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RURAL DEVELOPMENT: ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

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Introduction:

Rural development is an age-old problem in Indian Economy. India's labour force was 406.9 million in 2004-2005 and out of this 348 million (74.61%) lived in rural areas of the total workers. If we measured in term of usual primary and subsidiary status. (UPSS) 56.5 % worked in agriculture. These figures should bring home the true nature of population and employment burden on agriculture. Although there was a distinct diversification in term of distribution of gross domestic product (GDP). The share of agriculture in GDP declined from 44.8% in 1977-78 to 20.8% in 2004-05 at constant 1993-94 price. With 56.5% of the national workforce producing hardly one fifth of the GDP a lack of diversification and continued dependence of increasing population and labour force on limited land resources is continuous decline in the availability of land holding per farmer. Therefore, the national development strategy depends on the success of schemes for the well-being of people residing in rural areas. Thus the significance of rural development needs no overemphasis in the country. Since Independence the Government at all levels has introduced many schemes the rural areas remain backward barring a few pockets of affluence. The rural development policies have been modified or new policies formulated keeping in view the changing circumstances and priorities of the national government from time to time. Several programmes have been implemented for the development of rural sector but some have achieved considerable success, some have achieved partial success due to various reasons. So it is important to examine the important policy interventions for the rural development and what is situation of the rural people. It is also important to identify the major challenges in the effective implementation of these programmes. This paper divided in three parts. First is policy interventions for rural development, Second is impact on rural development programmes and Remedies for improvement is discuss in third part.

Policy Interventions for Rural Development-

National government launched the community Development programme (CAD) was the first rural development programme. This programme was based on the ideas that emerged from the pioneering efforts in rural reconstruction. Planners formulating different programmes of rural development under the five year plans from time to time. To provide live hood and employment to rural people. Intensive Agriculture District programme (IADP) and Intensive Agriculture Area Programme (IAAP) launched during the Third plan in 1970 the operation flood was launched to increase milk production in the country. Green revolution was one of the successful and very important programme to become self sufficiency in food grains production. In Forth plan it was realized that the regional imbalances and economic inequalities were growing. To remove disparities the Area Approach, Target Group Approach programmes were launched to focus on specific areas. Government also launch anti poverty programmes in Fifth plan and the sixth and seventh plan. The poverty Alleviation and Employment Generated approaches were continued in this plan.

Panchayati raj (PR) set up for achieving two main objectives one is democratic Decentralization and people participation in taking decision. It also provides a reservation of SCs and STs and women at Panchayat. During 1999, all the self employment oriented programmes were merged in to Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY). Similarly, all the wage employment programmes were merged into Jawaharlal Gram Samruddi Yojana (JGSY). During the Tenth Plan many innovative programmes were launched for rural poor. These include the National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme, Universal Health Insurance Scheme for BPL.

Impact of Rural Development Programmes-

Reduction of Rural Poverty 1977-78 and 1986-87 with rural poverty declining from 51% to 39%. After 1991 the post economic reform period evidenced both setbacks and progress. Rural income poverty increased from 34% in 1989-90 to 43% in 1992 and then fell to 37% in 1993-94. The latest NSS survey for 2004-2005 is fully comparable to the surveys before 1999-2000 and shows poverty at 28.3% in rural areas, 25.7% in urban areas and 27.5% for the country as a whole, using Uniform Recall Period Consumption. The reasons for poor performance could be traced that construct of cast system as a system of exploitation of poor, less employment facilities, Inequalities in distribution of land and other assets, indebtedness.etc