

# **Integrating Human Rights Into Developmental Programs: An Empirical Evaluation Of Rural Developmental Programs Of The Government Of India**

**Dr Jaimol James<sup>1\*</sup>**

**Abstract :** The integration of human rights into developmental programs is essential for promoting inclusive growth and sustainable development. This research paper evaluates the impact of various rural developmental programs implemented by the Government of India on the marginalized sections of society, using Amartya Sen's concept of "Development as Freedom" as a theoretical framework. The study focuses on the effectiveness of these programs in enhancing economic and political freedom and examines their role in ensuring human rights for vulnerable groups. Data from 2016-2019 is analyzed to assess the progress and challenges of these initiatives, with a particular focus on the state of Kerala. Findings indicate that while significant strides have been made, further efforts are needed to optimize resource utilization and enhance program effectiveness.

**Keywords:** Human Rights, Development, Entitlement, Rural Development, Government of India, Marginalized Communities

## **1. Introduction**

The concept of "human rights" is pivotal in shaping development policies and programs worldwide. According to Donnelly, "human rights are the rights one has simply because one is a human being" (Donnelly, 2008). The Universal Declaration of Human Rights emphasizes inherent dignity, equality, and inalienable rights for all members of society. Development and human rights are interdependent and mutually reinforcing pillars, as recognized by major international summits and documents, including the Vienna World Conference on Human Rights (1993) and the Millennium Summit (2000).

Amartya Sen, in his seminal work *\*Development as Freedom\**, argues that development involves expanding human freedom by removing unfreedoms such as poverty and social deprivation (Sen, 1999). This study examines the effectiveness of India's rural development programs in advancing human rights, focusing on marginalized communities. The research investigates whether these programs align with Sen's concept of development and their impact on economic and political freedom.

### **1.1. Importance of Human Rights in Development**

Human rights play a crucial role in shaping development agendas by ensuring that economic growth translates into improved living standards for all. The integration of human rights into developmental programs can lead to more equitable and sustainable outcomes. By emphasizing the rights of marginalized and vulnerable groups, development policies can address structural inequalities and promote social justice.

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<sup>1</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, St Dominic's College, Kanjirappally

## 1.2. Objectives of the Study

- To examine Sen's concept of "Development as Freedom."
- To integrate the concept of human rights into the developmental programs of the Government.
- To assess the impact of rural developmental programs on marginalized sections of society.
- To suggest measures for improving the effectiveness of government developmental programs.

## 2. Literature Review:

The literature review examines the relationship between human rights and development, focusing on key theoretical perspectives and empirical studies.

2.1. Theoretical Framework :Amartya Sen's \*Development as Freedom\* provides the theoretical foundation for this study. Sen argues that development should be viewed as a process of expanding substantive freedoms rather than merely increasing income (Sen, 1999). He identifies five instrumental freedoms essential for development: political freedoms, economic facilities, social opportunities, transparency guarantees, and protective security. These freedoms are interconnected and contribute to human well-being.

### 2.2. Empirical Studies on Human Rights and Development :-

Sano and Marslev (2016) highlight the importance of economic rights in realizing human rights. They argue that improving living conditions, such as health, employment, and education, can ensure economic freedom and enhance human rights. Koob et al. (2017) use econometric analysis to demonstrate that freedom and participation rights positively impact economic growth and government effectiveness.

Davenport (2004) emphasizes the role of democracy in ensuring political and civil rights, arguing that democratic processes can reduce inequality and enhance human rights. The Copenhagen Declaration on Social Development (1994) and the Paris Principles (1991) underscore the importance of social development and human rights as central to achieving global peace and prosperity.

### 2.3. Research Gap

While numerous studies have explored the relationship between human rights and development, there is a lack of research on the specific impact of India's rural developmental programs on human rights. This study aims to fill this gap by evaluating the effectiveness of these programs in promoting human rights for marginalized communities.

## 3. Methodology

**3.1. Research Design :** The study adopts an exploratory research design to investigate the integration of human rights into India's rural developmental programs. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of the programs' impact on marginalized sections of society.

**3.2. Data Collection :** Secondary data is used for analysis, sourced from government reports, research publications, books, journals, and project works. The study focuses on data from 2016-2019 to assess the effectiveness of various programs.

**3.3. Data Analysis :** The analysis involves a qualitative assessment of program outcomes, focusing on their impact on economic and political freedoms. The study also employs descriptive statistics to highlight key trends and patterns in program implementation and outcomes.

**3.4. Limitations:** The study is limited by the availability of secondary data and the time constraints for collecting comprehensive data on all rural development programs. Future research could benefit from primary data collection and a broader scope of analysis.

#### 4. Analysis: Impact of Rural Developmental Programs

This section reviews the impact of nine key rural development programs implemented by the Government of India. Each program is evaluated based on its objectives, implementation, and impact on human rights and marginalized communities.

##### 4.1. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA)

**Objectives:** MGNREGA aims to enhance livelihood security in rural areas by providing at least 100 days of wage employment to rural households, with a focus on women and SC/ST populations.

**Implementation:** The program operates through a demand-driven approach, allowing rural households to access employment opportunities based on their needs.

**Impact:** In 2018-19, there were 114,161,000 active workers, with women constituting 53.53%. The national average wage was Rs. 177.58, while in Kerala, it was Rs. 260.91, with 90.76% of workers being women. MGNREGA has contributed to empowering women and marginalized communities by providing economic opportunities and improving living standards.

##### 4.2. Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAYG)

**Objectives:** PMAYG aims to provide housing for the rural poor, ensuring access to basic amenities and improving living conditions.

**Implementation:** The program focuses on constructing durable houses with essential facilities, prioritizing marginalized groups.

**Impact:** During 2018-19, 2,330,044 houses were sanctioned, with 448,135 completed by October 2018. In Kerala, 31,300 beneficiaries were registered, with 12,531 houses completed. PMAYG has contributed to enhancing the quality of life for the rural poor by providing secure and stable housing.

##### 4.3. National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM)

**Objectives:** NRLM aims to increase household income through sustainable livelihoods and improved access to financial services.

**Implementation:** The program operates through self-managed Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and federated institutions, empowering the rural poor to participate in economic activities.

**Impact:** In 2018-19, 269,850 SHGs were promoted, and 125,277 SHGs received revolving funds. NRLM has contributed to economic empowerment by enhancing access to financial services and supporting livelihood initiatives.

##### 4.4. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

**Objectives:** PMGSY aims to provide rural connectivity through road infrastructure, enhancing access to markets, education, and healthcare.

**Implementation:** The program focuses on constructing all-weather roads to connect unconnected habitations.

**Impact:** 83.39% of sanctioned works were completed, with Kerala achieving over 93% completion in all categories. PMGSY has improved connectivity and access to essential services, contributing to rural development and human rights.

##### 4.5. National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP)

**Objectives:** NSAP provides financial assistance to the elderly, widows, and disabled persons, ensuring social security and dignity.

**Implementation:** The program includes schemes such as the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme and the Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme.

**Impact:** In Kerala, 50.6% of beneficiaries were widow pensioners, and 35.6% were old age pensioners, highlighting higher participation compared to national averages. NSAP has contributed to improving the quality of life for vulnerable groups by providing financial support and security.

#### **4.6. Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY)**

**Objectives:** SAGY aims to develop model villages through comprehensive development plans, focusing on social and economic empowerment.

**Implementation:** The program encourages Members of Parliament to adopt villages and implement development initiatives.

**Impact:** A total of 1,446 Gram Panchayats were identified for development by October 2018. SAGY has contributed to holistic rural development by promoting participatory planning and community engagement.

#### **4.7. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY)**

**Objectives:** DDU-GKY focuses on youth employment and skill development, addressing rural unemployment and enhancing employability.

**Implementation:** The program provides skill training and placement support to rural youth from poor families.

**Impact:** By October 2018, 554,581 individuals were trained, with 348,161 placed under this scheme. DDU-GKY has contributed to workforce development by enhancing skills and employment opportunities for rural youth.

#### **4.8. Mission Antyodaya**

**Objectives:** Mission Antyodaya seeks rural transformation by targeting 10 million households in 50,000 Gram Panchayats, promoting sustainable livelihoods.

**Implementation:** The program focuses on the convergence of government schemes and community participation for comprehensive development.

**Impact:** Mission Antyodaya has contributed to rural empowerment by enhancing access to services and improving living conditions for marginalized communities.

#### **4.9. National Rurban Mission (NRuM)**

**Objectives:** NRuM aims to develop rural areas with urban amenities, fostering balanced regional development.

**Implementation:** The program focuses on developing Rurban clusters with economic, social, and physical infrastructure.

**Impact:** By 2018-19, 300 clusters were allocated, with 295 approved. NRuM has contributed to rural transformation by promoting integrated development and improving quality of life.

### **5. Discussion**

The findings indicate that India's rural development programs have made significant progress in enhancing human rights and economic opportunities for marginalized communities. However, challenges remain in implementation and resource allocation. The focus on marginalized communities aligns with Sen's concept of development, yet further efforts are needed to address systemic issues and ensure sustainable impacts.

**5.1. Alignment with Human Rights :** The programs reviewed in this study demonstrate a commitment to promoting human rights by addressing key issues such as poverty, unemployment, and social exclusion. By enhancing access to economic opportunities and essential services, these programs contribute to the realization of human rights for marginalized communities.

**5.2. Challenges in Implementation :** Despite the positive impacts, several challenges hinder the effectiveness of these programs. Issues such as inadequate infrastructure, limited awareness, and bureaucratic hurdles can impede program implementation and reduce their impact on human rights.

**5.3. Policy Recommendations :** To enhance the effectiveness of rural development programs, the following policy recommendations are proposed:

- **Enhance Transparency and Accountability:** Strengthening mechanisms for transparency and accountability can improve program implementation and ensure effective resource utilization.

- Strengthen Community Participation: Encouraging community participation and empowerment initiatives can enhance program effectiveness and promote sustainable development.
- Improve Coordination Among Agencies: Improving coordination among government agencies can optimize resource utilization and enhance program outcomes.
- Conduct Regular Assessments: Regular assessments of program impacts can identify areas for improvement and ensure alignment with human rights objectives.

## **6. Conclusion:**

The study concludes that India's rural development programs have the potential to promote human rights and economic freedom. However, effective implementation and monitoring are crucial for maximizing their impact. Aligning these programs with the principles of human rights can enhance their effectiveness and contribute to the broader goal of inclusive development.

India, as the world's largest democracy, has a significant role in ensuring that development reaches all sections of society, especially the marginalized. The programs analyzed in this study demonstrate a commitment to improving the lives of rural populations and promoting human rights. However, there is a need for continuous evaluation and adaptation of these programs to address emerging challenges and ensure that they contribute to the realization of human rights for all.

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