

CHALLENGES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROVIDING SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD

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ABSTRACT

India is emerging as a major power economy and our cities and urban centres are beginning to display marks of affluence. Unfortunately our development is lopsided. The rural hinterlands are not able to march in tandem with urban India. About 69% of the country's total population continues to live in rural India There is no trickledown effect. The benefits of economic growth are not percolating to more than two-thirds of the people. The vital sectors such as agriculture, infrastructure development, and community and social services, and in rural development as a whole, our performance is not appreciable.

Economic development in any country to a greater extent depends on rural development and it assists the economy to grow and sustain. In the rural areas agriculture is the main source of livelihood to the people. There is a direct relationship between agriculture production, income and the demand for industrial goods.

People living in the rural areas have to struggle to earn wages or are forced to migrate to urban areas. The migration pattern varies with the region, opportunities and socio-economic status of the families. The poorest families, particularly the landless and marginal holders owning poor quality land tend to migrate with the entire family. Many tribal families migrate to cities as construction workers and return at the onset of the rains. Such migrations severely affect the quality of life, due to poor health, lack of education and social pressures leading to erosion of moral values.

The objectives of the paper is to analyse the challenges facing the rural areas and suggest ways to overcome these challenges and to create opportunities of gainful self-employment for the rural families, especially disadvantaged sections, ensuring sustainable livelihood, enriched environment, improved quality of life and good human values. This is being achieved through development research, effective use of local resources, extension of appropriate technologies and up gradation of skills and capabilities with community participation.

KEYWORDS: Challenges, Rural, Strategies, Sustainable Development