

3. Empowerment of Tribal Youth

Bhajaman Soren, Ph. D, Research Scholar, KIIT University Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
Mob. -7978051913, email-bhajamansoren@gmail.com

Introduction

“Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached”

-Swami Vivekananda.

This quote applies quite aptly to today's youth. The future of any nation lies in the hands of its youth. An empowerment youth can be the greatest wealth and strength guarantee of any country. In the present scenario, when several major economies of the world are struggling to increase their youth population, India is harvesting its rich demographic dividend. It is quite noticeable that India's youth population with 35.6 crore beats China's youth population, which is relatively less at 26.9 crores. Not denying the fact, the growth in youth population in India would only help the country reap dividends in the future. According to the census of India 2011, every fifth person in the country is an adolescent (10-19 years) and every third a young person (10- 24 years). Investing in this segment of the population is the best way to leverage the nation's competitive demographic advantage. The census report also highlights the fact that the proportion of youth population increased steadily from 16.5 percent in 1971 to 19.2 percent in 2011.

However, this huge powerhouse of the nation needs to be harnessed properly to enable the country to reach greater heights. There is a need to direct the energy of our youth in constructive channels. To tap this dividend, successive governments have been focussing on empowerment of youth especially rural youth in their plans and programmes. In the beginning, there were numerous challenges in this endeavour like lack of literacy, health care facilities and access to modern amenities, awareness of opportunities etc. However, all-round measures to tackle these problems in areas like healthcare, skill development, wage employment and capacity building have enabled rural youth with the wider choice for areas of employment. The government is determined to make conducive atmosphere for the overall development of the youth of the country.

Few of the focused government schemes on the health sector, especially for the adolescent girls and women have been reaping benefits. The Rashtriya Kishor Swasthya Karyakram (RKSK) has been reaching out to more than 25 lakh adolescents – male and female, rural and urban, married and unmarried, in and out-of-school adolescent with the special focus on marginalized and underserved groups. Financial inclusion schemes like Jan Dhan Yojana has given access to the deprived section of the society to the banks and more so in opening their bank accounts. The widely known wage guarantee scheme like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act also got more fund allocation which will further help in giving jobs to more hands. To add to this, the recent initiative to impart skill training to one crore people over the next four years (2016-2020) through Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) will prove beneficial in empowering the youth. The target allocation between fresh training and RPL will be flexible and interchangeable depending on functional and operational requirements.

Today the rural youth as a whole has never-ending opportunities. Not only can they make their career by migrating to the urban areas, but they can also lead better lives by staying in their villages. Numerous examples from various parts of the country where youth from the villages have improved their life and living standards through technological innovations prove that government's endeavour to empower the rural youth can certainly be achieved with the proper implementation of schemes at the grassroots level. The creative potential, enthusiasm and energy of the younger generation can work wonders for the country and create better tomorrow.

Now our world is home to 1.8 billion young people between the age group of 10-24 year, and the youth population is growing faster in lower income nations. Never before have there been so many young people. Never again is there likely to be such potential for economic and social progress. How we meet the needs aspirations of young people will define our common future. Education is critical. The skills and knowledge young people acquire must be relevant to the current economy and enable them to become innovators, thinkers and problem - solvers.

The sustainable development goals (SDG) that will follow the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) are being defined with the set of 17 goals and 169 targets, in these goals, policymakers prioritise the needs and make room for them to carry the next development agenda forward. Unlike MDGS, sustainable development goals are universal, while earlier means for developing nations only. MDGs were meant to be for the developing countries. There were the helpers and the ones that needed help," says Umar

Serajuddin, a senior economist in the World Bank's statistics office. The SDG views every country as needing development, and it's universal.”

The size of the dividend depends largely on how government invests in young people to realize their full potential. India has the world's highest number of 10 to 24-year-olds, with 365 million followed by China, which has 269 million young people. Indian government is taking this youth population as an asset and also understand that only with the right policies and investments and the engagement of young people in nurturing their own potential, the largest generation of young people in human history can become the problem-solving producers, creators, entrepreneurs, change agents and leaders of the coming decades. In order to reap the demographic dividend, this offers the education and skills of youth are vital so that they can maximize their productive contribution.

The World Bank group president in his recent visit to India said that:- “India is the world's fastest-growing economy and also home to 26 percent of the global extreme poor. This means that India has a great opportunity to make strong and sustained inroads to reducing poverty and to help lead the world in ending extreme poverty by 2030”.

The big chunk of India population lives in rural areas, as per the census report 2011, about 72.18 percent Indians lives in the rural area as compared to 27.82 percent in urban areas. Rural areas fall behind the national average on all socio-economic parameters. This article analyzes the challenges and government efforts with the various scheme made for empowering the youth of rural India.

The condition of rural youth is vulnerable, adult literacy (age 15 years and above) rate in India is around 71 percent, but the rural areas adult literacy rate is mere 64 percent compared to 84 percent in urban areas 17 percent of male and 13 percent of female completed this level of education. Among persons of age 14 - 29 years, nearly 18 percent in rural areas and 49 percent in urban areas were able to operate a computer.

A good education equips young people with appropriate skills and knowledge that will enable them to reap the benefits of globalisation with a low level of education; the job prospects become scant for the people of the rural areas. Here it becomes important to see how educational level of youth is related to the rate of unemployment and are different from that of the economically active population (i.e. population in age group, 15-59). NSS Report No. 554 on Employment and unemployment situation in India says that at

present the unemployment rates according to usual status (adjusted) for the youth (15-29 years) as well as for persons of age 15-59 years for different levels of general education. The general feature was that the unemployment rate increase with the level of education for persons in the age group of 15-29 years as well as for persons in the age group 15-29 years.

Consumption in India

The government of India allotted Rs.87,765 crore in the Union Budget 2015-16, for empowering rural youth and started various schemes to uplift the rural population by providing skill training, self-employment, wage employment and capacity building through training and research, human resource development, development of voluntary action.

Development of the rural economy has been one of the prime concerns for Government of India. Accordingly, efforts have made on a continuous basis for improving the economic and social well - being of people in rural areas on a sustainable basis. Despite the sincere efforts, the problems of poverty, unemployment, drudgery and migration still exist in the rural economy, pertains to a looming challenge for the Government.

MGNREGA

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee scheme is in consonance with the idea of sustainable development whose important cardinal component is economic, social and environmental sustainability. The recent global human development report (GHDR, 2015) refers to MGNREGA as one of the milestones in social protection measure in the world, with comparable cohort schemes- Rural Employment for public Assets in Bangladesh, Jefes De Hogar in Argentina and the limited Karnali programme in Nepal.

The 10th anniversary of MGNREGA was celebrated this year on 2nd February and current government celebrated this occasion by allocating it with record Rs. 38,500 crore funds to boost economic growth on an average each year around five crore people from rural areas are employed by MGNREGA. It is noteworthy that 1,970 crore person-days of employment have been generated since its inception out of which 40 percent belongs to SC/ST and 57 percent women participation. As on 12th January 2016 around 15.54 lakhs of households have completed 100 days of employment and in addition to these 26.19 lakhs, more households have completed 81.91 days of employment.

The Ministry of Rural development had launched “SAMARTHYA” a set of ten technical training programs for the creation of productive assets and to strengthen the livelihood resource base of the rural poor. The main objective of this program is to acquaint and train the MGNREA technical functionaries for all the permissible works under MGNREGA.

Rural Self–Employment Training

Increasing the productivity of small-scale and micro – enterprises is critical in rural areas, where people are increasingly dependent on them to supplement and diversify their income. Partly because of population growth, the average farm size has shrunk to 1.2 hectares in Asia and 0.8 in sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2003). To impart technical and skill training among the rural youth, Indian Government has come up with RSETI. It is a welcome step towards skill development and opens up new employment opportunity to rural youth paving the way for self-employment. The Ministry of Rural Development has set up one institute in each district of the country in collaboration with the banks and the state governments. These institutes are bank led i.e. managed and run by the public/private sector banks with the active support of the state and Central Governments. RSETI offers training in different vocations classified under agriculture process, product and general entrepreneurship development program designed for rural youth. A priority for rural BPL youth, a wide choice of vocations and continued hand-holding to ensure sustainability of microenterprise and credit linkage after training make it unique program. It must be underscored that so far, more than 190 RSETIs have been established in different states of the country with the active participation of 35 public/private banks and these institutes have trained more than 1.5 lakh rural youth on various trades.

Startup Village Entrepreneurship Programme

In order to promote entrepreneurship among the rural areas, the standing finance committee has approved “Startup Village Entrepreneurship Programme” (SVEP), with the objective to energize and streamline economic growth by providing necessary thrust from the grassroots, i.e. village, towards the creation of sustainable self-employment opportunities for inclusive growth. In its first phase of validating the concept, SVEP is expected to support creation and strengthening of about 1.82 lakh village enterprises in 125 Blocks across 24 states in the target four years i.e.2015-19. This is expected to create employment for about 3.78 lakh persons.

This program can do much to enhance entrepreneurial opportunities for the growing number of rural youth, while also harnessing their energies more effectively to reap the demographic dividend. The formal

sector offers far greater scope for creating jobs and raising incomes for young people, with far higher value added per worker. This is especially the case with the manufacturing sector, which can produce for world markets absorb large numbers of semi-skilled workers and create opportunities for young people to benefit from globalization.

National Rural Livelihoods Mission

It is imperative for the Government to expand livelihoods in rural areas in agriculture, small enterprises and formal sector employment. In 2011, National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was launched to realize this and renamed as National Rural Livelihoods Mission with the objective to organize all rural poor households of the country and continuously nurture and support them till they come out of abject poverty. NRLM ensures adequate coverage of vulnerable sections of the society such that 50 percent of the beneficiaries are members of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes 15 percent from minority groups and three percent from persons with disability. Apart from these, NRLM, work for bridging the gap between industries and skilled labour, a placement cell linked to NRLM yojana is also implemented. The skill development program seeks to build the skill of the rural youth and place them in relatively high wage employment sectors of the economy.

DAY-NRLM is providing also providing umbrella cover too, Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP), in order to meet the specific needs of women farmers and achieve socio-economic and technical empowerment of the rural women farmers, predominantly small and marginal farmers.

Conclusion

The non-agricultural labour-force is growing much more rapidly than the agricultural labour – force (UNFPA, 2011). The greatest potential for job creation and raising productivity and living standards lies in expanding formal-sector employment, especially in the manufacturing sector, which can absorb a large amount of semi-skilled labour. This is because the demand for manufactured goods has far greater potential for growth in global markets than that for agricultural produce .the manufacturing sector offers large-scale job opportunities for young people who may have limited schooling while helping countries reap more of the demographic dividend by using the available labour force in more productive jobs.

There is a need to address these problems by creating employment opportunities in the rural areas and this could be done by setting up of small enterprises in the Agro-based industry sector more as nearly 56 percent of the population is still dependent on agriculture. There is ample scope for innovation, value

addition and entrepreneurship development in this sector. This is possible only by skill up-gradation, handholding, mentoring, incubation and credit support aimed especially at rural youth and women providing them employment opportunities at their doorstep.

India has to take a lesson from its neighbouring country China. China's village enterprises employed people in the village and small towns by creating manufacturing enterprises that produced a wide range of products for local consumption and export (Xu and Zhang, 2009). In 1995, the village enterprises were contributing 37 percent of China's GDP, more than its state-owned enterprises (Xu and Zhang 2009).

In order to achieve the sustainable goals, India has to substantially increase the number of youth and adults of rural areas, who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. This will not only require policy formulation and deliberations but implementation as well. The Indian youth population can be the most substantial strength of development that we envisage as provided the necessary nurturing and opportunity. The crisis is being done away opportunities take shape but there should be more focus on universality and homogeneity of flagship programs and focus should be more on the most underdeveloped regions. The idea of sustainable development is exactly what the doctor has ordered for India and the functionary institutions must include non-state actors and other important participants to maximise the efforts to reach the desired goals. There are more unfolded challenges waiting for the government in the near future but there should be the least worryment as there lies a huge potential of youth population which is still fresh and unused. It is the opportunity that India can use efficiently to meet the sustainable development goals.

References

- Ø Kalam, Thomas. (2002) Youth: Definition, stages, specific Characteristics and Needs, in Vattathara ., T, and Michael, Biju (eds), youth vision, Guwahati: Don Bosco Institute.
- Ø A Rayan Amala Jeya (2014) Empowerment of marginalized youth Abhijit publication New Delhi.
- Ø Panda, A.N. (2010) Political participation of Tribals, Abhijit Publications, Delhi – 110094.
- Ø Singh, Utsav Kumar, (2016) Roadway to Accomplish sustainable Development of Rural Youth, Kurukshetra A Journal on Rural Development, Published by Soochana Bhawan, New Delhi,