

Growth and Progression of the Rural Communities

Radhika Kapur*

Pedagogy and Organizational Culture in Nursery Schools, Delhi University, New Delhi, India

***Corresponding Author:** Radhika Kapur, Pedagogy and Organizational Culture in Nursery Schools, Delhi University, New Delhi, India.

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Abstract

In India, over 70% of the country's population reside in rural areas. It is important to focus upon the aspects that would lead to the growth and progression of the rural communities. There are number of areas that are required to be taken into consideration when emphasising upon growth and progression of the rural communities; these are, empowering local governance, achieving equality for every person, increasing resources within the community, optimising assets, supporting the dynamic local economy, valuing local distinctiveness, enhancing social capital and wellbeing of the individuals, developing consistent infrastructure, enhancing environmental capacity and making one's living conditions sustainable by utilizing all the locally relevant services. The main objective of this research paper is to understand how important growth and progression of the rural communities are and the challenges that are experienced in the provision of rural services. Effective implementation of all the measures would lead to growth and progression of the rural communities.

Keywords: Growth; Progression; Rural Communities; Health; Services; Individuals; Development

Introduction

The development of rural areas has been controlled by the operative implementation of procedures, guidelines and regulations which lack the substantial confirmation, and which are not able to recognize and exploit rural strengths and opportunities for sustainable development. In the present existence, rural depopulation is creating an influence on the entire wellbeing of the rural community. This is apparent through the closing of rural schools, loss of services such as, post offices, pubs, stations, and health services. Furthermore, the entire production of the prolonged family network is under jeopardy with younger family members being forced from the land of their birth due to restraining planning regulations in rural areas and in most of the cases leaving behind their ageing parents who in turn will become dependent on state services during the twilight years of their life [1].

Rural culture, norms, values and way of life is reinforced by its people and communities, it is the material heritage that must be protected for the future generations. Creation of forms and

landscapes undergo transformations with the period of time, but populations must be maintained as a primacy. This is recognized in the mission that is to lead to the welfare and development of the rural areas, which has the main objective to unite all the rural dwellers and people of goodwill towards the creation of a peaceful, non-violent, passive, and a multi-cultural co-existence. The common cause is to make sure, by legal and constitutional means, the evolution and development of the detached village, underdeveloped areas or street village and the village that is in a clustered form [1].

Areas leading to Growth and Progression of the Rural Communities

The main areas, the development of which leads to growth and progression of the rural communities have been stated as follows: [2].

Financial – Finances are considered to be the imperative requirements of the individuals in rural areas. Rural people, in most cases reside in the conditions of poverty, they do not have

sufficient incomes in order to fulfil all the needs and requirements of their family members. They are not educated or possess low literacy levels, they are either unemployed or are employed in minority jobs and mostly are employed in the agricultural sector. Rural individuals are always looking for opportunities to enhance their financial position so that they are able to sustain their living as well as the living of their family members. In order to meet all the requirements such as, education, health, production, food, civic amenities and so forth, finances are considered to be vital.

Construction – Infrastructure is regarded to be an important aspect that is required for the development of any area or a region. In rural areas, it is crucial to develop roads, buildings, provide housing and shelters for the individuals, telecommunications and recreation infrastructure. People residing in rural areas are aware that they would be able to find more opportunities in urban areas, hence, they even consider migrating to urban areas in search for better opportunities. There are rural people who are engaged in the production and manufacturing of articles, hence, in order to communicate with the customers or market their goods, it is vital to lead to the development of infrastructure and communication networks.

Social – Socialization is regarded to be an imperative area through which an individual largely benefits. Through socializing, there is generation of awareness amongst the individuals regarding various areas and concerns. It basically means the creation of networks, trust and co-operation amongst the individuals and the organizations within the community. Finances are regarded to be imperative for the rural individuals in order to fulfil their needs and requirements. Besides finances, socialization and creation of networks amongst the individuals enable them to create a social circle, enhance productivity, obtain information and awareness regarding various areas and work in co-operation towards improving self-sufficiency.

Human – In rural communities, there is a government, there are rules, principles, norms and policies that the individuals are required to follow. There are rural cultures and traditions in accordance to which individuals carry out their day to day activities of life and functions. The proper functioning and the governance of the rural communities require the individuals, who are in charge to possess certain leadership skills, possession of appropriate leadership skills will enable the individual to make wise decisions, adequately lead, guide and direct the other people, formulate laws for the welfare of the community and promote education,

knowledge, skills and expertise amongst the people. It is vital to promote education and employment opportunities amongst the individuals.

Cultural – The cultural aspects comprise of the values, norms, and ethics that an individual is required to obey in carrying out of the daily life activities. In rural areas, people have their own cultures and traditions, which they follow in their daily lives. The main points that have been taken into account in the case of cultural are, how the residents view the world, as well as what are those heritages and perspectives that are valued and passed on from one generation to the next and how creativity, innovation and collaboration are nurtured. It is vital for the rural communities to possess the awareness of how they should enhance their inventiveness, creativeness, resourcefulness, and work in collaboration and co-operation with each other.

Political – Political is stated to be the ability of the municipality to influence the rules, regulations and distribution of resources in an appropriate manner. There are some of the individuals in rural areas, who are land owners, they are wealthy and possess authority and leadership. The individuals who are poverty stricken borrow loans from them and when they are under debt and are unable to pay the loans, they become bonded labourers. The main objective of the political aspect is to formulate the rules and the regulations, so that the rural masses generate awareness to abide by them and maintain law and order within the community.

Health Situation in Rural Areas

In India, nearly 716 million rural people, comprising of 72% of the total population of the country, half of which are residing below the poverty line (BPL) continue to fight a disheartened and are continuously losing battle for existence and health. The policies and the rules realized so far, which focus only on the development of the economy and not on impartiality and equality, have broadened the gap between urban and the rural communities. Nearly, 70% of all deaths, and 92% of deaths are from contagious diseases, occurred amongst the poorest, i.e. 20% of the population. However, some advancement has been made since the independence in the health status of the population; this is reflected in the enhancement in some of the health indicators. Under the growing influence of various measures and a host of national programs for employment, nutrition and shelter, life expectancy rose from 33 years at the time of independence in 1947 to 62 years in 1998. Infant mortality declined from 146/1000 live births in 1961 to 72/1000 in 1999. The under five years mortality rate (U5MR) declined from

236/1000 live births in 1960 to 109/1000 in 1993. Interstate, regional, socio-economic class, and gender disparities remain high. These achievements seem to be significant, yet it must be emphasized upon that these survival rates in India are comparable to the most deprived regions of the world, as in sub-Saharan Africa [3].

The rural populations, who are the primary victims of the policies, work in the most risky environmental conditions and live in appalling living conditions. Insecure and unhygienic birth practices, contaminated water, poor diet and nutrition, subhuman habitats, and degraded and unhygienic environments are the challenges to the public health system. The majority of the rural population are small holders, artisans and labourers, with limited resources that they spend primarily on fulfilling the nutritional requirements and other basic necessities such as, electricity, shelter, water, etc. The individuals residing in rural areas, when they suffer from any kinds of health problems and illnesses, they do not have resources to pay for their treatment, hence, the health conditions of the rural communities are untreated and as a result they suffer from dire consequences. The rural peasant worker, who works hard under adverse weather conditions to produce food for others, is often the first victim of epidemics. The majority of deaths in rural areas, which are preventable are due to infections and contagious, parasitic and respiratory diseases [3].

Measures leading to Growth and Progression of the Rural Communities

The following measures are required to get implemented in order to lead to growth and progression of the rural communities:

Cultivation of economic development that contributes in promoting the sustained economic potential of working rural lands - It is vital to implement measures that would lead to the economic development of the rural areas, where all the individuals are able to adequately sustain their living conditions and meet their needs and requirements. In order to achieve this objective, it is vital to initiate development of sources such as, wind farms, biomass, power generation and so forth. There are numerous factors that are required to be taken into consideration to promote economic growth, such as, formulation of financial policies, technology, innovative techniques and methods, productivity and so forth. The utilization of land has to be done in an appropriate manner to lead to economic development [4].

Education and Employment Opportunities – The significance of education has been recognized by the rural communities as well, even though the individuals are not educated and may not even possess the basic literacy skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but they believe in educating their children and even send their children to urban areas to get enrolled in reputed educational institutions. In the present existence, there has been establishment of schools and training centres in rural areas, so that people can acquire education and generate awareness. With acquisition of appropriate education, individuals are able to acquire employment opportunities or even establish their own businesses, for instance, in order to own a tea stall, it is vital for a person to enhance his literacy skills.

Development of Artistic Skills – In rural communities, majority of the individuals are employed in the agricultural sector. Besides engagement in the agricultural sector, particularly women and even men develop artistic skills amongst themselves and produce various kinds of handicrafts and artworks. In various parts of the country, rural folks also develop dancing and musical skills and participate in various events and fairs to earn their living. In most cases, rural individuals do make efforts in order to lead to growth and progression and generate a source of income. There are rural people who visit urban areas and set up stalls or even organize their shops to market their products. Besides, handicrafts, artworks, music and dance, sports are considered to be another vital area that rural communities get engaged into.

Providing Solutions to Water Problems – In rural areas, there is a problem of water, as water is considered to be the basic necessity and is required for multiple purposes. In order to utilize water for household tasks, people normally fetch water from the wells or the lakes nearby, as they do not get any supplies of water in their houses. To manage the problems of water in an efficient manner, it is vital that water pollution should be curbed, all kinds of waste materials should not be thrown into the water bodies and they should be kept clean. This is also a fact that amongst the rural communities, number of illnesses and diseases are caused due to contaminated water, hence, measures should be implemented to keep the water bodies free from pollution [5].

Diet and Nutrition – Proper diet and nutrition are considered to be the essential aspects that make provision of energy and all the required nutrients to the individual. In rural areas, farming, agriculture, construction, production, manufacturing and so forth,

all require manual work. Individuals that are involved into manual jobs, for them, it is vital that they should consume proper diet and nutrition. Children, when going to school and studying, for them proper diet and nutrition is considered to be a fundamental aspect, hence, for all the individuals, it is important. The major problem in rural areas is poverty stricken individuals are not able to fulfil the dietary requirements of their families and as a result of which there is a decline in their health conditions.

Diversification - There has been a diversification of Indian diets away from food grains to high value products like milk, butter, meat products, vegetables and fruits. In other words, in the present existence, people are consuming more rich foods. The increase in the middle class due to rapid urbanization, increase in the per capita income, increase in the involvement of women in jobs in urban areas and the influence of globalization has been mostly responsible for the diet diversification in India. Rich products have held the attention of the increasing middle class and the outcome is observable in the growing demand for rich processed products. There is an increasing demand for non-food grain items in India. The expenditure elasticity for non-cereal food items is still quite high in India. It is thrice as high when compared to cereals in the rural areas and over ten times as high in urban areas. Per capita consumption of fruits and vegetables illustrated the highest growth followed by edible oils. Diversification to high value crops and associated activities is one of the important sources for increasing agricultural growth. Since risk is high for diversification, essential support in infrastructure and marketing are required. Price policy should also stimulate diversification. Small and marginal farmers can obtain higher incomes with diversification. But, there are risks in leading to diversification as the support systems are more for food grains. There is a requirement for support systems for diversification to provide assistance to the small holder farmers [5].

Increase in affordable housing near rural towns and employment centres – Housing and shelters have been a problem in rural areas that have proved to be barriers within the course of growth and development. There should be implementation of policies to make sure that housing is affordable to the farmers, agricultural labourers and also to working individuals. There are women who contribute in the generation of income, they work as artisans, they are the ones who take care of all the household jobs, hence, it is also vital to ensure that housing is affordable to low income families, women, and the elderly individuals. The individuals who do not have proper shelters, for them making provision of affordable housing is a primary concern.

Challenges in the Provision of Rural Services

The main challenges that are experienced in the provision of rural services have been stated as follows: [6].

Consolidation, Co-location and the Merger of Similar Services – Consolidation involve focused clients on a smaller number of service locations. It rises operative demand by increasing the magnitude of the service territory for each continuing location. One example would be the amalgamation of several weak local newspapers to create a single regional paper that has more practicality. Co-location is another method that seeks to construct demand. Basic overhead costs, energy, security and administrative expenses can be collective, and generating economies of scope. If post office services are combined with a shop, people can obtain their mail and purchase food in one trip. Finally, service merger takes related or additional services and combines them into a distinct unit.

Alternative Delivery Mechanisms – Where the demand for services is broadly distributed, it may be more efficient to bring the service to the user i.e. the adoption of mobile service delivery approaches. Internet has proved to be useful in rural areas that have assisted in making provision of services within the rural communities. Telemedicine allows x-rays and other diagnostic services conducted in rural areas that are to be processed and analysed elsewhere.

Community-based solutions for Different Types of Providers - Some of the rural communities have volunteer fire departments. Others have fire departments that are functioned by the local governments. In some communities, there are for profit village shops, in some villages there are community owned shops that provide equal access to the services, but which operate as social enterprises.

Improve Quality and Marketing – Technology can help rural residents in making provision of and accessing information about service quality and about alternative providers. There should be a matching between the demand and supply of services and this is facilitated by the geo-location. The demand for the services has to be in accordance to the needs and requirements of the individuals.

Alternative Energy Sources - Renewable energy can lead to a decline in fuel poverty that can be a communal feature of remote regions, by allowing the communities who are residing in seclusion to produce their own energy instead of importing expensive conventional fuels. Increasing the utilization of inexpensive and

consistent energy in remote rural communities can lead to an improvement in their capacity to deliver goods and services. For instance, the accessibility of consistent electricity is vital for a local restaurant that needs a refrigerator.

Innovate and Create a New Service to Achieve Better Outcomes – In rural areas, the provision of commerce and professionalism is not adequate enough to support a complete range of services that are provided through independent firms. A region may not be able to support a complete home repair business, but the rural masses are also becoming used to the utilization of technology, digital technology is becoming more common in achieving enhanced results. Agriculture is the primary occupation of the rural communities and people are making use of innovative and advanced methods and techniques in their occupation to enhance productivity.

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