

A Study on Required 'Ruralization' For Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) of Villages in the Region (India)

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4

Abstract

The narrowed-down conventional idea of the Rural-Areas and narrative thereof has to be revisited and required to be 'Redefined'. The area with, dominantly, agricultural land and primary-activities, along with neat surroundings and clear environment, as well as masses having simple living and limited demands, with religious-fatalistic daily-life (simpleton) has to be designated as Rural Areas; needed to be reviewed in the 21st century, the age of IoT and AI, especially in the developing-region like South-ASIA of world, including India. This research effort has been an empirical attempt to get and add insights into the main issues of Low-RD on account of Non-Diversification of Agriculture and Allied Activities, Low Level & Quality of Education in Villages, neglected focus of the systems, and per-capita income of farmers, as well as low production productivity. Whereas, in the developed world, the population in rural areas is very well-equipped with Artisanal-Skills (upgraded), evolved and high-quality affordable – subsidized Implements – Tools, Support – Handholding by LSGs / Federal Depts, Scaling and Anchored Production, Increased Productivity – Production, etc. In 2019, the workforce in rural non-farm activities (due to proper Diversification of Primary activities) on average was 46%, significantly higher than the rural population of 30%, in OECD Nordic Developed Member Countries. The same potential was very much available in the Villages of India, if development had genuinely been given after independence to these regions. The villages have the power to create Reverse-Migration (from Urban-to-Rural), if properly developed and managed, thereby containing the problem of Unemployment and the lowest development scenario in the rural regions. The implication of this study would be a change in the outlook of people at the helm of affairs towards rural areas and realigning the much-needed (though delayed) focus, and simultaneously taking all available measures in the form of required policies – programs.

Keywords: Narrowed-Down, Conventional-Idea, Rural-Areas, Simpleton, Non-Diversification, Artisanal-Skills, Reverse-Migration.

Introduction

Modern-world and the classification in it of areas as the Urban-Area and Rural-Area, was an attempt to organize, as well as, to manage systematically, so that higher Ease of Life (i.e., better natural elements, surroundings, and behavioural aspect of life on Earth) and Higher ease of Living (i.e., better skills – capabilities and related (also humane! when its India) employment opportunities) could be achieved, by applying evaluated and refined Knowledge – Wisdom. But, due to refinement in, or overriding, the cultural – religious factors and level of advancement in society (in behavioural aspects especially), only few countries achieved this coveted Developed-ness (First-World Status) on account of (evolvment and)development in all sphere of Life (like refinement in Political-system, decline of Old-Customs – Traditions, Transparency– Accountability in Administration, Rule of Law, Humanistic-Values in Daily Dealings, Higher Standard of Education, R&D, etc.) to mention the few such countries / area, then it is, Northern Europe, Northern America, Japan, New Zealand, Australia, Russia, Similarly, on the other hand, most of the World failed to achieve Developed-ness, mainly on account of Old Backward Culture – Religious Traditions, Lack of Modern (the then, 17th, 18th and 19th century) Knowledge – Wisdom, Regressive Political-System, Lack of Refined Social – Economic Environment (it has been an open reality that in India these factors were very present (and things were evolving) during Independence-Movement, but vanished immediately after Independence like Horns from Donkey's Head).

However, broadly, Highly-Organized areas (i.e., Areas with Good Roads, Good Education Facilities, Good Health– Wellness – Sports Facilities, Good Housing and General Environment, Good Economic Activities Provider and More-Opportunities Potential bearing, Well-Managed Spaces – Places, Good Network of Transports and, Recreation – Entertainment Spots - Facilities, etc., (elements designated as 'Essentials for Life-Span' on Earth)) came to be known as Urban-Areas; the Areas where people have Ease-of-Life & Living (but in reality, these shall also be viewed as Essentials for masses in Rural-Areas. It never so happened, as has been evident from Daily-Life of masses in Rural-Areas / Villages in the region / India). It is also widely known that better governed countries strived to achieve this 'Way of Living' and achieved it, thereby becoming Developed-Nations. Due to limitations arisen from Self-sufficiency in Food grain Production and historically being established, developed world accepted - adopted Rural-Areas.

Though, there has been no (still) definition for ‘Ruralization’ (the main ‘Gap’ of which Rural Development Studies are oblivious to; never raised or discussed anywhere). In the first world countries, which is obvious (and can be verified on Internet) Rural-Areas are very different from Rural (Rustic & Pathetic) Areas of LDCs / UDCs.

Rural-Areas in Developed-World are Well-Managed and socially – Economically developed; having Refined-Ways of Life – Living (the Refined-Knowledge Based Life – Living for every Individual). This study remained an effort to get never-discussed gist of and insights into the Rural Areas of different countries, and juxtaposed and comparison of RD of different world, through grounded research having followed elements of empirical course.

Review of Literature

In the literature available, the ‘Villagers’ generally have been viewed as a somewhat sincere members of the society, who is considered as original source of Traditions & Culture, including continuously Robust Fighter of Natural Adversity and, a group of Human Beings deprived along with, having low expectations and aspirations but, provider to nation / region, therefore rural masses are unmatched Capital for any country, area, time and era.

On the other hand, Villages are considered as Basic Unit of Human Organization to National Development, Basic Unit of ‘Citizen’ and Sources of Manpower in the country / region and, Basic Unit of Production in the National Economy and provider to population of a country during war & peace. In the nutshell, thus villages mean survival-bases of existence and independence of a country.

Similarly, Rural-Development has been taken as Transition to the Creation and Establishment of Facilities so that these places become Well-Organized and thus become Smart-Regions, having relevant & proper amenities (the Essentials for the Ease of Life & Living on Earth as envisaged for Urban-Area population) in comparison to Urban-Areas, with sustainability and environmental-considerations.

As per Long Term Village Studies, it has been a fact that RAs have limited Capitalist Transformation and, evolution of changes should have to understand contextual processes involved during a time-span gone through by that particular rural region. It has also been mentioned that for analytical purpose, village-studies should have inductive and fact-value approach including longitudinal research element.

A Study on Required 'Ruralization' For Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) Of Villages in the Region (India)

As per many very well-known RUs' experts like Ramachandran, Nagraj, Srinivas, Jodhka, Sunder, Dasgupta, Harriss, Louis Dumont, Beteilli and others, the study of RUs also resort to inductive – inferential approach, value-accommodative approach, grounded – dialogic approach, instead of purely deductive – positivistic and fact-value neutral approach. Villages in India of 1950 and Villages in 2010 (2025) have been different due to (though with very limited) non-farm diversification and (unlimited) out-migration (as source of exploitatively cheapest-workers).

These experts have also pointed out that these basic-units / village has been considered as sovereign-whole irrespective of the transition and transfer of political – economic powers from kingdom to regime, at the national / regional levels. Furthermore, in the related literature, villages in India have also been described as 'Little Republics' that (were) are almost independent of foreign or external relations. Also, it has been a well-known fact that during 'British Raj' India was essentialized as a 'Land of Village Republics'.

It has also been a fact that generally, village as a unit of analysis is 'Untraceable', Indian Villages do not constitute a 'community' owing to deeply entrenched different level of distinctness / diversity (among population on the basis of colour, status, language, traditions, castes, region, clan, etc.).

Any type of development, and it is as the process, basically is bringing Easy of Life – Living in rural region, '...development is the process of improving (in the region India, it is firstly, at least providing, of any quality) the quality of life in cities and villages... especially, it is designed to improve the social and economic life in villages, and, bring modernization (the modernness of right way of doing all things personal, private and public, in one's life, which should be taught through proper-&-relevant (p & r) education-system and curriculum and, should be considered as vital for Human Beings in a society) in rural societies (world over)... It changes village from traditional isolation (and neglect) to society integrated with National-Development... Papeli Yazdi et al, 2002... expressed that Rural-Development includes fulfilling Human-Needs like Quality Food – Clothing – Housing – Education – Health as well as, Land, Employment, Accessories & Supplies, mobility and Comforts, including communication and transportation, along with keeping with clean environment (development should not damage environment (Ashrafi, et al, 2002.)) to survive dignifiedly, simultaneously RD should be inclusive of development and management of Agricultural – Allied Activities, diversifying and strengthening of Non-Farm Activities... RD also means

maturity of thoughts and hard-work and, determined – informed actions to improve community region through self-education, self-help and cooperation...’ (**Gilaninia, 2015.**)

Most of the common general studies take only conventional issues and factors to study villages, thereby neglecting the non-economic factors and behavioural aspect among general masses, which are very strong influencers in implementing – benefitting of policies, ‘...Social Science Research in India undertakes intensive primary-data based case-studies... ‘considered the village as its basic-unit of analysis..., but it is well known that socio-economic structure influences socio-economic relationships within the villages... therefore, also, socio-cultural environment and production conditions, living and working conditions of people in villages... along with interconnectedness of (in India) class, caste, gender, etc., at village level also determine and in turn being determined by diverse process of social-changes... Village-Studies must also focus on analysis of interrelation of different dimensions, like religion, ritual, traditions, politics, caste-class,... by integrating social realities with economic and political actions... and if possible village should be compared at 02 points in time... and also take up issues like non-farm diversification, caste-class-clan, migration, public-services, etc., as main changes have occurred (though veery slow) in these field... thereby making it clear that Behavioural-Aspect as non-economic factor required to be addressed, and this should be through p & r education...’ (**Kumar, 2017.**)

It has also been discussed and raised in one of the OECD studies that informed and required diversifications in farm and non-farm activities in the rural-areas has been the solution to overall development, though not without the prerequisite HRD & M, on account of refining and reforming the education-system, ‘... OECD study examined 12 cases from 04 countries and identified several common issues, like there should be initiative and programs to overcome the skills gap and shortages, by overhauling the educational and skills program, and upgrading the digital-skills in general, especially in rural-areas... study have also pointed out innovation in primary and tertiary sector in rural-areas should have been via linking research and departments with the participation of established small – medium firms / entities and start-ups.... Also. Increasing capacity of masses through regular education-cum-skills introduction programs for graduate students to harness the advantages of risen opportunities form green and digital transition in primary – tertiary sector... skills development programs should aim at disseminating skills - capabilities in areas of local – regional competitive-advantage and product-differentiation (like place – space based, policies-programs) ... Similarly, ‘commoditized’ (homogeneous mass production) especially, rural micro-

A Study on Required 'Ruralization' For Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) Of Villages in the Region (India)

enterprises medium-sized family business, ranging from 1st and 2nd stage processing firms (including Agriculture – Food products) require scaling-up and after-production hand-holding, as they have the tendency to employ more of educated / graduated youth than non-scaler firms... This therefore requires investment in rural areas, especially in infrastructure, along with extreme efforts to improve skills in local workforce, and Artisanal Skill-Upgradation and in the remote rural-areas and near big-cities... (OECD, 2023.)

Modernisation of RUs in the LDCs / UDCs has been seen as a solution by an study by Chinese Researchers, in 2025, because Highly traditional and backward daily-milieu of villages / rural region have been considered as obstacle in the path of SRD, '... SRD is basically related to modernisation of Population, Education and Land Use... Barriers are needed to be broken... with informed migration / depopulation of rural-region, adoption of non-farm activities, new techniques and need to change crop preferences, absence of social – religious rituals, demand for rural space – place relevant high quality education curriculum and skills – capabilities development... 03 main factors that has hampered the SRD and viewed as main obstacle I RD are, Non-diversification of Agriculture, Quality of Education in rural areas and ambiguous – inadequate govt programs – policies...It has been observed by this study that, as education levels improves, rural-talent, technology and proper organization – orderliness – management of daily village-life, overall improvement in rural area gets promoted...The wellbeing of villages / farmers by enhancing agriculture productivity and improving the living-conditions in RUs, are part of Agriculture Development and RD... RD in China stands at moderate levels but it is still trailing behind developed nations / First-World...from spatial perspective, RUs in Northern Hemisphere exhibit relatively higher development levels... like Northern America, Canada, Austria, Norway, Europe...However, urbanization and RD are two different things... which can be supported by the fact that, despite being high income countries and high levels of urbanization there is Low to Moderate level of RD; whereas countries, still at initial stages of urbanization, exhibit moderate to high levels of RD... it depends on the level of agriculture water consumption, mechanization, agricultural knowledge – skills and govt policies – support... It has also come to the fore that, neglecting rural areas while prioritising urbanization / urban areas, can result in urban – rural imbalance and decline in rural areas during urbanization at the accelerated stage of urbanization... whereas, out migration have little impact when there is mechanization, which gives way to higher education-levels among working rural population and increase in no-farm activities... other non-economic factors, especially related to general behavioural aspects also

substantially enhance the pace of SRD...’ (Chen, et al. 2025.) On the other hand, agriculture, the main vocation-occupation of rural gentry remained neglected since independence, on account of importance to industries solely. When we compare China since 1949 and India since 1947, one comes across today the higher development of primary sector in China when compared to dismal performance of Agriculture and Allied sector in the region.

Objective of the Study

As the Focus and Research on Villages (Rural Areas) has been a priority in both Developing Countries as well as of Development Economics, and most of the suggestions inclined to, and earmark it as an area which should remain Apolitical / free form immature – transitional Political System of developing countries (as being based on Adversarial Political System); it has deteriorated to being *Tamaashaa*/ The Great Indian Circus. As knowledge – Awareness including skills – capabilities creation through Education, along with, refinement – reforming Village Life – Living, as well as do away with ancient – old – rustic - regressive Traditions – Rituals have been seen as obstacle-removers in the path of RD / SRD, this research effort has following

Objectives

1. To get insight related to level of awareness and knowledge of rural youth, the future responsible villagers / citizens.
2. To observe – assess the daily-life in rural areas of the region and aspirations of the masses.
3. To find the possible solution for RD / SRD in the region (India/; The Land of Villages)

Methodology

This research effort has been an empirical move to get the insights, aspiration and solutions for the RD in the region, by interacting with the educated rural youth (ERY) in the vicinity / adjoining rural areas, as Himachal is more than 95% Rural. This study therefore has been Descriptive and Exploratory in nature having Deductive and Fact-Value approach based Dialogic and Grounded, keeping in mind the resources in the form of time – money at disposal. It has used statistical-tool available to present the collected Primary-Data and finding graphically. Also, inferential-statistics in the form of correlation-regression and ANOVA has been resorted to, to make empirical. Researcher has contacted 35 ERY, and

gathered information – insights through structured instrument having open and close ended questions, especially designed for the purpose at hand.

Stratified simple random sampling has been adopted to collect primary data, by direct-approach based intensive-interactions based from ERYs, the respondents, of Dehra and Jawalaji sub-divisions, during May to July 2025

Data Presentation

It has come to fore where 81% of the respondents, strongly emphasized that Indian Villages are highly disorganized and, 91% pointed out that village-life is based on highly ancient and old traditions based. On the other hand, 87% of the respondents, in the age of Internet of Things, emphasized that villages in rural areas of developed world are highly-organized and 90% pointed-out that village-life in developed-world is less-traditional, refined and modern.

Also, it has been put-forth by 65% of the respondents that skills-capabilities of farmers in the region / India have been (very) low and 90% pointed-out that income of farmers in the region is (very) low, and, whereas 87% emphasized, skills-capabilities of farmers in rural-areas of developed-world have been (very) high and, 90% stressed that production – productivity – income of farmers in rural-areas of developed-world have been high. An interesting point has been pointed-out by 81% of the respondents that skills-capabilities among Farmers in Rural-Areas of Developed-World has been achieved through General Education System prevalent in these countries (i.e., they have got Quality-Education System which takes care of basic skills and capabilities – capacities Development, whereas, our region / country lacks such system).

When asked about, the ways to develop Rural-Areas in the region, 90% emphasized that skills and capabilities development based general education system should be immediately implemented, as region is already lagging behind due to vested political - administrative interest. It has also been suggested by the 87% respondents that govt should make all-out efforts on priority, simultaneously to provide schemes and programs for Agriculture-Water / irrigation and the 81% thereupon pointed that Diversification of Agriculture –Allied-Activities should be undertaken for the development as well. Also, 84% of the respondents have opined that there should be introduction of non-farm activities and related skills in the area for complete development of the region.

Few other interesting points has come to the fore that, 81% of the respondents suggested that rural-development should be kept free and out of the reach of India's Adversarial Political-System, as it hampers and exploits the concept and policies of (Sustainable) Rural-Development. Similarly, 61% of the respondents agreed that rural region should do away with old – ancient traditions and make village-life reformed – refined collectively through intensive information – awareness programs and self-education.

Table 1.1: Researched and Informed-Considerations of the Respondents

Sr.No.	Issue	Percentage
1.	Villages / Rural-Areas are Disorganized in the region / India	81%
2.	Village Life-Living is Old Traditions – Rituals – Knowledge based in the region / India	91%
3.	Villages / Rural-Areas in Developed-World are Organized	87%
4.	Village Life-Living is Refined – Modern – Less-Traditional in the Developed-World	90%
5.	Farmers in Developed-World are having Skills-Capabilities	87%
6.	Productivity - Production – Income of Farmers in Developed-World has been High	90%
7.	Skills – Capabilities among Farmers in Developed has been achieved through High-Quality General Education System	81%
8.	Skills – Capabilities of Farmers in India is Very-Low	65%
9.	Income of Farmers in India is Very-Low	90%
10.	Rural-Areas / Villages in India shall Develop when a: It do-away with old traditions – rituals – knowledge b: It does away with Adversarial Political-System Based Interference c: Get support – program from Govt Dept; firstly, for Agri-Water and Agriculture d: Through Diversification of Agriculture and Allied-Activities e: Introduction of Non-Farm Skills and Activities f: High-Quality General Education-System for Skills – Capabilities Development Source: Primary-Data by Author, May-July 2025.	61% 81% 87% 81% 84% 90%

Fig 1.1: Informed-Consideration and Issues

A Study on Required 'Ruralization' For Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) Of Villages in the Region (India)



Source: Primary-Data by Author, May-July 2025.

However, Inferential statistics has also been obtained in the form of Correlation, Regression and ANOVA to find out the relationship and strength of different categorical and other variables, and has been presented here below in simple terms; where the correlation value of .41 has been found for Rural-Areas being disorganized and the issue of Life – Living in the region being Old – tradition – knowledge based. Further, the strength of the relationship has been found-out through regression analysis statistics results, at significance value of .05 and p-value being less at .01, which is statistically-significant, thus giving not ample evidence to accept the null-hypothesis thereby asserting that there exists a strong-strength based relationship between these 02 variables.

Similarly, it has come to the fore that there exist a positive relation between organized-ness of Rural-Areas in he Developed-World and Village / Rural Life – Living being Refined – Modern – Less-Traditional, where, the correlation-value obtained has been .09 and, the strength, through regression statistics, comes-out to be at significance level of .05, to 0.05 thereby (under the condition $p \leq .05$, shall be considered as substantially-significant) rejecting the null-hypothesis that the required relational-strength does not exist between the variables, and, accepting that there is a positive relationship between organized-ness and being refined – modern – less-traditional, issue.

Furthermore, through informed-consideration of accepting that farmers in developed-countries have relevant skills and capacities, and have high productivity – production – income; the positive correlation-value obtained has been .87 and inferential-statistics through regression analysis, where at significance level of .05 the p-value obtained has been .01, thereby rejecting the hypothesis that no-relationship exist between these 02 variables.

Further single factor ANOVA has been also undertaken to find the general influence of categorical-variables (factors which shall be adopted to get desired result of Development of village / region) on the independent variable of Development of Village / Rural-Areas; this exercise basically substantiates the informed-consideration of the respondents. It has been found out based on ANOVA-statistic, single-factor analysis, that at significance level of .05, the p-values of 1st, 2nd, 4th and 5th factors are less than .05 (at .03, .000, .000131 and .000152 respectively), thus suggesting they have influence on dependent variable whereas, point 4ht and 6th after single factor and two-factor ANOVA analysis, that at .05 the p-value of .13 is higher, thereby accepting the null-hypothesis that means are equal, thereby here considered as being of less influence on dependent variable, though there high-significance in real-world / on the ground cannot be over-looked.

Findings

In the times of IoT, the insights of the ERYs in rural areas of the region have been found to be well-informed and aspirational, they are aware that rural-areas and farmers in the developed world are highly-organized and bear higher skill-capabilities, higher productivity-production and knowledge – income, also the village-life in these regions are refined and less old-traditions based.

Regarding second objective, it can be stated that people are aware of backward village-life and causes (mainly lack of proper and relevant skills – capabilities development general education system and Indian political-*tamaashaa*) of it.

Whereas, findings about third objective, it can be stated that people definitely want govt programs & schemes related to providing water for agriculture, diversification of agriculture and allied activities as well as, establishing non-farm activities simultaneously with diversification and introduction of skills – capabilities based general education system, so that rural areas could develop and have refined – dignified ways of life – living.

Conclusion

A Study on Required 'Ruralization' For Sustainable Rural Development (SRD) Of Villages in the Region (India)

It can be reiterated for policy-implication part that, skills – capabilities development based general education-curriculum and education-system, as well as, diversification of agriculture – allied activities and introduction of non-farm activities, along with water for agriculture and govt support and ecosystem are the need of the hour (because areas are suffering due to intentional extreme delay (though, since independence) in policy making and implementation in the given socio - religious – political - administrative scenario) for sustainable RD.

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