

## **RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW**

**Dr. Sangeeta Borthakur Tamuli**

Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Lakhimpur Commerce College

Email: sbtamuli@gmail.com

### **ABSTRACT**

Rural development is must in India for overall development of the country, since in India about 69 percent of total population lives in rural areas. Most of the rural people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. But according to National Sample Survey (NSS) data, the growth rate of employment in agriculture sector has declined from 69 to 55 percent. In such a situation there is mass unemployment in rural areas which adversely affect rural development. Therefore, for rural development in India, it is essential to solve the problem of unemployment in rural areas. As a result of which the rural youths will get employment and per capita rural income will increase which ultimately pave the path of rural development.

In this paper an attempt is made to analyse the rural employment opportunities which will bring rural development in India.

**KEY WORDS:** Rural development, unemployment, agriculture and allied activities etc.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Rural development in India is one of the most important factors for the growth of the Indian economy. The present strategy of India mainly focuses on poverty alleviation, better livelihood opportunities, provision of basic amenities and infrastructure facilities through innovative programmes of wage and self-employment. India is primarily an agriculture-based country. Agriculture contributes nearly one-fifth of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in India. Agriculture, handicrafts, fisheries, poultry, and diary are the primary contributors to the rural business and economy.

Economic growth of a country depends upon skills of its people and application of knowledge, inherited or acquired by them. Optimum utilisation of human resources undoubtedly leads to considerable degree of economic development of a country.

People participation is one of the foremost pre-requisites of development process both from procedural and philosophical perspectives. Employment and rural development are the two sides of the same coin. Hence, more and more employments in rural areas lead to rural development.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT**

Rural development is the process of improving the quality of life and economic well-being of people living in relatively isolated and sparsely populated areas. Rural development aims at improving rural people's livelihoods in an equitable and sustainable manner, both from socially and environmentally, through access to assets (natural, physical, human, technological and social capital) and services, and control over productive capital that enables them to improve their livelihoods on a sustainable and equitable base.

The basic objectives of rural development programmes have been alleviation of poverty and unemployment through creation of basic social and economic infrastructure, provision of

training to rural unemployed youth and providing employment to marginal farmers or labourers to discourage seasonal and permanent migration to urban areas.

The rural economy is an integral part of the overall Indian economy. As majority of the poor reside in rural areas, the prime goal of rural development is to improve the quality of the life of the rural people by alleviating poverty through the instruments of self-employment and wage employment programmes, by providing community infrastructure facilities such as drinking water, electricity, road connectivity, health facilities, rural housing and education, promoting decentralisation of powers to strengthen the Panchayati Raj institution etc.

### **EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT**

People who are engaged in any economic activity for more than 183 days in a reference year are considered as employed according to the Usual Principal States (UPS) approach. Unpaid helpers who assist in the operation of an economic activity are also considered as workers.

According to Gillin and Gillin unemployment is a condition in which a person is able and willing to work normally, dependent upon his earning to provide the necessities of life for himself and family is unable to obtain gainful employment.

Unemployment in India is structural in nature. In other words, productive capacity is inadequate to create a sufficient number of jobs. This is a chronic phenomenon.

Employment-unemployment Survey 2012-13, MoL & E, Gol, reflected that in rural areas, unemployment rate is 3.4 per cent whereas in urban areas, the rate is 5.0 per cent under UPS approach. Most of the employment-unemployment surveys results show that majority of the persons are employed in the primary sector such as agriculture, forestry and fishery sectors and those population belongs to rural areas of India

### **CAUSES OF RURAL UNEMPLOYMENT**

Unemployment, a bane for realities, particularly in a developing country like India, is caused by a number of factors. Some of them are discussed below.

#### **1. Rapid growth of population**

Growth of population is the main cause of rural unemployment. Every year population increases by nearly 50 lakhs. As the industrial growth of the country does not keep pace with the rapid growth of population, industrial sector fails to absorb the increasing population. As a result, a vast number of people almost 67.7% of the population depend on agriculture.

#### **2. Pressure on agricultural land**

Most of the rural people depend on agriculture for their livelihood. But cultivable land is limited in supply. As a result, unemployment prevails in rural areas.

#### **3. Seasonal nature of agriculture**

Agriculture does not engage the cultivators all the year round. Generally during the sowing and harvesting period, the rural people are almost fully employed and before the next sowing they remain unemployed.

#### **4. Traditional method of cultivation**

Traditional method of cultivation adopted by Indian farmer is unscientific and obsolete. Aversion to use of fertiliser, lack of adequate irrigation facilities and lack of capital to

procure modern agricultural tools, seeds and manures affects agricultural produce. As a result, rural agriculture loses employment potentiality.

### **5. Disappearance of traditional occupation**

In pre-independence period rural people were employed mostly in cottage industries. But cottage industries have received a severe setback in the post-Independence period. Small industries failed to compare with large scale industries. As a result, cottage industries are gradually disappearing and many people are being thrown out of employment.

### **6. Defective social system**

Joint family tradition prevailing in India often takes the shape of an asylum for the idle and unemployed members. This defective social system encourages rural unemployment.

### **7. Faulty system of education**

The present system of education undermines manual labour. Educated youth develop aversion for physical labour. Hence the rural youth after the completion of their formal education looks for a safe job in a government office or a private firm. They are both unwilling and unable to adopt agriculture as their occupation. Hence present education system contributes to rural unemployment.

### **8. Poverty**

Poverty and unemployment are interlinked. Because of poverty the rural people have no resource for investment. Consequently, they remain unemployed.

### **9. Lack of employment policy**

In India there is no serious effort for manpower planning. So far as our development plan strategy is concerned, employment has not been accorded its due place. It is not linked with the development process under the assumption that economic growth itself would lead to creation of employment opportunities. But this failed to bring integration between growth and employment.

All these factors account for poverty in general and rural poverty in particular.

## **REMEDIAL MEASURES**

It is the agricultural sector, expansion and development of which ultimately bring rural development in India. Therefore, there is a need to make it more viable and profitable. There is enormous scope for raising the productivity of Indian agriculture, doubling crop yields and farm incomes, and generating significant growth in demand for farm labour. Rising rural incomes consequent to higher productivity will unleash a multiplier effect in the form of increasing demand for farm and non-farm product and services, thereby stimulating rapid growth of employment opportunities in other sectors. Therefore, it is very essential to adopt improved method of agriculture by using scientific method, good seed, proper tools and adequate manure, irrigation facilities. Moreover, there should be rotation of crops so that employment can be provided to the rural people for a longer period.

It is important to establish village-based farm schools to demonstrate and impart advanced technology to farmers on their own lands.

Measures should be taken to strengthen farm credit and insurance programmes, including creation of linkages between crop insurance, crop loans, and farm school training to

encourage farmers who seek credit and crop insurance to adopt improved cultivation practices.

Post-harvest management centres should be set up for sorting, grading, standardisation, storage and packing. In addition, units for value addition and food processing should also be established in the rural areas.

Steps should be taken to convert barren land into fertile land by scientific methods. Again it is through the scientific methods sandy and rocky land and even marshes and grass lands can be converted into cultivable farm lands.

Improvement in agriculture, not supplemented by any other corrective measures, cannot provide employment to the increasing population. In other to provide employment to the rural people in off-season, some subsidiary occupations such as dairy farming, poultry farming, horticulture, bee keeping, furniture making, weaving baskets, cloth, rope etc. should also be developed. For this purpose, they should be provided with adequate finance.

Small scale, labour-intensive industries should be set up to provide employment to surplus labour force. These industries should take into account the needs and resources of the rural areas. Furthermore, there should be rural industrialisation in big villages in the shape of the establishment of large-scale industries. The local labour as well as other resources should be utilised to develop these industries.

The unemployed rural people can be provided with work by engaging them in public construction like constructing roads, digging tanks etc. These works should be started only in areas where people are without any work. This will lead employment opportunities as well as rural development.

Minimum need programme should be undertaken in the rural areas. This covers the provision of rural housing, water supply, primary health care; primary education etc. Besides providing employment, such a programme will improve the socio-economic condition of rural areas.

In order to provide employment to the rural people arrangement should be made for transport of labour from the areas of thick population to the areas where the density is comparatively less.

Favourable conditions for marketing agricultural produce will alleviate the problem of agricultural unemployment. The organisation of agricultural market will increase the income of the cultivator. As a result, the problem relating to rural unemployment will be mitigated to a great extent.

Moreover, efforts should be made to check population explosion so that whatsoever is produced can be available to the existing population and industrial sector can be in a position to give employment to the surplus labour.

## **CONCLUSION**

Today, the rural youth are in dire need of appropriate and satisfying jobs within the villages. The sustainable solution lies in increasing the productivity of agricultural sector by accelerating public and private sector in infrastructure technology and skills. A well diversified agricultural growth will enhance employment opportunities. By setting up more

and more cottage and rural industries will create employment opportunities for rural youths. Rural people should be provided inputs like credit, marketing facilities, infrastructure and so on which will enhance their income generating capacity and strengthen their entrepreneurial capacity. This will lead development in rural areas.

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