

Role of Local Resources in Rural Development

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Abstract: India is a rich country where resides the poor. Tremendous inequality exists in the country of Mahatma Gandhi, who used to believe in simple living. Wealth is not evenly distributed among the people. It is very much clear in rural area. A large section of rural people plunged into abject poverty decades after decades. There is severe shortage of employment opportunities in rural areas. Generation of sufficient employment opportunities is the possible remedy to the stubborn poverty. Rural areas are full of different types of natural and human resources. Proper utilization of these resources is essential for rural development. Physical and social infrastructural development like good transportation, banking facilities, educational institutions, occupational and technical training facilities is the preconditions towards this end.

Keyword: Poverty, Rural development, Local Resources, Infrastructure Development.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Poverty, a social phenomenon in which a section of society is unable to fulfill even its basic necessities in life, is not new one that has been troubling the world. India is not an exception of it. In India, constitutionally it is resolved to attain a socialistic pattern of society. Socialism signifies democracy in the sphere of economic life. In other word, it means economic freedom and equality. But in reality that does not exist in our country. A large section of people lives below the poverty line, failing to meet their both ends. Efforts have been on to remove the scourge of poverty since the very beginning of independence. In a fast growing economy, demand for resources, including labour normally shows a rising trend and consequently unemployment driven poverty is bound to fall. But poverty is pertinacious. Some argue that it is the failure of 'trickle down' process of economic development in the country. Recently, India has achieved high rate of growth. But unfortunately, this high rate of growth is not corresponding with substantial employment generation and thus fails to touch a large section of general people. The growth is called 'zero employment growth' or 'jobless growth'. Hence the benefits of growth are not distributed evenly among the people. World Bank recognizes per day \$1.90 yardstick to measure the poverty and estimates 21.2% of Indian population is under poverty line in 2015.

India is a developing country and lives in villages. More than two-third of the total population lives in rural areas. A large portion of these people is crippled by abject poverty. Economists are of different views about the extent of poverty. But it is established that massive poverty exists in rural areas and urban poverty in many a case is simply an extension of rural poverty. Actually, the rural areas are the breeding ground of poverty. Unemployment and under-employment are the main causes of the high degree of rural poverty. As long as this continues, poverty will remain in good health. Any type of development programme would be meaningless had these problems are not addressed.

What is meant by rural development?

Development implies an overall positive change in the socio-economic life of people. It is not only economic betterment but other factors such as education, health, nutrition, recreation etc. which are also equally important in the total content of development. So, rural development is a multifaceted term, comprising socio-economic development of rural folk. Former Finance Minister, C. Subramanian in his thesis placed at the All India Science Congress, in 1976 viewed rural development as a 'systematic scientific use of all our natural resources and as a part of this process enabling every person to engage himself in a productive and socially useful occupation and earn an income that would meet at least the basic needs'. Dr. Suresh Chandra Jain states 'Rural development means the generation of employment by utilization of land, natural resources and the mobilization of rural population'. That is proper utilization of available resources in rural periphery is synonymous with rural development. As economic development leads the overall rural development and as it basically depends upon employment, availability of ample opportunities in rural areas is of utmost necessity.

Necessity of Utilization of Local Resources:

Agriculture is the most important sector in rural economy. It provides employment opportunities and livelihood to majority of rural people. But, agriculture has its own limitation. Even if all sorts of possible facilities could be available to the development of agriculture, it is very difficult if not impossible, to absorb whole battalion of rural folk. On the other hand, cultivable land is also limited and asymmetrically distributed. Naturally along with agriculture, non-agricultural activities also deserve attention to flourish for generating new employment opportunities. In this regard, available local resources would be of greater importance. It has been seen that in rural areas different resources are lying untapped. It is difficult to make a distinction between poverty and underutilization. Proper utilization of these resources may generate sufficient employment opportunities there leading to economic betterment of rural people. Agricultural resource, horticultural resource, forest resource, livestock resource etc. could be utilized profitably in rural periphery. During harvest time large amount of vegetables and fruits go into wastage or sold in a throw away price. If these are processed in rural level, along with generation of employment opportunities, wastage of different products will be minimize and farmers will also get the fair price for their production. Those regions which are rich in terms of natural resources are in an advantageous position towards development. But, only the availability of natural resources is not sufficient condition for development of a region. If so, forest-rich countries such as Congo, Ghana, and Surinam will not remain among the poorest countries in the world. On the other hand, most of India's lagging states like Orissa, Bihar, and Jharkhand are mineral rich. Hence, it is necessary to utilize these resources properly for the sake of development.

Here, the term properly deserves some special attention. 'Properly' means in such a way that along with utilization of natural resources, sufficient employment opportunity can be generated i.e. simultaneous utilization of natural and human resources. Simultaneous utilization of both the resources is the best alternative for the sustainable development.

Requirements for Utilization of Local Resources:

Identification of resource premises of a region is the first stage in the process of committing the resources to development. In this process resource education is very important to aware the local people about the surrounding resources. Subsequently, for the value addition to the natural resources, development of entrepreneurial ability among the rural people and availability of sufficient infrastructural facilities are imperative. Establishment of industrial undertakings is the pre-condition for effective utilization of available local resources. Rural industries are most suited here as it could be organized in a distributive manner to utilize the available resources dispersed in scattered way and its labour intensive character.

Entrepreneurs are the catalytic agents who organize production with the help of natural and human resources available in rural areas. The emergence of an entrepreneur in a society is the results of different variables such as social, religious, cultural, economical and psychological variables. But the entrepreneurial character of rural people is very weak. The rural people are not economically motivated and their economic decisions are based on custom and tradition rather than rationality. This non-rational society is inimical to entrepreneurship and needs a change.

Infrastructure is an umbrella term that includes both economic and social aspects. Transportation, telecommunication, electricity, banking facilities, storage facilities and so on constitute economic infrastructure, whereas education, occupational and technical training, basic medical services are included in social infrastructure. Inadequacy of infrastructural facilities inhibits not only the growth and development of rural industries but overall development of rural areas also. In many a case infrastructural developmental programmes are city centric. Hence prospective entrepreneurs preferably choose suburban areas for setting up establishments depriving the rural areas and rural areas remain years after year raw materials supplier. Lack of infrastructure means non-availability of finance, lack of all weather roads, shortage of storage facilities, lack of training facilities, use of outdated tools and technology, obstacles to smooth marketing etc. which stand in the way of development. These problems are not isolated and have an impact on each other. As financial problem has an adverse affect on raw material purchase, improvement in tools and technologies, new market exploration etc. Similarly, failure in marketing causes the financial and other problems. Again, use of traditional tools and technologies is often responsible for the production of lower quality goods causing lower market acceptance and so on. Hence, a comprehensive initiative is required for solving these problems.

Criteria for Success:

The importance of development of resource-based rural industrial undertakings could not be overemphasized considering the limitation of agriculture, unemployment problem in rural areas, need to utilize the available local resources, shortage of capital, traditional crafts and skills of the local people, environmental pollution and so on. But the fact is that the resource-based rural industries are burdened with numerous problems. Necessary steps like easy availability of credit, development and dissemination of appropriate

technology and arrangement for training, arrangement of entrepreneurship development programme, inclusion of resource education and entrepreneurship development in educational curriculum and vocational training, development of necessary infrastructural facilities like road, electricity, storage facilities, transport, education & health system, and above all adoption of bottom-up approach (people will decide through the Gramsabha) instead of top-down approach in any type of decision relating of rural development should be taken to rebuild rural industrial sector.

II. CONCLUSION:

We have had seven decades of planned economic development but not much success has been achieved in the front of poverty eradication. It is ironical that we are still trying to tackle the basic minimum problem of providing drinking water, shelter, sanitation and above all employment. The problem is acute enough in rural areas. It is understood that land-based agro-economic condition is primarily responsible for acute poverty. Diversification of rural economy is necessary to develop the situation. Resource-based rural industrialization could be a viable way in this direction. Government took different plans and programmes like Jawahar Gram Samridhhi Yojana (JGSY), Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarajgar Yojana (SGSY), Prime Minister Rojgar Yojana (PMRY), Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) etc. and established different institutions like Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), All India Handicrafts Board, National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC), National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), Small Industries Extension Training Institute (SITEI), Integrated Training Centre (ITC) etc. for the development of rural industries. Along with Government, different NGOs are also in the field for rural industrial development. But the progress in this regard is not satisfactory. This is possibly due to the lack of co-ordination among the development agents, lack of information about plans and programmes to the targeted group of people and thus non involvement, top-down approach in setting plans and programmes, step motherly attitude in the rural infrastructural development and above all supplementary treatment to this sector keeping capital intensive industrialization oriented development strategies in the mainstream economy in the name of rapid development. The fall out of which is 'cancerous development' i.e. uneven growth in the country and emergence of two sections of people haves and have-nots. Mass-involved rural industrialization will ensure proper utilization of scattered natural resources with ample employment opportunities and proper distribution of income leading to a uniform society. A time bound, motivated, aggressive and co-coordinated approach is of utmost necessity for the proper utilization of available resources in local periphery leading to rural development.

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