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STUDY ON HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT UNDER THE VIEW OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Human Resource Management is an integral part of rural development, focusing on improving the skills, education, and empowerment of rural populations. This paper examines the significance of Human Resources in the context of rural development, its objectives, and the current state of human resources in rural India. It emphasises that a well-trained rural workforce is essential for the success of rural development initiatives. The need for human resource management in rural India is critical to address challenges such as unemployment, skill gaps, and social inequality. The paper concludes that investing in human resources is crucial for achieving sustainable and inclusive growth in rural areas, thereby contributing to national development.

KEY WORDS: *Human Resource Management, Rural Communities, Social Inequality, Workforce*

INTRODUCTION

India is a vast country with rich natural resources but poor human Resources. The total population of the country is approximately 130 crores, of which men and women constitute 51.54% and 48.46%, respectively. India has a large youth population, with more than 65% of its population under the age of 35.

Human Resources refers to the available means offered by an individual's mind and personal capabilities for the socio-economic well-being of the nation in general and the individual in particular. Definitions of HRD (Human Resource Development) in terms of its components have ranged from the most comprehensive to the narrowest.

HRD Management has been a crucial component of rural development, focusing on empowering rural populations by enhancing their skills, education, and overall human capabilities. Within the rural development framework, it emphasises improving the socio-economic conditions of rural communities through various skill-building, vocational training, and educational programs. It aims to develop a rural workforce that is equipped to contribute to both agricultural and non-agricultural sectors, thereby promoting economic expansion alongside poverty alleviation. They also help decrease migration to urban areas by rural individuals, creating more local employment opportunities and enhancing their quality of life (QoL).

Rural development, in general, addresses the economic, infrastructural, and societal aspects of rural life, while focusing specifically on improving human capital in these areas.

They will provide rural development benefits to all sections of society by empowering individuals with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead a sustainable lifestyle. Since rural areas have historically been characterised by limited resources, inadequate education, and limited access to healthcare, addressing these disparities plays a crucial role in ensuring that rural development projects are not only effective but also sustainable in the long term.

OBJECTIVES

1. **Skill Enhancement**
   To provide rural populations with technical and vocational skills that increase their employability, productivity, and ability to engage in diversified economic activities.
2. **Economic Empowerment**
   To create opportunities for entrepreneurship and self-employment in rural areas, thus improving income levels and reducing dependence on external aid.
3. **Improving Literacy and Education**
   To ensure access to quality education and training for rural populations, which contributes to overall socio-economic development and social mobility.
4. **Social Inclusion and Equity**
   To ensure marginalised groups, including women and youth, have equal access to development opportunities, thereby reducing socio-economic inequalities in rural communities.
5. **Community Empowerment**
   To strengthen local leadership and decision-making capacities, promote participation in local governance and development processes.

Significance of Rural Development

National growth and progress have been integral to rural development. It aims at the General upgrading of rural regions, including aspects such as infrastructure, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. Through improving the economies in rural communities, rural development plays a vital role in combating inequality and poverty, as most disadvantaged people reside in these areas. Rural development achieves this by providing infrastructure, introducing new farming practices, and facilitating skills development, ensuring

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that rural communities have the means to thrive and prosper. This helps reduce rural-urban inequalities and promotes balanced, inclusive regional development.

Social cohesion and sustainability are also enhanced through rural development. Through sustainable farming practices, rural development enables the optimal utilisation of natural resources, resulting in reduced environmental degradation and improved long-term farm productivity. Enhancing the rural sector in the national economy would mean increasing the capacity of the rural workforce to make contributions to both local and national markets. Moreover, the inclusion of aspects such as education, healthcare, and social welfare in rural development leads to more equitable growth, alongside improvements in the living conditions of rural citizens.

Current Situation of Human Resources in Rural India

The current human resource situation in rural India presents both challenges and opportunities. A large part of the rural labour force continues to be predominantly involved in agriculture, with limited skills, outdated methods, and low productivity. A majority of the rural workforce lacks access to quality education and vocational training, hindering their ability to transition into well-paying sectors. Besides, the problem of gender inequity and societal inequalities is still not solved, and females, along with marginalised groups, have even fewer opportunities to obtain access to skills training and jobs.

It has been experiencing this hindrance, but there has been an increasing awareness of the necessity of investment in human resources in rural India. These programs include the Skill India Mission, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGA), the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY), and the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). At the state level, these programs aim to enhance the employability of rural youth. However, a lot remains to be achieved in developing a robust rural skill training, education, and healthcare infrastructure. Filling this gap would enable rural populations to make a more significant contribution to the economy, reduce unemployment and underemployment, and, in general, promote rural prosperity.

Gunnar Myrdal asserts that HRD is a complex process involving various interrelated factors. He identified eight key components that comprise HRD, particularly in underdeveloped or developing nations. The components are fundamental to the enhancement of general QoL and the empowerment of people to contribute positively to the socio-economic progress. Each component is described below in more detail:

1. **Food and Nutrition**
   Healthy human development is based on adequate food and proper nutrition. The availability of healthy food is essential to the physical and mental development of the population. Cognitive development in children is hindered by malnutrition, leading to a decline in workforce productivity. Achieving food security and improved nutrition leads to a healthier population that can contribute a greater share to the economy. This addresses the issues of hunger, food insecurity, and promoting balanced diets to maintain healthy lives.
2. **Clothing**
   Although it is a basic need, clothing also makes a significant contribution to HRD. Proper clothing is a necessity for personal dignity, social acceptance and protection against the environment. This is not only a comfort factor but also a social variable that may impact productivity. For example, a person who cannot afford decent clothes may face discrimination, which also has implications for their involvement in the labour market and the community. Correct dressing guarantees some form of comfort and confidence, which is essential for effective participation in daily activities and economic endeavours.
3. **Housing and Sanitation**
   Housing and sanitation play a vital role in the development of human resources, as they significantly influence the health and living conditions of individuals. He stated that safe and clean housing is one of the fundamental needs that enhance stability and well-being. Good housing prevents diseases, improves mental health, and gives people space to work and rest. Sanitation that encompasses access to clean drinking water, clean wastewater management and the provision of hygienic facilities is also essential. The inability to live in a healthy environment and the increased population density in a small living area may lead to unhealthiness, impaired productivity, and an increase in the transmission of illnesses in a country, ultimately affecting the country's workforce.
4. **Health Facilities**
   Myrdal emphasised the importance of access to and quality of healthcare in developing human resources. Basic health facilities that provide essential medical services, immunisation, maternal and child health care, and emergency services are vital in ensuring a healthy workforce. Unhealthiness may decrease an individual's productivity, increase absenteeism, and impoverish nations by diverting resources to healthcare. Making healthcare affordable to all not only benefits individuals but also boosts the country's economic production by ensuring a healthier and more productive population.
5. **Education**
   One of the most important elements of HRD is education. He believed that by increasing literacy levels and offering a good education, people would become an educated and skilled labour force that could spearhead economic development. Education provides the knowledge, skills, and abilities necessary to participate in various sectors of the economy, including agriculture, industry, and the service sector. Moreover, education is a tool for social mobility and empowerment, especially for marginalised groups such as women and rural populations, as it helps break the poverty cycle and contributes to national development.
6. **Media**
   Myrdal defines the role of media in HRD as informing people and spreading awareness of significant realms such as health, education, social rights and economic opportunities. Media serves as a change agent by enlightening people, sensitising them to societal problems, and encouraging the sharing of ideas. The availability of information through various media, including television, radio, newspapers, and digital media, helps individuals

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make informed decisions about their lives, thereby enhancing their social and economic growth. Additionally, the media can influence cultural and social norms, leading to greater inclusion in society.

7. **Energy Consumption**
Another crucial element which influences HRD is energy consumption. Myrdal suggested that access to stable and affordable energy is crucial for personal well-being and economic productivity. Energy is required for cooking, heating, transportation, education (e.g., lighting for studying), healthcare (e.g., medical tools), and supporting industrial activity. Economic activities in rural areas are usually constrained by theUnavailability of electricity or other viable sources of energy, and thus, the development of human resources is also restricted. The efficient use and availability of energy to all populations are key to improving living standards and development.

8. **Transport**
Transportation is also important in the integration of rural and urban areas and in the effective utilisation of human resources. Myrdal emphasises the importance of having transportation infrastructure, including roads, railways, and a system of public transportation, which is necessary for transporting people, goods, and services. Quality and cheap movement enables people to have easier access to markets, schools, health and jobs. Additionally, well-developed transport networks facilitate trade, enhance economic integration, and benefit regional economies. On the other hand, inadequate transportation infrastructure has the potential to isolate rural settings and restrict access to essential resources, which further hinders HRD.

Significant challenges in rural areas

Although the country has been independent for 78 years, rural areas continue to face numerous challenges that hinder their development. These complexities intersect, and although some of these fronts have been addressed, there is a tendency for rural areas to lag behind urban areas. These are some of the significant challenges:

1. **Lack of Proper Infrastructure**
Rural settings continue to experience poor infrastructure, characterised by inadequate road systems, inefficient electricity, and a lack of access to clean water. The roads in most rural areas are not well-developed, making it difficult to ship goods or access necessities, such as healthcare and education. Electricity is unreliable, and power cuts are regular. Most of the villages depend on non-potable sources of water, which are traditional, leading to health hazards. Rural populations are hindered in economic growth and QoL by the lack of reliable infrastructure.

2. **Limited Access to Quality Education**
The problem of access to quality education in rural areas is high. There are inadequate teachers in schools, and few are qualified; thus, there are poor academic achievements. The distance to schools is too far, many children are compelled to walk long distances, and the mode of transport is limited. Moreover, rural schools often lack modern facilities, such as computers, libraries, and science laboratories. The dropout rates are high due to socio-economic factors, and there is no vocational training centre to provide youth with practical skills. This restricts job prospects and future advancement opportunities.

3. **Healthcare Inaccessibility**
Healthcare systems in rural areas are often underdeveloped, lacking adequate medical facilities, skilled human resources, and essential equipment. Hospitals and clinics are often located far from rural communities and are frequently inaccessible due to poor road conditions and limited transportation. In rural areas, the shortage of doctors, nurses, and specialists leads to delays in treatment, exacerbating the heavy reliance on traditional medicine. Numerous rural communities are deprived of basic healthcare services, including maternal care or vaccinations, which affects the general state of health. Such obstacles translate to unnecessary deaths and poorer living standards in rural communities.

4. **Economic Challenges**
Most rural families rely mainly on agriculture as their primary source of livelihood; however, outmoded farming practices, unreliable weather patterns, and ineffective irrigation systems combine to make agriculture unproductive. Small-scale farmers face challenges including low yields, rising input costs, and limited market access. The rural economy lacks diversification, and few industries or businesses offer alternative employment opportunities. The rates of unemployment are very high, and those who work in the agricultural sector are paid low wages and have an unstable income, particularly among the youth. This economic stagnation leaves many rural communities in poverty.

5. **Poverty and Social Inequality**
In rural settings, poverty is rampant as most families exist below the poverty line as a result of a lack of economic activities and development. This is worsened by the lack of industries, low agricultural wages and access to financial services. The existence of societal inequalities such as caste-based discrimination or gender bias further contributes to economic immobility, which deprives marginalised communities of even more chances of social improvement. Women in rural areas face even greater challenges, including limited access to education and healthcare, as well as property rights, which restrict their ability to improve their financial situation. Such social inequalities constitute poverty cycles.

6. **Limited Access to Technology**
The digital gap between rural and urban areas remains a significant setback to rural development. Rural areas are often characterised by limited access to high-speed internet connections and modern technology, which limits the population's participation in the digital economy. A large number of individuals in the countryside cannot access online learning, e-business, or government services, which are becoming increasingly available over the Internet. Such inadequate technological infrastructure also denies farmers access to important agricultural information, market prices, and up-to-date farming skills. Additionally, rural communities are struggling to adopt digital literacy, which further disconnects them from the benefits of the digital era.

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7. **Environmental Issues**
   The rural regions are especially prone to environmental deterioration that jeopardises the livelihoods and farming activities. The effects of climate change, including the unpredictability of rainfall patterns and the occurrence of floods and droughts, directly impact crop yields and access to water. Rain-fed agriculture is not uncommon in many rural areas, and due to shifting weather patterns, farming is becoming increasingly uncertain. Other environmental challenges that curtail agricultural productivity include deforestation, overgrazing and soil erosion. The environment is also damaged through unsustainable farming practices, which lead to the loss of biodiversity and the depletion of natural resources. These environmental issues exacerbate poverty and food insecurity in rural areas.
8. **Migration to Urban Areas**
   Rural-to-urban migration of young people in search of better opportunities is a growing trend. Young people abandon their villages to go to cities in search of education, employment opportunities and better QoL, and the rural population will be reduced. Such migration results in an ageing population that is unable to cope with farming as well as other activities in the region. The migration causes strain on urban infrastructure and services, leading to overcrowding and unemployment in cities. In the meantime, there is a shortage of skilled workforce in the rural areas, which complicates the situation in these areas in terms of development.
9. **Political and Governance Issues**
   Political marginalisation and poor governance are common in rural areas, and this is one of the factors that slows down development. The incompetence of local administration and misuse of funds allocated to rural development lead to inefficiency and a lack of accountability in organising government schemes. Politicians can focus more on urban areas since they have a larger population and greater voting strength, while rural problems are often neglected or underfunded. Additionally, rural people are sometimes underrepresented in the political arena, and as a result, their needs and issues are not effectively presented to policymakers. Such a poor system of governance contributes to the underdevelopment of the rural regions.

Human Resource Management in Rural India: The Need of the Hour:

The role of human resource management in rural India is pivotal in realising the potential of rural communities. Effective strategies should be developed to establish a more skilled, efficient, and innovative workforce in rural areas, as the economy is mainly agrarian, and access to modern skills is limited. This is to be done through the undertaking of organised training programs, learning initiatives and capacity-building initiatives that are coherent with the requirements of the rural regions. With an emphasis on rural India, the government and other stakeholders will be able to tackle issues of unemployment, underemployment, and a lack of skill match, and eventually achieve self-sustained growth and minimise migration to urban centres. There would also be a better use of it in rural areas of India, and this would help integrate technology and modern methods into traditional industries such as agriculture, thereby enhancing productivity and minimising manual labour. It would result in improved labour control and a better working culture, empowering local entrepreneurs to ensure that rural people are strong and competitive in the emerging economic climate.

CONCLUSION

Human resource management is crucial in rural development, as it focuses on developing local skills, education, and capacity-building programs that have the potential to enhance the lives of rural communities. Increasing vocational training helps equip the rural labour force with the skills necessary to work in agriculture, construction, small-scale industries, and other sectors. It results in high productivity, improved employment and sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, these strategies can meet the specific demands of rural populations, enabling them to adapt to changing technologies and global economic trends, which in turn contribute to the long-term development of such regions.

Moreover, human resource management also leads to rural development through local leadership and community participation. Through the training of local leaders, they can enhance grassroots governance, enabling the rural population to participate in decisions that affect them. Community participation and effective leadership are crucial in mobilising resources to develop infrastructure projects, social welfare schemes, and community development initiatives. The increase of leadership development practices in Human Resource Management also facilitates social cohesion, resilience and a sense of ownership in rural communities, which plays a critical role in promoting the continuation of development activities.

This is also a crucial element in enhancing the health and well-being of rural populations, which in turn directly affects productivity and economic growth. Funding for health workforce management will help ensure that trained staff, including doctors, nurses, and community health workers, are available in rural areas. Healthier populations tend to be more engaged in the workforce, improve their educational performance, and earn higher incomes. They may also be invested in social initiatives that can help women, the youth, and disadvantaged groups, practising inclusivity and equality in rural development. Human Resource Management may enhance the QoL in the rural areas in general and make them more independent and prosperous.

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