Recent Rural Development Programmes /Schemes in India

**Suchithra P**

**Post Graduate scholor, College of Agriculture, Hassan, Karnataka**

suchithrap20@gmail.com

**Vidya Shree G**

**Post Graduate scholor, College of Agriculture, Hassan, Karnataka**

vidyashree1700@gmail.com

**INTRODUCTION**

Rural development in India embodies the ongoing advancement in economic and social conditions for people living in rural areas. It's not a single goal, but an ongoing process that significantly contributes to both local and national economic growth. Conversely, economic progress within a region drives rural development. Key goals encompass creating livelihood opportunities, lifting rural residents out of poverty, and enhancing their living standards through modern education, healthcare, and land reforms, as pursued by Indian policymakers.Over the decades following independence, the Indian government has consistently emphasized the imperative of fostering rural development in the country.

Rural development primarily entails creating increased income opportunities for individuals residing in rural regions. According to the 2011 Population Census, approximately 69% of India's populace resides in rural areas, accounting for roughly 833 million people. Consequently, rural development efforts also encompass government initiatives aimed at reducing poverty rates in these regions. A separate government report from 2011-2012 indicated that 21.9% of the population fell below the poverty line, with a significant portion originating from rural areas. Hence, enhancing the economic prospects and viable career options in rural communities is essential. This advancement holds the potential to elevate a substantial portion of the population out of poverty and contribute to the reduction of the Below Poverty Line segment.

Consequently, the rural population necessitates enduring reforms and continual projects aimed at rural development in India, particularly in sectors like agriculture, education, and health. Through concerted efforts and appropriate measures, it becomes achievable to instigate sustainable development across rural areas, ensuring its resilience over time.

Given below are some of the important recent schemes that have been introduced to drive rural development in India.

**a) Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana**

The Government of India had launched the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana on 25th December, 2000 to provide all-weather access to eligible unconnected habitations. Focuses on improving the socio-economic status of rural communities.

In the context of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), a total of 39,413 kilometers of road and 1,394 bridges have been constructed through different initiatives or aspects of PMGSY. The combined expenditure for these projects, including the state's contribution, in the year 2022 amounted to Rs. 23,364 crore

**b) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) 2005:**

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) aims to improve the livelihood security of rural households in India. It ensures a minimum of 100 days of wage employment per year for rural households whose adult members are willing to undertake unskilled manual. The central government has announced an increase in wage rates for the rural job guarantee program for the fiscal year 2023-24. Haryana will now have the highest daily wage at Rs 357, while Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh will offer the lowest at Rs 221 per day.

As of December 15, 2022, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has provided employment to 11.37 crore households, generating a total of 289.24 crore person-days of work.

**c) Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY)**

To facilitate area-based development, the Pradhan Mantri Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAGY) was introduced in 2009-10. This scheme focuses on the comprehensive growth of villages where Scheduled Castes form the majority population.

Scheme Objective: The primary goal of the scheme is to achieve holistic development in villages where Scheduled Castes make up the majority of the population. This is accomplished through two main approaches:

(a) By harmoniously executing pertinent Central and State/UT Government Schemes through convergence.

(b) By addressing specific activities that fall outside the purview of existing government schemes, using "Gap-filling" funds. These funds, amounting to Rs.20.00 lakh per village, are provided as Central Assistance.

The Scheme was initiated on a pilot basis in the fiscal year 2009-10. During this phase, a total of 1000 villages were chosen from five states: Tamil Nadu (225), Rajasthan (225), Bihar (225), Himachal Pradesh (225), and Assam (100). These villages were designated as 'Adarsh Grams' by their respective State Governments as part of the implementation.

In the fiscal year 2014-15, PMAGY was expanded in Phase-I to encompass an additional 1500 villages across 11 states. These states were Andhra Pradesh (7), Assam (75), Chhattisgarh (175), Jharkhand (100), Haryana (12), Karnataka (201), Madhya Pradesh (327), Odisha (175), Punjab (162), Telangana (6), and Uttar Pradesh (260).

Among the selected villages, 68 out of 75 in Assam and 9 out of 12 in Haryana were eligible for scheme implementation. Consequently, the total count of villages designated as 'Adarsh Grams' by respective State Governments now stands at 1184

**d) Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)**

Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) is a centrally sponsored program initiated by the Ministry of Rural Development in June 2011. Its goal is to combat rural poverty by fostering diverse livelihoods and enhancing rural households' access to financial services nationwide. Notably, in FY 2021, revolving funds and community investment funds totaling around Rs. 56 Crore were disbursed to women self-help groups (SHGs), compared to approximately Rs. 32 Crore in the corresponding period of FY 2020. The program provides training on both farm and non-farm livelihoods, along with education on COVID-19 management and the promotion of Agri-Nutri gardens

**e)Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)**

On September 25, 2014, the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) revamped the skill development program under the National Rural Livelihood Mission, naming it Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY). This program aims to elevate skill training programs to international standards and achieve outcomes in line with global benchmarks. DDU-GKY focuses on quality training with tangible results and aligns with the 'Make in India' initiative to position India as a preferred global manufacturing hub. It also collaborates with other prominent national programs.

DDU-GKY, a state-led scheme implemented in partnership with the private sector, operates based on demand-driven targets. It stands out among skill training programs by focusing on rural disadvantaged youth and ensuring sustainable employment through rigorous post-placement tracking, retention, and career growth efforts. Quality is assured through third-party certification by Sector Skill Councils (SSC) of NSDC, evaluating trainees' skills, knowledge, and attitude. DDU-GKY also encompasses two distinct initiatives: ROSHNI for conflict-affected areas and Himayat for Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh's youth, with specific features and funding approaches..

**f) Swachh Bharat Mission – Gramin**

Launched on October 2, 2014, the Swachh Bharat Mission by the Prime Minister of India aimed to swiftly achieve universal sanitation coverage and prioritize sanitation efforts. By October 2, 2019, in honor of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary, the mission led to the declaration of all villages, Gram Panchayats, Districts, States, and Union Territories in India as "open-defecation free" (ODF). Over 100 million toilets were constructed in rural India to achieve this. As a part of the ongoing efforts to ensure sustained open-defecation free practices, inclusive implementation, and accessible waste management facilities, the mission is transitioning to Phase II, termed ODF-Plus. Under Phase II, known as Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen), ODF Plus activities will further strengthen ODF behaviors and concentrate on providing solutions for the safe handling of solid and liquid waste within villages.

The Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G) has achieved another remarkable feat as 50% of the total villages in the country have now attained ODF Plus status under phase II of the Mission. An ODF Plus village signifies the sustained absence of open defecation while incorporating effective solid or liquid waste management systems. Presently, over 296,000 villages have self-declared as ODF Plus, marking a significant stride towards accomplishing the SBM-G phase II targets by 2024-25.

States showcasing exceptional performance include Telangana (100%), Karnataka (99.5%), Tamil Nadu (97.8%), and Uttar Pradesh (95.2%) among larger states, as well as Goa (95.3%) and Sikkim (69.2%) among smaller states. Additionally, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Dadra Nagar Havelli & Daman Diu, and Lakshadweep have achieved 100% ODF Plus Model villages among Union Territories. These states and UTs have made remarkable strides in attaining ODF Plus status, playing a pivotal role in reaching this noteworthy milestone.

**g) Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY):**

Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY), initiated by the Ministry of Rural Development, involves Members of Parliament directly in Gram Panchayat development. Launched on October 11, 2014, the scheme aims to establish well-rounded model villages. The initial goal was to develop three exemplary villages by March 2019, with one achieved by 2016. Subsequently, five such model villages are to be chosen and developed each year until 2024. These 'Adarsh Grams' serve as role models for health, cleanliness, greenery, and community harmony, inspiring nearby villages in development and governance.

Members of Parliament (MPs) play a catalytic role in the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY). They identify the Gram Panchayat to be developed as a model, engage with the community, promote the scheme's values, initiate startup activities, and facilitate planning. The District Collector oversees SAGY implementation, conducting monthly review meetings with relevant department representatives, chaired by the respective MPs. Additionally, the heads of the involved Gram Panchayats are invited to these meetings

**h) Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme**

SVEP (Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme) was incorporated as a component of the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM), which is a centrally sponsored program that has been in effect since June 2011. SVEP, specifically, was introduced as a budget-allocated scheme and received approval in May 2015 as a sub-scheme under the broader NRLM framework. The official guidelines for the implementation of SVEP were subsequently issued on June 15, 2015.

Over the preceding years, a persistent shortfall in both capital and assistance for rural enterprises has been brought to the forefront. The Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Program (SVEP) is designed with the aim of playing a pivotal role in addressing and closing this gap.

The primary objective of SVEP is to uplift the rural impoverished population by assisting them in establishing enterprises and offering ongoing support until these enterprises attain stability.

SVEP emphasizes

* Generating sustainable livelihoods and self-employment through financial aid and training in business management and soft skills.
* Establishing local community leaders to foster enterprise growth.
* Assisting fledgling rural businesses with essential services like business development, mentoring, finance, and integration with other government programs.

SVEP is rooted in the belief that it will drive non-farm livelihoods, including skill-based work and small businesses, leading to job creation, sustained economic growth, and social advantages. Crucially, the program empowers community-based organizations to make funding choices, democratizing entrepreneurship. SVEP facilitates and backs fledgling and struggling enterprises, enabling their inception and growth. This is achieved through an IT-based workflow system comprising both web and mobile platforms. This streamlined system simplifies day-to-day management and support provision

**i) Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)**

Launched in 2016, the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) is a farmer-centric initiative offering protection against diverse unforeseen events that result in financial losses. It encompasses scenarios like localized risks, post-harvest losses, natural disasters, untimely rainfall, pests, and crop ailments.

The scheme, guided by the principle 'One Nation, One Crop, One Premium,' strives to make crop insurance affordable and accessible to Indian farmers. Its core objective is to enhance the reach of crop insurance across the nation, particularly focusing on covering the entire cultivated area

**j) Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)**

Restructured from Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY) to PMAY-G from April 1, 2016. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) is a key initiative of the Indian government, working towards the "Housing for All" goal. It plans to provide 2.95 crore permanent houses with essential facilities to homeless and underprivileged rural households by 2024, through the integration of various schemes..

As of December 15, 2022, the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) has sanctioned 2.50 crore houses, with 2.11 crore houses already completed. In the fiscal year 2022-23, out of the targeted 52.78 lakh houses, 31.43 lakh houses have been successfully completed.

**k) National Rurban Mission (NRuM):**

* Launched on 21st February, 2016
* Named as the Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM).
* Aims to enhance rural areas by providing economic, social, and physical infrastructure.
* Targets development of 300 Rurban clusters within the next five years.
* Envisions creating clusters of "Rurban Villages" that maintain the rural community essence while incorporating urban-like facilities.
* The mission's objective is to foster local economic growth, improve essential services, and establish well-designed Rurban clusters

 **l) Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY)**

The Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY) launched on August 2017 is a government initiative aimed at providing rural livelihood opportunities by enabling safe and affordable transportation services in remote and inaccessible areas. This program seeks to enhance the livelihood prospects of rural communities, particularly women, by involving them in the operation of transport services and creating local employment opportunities.

Key points about the Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY):

Objective: The primary goal of AGEY is to facilitate better access to markets, healthcare, education, and other essential services in rural areas through efficient and affordable transportation

Involvement of Women: The scheme emphasizes the involvement of women in the operation of transport services, enabling them to become entrepreneurs and income generators. This empowers women and enhances their participation in economic activities.

Vehicles: Under AGEY, rural self-help groups (SHGs), cooperative societies, and other community-based organizations are provided financial assistance to purchase and operate vehicles like e-rickshaws, small buses, and other types of transport suitable for the local terrain

Service Coverage: The scheme focuses on connecting remote villages to nearby towns and markets, thereby enhancing rural connectivity and reducing travel time for residents.

Funding Support: The program provides financial support for vehicle acquisition, driver training, and operational expenses, aiming to create sustainable transport services that benefit the rural population

Implementation: AGEY is implemented by the Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with State Rural Livelihood Missions (SRLMs)

Social and Economic Impact: By improving transportation infrastructure and creating job opportunities, AGEY contributes to poverty reduction, women's empowerment, and overall socio-economic development in rural areas

Overall, the Aajeevika Grameen Express Yojana aims to address transportation challenges in rural regions, empower women, and enhance rural livelihoods by fostering sustainable and accessible transportation services

**m) Pradhan Mantri KIsan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN)**

PM-KISAN is indeed a significant Central Sector scheme in India that aims to provide financial support to small and marginal farmers.

Scheme Type and Funding: PM-KISAN is a Central Sector scheme, meaning it is fully funded by the Government of India. This implies that the entire financial burden of the scheme is borne by the central government.

Operational Date: The scheme became operational from December 1, 2018. This is when the implementation of the scheme began, and eligible farmers started receiving the benefits.

Income Support: PM-KISAN provides income support to eligible landholding farmer families. The support is provided in the form of direct cash transfers. Each eligible farmer family receives an amount of ₹6,000 per year.

Installments: The annual income support of ₹6,000 is distributed in three equal installments. These installments are usually paid at regular intervals over the course of the year.

Beneficiary Definition: The beneficiaries of the scheme are defined as the husband, wife, and minor children of the landholding farmer family. This is the unit considered for the distribution of the benefits.

Direct Bank Transfers: The income support funds are directly transferred to the bank accounts of the identified beneficiaries. This ensures that the financial assistance reaches the intended recipients without intermediaries.

Exclusion Categories: The scheme includes specific exclusion categories, which means that certain groups or individuals are not eligible to receive the benefits. These exclusion categories are defined in the scheme guidelines to ensure that the benefits are targeted to the intended beneficiaries.

Overall, PM-KISAN aims to provide much-needed financial assistance to small and marginal farmers across India. It's part of the government's efforts to improve the economic well-being of farmers and enhance the agricultural sector's contribution to the country's economy.

**n) Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA)**

The Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) was a government initiative that aimed to promote rural self-governance and empower Panchayati Raj institutions (PRIs) to effectively tackle development challenges and attain Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The program focused on enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of Panchayats in selected districts.

Transformation of Aspirational Districts Program: The Transformation of Aspirational Districts Program targeted the transformation of specific districts that encountered various development challenges, encompassing poverty, public health, nutrition, education, gender, sanitation, drinking water, and livelihood generation. The chosen districts were aligned with the SDGs and came under the jurisdiction of Panchayats.

Implementation Duration: The program was designed to be implemented as a core Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) for a duration of four years, spanning from 2018-19 to 2021-22.

Funding Structure: Regarding the funding structure, both the Central and State governments were involved. The sharing ratio for the State components of the program typically stood at 60:40, with the State government contributing 60% of the funds and the Central government contributing 40%. However, in North-Eastern (NE) and Hilly States, a different sharing ratio was established, with a higher Central contribution of 90%. In the case of Union Territories (UTs), the entire funding was borne by the Central government (100%).

Capacity Building Efforts : The primary objective of RGSA was to bolster the capacity of Panchayats to efficiently carry out their roles and responsibilities, particularly in achieving SDGs and other development objectives. This encompassed providing training, resources, and support to Panchayats to enhance their governance and development capabilities.

The combined endeavors of RGSA and the Transformation of Aspirational Districts program highlighted the Indian government's dedication to fostering local self-governance, addressing development disparities, and attaining sustainable and comprehensive growth throughout the country. These initiatives emphasized the significance of empowering Panchayats to play a crucial role in instigating positive change at the grassroots level.

**o) PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan)**

The PM-KUSUM (Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan) Scheme has a dual purpose: it aims to provide energy security to Indian farmers while also upholding India's commitment to raise the proportion of electric power capacity from non-fossil-fuel sources to 40% by 2030, as outlined in its Intended Nationally Determined Contributions (INDCs).

The PM-KUSUM Scheme, launched in 2019, consists of three components

Component-A: Establishing 10,000 MW of Decentralized Grid Connected Renewable Energy Power Plants on barren land. This involves setting up renewable energy power plants (REPP) with capacities ranging from 500 kW to 2 MW by individuals, farmer groups, cooperatives, panchayats, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), and Water User Associations (WUAs) on barren or fallow land. Solar panels can also be installed on stilts above cultivable land, allowing crops to grow beneath. These power projects are placed within a five-kilometer radius of sub-stations to reduce transmission costs and losses. Generated power will be purchased by local DISCOMs at predetermined tariffs.

Component-B: Installing 17.50 lakh stand-alone solar agriculture pumps. This component supports individual farmers in adopting stand-alone solar pumps with capacities up to 7.5 HP to replace existing diesel pumps or irrigation systems in off-grid areas lacking grid supply. Higher-capacity pumps can be used but with financial assistance limited to 7.5 HP.

Component-C: Solarizing 10 lakh grid-connected agriculture pumps. Farmers with grid-connected pumps receive support to solarize them. The generated solar power caters to irrigation needs, with excess power being sold to DISCOMs at predefined tariffs.

It is notable that the scope of the PM-KUSUM Scheme was modified based on the learning from the first year of the implementation.

**p) Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improvised Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA)**

SVAMITVA is a Central Sector Scheme under the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. After a successful pilot phase in 9 states during 2020-2021, the scheme was nationally launched by the Hon’ble Prime Minister on National Panchayati Raj Day, April 24, 2021. It marks a reformative stride towards establishing clear property ownership in rural inhabited areas by using drone technology to map land parcels. The scheme issues 'Record of Rights' to village household owners, accompanied by legal ownership cards (Property cards/Title deeds).

The collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Revenue Department, State Panchayati Raj Department, and Survey of India drive the implementation of SVAMITVA. The scheme encompasses various aspects such as promoting property monetization and bank loans, mitigating property-related disputes, and fostering comprehensive village-level planning. Ultimately, SVAMITVA serves as a foundational step toward achieving genuine Gram Swaraj and empowering rural India to be self-reliant.

The scheme aims to achieve the following objectives:

i. Develop accurate rural land records to aid in planning and reduce property-related disputes.

ii. Foster financial stability among rural citizens by allowing them to utilize their property as a financial asset for obtaining loans and other financial advantages.

iii. Determine property taxes, contributing directly to Gram Panchayats (GPs) in states where devolved, or adding to the state's revenue in other cases.

iv. Establish survey infrastructure and GIS maps that can be utilized by various departments.

 v. Enhance the quality of Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) through the utilization of GIS maps for better preparation.

**Conclusion**

In India, rural development schemes play a pivotal role in shaping the socio-economic landscape of the countryside. These initiatives serve as catalysts for positive change by addressing various challenges and fostering holistic growth. Through schemes like Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G), and Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY), the government strives to uplift rural communities.

However, the effectiveness of these schemes greatly hinges on community involvement and ownership. Social mobilization and community participation are integral for successful implementation. These programs empower rural individuals to actively shape their destiny and contribute to their own progress.

In conclusion, rural development schemes in India are integral to addressing challenges, enhancing living standards, and fostering sustainable growth. By combining government support with community participation, these initiatives pave the way for a brighter and more prosperous future for India

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