combining both approaches provides a more nuanced understanding of program effectiveness.

6. **Use of Technology and Innovation**

The scope of M & E has expanded significantly with the advent of digital tools. Technologies such as:

- Mobile-based data collection
- Satellite imagery and GIS mapping
- Real-time dashboards and data visualization
- Big data analytics

The objectives and scope of Monitoring and Evaluation in rural development programs are comprehensive, reflecting the complexity and ambition of such interventions. M&E systems not only help track progress and ensure accountability but also serve as engines of learning, innovation, and policy refinement. By providing reliable evidence on what works and what does not, M&E contributes significantly to making rural development efforts more impactful, inclusive, and sustainable. To be truly effective, M&E must be institutionalized, adequately funded, participatory in nature, and continuously updated to respond to evolving rural dynamics and development challenges.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 1:** What is monitoring & evaluation in rural development programs?

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.....

**Q 2:** How can monitoring and evaluation contribute to improved outcomes for rural development communities in Assam ?

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## 15.4 UNDERSTANDING OF EVALUATION UNITS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN ASSAM

The policy of evaluation of a unit of rural development program refers to the systematic and ongoing process of assessing the performance and impact of a specific unit or component of a rural development program. This policy is designed to ensure that the unit is achieving its intended objectives and making a meaningful contribution to the overall goals of the program . By establishing a clear framework for evaluation, program implementers can ensure that the unit's performance is regularly assessed and that lessons learned are used to inform program design and implementation.

### 15.4.1 Purpose of Evaluation

The purpose of evaluation is to assess the effectiveness, efficiency and impact of the unit of rural development program. Evaluation helps to identify areas where the unit is performing well and areas where improvement is needed. By evaluating the unit's performance, program implementers can make informed decisions about program design, implementation, and resource allocation, ultimately contributing to improved outcomes for rural communities.

### 15.4.2 Type of Evaluation

There are several types of evaluation that can be used to assess the performance of a unit of rural development program, including formative evaluation, summative evaluation, and impact evaluation. Formative evaluation is used to assess the unit's

performance during the implementation phase, while summative evaluation is used to assess the unit's overall performance at the end of the program. Impact evaluation is used to assess the long-term impact of the unit on rural communities.

## 15.5 IMPORTANCE OF MONITORING & EVALUATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are crucial components of rural developmental programs, playing a vital role in ensuring that these initiatives achieve their intended objectives and make a meaningful impact on the lives of rural communities. The importance of M&E in rural development can be understood through its various benefits and applications.

- **Assessing Program Effectiveness**

M & E helps assess the effectiveness of rural development programs by tracking progress, identifying successes, and pinpointing areas for improvement. This information enables policymakers and program implementers to make informed decisions about program design , implementation, and resource allocation. Through regular monitoring and evaluation, program implementers can identify areas of strength and weakness, and make adjustments to program design and implementation accordingly. This enables programs to achieve their intended objectives and make a meaningful impact on rural communities. By evaluating program effectiveness, implementers can also identify best practices and lessons learned, which can be used to inform future program design and implementation.

- **Improving Accountability**

M&E promotes accountability among program implementers, ensuring that resources are used efficiently and effectively. By tracking expenditures, outputs, and outcomes, M&E helps indentify instances of inefficiency, corruption, or mismanagement, enabling corrective actions to be taken. This helps to build trust and confidence among stakeholders, including program beneficiaries, donors and policymakers. By ensuring that program

implementers are held accountable for their actions and outcomes, M&E can help to prevent corruption and ensure that resources are used efficiently and effectively.

- **Informing Policy Decisions**

M&E provides valuable insights that inform policy decisions, enabling policymakers to make informed choices about program design, implementation, and scaling up. By analyzing data on program outcomes and impact, policymakers can identify what works and what doesn't, and adjust their policies and programs accordingly. This enables policymakers to allocate resources more effectively, and ensure that programs are aligned with national development priorities and goals. By using evidence-based decision making, policymakers can also indentify areas where policy changes are needed to support rural development.

- **Enhancing Learning and Capacity Building**

M&E helps to build the capacity of program implementers, policymakers, and other stakeholders by providing them with valuable insights and lessons learned. By documenting best practices and successes, M&E enables others to learn from these experiences and apply them in their own context. This enables programs to adopt to changing circumstances and contexts, and ensures that program implementers are equipped to respond to emerging challenges and opportunities.

- **Promoting Sustainability**

M&E helps ensure the sustainability of rural development programs by identifying factors that contribute to their long-term success. By tracking outcomes and impact over time, M&E enables policymakers and program implementers to make adjustments that promote sustainability and ensure that benefits are sustained beyond and life of the program.

- **Improved Resource Allocation**

M&E helps to optimize resource allocation by identifying areas where resources are being used efficiently and effectively. By evaluating program outcomes and impact, implementers can identify areas where resources can be reallocated to achieve greater impact. This enables program implementers to make the most of limited resources, and ensure that

programs are sustainable in the long term. By optimizing resource allocation, programs can achieve greater impact and make a more meaningful difference in the lives of rural communities.

## 15.6 PUBLIC POLICY OF MONITORING & EVALUATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

Monitoring and evaluation of rural development programs in Assam involve tracking progress, assessing performance and evaluating impact. Some key initiatives are pointed out as follows:

1. **Assam State Rural Livelihoods Missions ( ASRLM) :** This program aims to improve livelihoods and resilience of rural communities in Assam. ASRLM has implantation plans, intensive districts, and blocks, as well as capacity building and training programs.
2. **Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation Project ( APART) :** This project focuses on adding value and improving resilience of selected agriculture value chains, targeting smallholders farmers and agro based entrepreneurs in specific districts of Assam.
3. **Development Monitoring and Evaluation Office (DMEO) :** DMEO, under NITI Aayog, actively monitors and evaluates the implantation of government programs, including rural development initiatives. They organize national conference on monitoring, evaluation and learning, and publish articles and blogs on monitoring and evaluation best practices.
4. **National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) :** This institute provides training and capacity-building programs for rural development professionals, including a postgraduate diploma in rural management .



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q 3:** Mention some policy related to Rural Development Program implemented in Assam ?

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**Q 4:** What are the key components of Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission ( ASRLM) ?

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.....

### 15.6.1 Key components of Monitoring & Evaluation Policy

A comprehensive M&E policy for rural development programs should include several key components, including clear objectives and indicators, a robust data collection and analysis system, regular monitoring and reporting, and impact assessment. The policy should also establish roles and responsibilities for M&E, including the designation of responsible agencies and personnel. By establishing a clear framework for M&E, governments can ensure that rural development programs are subject to regular scrutiny and evaluation, and that lessons learned are used to inform policy decisions and program design.

### 15.6.2 Benefits of Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

The benefits of an M&E policy for rural development programs are numerous. By tracking progress and assessing performance, governments can identify areas that require improvement and make data-driven decisions to optimize program implementation. M&E can also promote transparency and accountability in program implementation, and provide valuable insights that can inform policy decisions and program design. Furthermore, M&E can help to ensure that rural development programs are sustainable in the long term, and that benefits are sustained beyond the life of the program.

### 15.6.3 Challenges in Implementing Monitoring and Evaluation Policy

Implementing an M&E policy for rural development programs can be challenging, particularly in contexts where resources are limited and capacity is weak. Governments may face challenges in establishing robust data collection and analysis systems, and in building the capacity of personnel to conduct M&E. Additionally, M&E may require significant financial resources, which can be a challenge for governments with limited budgets. Despite these challenges, the benefits of M&E far outweigh the costs, and governments should prioritize the development and implementation of M&E policies for rural development programs.

### 15.6.4 Best Practices in M & E Policy

Best practices in M&E policy for rural development programs include establishing clear objectives and indicators, using a participatory approach to M&E, and ensuring that M&E findings are used to inform policy decisions and program design. Governments should also prioritize building the capacity of personnel to conduct M&E, and ensure that M&E systems are robust and sustainable. By adopting these best practices, governments can ensure that their M&E policies are effective and contribute to improved outcomes for a rural communities.

### 15.6.5 Conclusion & Suggestions

The monitoring and evaluation of rural development programs in Assam is crucial for ensuring that initiatives are effective, efficient and sustainable. By tracking progress, assessing performance, and evaluating impact, policymakers and program implementers can identify areas for improvement, make informed decisions, and optimize resource allocation. Effective monitoring

and evaluation can help to improve the lives of rural communities in Assam, promoting economic growth, social-justice, and human well-being.

**Suggestions**

1. Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework.
2. Build capacity for monitoring and evaluation.
3. Use technology for data collection and analysis.
4. Foster stakeholder engagement .
5. Emphasize sustainability and impact.
6. Encourage participatory monitoring and evaluation.
7. Use monitoring and evaluation findings for policy and program improvement.



## 15.7 LET US SUM UP

- Monitoring is the continuous tracking of program activities and outputs, while evaluation assesses effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability to guide decision-making.**Combining monitoring and evaluation ensures better resource allocation, improved program design, and alignment with global frameworks like the SDGs. M&E tracks progress, measures impact, ensures accountability, enhances learning, supports policymaking, and promotes sustainability across multiple sectors, geographies, and stakeholders. Key initiatives include ASRLM, APART, DMEO, and NIRDPR, which use structured frameworks, capacity building, and technology for tracking and improvement.**



## 15.8 FURTHER READING

1) Rural Development : Principles , Policies, and Management by Katar Singh & Anil Shishodia

2) M.L.Jhingan " The Economics of Development and Planning".

3) Government of Assam . ( 2022). Assam State Rural Livelihoods Mission : Progress Report.



4) Ghosh, M.(2017). Infrastructure and development in rural India. Margin : The Journal of Applied Economics Research, 11 (3),246-289.

5) Nath, A. (2020). Educational Hurdles in rural Assam : Challenges and opportunities. Assam Education Journal,791), 33-48.

6) Economics of Rural Development by Shashi Bhushan & Rakesh Pushap .

7) Rural Development in India : Policies and Programmes by Abdul Azeez NP & S.M. Jawed Akhtar

## 15.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q No 1 :** Monitoring is the systematic and continuous process of collecting and analyzing data to track progress and identify areas for improvement in rural development programs. On the other hand, Evaluation assesses the effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of rural development programs to inform decision-making and improved outcomes.



**Ans to Q No 2 :** Monitoring and Evaluation can contribute to improved outcomes by identifying areas for improvement , informing decision-making, and ensuring that programs are responsive to the needs of rural communities.

**Ans to Q No 3 :** ASRLM ( Assam State Rural Livelihood Mission ) , APART

( Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transformation), DMEO ( Development Monitoring and Evaluation office ) etc.

**Ans to Q No 4 :** ASRLM focuses on improving livelihoods and resilience of rural communities in Assam through community mobilization, capacity building, and livelihood promotion .

## 15.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

**Short type Questions : ( Answer each questions in about 150 words)**

**Q 1:** How does the Assam Agribusiness and Rural Transmission Project ( APART) aim to benefits to smallholder farmers and Agro-entrepreneurs?

**Q 2:** What are the challenges in Monitoring and Evaluation of Rural development programs in Assam ?

**Q 3:** What is the role of community institutions in rural development programs in Assam?

**Q 4:** Write the significance of monitoring & evaluation in rural development programs in Assam?

**Long type questions : ( Answer each of the following within 300-400 words )**

**Q 1:** Describe the monitoring and evaluation framework for rural development programs in Assam ?

**Q 2:** Analyze the role of monitoring and evaluation in improving the effectiveness of rural development programs in Assam ?

**Q 3:** What indicators would you use to measure the impact, and how would you collect and analyze the data ?

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