

Rethinking Of Rural Development in Odisha: Challenges Ahead

Dr. Indira Garnaik

Asst.Prof. of Pol. Science, GM University, Sambalpur

Corresponding Author: Dr. Indira Garnaik

ABSTRACT: ‘Village is the cell of the national body & the cell must be healthy & developed for the national body to be healthy & developed’ are the golden lines of Sri Aurobindo. In recent years, the rural development topic assumed a widespread focus as a result of various emerging issues such as agrarian issues, rural poverty, lack of infrastructure, rural migration, development programme-related issues, unemployment, illiteracy, rural indebtedness & so on. Rural development more specifically signifies improving a lot of underprivileged rural poor by utilising, protecting and enhancing the natural, physical and human resources needed to improve rural living condition. After 72 years of independence though deliberate attempts are made by government, 26.1% of population are still living below poverty line. 68.9% of the population live in primitive condition under two rupees per day poverty line. As per the census 2011 data regarding rural livelihood, employment, literacy, access to basic service, IMR & % of anaemic, health & nutritional status are in great distress. This paper is an account of growing realisation of the centrality of rural development & facilitation of holistic and sustainable rural development which is significant for socio-economic vitality of the nation. The researcher attempts to balance among economic growth, environmental care, social welfare & cultural preservation of rural people through empowerment, tourism & skill development of people of rural Odisha.

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I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the rural development topic assumed a widespread focus as a result of various emerging issues such as agrarian issues, rural poverty, infrastructure problem, rural migration, development programme-related issues, rural indebtedness & so on. Mahatma Gandhi realises the importance of village by speaking that if village perishes, India will perish too. Basically rural development signifies improving a lot of the majority underprivileged rural poor of India. The developmental theorists became dissatisfied with the traditional concept of development as it neglected the important issue of ‘distributive justice’ (growth with justice). Looking at the rural problems and emerging issues, Government of India has made the blueprint of five year plans through which planning, policy, management and implementation of hundreds of projects, programmes and schemes are evolved in rural India. But these are suffered from deficiencies and their achievement fell short of the targets. No developmental model becomes effectively worked out to resolve the unprecedented problems of rural India.

Objectives of the study: Present paper is an account of growing realisation of the centrality of rural development and facilitation of holistic and sustainable rural development for the socio-economic vitality of the nation. It is imperative to explore ways by which unprecedented problems of rural India can be resolved. The researcher attempts to balance among economic growth, environmental care, social welfare & cultural preservation of rural people through rural empowerment, rural tourism & skill development programme for people of rural Odisha. The study has developed a framework for growing co-relationship between rural development & empowerment. It examines the socio-economic status of rural people of Odisha. Again, it attempts to review the rural development in successive censuses by taking into consideration of different indicators, identifies their problems & proposes suggestions to empower rural people & make them be a part of the developmental process. Present paper is mostly based on the secondary data from various research studies, committee reports, Odisha Economic Survey Report, HDI, United Nation Report, World Bank Report, Annual reports & Report on Selected Education Statistics & NSS reports.

Rural status of India: Rural population in India is large, widely dispersed with varied social, economic & natural endowment. As per the World Bank collection of development indicators, % of rural population in India was reported to 66.46% in 2017. Proportion of rural population declined from 72.19% to 68.84% as per 2011 census report. Growth rate of population in rural area is 12.2%. 26.1% of rural population are still living below poverty line. There is a high level of unemployment in rural India. Literacy rate in rural India is 68.9% (male 78.6% & female 58.8%) as against 85.0% literacy rate in urban India. (Census Report 2011) NSSO report says literacy rate in rural India is 71% as against 86% urban India.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Present article reviews the previous books & articles relating to the rural development. Rural development is a set of activities & actions of diverse actors- individuals, organisations, groups & groups which are taken together that leads to progress in rural area.(Shepherd,1998) Rural sector is important for the society because it generates the growth & development of the civilisation to sustain & achieve human goals for better existence. Again, economic growth & rural society are the connected as most resources available for development come from rural societies.(Mathur, 2011) Economic development of the country to a great extent depends on rural development as it assists the economy to grow & sustain; there is a direct relation between agricultural production, income & demand for industrial goods.(Yakanna, 2017) One of the remarkable changes that has occurred in the post independence period in the field of rural development is reflected in the socio-economic development & dynamics of public policy in the contemporary political system.(Singh, 1999) The task ahead for rural development with an eye to ameliorating the standard of living of the rural people are quite gigantic & arduous in the face of the country's resource crunch, slow growing economic & politics of underdevelopment.(Singh, 2001) Promoting development in rural areas is slow & complex that requires simultaneous action in various sectors.(Viiteren, 2001) 80% people in rural area depend on agriculture but low productivity of agriculture led to scarcity of food, clothing & shelter of rural people that ultimately affect their economic, social, educational & health condition in rural areas. (Basumatary, 2016) Sustainable rural development will emphasise on health, hygiene, infrastructure development & creating income generating opportunities.(Pandey, 2013)

Status of rural Odisha: As per 2011 Census Odisha has 4.20 crore populations i.e about 3.47% of population of the country, out of which 3 core (83% of total population as per NSS report) are living in rural areas. Odisha is India's 9th most rural populous state (Economic Times, 2017) whose geographical area covers about 1.5 lakh square kilometers.

Literacy rate of Rural Odisha: Rate of literacy is 72.9% as per Census 2011. About 21% of rural male, 11% of rural female, 48% of urban male & 36% of urban females were educated(up to secondary level & above) as per NSSO. Regardless of the provision of girl's schools, Residential schools, Sevashrams, Ashram schools, hostels for SC, ST, the enrolment & dropout rate exceeds the national average specifically in rural tribal areas of Odisha. Schools are there but teachers are absent or not sufficient on the basis of teacher-student ratio, even schools are found working with one teacher for 5 to 7 classes.

Labour force & work force status of rural Odisha: Census 2011 says that 86.1% of total workers of Odisha are from rural areas & only 13.9% are from urban areas. Economic Survey 2014-15 says the % of main workers accounted to 57.1% in rural areas, out of which 81.9% are engaged for 3-6 months work, rest 18.15 in less than three months in a year. In rural Odisha workers participation is satisfactory than rural India. The labour force parameters such as labour force participation, workers' population ratio, unemployment rate is higher in rural Odisha ie 52.8, 49.8, 5.6 than that of national average ie. 50.5, 48.5 & 4.7 respectively.(Odisha Economic Survey 2014-15) Looking at these Government of India implemented MGNREGA, National Rural Livelihood Mission, PM's employment generation programme, SHG & many more. Despite all these, unemployment status is still higher in rural Odisha than the national average. People are not getting 100 days work, sometimes work is allotted to dead persons, irregularities in payments & manipulation by mediators is some of the problems that do not fulfil the purpose. It is a challenge for government of Odisha.

Unemployment status of rural Odisha: Unemployment rate is 8.7% in rural Odisha where as it is 5.7% in rural India which shows that Odisha exceeds to the national average in unemployment.(Odisha Economic Survey 2017-18) About 23% of rural population registered their name in MGNREGA job card in Odisha among whom 575 worked under the scheme & others did not. (State sample Data of NSS 68th Round) Agricultural contribution of Odisha to GSDP was 15.4% in 2014-15 which is decreased to 1% of that fiscal year 2013-14. (Odisha Economic Survey 2017-18) All the above status shows that majority of rural people in Odisha are unemployed though different schemes are there.

Agricultural Status of rural Odisha: As per the Odisha Survey Report agriculture is the mainstay of rural economy of rural people of Odisha which shares 15.39% of GSDP in 2014-15. Maximum agricultural productivity will secure food sufficiency, livelihood security, supplement nutrition, improve health condition, reduce poverty, sustain ecology, and contribute GDP & state economy. But in Odisha rural areas have no proper irrigation facility, land distribution, irregular monsoon, use of traditional technology, illiteracy, poor condition to afford fertiliser, pesticide, ineffective agriculture extension service, ineffective agricultural market, poor credit system, lack of sufficient storage system, low MSP, ineffective programme in agricultural sectors, poor labour value & fluctuation of commodity price, reduced level of research & bureaucratic support so that the agricultural sector suffers a lot & nowhere fulfil the basic needs of rural Odisha. Everyday news headlines flashed out farmers agitation, dissatisfaction, protest and strikes even 'farmers suicide' very prominent in Maharashtra, Taminadu, Odisha, MP, West Bengal and Punjab. Sometimes poor tribal farmers become

aggressive and converted into Naxalites. It is a big challenge for the government now. In this situation government's commitment towards doubling the farmer's income by 2022 is a big question for farmers or whether it will serve only the big farmers by ignoring the small and landless farmers as it was during green revolution period. Letter of Food Commission of India to CGA in 2018 reports that about two lakhs dead beneficiaries are getting wheat and rice in Odisha.(OTV news, Dt. 30.10.2018)

Rural infrastructure of Odisha: Important components of rural infrastructure are basically road, dams, canal, bridge, drainage, irrigation, water supply, housing, telecommunication, transport, communication, electrification, school, health centres; & markets. Electric polls are there but there is no electric connection. Electricity is still like a dream for people of some areas of Odisha. Rural infrastructure is very poor mainly in remote areas of Odisha which affects their productivity, connectivity, effectiveness in agro-industry & above all, their economic development. In Odisha, % of village electricity is 10% behind other states like Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Punjab or Himachal Pradesh says Economic Statistics of Odisha 2017-18.

Poverty ratio of rural Odisha: The number of rural poor in Odisha is 112.69 lakh where as in urban Odisha it is 9.71 lakh in 2011-12. The following table shows clearly the highest % of poverty in rural Odisha ie. 35.69% as against 17.29% in urban Odisha & 25.70% in rural India.

Table1: Poverty Head count Ratio% for Odisha & India

RuralOdisha 2011-12	UrbanOdisha2011-12	RuralIndia 2011-12	UrbanIndia 2011-12
35.69%	17.29%	25.70%	13.70%

The above table shows the Poverty Head count Ratio % for Odisha & India as per MRP(Tendulkar Committee appointed by Planning Commission) Source: Odisha Economic Survey 2017-18.

Human Development Index from 1995-2018 by UN method of Indian States shows that Odisha stood at 32 rank out of 36 states & its HDI is 0.597. Odisha ranks 12 among 17 big states in GDP growth.

Health care service in rural Odisha: Vital health parameters like Crude Death Rate(8.40%) Infant Mortality Rate(40%), Maternity Mortality Rate(222 per one lakh population) for the state continue to remain high as compared to national average.(Andrew, 1998) Odisha government implemented IMR mission 2001, Nabajyoti scheme 2004, ASHA, Janani Express, GKS, FRU, free referral ambulance & many more. Health centres are there in rural areas but doctors are not available. Ambulance is not available in remote areas & sometimes due to poor condition of village roads, patients' specifically pregnant lady & old persons could not reach hospital in time. The most embarrassing fact is that in tribal areas people today still believe & practice witchcraft, black magic, *chenka*, *guni* & consult them before going to doctors in their sickness like snakebite, dogbite or stomach ache.

Migration status of rural Odisha: In recent decades, people from rural Odisha are migrated more & more to get work & better payment in factories, brick kiln, construction, stone crusher, cotton ginning, domestic work or carpet weaving. The number of short term migrants is 4.17 lakh. 71% of migrants are from southern region, 19% from northern & 10% from coastal region of Odisha⁵. Maximum migration reported from Balangir, their number is 45,000 in 2015 & 1 lakh in 2018 who are engaged in 'Dadan' in Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh & Tamilnadu. The following is the table that shows their status in different years.

Table: 2 shows the migration status of rural Odisha

Year	Migrants
2007	55000 workers
2008	87 seasonal migrants
2012	1.05 lakh
2013	1.2 lakh
2014	1.35 lakh
2015	1.46 lakh

Source: *The Pioneer*, 9th May 2019

Government Initiatives for rural development: Since independence Union Government started Green Revolution, Land Reforms, Agriculture Extension Services, Cooperative and Credit system to increase agricultural productivity, reduce poverty & increase livelihood. Steps have taken to have equitable distribution, eliminate exploitation and inequality among rural population. Large number of schemes for rural people like LAAP, IRDP, HYVP, RIP & RAP, IADP, TRYSEM, FWP, NREP, RLEGP, JRY, MNREP, PMAGSY, SHG & IAY & many more are implemented in each & every sector from time to time for rural people. But these are either not properly monitored, supervised & evaluated by government or people are not aware about these programmes or many times due to corruption, these are not given desired results. Union Budget 2018-19 highlights that Rs.14.34 lakh crore will be spent for creation of livelihood & infrastructure in rural areas.

Minimum Support Price for all will be at least one & half times of their production cost. Institutional credit to the agriculture sector is targeted at Rs. 11 lakh crore for 2018-19. Allocation of National Rural Livelihood Mission is increased to Rs. 5750 crore to that of the previous period. Budget expenditure on health, education and social protection for 2018-19 is Rs. 1.38 lakh crore which is expected to increase by Rs. 15,000 crore after additional allocation during the year. Besides these, National Health Protection Scheme, 'Revitalising infrastructure & Systems in Education' (RISE) by 2022, 'Medium, Small & Micro Enterprises' (MSMEs) and many more are several schemes planned for rural development.

Necessary Action plan for rural development in Odisha requires a sense of urgency, priority and direction where involvement of each & every person, community, society & government is required to face this comprehensive and multidimensional challenge.

Overcoming challenges:

- The first & foremost factor is to build up a **healthy dynamic agriculture sector** which is the important foundation of rural development in India. Agriculture in India contributes approximately 15.7% to the gross domestic product. About 65% people in rural Odisha are engaged in agriculture. It is a source of livelihood for 86% of rural household. Agriculture and its related goods contribute about 38% in total exports. It is high time to reform policy along with the development of New Pricing System, adequate number of storage system. The programmes, policies relating to agriculture and green revolution, land reform and agriculture extension service should be revived in war footing way to make this sector more vibrant with greater productivity. Farmers must be aware of the best price of their produce and sell and government should take initiative to develop ways to add value to agricultural product locally to generate additional income. The poor farmers should be given health facility, education facility for their children along with pension and insurance scheme.

- **Sustainable rural development** by making rural people self sufficient as far as their basic needs are concerned, is another significant step of the hour. Sustainable agriculture seeks to achieve a number of objectives: efficient but complex diversified system; conservation of ecology & natural resources including ground & surface water, & flora & fauna; conservation of non-renewable resources; & adequate & dependable farm incomes & healthy rural communities & institutions. (Kulshreshtha, Canada) We should manage resources to satisfy present needs without harming the needs of future generation. Attainment of sustainable agriculture should be properly understood and adopted in future where the farmers, labourers, policy makers, researchers and consumers active involvement is necessary.

- **Rural empowerment** is another important factor that lies behind rural development. Empowerment includes political, economic, social and cultural empowerment; people will have trust, empathy, cooperation, skill, aspiration and realisation about their potentiality that ultimately makes them really empowered. Impossible can be possible if they have confidence, skill, strong determination & hard work. For instance, we came to know from 'The Samaja' & TV news that mountainman Dasaratha Majhi of rural Bihar constructed a road singlehandedly from his remote cottage to the hospital about 5 kilometers by cutting the mountain. Gangadhar Nayak of Koraput & Jalandhar of Kandhamala cut mountain to get water from the stream to his village. Economic development is not only the job of government. People should know how to utilise precious natural, human & environmental resources. They should be actively involved in the implementation of different programmes, give suggestion for its improvement & raise voice against corruption done in their areas.

- Rural Odisha has abundance of human resources, mineral resources & natural resources which are not properly utilised. If rural people will be skilled, trained with modern technology in different fields, these will be better utilised for sustainable growth. **Vocational education** oriented by capacity building programme will definitely create a strong workforce for rural Odisha. In this aspect practical initiatives of government with the social sector must work together. That will work to empower rural people and reduce rural migration to cities in search of work.

- Strategies to develop rural infrastructure by government grants with the involvement of private sector, **community participation & initiative of NGO** are similarly required side by side to develop rural Odisha.

- Enhancement of new & appropriate technology in agriculture & non-agricultural activities should be equally promoted. **Extensive research in this field, innovative ideas** relating to agricultural productivity & application of new scientific technological ideas can help to promote it.

- **Involvement of women, SC, ST in decision making** process, their acquaintance with the achievement of food security to end hunger, awareness about new modern technology, schemes & programmes, designing rural road network are also of primarily important.

- Mahatma Gandhi once influenced by Ruskin & Tolstoy developed his idea of '**Bread Labour**'. To him each man must do some physical labour to earn his bread as 'Need of the body should be supplied by the work of the body'. Those who don't work will not have the right to his bread. Even lawyers, engineers, professors, poets & writers will have to perform physical labour apart from his intellectual labour to earn' (Pandey, ed. 1991) Really it is a good idea to make rural poor self-reliant & more responsible. People who

are the beneficiaries of different schemes & programmes, they should equally contribute to the society either in doing something for their community or locality, and otherwise they will be denied of these facilities.

- Strengthening of **information, education & communication** (IEC) in rural Odisha along with proper training to access all these facilities will help a lot for their development. Awareness & acquaintance with the system always make them to accept the system.

- Lastly, as we know that Odisha is full of beautiful unexplored potential tourist spots in remote rural areas. **Rural Tourism** is one of the significant sectors that will generate revenue, earn largest foreign exchange & provide employment opportunities so that rural poor will be more self sufficiency. Identification of rural tourist places and development of tourism projects must be prioritised by government of Odisha. A specific blueprint is to be prepared to develop rural tourist spots, revive oldest temples in this areas, promote rural industry, handicrafts, traditional fairs & festivals, tribal art, architecture, ethnic culture, encourage rural farming, conserve forest animal & natural scenic of this area. Rural tourism projects should emphasise on transport & communication facilities from urban towns from rural areas with cottage for tourist. Everything will be managed properly by local employment under government support. Appropriate sustainable tourism will not only act as a source of employment and income generating but also it will be encouraging farming, managing sustainable natural resource, preserving rich village culture, promoting cottage industry and attracting tourists. It will definitely attracted the foreign tourists to come here & enjoy the traditional food, drink, festival, folk of life, natural scenery, acquaint with traditional people, their local products, culture, history, & maintain peace of mind that act as a source of recreation.

Now it is high time to rethink of rural development of Odisha. Taking into consideration of everybody's accountability we can develop all. Understandings of rural development through human development, knowledge about different challenges of rural development & strategies to overcome challenges are predetermined factors to prepare the blueprint for rural development. Education, empowerment, skill, responsibility, good governance, accountability, community participation, awareness & further research relating to it can outgrowth the development in rural Odisha.

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