



EMPLOYMENT: THE ONLY VIABLE SOLUTION OF RURAL CRISES

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KEYWORDS :

It was a fact that India was an agricultural country where more than 80 percent population earns its bread and butter from rural-agricultural economy. In the year 1950 the GDP of agriculture was around 55 percent and the total public sector outlays of agriculture, community development, irrigation, village and small scale industry in first five year plan was more than 30 percent where as in 2015 the GDP and public sector outlays in budget of this sector was hardly 20 percent. The provision in five years plan and budget itself shows that the value of agriculture and rural community in national planning came down.

As per the census the rural population of India in 1951 was 299 million (82%) and in 2011 it was 834 million (68.5%). At percent rural population was decline up to 13-14 percent but in real terms it was increased by 500 million. Around 55 percent (400 million) labour force engage in agricultural sector. Operational holdings of land in hectares was 71 million in 1970-71 where as in 1990-91 it was 166 million. In 1970-71 the land in marginal holding was 51%, small holding 34%, medium holding 11% and large holdings were 3%. The condition of land holdings were improved in subsequent years and in 1991 the marginal holdings were improved from 51% to 15%, small holding from 34 to 41% medium holding from 11 to 27% and large holdings from 4 to 17%. The average size of operational holdings falls down from 2.28 to 1.57 hectares. In 1990, gross irrigated area from the total sown area was 20 percent. (All figures drawn from Datt & Sundharam).

If you go through the above facts, it was very clear that the condition of rural India and particularly agrarian economy and society is deteriorating years after years because of the income of small land holding and the pressure of population on land.

Government initiated various measures to improve the condition of agriculture and rural economy. Some of its flagship programs are Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Program, different irrigation projects, national health mission, National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (new), Wide network of Public distribution system, Micro Finance, Agricultural Marketing, rural electrification, etc. There is overall improvement-development in rural sector but the efforts needed are fallen short and that's why the crises are looming.

After adopting LPG policy in 1992-93 it was well-propagated and documented fact that the rate of rural suicide and particularly farmers suicide has raised. The proportion of agrarian economy in GDP was fallen down but the population depends on agricultural economy was increased many times. The main argument of this paper is that to make agriculture profitable, it is a timely pending need of diverting the population from agricultural employment to allied and other sectors. Urbanization, industrialization, market, supportive agencies, banking, finance, insurance, Horticulture, poultry, goat farming, commercial cattle farming, gardening, promotion of regional crops; government initiative of branding marketing and promoting alternative produce and technology helps the villagers to look beyond traditional farming, farming for profit and employment beyond agriculture. It not only increases the productivity of agriculture and improve the living standard of farmers and villagers but also automatically improves the condition of Indian Agriculture. Researcher found some good examples of such a success story in which the employment is not only diversified but the income of villagers also raised. The pull factor of employment and scope of prosperity makes such changes in some areas of Maharashtra.

This study is secondary in nature and the argument was well document by a profound scholar of economics. This study is an attempt of revisiting and reinterpreting the available information and data in present scenario.

Modern processes like industrialization, urbanization, market, service providers -NGOs, banking, finance, insurance and modern technology collectively change the condition of rural community and improve the condition of distress of rural society is the hypothesis of this research.

Indian reformers identified the challenges before Indian agriculture and suggest some important remedies on it. The first of these are Mahatma J. G. Phuley, in 1883 he wrote a small book, entitled, Cultivator's Whip-card. He was the pioneers of the Indian reformers who criticize the Indian caste system and request the colonial government to initiate various measures in favor of farmers.

Another important figure who was in favor of village society was Mahatma Gandhi. Gandhi criticize the process of modernization in totality and supports traditional rural society. Hindvi Swaraj was first book published in 1911 and in it he promoted and propagated independent Indian village.

In 1914 Sayajirao Gaikwad of Baroda appointed a committee on land reform. Sahu Maharaj of Kolhapur start development activities specially related with over-all-development of the region, like railway, small dams, educational institutes from primary to higher education, cooperatives etc.

S. C. Dube published Indian Village (1955), India's Changing Village (1958), Modernization and Development: The Search of Alternative Paradigm (1988), Traditions and Development (1990), etc. He worked as a professor and as an administrator in various departments and suggested in his work that modernization is the only way out from rural crises. He challenged the notion of self-sustained villages and prove that villages are not self- sustained but interdependent with other villages and urban areas.

M. S. Swaminathan, the renounced agricultural scientist was the chairperson of The National Commission on Farmers submitted four reports to government in 2004 to 2006. Land reform, irrigation, productivity of agriculture, credit and insurance, food security, village knowledge center, competitiveness of farmers, bio-recourses and more importantly employment are the issues he handled in his report. According to him, agriculture still provides the bulk of employment in the rural area. His strategy was twofold, first, create productive employment opportunities and second to improve the quality of employment in several sectors such that real wages rise through improved productivity. He suggest the "net take home income." of farmer should be comparable to those of civil services, He also suggest rural non-farm livelihood, promotion of commodity based farms, protect farmers from international prizing, make farmers responsible through training and promotional program etc. Minimum support prize should be at least 50% more than the weighted average cost of production (Sanyal).

Professor Swaminathan (2005, 10) also explained three pronged strategy for social inclusion in village India, it consists of improving the productivity of land, water, livestock and labour in the case of assets owing farm families, converting unskilled agricultural labour into skilled entrepreneurs, engaged in organizing market-driven non-farm enterprises, and enhancing the skills of families involved in

secondary and tertiary sectors of the rural economy, so that they are able to assist in improving agricultural efficiency and competitiveness and in ending the prevailing mismatch between production and post-harvest technologies.

Dr. Ambedkar published an article in 1918, entitled *Small Holdings in India and Their Remedies*. In this article he discusses the importance of agriculture for human being and with this introduction he clearly stated that through this paper he is dealing with the problem of small holdings as it affects the productivity of agriculture. Throughout this article he discusses the problem of small holding and proves that due to the importance of land in agriculture economy each and every member of the family wants its share from their ancestral land, which divide the land into pieces. He also put in notice that if there is a big land holding than in most of the cases these holdings are scattered in pieces in different parts of the village area. Small land holdings are proved non-economic and so consolidation of holding was envisaged. He discusses the problems of consolidation of holdings and raises the following two issues:

- 1) How to unite such small and scattered holdings as the existing ones, and
- 2) Once consolidated how to perpetuate them at that size (Ambedkar, p. 459).

The advocates of consolidation of land holdings also advocate the principle of land reform on two basis, one is making them economic holding and the other is for prevention of further fragmentation of land holdings - single hire formula. Dr. Ambedkar discusses on the problem of enlargement of land and question the formula of economic holding. He cleared that it is difficult to make a single formula for economic holding as it is related with technology, condition of soil, irrigation etc.

Dr. Ambedkar found the solution of economic land holding and consolidation of land holding in the process of industrialization! He stated, industrialization of India is the soundest remedy for the agricultural problems of India. Moreover, how Industrialization help Indian agriculture? he explained it as

If we succeed in sponging off this labour in non-agricultural channels of production we will at one stroke lessen the pressure and destroy the premium that at present weighs heavily on land in India. Besides, this labour when productively employed will cease to live by predation as it does to-day, and will not earn its keep but will give us surplus: and more surplus is more capital... The cumulative effects of industrialization, namely, a lessening pressure and an increasing amount of capital and capital goods and forcibly create the economic necessity of enlarging the holding. Not only this, but industrialization by destroying the premium on land will give rise to few occasions for its sub-division and fragmentation. Industrialization is a natural and powerful remedy... By legislation we will get a sham economic holding at the cost of many social ills. But by industrialization a large economic holding will force itself upon us as a pure gain. (p. 477)

Through this article Ambedkar traces the importance of agriculture in India. He clearly stated throughout his article that because agricultural land is the only means of livelihood and subsistence the importance of land in the life of Indians are immense and because of that each and every male member (as allowed by) of the family demands its share from land and agricultural land is fragmenting day-by-day.

He suggests that through industrialization, it is possible to change the level of dependency on agriculture and its suicidal cycle. Industrialization pulls the masses from ideal labour force of agriculture. As it is proved by various research and stated by economist and social scientists that for one hector of land there was one agricultural labour and the ratio between them was increased years after years. Village economy push its standby labour force towards industrial areas of industries. This push and pull factors help agriculture and village economy. The generation of additional and fixed income or sources of income not only support agriculture but also help to improve the condition of agriculture and village economy. It decreases the pressure on land, help the farmer to lead change in technology and cropping pattern and for that the additional income from non-agricultural sector extend its fixed financial support through family members.

It is clear through this argument that additional income from various sources share the burden of agriculture and also helps to improve its

condition.

Another meaning of this argument is that, other sources of income improves the conditions of farmers and so called dependents on agriculture.

It also means that as much the work force left agricultural work that much the condition of the work force will improve.

Farmers' suicide or Suicide in rural communities is one of the important question. Researcher proved in one of his paper (Borkar, 79-94) that it is good to say suicide in rural communities rather than farmers' suicide. Farmers from marginal to large holdings, non-farm labors, and housewife's people from all age groups committed suicide in rural area. Some suicides were eligible for financial help because they are farmers where as some were not eligible, that means they are not directly related with agrarian economy as per government rule. But the Parsons' social system theory explains that system is made up of various subsystems like economy, family, religion, polity, culture etc. and the change occurred in any one subsystem leads to change in another system. That means suicide related with cultural cause also related with economy; rising expectations, aspirations, family tension, health issues and over all ignorance are also related with the economy. This theory looks similar to Marxian theory of economic determination, which is also applicable for explaining the phenomenon of rural suicide. All the subsystems in society are interdependent and problem in one system reflect in another system. Low income or losses in agriculture also related with health, education, under-development of agriculture, unemployment etc. and they collectively reflect in their cultural, society, psychology and family life. Collectively, it is not the problem of farmer alone but at wider level it is a problem of agricultural community, labour related with agriculture, village community and national economy.

If the ideal labour force of agriculture engaged in other economic activities, the ratio of BPL (Below Poverty Line) will decrease, it improve livelihood conditions which also reflects in HDI (Human Development Index) of that area, it reflects in an increase in per capita income of that area and increase in urbanization and industrialization of that area.

The other most important indicator which emerged after the adoption of liberalization, privatizations and globalizations (LGP) policy in 1992 is rural suicide. From various studies and data, it was found that there was a strong relation between development of the state and farmers suicide. These are,

- The area in which higher HDI and higher level of unemployment shows higher numbers of rural suicide.
- Lower level of industrialization and urbanization in particular region of developed states related with high rural suicide rate due to relative deprivation.
- There are political and cultural factors related to development and underdevelopment of that area.
- Scattered industrialization and development of the various sources of employment shows lesser rural suicides.
- In developed states like Maharashtra, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka, there are regions where agriculture as predominant source of employment and income and related with more rural suicides.

Maharashtra reported 3,228 (Deshpande) rural suicides in January to December 2015. Following table shows the region wise distribution of rural suicide.

Region	Division	No. of suicides
Vidarbha	Nagpur and Amravati	1,541
Marathwada	Aurangabad	1,130
North Maharashtra	Nasik	459
Western Maharashtra	Pune and Konken	96
Total		3,228

Since 2001 to 2015, Maharashtra has recorded 20,504 farmers suicide and the regional pattern of suicide was as same as 2015. In 2015 the suicide is highest in Maharashtra because of draught from last three years. It also shows the regional imbalance between these regions and more clearly between administrative divisions.

To find out the relation between labour forces majorly engaged in

agriculture and non-agriculture as-will-as allied activities and the relation between Below Poverty Line as-will-as HDI, researcher divided the districts of Maharashtra into four parts, they are as follows:

1. Highly Industrialized Urban Areas - Thane, Raigad, Nasik, Nagpur, etc.
2. Industrialized Rural-Urban areas with Major allied economic activities - Pune division - Pune, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Solapur.
3. Only Agriculture related areas - Bhandara, Chandrapur, Buldhana, Dhule, Jalgaon, etc.
4. Intense agriculture related areas - Aurangabad division, etc.

Highly Industrialized Urban centers:

Researcher included four districts of Maharashtra's richest eight districts, who belong to richest quarter of the state, they are Thane, Raigarh, Nashik and Nagpur. Mumbai is a purely urban center and that's why excluded from this category.

1. The per capita income (2008-09, current praise) of these districts are above 55 thousand rupees.
2. More than 60% population of these districts are living in urban-industrial areas.

Nasik district is famous for big Public Sector Undertakings like HAL, Government Printing Press, etc. Thane, Raigarh and Nashik are the extensions of Mumbai's urban industrial sector and because of industrial urban development in these districts which were not much organized but they are well connected with Mumbai through road and metro railway.

The most important fact is that, the per capita income in these districts are high but the percentage of BPL population is also high (>30%, except Raigarh 21% in 2004-05).

Nagpur District is also heavily industrialized and urban (>70%) whose per capita income is more than 60 thousand rupees but the BPL population is above 30%.

It simply means that industrialization, urbanization and allied sectors (service sector) raises the income of the few but also raises the gap between the rich and the poor and that's why the percentage of people below poverty line was higher than 30%.

This data and finding disproves that only industrialization will improve the condition of masses.

Industrialized Rural-Urban centers with Major allied economic activities:

Researcher choose three districts out of eight whose per capita income is in upper middle quarter, they are Solapur (45,055 Rs.), Sangli (46,699 Rs.) and Satara (47,009 Rs.) and another two districts from richest eight quarter, they are Pune (79,968 Rs.) and Kolhapur (55,931 Rs.) Researcher choose these five districts from two different income groups because they belongs to single administrative block. The incidences of poverty of these districts in the year 2004-05 ranging 7 to 12.1% which is lowest in Maharashtra.

Kolhapur, Satara, Sangli and Solapur districts are among those whose per capita income is lower than Pune district. Their level of urbanization was also low, urban population ranging between 40-50% whereas Maharashtra was above 60% urbanized, as per 2011 census.

These districts are special because they are not much good in agriculture as compared to the districts of Aurangabad administration block. But these districts have special kind of industries like 8 to 12 cooperative sugar industries, cooperative ginning and cotton mills, many small scale working industrial units, dairy development - Varna is famous for it and other related industries for agriculture produce; agricultural cash crops like tobacco, fruits, vegetables, turmeric, tomato, potato, onion and most important in them is sugarcane; small cottage industries of jiggery, etc; Kolhapur's leather sandals and Solapur's cotton bed sheets are famous in Maharashtra. These districts have high quality institutions - educational, and infrastructure facilities like market and roads etc.

This group shows that diversified industrialization with labour hungry industries, good quality infrastructure, institutions and agricultural development improves the condition of people and that's why

distribution of income in masses are much fair and the BPL percentage is low.

This category proves that a special package of special diversified industrialization improves the condition of masses and the farmer. It is also important to note that farmer suicide was almost in these districts.

Only Agriculture related centers/Intense Agriculture:

For this category researcher choose four districts of Viderbha region and from that two from Amravati Division - Amravati itself and Yavatmal and two from Nagpur Division - Wardha and Bhandara. There per capita Income ranging from 33 to 42 thousand. They belongs to lower middle quarter of per capita national domestic production as per prices of 2008-09.

As far as rural poverty is concerned Amravati (29.4%), Bhandara (30.1%), Wardha (11.5%) and Yavatmal (33.4%) are poor districts. Wardha shows some difference in this group but if we relate it with farmer suicide it is one of the most suicide prone district. Infact Wardha lost its cotton processing industries after 1992. Cotton is the main crop of Wardha, Amravati and Yavatmal district but this crop is related with international market and so the volatility of cost challenges the economic sustainability of its farmers.

As far as industrialization is concerned all the districts are much backward. In HDI Yavatmal, Bhandara and Amravati districts came under Medium category and only Wardha came in high category.

Lack of industrialization, lack of basic infrastructural facilities, absent of special development programs and connectivity through railway are the main components of underdevelopment of these districts. The cumulative effect of all of this is that they are the loser in the phase of industrialization.

CONCLUSION

This model proves that well planned industrialization is necessary for human development, poverty reduction and over all agricultural improvement. Land reform and reform in agricultural sector needs special attention because land reform is next to impossible with improvement in other non-agricultural multiple sectors. This also proves that Dr. Ambedkar thesis of industrialization provides solution for agrarian problems, in general and in particular there is a need of overall industrial revolution with special labour demanding industries and allied activities proves its relevance.

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