



NATIONAL RURBAN MISSION: HOPE FOR THE BALANCED DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract

India is one of the village dominated nations. India is a land of villages. If villages develop, the nation will automatically develop. Considering the importance of rural development, the government after independence launched various rural development programmes. Development of rural area became the priority of many policy makers and welfare schemes. After investing crores rupees in rural development programmes, still there has been a continuous migration of the people from rural to the urban areas. Today also majority of villages are facing various problems. Keeping all these issues, Rurban mission was launched. It seems to be promising scheme to transform the rural sector in the coming years.

Key words: *Rural development, villages, PURA, Rurban mission etc.*



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Introduction :

Villages play an important role in Indian society. In the era of globalization and urbanization the present Indian society is still dominated by the villages. Urbanization and unprecedented growth of cities is the most significant trends in the modern world. In spite of the craze towards city and modern lifestyle, majority of the people in India prefer to stay back in their villages. Hence, the world population is predominately rural. India is known as the land of villages. From the prehistoric times, the villages have influenced the Indian social structure. According to *C.N. Shankar Rao*, 'the study of the Indian society becomes meaningful and fruitful only if its villages and their problems are studies carefully'. Indian sociologist, *M.N. Shrinivas* is of the opinion that the village studies provide detailed information regarding various aspects of rural life as well as provides useful knowledge about Indian social reality. Indian rural life and villages are not stagnant. Change is an ever present phenomenon everywhere. Indian villages are also changing. It has been undergoing fast economic, social, political changes. The change has not taken place on its own automatically. Mahatma Gandhiji, Vinoba Bhave, Jaya Prakash Narayan and others knew that the progress of the

nation lies in the development of the villages. After independence, Government of India has spent crores of rupees in the development of villages. This change and development process has various angles such as economic, sociological, statistical, historical, political etc. One of the prominent rural sociologists in India A.R. Desai, has identified some major trends in social change in rural life. He pointed out the transformation of agrarian society followed by the introduction of modern technology and emergence of various association and institutions having linkages with urban societies.

After Independence, crores and crores of rupees have been poured into large number of village development programmes. But still there has been a continuous migration of the people from rural to the urban areas. It is observed that the urban population is steadily increasing and one of the reasons for this is the migration of rural population. It is clearly implies that our rural development programmes brought disappointment. Lack of livelihood opportunities, modern amenities and services, poverty, unemployment, casteism led to migration of people to urban areas. Many of our villages are facing the problem of having good medical, schooling, banking, postal facilities and services. There are many villages with no proper roads, bridges and transport facilities. There are villages which are quite advanced. In such villages many of problems mentioned above are not found. But such Ideal villages are few in number. We say that villages are 'the backbone' of the country and on the other hand realities showing that majority of our villages became the centre of problems. The 'push' factors and 'pull' factors have made the rural people to migrate to the cities which is resulting into adverse effects and damaging planned urbanization too.

PURA : A step towards Rural Development

Urban life influences rural community in many ways. Urban community serves as a 'reference group' for the villages. Such type of rural-urban continuum can be seen in social and cultural interactions and influencing each other. But when uncontrolled rural migration and unplanned urban concentration take place constantly, it leads to several issues and social, economic illness. Considering all the above mentioned issues, Government of India came with the concept PURA i.e. "Provision of Urban Amenities to Rural Areas" which was announced in 2003. This concept was given by former president Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam and discussed in his book 'Target 3 Billion'. It aimed at providing urban amenities and livelihood opportunities in rural area to bridge the rural and urban divide. So that to can reduce the migration from rural to urban area. With the help of Public Private Partnership, it was an attempt to provide livelihood opportunities and urban amenities to improve quality of life in rural area. Unfortunately, PURA was treated as a project. In 2012, former Rural Development

Minister Jairam Ramesh launched the reconstructed PURA scheme that combines rural infrastructure development with economic regeneration in private public partnership mode. But is also lacked a detail business plan. The entire implementation lacked a proper institutional structure and dedicated professional support.

NationalRurban Mission:

Shyama Prasad Mukharjee Rurban Mission (rural and urban) was launched which is a reflection of APJ Abdul Kalam’s idea of PURA. Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the S.P. Mukharjee National Rurban Mission on February 2015 from Kurubhat in Ranjanandgaon district of Chattisgarh. Rurban was announced in the Union budget 2014-15. The funds allocated in the budget 2015-16 also clearly shows that Government is geared to revamping the rural sector. At the time of launching ‘Rurban Mission’ Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, “It is the culmination of rural and urban. Development should be in such a way that its soul should be in the villages and the cities should be its body. The mission will reduce pressure on the cities and provide a new avenue to the village people.”Senior social activist Dhurjati Mukharjee described Rurban as, “a well-knit co-ordinated strategy with adequate financial support may transform the rural sector in the coming years.” Rurban is expected to deliver infrastructure in rural area which also includes economic activities and skill development.

The government aims at developing 300 villages across India as growth centres over a period of three years. Calling the Rurban Mission a remedy to the problem of migration of people cities in search of better quality of life., PM Narendra Modi said that these centers would increase scope of employment in villages, hence, curbing migration of youth from villages to cities. By the end of 2016, the government wants to develop 100 such centers. It is through Rurban Mission that the government wants to ensure that urban level health care facilities reach the nearby villages of such centers.

Kay features of National Rurban Mission :

Rurban is present government’s ambitious plan of improving infrastructures like roads, power, water and sanitation to the overall development of the village. The key features of Rurban are as follows :

- It is an inclusive rural development plan focusing on the overall regional growth for simultaneously benefiting the rural as well as urban area of the country.
- Strengthening of rural area and rural area and de-burdening the urban area.
- Balanced regional development approach.

- Distribution of ownership at the State and Central level in order to ensure smooth implementation of the mission.
- State government will prepare integrated cluster action plans for Rurban clusters. It will be overall, detail plan for the cluster development.
- There will be separate approach for selection of clusters in Tribal and Non-tribal districts.

Rurban Mission is present government's ambitious plan to rejuvenate rural development. Other schemes such as SaasadAdarshGram Yojana, Skilled India Mission, Jan Dhan Yojana etc. are beneficiaries to Rurban Mission. It is an inclusive attempt to achieve rural infrastructure, skill education and employment and health. As Dhurjati Mukharjee said, "though this may not help in high GDP growth but would have a grass root effect which in turn, would boost up incomes of the economically weaker sections and the poor."

No nation can grow with limited and one sided urbanization and city growth. After independence, government has poured crores of rupees into rural development programmes and projects. But we don't have effective results. Doshi and Jain have observed that, 'much money has been invested and little has been harvested in terms of the real improvement in the life of the village people.' On the basis of this and experiences of previous failures Rurban mission seems a promising scheme. It attempts to transforms rural life through a proper plan for improving roads, infrastructure, water, sanitation, health, skill, education. Planning considering grass root realities and direct involvement of central government, National Rurban Mission seems to be step towards 'Balanced Development'.

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