



Rural Resources and Development

Perspectives and Planning

Edited by

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Rural Development Concerns in India: A Brief Appraisal of the Five Year Plans Perspective

Ravi S. Singh and Satheesh, C.

Introduction

Eradication of poverty and creation of 'Hunger free India' are the major development concerns of India in the new millennium. According to the UNDP and World Bank, of the estimated 1.3 billion poor people in the world with income less than one dollar a day, about 0.26 billion live in India with most of them (74%) residing in rural areas (Rao, 2005). The percentage of rural among the poor is alarming, even after six and a half decades of independence with implementation of different five year plans and policies by government and other agencies for the upliftment of heart and soul of India. The words of Mahatma Gandhi are getting more relevance in this situation "India is to be found not in few cities but in the villages. Farmers and workers make India. Their prosperity alone can make India a country fit to live in" (Singh, 1986). Agriculture is the main source of livelihood for most of the poor. Thus, sustainable and broad based development of agriculture is a pre-requisite for rural development, and the later, a necessary condition for overall socio-economic development of India.