

Infrastructure for Rural Transformation in India

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ABSTRACT

India lives in villages. Around 69 percent of India's population are rural. The large magnitude of the rural population their prevailing socio- economic conditions and the quality of life calls for all around development in rural infrastructure to achieve the objectives of equitable and inclusive infrastructure for economic growth and development in rural area can hardly be overemphasised in a developing economy like India with poor rural infrastructure. Even a marginal improvement in its quantity and quality could significantly improve economic development an human well being. Improving basic infrastructure, such as roads, transport, electricity, telecommunication housing, health, water and sanitation is essential for development and well-being of the rural population. The development of rural infrastructure could promote economic growth, improve the standard or poverty by generating both farm and non-farm employment and earning opportunities, increasing productivity, providing access to basic goods and services and improvising the health and physical condition of people (NCAER 2007), Empirical studies also report a strong relationship between infrastructure, economic growth, rural development and poverty reduction. Rural development generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic condition of people living in rural areas. To achieve the desired social and economic development of the rural people a number of rural development programmers are being implemented. The agriculture sector is facing several challenges. The infrastructure is the backbone of any nation development and quality of life. Weather it is highways or railways or airways of even digi-ways, the government has gone beyond incremental growth to attain transformative achievements. One of the focus areas of digital India program is to promote digital literacy. Quality and affordable healthcare is one of the emerging needs for citizens in rural areas.

1. Introduction

Mahatma Gandhi laid emphasis on the fact that India lived in villages and that only through their salvation India could regain her glory and prosperity. The path of rural development India has adopted aims to making villages self sufficient in the matters of their vital requirements and easy availability of means of production of the basic necessities of life. The importance of infrastructure in economic growth and development has attracted considerable attention in the literate. The importance of social overhead capital in economic development in particular has long been recognised. (see for example, Hirschman, 1958: Mellor, 1976, Resenstion-Rodan, 1943: Rostow, 1960: Wharton, 1967).

Infrastructure accelerates economic growth by raising productivity and lowering production costs. The adoption and dissemination of high-fielding variety technology depend crucially on rural facilities, such as irrigation, extension services, availability of credit and marketing. Rural infrastructures help reduce poverty through a positive effect on agricultural productivity real incomes and employment in the agriculture and non-agriculture sectors (World Bank, 1994) Higher farm productivity, per capita farm income and employment in farm and non-farm sectors were found to be associated with lower level of rural poverty. Infrastructure also contributes directly to poverty alleviation by providing and supporting the delivery of key services, such as access to

electricity, safe drinking water and sanitation investment in rural infrastructure was found to be associated with lower transportation costs and transaction coasts of credit services, increased farmers access to various markers and substantial expansion in agriculture in India. The importance of rural infrastructure in agricultural growth, rural development and poverty alleviation in India and China has been extensively examined by fan and Hazell (1999). The positive effects of rural infrastructure on rural development and poverty alleviation through expansion of markets, economies of scale, improvement in factor market operations and commercialisation in agriculture and rural sector have been reported in several studies. The impact of specific infrastructure, such as rural roads, transport, power irrigation and access to electricity, on agricultural development and poverty alleviation has also been examined by Chakraborty and Guha, 2009.

The role of rural infrastructure in rural development has been evaluated in the literature mostly by examining the impacts of specific infrastructure indicators on various aspects of rural development. However the relation between rural development and various composite indices of rural infrastructure has not been eduquately examined, largely due to the lake of adequate data on rural infrastructure indicators and composite indices of rural infrastructure and composite

Indies of rural infrastructure on various dimensions of rural development.

2. Infrastructure for Rural Transformation

A specific rural infrastructure programme called “Bharat Nirman” was launched as a time-bound the programme were irrigation, drinking water, electrification, roads, housing and rural telephony considering the importance of infrastructure in the sustenance of rural economic growth, the government continued lying focus on creation of rural infrastructure through development plans and other subject specific schematic intervention in this context this article reviews a few rural infrastructure initiatives which have immense potential to contribute establishing economically vibrant and egalitarian rural societies.

1) Rural Sanitation

The world's largest behavioural change movement was planned and executed through India's Swachh Bharat Mission. With concerted efforts of the government and civil society as change makers, India could achieve 98 percent rural sanitation coverage. Around 5.45 lakh village have been declared. Open defecation free by December 2018. The holistic programme has some what succeeded in changing the mind-set of the citizen by ensuring people's participation.

2) Irrigation Infrastructure

Creation of irrigation potential and expansion of installed capacity have been important policy objectives of India's development planning by 2016-17, a large number of irrigation related projects were facing financial constraints and the investments made therein were treated as ‘Sunken Investment’ during 2016-17, 99 on going major/medium irrigation projects were prioritized for early completion under Pradhan Mantri Krishi sinchayee yojana Accelerated irrigation benefits programme. These unfinished projects. With and additional irrigation potential of 76.03 lakh hectare, have been targeted for completion in phases up to December 2019 along with their command area development and water management works with an estimated cost of Rs. 77595 crore.

3) Rural Drinking Water Supply

The achievement of target for providing access to safe drinking water to identified habitations shifted the government focus to improving the quality of water supplied to targeted habitations. The National Rural Drinking water programme concerted focus on the creation and sustaining the rural drinking water infrastructure resulted in the development of infrastructure and capacities for successful operation of drinking water supply schemes in rural areas. Timely corrective measures are a must for creasing the coverage of piped water supply in rural areas by restructuring and result oriented. Further the country's long term goal is to achieve “Har Ghar Jal” by 2030, in line with the UN's sustainable development goals.

4) Rural Roads

Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana – a one time special intervention provides rural connectivity by way of single all weather road, to the eligible connected habitations in the core

network. From the year of implementation in 2000, out of 15.80 lakh eligible unconnected habitation in 250+ and 500+ population categories, 17.84 lakh habitations have been connected with pucca roads by December 31, 2018. As in December, 2018, out under PMGSY, 82 percent (5.34 lakh kms) of roads have been completed.

5) Rural Housing

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana:- Rural came into effect from 01.04.2016 to fulfil the government's vision of Housing for all by 2022. The scheme frame work allows inclusion of the beneficiaries not covered under socio-economic caste census. It provides for a separate beneficiary list to be recorded in the Gram Sabha resolution. Under PMAY-R against the target of 1.0 crore houses in first phase (2016-17 to 2018-19). 94,45,886 house got sanctioned as on 27.12.2018. Interim budget 2019-20 has allocated Rs 19,000 crore for PMAY-R while the physical progress in the provision of rural housing and initiatives for inclusion of excluded eligible beneficiaries under rural housing projects is laudable the involvement of beneficiaries in the construction of the house should be the key for effective implementation of the scheme, the beneficiaries need to actively participate throughout the construction process.

6) Rural Electrification

Power infrastructure plays a vital role in sustaining economic development of a country. The quality of power supply and power accessibility have been a matter of concern in rural India as capacity addition in this sector has been falling short of its targets/demand. In addition to Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana, the government has launched Prime Minister Saubhagya Yojana for providing electricity to all house hold's were intended for providing with electricity connection free of charge in the interim budget 2019-20 with an outlay of Rs. 1600 crore. To ensure quality and sustained power supply in rural areas, we now need to switch-over from free or subsidy driven power distribution system to a competitive user-based revenue collection and sharing model.

7) Rural Telephone Connectivity

India is trying to transform herself as a digitally empowered society by meeting the information and communications needs of citizens' and enterprises. This is possible only when universal, strong and affordable digital communications infrastructure and services are established. The country has witnessed a rapid expansion of telecommunication in the last decade. This has led to an intense competition amongst various service providers which ensured quality services at affordable prices. The revolution in the field of communication has the potential in supporting the rural folk in efforts are also being made to install towers for National Highways to strengthen transmission network. The Bharat net project aims at crating network to connect all 2.5 lakh Gram Panchyats by broadband connectivity.

3. Conclusion

Infrastructure provides the basic framework for economic provides and social programmes of a country. Rural Infrastructure, inter alia involves irrigation, Rural housing, rural

water supply, rural electrification and rural telecommunication communication connectivity. The initiatives for building rural Infrastructure and threaded schemes envisage enhancement of socio-economic status of rural people. A considerable part of the total expenditure under the programme. Many projects aiming at enhancing rural Infrastructure are also routed through the national bank for agriculture and rural development which is the apex financial body for agriculture and rural Infrastructure.

As a follow up action to the rural Infrastructure building initiatives, a synchronized approach is required to establish rightful convergence with various other development oriented programmes for alleviating poverty, generating gainful employment, ensuring social security, enhancing standard of health, hygiene, sanitation and education being implemented by ministries/departments of panchayati raj, rural development, drinking water and sanitation, water resources, agriculture,

information technology and land resources etc. Estimating the effects of the composite in dices/individual indicators of rural Infrastructure on various dimensions of rural development, we have found that better physical and social Infrastructure facilities and opportunities improve life expectancy and reduce rural poverty and infant mortality by raising agricultural productivity and output.

The development of rural India is an imperative for inclusive and equitable growth. The continued emphasis on Infrastructure and social sectors indicates the country's resolve towards ensuring inclusive growth, considering the implementation issues and challenges of execution of these plans and programmes at grass-root level, it is expected that the programme implementing agencies would bring in good governance and follow best practise to maximise the benefits of such development intervention.

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