

Inclusive Rural Development in Andaman and Nicobar Islands: A Way Forward

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Abstract: Inclusive Rural development is more specific concept than the concept of rural development. Inclusive growth is closely identified with economic growth which is distributed fairly across society and creates opportunities for all. Indeed these concepts indicate a developmental process whose result consists in the creation of proper conditions for the rural population for such purposes as: the use of land and other local resources in the pursuit of economic activities; adequate distribution of the results of economic growth in the agriculture and other sectors of the rural developments. In broader terms inclusive rural development is signify about improving the quality of life of all rural households with the help of creation of economic activity. More specifically, inclusive rural development significantly covers three different and interrelated dimensions viz., Economic, social and political dimensions. All these dimensions are equally important, but among economic activities are more significant than other two and these includes education, social justice and equal distribution of production, inter-village connectivity, road and waterways, markets, employment opportunities, agriculture and farming practices like administration and management, infrastructure civic amenities, health care and medical and specifically environmental conditions.

The challenges before inclusive rural development is manifold but with committed decentralization and administration by way of improvements in education, health and sanitation in villages can help to avoid problems including providing safe drinking water and so on. The thrust areas like development of agriculture and allied activities are necessary for providing gainful employment in rural areas and for improving overall food production. Providing robust rural infrastructure and socio-economic growth opportunities for the poor people in rural areas through MGNREGA, PMAYG, SBMG & DAY-NRLM schemes has been seen as major achievement in poverty alleviation for improving their quality of life. Furthermore empowering rural enmass by providing opportunities for rural livelihood through various schemes has been launched by the Govt. of India to bring about an improvement in the general quality of

life in the rural areas, by promoting cleanliness, hygiene and eliminating open defecation.

The Directorate of RD, PRIs & ULB being the Nodal Department at Union territory of Andaman and Nicobar has to enforce close supervision, coordination and monitoring for effective implementation of the programme/ Centrally Sponsored Schemes being implemented to achieve the targets set forth. The overall growth factor of A & N Islands is much better than other states. Education, health, irrigation, safe drinking water, implementation of Jal Jeevan Mission is some of the highlights of rural development. The leading role of Directorate of Rural Development, A & N Administration has to bring requisite economic growth and well being among its subjects.

This article is drawn based on the substances available to overviews the role and function of the Directorate of Rural Development and its' programmes for inclusive rural development in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Key Words: Empowerment, Growth opportunities, poverty alleviation, Mission Mode.

INTRODUCTION

Rural Development in India is one of the most important dimensions for the growth engine of the Indian economy since Independence of India. India is primarily an agriculture-based country. Agriculture contributes nearly one-third of the GDP in India. In order to increase the growth of agriculture, the Government has planned several programs pertaining to Rural Development. Inclusive Rural Development generally refers to method of sustainable and inclusive growth of villages through a multi-pronged strategy for eradication of poverty by improving the quality of life and economic well being of the people living in the rural areas. Inclusive Rural development implies both the economic betterment of the people as well as social transformation, increased participation of the people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of

land reforms and greater access to credit among are envisaged for providing the rural people with better prospects.

In other words inclusive rural development means to improve the quality of life of the rural people by reducing poverty through creating structures for self-employment and wage employment programs, providing safe drinking water, electricity, highway connectivity, health, and housing and education facilities to rural enmass. The needs of rural masses are to be guaranteeing an increase in the standard of living of the underprivileged population. The standard of living would be attained by insisting on the basic needs of elementary education, healthcare, clean drinking water, rural roads, etc. India has witnessed a great deal of activities in the last decades particularly a rise in demand for better education, public healthcare, and social security, connectivity or self-employment generation which is marked as significant for this study. Most people returned to villages from cities during COVID pandemic, which was uncommon phenomenon due to improved public services such as education and employment opportunities.

The essential features of inclusive rural development as a multi-dimensional process, which is only involves economic growth but also requires its adaptation to human behavior, social and political structure of rural communities and their involvement in the development strategy. It also reflects systemic positive changes in rural areas, which are initiated "from bottom" and supported "from top". In this process of rural development, inclusiveness is inherent. Moreover the "inclusive rural development" took place in the process of enrichment and specification of the theoretical concepts of sustainable development, inclusive growth and inclusive development in relation to the rural sector of society. This signify a developmental process whose result consists in the creation of proper conditions for the rural population for such purposes as: the use of land and other local resources in the economic activities; adequate distribution of the results of economic growth in the agriculture and other sectors of the rural economy; and participation in social and public life for the consolidation of communities and observance of dignified rights. Such development leads to the reduction of poverty, overcoming the economic, social and political exclusion of people residing in rural

areas. It is pointed out that ensuring the inclusive development is a function of the state regulation of national economy including Poverty Reduction, Equal Distribution of Income, Agricultural Development and the rural economy, Reduction in Regional Disparities are some examples of inclusive growth in India. There are three principles of inclusive development:

1. Respect for the inherent dignity, individual autonomy, including the right to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
2. Non-discrimination;
3. Full and effective participation and inclusion in society and so on.

Inclusive rural development promotes human wellbeing by imparting a sense of belonging and respect, and by building capability, enhancing choices and freedom. It is based on the premises of equity. Thus it is desirable for development of free society. Whereas sustainable development and economic growth determined by the eco-friendly production and consumption of goods and resources. It requires framework for sustainable business practices, natural resource management, recycling and reducing waste management of harmful chemicals and wastes. Further it is suggest that individuals have equal access to the social, political and economic mainstream as well chances to assert their preferences. This normative aspiration requires all parts of society to benefit from development. The elements of Inclusive rural development are as follows:

- Skill Development.
- Financial Inclusion
- Technological Progress
- Economic Expansion
- Social Development.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands at a glance:

The People of Andaman and Nicobar Islands can be broadly categorized into two group's viz. Indigenous or Aborigines and Immigrants or Settlers. Prior to 1858, the Andaman Islands were inhabited by Autochthons only and with the founding of Penal Settlement at Port Blair after Indian Mutiny, Non-autochthons came to inhabit these Islands. Both classes have different traditions and cultures, which creates a beautiful combination. The indigenous tribes are mainly hunters or horticulturists and do not have

much contact with outsiders. People living in islands are mainly engaged in the occupation of fishing, agriculture etc. For example the people residing in Andaman and Nicobar islands have agriculture as their primary occupation. Principal crops are grown rice, coconuts, betel nuts, fruits, and spices mainly turmeric. The island's blue economy such as fisheries, aquaculture, and seaweed farming will accelerate in line with the growth of modern infrastructure in A&N. Agriculture, industry and tourism are the main sources of the economy of the islanders. As per 2011 Census Data, 560 villages are in Andaman and Nicobar Islands of which Nicobars constitute of 200 villages and hamlets mostly tribal predominance in this district, North & Middle Andaman district comprises of 228 villages mostly settlers and South Andaman district having 132 villages are having cosmopolitan population. As per 2011 Census 2.25 lakh population representing from the rural areas living in most inaccessible and geographically isolated areas. Besides 4 sub-divisions, 9 tehsils, 5 CD blocks and 69 Panchayats administrative divisions endowed with responsibilities to carryout rural developmental activities across the island region.

Directorate of Rural Development, Andaman and Nicobar Administration was started from November 1983. Prior it was constitute under the aegis of Deputy Commissioner Office, Port Blair executed through District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) to implement poverty alleviation schemes including tribal sub-plan are being funded fully by the GoI as the schemes are being treated as centrally sponsored Schemes. The schemes are implemented in accordance with the instructions received from the GOI from time to time.

Directorate of Rural Development, PRIs & ULB being the nodal agency at Union Territory level has to enforce close supervision, coordination and monitoring for effective implementation of the programe/ centrally sponsored schemes being implemented in this UT. The scheme “strengthening of the Directorate of Rural Development and block level Administration” is constituted with the above objectives.

Strategy up to 2030

a) To alleviate poverty through Self-Employment Programmes.

b) To strengthen the livelihood of the rural households by providing 100 days of guaranteed wage employment every year.

c) To create qualitative and durable rural infrastructure within the time schedule paving way for meeting the requirements of the rural beneficiaries.

d) To empower the Panchayati Raj Institutions

e) To improve the quality of service delivery of the Gram Panchayats in the priorities of the local areas and effective management of public resources

f) To develop vibrant village communities with an in depth and sustainable knowledge of integrated rural development.

g) To create awareness about Solar energy and to disseminate the Innovative technology.

h) To remove barriers in the development of basic amenities.

i) To improve rural sanitation through Individual Household Latrines, Community Sanitary Complex and Solid Liquid Waste Management.

j) To ensure transparency in administration.

k) To improve Convergence`

l) To train about Information, Education and Communication Scheme

m) To provide IT initiatives / Space Technology.

n) To provide manpower

o) To improve infrastructure

Directorate of Rural development, A & N Administration committed to promote participation of people and through effective implementation of rural development programmes for economic development and social justice. Further it provides policy advice and technical assistance, supports stakeholders' capacity development and works on generating knowledge, undertaking advocacy and establishing partnerships through community engagement for empowerment, inclusive finances, rural service and territorial development. The “Holistic Development” initiated by the A & N Administration to bring overall development of individuals with available resources utilization. Agriculture is the main occupation of most of the residents of the Andaman Islands. Principal crops include rice, coconuts, betel (areca nuts), fruits, and spices (such as turmeric). Rubber, oil palms, and cashews also are important. The fishing industry supports a major portion of the economy of Andaman and Nicobar islands. Besides agriculture is also a major revenue-earning source for the peasants of that island. A major portion of revenue of UT of

Andaman and Nicobar Islands is earned through tourism. In Nicobar group of islands, the tribal have been growing plantation crops like coconut and areca nut from centuries. It is reported that they used to exchange coconut and areca nut for rice and cloth etc before independence of India. Now the procurement as per the Government India Minimum support prices (MSP).

The MGNREGA was initiated in the UT of A& N Islands with the objective of “enhancing livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year, to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work”. Another aim of MGNREGA is to create durable assets (such as roads, canals, ponds and wells). Employment is to be provided within 5 km of an applicant’s residence, which is to some extent successful since its inception.

Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) is National Mission for Financial Inclusion to ensure access to financial services, namely, Banking/ Savings & Deposit Accounts, Remittance, Credit, Insurance, Pension in an affordable manner. Account can be opened in any bank branch or Business Correspondent (Bank Mitra) outlet. Accounts opened under PMJDY are being opened with Zero balance. More than 30000 islander beneficiaries’ opened account at rural/semi-urban bank branches.

Overall Goal of the Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme is to celebrate the Girl Child & Enable her Education. The objectives of the Scheme are as under:
- Prevent gender biased sex selective elimination
Ensure survival & protection of the girl child
Ensure education of the girl child.

The National Rural Health Mission (NRHM), now under National Health Mission is an initiative undertaken by the government of India to address the health needs of under-served rural areas. Basic objectives for implementation of NRHM are: To reduce infant mortality rate and maternal mortality rate. To ensure population stabilization To prevent and control of communicable and non-communicable diseases To upgrade AYUSH (Ayurvedic Yoga Unani Siddh and Homeopathy) for promotion of healthy. Holistic health and wellness is sustained by eight pillars: physical, nutritional, emotional, social, spiritual, intellectual, financial, and environmental. The pillars will give you a sense of how to work

toward your optimal wellness, but it's by no means prescriptive.

Having achieved model ODF Plus status for all its villages, the Union Territory (UT) of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is now the country’s first ODF Plus UT, so declared on February 15, 2022, under the Government of India’s flagship programme, the Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen (SBM-G). The accomplishment is attributed to the concerted measures taken by the UT administration in constructing both individual household toilets and community sanitary complexes and putting in place effective measures for management of solid and liquid waste. During Phase I of SBM-G, as many as 14,775 beneficiaries, as identified by the Baseline Survey of 2012 were provided with incentive of Rs.12, 000 each to construct individual household toilets. Thereafter, to make certain that no one was left behind without access to sanitation, an additional 3828 households were provided with toilets. Besides, 296 community sanitary complexes were constructed in public spaces to serve the floating population. Reverse Osmosis plant for desalination in Andaman & Nicobar Islands is under active consideration of the Government of India to ease water crisis during summers.

Under Phase II of SBM-G, 39 additional CSCs were constructed and 24 solid waste management (SWM) clusters were set up, and mapped to 70 Gram Panchayats across the islands. These clusters have provision for treatment of organic waste by means of composting. They are also equipped with bailing and shredding machines for processing of non-biodegradable solid waste. On the other hand, the recyclable plastic, paper, cardboard, tetra packs and multilayer plastics are bailed and sent for recycling. Meanwhile, the non-recyclable waste is shredded and used in rural road construction. As per a notification of the A&N administration, it is mandatory for 8-10 per cent of shredded plastic to be used in road construction within the UT. In March 2021, the Department had also identified one recycler for collection, management, processing and transportation of waste from SWM clusters to the mainland. Currently, the waste is being taken from the SWM clusters for further processing, recycling as per approved rates, thereby adding to the revenue of the Gram Panchayats (GPs). Thus far, an amount of Rs.8,72,737 has been earned by the GPs through the sale of dry waste to recyclers. Further the rural villages

have been equipped with proper drainage facilities for liquid waste management.

Jal Jeevan Mission

Another important flagship programme Jal Jeevan Mission is to provide tap water connection to every rural household by 2024. The UT of A & N Islands has 62 thousand rural households in 266 villages located in 9 blocks of three districts. Further, UT has also provided piped water supply to all the 368 schools, 558 Anganwadi centres and 292 public institution centers. On World Water Day i.e. 22 March, 2021, UT of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has declared to have achieved 100 percent coverage of rural households with tap water connection and with this, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands became the third State/UT in the country to achieve 100% coverage of rural households with tap water supply after Goa and Telangana. Since the 100% rural households in the UT of A&N Islands have been provided with tap connections, it's important to ensure that every rural home to get tap connection on regular and long-term basis without any disruption. This means, the focus of the UT administration is now on 'service delivery', which is the essence of Jal Jeevan Mission. In the Annual Action Plan (2021-22), the UT plans to focus on the sustainability of its completed schemes in 266 villages. Also, the focus will be on strengthening its Water Quality Monitoring and Surveillance (WQMS), IoT based sensor for measurement and monitoring of water supply schemes, grey water management and most importantly IEC activities to make people aware about various aspects of water management like water conservation, judicious use of water, waste water treatment and re-use, etc. The UT was urged to emphasize on grey water management through soak pits and reuse water for agriculture, forestry, horticulture purposes.

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)

The Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India has launched a new programme known as "Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana" (SGSY) by restructuring the existing schemes namely:

- Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP)
- Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM)
- Development of Women & Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA)

- Supply of Improved Toolkits to Artisans (SITRA)
- Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY)
- Million Wells Scheme (MWS)

The SGSY Scheme is operative from 1st April 1999 in rural areas of the country. SGSY is holistic Scheme covering all aspects of self-employment such as organization of the poor into Self Help Groups, training, credit, technology, infrastructure and marketing. The scheme will be funded by the financial institutions, Panchayati Raj Institutions, District Rural Development Agencies (DRDAs), Non Government Organization (NGOs), Technical institutions in the district; will be involved in the process of planning, implementation and monitoring of the scheme. NGO's help may be sought in the formation and nurturing of the Self Help Groups (SHGs) as well as in the monitoring of the progress of the Swarozgaris. Where feasible their services may be utilized in the provision of technology support, quality control of the products and as recovery monitors cum facilitators. The scheme aims at establishing a large number of micro enterprises in the rural areas. The list of Below Poverty Line (BPL) households identified through BPL census duly approved by Gram Sabha will form the basis for identification of families for assistance under SGSY. The objective of SGSY is to bring assisted family above the poverty line within three years by providing them income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and Government subsidy. The rural poor such as those with land, landless labour, educated unemployed, rural artisans and disable are covered under the scheme. The assisted families known as Swarozgaris can be either individuals or groups and would be selected from BPL families by a three member team consisting of Block Development Officer, Banker and Sarpanch. SGSY will focus on vulnerable section of the rural poor. Accordingly the SC/ST will account for at least 50%, Women 40% and the disabled 3% of those assisted.

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

The PMGSY scheme was launched on 25th December, 2000 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme to provide all-weather pucca road connecting all the habitations with a population of 500 persons and above in plain areas and 250 persons and above in hill States, the tribal and the desert areas. About `1.67 Lakhs unconnected habitations are eligible for

coverage under PMGSY. Under Bharat Nirman initiative which has been launched as a time bound business plan to augment rural infrastructure – goal has been set to provide all weather road connectivity to all habitations having population of 1000 persons and above in the plain areas and habitations having population of 500 persons and above in hill States, desert and tribal areas by 2009.

CONCLUSION

Inclusive rural development means an action plan for the economic and social upliftment of rural areas. It aims at improving the quality of life of people living in rural areas. Further it focuses on the action for the development of areas that are lagging behind in the overall development of the rural economy. Directorate of Rural Development is the main pillar of Islands Development. In spite of better connectivity, a large section of islanders are still lives in the villages. Secondly, a rural development activity needs to be special focus especially the tribal villages, which are major concern for us. Although concerted efforts have been initiated by the Directorate of Rural development through several plans and measures to alleviate poverty in rural areas, there still remains much more to be done to bring prosperity in the lives of the people in rural areas of A & N Islands. This Directorate is the Nodal Agency for monitoring and evaluation of implementation of the various schemes pertaining to the Ministry of Rural Development which are being implemented in the rural areas by the three DRDAs/Nodal Departments. Consequent on the formulation of the 73rd constitutional amendment and the formation of the three tier Panchayati Raj set up in this UT, the blocks implement the Poverty Alleviation Programmes in co-ordination with the PRIs.

The Directorate of Rural development has foster the generation of decent employment opportunities such as youth employment, agri-food and green jobs through advocacy like local fairs, flea markets, capacity building and extending technical cooperation to SHGs. It also pro actively supports in the formulation of inclusive decent rural employment. To achieve this Directorate of Rural Deployment partners with other rural agencies stake holders, who works to strengthen rural institutions' and organizations, facilitating the social-economic inclusion and empowerment of people engaged in agriculture,

including small scale producers, rural youth and women, indigenous people and poor rural communities enabling the collective action to transform and realization of rural prosperity.

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