

Mahatma Gandhi and Rural Development: Special Reference to Adarsh Gram Yojna

¹Alka Prakash Tare, ²Prof. Dr. J. S. Dhayagude

¹Department of Public Administration, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

²Professor, Department of Public Administration, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada University, Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar

Email ID: tarealka@gmail.com, drjsdhayagude@gmail.com

Abstract:

Mahatman Gandhi the father of the Indian nation championed the cause of rural development as the cornerstone of India's Socio-Economic Progress. He believed that the soul of India resides in its villages and therefore, holistic rural development was imperative for the nation's overall growth. Gandhi's vision for rural development emphasized self reliance, sustainability and the empowerment of rural communities through the principals of Sarvodaya (Universal upliftment) and Gram Swaraj (Village Self-Governance).

In alignment with Gandhi's philosophy the Government of India launched the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' (SAGY) in 2014. This initiative aims to develop model villages (Adarsh Gram) that demonstrate holistic development across various dimensions, including social, economic and infrastructure aspects. The scheme encourages members of parliament (MPs) to adopt and develop villages in their constituencies into model villages by leveraging existing schemes and fostering community participation.

Introduction:

Mahatma Gandhi the father of the Indian nation had a profound and enduring vision for India. He dreamt of an India where every village would be self-sufficient, socially harmonious and economically prosperous. This vision was not just an idyllic fantasy but a blueprint for sustainable and equitable development. Gandhi's idea of the ideal village or 'Adarsh Gram' was based on communal harmony. Decades after his passing this vision continue to inspire various developmental initiatives most notably the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' launched by the Indian government.

The 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' or 'Model Village Scheme' is an ambitious project aimed at transforming rural India by implementing comprehensive development plans in selected villages. This initiative seeks to align with Gandhi's vision by focusing on holistic development encompassing aspects such as sanitation, education, health care and livelihood opportunities. This research paper aims to delve into the intricacies of Gandhi's dream for India and critically analyze the effectiveness of the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' in realizing this vision.

Mahatma Gandhi's vision for India:

Gandhi's vision for India was rooted in his profound understanding of Indian society and his unwavering

belief in the potential of its people. He believed that true independence for India could only be achieved through the empowerment of its villages which he saw as the backbone of the nation. According to Gandhi "An ideal village would be a microcosm of a self sufficient and equitable society free from poverty, discrimination and exploitation."¹

Gandhi's vision of rural India emphasized the importance of local self-governance, community participation and sustainable practices. He advocated for the use of indigenous technologies and resources to meet the needs of the people while preserving the environment. Education and health were seen as critical components of village development with a focus on holistic well-being rather than mere economic growth.

Historical Context of Adarsh Gram Yojna:

The concept of the ideal village as envisioned by Gandhi has had a significant influence on various government initiatives aimed at rural development. Over the years numerous scheme and programs have been introduced to address the challenges faced by rural communities and to promote sustainable development. One such initiative is the "Adarsh Gram Yojna launched in 2014 by the Government of India."²

Pre-Independence Rural Development
Before India gained independence in 1947 rural

development initiatives were largely scattered and unorganized. Villages faced significant challenges, including lack of infrastructure, poverty and limited access to education and health care. Efforts for rural upliftment were primarily driven by voluntary organizations and individual philanthropists with little formal government intervention.

Post Independence Rural Development Policies After independence the Indian government recognized the importance of rural development in achieving national growth and stability. The Community Development Programme (CDP) launched in 1952 marked a significant step towards organized rural development. The CDP aimed to involve local communities in development activities and improve living conditions through infrastructure, education and health care.

Genesis of Adarsh Gram Yojna:

1) Inspiration from Mahatma Gandhi:

The concept of model villages has its roots in Mahatma Gandhi's vision of 'Gram Swaraj' (Village self-governance). Gandhi emphasized the need for self-reliant villages as the foundation of a strong and prosperous India. His philosophy of 'Sarvodaya' (Welfare of all) inspired subsequent rural development policies and initiatives including the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna'.

The 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' is a continuation of Gandhi's vision, aiming to create model villages that can serve as examples of holistic and sustainable development. The scheme focuses on various aspects of rural life including Sanitation, Education, Healthcare, Infrastructure and Live hoods.³ by implementing comprehensive development plans in selected villages the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' seeks to transform these communities into vibrant self-reliant and socially inclusive entities.

2) Evolution of Model Village Initiatives:

Over the years various state governments and organizations experimented with model village projects to demonstrate the feasibility of integrated rural development. These initiatives focused on creating sustainable, self-reliant communities by addressing key aspects such as agriculture, education, healthcare and infrastructure.

The 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' was formally launched by the Government of India in 2014 with a

vision to create model villages that epitomize holistic and sustainable development.⁴ The scheme aimed to bridge the urban-rural divide by providing rural communities with access to modern amenities and improved quality of life.

Launch of 'Adarsh Gram Yojna':

1) Objectives and Vision:

The 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' was officially launched October 11, 2014 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The scheme was inspired by the vision of Mahatma Gandhi and aimed to create model villages that could serve as example of sustainable and inclusive development. Under this scheme Member of Parliament (MPs) were tasked with adopting and developing three villages by 2019 and eight villages by 2024 to transform them into 'Adarsh Grams'.⁵

The objectives of the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' include the provision of basic amenities enhancement of human development promotion of social harmony and the implementation of sustainable practices. The Scheme emphasizes community participation and the active involvement the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' aims to create an environment where people can lead healthy, productive and dignified lives.

Implementation Strategy:

The implementation strategy of the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' revolves around the active participation of Member of Parliament (MPs) and local communities. Each MP is expected to adopt a village and take responsibility for its development. The key components of the scheme include.

1) Agricultural Development:

Since the main occupation of rural areas is agriculture various scheme and programs for agriculture development are implemented through 'Panchayat Raj'. For Example – Distribution of agriculture materials to farmers, fertilizers and seeds, irrigation agricultural training programs etc. Implementation of scheme and programs can be seen in ideal village.⁶

2) Supply of clean drinking water:

The responsibility of providing clean drinking water to every village in rural areas lives with 'Panchayat Raj' system. There for a water

supply plan has been made for each village through Panchayat Raj. Also wells, hand pumps and villages where taps wells or hand pumps are scarce. Water is supplied by tankers in such villages. It is the task of Gram panchayat to supply clean water to every people in the village.⁷

3) Expansion of Education:

In rural areas, primary and secondary education is arranged through Panchayat Raj. Zilha Parishad schools have been established in every village in rural areas. We can see that all the work of managing these schools from management, supervision control, supply of educational materials and selection of teachers is done through the development work of Gram Panchayat.⁸

4) Public roads and lighting facilities:

Gram Panchayat makes internal roads and electricity system in the village. The state government gives subsidy for this work. Also some financial assistance is spent on maintenance of road and lighting from Gram Panchayat taxes. All this work is done through Gram Panchayat.

5) Health Care:

Establishing healthcare facilities and promoting preventive healthcare practices.

Impact and Challenges of 'Adarsh Gram Yojna':

Since its inception the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' has achieved several successes and faced numerous challenges. The scheme has led to development of basic infrastructure improved sanitation better healthcare facilities and enhanced education opportunity in many villages. Success stories from various parts of the country highlight the positive impact of the lives of rural communities.

However the implementation of the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' has not been without challenges. Issues such as inadequate funding, bureaucratic hurdles and lack of community participation have hindered the progress of the scheme. Additionally the diverse socio-economic-conditions of different regions have made it difficult to implement a one size fits all approach to rural development.

Comparative Analysis:

Gandhi's vision of the ideal village was based on principles of self-reliance, simplicity and

communal harmony. While the 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' aligns with many of these principles the real word implementation of the scheme has faced several obstacles. The scheme's focus on holistic development and community participation is in line with Gandhi's vision, but the challenges highlight the complexities of achieving this vision in a diverse and rapidly changing country like India.

Conclusion:

Mahatma Gandhi's dream of an Ideal India, where villages are self-sufficient, socially harmonious and economically prosperous continues to inspire rural development initiatives in the country. The 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' launched by the Government of India aims to realize this vision by implementing comprehensive development plans in selected villages.

While the scheme has achieved several successes it has also faced numerous challenges, highlighting the need for continues efforts and innovative solution to transform rural India.

References:

- 1) Mahatma Gandhi, "Hind Swaraj", Navajivan Publishing House, 1909.
- 2) Government of India, "Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna Guidelines", Ministry of Rural Development, 2014.
- 3) Sharma Ajay, "Gandhi Vision for Rural Development in India", Journal of Rural Studies, Vol.25, No.2, 2015.
- 4) "Impact of 'Adarsh Gram Yojna' on Rural Development", Economic and Political Weekly, Vol.52, No.35, 2017.
- 5) Sahasrabuddhe D. L., "Aapli Khedi", Tilak Maharashtra University, Sadashiv Peth, Pune, 1950.
- 6) M. K. Gandhi, "India in My Dreams", Pardhan Publications, Pawanar, Wardha, 1928.
- 7) Our Ideal Village 'Patoda-Geolysis Local', Aurangabad, Maharashtra.
- 8) Dr. Pramod Berlikar, "Rural Development", Vidya Books Publication, Aurangabag, 2012.