

## **INTEGRATED PLANNING OF RURAL AREAS**

India is an agrarian country with about 72 per cent (about 80 Crores) of its population in about 5,75,936 villages, the villages are inhabited by the rural poor with agriculture as their predominant occupation. They are largely small and marginal farmers, agricultural laborers, artisans and scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. A large number of rural people (about 30 crore) are still living below the poverty line and often face the basic problem of survival, viz., jobs, poverty, hunger, shelter, ill-health and disease. By the year 2015, India's population may surpass that of China. Dr. MS Swami Nathan, credited with the 'Green Revolution' has warned of a coming famine. The increasing unemployment in the rural sector is likely to have serious ramifications on India's socio-economic and political balance. Today, we often witness serious contradictions – an airplane, a sign of progress and power and a bullock cart dragging in a slushy and deeply rutted katcha road. We cannot afford to lose the focus of rural areas and make them subservient to the urban life. The hi-tech should be blended with indigenous practices in a manner that it eradicates poverty, disease, inequality and provides basic human needs such as, water, roads, medical care and literacy. Value addition to agro-products is very crucial in this respect. The planned development of rural areas should

envisage provision of 'urban' facilities and services, including work centers, agro-industry, hospitals, schools, piped water supply, sanitation, housing, recreational facilities etc., which can be clustered into viable units or 'cities in the field'. These can also be the centers of learning of new technologies of computer, space, telecommunication etc. From the pre-independence era of Mahatma Gandhi, every government after the Independence of the country in 1947, has committed itself to rural development. The latest being the UPA Government at the center, which announced a Common Minimum Progress (CMP). According to the Common Minimum Program of the Government of India (2004), the following are the commitments in respect of rural development:

### **Panchayati Raj:**

“It will be ensured that all funds given to states for implementation of poverty alleviation and rural development schemes by panchayats are neither delayed nor diverted. Monitoring will be strict. In addition, after consultations with states, the UPA government will consider crediting elected panchayats with such funds directly. Devolution of funds will be accompanied by similar devolution of functions and functionaries as well. Regular elections to panchayat bodies will be ensured and the amended Act in respect of the Fifth and Sixth Schedule Areas will be implemented. The UPA government will ensure that the gram Sabha is empowered to emerge as the foundation of panchayati raj.”

### **Women and Children:**

“It will be ensured that at least one-third of all funds flowing into panchayats are earmarked for programs for the development of women and children. Village women and their associations will be encouraged to assume responsibility for all development schemes relating to drinking water, sanitation, primary education, health and nutrition.”

### **Infrastructure:**

“The highest priority is attached to the development and expansion of physical infrastructure like roads, highways, ports, power, railways, water supply, sewage treatment and sanitation.

### **Drinking Water:**

“Providing drinking water to all sections in urban and rural areas and augmenting availability of drinking water sources is an issue of the topmost priority. Harvesting rainwater, de-silting existing ponds and other innovative mechanisms will be adopted.” The Central Government has recently announced a new Twenty Point Program (TPP-2004), which overlaps the provisions of rural amenities and services. The salient programs of the Central Government under each head are given below:

## **Agriculture**

### Intensive Agriculture District Programme

- Launched in 1960-61, intensive agriculture district programme (IADP) was started to expand food production based on a package of irrigation, seeds, pesticides, credit and technical assistance.
- Comprehensive Crop Insurance to farmers against calamity and loss of crop.
- Kisan Credit Card and Life Insurance Cover to Kisan Credit Card holders.
- Kisan Mitra (Twenty Point Programme-2004)
- Kisan Credit Cards
- Agriculture Insurance– Crops and livestock
- Agro Clinic (Kisan Call Centre)
- Water shed development and Rain water harvesting
- Dry land farming
- Promotion of horticulture, floriculture, aquaculture and dairying
- Marketing and infrastructural support to farmers
- Irrigation facilities (Including minor and micro irrigation)
- National Programme for Desert areas and Drought Prone Area
- Land Reforms – Distribution of surplus land to landless SC/ST families – Compilation and computerization of land records
- Waste Land Development Programme
- Debt relief and clearance of dues to farmers
- Promotion of Commercial Agriculture
- Effective functioning of agricultural cooperatives

## **Land**

- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP): The sector-wise rural development programs were sought to be integrated in a package through the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) launched in 1976-77, which directed at formulation of District Development Plan. Basic criteria for identifying the districts were economic backwardness, development potential, acute unemployment, presence of basic infrastructure and scientific and technical institutions extension services.
- Tribal Area Development Programme (TAD)
- Border Area Development Programme (BADP)
- MP Area Development Scheme
- Prime Minister Gramodya Yojana (2000)
- Nationwide programme to computerize land records.
- Kshetriya Vikas (TPP-2004) With a view to redress regional imbalances through fiscal, administrative, investment and other means, the programme titled Kshetriya Vikas has been launched in 2004, which covers various aspects, such as:
  - Surplus Land Distribution (TPP-1986)
  - Flood Control
  - Prevention of erosion
  - Creation of productive assets
  - Financing

## **Irrigation and Water Management**

- New Watershed Development Projects taken up to develop 62 lakh hectares of wasteland/degraded lands.
- Pumpset Energisation Scheme (TPP-1986)
- Desert Development, Drought Prone/Arid Prone Watershed/Wasteland Development Programme (1999)

## **Social Forestry**

- Tree Plantation Programme (TPP-1986)
- Paryavaran Sanrakshan evam Van Vridhi (Twenty Point Programme – 2004)

This covers plantation and conservation of forests, identification of air and water pollution, pollution of rivers and their prevention.

## **Small Scale/Village/Cottage Industries**

- Deendayal Hathkargha Protsahan Yojana (TPP – 2004)
- Babasahib Ambedkar Hastshilpa Vikas Yojana (TPP – 2004)
- Modernisation of Village Industries (TPP-2004) : (i) Khadi Village and Cottage Industries, (ii) Small Scale Industries, (iii) Handicrafts,(iv)Sericulture, (v) Handloom, (vi) Coir and Jute, (vii) Rubber, (viii) Cashew, (ix) Food processing, (x) Leather, and (xi) PotteryRural Housing
- Shelter for all by 2007 –Construction of 25 lakh houses per year in rural areas.
- Apna Ghar (Twenty Point Programme – 2004): Apna Ghar covers Rural Housing, Indira Awaas Yojana and Valmiki Ambedkar Awaas Yojana.
- Basti Sudhar (TPP – 2004): With a view to paying particular attention to the needs of slum dwellers the programme of Basti Sudhar would cover seven basic amenities and housing for slum dwellers.

## **Drinking Water**

- Safe Drinking Water by 2004 for all villages. 87.9% villages fully covered and 10.9% partially covered so far. Sector Reforms in 62 pilot districts with an outlay of Rs.1800 crore is under implementation.
- Shudh Peya Jal (Twenty Point Programme – 2004): Providing drinking water to all and augmenting availability of drinking water sources is an issue of the topmost priority. Harvesting rain water, desilting existing ponds and other innovative mechanisms are to be taken up and monitored.

## **Rural Roads**

- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana providing on all-weather road to all rural Habitations with a population of 500 by 2007.21,000 projects already taken up.
- Rural Infrastructure Development fund (RIDF) corpus with NABARD for creating infrastructure in rural areas Increased to Rs.5000 crores.

## **Rural Electrification and Non-Conventional Energy Sources**

- Bio-Gas Plants (TPP-1986)
- Village Electrification Scheme (TPP-1986)
- Awasthapna Vikas (TPP-2004) The Awasthapna Vikas (Infrastructure Development) envisages giving the highest priority to the development and expansion of physical infrastructure, like Power, Coal, Steel, Railways, Ports, Shipping and Telecommunication, Cement, Fertilizer, Petroleum & Natural Gas, Civil Aviation, Rural and Urban Roads, Electrification, Solar Energy, Integrated Rural Energy Programme, Water Supply, Sewage Treatment, Sanitation, Interlinking of rivers, and irrigation.
- Accelerated Rural Electrification Programme covering the following:
  - Electrification of Villages
  - Electrification of Hamlets

- Electrification of Dalit Bastis
- Electrification of Households
- Bio-gas Plant
- Solar Energy: (i) Water heating, (ii) Solar cooking and (iii) Air heating
- Integrated Rural Energy

### **Programme Poverty Alleviation**

- Jawahar Gram Smridhi Yojana (GSY-2002)
- Sampoorna Grameen Rozgar Yojana – outlay of Rs.10000 crore per annum – provides 100 crore mandays of employment with food security. 50% of funds earmarked direct to Panchayats.
- Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana providing sustainable income to rural poor through Self- Help Groups. 14 lakh Self – help groups, one in each habitation.
- Massive Food for Work Programme introduced in calamity affected States. 25.13 lakh tons of food grains valued at Rs.2353 crores released.
- Employment Assurance Scheme (2002)
- Antyodaya Ann Yojana (2000)
- Employment and Food Bank
- Garibi Unmoolan (Twenty Point Programme – 2004)
- The National Common Minimum Programme (NCMP) lays down that a National Employment Guarantee Act will be enacted to provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment to begin with on asset-creating public works programs every year at minimum wages for at least one able-bodied person in every household, which include:
  - (a) Kisan Mitra
  - (b) Shramik Kalyan : With a view to ensure the welfare and well-being of all workers, particularly those in unorganized sector, including the Social Security for Agricultural and Unorganized Labor, Minimum

Wages Enforcement (including Farm Labour), Prevention of Child Labour and Women Labour.

- Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana (TPP-2004) Increasing employment potential in service industries viz. (i) Information Technology enabled services, (ii) Trade, (iii) Transport, (iv) Tele-communications, (v) Finance and (vi) Tourism.

### **Education**

- Vidyadeep (Twenty Point Programme 2004): The Vidyadeep Programme includes SarvShiksha Abhiyan, education guarantee scheme and non-formal education, Mid-Day Meal Scheme, Literacy rate, and financial assistance to poor students for professional education.

### **Cultural Activities**

- Community Development Programme (CDP) was launched in 1952 to establish an appropriate data base for village development plans and programmes to improve village community life.

### **Health Family Welfare and Sanitation**

- Immunization of Children (TPP – 1986)
- Total Sanitation campaign launched in 200 districts. Project cost Rs.1195 crores.
- Assistance of Rs.10000/- to the family of deceased bread earner under National Family Benefit Scheme.
- Jan-Jan Ka Swasthya (TPP-2004): Jan-Jan Ka Swasthya Programme envisages Health Care for the Poor (Sub Centers/Primary Health Centres/Community Health Centers), Immunization of Children, Disease Prevention (Blindness, Leprosy, Malaria, TB, AIDS and Goitre), National Scheme for Health Insurance for the poor, and Sanitation Programme.
- Chhota Pariwar (TPP-2004): The Government has targeted high fertility districts (150) for population control programme, which includes the following:

- Child survival and safe motherhood programme
- Supplementary nutrition (Mother and Children)
- Universalization of ICDS Scheme
- Functional Anganwadis in every settlement

### **Women and Child Development, Social Welfare**

- Bhagyashree Child Welfare Policy for girl child, Rajrajeshwari Mahila Kalyan Bima Yojana for women, Janashree Bima Yojana for Labour in Unorganized Sector, Khetihar Mazdoor Bima Yojana for agricultural labours & Shiksha Sahyog Yojana for education allowance to poor children.
- Decentralization and devolution of powers, funds and functions to the Panchayati Raj Institutions with mandatory reservation for women.
- Balika Smridhi Yojana
- National Maternity Benefit Scheme
- Stree Shakti (TPP – 2004): The programme launched in 2004, covers micro financing. Rashtriya Mahila Kosh, Balika Samridhi Yojana, Kishori Shakti Yojana and Women Participation in Panchayats, municipalities, state legislatures and Parliament.

### **Social Welfare of Weaker Sections/SC/ST/Youth**

- National Old Age Pension Scheme provides social security to 44 lakh destitute persons above 65 years. 10 Kg. Free food grains per month to identified poor under Annapurna Scheme. Under National Maternity Benefit Scheme Rs.500/- to women below poverty line during maternity.
- Social Security Scheme
- Anusuchit Jaati, Jan Jaati, evam Alpsankhyak Shashaktikaran (Twenty Point Programme– 2004): This covers the issues of reservation quotas assistance to primitive tribal sub-groups,

ownership rights to tribal, and promoting modern and technical education among all minorities.

- Yuva Shakti (TPP-2004): The Yuva Shakti programme covers the items like National Service Volunteer Scheme, National Service Scheme, National Cadet Corps, Nehru Yuva Kendra, Youths – sports and cultural development.
- Samajik Suraksha (TPP-2004): To provide social security to the weaker sections of society, this programme aims at rehabilitation of the handicapped, National Policy on older persons for providing health and shelter, vocational training, reforming social/juvenile delinquents, alcoholics and drug addicts.

### **Public Distribution System**

Upbhokta Jaagran (TPP-2004) : To make the consumer more aware, to ensure food and nutrition security, and to bring about improvements in the food storage facilities, the Upbhokta Jaagran programme, which includes the following, has been launched in 2004:

- Consumer court cases
- Jagriti Shivir Yojana
- Strategy for food and nutritional security: (i) Nutrition Programme for mother and children (boys/girls), (ii) Targeted Public Distribution system, (iii) Anthodhya Anna Yojana, (iv) Annapurna Scheme, (v) Construction of additional storage facilities, (vi) Establishing Grain banks in chronically food scared area, (vii) New Strategy for food and nutritional security and (viii) New Ration Card issue BPL Families/others.

### **Panchayati Raj**

- Conducting of timely Panchayat Election
- Devolution of funds and functions
- Transfer of functionaries to Panchayats for local administration

- Kriyasheel Prashaasan (TPP-2004): The programme – Kriyasheel Prashaasan aims at improving governance and responsiveness of the public administration, covering items like simplification of procedure, delegation of authority, enforcement of accountability, Redressal of Public Grievances, and Transparency in decision making,

Development of Technology for e-Governance, versatile on-line information system for citizens, civic administration and municipal corporation, Development and up gradation of website of Ministries and State Governments.

- Sheeghra Nyay Prakriya (TPP-2004): To expedite disposal of court cases the Sheeghra Nyay Pakriya programme has been launched for monitoring the pendency of court cases and expansion of legal aid services.

### **The Reality**

In spite of numerous laudable programmes and huge investments, the reality of rural livelihood is rather dismal. There is a continuous distress migration to the cities and most of the villages lack the basic amenities and services, like a pakka road, transport, communications, drinking water supply, power, sanitation, health center, irrigation facility and jobs for survival and sustenance. The power is concentrated in the hands of few and the village administration is by and large urban-centered. The concepts of citizen empowerment, participatory governance and decentralization are often confined to the seminars and papers. The decision-making is often piecemeal, disjointed, ad-hoc, motivated and lacks an overall perspective. A lion's share of subsidies is eaten up by the administration/establishment structure and their salaries. The programmes are too many, so are the departments involved in each one of them. There is often overlapping and lack of clarity about the organizations and their accountability. The programmes too often exceed the time and financial allocations and the facilities including housing built up by the government bodies have often remain

unoccupied. This leads us to identification of the pertinent issues involved in rural development, as given below:

### **Issues**

- Lack of clear goals, objectives and targets
- Lack of benchmark and quantifiable standards
- Abstract and disjointed programmes without a coordinated spatial dimension
- Lack of strategic interventions and time frame
- Gap between plans/programmes and implementation
- Urban Centered, Multi-layered and multi-tiered rural administration and lack of accountability
- Complex procedures and obsolete legal frame
- Lack of funds, bulk of expenditure booked for establishment and salaries.

### **The Approach**

- Evolving Smart Targets (Specific, Measureable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Timely)
- Setting up the Benchmarks for amenities and services
- Preparation of the development plans at policy, strategic and operational levels, and exploring a need based approach for clustered hierarchy of facilities
- Strategic planning for priority projects, areas and sectors in a timeframe
- Action Planning and participatory management
- Institutional/organization framework/Governance
- Legal framework and procedural reforms

- Financial Planning and harnessing the potential of private and community sectors planning of the Rural Areas is essentially comprised the following levels:

1. Policy Goals

2. Strategic objectives

3. Action Plans

4. Projects

So that all these fit into a comprehensive frame-work, a matrix structure can be developed relating the above with the following:

- (a) Focus Areas/Priority Sector, based on the characteristics and potential of a particular region/district/village.

- (b) Benchmarking of standards, levels and norms

- (c) Time Frame for achieving the targets/accomplishing the activity

- (d) Key organization/departments responsible

- (e) Financial resources

- (f) Monitoring and Feedback system

### **Towards a need based approach**

Participatory learning with the target groups provides useful clues towards adopting a 'needs based approach'. The needs of the rural population can be categorized in the following priorities:

1. Survival: Freedom from hunger and malnutrition, food security, agriculture and employment, credit facility

2. Supportive: Shelter, drinking water supply, power, transport, sanitation etc.

3. Transformational: Education, literacy, skill development, environmental up gradation and access to information.

4. Empowerment: Equal access to resources, including land, finance and services, justice, participation in decision making, etc. It is

observed that with a little external support, the rural poor are often capable of meeting their survival needs. The organized sector has a vital role in helping the rural poor in meeting these needs. The experience indicates that the supportive needs really help the rural poor in climbing up the economic ladder. The provision of basic services and facilities in the rural context is a major concern. As such the rural amenities and services be grouped under the above heads and the priorities of planning, development and investments can be worked out.

Based on participatory rural learning, the viable distances for these amenities and facilities can also be worked out (which will vary according to public transport facility, topography and characteristics of potential areas). This leads us to a system of clustering of the facilities into a conceptual hierarchy of rural settlements (such as 'cities in green field', urban centers, growth centers etc.) which can be developed according to the potential of either the existing settlement or as the new areas.

### **The Process**

Keeping in view the above approach, the following steps are necessary in the process of rural planning:

1. Mission Statement and Objectives (mainly derived from 11th schedule, Article 243 G and 20 Point Programme-2004)
2. translating the above into region wise SMART Goals and Targets (specific, measureable, Action-oriented, Realistic and Timely).
3. Baseline Information and participatory learning at District, Taluk and village settlement levels
4. Identifying the issues and Key Action Areas
5. Conceptual Framework with respect to Policy Option, Strategic planning, Benchmarks and Standards
6. Evaluation of planning options, by SWOT Analysis, financial implications, cost benefit analysis, feasibility and viability assessment.

7. Development of Plans at District, Taluka and settlement levels, strategies of development, disaggregated into sectorial plans for various amenities & services.

8. Resource Planning and Governance:

- Shared Governance and Decentralization
- Identifying key issues vis-à-vis Resource assessment
- Empowerment of the community.
- Participatory Action Planning Implementation Planning
- Matrix structure for integrated implementation
- GIS/MIS, computerization, information sharing and participatory monitoring
- Capacity building and networking
- Legal, institutional and financial framework.

The entire superstructure of rural planning and development rests on the three pillars of-

- Organization/institutional structure
- Finance
- Legal Frame

No plan, however good, can be implemented unless it is supported by the people and stakeholders, who have to participate at all levels of decision making and implementation.

## **Conclusion**

The Government with its avowed commitment to rural development has resorted to the conventional “programme” approach, which has serious shortcomings in achieving its objectives and has the danger of reducing the laudable mandate into mere exhortations. It is time that a more professional, participatory planning approach is evolved, which should be accompanied by supportive governance, organization/administrative structure, fiscal and legal/procedural reforms to induce a holistic approach towards the development of the rural areas.