



TRANSFORMING RURAL YOUTH BY EDUCATION AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Rural India is the real face of our country as it represents 68.9 percent of our population. It is important to engage the rural youth in a productive way in tandem with their aspirations by providing them credible opportunities for growth and well being. But in the globalized area, firms and industries demand for more skills workers. In addition to this technological change, particularly the development of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) , is occurring at unprecedented speed, requiring workers to have more and more complex cognitive skills than ever. Therefore it is important to meet the challenges and prepare rural youth with the proper education and skills they need. Although there are many programmes for their development but it is important to note that all of these programme will be successful only if they are implemented properly. This article is an attempt to understand the problems and challenges of rural youth in the context of their development and possible suggestions are given to overcome the problems by Education and Skill Development.

Keywords: Rural, Youth, Education, Skill Development, Challenges, Suggestions.

INTRODUCTION

Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the Nation said that India's strength lies in its villages. Rural India is the real face of our country as it represents 68.9 percent of our population (Census, 2011). Rural areas contribute significantly to the overall growth and economic development of our country. It is important to engage the rural youth in a productive way in tandem with their aspirations . According to census 2011 India has 55 million potential workers between

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the age growth of 15 and 35 years in rural areas. When the world is expected to face a shortage of 57 million workers by 2020, India is expected to have a surplus of 47 million. This presents a historic opportunity for India to transform its demographic surplus into a demographic dividend. The challenge is to make this population a human resource which is not possible without education and skill development. The task is gigantic in many ways.

Current situation of youth in India-

Census 2011 from the national sample survey office indicates that 105 million fresh entrants to workforce will require skill training by 2022 [i.e. around 15 million every year]. Some 300 million of the current working population will need to additional training over the next 7 years. According to the 12th plan document of the planning commission, India's labour force has increased from over 478 million in 2011 to over 502 million in 2017 and over 8.5% this labour force has an educational qualification till the primary level and only 2% have had vocational training (12th plan, 2013). A World Bank report states that India is one of the few countries where working population continues to grow till 2050.

India skill Report, 2018 highlighted that there is a clear, structural shift from agriculture to non-farm sector, particularly construction, trade and transport. According to report, rapid advances in automation technologies are affecting India's information technology and business process outsourcing sectors. These sectors have remained net job creators, and the industry estimates that companies could hire up to 2.5 to 3 million more workers by 2025. In addition to this the global rise of independent work and micro entrepreneurship created gainful employment for between 20 million and 26 million people between 2014 and 2017. Thus a nation like India which is progressing towards development requires institutions, entrepreneurship and skill development, to initiate and achieve the course of change and the changing societal structure and livelihood profiles (Singh, 2016).

Despite the obvious importance of young people today for addressing the challenges facing the world, it is an unfortunate reality that they remain marginal to development debates and planning. This marginalization is particularly stark when it comes to young rural women and men, with the result that youth employment plans have been disproportionately initiated and designed according to the needs of urban young people. There are two major problems with the existing workforce that is supposed to be skilled:

- Poor quality of labour force who have general education upto secondary level or those having vocational training and get employment.
- Educated labour force who are not able to find jobs matching their qualification due to lack of technical or soft skills.



The above factors lead to the mismatch between the skills that are currently available in the educated or trained labour force on the one hand, and the type of skills that are actually in demand from employers on the other hand. However, recognition is growing about the need for economic models to be inclusive and about the role of agriculture and the need to address emerging climatic and environmental challenges for rural youth . This recognition indicates there may be wider scope to address the concerns of young rural woman and men than has been the case up until now.

Current situation of rural youth in India-

Rural India, awash with natural resources has the potential to be the most efficient powerhouse for national development . Other facts include total fertility rates and pregnancies are reported more in rural than in urban areas and that the rural population is much younger than the urban population (Anbuthambi and Chandrasekaran, 2017) . As per the annual report of 2015-16, (NSS) following is the current state of rural India.

- 72.2% of Indian population I.e. 857 million people lives in rural areas.
- 12% of the world population lives in Indian villages, which makes it bigger than the size of Europe.
- 80% of the rural household depends upon small and marginal farms.
- Though the share of agriculture in India's GDP is continuously declining, it still engages around half the country's total work force.
- However, 40% of rural household now rely on non-farm activities as their major source of income.
- About 60% of the rural males and 61% of rural females belong to the economically active age group viz. 15-59 years.
- Persons aged 15-29 years, who were considered as the youth , accounted for 26% of rural population.
- About 72% of rural males and 56% of rural females are illiterate. However, only about 21% of rural males and 12% of rural females are educated at secondary level and above, (including diploma/certificate course). The literacy rate has continuously increased significantly over the years for both rural males and females but not proper vocational training.



Rural youth labour market also faces the problem of organized labour market, lower income, and unhygienic conditions of work and lack of social security. Even when the education and training are available, obstacles still exist such as social customs, caste barriers, and lack of access to capital, corruption, lack of support mechanisms, poverty, poor health and population growth. Due to population growth, youth numbers are growing faster than the rate of job creation. Exploitation also threatens youths.

Rural youth starts working from their childhood. They are often forced to work as bonded labour. All such harsh situations make rural youth unemployable and it was rampant for the last ten years. Most of the youth in rural areas, even though decently educated, they are not getting their desired and required jobs as per their educational qualifications. Their qualifications and job they are doing mismatch which creates the lack of skilled and qualified employees in the desired market field. Rural youth who preferred to work in fields also lack an innovative idea that is making agriculture bitter for them. There are many other challenges which rural youth faces these include:

- **Limited land and great pressure on land**

With the growth in rural population, Rural India has a limited area of agricultural land. Attempt is being made to break the barren land and bring greater area under the orbit of the agriculture. Apart from this there are greater people depend on land for their livelihood. This creates the situation of unemployment for a large number of persons in the rural areas.

- **Seasonal nature of agriculture**

No doubt India is a land of villages where majority of people are dependent on Agriculture. But agriculture in India is a seasonal affair. It keeps people engaged only for few months. After sometime the farmer has nothing to do. they have no job. During this period they remain unemployed. This has adverse affect on the earning of the people and the standard of living. In addition to these development of technology and competition also hampers the peace.

- **Lack of relevant education and training opportunities available for rural youth**

Indian Rural families have inherited traditional skills in Handicrafts and Handloom and many other sectors from their previous generation and they further extend these to new generations. These skills are dying because they are not cost effective and hence cannot survive in the competitive market, unless marketed properly. In addition to these rural youth need the skill to adopt sustainable production methods in agriculture also and have greater opportunities for rural non-farm work or livelihood-enhancing migration. As yet, the needs of young rural people have rarely been systematically addressed within education and training agendas. This has contributed to the difficulties they are facing in transitioning to productive employment.



- **Poor understanding of labour markets and lack of geographically oriented employment policies that are sensitive age and gender**

Many of the rural youth just go and join any course without proper guidance but only for the sake of degree. Such courses which don't bear compatibility to the innate talents of youth may remain as degree for name sake and they don't help them in getting a job. As India's labour market is highly stratified and segmented. Rural Youth is not proper aware about formal and informal sector opportunities of job. In such cases these rural youth resign back to their villages only to go for agriculture works or remains unemployed.

- **Rural entrepreneurship and rural industries**

Micro and small scale enterprise have existed in rural India since ages in the form of traditional skills. As the population grows there will be pressure on land and the growth in the agricultural production cannot absorb the ever increasing rural labour force in agricultural employment. This leaves the rural non-farm sector in the form of rural Small and Medium Enterprises to absorb those released from agriculture but not absorbed in the urban industries. Rural entrepreneurship finds it difficult to take off due to lack of capital accumulation, risk taking and innovation.

- **Migration**

Migration potentially opens up opportunities for young people to access decent work and education, and it will be a key part of the structural transformation needed to bring about economic development. At the same time, an exodus of young people from rural areas could deprive these communities of their most dynamic and energetic members. The migration process itself brings new challenges and risks as well as opportunities for young people.

All the above factors are simply raising the same voice i.e. accessing decent jobs not only requires improvement in quality of education, training and skill development but also it is to be done as per the need of the industry and labour market. Skill development programmes are essential and can work as a vehicle for change. However, a skill development programme to be successful in enhancing the employability of rural youth needs to take care of some additional factors. We should bear in mind that skill development is from the supply side. We need to be sensitive to the expectations of employers from demand side. Besides hard skill, they also award weightage to soft skills such as communication skills, upkeep of the employees, language proficiency, punctuality, hygiene and so on.

Solutions-

- The very first solution for growing unemployment is to control the rising population of our country. Measures have been taken by the government to control population



explosion, but still the desired results have not been achieved. In rural India, people must be aware about the demerits of the problem of over population.

- In India basic education should go hand in hand with technical vocational training in rural India also . Job oriented courses should be incorporated into the curriculum. Government should keep a strict watch on the education system and try to implement new ways to generate skilled labour force in rural India also. The education should be as per the current requirements of the industries. Before completing the education a practical knowledge vocational training should be given to the future aspirants.
- Depending upon the natural resource available in a particular area/region, skill development initiatives and courses relevant to that resource utilization can be linked / framed so as to have perfect demand supply. There must be continuous communication between enterprises.
- Government should encourage and develop agriculture based industries in rural areas so that the rural candidates don't migrate to the urban areas. More employment should be generated in rural areas for the seasonal unemployed people. In rural India, young people should provide with access to land and finance to appreciate new startups.
- Discuss with the villagers and farmers on a regular basis regarding the frequent problems they face and the ways and methods in which it can be solved . Take their inputs and suggestions into consideration which drafting the skill policy for rural areas.
- Promotion of rural entrepreneurship is extremely important in the context of producing gainful employment and reducing the widening disparities between the rural and urban. Monitoring rural development programmes by supplying right information at the right time, providing timely and adequate credit and continuous motivation of bankers, panchayat, union leaders and voluntary service organization will lead to the development of rural entrepreneurship.
- Conduct conclaves for rural skill development involving all stakeholders for creating a common forum and platform where they can discuss the latest trends and practices followed and people in remote areas can be aware of standard practices followed and initiatives and solutions to their problems must be given to them.

CONCLUSION-

It is evident that Education and Skills are central to improve employability and livelihood opportunities, reduce poverty, enhance productivity, and promote environmentally

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sustainable development in rural areas. It is urgently needed to integrate skills development into rural development policies and strategies such as agricultural policies and private sector development and entrepreneurship policies. It is required that in education system skill based training should be linked with placement facility to link trainee with Industries/Employees. The need of the hour is to build a skilling system which would enable the workforce to adapt and match the new requirements, a system that responds well to business needs and also provides new opportunities for rural youth which results in rural development.

Thus, Rural Development holds the key to sustainable economic growth and human development. The reduction in poverty is fastest when rural economies are resurgent, providing opportunities for diversification of livelihoods in farm and non-farm sectors. It is for this reason that the Government accords the highest priority to transforming lives in rural areas through livelihood and by improving infrastructure to improve the well being of households. It is only through an inclusive rural development agenda that sustainable human progress is possible (Sinha, 2007). Thus education and skill Development is an urgent and important requirement for developing countries, in particular for countries with large youth population such as India.

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