



Rural Development - Non - Farm Sector: A Need For Sustainable Development In India

KEYWORDS

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ABSTRACT *"The prosperity of India lies in the prosperity of Villages"----- Mahatma Gandhi This paper highlights the protection of environment in the rural areas and suggests measures to improve the position of natural resources at the implementation of Non- farm activities. Majority of population depends on primary sector in India and engaged in farm activities. So, pressure on land should be reduced by giving priority to non-farm activities. Then, they play crucial role in reducing unemployment, poverty and enhances development activities in rural areas. The most dangerous common problem to the world countries is degradation of environmental resources at present. The degradation of environment shows adverse effect on human beings, live stock, bio-diversity etc. As climate changes the availability of natural resource becomes very difficult in rural areas. This leads to migration of people to the urban areas for employment. After recognizing the danger of environment pollution the world countries are giving priority to protect environment. India is also implementing different programmes for the development of rural areas, but there is less importance for protection of environment in the programmes. Under globalization, the non- farm activities got importance in rural as well as urban areas. So priority should be given for the protection of environment and policies and programmes should be made by keeping the people's participation and services of NGO's and other like minded organizations. The practice of non- farm activities should be with the objective that environment protection should be given priority. Then there is possibility for the sustainable rural development*

Brief history of Rural Development: The concept of Rural Development in India is not new concept. From British onwards efforts have been taking by the government for the development of rural areas. Mahatma Gandhi also proposed some schemes for rural development. Earlier five year plans had been prepared based on the theme of rural development along with priority to rural development. The expectations of economists collapsed as the failure of Trickle down effect which refers that the fruitful results of economic development reach to bottom from top. So, in 1974 department of Rural development came into force as a part of ministry of Food and Agriculture. On the 18th August, 1979 new Ministry of Rural reconstruction was emerged. It was renamed as Ministry of Rural development on 23rd of January 1982. Later Rural Development Ministry was converted into a part of Agriculture Ministry in 1985. In 1991 on July 5th Rural development was announced as separate Ministry. Again in 1995, it was formed as Ministry of Rural Areas Employment and Poverty Alleviation. In 1999 finally it was formed as ministry of Rural development. For the development of rural areas the Ministry of Rural development has been implementing number of programmes focusing on the elements like health, education, safe drinking water, housing and roads.

Meaning of Rural Development: There is no comprehensive definition for rural development. "Overall development of villages is called Rural development. This refers development of agriculture and allied sectors, rural industries and rural infrastructure. As majority of population lives in villages, their backwardness stands for backwardness of economy as whole. So, Rural development has emerged as " a strategy designed to improve the economic and social life of a specific group of a people i.e. rural poor. It involves extending the benefits of development to the rural population who seeks a livelihood in the rural areas.

Objectives of Rural Development: In the Indian context Rural development programmes have aimed at achieving the following objectives.

1. To change the attitude of rural people towards development.
2. To promote democratic leadership by setting up local self government.

3. To provide basic needs such as drinking water, health care, sanitation, housing and employment i.e. to improve standard of living
4. To improve communal harmony and unity among rural people
5. To develop farming and non- farming activities without adverse affecting the environment.

Programmes introduced for Rural Development: For the development of any country proper utilization of natural and human resources is inevitable. In India the land mark in the history of rural development is introduction of Community Development Programme on October 2nd, 1952. After that for the elimination of poverty and unemployment in the rural areas, the programmes like Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA), Marginal Farmers and Agriculture Labour Development Agency (MFADA), Minimum Needs Programme (MNP), Food for Work Programme (FWP), Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA), Training for Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Ganga Kalyan Yojana (GKY), Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRY) Swarna Jayanthi Swagram Yojana (SJSY), Anthyodaya Programme etc. Besides this, NABARD, RRB, SBI and other commercial banks are helping for the development of rural areas. During 1995-96 Rural Infrastructure Development Fund was established and maintained by NABARD. The budget expenditure for Rural Development during 2007-08 is 32,508 crores. In the plans Expenditure on Rural development has been increasing. In the 11th plan the government has target that an increase in forests and cover tree by 5 percent and provision of safe drinking water by 2009. But in the programmes there was no much more priority for the protection of environment.

Importance of Non- Farm Sector: Rural development: The Rural Non- Farm Sector (RNFS) refers all non- agricultural activities like mining and quarrying, household and non- household manufacturing, processing, repair, construction, trade and commerce, transport and other services in villages and rural towns undertaken by enterprises varying in size from household own account enterprises to huge industries. The level and growth in urbanization is expected to have a positive impact on the level of non-farm employment in rural areas. In many areas, agriculture alone cannot provide sufficient livelihood opportunities. Migration is not an option for everyone and where

possible, policy makers may in any case prefer to limit the worst excess of urbanization with its associated social and environmental problems. Rural Non-farm employment can play a potentially significant role in reducing rural poverty and numerous studies indicate the importance of non-farm enterprise to rural incomes. Livelihood diversification is often characterized as being driven by two processes. 1. Distress push, where the poor are driven to seek non-farm employment for want of adequate on-farm opportunities. 2. Demand-pull where rural people are able to respond to new opportunities. In the former situation large numbers may be drawn into poorly remunerated low entry barrier activities, while the latter are more likely to offer a route to improved livelihoods.

Rural Non-farm activities may absorb surplus labour in rural areas, help farm-based households spread risks, offer more remunerative activities to supplement or replace agricultural income, offer income potential during the agricultural off-season and provide a means to cope or survive when farming falls. So the policies must aim to improve the assets held by the poor or increase their productivity. The following different types of assets provide an appropriate way in which to structure the evidence on livelihood choices and outcomes.

Natural Capital: The rural resource stocks from which resource flows useful for livelihoods are derived. (e.g. land, water, wildlife, bio diversity environmental resources)

Social Capital: The social resources upon which people draw in pursuit of livelihood. (e.g. networks, membership of groups, relationship of trusts across to wider institutions of society)

Human Capital: The skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health importance to the ability to pursue different livelihood strategies.

Physical capital: The basic infrastructure and production equipment and means which enable people to pursue their livelihoods. (e.g. transport, shelter, water, energy and communications)

Financial Capital: The financial resources which are available to the people and which provide them with different livelihood options. (e.g. savings, supply of credit, regular remittances, pensions)

Under Globalization the following measures can be suggested regarding Rural- Non-Farm activities.

1. Provision of adequate and suitable infrastructure support
2. availability of fiscal and financial incentives
3. Provision of Marketing outlets
4. Information about improved technology
5. Maintenance of harmonious relationship between farm and non-farm activities.
6. Policy review and changes in must be made as per requirement.

Degradation of Environment: At present, the most dangerous common problem to mankind in the world is degradation of environment. In order to make comfortable life, human beings are going to exploit natural resources by applying modern technology and on the other side, totally neglecting future generation's needs. Industrialization, massive deforestation and urbanization result in downfall of quality in land, water, air and depletion of ozone layer, acid rains, green house effects, global warming etc.

Sustainable Development: The concept of Sustainable Development conveys the message that environment and economic development are closely interdependent and mutually supportive. It deals with quite simply the largest and most extreme problem ever faced by humanity. The term Sustainable Development was probably coined by Barbara Ward (Lady Jackson), the founder of the International Institute for Environment and Development, who pointed out that Socio-

Economic Development and environmental protection, must be linked. The World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) 1987, headed by Brundtland defined Sustainable Development as follows.

“Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generation's to meet their own needs.”

Rural India: Environmental problems: The problems like lack of sanitation, shortage of safe drinking water, ill-designed habitats and kitchens, living of animals and human in close proximity etc. are very common. The farmers and agricultural labours are suffering from soil erosion, chemical seeding, chemical fertilizers, pesticides spraying etc. Unscientific agriculture is also causing for environment problems in rural areas. India is sixth largest and second fastest growing producer of green house gases (GHG) in the world.. Regarding soil pollution in the country, out of 329 million hectares of total geographical area, 144 million hectares are subject to water and wind erosion and 30 million hectares through salinity, water logging etc. Recently noise pollution is also becoming as major environmental hazard in rural areas. There is a forecast that there will be more pressure on water and other natural resources in India by 2020.

Policy Measures for Sustainable Rural Development:

For the overall development of the country in the long run, protection of environmental resources, particularly in the rural areas is needed. India has two-tier system for combating pollution i.e. Central Pollution Control Board (1974) and State Pollution Control Board. In this regard, the Indian Constitution adopted the articles like 48A, 51A(g) and 253. On the basis of these articles, the Indian Parliament enacted Water Act of 1974, the Prevention and Control of Pollution Act (Air Act) 1981, the Environmental Protection Act 1986, The Public Liability Insurance Act 1991 have been made for the protection of environment resources.

The following measures are useful to protect environment especially in rural areas, while performing non-farm activities.

1. To educate and train the politicians, bureaucrats, NGOs and policy makers who are responsible for making and implementation of laws over environmental degradation in rural areas when undertaking the non-farm activities.
2. By keeping non-farm activities in mind Vanasamrakshna Samithis are to be upgraded with knowledge, mission and vision.
3. The sarpanches or administrators of villages and their ward member are given exposure to environmental protection and their merits for farm as well as non-farm activities.
4. At the cost of non-farm activities, a strong dose of advertisements would be given in press and electronic media about degradation and result of sustainability in rural.
5. Environmental clubs in schools, colleges, universities are to be prompted and make it mandatory in villages by giving priority to the non-farm activities.
6. In connection with non-farm activities, Environment budgeting and auditing is to be introduced in village panchayats.
7. Public participation is needed for sustainable development. For this motivation of the people about the importance of sustainable development is needed while introducing non-farm activities in rural areas.
8. Brining awareness among the rural people regarding non-farm activities and undertake them at suitable environment by using the services of NGO and other voluntary organizations.

Conclusion: For the prosperity of any economy either in Developed or Underdeveloped country sustainable rural development is required by giving priority to non-farm activities. Though governments are implementing number of programmes there is more focus on elimination of poverty and unemployment and less priority to protection of environment. It is necessary that by taking the strategies of developed countries, India has to go to achieve sustainable rural development.

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