

PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A LITERATURE REVIEW

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Abstract

People's Participation is one important component of any developmental programmes. It is through people's participation that the rural populations are benefitted more from the different Developmental Programmes that are being given by the Government. Therefore, it is very imperative that in all the Developmental Programmes, people's participation is given priority in order to implement the programmes for the benefit of the rural population.

Keywords: *People's Participation, Rural Development, Developmental Programmes.*

Introduction:

People's Participation in Rural Development, in simple terms, mean the involvement of people in different Rural Development Projects or Programmes making them their own. It creates a sense of ownership, awareness, and a sense of belonging to the different developmental programmes meant for them. According to Setty, "people's participation means their total involvement with development agencies deciding the programmes and activities, fixing up of priorities, taking initiative and carrying out the projects as partners by their contribution of their ideas, interest, material, money, labour and time".

People's Participation in Rural Development:

Rural Development, in simple terms, means social transformation or upliftment of the rural masses. One of the most important features of development in any aspect is growth. To develop means to advance, to further, to evolve or to

expand by a process of growth. Rural Development is also associated with economic growth.

Singh (1999) defined Rural Development as "A process of leading to sustainable improvement in the quality of life of rural people, especially the poor". The objective of Rural Development is to secure the total development of the material and human resources of rural areas and to develop local leadership and self-governing institutions.

Rural Development involves a complex process of changing in rural sub-systems and their interaction leading to the desired improvements in rural incomes, employment opportunities, income distribution, rural welfare and other aspects of rural life.

People's Participation in Rural Development Programmes means the involvement of the beneficiaries in implementation of the different Rural Development Programmes. The

participants are those people who are the beneficiaries of the Rural Development Programmes. It includes all the beneficiaries irrespective of caste, creed, age, sex etc. By participating in the implementation of the Rural Development Programmes, the beneficiaries get a sense of awareness, belonging, and ownership.

Literature Review

Different people and groups of people have studied on works relating to People's Participation in Rural Development. The literature review gives a broader outlook of the advantages and disadvantages of People's Participation in Rural Development. Some of the works that have been done are reviewed and given below.

Okafor (1987) did a study on how participatory development could provide the needs of the rural people. For the study, two communities were selected which had the least number of self-help projects. Data collection was done through structured and unstructured interview method and official documents for secondary sources. The study found that the rural people wanted to participate in different projects since they were the ultimate beneficiaries.

Francis (1993) conducted a study on the peoples' participation and the role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in the rural development process. It was found that due to lack of participation of the people, expected and desired results of Rural Development Programmes were not achieved. Further, it was found that people were not given a chance for meaningful Programmes. The researcher had also pointed out that lack of awareness on the Rural Development Programmes was one major factor for low level participation of the people. It was,

therefore, suggested that the responsibilities for implementing different programmes should be given to the rural people and not to those planners who were miles away from the reality. Further, the NGOs in the rural areas were urged to act as connecting bridge between the rural people and the Government in order to create awareness, to educate the rural masses and to help them get their lawfully granted rights.

Mpolokeng (2003) did a study on "People's Participation in Rural Development" in the Central District of North-west Province of South Africa. The study was done through literature review and by means of interview and questionnaires in four (4) rural areas. The objective of the study was to see the effectiveness of people's participation in developmental projects. Four (4) case studies of rural development projects were taken for the study. Out of these four projects two (2) were very successful and two (2) were least successful. It was found that the need and preferences of the rural poor were never taken into consideration while launching different development projects. The study also found that to bring success in the development projects, people's participation was very much important. However, it was also found that people's participation in all the stages of the project was not much necessary because it depended on the relevance of the project to the intended beneficiaries. Some obstacles of people's non-participation were identified during the study such as illiteracy, monopoly, lack of expertise amongst the rural people, functioning of bureaucracy, beneficiaries' apathy and unequal treatment by participants. The study brought forth some suggestions for improvement of people's participation. Firstly, training was

required for the beneficiaries; secondly, equality should be there; thirdly, infusion of expertise should be there and lastly establishment of committees should be there to have meaningful participation. In spite of all the loopholes, it was concluded that people's participation was a must for any Rural Development Projects to be successful.

Another study on Peoples' Participation in Rural Development Programmes in Sadiya Block of the Tinsukia District, Assam, was carried out by Majinder (2003). Two villages were selected for the study and 100 respondents were interviewed. It was found that out of the 100 respondents only 46% admitted their participation in Rural Development Programmes. Most of the respondents were not satisfied with the activities of the rural development authorities since no significant development had been made in the field of roads and communication, agriculture, public health, etc. Another important finding of the study was that Rural Development services suffered due to low level of education, lack of awareness and politicization, and there were hardly any interactions between the officials and the rural people.

A study was done by Johanson and Chandler (2015) on specific mechanisms of power in rural planning projects. The study was done in rural Denmark and data for the study was collected through observation study of a Danish rural participatory planning project and were analyzed in the power perspective of Foucault and his suggestion. The study found that the awareness of the existence of 3 specific mechanisms of power i.e., 'institutionalizing knowledge and competencies'; 'structuring of criticism' and 'undermining the objectives of others' plays a very important role and this

needed to be taken into account in rural planning literature concerned with the assessment of power in participatory planning process.

Sangtam and Yaden (2017) did a study on "People's Participation in Rural Development". The study found that a failure of the development strategies for the last few decades is due to lack of People's Participation in the implementation of Development Programmes. It was also found that most of the respondents were interested to take part in Rural Development activities, targeted groups were not benefitted from various Rural Development Programmes and equality was not maintained in the distribution of the benefits from various Development Programmes. They suggested that rural people should be made aware about different Rural Development Programmes, common people should be given chance to express their views, transparency of fund utilization should be made and lastly women and youth should be involved in all the Rural Development activities.

Kasar (2019) did a study on "Community Participation in Rural Development". The study was done on the achievements of community based rural development activities undertaken by the Ukhrul District Community Resources Management Society (UDCRMS/IFAD). It was found that community empowerment can be attained only when the people at the grassroots level are involved in various development programmes and projects. The study also found that through community participation there is gender empowerment. It was also found that with community participation in various Rural Development activities, the rural people had more success stories to share. The author suggested that to implement various

development projects in tribal inhabited North East India, the most rational strategy would be to build on the inherent collectiveness and cohesiveness of the community.

Rafiqi (2020) did a study on People's Participation on Rural Development in India. According to him, People's Participation in Development Programmes has become the main component to ensure good governance as demanded by the International Aid Donor agencies in developing countries. The author studied on People's Participation in local governance, planning and development through PRIs. The study concluded that People's Participation particularly the rural population ensures political development and helps in socio-economic development of the society.

Kanmyamuna and Zulu (2022) did a study on the importance and limitations of participation in developmental practice. It was found that participatory approaches in various developmental activities have grown rapidly in the past few decades. The study found that the importance of participation increases efficiency and sustainability, leads to empowerment, enhances achievement of developmental goals

and transforms the development actors' paradigms. Whereas the limitations are participation lacks proof to cause empowerment and sustainability, fails to resolve the power relations problem, works well with small projects and PRA tools are over praised. The study concluded that despite various limitations, participation is still one great tool to fight against world poverty and is important in development practice.

Conclusion:

People's Participation in Rural Development Programmes is a very important aspect in order to implement the development programmes judiciously. Without the consent and involvement of the beneficiaries, the developmental works cannot be carried out to the benefit of the beneficiaries. The beneficiaries are the one who knows how and in what way the programmes will benefit them. Therefore, it is very important to that there is people's participation in all the Rural Development Programmes in order to implement them successfully and benefit the rightful beneficiaries.

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