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Rural Development and Self-Empowerment: Issues And Challenges

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Abstract:

Today, Inclusive rural development is more specific concept than the concept of rural development of earlier, in broader terms, inclusive rural development is about improving the quality of life of all rural people.

"Just as the whole universe is contained in
the self, so is India contained in the villages.

The dream of the Gandhiji was to see the village as self - contained and self sufficient. Therefore, for the betterment of people Gandhiji formulated 18 programmes, which includes the promotion of village industries, basic and adult education in rural areas, upliftment of backward tribes, upliftment of women, education in public health and hygiene, propagation of natural language, love for the mother tongue, economic equality, organization of kisans, labour and students and so on.

Rural development is a term for improving the quality of life and economic wellbeing of the population that resides in villages. In other words, rural development aims at bringing about overall growth in the rural areas in terms of health, education and quality of life. The process of raising the standard of living and economic security of rural residents is known as rural development.

Poverty and unemployment are the two sides of the same coin. When we solve one problem in the rural area , the second will be taken care along with it. In the present scenario, poverty and unemployment are the still most severe problems faced by the Rural area. Special income generation and socio-economic development programmes were introduced among selected target groups in the rural sector for small farmers, landless agricultural labourers and for scheduled caste and scheduled tribes. This new strategy was adopted because, after the critical review of the earlier plans and their achievements, it was found that the benefits of economic growth had failed to percolate to the lower income groups and weaker sections of the society. The majority of the rural poor own very little or no land at all. They are not educated and have no skills, so they cannot find employment. To generate skills among rural youths so as to provide self-employment and wage employment to them.

Keywords: Rural development, Unemployment, Self-employment, skills, Poverty, Equality

Introduction:

'It is possible to fly without motors, but not without knowledge and skill' —Wilbur Wright

Rural development has always been an important issue in all discussions pertaining to economic development, especially of developing countries, throughout the world. In the developing countries and some formerly communist societies, rural mass comprises a substantial majority of the population. Over 1.4 billion

people live in the India and some 60% of them in rural areas. Although millions of rural people have escaped poverty as a result of rural development in many states, a large majority of rural people continue to suffer from persistent poverty. The socio-economic disparities between rural and urban areas are widening and creating tremendous pressure on the social and economic fabric of many states. These factors, among many others, tend to highlight the importance of rural development. The policy makers in most of the developing economies recognize this importance and have been implementing a host of programs and measures to achieve rural development objectives. While some of these states have achieved impressive results, others have failed to make a significant dent in the problem of persistent rural underdevelopment.

Rural - Is an area, where the people are engaged in primary industry in the sense that they produce things directly for the first time in cooperation with nature as stated by Srivastava (1961). Rural areas are sparsely settled places away from the influence of large cities and towns. Such areas are distinct from more intensively settled urban and suburban areas, and also from unsettled lands such as outback or wilderness. People live in village, on farms and in other isolated houses.

Development – Rural development is the process of improving the standard of life and financial stability for those who live in rural areas, which are frequently less populated and economically disadvantaged than urban centres. Its primary goals are to encourage sustainable agriculture, build jobs and opportunities for income generation, enhance infrastructure, and make basic services like healthcare and education accessible. remote development initiatives aim to tackle problems including poverty, inadequate access to resources, and low connectivity in remote regions. Rural development is the continuous and comprehensive socio-economic process of improving all aspects of rural life. Traditionally, rural development has been focused on the exploitation of land-intensive natural resources such as forests and agriculture. However, growing urbanisation and changes in global production networks have changed the character of rural areas today.

Self-employment - Development economics evaluates the role of self-employment in poverty alleviation, economic development, and the transition from informal to formal sectors in developing economies. The trend of introduction of self-employment programmes as a policy tool to fight against poverty is found in India. This paper critically reviews different self-employment programmes introduced in India.

Self-employment refers to incumbents to individual business decision and shall be responsible for the welfare of the enterprise, its profit from the profit of venture enterprises (OECD, 2002).

It has been observed that the employment opportunity has been squeezed in the Government sector due to scarcity of funds as well as imposition of restriction by different financial agencies. Statistics indicated that during 1997 out of total registered unemployed in our country only 4.37% employed in Government sector whereas during 2001 that figure reduced to 1.85% and it will decrease further. We observed that the financial growth rate during 1983-1991 i.e. pre financial reform time was 5.7% whereas this rate was reduced to 1% during post-financial reform time. It indicated that the financial reform reduces the average financial growth rate as well as decreases the employment opportunity. In India, 70% of the total population depends upon the agriculture and allied sector directly or indirectly. So, self-employment opportunity can be created easily in rural areas through agriculture and allied sector. In this context we will discuss

some of the projects related to agriculture and allied sector in detail which provide self-employment to the rural youth. Before going to detail of the individual project, we will discuss some of the general principles for smooth management of any project.

When it comes to rural development and self-empowerment, key issues and challenges include: lack of access to education and financial services, gender inequality, inadequate infrastructure, limited market access, social and cultural barriers, low literacy rates, poor health facilities, and a lack of awareness about opportunities for economic participation, particularly for marginalized groups like women and rural youth; all of which hinder their ability to take control of their lives and contribute meaningfully to their communities.

The Objective of the Study:

1. To examine the issues and difficulties faced by rural economies in India.
2. Make suggestions as to how these issues could be alleviated.
3. To give training to the NGO's which are interested in the development of rural area.
4. To organise campaigns related to self-employment.
5. To provide training to the members of women's SHG and women in the field of management.

Research Methodology:

This study is based on secondary data. It is completely analytical in nature. The data is collected from articles, journals, and websites of Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana and Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikash Yojana and from major skill development institutions. To examine the issues and difficulties faced by rural economies in India get detailed information from the websites and field visits.

Some Factors Related To Rural Development And Self Employment:

Factors affecting Rural Development:

1. Rising Literacy Level:

More literacy means more chances of employability. As per NSS reports, the literacy rate in rural areas was 72.3% Male and 56.8% Females in 2014 which is higher as compared to the literacy rate of 68% male and 43% female in 2000.

The literacy rate is increasing year by year. The government has started providing online courses through SWAYAM, eVIDYA. The government has taken initiatives for offline education through schemes like Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).

2. Infrastructural Activities:

A strong infrastructure is a necessity for rural development. Roads, communication channels, electrification, drinking water supply, irrigation facilities, drainage lines, and proper houses to live are some of the key things that demonstrate rural development. In the last couple of decades, we have observed a growth in infrastructure facilities and public service projects in rural India.

3. New Employment Opportunities:

Various policies have resulted in the development of rural India, which leads to new employment opportunities. One such initiative is TRYSEM(Training Rural Youth for Self- Employment). The main objective of this policy was to train youth to develop technical skills.

The most recent example is Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan where Hon. PM Modi invited startups to get funding for their prototypes. This will increase employment in the next decade.

4. Rising Mass Media:

Increased communication channels like Television, social media, radio platforms have increased awareness among rural masses. With mobile phones and the

internet, they can now search for jobs, learn new skills, and connect with people outside the village

Because of the rise of mass media, farmers and other people in rural areas are now aware of different government schemes which can be helpful for farming and other activities.

5. Agricultural Research:

In India, agriculture research is conducted by the ICAR- Indian Council of Agricultural Research. Research helps us understand the behavior of crop yield under different atmospheric and soil conditions, and how the use of certain fertilizers can increase production. The use of new scientific methods has been beneficial for farmers. This led us to the green revolution.

6. Urban Influence:

Communication channels like social media brought rural people closer to urban people. Rural people are influenced by urban people. It changed their buying behaviors and lifestyle which led to the increased demands for consumer goods.

Increased demands attracted many industries and many MNCs entered the rural market. MNCs worked towards making their products available at affordable prices. It resulted in more sales which helped to grow the economy. MNCs also started offering jobs to locals increasing the employability rate.

7. Government Initiatives:

The government of India has taken many initiatives to promote rural development. Some of the examples are as below:

1. Operation flood, white and blue revolution for self-sufficiency
2. IRDP- Integrated Rural Development Program
3. TRYSEM- Training Rural Youth for Self- Employment
4. REP- Rural electrification program for providing an electricity supply
5. PSU and Banks' lending money to farmers
6. Contract farming: companies give high yielding seeds to the farmers to cultivate crops and give them back to the company. This way farmers don't have to invest their own money for farming.

Following are the Characteristics of Self-Employment:

1. Self-employment involves doing something on one's own to earn one's livelihood.
2. It involves ownership and management of activities by a person although he/she may take the help of one or two persons to assist him/her. Thus, self-employment may provide employment to other persons as well.
3. The earning from self-employment is not fixed. It depends on the income one can earn by producing or buying and selling goods or providing services to others at a price.
4. In self-employment, the owner alone has to take the profit and bear the risk of loss. So, we find a direct link between the effort and reward in self-employment.
5. It requires some amount of capital investment, although it may be small.
6. In self-employment, a person is free to take decisions in respect of running his business profitably and avail of any opportunity that may come up for expansion of his business. It gives complete freedom to work as per one's own will and within the parameters of the prevailing laws.

Thus, self-employment may be defined as, an economic activity which one may perform on his own as a gainful occupation, and this may consist of producing and selling goods, buying and selling goods, or rendering services for a price

NGO's role in Rural Development and Self-Employment:

Preliminary definition of NGOs and civil society Research on NGOs is vast, and NGOs have been subject to rich academic debates related to global governance, democratization and development. Diversity has become an NGO trademark and it is a nearly impossible task to enumerate the various NGO characteristics when it comes to their aims, strategies, resources, target groups, tools, effectiveness, impact and sustainability. A preliminary attempt to define NGOs would imply referring to the civil sphere of society. Nerfi n's famous words "neither prince nor merchant: citizen" are often quoted in the literature in order to illustrate how we can conceive of civil society as a separate sphere, distinct from the political and economic spheres. In the non-state sphere, NGOs are characterized by their non-profit motivation and conversely, the private sector is fuelled by profit. In reality, these spheres are not always easy to distinguish. The interdependency may be even more present or at least more visible in a developmental context, where the political sphere often encounters difficulties in matching the capacities of the other two types of actors. Development NGOs are committed to working towards economic, social or political development in developing countries. Additional distinctions are often made between advocacy and rights-based NGOs; relief, welfare and charity NGOs; network NGOs and professional support NGOs. However, it is important to bear in mind that in practice the boundaries between these categories rapidly become blurred. Potentially, NGOs can participate in all phases of the policy cycle and on all levels of the public sector; as contributors to policy discussion and formulation, advocates and lobbyists, service deliverers (operators), monitors (watchdogs) of rights and of particular interests, and as innovators introducing new concepts and initiatives. Some NGOs combine two or more of these activities, whereas others choose to focus on one. However, in this paper the primary focus will be the traditional NGO role of filling gaps in state-provided public education. We will trace the evolution of NGO activities on the supply side of capacity development, making occasional references to advocacy and watchdog activities on the demand side of service provision. The characteristics of NGO interventions Within the education sector, it is possible to sketch out some principal NGO activities. As mentioned, NGOs have traditionally taken on the role of gap filling; that is, taking on activities of basic education provision where the government lacks the capacity to do so or does not consider it a priority.

Explaining Self-Employment Growth: There is an argument that the excessive size of self-employment in India is not due to the attraction for business or entrepreneurship but is a crisis-driven response to a situation where not many formal sector regular wage or salaried jobs are unavailable. The recent trends in labour surveys seem to suggest apprehensions about jobless growth in India, as concerns have been expressed in respect of low decent employment growth numbers. It appears that the creeping job crisis in the country is turning over the accountability of labour absorption to self-employment and entrepreneurships initiatives in the country. Therefore, the recent self-employment growth in the country has been linked to the entrepreneurship and start-ups growth resulting from the government's supportive measures in the country. On the other hand, there has also been a substantial increase in the demand for work under the rural employment generation scheme, viz., MGNREGS that increased immediately after the pandemic and economic lockdown that still continues to remain at a high level. In this section, we address these two issues;

whether the growth in self-employment does bear any link with the demand for work under the rural employment generation scheme and the entrepreneurship or start-ups growths. The emergency triggered by the pandemic during the first lockdown in March 2020 had forced millions of migrant labours to go back to their villages and take recourse to the 9 MGNREGS's work option. The MGNREGS that is a right based employment programme guaranteeing 100 days of manual employment in a year also contributed to the household belong to poor, landless and socially disadvantage communities. This scheme ensured the self-selection of the rural poor to receive payments by performing manual works. It may therefore appear that the rise in the category of self-employment workers is a direct result of the pandemic's job market impacts and the response of the workers in the unpaid family labour. The MGNREGS wage rate has often remained above the existing agricultural and other non-agricultural wage rates in several sample districts. It has also been observed that more women than men worked under the programme in recent years. Women's participation has been growing since the inception of the Act in 2006, and considering the aspects of low female labor force participation in the country, it is remarkable that the public work programmes attracted positive participation from women. We do not observe any significant relationship between the two either from the scatterplot or from the calculation of the correlation coefficients. It may be mentioned that the government has taken various steps for improving employability in the country like encouraging private sector of economy, fast tracking various projects involving substantial investment and increasing public expenditure on schemes like Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) run by Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MG-NREGs), Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) scheme run by Ministry of Rural Development and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Urban Livelihoods 10 Mission (DAY-NULM) run by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs. This aspect has been interpreted as not enough regular jobs have been created in the urban centres so that a large section of the migrant and displaced workers remained engaged in this scheme. The government is presently offering various schemes to provide financial assistance to potential ventures in the form of subsidies and loans. The results provided a negative and insignificant correlation that is contrary to our expectation and would possibly indicates the absence of any stable relationship between self-employment and start-ups growth in India. It may be noted in this context that although the start-ups or entrepreneurship and self-employment may bear the common characteristics of managing a business, but there remain differences on account of the ownership and operational aspects of the business between the two. 5. Self-Employment and Joblessness: It may be noted that the links between unemployment and self-employment levels in macroeconomic are discussed by using the 'push' and 'pull' approaches of entrepreneurship growth, wherein it is claimed that the unemployment rates can affect self-employment levels both positively and negatively. The 'push' approach, also known by the refugee effect, maintains that an increasingly high proportion of workers take recourse to the alternative of self-employment as the unemployment rate starts to rise. On the other hand, the 'pull' approach, also known by the entrepreneurial effect, suggests that as entrepreneurship encourages the business activities, self-employment in turn activates decline in unemployment levels in

subsequent periods. Thus, while the aspect of refugee effect or unemployment-push suggests high unemployment levels positively affecting self-employment through an increase in the start-up activities, the unemployment or the entrepreneurial pull suggests that unemployment could be negatively related to self-employment, as high unemployment reduces the incentives to enter self-employment

Conclusion:

Unless the NGOs are developed, prepared to face the new challenges like shortage of funds, stoppage of funds, it would be difficult for them to sustain. Rural India continues to suffer from lack of employment and self-employment opportunities owing to its narrow economic base. In the recent past, considerable success has been achieved in developing rural poor through entrepreneurship development approach which focuses on selectively utilizing local talent, appropriately developing them through training intervention and linking them with relevant Business opportunities. EDI implemented Rural Entrepreneurship Development (RED) Approach, in collaboration with NGOs by training their development workers. One of the major hurdles faced in the process is non-availability of required and timely financial support to trained entrepreneurs. It was, therefore, felt that the desired success rate could not be achieved in REDPs despite best possible training inputs, because of non-availability of funds from banks to trainees.

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