

Identificaton Of Existing And Potential Rural Service Centres Of A Region

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India is a country of villages. More than 2/3 of its total population dwells in rural areas with agriculture as their main occupation. Rural development has formed one of the chief planks for economic and political activities in India. In the pre-independence era rural development programme formed that chief weapon through which independence was sought to be achieved. Almost half of the rural population lives below the poverty line. This calls for immediate and radical measures to improve the lot of the rural masses, if we wish to be recognised as a civilized nation. The progress achieved during the last sixty years or so, in the rural development programme, has however, not been very encouraging.



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Rural areas were utterly neglected on account of ill-conceived five year plans. Instead of narrowing the gap between rural and urban settlements, these plans further widened the chasm between them. The continued persistence of regional imbalances (inter-state and intra-state) throughout Indian planning history has been one of the intriguing problems to planners and administrators.

The purpose of the present study is to analyse and classify the micro-units (villages & settlements), for micro level development of India's rural areas. The concept of Integrated area development in its true scientific meaning has gained only during the last few years. Very briefly it refers to two types of integration, functional and spatial, which are themselves inter-related.

The inter-relationship among various socio-economic activities depends a great deal on where they are located. An understanding of functional inter-relationship in space, therefore, goes a long way towards the development of an area. This is the idea behind the concept of integrated area development.

Integrated area development, thus refers to appropriate location of social and economic activities over physical space for the balanced development of a region. It has been observed by location theorists that there is a hierarchy of settlements determined as per the functions of different order, and specialization and also on the basis of area served by a settlement. Higher order settlements have their own hinterlands, which include those of the lower order settlements. Such a centre which provides function and services to its dependent territory is known as 'Central Place' or 'Service Centre' or 'Growth Centre'.

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