

## **Livelihood Perspectives and Rural Development**

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### **Abstract**

*Livelihood options are defined as those activities in which rural residents can engage in order to earn a living and maintain their standard of living. Opportunities for employment must be sought out by people from all walks of life regardless of characteristics such as class, ethnicity, religion or socio-economic status. Those who are well-educated and well-off are able to take advantage of prestigious employment chances. However, those from the most disadvantaged and marginalised elements of society are able to secure jobs with lower wages. Agriculture is commonly cited as the primary source of employment in rural areas. Additionally, they have a variety of other pursuits besides agriculture. To name just a few: small-scale and home-based businesses, handicrafts, fine art, silk weaving, pottery production, and the like. Need for improvements in livelihoods opportunities, National Rural Livelihood Mission, features of rural livelihoods and the role that agriculture plays in developing livelihoods chances are only few of the subjects that have been considered in this research study.*

**Keywords:** *Agriculture, Livelihoods Opportunities, Projects, National Rural Livelihood Mission.*

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### **I. Introduction**

Many countries around the world, including India, see livelihood strategy as a key component in their development policies, practises, and initiatives. Rural people's well-being is threatened by a lack of adequate and secure employment opportunities. The term "livelihood" refers to a collection of economic activities involving the use of one's own resources, whether they are human or material, such as self-employment or wage work. The primary purpose of utilizing human and material resources is to generate sufficient resources, which might be monetary or non-monetary in nature. Those living in rural areas are taking advantage of these resources to support themselves in a more efficient manner. The Indian government has made a considerable contribution to the improvement of rural dwellers' economic prospects. Several rural development schemes, such as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, have been put in place (MGNREGS). People in rural areas face a variety of difficulties while trying to take advantage of available job opportunities.

Rural populations are more likely to be impoverished because of basic inequities in the availability of food, clothes, and shelter. Deforestation, falling land productivity, erosion, and other environmental risks are all seen as having a negative impact on rural people's ability to earn a living, in addition to the environmental repercussions of poverty. Most rural households rely on agriculture, farming practices, animal husbandry, and livestock management to sustain their livelihoods. Wage work, social pensions, remittances from family members working in metropolitan areas, unpaid domestic and farm work, and other activities such as the manufacture of handicrafts, ceramics, jewellery, and so on are examples of sources of income. This type of community is made up of people who have a strong sense of tradition and adhere to a set of rules, conventions, and practices. In other words, their jobs and cultures have a direct impact on their ability to earn a living.

### **Need for Improvements in Livelihoods Opportunities**

Individuals are expected to put in consistent effort and use a variety of strategies to better their financial situation. One of the most pressing issues facing rural communities in the United States is poverty. Unemployment, underemployment, low wages, and changes in the agriculture sector are all key contributors to poverty. When it comes to providing people with basic means of subsistence, poverty is widely considered a key obstacle to overcome. These folks establish a key objective when they are experiencing severe poverty, which is getting involved in various employment options according to their capabilities and talents. Rural areas are in a less developed state than urban areas. Individuals who are unable to find work in these areas move to the cities in search of jobs. For those who are unable to find work in their desired field, they may take other careers that aren't in line with their interests.

The agriculture sector is the primary source of income for the majority of rural residents in the country. Agriculture is no longer an option for them in the modern world. As a result of a wide range of factors, rural people no longer see agriculture as a primary source of economic opportunity. Because of the poor pay, those who work in this industry are frequently dissatisfied and unable to make ends meet. Production costs are too high compared to the yield. As a rule, farmers are reluctant to get involved in the agricultural industry. Farmers who work in other fields aren't getting paid what they're worth. One of the main causes of agricultural decline is the rapid growth of the population. It's becoming increasingly difficult to find farmland as a result of population growth. As a result, employment in agriculture for people living in rural areas has decreased.

To a large extent, this is owing to the fact that existing levels of endowment for production factors, asset distribution, and productive capacity are so far out of step with what is required that it is necessary to address these issues. Job possibilities are few because of a lack of economic development in this country, which would have a significant impact on the number of people seeking them. There is no shortage of labour in India, nor is there a dearth of investable capital. The vast majority of those in need of employment are illiterate, unskilled, and lacking in financial resources. Generally speaking, they have the ability to work in low-skilled manual labour. Loads can be lifted with ease by these people. All of these people, including migrants from other countries, are currently within the age range needed to improve their economic prospects. As a result, with the right skills, people may even work in low-wage tasks like cleaning and washing dishes.

Poor, illiterate, unemployed and malnourished people in rural areas have a big impact on their lives. When natural disasters and calamities like drought, floods, and earthquakes occur, they also require help to recover and get back on their feet. One of the most essential ways to address these issues is to find attractive employment prospects. In this situation, one can come up with ideas for improving one's living situations. It is a reality that there is no other component that could have a positive impact on numerous aspects of society. Economic, social, cultural, and educational issues are only a few of the many to consider. Individuals living in rural areas can better meet their physical demands and requirements if they are given the proper training and resources to do so. To put it another way, it is critical that residents of rural areas become knowledgeable about all of the ways they may help to ensure their communities' long-term well-being. People's livelihoods must be safeguarded through the state's implementation of relevant actions. In order to ensure the long-term viability of rural communities, new policies and programmes must be organised and implemented to support rural economic and social sustainability. In our society, families are seen as the micro-units of the larger community. As a family, you have a major obligation to ensure that your members have the resources they need to maintain their livelihoods in an improved manner. Increasing the family's financial well-being will eventually lead to greater state economic stability. It is essential to learn about the shift from wage employment programmes to the right-based wage programme Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)

There have been three decades of paid employment programmes in the United States. Creating public employment initiatives through a ruse is not a novel concept. There has been a Maharashtra Model for rural employment since the 1970s. People's entitlement and support by law are just two examples of the new MGNREGS's many individual characteristics. These are required by law. There haven't been many changes in public works initiatives during the last 30 or so years. Often, MGNREGS is seen as a copycat of other programmes, with the added benefit of legal protection. As part of Maharashtra Employment Guarantee Scheme, the National Rural Employment Program and Rural Landless Employment Program were launched in the 1970s.

Among the numerous initiatives and schemes aimed at boosting the economy are Wage Employment Programs, which were launched in 1972. The Food for Work Program (FWP) was launched in the 1970s to provide food grains to the poor and landless, especially those who were unable to cultivate their own land. The National Rural Employment Program (NREP) is the other one (NREP). Its goal is to help rural areas find jobs that are both profitable and sustainable. At least one landless household member, for up to 100 days a year, can be guaranteed work on projects to improve community assets and rural infrastructure under the Rural Landless Guarantee Scheme (RLGS), which was launched in 1983. JawaharRozgarYojana (JRY) was formed in 1989 as a result of the merger of the two programmes.

### **Aspects Signifying Rural Livelihoods**

Education lays the groundwork for individuals to enjoy more secure economic futures. As a result, one is able to distinguish between appropriate and improper concepts and topics of study. Individuals are able to instil moral and ethical values, which allow them to carry out numerous jobs and activities with honesty and integrity. The importance of education is becoming recognised in rural areas. In their minds, their children will be better off if they have an education so that they can get better jobs and raise their families' incomes. Even illiterate parents want the best for their children, which include enrolling them in school and helping them succeed academically. Additionally, it has been found that rural people are moving into metropolitan regions so

that they can attend higher education institutions. They are pursuing master's and doctoral degrees in order to improve their families' and their communities' economic well-being.

In terms of importance, diet and nutrition is considered the most important factor. People in rural and urban areas are aware of this. When women take on home duties, the first thing they do is organise meals for their families. A healthy diet is essential for anyone who wants to get involved in any kind of work or activity. In the morning, whether children go to school or adults go to work, they eat their breakfast because they need to replenish their energy levels and get the necessary nutrients. So that they can better carry out their work tasks, rural women participate in the implementation of household chores. In the countryside, most people work as manual labourers, which puts a heavy demand on their muscles? As a result, they must obtain meals that are both nutrient-dense and filling. One might thus say with certainty that acquiring an appropriate diet would effectively improve prospects for livelihoods.

An important part of rural India is agriculture and farming methods, which have been referred to as significant areas. The majority of rural residents are reliant on agriculture to provide for their basic needs. It is essential for them to have efficient skills and knowledge in order to generate production. More efficient use of natural resources, time-specific management practises, a focus on technology-driven production (as opposed to manual labour), the adoption of appropriate farming systems, the use of location-specific technology (as opposed to labor-intensive methods), and the implementation of inexpensive and no-cost technologies can all help boost productivity and profitability.

For those who want to improve their livelihoods by working in the agricultural sector alone, vocational training is a must. Individuals in rural areas are also considering other possibilities. Among them, vocational education is common. It's common to use terms like "vocational education," "technical and vocational education," "skills development," and "human resources development" interchangeably when talking about this type of educational programme. Education and training in the vocational field are considered to be an amalgamation of various techniques and technology (McGrath, 2011).

In order to broaden their knowledge and abilities, the folks enrol in vocational training centres. Rural residents broaden their knowledge in a wide range of fields. Some examples of this include plumbing and electrical work; painting and carpentry; handicrafts and artwork; and so on. Individuals choose their career paths based on a combination of their own preferences and skill set. The majority of these people relocate to urban areas in search of work once they have received adequate training in these rural locations. Most of the time, they go door-to-door to put their skills to use. Electricians, plumbers, carpenters, painters, and other tradespeople are the most likely to be affected by this. Then there are those who can start their own business. In the case of artisans and craftsmen, this is more common. Extra-curricular activities – often referred to as co-curricular activities for rural people, extra-curricular activities have a substantial impact on both their education and their livelihoods. Consider the variety of activities available, and you'll be able to determine how many ways you can make money and improve your living situation. Sports, periodicals, the arts, student government, clubs in the classroom, community service organisations, and other extracurricular activities are just a few examples. (O'Dea, 1994) Singing, dancing, and playing musical instruments are just a few of the things that rural residents are particularly fond of, as evidenced by several studies.

### **Role of Agriculture in Improving Livelihoods Opportunities**

Farmers and non-farmers alike in emerging nations such as India see agricultural development as the most important factor in enhancing the livelihoods of rural people. When people have enough food and money to meet their daily wants and requirements, they have better opportunities for a better life. As long as they have a work, money, and assets, they believe that they can maintain their livelihoods opportunities in a suitable manner. To secure a livelihood for those who live in rural areas, there are four primary options available to them. This is how it's stated: Charya (2006) stated:

The vast majority of small and marginal farmers make a living through farming on tiny plots of land, which is known as "production-based livelihood." Simply put, production-based livelihoods are those in which people earn a living by participating in production activities. Individuals in this group see access to inputs and better farming practises as vital to their potential to enhance their livelihoods.

Small landowners and landless rural households can meet their needs for income by selling their labour in the case of labor-based livelihoods. Individuals may even be hired to perform unskilled manual labour in construction projects. Those who rely on a job to make a living factor in such things as labour demand, wage rates, and the cost of food.

When people in rural communities generate surplus food or non-food agricultural products or non-farm items, they can sell their surplus in the market. This is known as an exchange or market-based living. In order to do this, they need to be well-versed in marketing techniques, production expenses, and selling pricing. It is imperative that they understand that the cost of production and manufacturing must be lower than the selling price in order to generate profit.

Entitlements based on the transfer of ownership – In most cases, transfer-based entitlements are intended for households that lack income-earning assets or an able-bodied person who can work in order to maintain their livelihoods chances. They are the ones who are reliant on the government or other social groups for financial assistance. The social security and food assistance programmes of the federal government are thought to be helpful to this particular category of rural households in meeting their basic needs. With regard to emerging countries, a wide range of determinants and macroeconomic subsystems influence rural livelihoods systems.

Sustaining agriculture is defined by FAO as "the management and conservation of natural resources while employing cutting-edge technologies to ensure that human needs are addressed for present as well as future generations." When it comes to sustainable agriculture, this means it must be environmentally non-degrading; technologically adequate; commercially viable; and socially accepted (Acharya, 2006). People in rural areas would be better able to make ends meet if they were able to apply new and innovative methods and techniques in their production processes.

Understanding how the agricultural industry contributes to people's quality of life requires recognising that agriculture by definition is the most efficient eco-system in existence. It has a strong connection to the food chain. People in rural areas who are exclusively dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods are able to escape poverty thanks to technological advances in the agricultural sector. It is possible for the agricultural workers to earn a living and to meet their dietary needs at the same time. Individuals in this position must be knowledgeable of the best practises and procedures for boosting productivity. Recent trends in the profitability of farming and certain new approaches, such as organic farming, will lead to an increase in productivity with the implementation of sustainable crop and agricultural systems (Acharya, 2006).

The perception of rural and urban areas is an important part of the sustainability of agriculture and rural livelihoods. Urban areas are becoming less dependent on agricultural land, which is a good indicator for lowering the demand on land and water resources. The boundaries between farmland, small and big towns, informal urban settlements, peri-urban areas, and urban centres have grown increasingly difficult to identify. The peri-urban areas have grown at a far faster rate than the metropolis. Because private investments tend to be concentrated in these locations, there has been a growth in these areas. As the entire population grows, the urban population continues to grow at a faster rate than the total population (Acharya, 2006).

Several studies have found that rural residents' sources of income have become more dispersed. In search of improved job prospects, rural residents go to urban centres and other locales outside of their home regions. Industrial and manufacturing vocations are considered to be dangerous. Those who live in rural areas are sometimes afraid to work in these areas because they lack the necessary skills and feel vulnerable. Most people's expertise is restricted to the activities in which they are actively involved. People in rural areas are mostly involved in farming and agricultural pursuits. Because of this, they are well-versed in the duties and responsibilities of this industry. When the agriculture sector does not provide enough income, they look for other employment options. In rural areas, it has been discovered that people are trained in a wide range of trades, from plumbing and electrical work to carpentry and painting. With these talents and qualities, they are able to find work in metropolitan areas, too.

## **II. Conclusion**

It is considered essential for the well-being of people of all ages, genders, and ethnicities to increase their employment options. The current period recognises the need of improving rural residents' prospects for a decent standard of living. In order to achieve this goal, policies and initiatives have been designed with rural residents' wants and needs in mind. In order to reduce poverty, the NRLM programme was launched in the first place. Agriculture and farming techniques, vocational training, extracurricular and sporting activities, safety nets and programmes and schemes all fall under the category of rural livelihoods, as do education, diet and nutrition, extracurricular and sporting activities and safety nets. Rural residents benefit greatly from the agriculture sector's efforts to improve their livelihoods. There are four main ways to make a living: production-based, labor-based, exchange- or market-based, and entitlement-based.

To achieve the primary goal of improving rural livelihoods, the following areas must be addressed: poverty reduction, creative approaches to providing better livelihoods chances, basic amenities and infrastructure facilities, wage and self-employment, and basic amenities and infrastructure. Individuals in rural areas must be able to create enough revenue so that they can improve their living conditions.. A nuclear family with more than two children is more common in rural areas than in any other region. People must take on more than one job or hobby in order to maintain their standard of living. To improve their living conditions, many people from rural regions move into urban areas in order to find work and to pursue higher education, according to a recent study by the Pew Research Center on the State of the American Dream. It may be concluded that the information generated by those who reside in rural areas is aimed at improving their livelihood chances.

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