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RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING: SOME MODALITY PRACTICED IN NEPAL

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to analyze the practices and the effectiveness of rural development plan in Nepal since long. During the 1970's, numerous advanced development strategies in the provincial territories of Third World nations were introduced as 'Integrated Rural Development' (IRD) and the loaning arrangements of associations, for example, the World Bank has given much support to these 'new scheme' ventures. Trends in the conceptualization and application of rural development planning in less-developed countries are reviewed in this paper. Along these lines, there have been various examinations which both audit singular ventures and furthermore inspect the idea itself. In this sense, this article centers on certain rural development planning practices and their relevance and effectiveness in Nepal. After 1950, for rural development various plans were brought in effect in the country for instance, five year plan, and Panchayati system in which the country was divided into five development regions, fourteen zones and seventy five districts. Despite the use of various rural development plans, Nepal did not get expected goals in this respect. Therefore, for rapid rural development, according to the conception of decentralization, the concept of provincial modality was introduced in the country and then Nepal is divided into seven provinces with provincial government after the announcement of new constitution of Nepal 2015.

KEY WORDS: Development, planning, integration, implication, panchayat, rural development, program, development model

INTRODUCTION

During the 1970's many development projects in rural areas of Third World countries were labeled 'Integrated Rural Development'. Subsequently, there has been a steady stream of studies which both review individual projects and also examine the concept itself, particularly the notion of integration and its practical implications. Rural development and planning generally refers to the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas (Singh, 1999; Mosley, 2003). But first, the word 'rural' should be classified. A considerable literature exists on what 'rural' might mean and, indeed, on whether 'rurality' is really significant in the context of advanced western society in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries (Dunn et al, 1998; Shucksmith et al, 1996). Here, however, we will be heavily on

pragmatic, simply defining 'rural areas' as those with 'low population density containing scattered dwellings, hamlets, villages and small towns', and effectively put to one side such questions as 'How low is "low"?' and 'How small is "small"?', since there is no agreed answer to such questions, the 'cut-off points' of density and settlement size being best set according to the task in hand (Moseley, 2003).

Despite this considerable exposure, few commentators have explored certain geographical features and consequences of this type of development policy. This is rather surprising in view of the fact that one of the key features of Integrated Rural Development (IRD) projects is that they are often designed for specific geographical areas rather than being applicable to all parts of a country at the same time. This paper examines some of the geographical considerations surrounding IRD and then considers how these may influence the design of the programs as a whole (Binns & Funnell, 1983).

The point is that an emphasis on population density - rather than on other possible criteria of rurality with strong competing claims such as land use, economic structure, culture and remoteness - usefully focuses attention on what, in the context of development initiatives, are three crucial elements of the rural scene:

- the fact that all rural people, and many of the economic, social, political and cultural activities which are relevant to their well-being, are by definition located in isolated buildings or in settlements that are both small and widely separated;
- the fact that the wide expanses of land that necessarily separate them are subject to a mass of powerful and competing demands and pressures as agriculture and other forms of land-extensive economic activity are compelled to restructure; and
- the fact that an increasingly prosperous and 'space hungry' urban population is drawn, in a variety of ways and for a variety of reasons, both to those small settlements and to the wide expanses of land that separate them.

That essential rural context has certainly conditioned, even if it has not 'caused', a set of inter-related concerns that have intensified in recent years and which underlie the various calls made for 'rural development' programs.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

This brings us to the definition of rural development. The following three suggested definitions build on the above brief discussion of 'rurality' and of associated concerns and aspirations to encapsulate what most contemporary commentators understand by the term:

- 'a broad notion encompassing all important issues pertinent to the collective vitality of rural people and places... [including] education, health, housing, public services and facilities, capacity for leadership and governance, and cultural heritage as well as sectoral and general economic issues...' (OECD, 1990: 23);
- 'a multi-dimensional process that seeks to integrate, in a sustainable manner, economic, socio-cultural and environmental objectives' (Kearney et al. 1994: 128); and
- 'a *sustained and sustainable process of economic, social, cultural and environmental change designed to enhance the long-term well-being of the whole community*' (Moseley, 1996: 20).

The third of these definitions includes 12 italicized words which are central to the understanding of 'rural development' and to its promotion:

Table 1: The Concept and the Context Use in the Rural Development

Concepts	Context use in the rural development
Sustained	not short-lived
Sustainable	respecting our inherited 'capital'
Process	A continuing and inter-related set of actions
Economic	relating to the production, distribution and exchange of goods and services
Social	relating to human relationships
Cultural	relating to 'ways of life' and sources of identity
Environmental	relating to our physical and biotic surroundings
Designed	deliberately induced, not naturally evolving
Long-term	relating to decades not years
Well being	not just material prosperity
Whole	inclusive of all ages, both genders, all social groups
Community	here meaning people living or working in the relevant area

Source: Moseley, 2003.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Why should 'rural development' be pursued principally at the local level? Why do rural programs and plans and the projects that they contain need to relate not just to 'rural areas in general' but to this or that specific area? Why should machinery be put in place at the local level for determining and implementing rural development policies, programs and projects? In short, why and how far should there be both 'decentralization' (a shift of decision-making to 'lower levels') and 'territorialization' (shift of focus from sectors such as education, transport and manufacturing to areas). Setting aside for the present what 'local' might mean in terms of population size and geographical extent, there seem to be five main (and often overlapping) elements of the argument for specifically local development. Here I would like to discuss some of the rural model which is widely used all over the world. These models are also adopted by developed and developing countries as 'local area perspective'.

- The first argument for local rural development relates to local diversity. Rural areas across Europe have much in common but they are far from being identical. Some have economies still dominated by agriculture; for others tourism, mineral extraction, retirement migration or manufacturing industry may be their principal vocation. Some may still be experiencing depopulation, while for others it is rapid population growth and related social upheavals that characterize them. Some suffer from being 'too close' to metropolitan areas; for others it is remoteness that underlies their situation. Some are well-endowed with natural resources, others are not. So while all rural areas have, by definition, a scattered population and a landscape dominated by open countryside, their economic and social circumstances, their problems, needs and development potential will all vary greatly. It follows that the programs that address their problems must be locally sensitive.
- Second, rural problems are interlocking and, in consequence, so must be both the measures to address them and the agencies involved. And the most effective way of achieving this may well be at an intermediate level, somewhere between the nation or region on the one hand, and the village or parish/commune on the other. It is at this level, the argument runs, that partnerships are best forged and co-ordination achieved or, to put it another way, that top-down priorities relating to sectors (such as healthcare, energy or specific industrial sectors) and bottom-up needs (across relatively homogeneous geographical areas) are best reconciled. As one Irish commentator put it, 'area-based partnerships have the potential to be the "central cog" that connects local needs and priorities with the "sectoral cogs" (sectoral programs,

funding and related agencies) which can supply the energy necessary for balanced and sustainable rural development' (Mannion, 1996: 12).

- The third argument relates to local identification and mobilization. It accepts that local people - both as individuals and collectively in groups, organizations and firms - are key resources in rural development, as sources of information, ideas, energy and enterprise. Such people will, however, only be enthused to participate if they feel that the venture at issue is clearly relevant to their concerns and that any contribution they make is likely to produce beneficial change. The more the area of operation is confined geographically and the more it is in some sense coherent rather than a hotchpotch of localities that happen to be in reasonable proximity to one another, the more this crucial resource of unpaid local energy is likely to be forthcoming and sustained. So this argument is about building and mobilizing social capital and drawing upon local knowledge and experience.
- Fourth, there has been a growing sense that adding value to local resources is likely to provide a more secure and sustainable future for economic development than is a strategy involving excessive reliance upon imported materials and capital (even if, ironically, releasing that local added value often requires initial injections of non-local). This implies a need for a greater and more respectful understanding of local resources, in the broadest sense, and of their potential for creating new business opportunities. A second strand to this argument concerns the value of encouraging local purchasing by local people and organizations - a phenomenon graphically known as 'plugging the leaky bucket', with the implication that the local economic multiplier will be enhanced if money is recycled within the 'bucket' or local economy. Thus the argument is that local development driven by local people and institutions is more likely to foster both the adding of value to local resources and local purchasing.
- The fifth argument has only really been voiced in recent years. It involves constructing a defense against globalization. Globalization (Bryden, 1998; Norberge-Hodge, 1999) entails the increased opening up of local economies to the cold blast of world competition. It arises particularly from the development and worldwide adoption of modern information and communication technologies, the global liberalization of international trade and capital movements, the associated enhanced ability of multinational corporations to assemble capital wherever the costs of production are lowest and social and environmental restrictions are weakest, and international agreements that limit the power of national governments to directly bolster and protect the economies of their lagging areas. Thus cheese producers in Normandy, say, or cherry producers in Spain have, increasingly, to accept that very similar produce from places thousands of miles away is occupying 'their' shelf space in their nation's supermarkets. One response to this has been to deliberately accentuate and proclaim local diversity, to foster in each local area a distinctiveness and, thereby, a 'niche' at least in the mind of the consumer. The urgency of developing and marketing local identity and distinctive quality products and services linked to it is, then, another case for rural development being pursued at the local level, and it is one of growing importance - as recently argued in Ray's consideration of what he terms 'culture economies' (Ray, 2001).

Given those arguments and that experience, author may now define local development as 'the pursuit of development - as previously defined - at a local scale with the aim of addressing local concerns, adding value to local resources - whether material, human or symbolic - and mobilizing local actors - whether people, groups or agencies'.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This paper is entirely based on the available literature (secondary sources). Secondary source material draws upon existing primary source literature to analyze, interpret, or discuss a concept. The secondary sources, such as the Internet, published and unpublished reports, articles and

academic thesis have been used to get information for the study which is presented in the next section of this report. To get insightful information and the production of knowledge about rural and local development planning, various types of documents related with development planning in Nepal as well as abroad are reviewed. So, the objective of this paper is to find out the effectiveness of practices carried out in the process of rural development and their implications in Nepal.

THE EVOLUTION OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

A review of the historic evolution of rural planning provides insight as to why there is an emerging re-emphasis on the rural in current planning concerns. The rural challenge to planning has always been, and continues to be, to create and maintain a rural economy that provides primary agricultural and natural resource products and more recently, natural amenities for the well-being of cities while also creating jobs, wealth, and attractive lifestyle opportunities in rural areas. Two threads emerge which address that challenge. US President Theodore Roosevelt summed up the first thread one hundred years ago: 'Natural resources and their proper use constitute the fundamental problem which underlies almost every other problem ...' (quoted in Dalton 2002, 240). The other thread of rural planning focuses on physical design. It aims to create rural villages and small towns that minimize city problems such as poverty and pollution and enable access to rural amenities such as sociability and the natural environment. These settlements are envisioned as being self-sufficient and include sites for industry to provide work for their residents. The effort is to combine the virtues of both town and country and offer the working class an alternative that combines the benefits of both (Hall 2002; Howard 1902). The physical design thread of rural planning, from new town and factory town movements which keep faith with the Garden Cities ideals of Ebenezer Howard, were amplified in scale and reach in the development of green belts, green ways, and scenic corridors that are reflected in design of town plans regional design frameworks (Arendt 1994, 1996; Mumford 1961). Over time these threads wove together to form a rural planning that was linked to urban and national development issues but also addressed the physical, tangible aspects of resource conservation and design.

One of the first manifestations of the rural development thread, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was the planning and promotion of rural settlements based on agriculture and natural resource extraction in settler societies such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA. It focused on rural production managing primary resources such as soils, forests, minerals, and water to sustain cities and develop the national economy. In so doing, it aimed to enable economic and social opportunities in rural settlements, to stabilize and strengthen them, to create permanent occupations, homes, and communities (Morrison, Lane, & Hibbard 2015).

Regional development planning reached a peak in the post-world war II period, with the comprehensive river basin development planning that emerged in the 1920s and 1930s and its successors. The best-known example of 1930s river basin planning is probably the Tennessee Valley Authority in the USA. Its purposes were to regulate and utilize water resources for power and river navigation; to generate electricity for industrial, agricultural, and home use; to develop mineral resources; to check soil erosion; and to improve crop yields by introducing 'scientific' farming practices. The general characteristics of rural planning qua river basin planning were: (1) the centrality of state leadership and resourcing; (2) the importance of expert-driven scientific rationality; and (3) a commitment to the integrated development of natural resources for human use (Morrison, Lane, and Hibbard 2015).

National development planning, which emerged following world war II is most succinctly described in the paradigmatic statement of this top-down, high modernist approach, Walt Rostow's 'The Stages of Economic Growth' (1960). He argued that there is a regular five-stage progression in socio-economic development, from 'traditional society' to 'the age of high mass-consumption', and that all economies go through each of these stages in a fairly linear way as they develop. Drawing on neo-classical economics, Rostow posited a set of universal principles that undergird high mass

consumption societies: society is best understood as a collection of autonomous individuals; self-regulating markets are the best way to allocate resources; and people's wants are essentially limitless. In Rostow's view, the entire world should aspire to become 'high mass consumption' and the aim of planning is to help move societies – especially their rural areas – towards that end.

Rostow's view shaped the classic development planning that was employed in the newly independent Third World countries in the years after World War II but his emphasis on industry and urban was moderated by the concerns that governments in emerging nations had about a pervasive need to address equity and redistribution needs that were most overtly apparent in rural areas. Rostow was concerned with shifting rural economies from subsistence agriculture to market oriented commodity production, and with transferring economic surplus to industrialization, relocating the 'surplus' rural peasant population to urban areas. However, in countries with large and growing populations, urban industrialization could not create enough replacement jobs to absorb all the displaced rural workers. And the systemic and traditional stratification of society by class remained manifest in the form of severe income and asset inequalities in rural areas and mandated focused and targeted attention to their remediation through equity and redistributive planning.

By the late 1970s, the top-down, modernist approach to rural planning began to lose force in the face of three trends. First, the industrialization of agriculture and natural resource management reinforced the production aspects of rural regional planning while turning away from settlement goals. With the rise of the environmental movement in the 1960s and 1970s, this disconnect had major consequences. The environmental movement focused on ecosystem preservation as its exclusive goal, disregarding the socio-economic implications of its agenda for rural communities. At the same time, the industrialization of commodity production disconnected rural communities from the socio-economic benefits of the production of food, fibre, lumber, and other commodities that had formed the basis of rural planning up to then. The decline of commodity production as the economic base for rural communities and the political clout of the environmental movement is leading to a rethinking of the human uses of rural space (Hibbard and Lurie 2013). There was a shift from the dominant use of rural landscapes for production towards a more complex and often overlapping mix of uses – production, consumption, and protection – that scholars have termed the multifunctional transition (Holmes 2006; McCarthy 2005).

A second trend was the increasing social-political emphasis on more local scales in rural planning. The turn to the local has had a significant impact on planning practice. Responsibility for planning and implementation is being devolved to local communities and non-state associations. While the practices are diverse, a common conceptual and operational core can be identified. Underpinning it is the notion that local communities are better able to understand and intervene in local problems because they are closer to both the problem and the solution. In addition, localized approaches are considered to be more responsive to context and local priorities and imperatives (Easterly 2013).

The rise of localism is closely related to a third issue facing rural planning. The expert-driven, topdown approach that arose with river basin planning and continued through the Rostovian era has been discredited. The key factor is the difficulty of knowing and understanding the complexities of the social and environmental domain at the local level (Scott 1998). The long-held view in rural planning of the state as a rational instrument for promoting and guiding development was under siege by the 1990s. From both the left and right 'the state was viewed as an instrument of exploitation, pre-empting popular or individual initiative' (Hyden 1997, 4). More specifically, concern is voiced as to whether 'the state is the appropriate player to exercise power and authority' in rural planning (Reed & Bruyneel 2010, 646).

The rethinking of rural planning has involved a shift towards a complex and often overlapping mix of commodity and non-commodity uses of the rural landscape – conventional production of various kinds, including industrial primary production, along with consumption, using

the landscape without using it up, as in tourism and recreation, and protection, maintaining, conserving, and restoring the landscape (Hibbard, Senkyer, & Webb 2015). Simultaneous engagement in production, consumption, and protection on a landscape has been termed multifunctionality.

In dealing with the overlapping and sometimes conflicting needs and claims on resources of multifunctionality planning has engaged with issues of governance and decision-making centralization versus local, 'insider' versus 'outsider' and also with addressing the residual spaces left in, or abandoned, in rural areas or urban interstices where concentrated industrial activity and employment has disappeared. There is also a distinction between approaches to rural planning in the developed versus developing or recently industrialized countries. The latter continue to invest at significant scales in rural planning and infrastructure development given that large populations continue to reside in rural areas, and these numbers speak to those versed in politics and the art of staying in positions of power.

GEOGRAPHY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT: AN ALTERNATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The problems posed by IRD stem partly from locational issues per se, but also from the fact that geographical selectivity exacerbates existing social and economic inequalities within societies. Any alternative strategy must address these issues directly, and in particular the apparent need to concentrate resources in selected geographical areas. Admittedly, national scale programs employing the level of intensity characteristic of IRDs, would absorb enormous quantities of manpower and financial resources (Adhikari, 1982). But this begs the question as to whether such intensity is really necessary for project implementation, and additionally whether resources available for the project need to be derived from outside the area in question. Mabogunje (1981) has summarized the first point well when he says that most rural area projects, including those under the IRD label, are equivalent to "throwing money at the problem", hoping it will go away. Equally, it is evident that few donors funded IRD programs look to mass mobilization of the population, preferring instead to rely upon the central provision of personnel and equipment. This presumably reflects an antipathy to any politically inspired organization that mobilization might require, especially when it is associated with agrarian reform. Thus, under the guise of pragmatism, it may be argued that IRD policy reflects a compromise with inherently conservative political viewpoints.

On the off chance that there is to be a topographically more extensive spread of provincial improvement extends inside a nation, it is fundamental to energize nearby interest. Yet, keeping in mind the end goal to do this, it will be important to give careful consideration to nearby needs and desire. A review in Switzerland, for instance, found that the number of inhabitants in a zone decided for a rustic advancement conspire positioned a large number of the venture's needs very low without anyone else size of interests. While this might be inescapable to some degree, it speaks to a genuine obstacle to extend administration and prompts the impulse to force from the outside a foreordained bundle of arrangements that fits bureaucratic prerequisites. There is accordingly an oddity, in so far as an endeavor to extend the geological degree towards a national country advancement program infers that more prominent consideration is paid to neighborhood level necessities. This is likewise hampered by the genuine absence of information at neighborhood levels, which is mostly incited by the style of country improvement program itself. Scarcely any administrations have under-taken complete overviews of the topographical attributes, regular asset potential and statistic structure of neighborhood networks. This would require long haul investigations of house-hold synthesis and conduct. Such investigations are not as a rule inside the brief of giver offices, who, when they touch base on the scene, start quick 'preview' concentrates to shape a reason for essential approach choices.

Perhaps the most desirable strategy is to alter the focus of IRD's so that they can form the basis of a coherent national policy which may be implemented by mass participation on a local level. The first stage in this task is to move away from projects designed primarily around production criteria to an engagement with fundamental social questions. The tendency with many IRDs is to subsume 'rural' development under a narrower 'agricultural' focus despite claims to the contrary. It is

suggested, therefore, that production goals should be carefully specified in response to local welfare needs. This apparently simple change could have very significant consequences and has been advocated by several writers (Conde, Paraiso, & Ayassou, 1979; Dupriez, 1979). For example, an examination of nutritional requirements and the social composition of households may suggest that specific categories of household would benefit more from upgrading food crop husbandry than from attempts to expand cash crop production. Dupriez (1979) has shown that in one area of Togo, for instance, the food equivalent return of unit labor input is much higher from subsistence farming than from cash crops.

An extra advantage from this approach is feature creation frameworks which incorporate neighborhood trims that are frequently overlooked in the race to empower the planting of business items. In the meantime, creation techniques in view of socially characterized necessities could feature exactly what type of generation system is most suitable for those gatherings which have been appeared to be most in danger families with high reliance proportions, those with wiped out elderly family heads or with high male out-movement, bringing about an exorbitant weight on the ladies. As Matlon (1979) has appeared in his investigation from Northern Nigeria, some portion of the between house-hold variety in salary mirrors the existence cycle pay example of families. As family unit structure changes and its individuals contribute more to family wage, so the fortunes of the family enhance, however the gatherings in danger are frequently unfit to exploit those provincial improvement programs in view of a move to negligible industrialist generation due to work deficiencies. These gatherings may turn out to be generally devastated to the point where recuperation is exceptionally troublesome.

NEED OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN NEPAL

According to the 2011 census, more than 70 percent of Nepal's total population live in rural areas, with more than 70 percent of population living in rural areas deriving their livelihood from agriculture, the economic development of Nepal agriculture has accounted for over half of GDP, over 80 percent of employment and 15 percent of recorded exports. About 50 percent farmers own less than 05-hectare land. In terms of geographical area coverage also, out of total localities (VDCS) of 4048 in the country, 4015 localities live in rural areas.

According to 1991 census, the rural literacy rate (of all ages) was 36.8 percent against urban literacy rate of 66.9 percent. The situation is still worse among rural females' whose whole literacy accounts for only 22 percent against 54.8 percent of urban females.

The vast majority of economically active labor force is still involved in agriculture. According to 1991 census, about 82 percent of labor force was engaged in agriculture in rural areas and the rest work as technical workers (1.8) administrative workers (0.3%) clerical workers (1.1%), sales workers (3.9%), service workers (6.2%) and production workers (4.2%) despite some increase in industrial development.

In most of the rural areas, landless and very small farmers suffer mainly from disguised unemployment. As a result, most of the people falling below poverty line is concentrated in rural areas. The rural poverty accounts for 43 percent against the urban poverty of 19 percent. About 41 percent of the rural households fall below poverty line (22.08 percent households of urban areas fall under poverty line). The estimated average per capita income (1988-89) of rural areas was Rs.260 per month, whereas it was Rs.426 per month in urban areas. In terms of income distribution (NRB 1988), per capita ranking, the bottom 40 percent income is shared by 25 percent of the rural areas as compared to urban areas which shares 23 percent. On the other hand, the top 10 percent is shared by 22 percent urban areas as compared to rural areas share of 20 percent. The rural areas also face severe underemployment problems as about 46 percent of their population is under-employed despite the fact that about 93 percent of the total rural population is economically active.

As of 1991, the national crude death rate and infant mortality rate was 13.8 and 102 per 1,000, respectively. In 1974/75 the crude death rate in rural areas was 19.8 percent (11.8 per thousand in

urban areas). Similarly, the infant mortality rate in rural areas during the period 1962-71 remained 167 per thousand (127 per thousand in urban areas).

The population per hospital bed was 9, 146 in 1961, and the 3915 in 1990. Of course, the number of hospitals, health posts and health centers has increased over time. However, it must be remembered that better health service facility and institutions are concentrated in urban areas. About 55 percent of the rural people do not have access to drinking water (about 97 percent of the rural people are devoid of sanitary mean of excreta disposal).

Electricity currently contributes less than one percent to the total energy supply, but shows great potential for the future. Electricity is used primarily in urban areas and the industrial sectors rather than in rural areas. Similarly, about 50 percent the rural people live far away from road network. Almost the situation prevails in the case of communication network.

The above facts and figures demonstrate that development in Nepal is a real challenge to national development. Therefore, rural development should form the foundation for national development. In other words, rural development is pre requisites for national development.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN NEPAL: OBJECTIVES, PROGRAMS AND IMPACTS.

Programs for the development of rural areas were initiated in Nepal as early as 1952. Since then requisite institutional arrangements from the central to district levels were established to provide goods and services to the rural people. Rural sector programs were mainly focused on the development of agriculture, cottage industries and infrastructure facilities. The main objective of these programs was to enhance the standard of living of the rural people by expanding employment opportunities and thus ensuring higher incomes than before.

Process of modern development in Nepal has been started after 1950 when family based political system called 'Rana Rule' ended and country has entered into the democratic system by the influence of people's movement and political influence of outer world. Development planning was started in the country in 1955-56 to bring about systematic change in the underdeveloped socio-economic condition. Tenth Plans have already been completed and interim three years' plan is running at present. We could not get satisfactory output in the history of overall process of planning and development in Nepal due to the unstable political economy and center oriented development mechanisms (Pyakuryal 1980; Pandey 1999; Bista 2000).

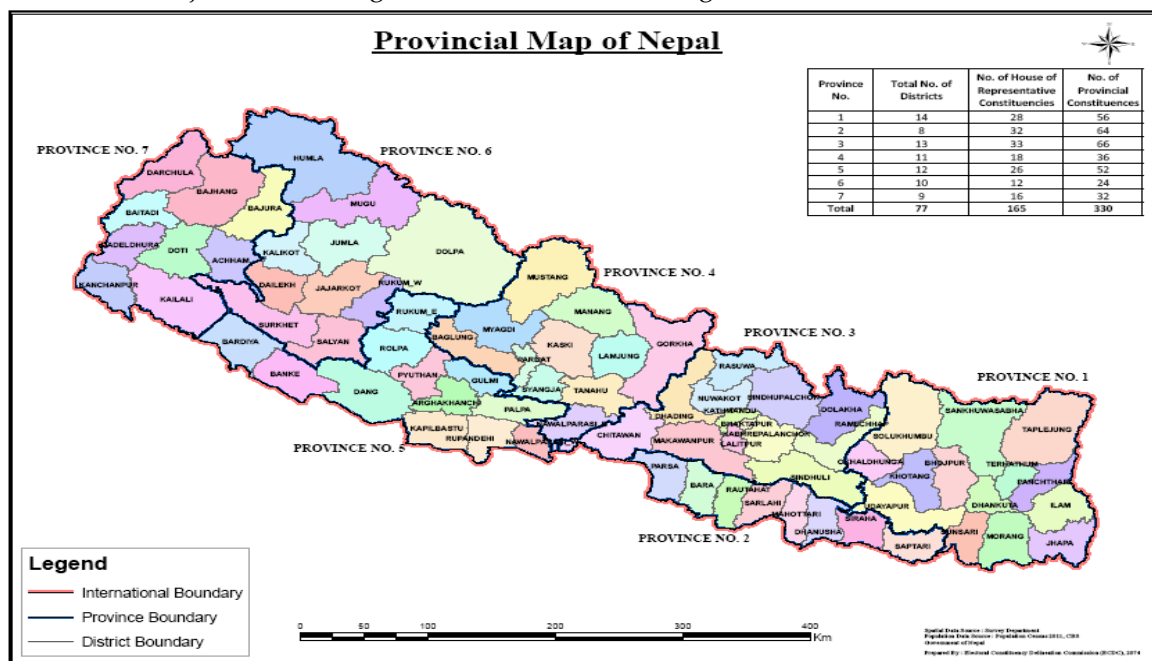
Government of Nepal has tried to adopt rural development approach for the development of rural areas after 1950s by the integrated rural development program. Obviously, effort of rural development in Nepal has a few achievements as compared to its inputs. Most of the integrated rural development program in Nepal has faced problems because of irrelevant program to the target groups and lack of proper evaluation and monitoring system.

Rural development programs in Nepal

No planned efforts were made for rural development in the country before 1950. Efforts towards rural development started only after the political change of 1951 (Pyakuryal 1980; Pandey 1999; Bista 2000). The first significant development program initiated in Nepal even before the introduction of the first five-year plan (1958-60) was the village development program in 1952. It was well conceived as multi-sectoral program embracing all important aspects of village community and economy. The goal of rural development is to eradicate poverty. However, only a few targets of the Tenth Plan have been achieved during the period of 2003-2007. Then interim plan was implemented at the end of 2007. Major objectives of this plan were to reduce poverty, unemployment and inequality for social and economic transformation. It focuses on target program to the marginalized people, social mobilization, infrastructure development, strengthening to local bodies, regional development, reconstructing local infrastructure, and reformation of local governance for rural development and change.

Different acts, regulations & policies are, as a rule, formulated and implemented for the entire & all round development of the nation time & again. Before the unification of the nation by the late

king, the national hero of the country, Prithivi Narayan Shah, the country was divided into distinct small states called 22nd, 24th states (*baisi, chaubisi rajya*). These states were the hindrance of the nation's development. So, to remove the blocked of development created by these states, unification of the nation was a must. The king, taking this fact into consideration, unified the nation. Then, he, for the nation's equal development & for its ease, divided the country into 12 regions. Later on, during Rana regime, by the then Prime Minister Janga Bahadur Rana, the nation was further divided into 69 units. Similarly, for the equilibrium in development, particularly, the development of the rural areas, Bhimsen Thapa another Rana Prime Minister, narrowed the country into 39 districts. But Bir Samser, decreased the number of districts and confined the nation into 35 ones for proportionate development. After the restoration of democracy in 1950, the citizens took a long breath of peace and the nation slowly began to move a long step towards balanced development. During the ruling period of King Mahendra, the nation was found to be divided into 14 zones and 75 districts and administrative units in each zone and district were formed to focus on the development of the rural areas utilizing the locally available resources and human manpower. The countrymen now really began to taste the flavour of balanced development. Sometimes, distinct geographical regions used to be barrier for the proportional development of the nation. So, to connect each geographical region i.e. north to south was felt necessary and during the regime of the then King Birendra in 1972, the country was further divided into 4 development regions. Later on, in 1980, another region was added for the very purpose. In this way, during panchayati system for the all round development of the nation especially, the rural areas, in different times, the nation was divided into 5 development regions, 14 zones, 75 districts, 3915 *gaun panchayats* (rural panchayats) and 58 *nagar panchayats* (urban panchayats). After the declaration of Nepal as republic country in 2015, under the policy of decentralization for the all round development of the country, the entire nation is divided into seven provinces according to schedule 4 of the constitution of Nepal. The seven provinces are formed by grouping the existing districts; two districts viz; Nawalparasai and Rukum are split between two provinces. Now, altogether there are 77 districts. Each district has local units. Nepal includes six metropolises, 11 sub-metropolises, 276 municipalities & 60 rural municipalities (Figure 1). Similarly, there are 6680 wards in the country which are actively working for the sustainable development of local level. On the whole, the ruling system of the country has been changed as the need of the citizens and to adjust to the changeable circumstances of the global world.



Figur 1: Provincial Map of Nepal

Tribhuvan Village Development Program (Tribhuvan Gram Vikas)

Different rural development programs have been conducted after 1951. After the political change of 1951, the need of guiding rural change in a planned way was recognized. In order to translate the national policy of comprehensive development of rural areas Village Development Program (VDP) was introduced in 1952. Initially the program was implemented with the aid of the government of United States of America. Later, the Village Development Program (VDP) was aided by the Indian government. It was through this strategy that systematic efforts were made to push development into rural areas. The program had a pragmatic approach and was divided into three phases. These were: (a) Nucleus development at the lowest level focused mainly on the improvement of existing local infrastructure and facilities like school, playground, wells, roads etc., (b) middle level rural development called Dehat (rural) development, which in addition to nucleus activities included provision of improved seeds and fertilizer, horticulture and livestock development, basic social services like primary school, first aid kits, drinking water etc., and (c) multi-sectoral intensive village development which besides the middle level package, incorporated soil survey, propagation of scientific farming techniques, extension of health and maternity services, cottage industries, cooperatives etc. Training of different levels of manpower required for the program constituted an integral part of the program. Since VDP was backed by national commitment, it was incorporated as high priority component in the first five-year plan (1956-61).

However, the second plan (1962-64) deplored the ineffectiveness of the program due to limited coverage, the lack of people's participation and dichotomy between the U.S. aided and Indian aided program. The new political institution i.e., the Panchayat was assigned the role of medium of local development, and village development program as such was deleted from the plan. The withdrawal of foreign assistance to this program was also a contributory factor to the termination of the village Development Program.

Panchayat Development Model

With the abolition of the parliamentary democracy in 1961, VDP was completely avoided. Later, village panchayat development program was introduced as a strategic measure for rural development. In this model, through legislative acts, authority was decentralized to local panchayats. The project used to be implemented through the local panchayats. The sole objectives of the efforts of this model were to strengthen the panchayats of different levels. As a result, these could hardly contribute to the systematic development of rural areas in the country. In this view, it was strongly felt that some other effective strategies were needed to push development activities in the rural areas.

Integrated Panchayat Development Model (IPDM)

It was realized that the earlier rural development strategy did not fill a gap of a national approach to rural development. The strategy was not perfect and had some organizational weaknesses. On this ground and more on fundamental issues, there was a thorough examination of the concept and approach by HMG. Consequently, a new concept integrated panchayat development model was born in 1978.

The main thrust of this model was the development of the village and district panchayats as the institutions for rural development. Panchayatization of Rural development program was declared a major policy. The model placed great emphasis on the institutional aspect, in terms of both quality and quantity. The starting from a cabinet subcommittee for policy mattered to central, zonal, district and village level. An innovative provision in the model was the service center, was in each district with a panchayat supervisor as the coordinator. The main function of the center was to help the village panchayats within its jurisdiction center within its jurisdiction in planning and implementation, and to organize necessary training.

The IPDM was, no doubt, politically biased. Hence, the emphasis was more on the strengthening of district and village panchayats organization. Thus, it could not adequately address

the main issues of rural development. The coordinator, the key person in the IRDP was less than effective. As a result, the performance of the IRDPs could not be very encouraging.

Integrated rural development model

The fifth five-year plan (1975-80) was the turning point in the development process of Nepal. Physical infrastructure which dominated the earlier plans was deemphasized for the first time, with the agricultural and social sectors receiving the first fifth plan to integrate the development process with the panchayat system. The scope of panchayat was thus expanded. The plan also incorporated a new program i.e., Small Area Development Program (SADP) to develop 8 to 20 locations. This time the interest of donors in assisting the developing countries in rural development was growing. The first Integrated Rural Development Project (IRDP), Rasuwa-Nuwakot IRDP implemented during this plan period was with the interest of donor agencies (Pyakuryal 1980; Pandey 1999; Bista 2000). In the sixth plan, the integrated rural development program was recognized as the strategy for Nepal's rural development. It was visualized that the entire rural territory of the country would be brought gradually under integrated rural development projects. In line with this policy, a number of such projects supported mainly by foreign assistance were introduced in the country. It was through such projects that the concept of integrated approach for area development was adopted in Nepal.

The program was introduced for the development of the remote areas. The main objectives of the program were: (1) to generate national feeling among the people of the remote areas of northern Nepal, (2) to bring the people of remote area into the main stream of national development, (3) to conserve the ancient arts and manuscripts in the northern area, (4) to improve accessibility and (5) to enhance the quality of the life of the people by social, economic and educational development. The executing agency of the program was the ministry of local development. The development activities covered under this program included drinking water, school building, renovation of monasteries, irrigation schemes, cottage industry, construction of trails and mule tracks. SADP covers entire areas of 12 remote districts and some parts of other six districts.

Development issues and challenges

As a developing nation, Nepal has been facing several challenges in the path of economic development. There are so many development issues entailed to be addressed as far as possible through economic policy measures. These development issues and challenge can be outlined as follows.

Mass Poverty and Inequality

- Lack of Physical Infrastructure
- Widespread Unemployment
- Stagnation of Agriculture
- Economic Dependency
- Political Stability and Good Governance
- Low Level of Savings and Investment
- Natural Resources Utilization
- Human Resources
- Benefiting from Globalization

In addition to the above mentioned issues and challenges, there are so many development challenges we are facing continuously in the path of building a well-advanced, egalitarian and discrimination-free society. Therefore, one of the challenges is to build financial sector strong and stable alongside making institutional governance and self-regulatory system of the banks and financial institutions effective. Addressing the issue of financial inclusiveness is also prominent one because of the difficulty in increasing access to banking and financial services of the ultra-poor, remote and rural areas. One additional challenge is of simultaneously sustaining both monetary and demand management for avoiding the undesired pressure on the price level. As a least developing country,

Nepal has several development changes in its way of economic development, which needs immediate policy consideration and implementation from all Nepalese.

CONCLUSION

Indeed, Nepal is an underdeveloped country in South Asian region. The rate of population below the poverty line is in decreasing trend. Unfortunately, equal distribution of development is difficult in terms of its social, regional and cultural diversity. To improve entire socio-economic condition of rural people, we have to change trickle down model of development which is in practice since 1956. We have to try development honestly through decentralization and multidisciplinary approaches in which every section of population or community can be involved in their own development process. Without commercialization of agriculture no one can hope rural development properly. Eighty percent of Nepalese people depend on subsistence agriculture. I think enabling local community to identify their resources and let them to mobilize for local development can best support to infrastructural development concerning to the rural areas. It is essential to identify patterns of poverty, inequality, exclusion and vulnerability of the rural sector or rural community to prepare proper development plan for rural development and change in Nepal.

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