



Developing PERSPECTIVE Plans



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It is very well known that urban planners prepare master plans for urban areas. However so far in India, no perspective plans were developed for villages. The present effort is to highlight the need for developing perspective plans for villages with a time span of 20 years. Rural India 2034 can be different from the rural India of 2014, is nothing surprising. But, this 20 year planning will have many positive impacts on rural life and development from the point of view of not only equity but also



poverty alleviation with zero poverty and zero unemployment. The author had developed a blueprint for this for some villages in Bihar.

SHIFTING POPULATION TALLY

The demographic transition of villages belonging to different categories (as defined by Census of India) is available for a period from 1991 to 2011. A look at the change of population in different types of villages across India shows certain facts, as the census data highlights. Between 1991 and 2011 there is a reduction in the population of villages having less than 200; population decreased from 1.69 percent to 0.98. During the same period villages with population from 200 - 499 decreased from 7.78 percent to 4.76. Similarly, villages with 500 - 999 population decreased from 16.76 percent to 12.39 and villages with 1000-1999 population decreased from 25.74 percent to 23.69.

On the contrary, during this period villages with population 2000 - 4999 increased from 29.80 percent to 34.64 and villages with population 5000- 9999 increased from 11.21 percent to 14.86. Similarly villages with population 10,000 and above increased from 7.03 percent to 8.68.

It may be observed that during these 30 years, villages with population 2000- 4999 showed the highest rate of growth (almost 5 per cent). This background of the growth path of villages has several implications for perspective plan development.

Ecological security, optimal resource planning, pre-emptive steps against disasters and, appropriate employment and development related activity matrix, can all be planned over a longer period for every village of India. Thinking beyond five years can substantially benefit the life in villages and as research shows, reduce outbound migration.

ABOMINABLE THREAT

The trends in population belonging to different ages are already emerging as a threat, more so for the 60 plus population (with reference to active participation in economic activities). As an example, one can think of planning for facilities for elderly population well in advance,



if the planning is done for a 20 year period. Studies also show that the dependence on land related living has not been substantially mitigated during the last 30 years because 'no one expected' and planned for an alternate route of development incorporating non-farm activities and market linkages.

The most important advantage of a realistic approach to the development of perspective plans for each village is the 'early signals' made known to the growing population. Migration related consequences or unemployment is unpredictable and occurring without any expectations or realistic analysis, now in plans. None of these sufferings or miseries of the large chunk of rural population is known to policy makers because they "absorb" all their pains in themselves.

REALISTIC APPROACH

Self sustaining, ecologically compatible and economically fruitful plans can considerably reduce the gap between the dire needs of

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life now and will continue in future, in all probability.

GENERATING ENTHUSIASM

Another aspect of transforming rural life through perspective plans is to simulate all future conditions that can emerge for a village. Such simulation exercises can give a feeling of all permutations and combinations that can emerge given certain “natural and as of now” changes occurring in the natural and social atmosphere of each village.

It is even possible to simulate the likely transformation in social values and the resulting social change because of the path of development of the village. Simulating social change in a twenty year perspective will also be a planning challenge.

The perspective plan for each village can be considered as a ‘dream plan’ given to every village by professional planners. The villages can foresee all possible growth paths. Given the fact that it is a perspective plan, most of the villages will also be happy to see what is likely to emerge in the life of their offspring and grandchildren. All issues which are likely to impact a family, a community and above all, the total village can be understood by the villages. This will also restrain them from unacceptable actions as it is a document for their zero poverty, zero unemployment and best health mandate. ■

(The writer is a renowned expert on rural issues and is currently the director of Chandragupt Institute of Management Patna)

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the families/ households in villages and the general environmental conditions of the village, affecting each family. The short term perspectives in our village plans (existing now) have more or less ignored the need priorities of villages.

Perspective plan for twenty years requires careful analyses by multitude of specialists such as demographers, economists, ecologists, water experts, land experts, marketing experts and agri – production experts. However, well developed conjoined plan formulation is required to reduce all probable anomalies in planning.

By planning for the next twenty years for any village, perspective planners also need to identify the micro technology gaps in stream lining rural life. These technologies can be planned with definite targets and environment of the users in mind. For eg, if such an exercise had happened thirty years back, every village would have been electrified with solar energy by now. While talking about technology it is also pertinent to mention that the villages are likely to be influenced by such technologies developed outside and has propensity to have an impact on their life, to illustrate, mobile phones and internet will have commendable impact in bringing a metamorphosis to rural