**RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Definitions:**

“Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in rural areas”

Rural development is a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of rural poor.

Rural Development is all about bringing change among rural community from the traditional way of living to progressive way of living. It is also expressed as a movement for progress.

**Objective of Rural Development**

The main objective of the Rural Development is improving the living standards of rural people by utilizing the easily available natural and human resources.  The other objectives of rural development programmers are as follow:

1. Development of agriculture and allied activities.

2. Development of village and cottage industries and handicrafts.

3. Development of socio-economic infrastructure which includes setting up of rural banks, co-operatives, schools etc.

4. Development of community services and facilities i.e. drinking water, electricity, rural roads, health services etc.

5. To develop leadership quality of rural area.

**Importance of Rural Development**

Improvement in the quality of life of rural people is the important agenda of rural development programme.  A country where the number of people living in rural areas, rural development programme is necessary aspect.  
  
Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation.  The basic objective of all rural development endeavors / programmes has been the welfare of the millions.  In order to achieve this, planned attempts have been made to eliminate poverty, ignorance and inequality of opportunities.  A wide spectrum of programmes has been undertaken so far, to alleviate rural poverty and ensure improved quality of life for the rural population especially those below the poverty line.  In the initial phase of planned rural development, the concentration was on sectors of agriculture industry, communication, education and health.  The Ministry of Rural Development places importance now on health, education, drinking water, housing and road so that the quality of life in rural areas improves and the fruit of economic reform are shared by all sections of the society.

With time and experience, it is realized that accelerated and meaningful development can be achieved only if people of the grass root are involved, “people’s participation” has become the keyword in rural development programmes.  The participation of the people is necessary to provide the rural people with better prospects for economic development

**Need and Importance of rural development**

Rural development is a national necessity and has considerable importance because of the following reasons:

1. To develop rural area as whole in terms of culture, society, economy, technology and health.
2. To develop living slandered of rural mass.
3. To develop rural youths, children and women.
4. To develop and empower human resource of rural area in terms of their psychology, skill, knowledge, attitude and other abilities.
5. To develop infrastructure facility of rural area.
6. To provide minimum facility to rural mass in terms of drinking water, education, transport, electricity and communication.
7. To develop rural industries through the development of handicrafts, small scaled industries, village industries, rural crafts, cottage industries and other related economic operations in the rural sector.
8. To develop agriculture, animal husbandry and other agricultural related areas.
9. To restore uncultivated land, provide irrigation facilities and motivate farmers to adopt improved seed, fertilizers, package of practices of crop cultivation and soil conservation methods.
10. To develop leadership quality of rural area.
11. To improve rural marketing facility.
12. To minimize gap between the urban and rural

**Elements of Rural Development**

There are at least three basic elements which are considered to constitute the ‘true’ meaning of rural development.  They are as follows:   
 **1.   Basic Necessities/Needs of Life:**

People have certain basic needs, without which it would be impossible (or very difficult) for them to survive.  The basic necessitates include food, clothes, shelter, basic literacy, primary health care and security of life and property.  When any one or all of them are absent or in critically short supply, we may state that a condition of ‘absolute underdevelopment’ exists.  Provision of the basic necessities of life to everybody is the primary responsibility of all economies, whether they are capitalist, socialist, or mixed.  In this sense, we may claim that economic growth is a necessary condition for improvement of the ‘quality of life’ or rural people, which is rural development.  
 **2.  Self Respect:**

Every person and every nation seeks some sort of self-respect, dignity or honour.  Absence or denial of self-respect indicates lack of development.  
 **3.  Freedom**:

In this context, freedom refers to political or ideological freedom, economic freedom and freedom from social servitude.  As long as society is bound by the servitude of men to nature, ignorance, other men, institutions and dogmatic beliefs, it cannot claim to have achieved the goal of ‘development’. Servitude in any from reflects a state of underdevelopment.

**Indicators of Rural Development**

1. Change in rural population
2. Change in agricultural productivity
3. Change in rural employment, unemployment and under employment
4. Change in distribution of power, influence and participation in decision change
5. Change in literacy rate
6. Change in values, believes and attitude of rural population
7. Change in infrastructure
8. Change in social conditions
9. Change in sanitation conditions
10. Change in economic conditions