

# People's Participation in Rural Development Activities: A Study

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## Abstract:

India has mass poverty, low levels of income and concentration of income in a few hands, low level of productivity and backward technology, high levels of unemployment, poor nutrition, health, housing, literacy and welfare status, low levels of industrialization and lower status of women. so, Govt. of India introduced implemented many plans and programmes for the development of rural masses. The programmes implemented by the Govt. of India for development of rural people can be discussed by dividing into three categories, i. e growth oriented, area specific and target oriented and poverty alleviation programmes.

India has gained vast experience in the implementation of rural development programmes , According to UNDP report it has been ranked 135<sup>th</sup> among a total of 174 countries . Despite of launching numerous programmes and schemes and pumping crores of rupees in to rural development, the overall picture of rural India continues to be grim. The rural development programmes are almost failed socio – economic conditions of the rural people. The failure of past development efforts was largely distributed to the lack of people's participation. Without people's participation it is impossible for administration to function effectively or implemented any plans and programmes properly. Development was carried out for the people, but not by them. In response, the emphasis shifted to total development efforts and involvement of people in development activities. Participation has come to be recognized as an absolute imperative for development. Some even argue that development, in fact is participation. Rural development is a people's programme, it is essential that people should take active part in rural development activities. For success of any development programmes, people's participation is most important. Without people's participation success of rural development programmes cannot be ensure.

**Keyword:** People's participation, active participation, direct and indirect participation, involvement.

## Introduction

Rural areas constitute a large part, not only of India but also the world. Almost three fourth of the total population of the world are living in these areas Especially in developing countries like India, major arts of the total population are living in rural areas. Such a situation, rural development is an important development effort for any nation. Bening a development country. India has mass poverty, low levels of income in a few hands, low levels of income in a few hands, low level productivity and backward technology, high levels of unemployment, poor in nutrition, health, housing, literacy and welfare status, low levels of

industrialization and programs for the development of rural people which can be discussed by dividing into three categories, I.e.

- 1) Growth Oriented,
- 2) Area Specific and
- 3) Target Oriented poverty alleviation programmes

For proper implementation of these programmes, the government of India has set up a sound administrative system at the center, state, district and block level.

Though India has gained vast experience in the implementation rural development programmes , according to UNDP report it has rank 135<sup>th</sup> among

a total of 174 countries. Despite of launching numerous programmes / schemes and pumping crores of rupees in to rural development, the overall picture of rural India continues to be grim. The rural development programmes are almost failed to improve the socio – economic conditions of the rural people due to lack of people's participation it is impossible for administration to function effectively or implement any plans and programmes properly.

Different writers, organizations and committees consulted for the purpose of rural development not only from India but also the world analyzed people's participation in development process in different ways. According to United Nation Development Programmes (1993) "Participation means that people are closely involves in the economic, socio – cultural and political processes that affect their lives."

Rajani Kothari rightly observed that "participation is not same processes of involving everyone and reducing all to a common denominator, rather it consists of involving institution from which device individuals get a sense of dignity and self-respect as being that are able to determine their own destiny.

According to Johnston and Clark, "participation has a large cost for the poor and they will invest their participation when they believe it will secure them valuable benefits not otherwise available at comparable cost, time and risk."

Thus, participation means doing things together, exchanging ideas and experiences, consulting and considering all views, sharing in decision making, co – implementing, co- operation, sharing and learning, empowerment, democratic risk sharing, collective ideas and effort, getting involved, sharing ideas, opinions and experience, doing things together in work, analysis and decision making and consulting together all views in survey or interview and other activities. In brief, people's participation means peoples participation in planning, implementation and decision-making process. community participation, being one strong features of decentralized planning, is important to achieving socio – economic upliftment for all section of peoples of because of the following reasons:

- 1) Active involvement of the community helps in preparation and execution of effective development action plan by making assessment of the felt needs and constrain of the people easier.
- 2) Participation of community members in the development planning process helps in mobilizing resource for effective plan implementation. Besides, it also minimized the cost of

implementation of the development programmes by reducing the cost of supervision and by elimination irrelevant components in the action plan. Apart from these, people's participation steps up the speed of implementation of the progsrmes by mobilizing popular support and co – operation between groups having diversified objectives and interests.

3) Community participation in developmental activities makes the tasks of monitoring and supervision more effective. This ultimately reduces the amount of leakage of resources, both material and human, in the delivery system and in this process minimizes the "distortion effect in the implementation of the plan."

4) Involvement of the people in the process of development planning also acts as a "pressure groups "from below, thereby creating conducive environments for formulation of effective plans and its better implementation.

5) Finally, the most important agenda for community participation in the process of development , plan formulation and its implementation that is primarily required to reduces unequal distribution of power means of production between groups so as to ' positively restructure " our existing society in favor of the so far deprived sections, since generation of poverty is function of concentration of power in a few privileged class or groups in our society and poverty acts as a major obstacle to achieving the objectives of the development effort. To achieving the goals of implementation of rural development programmes , peoples participation is inevitable. In this regard Y.V. Reddy correctly said popular participation strengthening the planning process, ensuring targeted projects for the rural sector, rationalizing proposals by the agencies concerned, reducing unreasonable pressure of informal channels. People's participation keeps the problems of the community and ensure efficient and smooth implementation of the various plans and rural development programmes.

*Karl Deutsch viewing participation as a psychological phenomenon, underscored its important ace in the planning process in development. For Deutch, participation denotes a technique for setting goals, choosing priorities and deciding what resources are to commit to goal attainment. UNDP analyzed that rural development programme of the people, by the people and or the people. So, without effective participation of the people, it has not been possible to make rural development programmes, the active participation, involvement and cooperation of the people is absolutely essential.*

According to working group on district planning people's participation is needed at the local level for the following reasons:

- 1) To know the needs of the local people.
- 2) To mobilizing local resources.
- 3) To reduce the level of conflict planning and implementation stages.
- 4) To increase the speed of implementation of the programmes.
- 5) To strengthen legitimacy of authority and
- 6) To reduce popular resistance to decision.

According to them, public participations are needed at the local level for the following reasons: People's participation in rural development is also important for the local people than analyzing else. As such, they show positive interest in the provision of the basic needs. It is a fact the local people know well about their problem and hence they are the best judge in solution of their problems. The government is to create an environment that permits the local people to seek their best interest freely.

People's participation and involvement is important factor for the successful implementation of any rural development activities. Especially in decision making, implementation, monitoring, evaluation and sharing the benefits of the development Programmes, people's participation and involvement is necessary. For effective functioning of the rural development programmes, people's participation and involvement is necessary. The implementing agencies of the rural development programmes also very much depend on the effective participation and involvement of the masses, in rural development activities. To command more participation from the rural masses, irrespective of rich and poor, it is necessary to develop the understanding and cooperation between the rural development officials and the people. In this context, special attention should be paid to identify the resources of the peoples and to educate them to understand their needs and problems. If the people drown up their own development plans and government officials motivate the people to take active part in the programmes for their own development, then the atmosphere of the rural development will be created. Without people's effective participation and involvement, it would not be possible to implement the rural development programmes effectively.

Another important! side of people's participation is its 'scope' in the rural development programmes. The rural planning laws lay down a process that before taking action on rural development programmes. The implementing agencies should

consult with the public. The scope not only provided for people's participation but also makes them responsible regarding rural development activities through holding meeting and agencies and discussions. The planner should educate the people on the benefits that flow from different rural development programmes and the needs of people's active participation.

In rural development prpgrammes the people can participate directly or indirectly in several ways. Direct participation is possible through active membership in organization taking up leadership positions and getting involvement in projects. Indirect participation on the other hand implies by helping the programmes of the organization and projects by making available the necessary resources and assisting the community development officials and leaders.

The constitution of India has been absolutely silent with regard to people's participation in administration in administration till 1993 but 73<sup>rd</sup> Amendment of the Indian Constitution, empowers the Panchayati Raj institution to prepare plans and programmes for economic development and social justice, including 29 subjects in the 11<sup>th</sup> schedule, is a water side in the history of democratic decentralization. This has given an opportunity to Panchayats for involving all sections of rural people in decision making, implementation and evaluation, and sharing of benefits of socio-economic development schemes.

As the rural development Programmes is for the people it should certainly be the programmed of the people and by people. Thus, without effective people's participation it has not been possible to make development a people's Programmes. Therefore, the active participation, involvement and co - operation of the people is absolutely essential for the proper implementation of the rural development Programmes.

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