



RURAL LOCAL GOVERNANCE

THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY



School of Social Sciences
Indira Gandhi National Open University
Maidan Garhi, New Delhi-110068

EXPERT COMMITTEE

Prof. C.V. Raghavulu
Former Vice-Chancellor of Nagarjuna
University, Guntur (A.P.)

Prof. Ramesh K. Arora
Former Professor of Public Administration
Rajasthan University
Jaipur

Prof. O.P. Minocha
Former Professor of Public Administration
Indian Institute of Public Administration
New Delhi

Prof. Arvind K. Sharma
Former Professor of Public Administration
Indian Institute of Public Administration
New Delhi

Prof. R.K. Sapru
Former Professor of Public Administration
Panjab University, Chandigarh

Prof. Sahib Singh Bhayana
Former Professor of Public Administration
Panjab University, Chandigarh

Prof. B.B.Goel
Former Professor of Public Administration
Panjab University, Chandigarh

Prof. Ravinder Kaur
Department of Public Administration
Osmania University, Hyderabad

Prof. C.Venkataiah
Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Open University
Hyderabad

Prof. G. Palanithurai
Department of Political Science and
Development Administration
Gandhigram Rural University
Gandhigram

Prof. Ramanjit Kaur Johal
Panjab University
Chandigarh

Prof. Rajbans Singh Gill
Department of Public
Administration, Punjabi
University, Patiala

Prof. Manjusha Sharma
Department of Public
Administration
Kurukshetra University
Kurukshetra

Prof. Lalneihzovi
Department of Public
Administration
Mizoram Central University

Prof. Neelima Deshmukh
Former Professor of Public
Administration, Rashtrasant
Tukadoji Maharaj Nagpur
University, Nagpur

Prof. Rajvir Sharma
Maharaja Agrasen Institute of
Management Studies, Delhi

Prof. Sanjeev Kumar Mahajan
Department of Public
Administration, Himachal
Pradesh University, Shimla

Prof. Manoj Dixit
Department of Public
Administration, Lucknow
University, Lucknow

Prof. Sudha Mohan
Department of Civics and
Politics University of Mumbai
Mumbai

IGNOU Faculty

Prof. Pardeep Sahni
Prof. E. Vayunandan
Prof. Uma Medury
Prof. Alka Dhameja
Prof. Dolly Mathew
Prof. Durgesh Nandini

Consultants

Dr. Sandhya Chopra
Dr. A. Senthamizh Kanal

Conveners

Prof. Dolly Mathew
Prof. Durgesh Nandini

Course Coordinator and Editor: Prof. Durgesh Nandini, Faculty of
Public Administration, School of Social Sciences, IGNOU, New Delhi

COURSE PREPARATION TEAM

Unit	Block/Unit Title	Unit Writer
BLOCK 1	Evolution of Local Governance and Rural Development	
Unit 1	Local Governance: Evolution	Dr. Sweta Mishra, Associate Professor, Gargi College, University of Delhi
Unit 2	Rural Development	Dr. Sweta Mishra, Associate Professor, Gargi College, University of Delhi
BLOCK 2	Legislative Framework, Election and Planning	
Unit 3	Legislative Framework: The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992 and Conformative Legislation	Dr. Sachin Chowdhry, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
Unit 4	Panchayat Election	Prof. Swinder Singh, USOL, Panjab University Chandigarh
Unit 5	Decentralised Planning	Prof. Durgesh Nandini, Faculty of Public Administration, New Delhi
BLOCK 3	Panchayati Raj Institutions: Functional Domain and Finances	
Unit 6	Panchayati Raj Institutions	Dr. Mahi Pal, Advisor Sixth State Finance Commission, Haryana, Former Director, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
Unit 7	Resource Mobilisation and Management	Dr. Mahi Pal, Advisor Sixth State Finance Commission, Haryana, Former Director, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
BLOCK 4	Rural Local Government	
Unit 8	Rural Local Government: Structure, Role and Responsibilities	Dr. Sachin Chowdhry, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
Unit 9	Role of Local Government in Service Delivery	Dr. Sachin Chowdhry, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
Unit 10	E-Governance practice in Service Delivery of Rural Local Government	Dr. Charu Malhotra, Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi
Unit 11	Interface between State and Rural Local Government	Prof. Swinder Singh, USOL, Panjab University Chandigarh
BLOCK 5	Rural Local Governance: Innovative Practices, Challenges and Way Forward	
Unit 12	Innovative Practices in Governance: Case Studies	Dr. Mahi Pal, Advisor Sixth State Finance Commission, Haryana, Former Director, Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India
Unit 13	Rural Local Governance: Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forward	Dr. Sweta Mishra, Associate Professor, Gargi College, University of Delhi

PRINT PRODUCTION

Mr. Tilak Raj
Assistant Registrar, IGNOU, New Delhi

Secretarial Assistance

Mr. Lalit Kumar
SOSS, IGNOU, New Delhi

Formatting of References

Dr. A. Senthamizh Kanal

Graphics/ Cover Design – R. K. Enterprises

June, 2022

© Indira Gandhi National Open University, 2022

ISBN: 978-93-5568-334-2

All rights reserved. No part of this work may be produced in any form, by mimeograph or any other means, without permission in writings from the Indira Gandhi National Open University.

Further information on the Indira Gandhi National Open University courses may be obtained from the University's office at Maidan Garhi, New Delhi -110068 or visit our website: <http://www.ignou.ac.in>

Printed and published on behalf of the Indira Gandhi National Open University, New Delhi, by Registrar, MPDD.

Printed at: Palak Printers



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

COURSE CONTENTS

		Page No
INTRODUCTION		
BLOCK 1	EVOLUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT	9
Unit 1	Local Governance: Evolution	11
Unit 2	Rural Development	26
BLOCK 2	LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK, ELECTION AND PLANNING	41
Unit 3	Legislative Framework: The Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992 and Conformative Legislation	43
Unit 4	Panchayat Election	60
Unit 5	Decentralised Planning	73
BLOCK 3	PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS: FUNCTIONAL DOMAIN AND FINANCES	87
Unit 6	Panchayati Raj Institutions	89
Unit 7	Resource Mobilisation and Management	105
BLOCK 4	RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT	125
Unit 8	Rural Local Government: Structure, Role and Responsibilities	127
Unit 9	Role of Local Government in Service Delivery	141
Unit 10	E-Governance practice in Service Delivery of Rural Local Government	158
Unit 11	Interface between State and Rural Local Government	174
BLOCK 5	RURAL LOCAL GOVERNANCE: INNOVATIVE PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND WAY FORWARD	189
Unit 12	Innovative Practices in Governance: Case Studies	191
Unit 13	Rural Local Governance: Challenges, Opportunities and Way Forward	204
SUGGESTED READINGS		218



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

COURSE INTRODUCTION

The Course on Rural Local Governance aims to familiarise the learners with evolution, structure and functions of the rural local government, and rural local governance. The Course deals with evolution of local government, explains structure and functions of the rural local government; describes the composition, structure, role and responsibilities of the Gram Sabha, Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti, Zilla Parishad, and District Planning Committee; and discusses the functions, functionaries and finances of the Gram Panchayat, Panchayat Samiti and Zilla Parishad. It emphasises on planning process, resource mobilisation and management. In addition, depicts the process of Panchayat elections. The study explores areas of interface between the state and rural local government. This Course highlights the role of local government in implementing the Flagship Central Schemes in the rural areas. The study focuses on the role of local government in service delivery such as public health, water supply, sanitation, education, and communication. In this context, it elaborates the significance of e-Governance practice in service delivery. In the last part, it brings out innovative practices, challenges and opportunities for Rural Local Governance. This Course has been divided into five Blocks and 13 Units.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end, on completion of this Course, learners will be able to:

- Explain the evolution of local governance;
- Discuss the status of the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992 and Conformative Legislation, Panchayat elections, and decentralised planning in India;
- Highlight the major areas of interface between the State and Rural Local Government;
- Analyse the role of Local Government in service delivery and e-Governance practice;
- Examine the role of Panchayati Raj Institutions in governance, and adequacy of finances; and
- Create ideas for innovative practices in governance, and develop case studies.



ignou
THE PEOPLE'S
UNIVERSITY

BLOCK 1

EVOLUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

**BLOCK 1 EVOLUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE
AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Unit 1 Local Governance: Evolution

Unit 2 Rural Development

UNIT 1 LOCAL GOVERNANCE: EVOLUTION*

Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Local Government: Meaning and Definitions
- 1.3 Need for Local Government
- 1.4 Evolution of Local Government: Pre-Independence Period
- 1.5 Evolution of Local Government: Post-Independence Period
- 1.6 Rural Local Government
- 1.7 Urban Local Government
- 1.8 Conclusion
- 1.9 Glossary
- 1.10 References
- 1.11 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

1.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Discuss the local government;
- Explain the need for local government;
- Describe the origin of local governance in India;
- Explain the evolution of local government in the pre-independence and post-independence period; and
- Examine the initiatives taken for rural and urban local government in India.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The local government institutions in India have been in existence in some form or the other, since time immemorial. It has been reinvented and has emerged as a new avatar in modern times. These institutions are an integral part of the three-tier system of government in India. These institutions are organs that promote grassroots democracy, provide civic services for the welfare of local people; and carry out the task of rural and urban development, and planning. They operate both in rural as well as urban areas. These institutions are created by the national and state enactments at the base of the governmental institutions with national government at the apex and state government at the middle level.

* Contributed by Dr. Sweta Mishra, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Gargi College, University of Delhi, New Delhi

1.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT: MEANING AND DEFINITIONS

Local government is an integral part of the three-tier system of government. It is at the bottom of a pyramid of governmental institutions. Local bodies are institutions of the local self-governance, which look after the administration of an area or small community such as villages, towns, or cities. Its jurisdiction is limited to a specific area and it functions within the provisions of the statute, which has created it. It is subordinate to the state or provincial government, which exercises control and supervision over it (Maheshwari, 1970). Local government is a system that ensures mass political participation in the decision-making process by extending democracy to the grassroots level. It is considered to be the training ground for democracy (Sarkar Siuli, 2010).

Local self-government is common to both parliamentary and federal constitutions. In the parliamentary framework, the local self-government is devolutionary. In a truly federal system, it could be federative (Singh and Saxena, 2011). The local bodies in India are broadly classified into two categories viz., rural and urban. The local bodies constituted for local planning, development and administration in the rural areas are referred to as Rural Local Bodies (Panchayats); and the local bodies, which are constituted for local planning, development and administration in the urban areas, are referred to as Urban Local Bodies (Municipalities).

So far as the definition of local government is concerned, it has been defined in numerous ways. The Encyclopedia Britannica defines local government as “an authority to determine and execute measures within a restricted area inside and smaller than the whole state. The variant of local self-government is important for its emphasis on the freedom to decide and act” (Encyclopedia Britannica). John J. Clarke defines local government as “that part of the government of a nation or state which deals mainly with such matters as concern the inhabitants of particular district or place” (Clarke, 1948). In the words of P. Stones, “Local government is that part of the government of a country which deals with those matters which concern the people in a particular locality”(Stones, 1963).

L. Golding defines local government as “the management of their own affairs by the people of a locality” (Golding, 1955). In the words of K. Venkatarangaiya, local government is “the administration of a locality - a village, a city or any other area smaller than the state - by a body representing the local inhabitants, possessing a fairly large amount of autonomy, raising at least a part of its revenue through local taxation and spending its income on services which are regarded as local and, therefore, distinct from State and Central services”(Venkatarangaiya, 1969). G. Montagu Harris defines local government as government by the people themselves through freely elected representatives” (Harris, 1948). According to B.K. Gokhale, local self-government is “the government of a specified locality by the local people through the representatives elected by them”(Gokhale, 1972). However, WA Robson defines it in a more elaborate way to involve the conception of a territorial, non-sovereign community possessing the legal right

and the necessary organisation to regulate its own affairs. This, in turn, presupposes the existence of local authority with power so act independently of external control as well as the participation of the local community in the administration of its own affairs” (Robson, 574p.).

On the basis of the above definitions, it can be said that local government is a combination of various aspects like a local body, local inhabitants electing and ultimately controlling that body, autonomy of that body in the sense of freedom from the control of higher authorities within at least a limited sphere, recognition of the distinction between local and non-local services, and local taxation (Sachdeva, 2011).

1.3 NEED FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Local government is an important institution anywhere in the world and India. They act as vehicles in carrying back to the people the power that really belongs to them (Mishra, et.al., 1996). The emergence of local government as a distinct unit of government is a result of the interplay of factors like historical and administrative. Historically, they preceded national government. Initially, the neighbourhood government was evolved. The national government came later on. Even after the coming up of the national government, local governments existed as units of the national government and performed those functions, which were of local interest. Administratively, it is necessary that the civic services needed by any community of people are planned, programmed and integrated in terms of region or area inhabited by them. In other words, the distribution of work was to be done on a territorial basis.

Local governance in India is the prime instrument of decentralisation at the grassroots level. They assume importance due to the need to contain the relentless demographic pressures and optimum use of scarce resources for development (Mishra & Mishra, 2002). The urge for local government has come from many sources.

Firstly, local government is necessary precisely because some public needs and requirements are local in their intensity, character and scope. They are not common to all the areas and they vary from region to region. Such problems can be solved locally.

Secondly, local government provides a wide variety of services to the people and performs functions of great variety and magnitude. These goods and services can be delivered much faster to the people from the local units of administration. It relieves the state government of a sizeable volume of routine work, which is its responsibility to carry out.

Thirdly, tackling local problems requires knowledge of local conditions and the environment. In fact, the basic concept of local government springs from these requirements.

Fourthly, local government serves as a training ground for the politicians and prepares them to take up responsibility and function at the state and central

levels. It ensures a regular flow of talent to higher levels. In the words of Lord Bryce, “the practice of local self-government is the best school of democracy and the best guarantee for its success”(Bryce, 1921).

Fifthly, since the local government is closest tier to the people which is easily accessible, people can influence them in a better way and to a greater degree as compared to the state or the central government, which is quite far from it. It leads to a better understanding between citizens and the officials.

Sixthly, regional and local resources can be utilised for area development purposes, only if the administration is localised, i.e. moved out to the regions and localities.

Seventhly, the local government contributes to the resilience, strength and richness of democracy by promoting diversification of political experience, and by setting up as yet another centre of creative activity through democratic action.

Finally, the local government has its own value in political and administrative terms. Politically, local participation in development activities, with intensive responses paves the way for meaningful articulation of local demands. Planning thus, becomes much more realistic and receives ready political support. Administratively, local capability to govern local areas increases through sustained participation in local decision-making. The local government is expected to release local energies and enlist local support for development activities. In the process, the local community can steadily attain political and administrative maturity.

1.4 EVOLUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: PRE-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

Local government has been a major concern in India, since time immemorial. Its history goes back to the ancient and medieval times. The panchayats or village governments, as they were called, were ancient institutions and were themselves republics. Likewise, the urban government too had existed during this period. These institutions existed during the Mughal period as well. The administration of the town was vested in an officer called Kotwal. He exercised supreme authority in all magisterial, police and fiscal matters besides performing a variety of municipal functions.

Although the evolution of local government in India can be traced back to ancient times, it owes its existence to the British rule in India, especially its present structure and style of functioning. “Local self-government in India, in the sense of a representative organisation, responsible to a body of electors, enjoying wide powers of administration and taxation, and functioning both as a school for training in responsibility and as a vital link in the chain of organisms that make up the government of the country, is a British creation. The ancient village communities were constituted on a narrow basis of hereditary privilege or caste, closely restricted in the scope of their duties, were neither conscious instruments of political education nor important parts of the administrative system” (Government of India, Vol V, p.1056).

A beginning in the direction of local government was made in 1687, with the setting up of a Municipal Corporation, a local governing body in Madras, having the authority to levy specified taxes. It was replaced by a Mayor's Court in 1726. The Mayor's Court was more a judicial body rather than an administrative one. The local body in India acquired a statutory base in 1793, when municipal administration was established in the presidency towns of Madras, Calcutta and Bombay by the Charter Act of 1793. The municipal administration was further extended to the district towns in Bengal in 1842 with the passage of the Bengal Act.

Lord Mayo's Resolution of 1870 gave a fresh impetus to the growth of local government. It advocated decentralisation and made arrangements for strengthening the municipal institutions and involving more and more Indians in these bodies. Till now, the local government had remained almost wholly non-Indian and, therefore, from the Indians' point of view, was to a great extent neither 'local' nor 'self-government'. It served the British interests rather than promoted self-governing bodies.

Lord Ripon, who succeeded Lord Mayo as the Governor-General of India, resolved in 1882 to make local government self-governing. To him, local government was predominantly an instrument of political and popular education. Lord Ripon's Resolution of 1882, strongly advocated the cause of decentralisation of administration through the establishment of local self-governing institutions. The British administrators were not prepared to accept the Ripon thesis as they questioned the competence of Indians to manage local administration, and feared a general weakening of field administration under a local self-government regime. The Resolution of 1882 was hailed as the *Magna Carta* of local government.

Another significant development in local government was the Royal Commission on Decentralisation 1907. It recommended that the village should be regarded as the basic unit of local self-government institutions, and every village should have a panchayat. Municipalities should be constituted in urban areas. In order to increase devolution of power and gradual democratisation of the local bodies, the Commission had recommended: (a) the chairman should be elected non-officially, (b) majority of the members should be elected non-officially, (c) municipalities should be given more powers of taxation and control over their budgets, and (d) large municipalities should be endowed with greater power and required to appoint qualified health officers along with the executive officers.

The Government of India, in its resolution of 28th April 1915, suggested the gradual implementation of these recommendations. Punjab was the first province to incorporate the recommendations of the Royal Commission in its Municipal Act of 1911. The other provinces had thereafter passed similar Acts.

With the outbreak of the First World War, the British Government felt it necessary to solicit support and cooperation from the people of India. Hence, came out with a declaration seeking more association of Indians in every branch of the administration and gradual development of self-governing institutions.

Accordingly, an executive resolution of 1918 stressed , "The object of local self-government is to train the people in the management of their own local affairs and the political education of this sort must be in the main take precedence on consideration of departmental efficiency. It follows from this that local bodies should be as representative as possible of the people whose affairs they are called upon to administer, that their authority in the matter entrusted should be real and not nominal and that they should not be subjected to unnecessary control, should learn by making mistakes and profiting by them" (Maheshwari, 1970).

The Government of India Act, 1919 introduced 'Dyarchy' in the provinces, and Local Self-Government became a transferred subject under the charge of a popular Minister of the provincial legislature. The Act increased the taxation powers of the local bodies, lowered the franchise, reduced the nominated element and extended the communal electorate to a large number of municipalities. After the Act of 1919, Panchayats became legal entities, losing their traditional prerogative powers. The Act of 1919, thus, inaugurated an era of new interest and activity in the field of local government. This period witnessed a series of amending Acts on local government in every province.

The Act of 1935, for the first time introduced a federal form of Government conferred 'Provincial Autonomy' on the provinces and envisaged self-government for the country as a whole. With the growing strength of the national movement and the achievement of provincial autonomy, the local government in India was no more a mere experimental station of self-government. Rather it became the constituent part of self-government for the country as a whole. By now the local government had acquired a new and stable base. Yet it suffered from some deficiencies and drawbacks, which were too vivid and needed to be identified, diagnosed and even verified. Keeping this in view, the provinces launched investigations into local governing bodies in order to make them perfect institutions for managing local affairs. The Central Provinces set up an enquiry committee in 1935, the United Provinces in 1938, and Bombay in 1939. Although the recommendations of the municipal enquiry committees were unevenly carried out in various provinces, there was a definite trend towards democratisation of local government. The franchise was further lowered and the system of nominations was abolished as also the deliberative functions were separated from the executive ones.

The year 1947 ushered in a new period in the history of local government in India as the country got freedom from British rule. Thus, enabling local government to function under an atmosphere of national independence for the first time. The revival of the Village Panchayat system was accepted as an article of faith during the struggle for national political emancipation. It was, therefore, in keeping with the revolutionary spirit of pre-independence days that the task of establishing and promoting village panchayats as powerful units of self-government was given high priority as soon as the newly established governments in the Centre and states got over the newly won citadels of state power (Mishra & Mishra, 2002). In 1948, a conference was organised under the chairmanship of Amrit Kaur, which was attended by the ministers on local self-government in the provinces. It

was the first time that such a conference was organised which highlighted the fact that local self-government is of vital importance for the general well-being of the people. In an inaugural address, Jawaharlal Nehru expounded on the vital role of local government in free India. He remarked: "Local self-government is and must be the basis of any true system of democracy. We have got rather into the habit of thinking of democracy at the top and not so much below. Democracy at the top may not be a success unless you build on this foundation from below" (Maheshwari, 1970).

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your progress with those answer given at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the meaning and need of Local Government.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2) Highlight the evolution of Local Government in pre-Independence period.

.....

.....

.....

.....

1.5 EVOLUTION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT: POST-INDEPENDENCE PERIOD

The second phase of the debate on local governance in post-Independence India was staged on the floor of the Constituent Assembly. The plea for greater autonomy to the rural bodies received conceptual strength with the advent of Mahatma Gandhi on the national scene and his enunciation of the doctrine of the national development through autonomous rural organisations, which he strived to model on the lines of the Panchayat system as it prevailed in ancient India. He envisaged a five-tier system of Village Panchayats, Taluka Panchayats, District Panchayats, Provincial Panchayats and All-India Panchayats. The administrative system envisaged by him was that of a pyramid whose broad base was composed of numerous village communities of the country. The higher Panchayats shall tender sound advice, give expert guidance and information, supervise and coordinate the activities of the Village Panchayats with a view to increasing the efficiency of the administration and public service. But, it would be the basic units that would dictate to the centre and not vice versa. In fact, the whole system would turn upside down; the village shall become the real and moving unit of administration. However, Dr. Ambedkar, who was primarily responsible for the

Draft Constitution, gave no place in it to the Panchayats. He spoke clearly and unequivocally condemning the village Panchayats as "a sink of localism and a den of ignorance and narrow mindedness and communalism" (Mishra, 1994). He opined that the village republics spelt ruination for the country, and played no part in the affairs and destiny of the country.

What followed was a mid-way between the Gandhian concept of village Panchayats and its condemnation by Dr. Ambedkar. There was only the formal acceptance of the idea of local autonomy, in juxtaposition there existed a well-entrenched resistance to any radical change of balance of power in favour of local self-government institutions. The resultant of this was in the form of only incorporation of village Panchayats in the Directive Principles of State Policy (Article 40) of the Indian Constitution. Article 40 read "the State shall take steps to organise village Panchayats and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-governments".

After discussing the evolution of local government in the pre-independence and post-independence periods, in the succeeding section we will discuss the various efforts made with regard to the rural and urban local governments in India.

1.6 RURAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT

After Independence, the first attempt in the direction of rural local governance was the inauguration of the Community Development Programme in 1952, followed by the National Extension Scheme in 1953. Both these programmes could not deliver goods. As a result, the Balwant Rai Mehta Committee was constituted to enquire into the questions of economy and efficiency and suggest other measures for the re-organisation of the Community Development Programme. The Committee reported in 1958. The Committee came out with the suggestion of a three-tier system of rural local government, which would be given statutory status and upon which the various developmental functions performed by Blocks were to be devolved.

The first states to go for a full stream with the scheme of democratic decentralisation were Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh. Late Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru inaugurated the Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) in Nagaur district in Rajasthan on 2nd October, 1959. The movement spread like wildfire all over the country. By the end of 1963, most of the states had enacted legislation to introduce Panchayati Raj within their jurisdiction. However, after the initial enthusiasm and a promising start, the Panchayati Raj Institutions began to deteriorate rapidly and could not function as institutions of local governance.

In 1977, another Committee, popularly known as the Asoka Mehta Committee was appointed by the then Janata Government and was entrusted with inquiring into the sorry situation eating the vitals of Panchayati Raj Institutions and suggesting measures to revivify them. The Committee outlined the reasons for the decline of PRI's, haphazard programmes, non-performance, rise of vested interests (*Sugar lobby being an example in Maharashtra*), lack of adequate financial resources, etc. The concept of Panchayati Raj itself got lost in a haze of

conflicting interpretations. (Mishra, 1981, p.55). The Committee's principal thesis was the functional necessity for decentralisation of administration. The Committee recommended a two-tier system of PRI.

It also recommended that the first point of decentralisation below the state should be the district, and the district should be the unit of planning in most of the states. On the basis of the recommendations of the Asoka Mehta Committee, a meeting of the Chief Ministers was convened by the Ministry of Rural Development in August 1979, and a model bill was prepared to be adopted by each and every state of the country. In the meanwhile, the Janata Government failed and the Bill died its unnatural death.

However, Karnataka Government took the recommendations of the Committee seriously and adopted a new system of Panchayati Raj in 1985. West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh followed suit. After the publication of Asoka Mehta Committee Report, and its experimentation in the states of Karnataka, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, hectic activities at the central level started towards strengthening the grassroots democratic organisations and achieving the goals of real democratic decentralisation.

Apart from the concern expressed by the Central Government, several State Governments including Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Rajasthan also took serious steps in this direction. Some of the Committees set up by the Central Government are Committee on Administrative Arrangements for Rural Development (CAARD) 1985, L.M.Singhvi Committee for the Concept Paper on Panchayati Raj Institutions, 1986, Sarkaria Commission 1988, P.K. Thungon Committee 1988, Congress Committee on Policy and Programmes 1988, etc.

The net result of the recommendations of these Committees was that a proper environment was created in favour of giving a new thrust to the concept of democratic decentralisation. All political parties by and large arrived at the conclusion that it was high time to give Constitutional status to the PRI's. The result of such consensus was the introduction of the 64th Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Parliament in July, 1989. The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha. However, it failed in Rajya Sabha due to serious apprehensions regarding the timing and the intention of the Bill and could not become part of the Constitution. After the defeat of the 64th Amendment Bill, the National Front Government introduced in the Lok Sabha on 4th September 1990 a new Amendment Bill. However, this Bill died its unnatural death, as the Janata Dal Government collapsed before passing the Bill.

In June 1991, the minority Congress Government having P.V. Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister came to power. It gave top priority to the PRI's and brought out the Constitution (Seventy-second Amendment) Bill, 1991 as Bill No. 158-C of 1991. After preliminary discussion on the bill, it was referred to the Select Committee of the House for detailed scrutiny. After receiving the comments of the select committee, the Bill again came before the House for discussion and adoption in the winter session of the Parliament in December 1992.

Finally, on December 22, 1992, the Bill was passed by the Parliament and is now known as the Constitution (Seventy-third Amendment) Act, 1992. By April 23, 1994, all the states had completed the process of enacting fresh legislation on strengthening the PRI's. As many as eleven states pushed through fresh legislation in 72 hours, some of them even in the early hours of April 23, 1994, to beat the stipulated deadline of April 23, 1994, the day Panchayats became part of the Indian Constitution (Mishra & Mishra, 2002).

The 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 1992 has constitutionalised the Panchayats. It is a step in the direction of speeding up the process of rural local governance, and giving strength as well as stability to local institutions. It has made mandatory for all the states to set up three-tier (in smaller states having less than 20 lakh population – two-tier) Panchayats, viz Zilla Parishad at the district level, Panchayat Samiti at the block level and Gram Panchayat at the village level. It has provided for periodic elections to all the tiers at regular intervals of five years; and if dissolved earlier, fresh elections to be held within six months. It has made provisions for reservation of seats for SCs and STs in all the Panchayats at all the levels in proportion to their population as also one-third reservation of seats for women in Panchayats. There is also a provision for the creation of a State Election Commission to conduct elections to PRIs and a State Finance Commission in order to review the financial position of the PRIs. It also provided for devolution of powers to the panchayat bodies to perform 29 functions suggested in the Eleventh Schedule.

1.7 URBAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

After Independence, Article 40, which provided for the Constitution of Panchayats, was inserted in the Constitution. The Article only talked about the creation of Panchayats and was silent on the creation of urban bodies. The only reference to urban self-government was made in two entries viz., Entry 5 of List 11 of the Seventh Schedule and Entry 20 of the Concurrent List. As compared to the dramatic changes in rural local government, the development of urban local government was slow to the extent of being unimpressive. The urban local government attracted the attention of the government quite late as compared to rural local bodies. The Third Five-Year Plan took note of the significance of urban local government and stated, "In the next phase of planning, as many towns and cities as possible, at any rate those with a population of one lakh or more, should come into the scheme of planning in an organic way, each state mobilising its own resources and helping to create conditions for a better life for its citizens"(Planning Commission: Third Five Year Plan, 1961).

The Central Government appointed several committees and commissions, from time to time, in order to improve the urban local bodies. Some of these committees are:

- i) The Local Finance Enquiry Committee (1949-51), which mainly recommended the widening of the sphere of taxation of urban bodies;

- ii) The Taxation Enquiry Committee (1953-54), which recommended that certain taxes be segregated so that they can be exclusively utilised by or for local government;
- iii) The Committee on the Training of Municipal Employees (1963), which laid emphasis on the fact that training institutes be set up both at the central and the state levels so that they can provide training to the municipal personnel;
- iv) The Rural-Urban Relationship Committee (1963-66), which enquired into all the aspects of municipal administration from personnel, planning and taxation to interdependence between the town and its surrounding villages;
- v) The Committee of Ministers on Augmentation of Financial Resources of Urban Local Bodies (1963), which highlighted the fact that the urban local bodies were not levying taxes even in the fields earmarked for them and urged the local bodies to set up statutory Urban Development Boards to undertake town development;
- vi) The Committee on Service Conditions of Municipal Employees (1965-68), which suggested the constitution of a state-wide cadre of municipal employees; and
- vii) The National Commission on Urbanisation (1988), which recommended revitalising the urban government.

In 1989, the Constitution 65th Amendment Bill was introduced in the Parliament, which aimed at constitutionalising the urban local bodies. The Bill was passed in the Lok Sabha but was defeated in the Rajya Sabha. Once again a similar effort was made in the year 1990 when the National Front Government headed by Shri V.P. Singh, introduced the Constitution 65th Amendment Bill in Parliament. However, this Bill too met the same fate. Finally, in 1991 the Congress-led Government headed by Shri P.V.Narasimha Rao introduced a new Bill, which was passed by the Parliament and is now popularly known as the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act.

The 74th Constitutional Amendment Act ushered in a new era in the urban local governance in India. It has constitutionalised the municipal local bodies by providing them with a constitutional status and also making it mandatory for the government to constitute them. The Act inserted a new part, namely, Part IXA, in the Constitution, which deals with issues relating to municipalities like their structure and composition, elections, powers and functions, finances, reservation of seats etc. A uniform three-tier structure of urban local bodies' viz., Municipal Corporation, Municipal Councils and Nagar Panchayats was to be constituted. It provided for a uniform tenure of five years for all the three urban local bodies and in case of dissolution, elections to be held within six months. One-third reservation of seats for women in all the three urban local bodies, and reservation of seats for SCs and STs in proportion to their population was provided. The twelfth Schedule provides 18 subjects on which the municipal bodies can make laws and implement schemes for economic development and social justice was also added. Each State shall constitute a State Finance Commission to look into the financial position of the urban local bodies. A State Election Commission was

constituted to conduct elections to the urban local bodies. A provision for the constitution of the District Planning Committee (DPC) and Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) to prepare a development plan was made. Provision of ward committees for better proximity with the citizens was also made.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answers.

ii) Check your progress with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) “Influence of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar can be observed in evolution of Local Government in post-Independence period”. Elaborate.

.....
.....
.....
.....

- 2) Describe the significance of the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts in Local Governance.

.....
.....
.....

1.8 CONCLUSION

The local government in India has a long history, which has evolved over a period of time to suit the requirements of this society and region. It has travelled a long way since the time of its inception till getting constitutional status in 1993, by way of the 73rd and the 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts. The amendments are a path-breaking piece of legislation, which provides a thorough democratic framework for the institution of local self-government. They intended that the local bodies should be institutions of self-government through which people would participate in the process of planning for economic development and social justice, and also in implementation of schemes for development. Local democracy has been deepened, political participation broadened, and representation diversified as a result of these amendments. The new system has provided an element of continuity and enlarged the participatory process at the grassroots level, making it more inclusive.

1.9 GLOSSARY

Local self-government: It refers to the governmental jurisdictions below the level of state. The term originated, when our country was ruled by the British and we did not have any self-government at the central and provincial levels. After the British government decided to associate us in administering local affairs, it

meant a slice of self-government for the people. Hence, the term local self-government was meaningful at that time. But now, citizens enjoy self-rule at all levels.

1.10 REFERENCES

Awasthi, A. & Maheshwari, S.R. (1980). *Public Administration*. Agra, India: Lakshmi Narain Agarwal.

Bryce, J. (1921). *Modern Democracies*. New York: Macmillan.

Chaubey, P.K. (2004). *Urban Local Bodies in India*. New Delhi, India: Indian Institute of Public Administration.

Clarke, J.J. (1948). *Local Government of the United Kingdom*. London.

Encyclopaedia Britannica. Retrieved from <https://www.britannica.com/place/London>

Fesler, J.W. (1965). Approaches to the Understanding of Decentralisation. *Journal of Politics*. 27(3), 536-566.

Gokhale, B.K. (1972). *The Constitution of India*. Bombay, India: Sheth and Company

Golding, L. (1955). *Local Government*. London.

Government of India. (1930). *Memorandum on the Development and Working of Representative Institutions in the Sphere of Local Self-Government*. Vol.V, p.1056. Quoted in the Report of the Indian Statutory Commission, Cmd. 3568, Vol.1, London, H.M.S.O. 1930, p.298.

Gupta, D.N. (2004). *Decentralisation Need for Reforms*. New Delhi, India: Concept Publishing Company.

Harris, G.M. (1948). *Comparative Local Government*. London.

Kothari, R. (1988). *State Against Democracy: in Search of Human Governance*. New Delhi, India: Ajanta.

Local bodies. Retrieved from http://mospi.nic.in/sites/default/files/Statistical_year_book_india_chapters/local%20bodies.pdf

Maheshwari, S.R. (1976). *Local Government in India*. New Delhi, India: Orient Longman.

Mathur, K. (2013). *Panchayati Raj*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.

Mishra, S. (1994). *Democratic Decentralisation in India*. New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications.

Mishra, S. (1994). *Democratic Decentralisation in India*. New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications.

Mishra, S.N. & Mishra, S. (2002). *Decentralised Governance*. New Delhi, India: Shipra Publications.

- Mishra, S.N. (1981). *Rural Development and Panchayati Raj*. New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications.
- Mishra, S.N. (1989). *New Horizons in Rural Development Administration*. New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications.
- Mishra, S.N. (2005). The 73rd Constitution Amendment and the Local Resource Base: A Critical Appraisal. In S.S. Chahar (Ed.), *Governance at Grassroots Level in India*. New Delhi, India: Kanishka.
- Mishra, S.N., Kumar, L. & Pal, C. (1996). *New Panchayati Raj in Action*. New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications.
- Pfiffner, J.M. & Sherwood, F.P. (1960). *Administrative Organisation*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall.
- Robinson, M. (2005). A Decade of Panchayati Raj Reforms: The Challenge of Democratic Decentralisation in India. In L.C. Jain (Ed.), *Decentralisation and Local Governance*. New Delhi, India: Orient Longman.
- Robson, W.A. (1979). *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*. (Vol. 9). New York: The Macmillan Company.
- Sachdeva, P. (2011). *Local Government in India*. New Delhi, India: Pearson.
- Sarkar, S. (2010). *Public Administration in India*. New Delhi, India: PHI.
- Singh, M.P. & Saxena, R. (2011). *Indian Politics: Constitutional Foundations and Institutional Functioning*. New Delhi, India: PHI.
- Singh, S. & Sharma, P.K. (Eds.). (2007). *Decentralisation Institutions and Politics in Rural India*. New Delhi, India: Oxford University Press.
- Smith, B.C. (1985). *Decentralisation: The Territorial Dimension of the State*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Stones, P. (1963). *Local Government for Students*. London: McDonald and Evons Ltd.
- Venkatarangiya & Pattabhiram (Eds.). (1969). *Local Government in India: Selected Readings*. Bombay, India: Allied Publishers.

1.11 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- For your answer, refer to Section 1.2 and 1.3 of this Unit.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- For your answer, refer to Section 1.4 of this Unit.

Check Your Progress 2

Local Governance:
Evolution

- 1) Your answer should include the following points:
 - For your answer, refer to Section 1.5 of this Unit.
- 2) Your answer should include the following points:
 - For your answer, refer to Section 1.6 and 1.7 of this Unit.



UNIT 2 RURAL DEVELOPMENT*

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Importance of Rural Development
- 2.3 Definitions of Rural Development
- 2.4 Approaches to Rural Development
- 2.5 Attempts towards Rural Development: Pre-Independence Experiments
- 2.6 Post Independence: Attempts Towards Rural Development
- 2.7 Post 1991 Phase
- 2.8 Rights-Based Approach to Rural Development
- 2.9 Conclusion
- 2.10 Glossary
- 2.11 References
- 2.12 Answers to Check Your Progress Exercises

2.0 OBJECTIVES

After studying this Unit, you should be able to:

- Define the term rural development;
- Explain the importance of rural development;
- Describe the various approaches to rural development;
- Highlight the initiatives towards rural development, since the pre-independence period to rights-based approach; and
- Discuss the rights-based approach to rural development.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Rural development, as such, is nothing new to the developing countries. Many countries have been practising or promoting rural development for a number of years, and many of them have achieved significant success in their efforts.

Like many developing countries, India has accorded a high priority to rural development through various public policies. Since more than 70 per cent of the people live in villages, rural development has been the foremost task of planners, since the inception of the era. However, rural development has been attracting special attention and importance of late. Alongside, there has been considerable discussion of the need for and the nature of shifts in emphasis and approach called for in rural development in keeping with the objective of overall development policy for speedy alleviation of poverty.

* Contributed by Dr. Sweta Mishra, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Gargi College, University of Delhi.

In view of the enormity, nature, complexities and urgency of the rural development problems, most of the developing nations initiated development programmes, which led to the creation of a number of new institutions – political, economic, social and administrative. It was believed that the programmes of development were to be carried out not only by the state bureaucracy but also through active and effective people's participation. Hence, effective people's institutions were needed. Thus, a local institution is a necessary condition for accelerated rural development (Bajpai, 1997).

Rural development is not merely the agricultural development but rural transformation as a whole, which includes the development of all facets of human resources like social, economic, cultural, spiritual, etc. Therefore, rural development has to be viewed in its totality rather than its being a fragmented approach (Jha, 1995).

In the introductory background, the present unit attempts to analyse some important aspects of rural development. After explaining the importance and defining the concept of rural development, it presents, in brief, the various approaches to rural development. It also highlights the attempts towards rural development right from 1920 to the present day.

2.2 IMPORTANCE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Development of rural areas and rural people has been the central concern of development planning in India. Rural India which encompasses almost three-fourths of the country's population is characterised by low-income levels, not even adequate to ensure a quality of life compatible with physical well-being (Dasgupta, 1997, p.29). Rural development, therefore, occupies an important place in the agenda for national development. It is, in fact, a strategy to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people - the rural poor.

The politico-economic and socio-cultural structural disabilities threaten the development of rural poor. This has aggravated the problem of poverty, which has manifested itself in various forms, i.e. unemployment, inequality, malnutrition, growth of slums, and ignorance. The growing poverty, which undermines planned development, is much more severe in rural than urban areas and has become the biggest bottleneck in national development. Since rural development and poverty alleviation are two sides of the same economic problem, the former is essential to accelerate the pace of overall economic development (Nandini, 1992).

The importance of rural development was also felt by the World Bank. The Bank has popularised the problem of rural poverty and the concept of rural development, and encouraged its introduction into the official development plan documents of almost all developing countries which are members of the World Bank. Other international agencies like the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO). The International Labour Office of the United Nations and other agencies have also highlighted the need for rural development (Mittal & Kumar, 1995).

Since rural development holds the key to nation-building, it can transform rural society from traditional isolation to integration with the mainstream of national life. It will evolve a new society with a built-in value system by raising the social, economic and cultural values of rural people through basic infrastructural amenities.

Finally, due to lack of resources and little or no bargaining power, the owners of small, scattered and unorganised rural enterprises are exploited to the hilt vis-a-vis those to whom they sell their products and from whom they purchase raw materials, etc. These small rural entrepreneurs can be protected from exploitation and their financial conditions can be improved only through rural development in the form of price support, credit facilities, insurance, etc (Nandini, 1992).

2.3 DEFINITIONS OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The concept of rural development was born in the context of agriculture and it remained, for a long time, coterminous with agricultural development in India. The Royal Commission on Agriculture (1928) interpreted rural development in the following words: "We cannot too strongly state our conviction that the directorship of agriculture is one of the key posts in rural development and that agricultural advance must in a very great degree depend upon the suitability of the officer appointed" (Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, 1928).

Similarly, the Planning Commission's Task Force on Integrated Rural Development observed, "After careful consideration, we have belatedly decided to take what might be considered a rather restricted view of the expression rural development. We have chosen to equate it with agricultural development in the widest sense so as to embrace, besides crop husbandry, all the allied activities" (Government of India, 1972).

Since the 70s, the concept of rural development has undergone a change and has become more comprehensive. The World Bank defines rural development as a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of people, i.e. the rural poor. It involves the extending of the benefits of development to the poorest among those who are living in the rural areas. This group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless. Rural development should include a mix of activities including projects to raise agricultural output, create new employment, improve health and education, expand communication and improve housing (World Bank, 1975). Thus, the World Bank defines rural development in terms of an improvement of the economic and social life of the rural poor (Maheshwari, 1985).

Robert Chambers defines rural development as a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men, to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and need (Chambers, 1983). It involves helping the poorest among those who seek a livelihood in the rural areas to demand and control more of the benefits of rural development. The group includes small scale farmers, tenants and the landless (Singh, 1986).

While explaining the term rural development, Copp has defined it as a process through collective efforts, aimed at improving the wellbeing and self-realisation of rural people. One of the objectives of rural development is to "widen people's ranges of choices". The efforts should be towards preservation and improvement of the rural environment and rural development planning may be conceived as the process of identifying the complex factors, which contribute to the development of a rural area (Copp, 1972).

Rural development is a comprehensive programme of activities, which include agriculture growth, development of economic and social infrastructure, village planning, public health, education, functional literacy and communications, etc. (Tripathi, 1988). In this way, it becomes clear that any progressive change in the villager's status is called rural development, and a programme means a new activity or plan. Rural development thus, connotes the overall development of rural areas with a view to improving the quality of life of the rural people (Jha, 1995).

Besides the above concepts, various other concepts of rural development have been propounded by various authors. The former Union Finance Minister, Shri C. Subramanian, viewed it as a "systematic and scientific use of all our natural resources and as a part of this process enabling every person to engage himself in a productive and socially useful occupation and earn an income that would meet at least the basic needs". Uma Lele, defines rural development as "improving living standards of the masses of the low-income population residing in rural areas and making the process of rural development self-sustaining" (Dasgupta, 1997).

Thus, rural development is, of late, viewed as a strategy to bring about improvement in the economic and social life of the rural poor. It implies the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. It encompasses a spectrum of activities and human mobilisation to make people stand on their own feet and break away from all structural disabilities. (Rao, 1995).

2.4 APPROACHES TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The approaches to rural development can be grouped under the following headings:

i) **Area Development Approach**

It lays emphasis on the development of under-developed regions. Under this approach, a pin-pointed area is taken for development. The programmes, which come under this approach are Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Command Area Development Programme (CADP), Tribal Development Programme (TDP), Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), etc.

ii) **Minimum Package Approach**

This approach is a limited purpose approach, that takes a particular part at a time and tackles it in depth. The main purpose of this approach was to achieve higher agricultural production and marketable surplus. The Intensive Agricultural District Programme is a minimum package programme. The IADP advocated a selective area approach to agricultural development, and achievements of intensity of cropping.

iii) **Target Group Approach**

In the target group approach, a particular group is taken for an in depth study and after that, the plan-priorities are accordingly modified. Under this approach a client-oriented design is produced, and the final goal is to

transfer all the responsibilities of planning and development to the clientele themselves.

iv) **Integrated Rural Development Approach**

This approach is viewed as a package of action, which covers a series of mutually supporting projects and activities concerned with different sectors of rural communities. This approach is open to all rural poor.

On the whole, the approaches to rural development lay emphasis on a direct and time-bound plan of action for improving the living conditions of the rural majority, and their quality of life; and promoting real participation of the rural majority in the decision-making, and implementation process.

Check Your Progress 1

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) “Rural development occupies an important place in the agenda for national development”. Comment.

.....

.....

.....

- 2) What are the major approaches to rural development?

.....

.....

.....

2.5 ATTEMPTS TOWARDS RURAL DEVELOPMENT: PRE-INDEPENDENCE EXPERIMENTS

The concept of rural development is not a new one. Several attempts have been pioneered in the direction of rural development, from time to time, both in the pre-independence and the post-independence period. By and large, the main aim of these different programmes has been the betterment of the rural poor. In the early days, the task of rural reconstruction was mainly the field of voluntary organisations set up by eminent leaders with full commitment to rural betterment.

The first political attempt in India to mobilise the villagers and ruralise politics was the non-cooperation movement of 1920, in which Mahatma Gandhi articulated the approach to rural development by recommending the spinning wheel economy, i.e. hand spinning in every house and hand weaving on the part of the millions of weavers. He was concerned about the plight of persons in rural India and about developing a wholesome total pattern of rural life and work. He emphasised the role of the people themselves in any constructive programme. He conceptualised rural development in its totality, consistent with the Indian situation (Maheshwari, 1985).

Another attempt in this direction was by Rabindra Nath Tagore who established the Sriniketan Institute of Rural Reconstruction in 1922 under the stewardship of Mr. Elmhirst, with the main objective of improving the condition of the rural people and making them self-reliant. He desired that the local government should take up some responsibility in rural development programmes, leading to rural welfare (Singh, 1982).

It was followed by the Martandam experiment of 1921 under the leadership of Dr. Spencer Hatch. The purpose of the experiment was to bring about a complete upward development towards a more abundant life for rural people, spiritually, mentally, physically, socially and economically. Martandam claims its principal gains in the field of changing the outlook of the rural people.

After this, there was the Gurgaon experiment by Mr. F.L. Brayne, who conceived the idea of rural development as early as 1927. He spoke of the rural reconstruction as "nothing more or less than the revival of the old fashioned virtues of hard work, thrift, self-respect, self-control, self-help, mutual help and mutual respect" (Jain, 1967). Brayne's work, though limited in scope, did make a significant contribution to the cause of rural reconstruction.

It was followed by a broad-based programme of rural amelioration to promote the will to live better and a capacity for self-help and self-reliance, which was launched in 1932, in the princely state of Baroda. The programme aimed at improvement of communication, digging of drinking water wells, anti-malarial measures, pasture improvement to name a few.

After this, the Firka Scheme came to Madras in 1946. The aims of the scheme were "to organise the villagers for a happier, more prosperous and fuller life in which the individual villagers will have the opportunity to develop both as individual and as a unit of well-integrated society".

Nilokheri was another pioneering attempt in this direction. Sri S.K. Dey was the moving spirit behind the project. Nilokheri township was designed to rehabilitate about 7,000 displaced persons coming from Pakistan. Its main objective was to attain self-sufficiency in the essential requirements for the township and surrounding villages. Nilokheri became a symbol of progress through self-help and mutual aid.

It was followed by Etawah Project, which came into existence in 1948. The architect of the project was Mr. Albert Mayer. The main objective of the project was to see what degree of productive and social improvement as well as initiative, self-confidence and cooperation can be developed. The problem was to ascertain how quickly these results may be attainable, and remain permanently a part of people's mental, spiritual, technical equipment and outlook after the special presume is lifted.

A noteworthy feature of all these experiments is the influence of the ideas of their initiators in respect of both the general orientation to rural development as well as of the specific programmes and schemes taken up. These initiatives constituted a strong base for rural development in independent India.

2.6 POST-INDEPENDENCE: ATTEMPTS TOWARDS RURAL DEVELOPMENT

After Independence, the Government launched a plethora of country-wide programmes in the field of rural development with the objective of uplifting the rural masses. These programmes are discussed below.

i) **Community Development Programme and National Extension Scheme**

The first step towards changing the face of rural India was the multi-purpose Community Development Programme (CDP) launched on October 2, 1952. The main objective of CDP was to improve the living standard of people in rural areas by providing an integrated package of services and to develop self-reliance and self-help in the individual and the community. In other words, it aimed at a comprehensive and all-round development of the rural people.

The CDP, no doubt, had a far-reaching impact on the rural community as it developed both community feeling and leadership. Yet it could not yield the expected results as it lacked an institutional mechanism through which local people could participate in the development work.

It was followed by the National Extension Service (NES) in 1953, with the objective of securing increased production and raising the standard of village life on a wider scale. By 1956, it covered the whole country. It was an agency through which the first five-year plan sought to initiate a process of transformation of the social and economic life of the villages. It was a major development in the sphere of rural reconstruction in India. Karl C. Taylor has called this programme a unique one as it combines development with extension (Mishra & Mishra, 2002).

ii) **Intensive Agricultural Programmes**

The Intensive Agricultural District Programme (IADP) was launched in 1959 with the objective of a rapid increase in agricultural production in selected areas and to suggest new innovations and combinations of practices, which may be of value elsewhere (Government of India, 1988). The programme delivered quite encouraging and positive results.

Seeing the success of the IADP, the Government launched the Intensive Agricultural Areas Programme (IAAP) in 1964-65 for intensive development of important crops like wheat, millet, paddy, pulses, cotton, etc. in 114 districts. The focus of IAAP was intensive agricultural development of the area as a whole rather than of districts as was the case in IADP. Under IAAP high yielding varieties was used, which led to the revolutionary increase of the food grain production after the mid-1960s. Though there were limitations in both IADP and IAAP, they set the pace for the introduction of high yielding variety (HYV) of seed, leading to the Green Revolution. The green revolution technology did increase farm productivity and helped to solve the food problem to a large extent (Mishra & Mishra, 2002).

After this, Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) and Marginal Farmers and Agricultural Labourers Agency (MFALA) were established in

1971 with the objective of raising the earning capacity of the target group and enabling the poor farmers to gain access to services and input. While the SFDA primarily focussed on intensive farming, the MFALA concentrated more on the provision of subsidiary occupations and other employment generating programmes. Later on, these special programmes were merged with Integrated Rural Development Programme as it was realised that the problems of weaker sections cannot be solved by economic measures alone.

iii) **Area Development Programmes**

There were specific areas, which had specific problems and which required specific programmes to meet the demands and requirements of those areas. Accordingly, a number of programmes catering to the issues pertaining to specific areas were launched by the Government. Prominent among these programmes were Tribal Area Development Programme (TADP), Hill Area Development Programme (HADP), Drought Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Desert Development Programme (DDP) and Command Area Development Programme (CADP). The main focus of all these programmes was on the development of these areas for which different strategies were adopted.

iv) **Target Group Programmes**

After area development programmes, the focus of rural development shifted to clientele specific programmes. Accordingly, Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was introduced in 1976 on a pilot basis. In 1980, it was extended to all the blocks. It was based on local needs, resource endowments and potentialities. The IRDP was a major scheme through which rural poverty was to be alleviated by creating additional self-employment opportunities for a target group of beneficiaries living below the poverty line. It was the single largest rural poverty alleviation programme. The target group consisted of small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans of which 50 per cent of the assisted families should be from SC and ST (Mishra & Mishra, 2002).

After this came the Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) in 1982-83. It was started on a pilot basis in 50 districts, and later on extended to all. The basic idea was to involve women in the process of development and to provide income-generating skills and activities to poor women in rural areas, thereby improving their social and economic status.

Special programmes for solving the problems of employment and underemployment were formulated through different rural development programmes in the form of individual beneficiaries and area development schemes. Programmes like National Rural Employment Programme, Rural Landless Employment Guarantee Programme, Jawahar Rojgar Yojana, Employment Assurance Scheme, etc. were launched from time to time. The basic idea behind all these programmes was to provide employment opportunities to the rural poor. However, these programmes could not deliver results and that's the reason why later on NREGA was enacted by the Parliament.

2.7 POST 1991 PHASE

The year 1991 witnessed a major paradigm shift in India's development and economic policy. The serious economic crisis, with which India was confronted, propelled India to embark upon a different development trajectory. In the backdrop of such an acute crisis, parliamentary elections were held. No political party got a clear majority. Congress emerged as the single largest party and was invited to form the government. Under the leadership of Shri Narashima Rao and his lieutenant, Dr. Manmohan Singh, at the command of the Finance Ministry, the government successfully steered the country out of the economic crisis created by previous governments, to fulfil the popular demands of the people. It was therefore the need of the hour to adopt pragmatic economic policies without being unnecessarily perturbed by the political consequences of such policies. It was a tacit shift from the Nehruvian model of development – licence permit raj – to free market-led development. In this context, one can easily discern three distinct aspects of these changes. Firstly, there was large scale deregulation of the economy, encouraging more and more private investments known as liberalising and privatising the economy. Secondly, the state made a considerable retreat from the social and economic sector. Finally, foreign investment was encouraged and being provided easy access to the economy.

All these culminated into what is popularly known as liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG). Since then these policies are vigorously pursued irrespective of governments at the national level. It was presumed that these radical reforms commanded broader consensus all across the political spectrum. But despite this apparent anonymity, they were in reality, crisis-driven more than carrying wider acceptability. The pertinent question that emerges in this regard that how could a minority government usher in such path-breaking reforms. To get an answer to this question, one has to turn towards national and international scenarios – nationally, Mandal-mandir turmoil, internationally, tumultuous happening that led to the collapse of the Soviet Union and erstwhile communist political regimes in Eastern Europe. The tempest caused by these developments stirred the whole world and forced almost all the countries to make a radical turnaround in their economy in particular and also politics and society. Then how could India be an exception to these monumental changes?

While all these reflected a strong political commitment to these reforms by all the political parties, no political party, however, reaped political benefits out of them. Despite a leap with regard to economic reforms by the Congress government, it could not manage to win the 1996 elections, and all governments that followed remained short-lived. Finally, the NDA under the prime ministership of Shri A.B.Vajpayee followed the same policies with equal vigour. However, NDA could not manage electoral victory in the hustings held in 2004 and a new coalition UPA, headed by Dr. Manmohan Singh came to power.

2.8 RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The UPA government realised the political hazards caused by the pitfalls of these economic reforms. So they decided to turn the tide by implementing corresponding public policies to minimise the economic hardships. This is how intervention in the form of public policy was initiated, which is known as the rights-based approach to rural development. Some of these are briefly discussed below.

i) Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act

The first scheme/programme under the rights-based approach, which draws our attention is based on the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), which came into being in 2005 and was finally renamed as Mahatma Gandhi NREGA (MGNREGA) in 2009. It is the wage employment scheme, ensuring a legal guarantee of 100 days of employment in a financial year to a rural poor household, whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. It aims at creating durable assets and strengthening the livelihood resource base of the rural poor. Initially, it was introduced in 200 most backward districts, and then extended to an additional 130 districts, and finally to all the rural districts by April 2008. The livelihood possibilities are successfully delivered by MGNREGA. When a large number of migrant labourers returned home in the wake of COVID-19, MGNREGA came to their rescue. In order to ensure that MGNREGA funds are utilised properly, it was the need of the hour to bring transparency in the execution of MGNREGA. This realisation entailed the process of another significant Act in that direction, which is known as Right to Information.

ii) Right to Information

The Right to Information (RTI) Act was enacted in 2005 with an aim of providing access to records of the government to the citizens. As per the Act, every public authority is required to computerise their records for wide dissemination, and to proactively publish certain categories of information. It opens up government's records to public scrutiny, thereby, ensuring openness, transparency and accountability in the system. It also strengthens the foundation of grassroots democracy through peoples' participation in local governance and development activities.

RTI is being used at the grassroots level in development programmes and schemes in general, and MGNREGA in particular. During the audit, details of government expenditure on MGNREGA are verified, assets developed are assessed and information on MGNREGA is shared with village communities. The audit ends with a public meeting, where the findings of the audit are shared in the presence of local government officials and politicians (Aiyer & Samji, 2012). The experience gained from the experiment of *jan sunvair* (public hearings) in Rajasthan is proof that the citizens can no longer be misled or misutilised. This is a very positive impact of the RTI (Mishra, 2016).

iii) **The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006**

In the series of a rights-based approach, yet another important legislation was enacted to ensure the ownership rights to the Adivasi's. The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 recognises the rights of the forest-dwelling tribal communities and other traditional forest dwellers to forest resources, on which these communities were dependent for a variety of needs, including livelihood, habitation and other socio-cultural needs. The Act essentially empowers traditional forest dwellers with control over the forest area and its resources. The Forest Rights Act is under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Environment (Now, Ministry of Environment and Climate Change). As per the order of the Ministries, the states were given the responsibility of implementing the Forest Rights Act, 2006. The Act protects their rights to access and use the forest resources "in the manner that they were traditionally accustomed, to protect, conserve and manage forests, protect forest dwellers from unlawful evictions and also provides for basic development facilities for the community of forest dwellers to access facilities of education, health, nutrition, infrastructure, etc." Though the Act has been in force for over a decade and a half, several forest communities have not had their traditional rights registered or acknowledged, an issue that has sparked conflict over the years.

iv) **Right to Education**

In order to enhance the educational capability of rural children, a very significant move was made by enacting the Right To Education (RTE) Act on 4th August, 2009, which describes the modalities of the importance of free and compulsory education under Article 21A of the Constitution. With this, India has moved forward to a rights-based framework. The Act ensures that every child has a right to guaranteed quality elementary education. It mandates that private schools must ensure that they reserve 25 per cent seats for children belonging to disadvantaged groups. It strives for quality with equity by banning corporal punishment to ensure classrooms free of fear and anxiety as well as by providing mother tongue education to the extent possible.

v) **National Food Security Act, 2013**

For long, the government has been addressing the issue of 'food security' at the household through the Public Distribution System (PDS) and the Targeted Public Distribution System. Yet the menace of poverty has been persisting. It is in this background that the right to food, a long-standing demand of the poor and social activists, was implemented. Presumably, it was a shield against starvation and hunger. The enactment of the National Food Security (NFSA) Act, 2013 on July 5, 2013, marks a paradigm shift in the approach to food security from welfare to a rights-based approach. The Act legally entitles up to 75 per cent of the rural population and 50 per cent of the urban population to receive subsidised foodgrains under Targeted Public Distribution System. About two-thirds of the population, therefore, is covered under the Act to receive highly subsidised food grains.

The Act is being implemented in all the States/UTs, and on an all India basis, out of maximum coverage of 81.34 crore persons, around 80 crore persons have been covered under NFSA, at present, for receiving highly subsidised food grains (Government of India, Food Security Portal). The NFSA covers up to 75 per cent of the rural population and 50 per cent of the urban population under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY) and priority households. While AAY households, which constitute the poorest of the poor, are entitled to 35 kg of food grains per family per month, priority households are entitled to 5 kg per person per month.

Check Your Progress 2

Note: i) Use the space given below for your answer.

ii) Check your answer with those given at the end of the unit.

- 1) Describe the pre-Independence experiments towards Rural Development.

.....

.....

.....

.....

- 2) Explain the attempts towards Rural Development in post-Independence period.

.....

.....

.....

.....

2.9 CONCLUSION

Outlining the processes of rural development that began with Mahalanobian vision, passed through many twists and turns and has finally reached a stage where a new paradigm of rights-based approach was thought of and was subsequently operationalised. This pragmatic policy intervention in the midst of competing market imperatives has substantially diluted the excruciating effects of such reforms. Such critical reading into the changing time has paid a rich dividend to the ruling dispensation, enabling it to repeat its 2004 electoral victory in 2009 with an increased number of seats and percentage of votes. Even after the change of political regime, this rights-based approach continues unabated. Moreover, even at the risk of reiterating the same argument, it is important to foreground the objective realities underlying the Indian society that is nothing but all-pervasive agrarian life with all its concomitant values. It is, therefore, irrespective of political parties at the saddle, a political necessity to conceive and device rational rural development programmes and policies in order to mitigate hardships from the life of millions of rural people. This perceptive understanding of Indian society would always force government and policy planners to endlessly grapple with the problems of rural India.

2.10 GLOSSARY

Public Distribution System (PDS) – it a system of management of scarcity refers to through the distribution of food grains at affordable prices. Over the years, PDS has become an important part of the Government's policy for management of the food economy in the country. The PDS is supplemental in nature and is not intended to make available the entire requirement of any of the commodities distributed under it to a household or a section of the society (https://nfsa.gov.in/portal/PDS_page).

Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) – It aims at providing food security to poor and vulnerable people. It also provides subsidised fuel for household use in cooking and lighting. It is the largest food distribution programme in the world, which alone accounts for 34 per cent of all cardholders in our sample. The widespread coverage of food-based benefits, however, is not at all a peculiarity of India. It not only serves beneficiaries through the supply of benefits, but it also creates value on the demand side through the procurement of food for the programme (<https://socialprotection.org/discover/programmes/targeted-public-distribution-system-tpds>).

Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY): AAY was a step in the direction of making TPDS aims at reducing hunger among the poorest segments of the BPL population. In order to make the TPDS more focused and targeted towards this category of population, the "Antyodaya Anna Yojana" was launched in December 2000 for one crore poorest of the poor families. The AAY involved identification of one crore poorest of the poor families from amongst the number of BPL families covered under TPDS within the states and providing them food grains at a highly subsidised rate of Rs.2/- per kg for wheat, and Rs.3/- per kg for rice (https://nfsa.gov.in/portal/PDS_page).

2.11 REFERENCES

Aiyer, Y. and Samji, S. (2012). *Guaranteeing Good Governance: Understanding the Effectiveness of Accountability Mechanisms* in NREGA. Retrieved from indiagovernance.gov.in/files/strengtheningpublicaccountability

Bajpai, A. (1997). *Panchayati Raj and Rural Development*. Delhi, India: Sahitya Prakashan.

Chambers, R. (1983). *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*. London: Longman.

Copp, J.H. (1972). Rural Sociology and Rural Development. *Rural Sociology*. 37(4).

Dasgupta, K. R. (1997). Rural Development Programmes in India – Concepts and Strategies. *Kurukshetra*. 45(11).

Government of India. (1928). *Report of the Royal Commission on Agriculture in India*. Bombay, India: Government Central Press.

Government of India. (1972). *Interim Report on Integrated Agricultural Development Projects in Canal Irrigated Areas by the Task Force on Integrated Rural Development*. New Delhi, India: Planning Commission.

Jain, S.C. (1967). *Community Development and Panchayati Raj in India*. New Delhi, India: Allied Publishers.

Jha, B.N. (1995). Rural Development Programmes: A Need for Collective Efforts. In Ugra Mohan Jha (Ed.), *Rural Development in India: Problems and Prospects*. New Delhi, India: Anmol Publications.

Jha, L.K. (1995). Planning for Rural Transformation in Eastern India. An Integrated Approach. In Ugra Mohan Jha (Ed.), *Rural Development in India: Problems and Prospects*. New Delhi, India: Anmol Publications.

Maheshwari, S. R. (1985). *Rural Development in India*. New Delhi, India: Sage Publications.

Mishra, S. (2016). Redressal of grievances and Right to Information. In Alka Dhameja & Sweta Mishra, *Public Administration, Approaches and Applications*. New Delhi, India: Pearson.

Mishra, S. N. (1989). *New Horizons in Rural Development Administration*. New Delhi, India: Mittal Publications.

Mishra, S.N. & Mishra, S. (2002). *Decentralised Governance*. New Delhi, India: Shipra.

Mittal, M. & Kumar, A. (1995). Rural Development in India: Retrospect and Prospect. In Mukta Mittal, *Rural Development in India*. New Delhi, India: Anmol Publications.

Nandini, D. (1992). *Rural Development Administration*. New Delhi, India: Rawat Publications.

National Food Security Act, (NFSA) 2013. Retrieved from <https://nfsa.gov.in/portal/NFSA-Act>

Rao, V. M. (1995). Evolution of Rural Development Programmes in India. In Ugra Mohan Jha (Ed.), *Rural Development in India: Problems and Prospects*. New Delhi, India: Anmol Publications.

Singh, K. (1986). *Rural Development Principles, Policies and Management*. New Delhi, India: Sage Publications.

Singh, P. (1982). *Community Development Programme in India*. New Delhi, India: Deep & Deep Publications.

The World Bank. (1975). *Rural Development and Sector Policy Paper*. Washington, D.C.

2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS EXERCISES

Check Your Progress 1

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- For your answer, refer to Section 2.2 of this Unit.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- Area Development Approach
- Minimum Package Approach
- Target Group Approach
- Integrated Rural Development Approach.

Check Your Progress 2

1) Your answer should include the following points:

- For your answer, refer to Section 2.5 of this Unit.

2) Your answer should include the following points:

- For your answer, refer to Section 2.6 of this Unit.

