

The Dichotomy of Rural and Urban Planning in India



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Abstract

The purpose of the study area is to explain the factors that are responsible for the gap between rural and urban development in India. The existing policies and programmes have also been discussed in the paper. The paper tries to clear the confusion among politicians, administrators, scientists, planners, academicians regarding the development of rural and urban areas as to whether development should be focussed on rural India or urban India. Finally the paper attempts to explain the strategies that are beneficial for the development of rural and urban India simultaneously.

Keywords : Rural planning, urban planning, rural-urban dichotomy.

Introduction:

Planning is an organized process by which a society achieves its goals of development. It is a systematic arrangement of intended course of action to achieve certain well defined goals. It involves step-by-step process to develop a strategy to achieve desired objectives. It is an attempt to solve problems and to facilitate action. Planning is supposed to support optimum utilisation of resources to get maximum benefit. It is future-oriented, systematic and well-designed course of action that is helpful for communities to meet their social, economic, environmental and cultural needs of present and future generations.

The first systematic attempt of planning in India was made in 1934 by M. Visvesvaraiya. He published a book titled 'Planned Economy for India'. In 1937 Indian National Congress set up the National Planning Committee. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was the Chairman of this committee.

However, the real beginning of Planning in India started with the establishment of Indian Planning Commission in March 1950. The First Five Year Plan was launched in 1951. Decentralisation of the entire planning process through the concept of planning at the grassroot level made its beginning in 1993 after the 73rd and 74th amendments in the Indian Constitution. The newly formed Government of India replaces Planning Commission, on January 1, 2015 by establishing National Institution for Transforming India, also called NITI Aayog.

Before proceeding further it should be made clear that the process of planning world over follows some basic principles. These basic principles are as follows:

1. No one, however knowledgeable she/he may be has the right to plan for anyone else's development without his/her willing consent.

2. 'Planners' can only interpret people's needs and aspirations, they can never understand their needs and problems.
3. Planning is not the task of a professional planner; it is the task of the people. Professional planners can help people devise ways and means to achieve their planning objectives.

'But in the world today planning is done by the planners and people for whom planning is done are only recipients. Though, it is a wonderful idea to receive 'good things' from others without asking. The only trouble is that charity is just another name of dependency and continued poverty'.

Definition of Rural & Urban Areas

1. As per Census of India, Urban area is defined as follows:
 - All places with a Municipality, Corporation or Cantonment or Notified Town Area, or
 - All other places which satisfied the following criteria:
 - a. A minimum population of 5,000.
 - b. A least 75% of the male working population was non-agricultural.
 - c. A density of population of at least 400 sq. km.

The rest of the places are identified as rural areas. The Director of Census of each State/Union Territory was, however, given some discretion in respect of some marginal cases, in consultation with the State Govt., to include some places that had other distinct urban characteristics and to exclude undeserving cases.

The Weakness of the Early Experiments of Rural Planning

- The attempts were mostly based on individual initiatives inspired by humanitarian considerations.
- The attempts were mostly isolated, uneven and discontinuous.
- Parallel programs of supplies, services, guidance and supervision were not developed.
- The involvement of people from rural areas in planning and executing'
- Association and co-ordination with other development departments was very limited.
- Research and evaluation was lacking.

Features of Post-Independence Planning:

- Economic betterment of people
- Greater social transformation
- Increased participation of people in the rural development programs.
- Decentralization of planning
- Better enforcement of land reforms
- Greater access to credit
- From capital centered approach to people centered approach

Major rural development programmes of Government of India are MGNREGA, National Rural Livelihoods Mission, Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana, Indiar Awas Yojana, Deen Dayal Upadhyaya- Grameen Kaushalya Yojana, Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana, National Rural Drinking Water Programme, Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), Bharat Nirman etc. These rural development programs implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. However, poverty still remains India's greatest challenge.

Major Challenges of Urban India

- Urban Housing: A shortage 18.78 million houses.
- Water Supply: As per 2011 census 70.6 per cent of urban population is covered by individual connections, compared with 91 per cent in China, 86 per cent in South Africa and 80 per cent in Brazil.
- Duration of water supply in Indian cities ranges from 1 hour to 6 hours, compared with 24 hours in Brazil and China and 22 hours in Vietnam.
- Sanitation: About 13 per cent of urban households do not have access to any form of latrine facility and defecate in the open. Almost 50 per cent of households in cities like Bangalore and Hyderabad do not have sewerage connections.
- As per CPCB report, about 1,15,000 MT of Municipal Solid Waste is generated daily in the country. However, scientific disposal of the waste generated is almost non-existent.
- Public transport accounts for only 27 per cent of urban transport in India.
- Air Quality: Most Indian cities violate India's and world air quality PM10 targets. Respirable particulate matter pollution remains a key challenge for India.

Recent initiatives undertaken for Urban Planning in India includes Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT), Smart Cities Mission etc.

Rural Urban Integration through District Planning and Integrated Rural Development Program

The District Planning in the form of decentralized planning for a balanced, integrated and meaningful development of districts has been an accepted concept since the beginning of the planning era. Planning Commission in 1982 set up a Working Group under the Chairmanship of Dr. C.H. Hanumantharao recommended spatial planning, rural urban integration, peoples 'participation, institutional framework as an integral part of district planning

The major difficulties that has been experienced in the integration of rural-urban planning are wide gap between the concept and the practices, states differ widely in their levels

of decentralization of development administration, institutional mechanism for district planning not fully geared, low level of awareness. Therefore it is necessary to avoid multiplicity of institutions and processes and overlapping functions to achieve functional and spatial integration at planning and implementation stage. The integration of rural-urban planning can be at two stages. Firstly integration in planning process itself and secondly coordination in implementation.

Integrated Rural Development Program recommended for provision of higher order services and amenities related to agriculture and other allied activities in small and medium towns. This approach was further reinforced by the report of Task Force on 'Planning & Development of Small & Medium Towns & Cities' set up in 1975. It recognized 'spatial plan at regional / district level as an important tool of rural urban integration through provisions of various levels of services and facilities.

Conclusion:

The programs and policies that have existed before and after independence were mainly focused either on the development of the rural areas or on the urban areas. After independence India experienced unprecedented growth in the number of people in urban areas because of rural-urban migration accelerated due to lack of employment opportunities in rural areas. Lack of employment opportunities in rural India can be attributed to the vagaries of monsoon and dependence of agriculture on monsoon. Another factor that had accelerated the pace of rural-urban migration is the lack of infrastructural facilities in rural areas and also the desire to enjoy modern urban lifestyle. Therefore, proper coordination in rural-urban planning is the only way to achieve the sustainable development goals.

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