



# Eradication of Rural Poverty through Sustainable Natural Resources Management in India

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Available online at: [www.isca.in](http://www.isca.in)

Received 8<sup>th</sup> November 2015, revised 17<sup>th</sup> December 2015, accepted 11<sup>th</sup> January 2016

## Abstract

*Eradication of Poverty and hunger on the basis of development process, the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) given utmost priority as eliminating extreme poverty and hunger as first goal among eight goals. After 65 years of free independent India, 65% of people living in rural villages and earn US\$275 per annum. Agriculture is the prime source of livelihood for the poor. The most of natural resources like land, water, forests and live stock are demanded and utilized properly. For the upliftment of rural poor the Government of India had taken several steps to elimination of poverty and implemented many rural development schemes. On this process Community Development Programme (CDP) was initiated in the year 1952. The other programmes like Integrated Rural Development Programme in 1979, Training of Rural Youth for Self Employment (TRYSEM), Development of Children and Women in Rural Areas (DWCRA) in 1983 and Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guaranty Programme in the year 2006 are the flagship programmes of the different Governments. About three in four people live in rural areas, where they depend on natural resources. Only natural resources can be sustained the countries growth and reducing poverty. The Government of India itself set 12<sup>th</sup> five year plan as "Faster, Sustainable and more Inclusive Growth".*

**Keywords:** Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), National Rural Employment Guaranty Programme (NREGP), Community Based Organizations (CBOs), Non Timber forests Products (NTFPs), Joint Forest Management Committees (JFMCs).

## Introduction

In India majority of poor people living in rural areas and depends upon Natural resources. The dependence of poor on natural resources is more than others. Reducing poverty is challenging for developing countries and it is alarming issues. Percentage of poverty in declining but still discrimination, inequality, vulnerabilities and deprivation still continue. According to UN General Assembly report says people living on less than \$ 1.25 a day.

UN millennium Summit 2000, 189 countries participated and bound to and poverty and hunger through improve better health, education and gender equality and environmental stability by 2015<sup>1</sup>. Still it is serious issue among the countries. We are observing International day for the eradication of poverty on 17<sup>th</sup> October. United Nations organization conducted summit in this 2015 and set Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They are: End poverty in all its forms every where, Zero hunger, Good health & Well being, Quality Education, Gender equality, Clean water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean energy, Decent work and economic growth, Industry, innovation and infrastructure, Reduced inequalities, Sustainable cities and communities, Responsible consumption & Protection, Climate action, Life below water, Life on land, Peace justice and strong institutions, Partnership for the goals.

## Poverty at Global Level

Poverty is not only a single country issue. It is very difficult to measure. According to World Bank estimates 21% of the developing countries lived below \$ 1.25 a day. In Mid 1970's UN setup a committee to speed up poverty reduction strategies like income distribution, employment, health, education housing etc., for social change. In 1991 the World Bank prepared World Development Report (WDR) on poverty in three main fronts<sup>2</sup>. They are: Broad based economic growth that generated employment and incomes for the poor. Development of human resources for poor and Establishment social safety net for poor.

In the development processes of globalize and liberalization poverty has been lightened up into the front. The UN millennium Declaration and the world summit on sustainable development (WSSD) held at Johannesburg in the year 2002 and focused on eradicating poverty<sup>3</sup>. In recent past poverty has been declining, but vulnerability of the poor did not decline. The disparity between rich and poor increasing.

**Poverty in India - Retrospection:** Planning Commission of India defined poverty and measured on calorie based both in rural and urban areas. It is defined that below poverty lines (BPL) people consumed 2400 Kcal per day in rural areas and 2100 Kcal/day in urban areas<sup>4</sup>. The Planning Commission was

estimated that 45.6% of Indian Population was under BPL in 1983, 35.8% in 1993, 27.5% in 2004-2005, 25.7% in rural areas and 13.7% in urban areas and total 21.9% in the year 2011-12.

Fresh debate aired on poverty measurements that Suresh Tendulkar Committee recommended BPL as Rs. 27 in rural areas and 33 in urban areas report submitted in 2011-12, but former RBI Governor, C. Rangarajan Committee submitted a report to BJP Govt that in the year 2014 that BPL as those spending Rs. 32/- per day in rural areas and Rs. 47/- in urban cities. Majority of the rural poor in India are poor because, lack of assets like land and unemployment. Besides this caste, race, ethnicity, gender are other dimensions<sup>5</sup>.

Some sections like Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes suffers highly due to limited assets and natural resources like forests, agricultural lands etc., People living below poverty line exposed in various shock that to crops, prices and illness. Poverty is not only matter of deprivation and also of vulnerability to such shocks.

### Poverty eradication programmes

With the inspiration of free independent India, Govt. of India initiated allocated lion share in the financial budgets to change the socio economic and political areas. Different rural development programmes and schedules were introduced. The Community Development programme (CDP) was introduced on October 2<sup>nd</sup> 1952. It focuses on self governance and develops leadership at grass root level. Some other programmes like Intensive Agriculture Areas Development Programme (IAABP), Drought prone Area Programme (DPAP), Hill Area Development Programme, command Area Development Programme (TADP) and Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) implemented during 1970 to 1980. National Rural Employment Programme (NREGP), Rural Labor Employment Guarantee Programme (RLEGP) Jawahar Rojgar Yojana (JRM) is also some of the poverty alleviation programmes. Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (NREGP) is flagship programme that implemented in the year 2006. This programme main objective in to provide wage employment 100 days in a Calendar year and also extended 150 days in a year in mandatory<sup>6</sup>.

**Nexus between poverty and Natural resources:** Poor people directly depend on natural resources for their livelihoods. According to recent estimates natural resources constitute roughly 20-25% of their total income. Estimation reveals that about 1.3 billion people live on marginal land and half of the rural poor having small land holdings to get adequate income. Dwindling of natural resources have been significant adverse impact on income levels among the rural poor and pushed them to migrate urban areas for livelihood. In the absence of resources, particulars in rural areas may remain under chronic poverty condition. Land is one of the prime natural resources to grow agricultural income. Agriculture provides employment.

Agriculture provides food fodder and drinking water to farmers particularly small and marginal farmers. The sustainable agriculture leads to growth rate of production of crops and enhance purchasing capacity of poor. When crop production increasing automatically wage rate also increases and it is one of the most important route to exit poverty. It is not only enhancing livelihoods but also for socio-political and economical identity. Land less and semi landless people are nearly 42% in poor in rural India<sup>7</sup>.

### Forests Management Concerns and Poverty Alleviation

Forests are played vital role in enhancing the quality of life of the local environment. It is renewable resource and contributes substantially for economic development as it is provides forests products and goods for dwellers and forest based industries. Excess use of land, forests, minerals and mines and also over population leads to ecological imbalance and disturbs ecosystem. Sustainable utilization of land, water, air, forests, fisheries, wild life flora and fauna only provides eco system that underpins human life.

Poverty and environment degradation is side by side relationship. 40% of the earth land in the surface affected by land degradation. Increase pressure on land through deforestation, over grazing and over collimation root cause of decline in soil fertilizing and production and aggravates poverty. This is shown that there is inter relationship between rural poverty and environmental degradation. There is an urgent need to address about sustainable rural development activities to alleviate poverty. By 2010 world's population would be likely to grow by 3.7 billion and India will reach 150 crores. The Govt. of India should intervene and should announce various programmes relating to alleviation of rural poverty. The Government of India already taken some Initiatives to reduce poverty through natural resources utilization activities like Community Forest Management (CFM) in the place of Joint Forest Management (JFM) was successfully practices in Andhra Pradesh. Organizing Community Based organization (CBOs) as called Vana Samrakshana Samithi's (VSS) and Village Organization (VO's) in a major cormorant of protection of natural resources and enhancing livelihood opportunities for the poor in local areas. These committees and the concerned departments like forests and district rural development agencies will jointly responsible to develop the degraded lands. Govt. of India implemented schemes like sustainable livelihood through Non Timber Forests Products (NTFPs), Capacity Development of Grama Sabha including Joint Forest Management Protection Committees (JFMC's) Green India Mission schedule, Foresting institutional and Technology Management Scheme.

**Strategies in 12<sup>th</sup> Five Year Plan:** The approach of Faster, sustainable and more inclusive growth the Govt. of India concentrated more on protection of Natural resources management and decided to give much priority for concerned

and encouraged Participatory forest management. People's participation in Government initiative projects are played vital role, particularly for livelihood security of local communities. Much more cooperation needed for forestry and wild life protection between developed and developing countries. Under the ministry of Environment and Forestry a Study Centre started for forest policy and cooperation studies.

**Strength and Limitation of past NRM Programmes:** From the past three decades 51 m.h.a had been developed through Natural Resources Management. There is top down approach followed in the past. Participating has not yet taken place and this resulted exploitation of Natural Resources due to low emphasis on management of resources. Inadequate delivery mechanism from National level to district and block levels, lack of Community Based Organizations (CBOs) etc., Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) involvement is also very less comparative to recent activities.

**Recent Strategies and interventions:** i. Integrated development of natural resources, on watersheds. ii. Need based development of individual resources. iii. Institution building as well as capacity building.

**Summary:** In the process of development in this paper I believe that the Government should adopt innovative methods and practices to conserve natural resources and reducing poverty. There is an interface between natural resources and poverty in India. Land, Water, Forest resources significantly influencing on poverty among rural poor land less house holds.

Resource degradation appears to be major cause for chronic poverty in India. The Government of India seriously looks into the policy intervention like forests protection and rights for local, especially tribal areas. Contemporary policy discourse on agriculture should focus on process of work force diversification for rural urban migration, promotion of high value crops in the primary sector, adopting integrated farming system.

## Conclusion

It is concluded that protection of Natural resources is an important factor to escape chronic poverty. In the present context poor may be seen a kind of continuum rather than strictly a separate category. Uncertainly asset less ness and adverse incorporation of government funds for schemes and

rural development programmes pressurized for poverty enhancement. Further approaches, policy formulation to combat rural poverty must focus on systematic approaches to build inter linkages across the themes.

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