

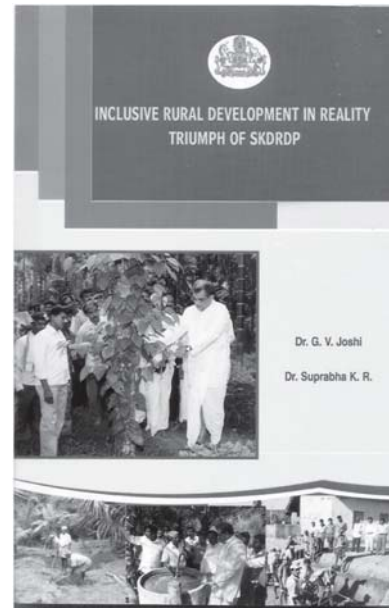
## A Successful Journey towards Inclusive Rural Development

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**Inclusive Rural Development in Reality Triumph of SKDRDP: G. V. Joshi and Suprabha K. R: Publisher: Shri Kshethra Dharmasthala Rural Development Project®, Dharmasthala: 2012: (Unpriced).**

The reflections on rural development presented in this book are the result of an experimental project carried out to know the role of SKDRDP in the welfare of the marginalized in particular and the society in general. The growth story of India has to be inclusive and the benefits of economic growth have to be shared equally by the rural masses. This is strongly argued and artistically realized in the book under review. The authors lucidly present the key issues in the form of analysis and evaluations taking the base from the earlier studies of SKDRDP. The study not only diagnosed the afflictions bedeviling Belthangady taluk before the inception of SKDRDP but also spelt out a pragmatic approach in the form of SKDRDP to confront them at the grass root level. The critical issues confronting the study area are neither exaggerated nor undermined but are highlighted in the right perspective and provide an engaging explanation. Therefore it is not surprising if a distinguished writer and thinker Dr. N K Thingalaya on rural development remarks that "This study has graphically explained the all round progress made by the project and the positive impact it has made on the lives of the poor". Obviously the project is SKDRDP which has made a successful journey towards inclusive rural development.

The book consists of five chapters. The flow of ideas is a smooth sail from one chapter to the other. The colourful pictures give a visual impact to the reader. The brainchild of Dharmadhikari Dr. D Veerendra Heggade, SKDRDP is a pioneer in the inclusive growth of rural area. The book is the result of the field survey conducted in 81 villages covered by SKDRDP in Belthangady taluk of Dakshina Kannada district.



The role of NGOs in the development process is specified in Chapter I. Broad objectives of the study is clearly stated which aims to find out the role and impact of SKDRDP in the process of inclusive rural development. The reader gets a bird's eye view as he completes with the first chapter and the interest to know more is generated.

The origin of SKDRDP in the year 1982 in Belthangady taluk is a milestone and is candidly picturised in Chapter II. The Land Reforms (Amendment) Act of 1974 made many owners of farms without adequate capital. It is the Heggade family known for Danas or charities initiated the SKDRDP with deep concern for raising agricultural productivity. The original idea to operate for five years was found too short and the programme continued with the support of Heggade family. By 1992, SKDRDP realized the need for empowering women for overall development of the region.

Leading programmes were initiated by SKDRDP which

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include Pragathinidhi, Pragathi bandhu- a labour sharing programme, Jnana Vikas Kendras for women empowerment, Gelathi for counseling, Jana Jagruthi an anti alcoholism programme, Navajeevana Samithis for new life free from alcohol, Sampoorana Suraksha a micro health insurance scheme, Jnan Deepa for education, Jeevana Dhama a housing scheme, Suraksha a health scheme. The schemes benefitted the local people. SKDRDP has stretched its helping hand to other eleven districts of Karnataka. It spreads the message that the rural poor have to help themselves to overcome poverty.

A candid exposition of the working of SKDRDP in the upliftment of small and marginal farmers, women empowerment through SHGs, infrastructure development, developing management and leadership qualities is traced. With the inception and growth of SKDRDP, Belthangady taluk came under the relatively developed taluk as per the Nanjudappa Committee on Redressal of Regional Imbalances in Karnataka which used the social infrastructure index for grouping taluks in coastal Karnataka in its report submitted to Government of Karnataka in 2002.

Pictures and tables vividly express the profile of Belthangady taluk in the following chapter. The data on cropping pattern, size of land holdings, occupation clearly reveals the socio economic status of the people in the study area. Field data analysis relate to the sex wise composition, age structure, educational level, different card holders, access to institutional finance since the inception of SKDRDP to 2011. The study reveals that SKDRDP facilitated the generation of income earning opportunities and diversification in Belthangady taluk.

Availability of basic infrastructure facilities directly contributes to the welfare. An overview of infrastructure for welfare is presented in Chapter IV. Number of households owning houses, having drinking water, electricity, sanitation shows a spectacular rise in the study period. The field survey data clearly shows an increase in amenities like gobargas, LPG, vehicles, consumption of milk and eggs, irrigation etc.

Based on the field data analysis, an attempt is made to assess the level of empowerment of the families and the role of SKDRDP in it by using sustainability and financial indicators. The sustainability index uses variables like education level, housing, sanitation, sources of drinking water, form of cooking fuel, electricity, awareness about laws and so on. The financial indicators are level of savings, purpose of loans, income level, asset possessed. Although SKDRDP has played a significant role in the empowerment of families in the study area, statistical analysis of correlation coefficient shows that age, basic amenities, nutritious food and direct grant for agriculture are positively correlated with the empowerment index. The study also reveals that shortage of labour is a major problem as well as a challenge afflicting agriculture.

The final chapter of the book focuses on the evaluation of the impact of SKDRDP in the context of inclusive rural development. The authors opine that SKDRDP began with a glowing background of Dharma and in course of time it was able to acquire Dharma of inclusive rural development. SKDRDP has been making a drive towards the goal of inclusive growth right from its inception. The programme has no inflationary potential. The individual- centered approach formulated and monitored by SKDRDP is at the root of its success.

Vivid presentation, judicious mix of primary and secondary data, use of pictures and charts, related information precisely given in appendices, comprehensive bibliography with artistic layout and presentation makes a great reading. Any reader who is interested to know about SKDRDP will find this book very appropriate and exciting. Dr. G V Joshi and Dr. Suprabha K. R. with their strong theoretical training and vast practical research experience in the field have succeeded in documenting a well researched and articulately argued experimental study combining academic rigour and ability to write clearly. As Dr. N. S. Shetty, a leading social scientist and former FAO (UN) Consultant observes, it is a well researched and cogently argued empirical study. Anyone interested in rural development should want to read this book.

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