



A STUDY ON CHANGING PARADIGMS OF SELF EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS IN INDIA

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ABSTRACT

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Poverty alleviation has been a concern for India since independence. The government has been persistently implementing and upgrading various policies in this regard. The self employment schemes and policies have been premier tools to combat the poverty in India. The Indian economy being predominated by rural area and regional inequality is the critical facet of Indian Economy, therefore the second most important concern of the government is rural development. Thus self employment and rural development go hand in hand. The policies implemented by government have been revolving around community development approach, integrated development and lately to inclusive growth. The paper explores the self-employment programmes introduced in India and revolves around Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP), Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) and National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM). The paper presents the approaches of these programs with their pros and cons. The paper concludes with the Road ahead in contemporary Indian scenario

INTRODUCTION

Self employment-Concept

Self employment means to be employed on one's own rather than working for an employer who pays a wage or salary. Thus the individual earns income through the trade or business which he/she operated directly. The definitions may vary from situation to situation. An individual may have a retail shop, a bakery or a restaurant, beauty saloon, a boutique, artesian manufacturing etc in a locality. In other words, one is engaged in trading or manufacturing on a small scale or providing some service for a price. Thus this form of employment is called 'self employment'

Significance of Self Employment in Indian context

Every individual needs to support the basic needs of food shelter and clothing. Further the individual needs to fulfil education, health & social needs. Even the bench mark of prosperity is money. All these can be acquired by employment.

The employment situation is very dismal in India. Often the minimum wage laws are blamed for this; it is argued that these laws reduce jobs. However, the role of paying a minimum "wage" or ensuring a minimum standard of living can be, shifted from the employer to the public exchequer. Nearly half of the labour force is, self-employed in India. It is not plausible that all the self-employed people in India are entrepreneurs. Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of

households. One set has hardly any savings or wealth while households in the other group have some assets. The first group has no choice but to take up whatever jobs are available, even if these are low-paying and casual in nature. The other group, though relatively better placed, has its own difficulties. The macro-financial system is not very well developed in India. The real returns on bank deposits are usually very low, if not negative—thanks to inflation and financial repression. The non-bank financial institutions and instruments can be risky, information-sensitive and inaccessible the stock market is risky and difficult to understand for most people. Gold can be a store of value but it does not provide an income stream. Real estate can provide an income stream but the investments can be large and risky.

Self-employment is large in India also because government policies encourage owner-managed enterprises. Yet another reason for large self-employment in India is that we do not have appropriate training and education, a credible certification process, and a flexible and discerning way of recruitment. Many skilled and talented people are not well recognized. So, they migrate or they need to set up on their own here even if they are not entrepreneurs⁵

In Indian context Self employment is significant to the on account of – (i) generated employment and thereby improve standards of living, (ii) self employment allows person to be more creative, imaginative, productive, efficient and reduce stress from employers pressure, (iii) helps to realise potential of demographic dividend and fillip to make

government initiatives like MAKE IN INDIA, (iv) helps to achieve SDG based on poverty alleviation.⁶

Further small enterprises and self employment seek less capital, low cost of production due to local resources, lack of skills, training & education make it conducive to be adopted, less risky as they tap less investment and generally the produce requires less marketing & sale efforts

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sharma & Murthy(2013)¹affected by all changes in Self-employment rather than just the support programs of the Government programs, the strong increase in self-employment without employees is largely due to the Encouragement of the Government. Nevertheless the new business foundations by unemployed appear to be sustainable, compare positively against the former unemployment situation, and provide higher incomes highlights snapshot of Indian self-employment reveals that there are many factors to keep in mind when studying the determinants of self-employment. These include differences in self employment according to characteristics such asset, race, region, age, and education. They also include differences in the occupations and industries in which self-employed men and women tend to be found

Shukla & Mishra (2013)² the paper deliberates on Remedial Measures, challenges and opportunities of poverty alleviation measures in Indian context. The remedies suggested are- Employment generation should be the single most important criteria for investment policy, although profits and technological updating to be given due weightage, Constitutional obligation ensuring "Right to Work" should be the function of economic planning, Land reform, as an indispensable instrument for promoting distributive justice, for the employment of the poor and enhancing agricultural productivity, Rising of the domestic savings and generation of the domestic resources for investment, The private sector has to be more humane and the public sector more cost efficient. The challenges in this regards are Corruption, Political, Illiteracy, Reservation / Quota (Castism), Role of Private Companies should be enhanced. The brighter side talk about the Opportunities in Employment Generation - Huge work force, Transparency in the system, Economical work force & Liberalization in Exchange Policies

Tapola (2008)³ The present paper looks at the employment challenges faced by India within the framework of "ten core elements" identified by the Global Employment Agenda of the ILO. These elements relate to trade and investment, technological change, sustainable livelihoods, macro policy, entrepreneurship development, skills development, active labour market policies, social protection, conditions of work and poverty reduction. The paper highlights the efforts that are under way, if any, from a historical perspective and notes what conditions and institutional arrangements are further required to meet them. The author notes the poor quality of employment of the vast majority in India, especially in the informal economy, and analyses the evolving strategy for poverty alleviation through employment generation. He examines the poverty-employment nexus through distribution of the poor by their work status and reasons for poverty. He finds that the incidence of poverty is higher among the employed than the unemployed. The paper argues for the need to document the status of the qualitative dimensions of work in different sectors and estimate deficits of Decent Work to work out strategies and programmes for

improvement of quality of work in various sectors and activities.

Gary (2014)⁴Two key policy planks in the fight against poverty should be: raising the returns to self-employment and creating more opportunities to move from self employment into higher paying wage employment. Governments should support self-employment as a means of creating livelihood opportunities for the poor and expand opportunities for better-paying wage employment. Too often, public policies hinder the self-employed. With the right policies in place, the self-employed can boost their earnings above the poverty level. Four interventions have proved effective in a range of settings: focusing economic growth on improving earning opportunities for the poor, creating off-farm jobs, training for wage employment, and making microcredit affordable

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study is to understand the approaches of self employment programs in India from Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) to Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) to National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM).

The study is descriptive in nature. The study covers the model approach of the IRDP, SGSY & NRLM with their merits and demerits. Further discusses the road ahead in contemporary Indian scenario. The study is based on secondary data which is collected from various research papers, gazetted websites, and various reports.

DISCUSSION

Self employment programs in India

Integrated Rural Development Program

The various programmes prior to IRDP, their approaches were selective, sporadic, piecemeal or sectoral in nature. The programmes were designed in different years by the Government for eradication of rural poverty. Though they recorded considerable progress, they suffered from several defects and administrative loopholes and did not succeed in achieving the desired result, both in removing poverty and unemployment. None of these programmes have covered the whole country though the large numbers of blocks have more than one of these programmes. The Sixth Five Year Plan therefore proposed that the multiple programmes operated by multiple agencies should be ended and replaced by one single programme throughout the country. As against this background the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was introduced by the Government of India.⁸ It was a centrally sponsored scheme being implemented on a 50:50 basis by the centre and the states.

The program was launched by the Government of India during 1978 and implemented during 1980, the Integrated Rural Development Program (RDP), aimed to improve the living conditions of the poor by providing them employment opportunities to the poor and those who are living below poverty line and by offering them the necessary subsidies as well and chances to improve their skill set. Primary, secondary and tertiary sectors were included in the target groups. Educational programs and financial help in the form of subsidies were provided as part of this scheme to help these poor come beyond their poverty lines and lead a respectable life. The group that had been targeted as beneficiaries of this scheme included rural artisans, labourers, marginal farmers and the relevant group of people who are living below the

poverty line. Subsidies provided to these people were small farmers (25%), marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and marginal farmers (33.33%), SC/ST families and differently abled people (50%). The maximum amount of subsidy amount that had been fixed at 6000INR (for SC/ST families and differently abled people), 4000INR (non DPAP and non DDP localities) and 5000INR (drought prone area program (DPAP) and desert development program DDP localities).⁷ The programme covered small and marginal farmers, agricultural workers and landless labourers and rural craftsmen and artisans and virtually all the families of about 5 persons with an annual income level below 3500.⁸

The programme was to be implemented by District Rural Development Agency (DRDA) with the assistance from block level machinery. The scheme for Development of Women and Children in Rural Areas (DWCRA) was launched in 1982 as a part of IRDP. Both in terms of the volume of aggregate investment planned and the number of families to be benefitted, the IRDP was the largest programme of the Sixth Five Year Plan for the alleviation of poverty in rural areas. The review of the program put forth the following¹⁰

- The government evaluation showed that only 15% beneficiaries could cross the poverty line by 1994 it was found that 24% of assets did not generate any income and another 50% of the assets did not make any contribution to net disposable income.
- The first limitation is in theory offset by subsidy, but it attracts rich borrowers to the scheme, and thus creates political and administrative problems. The subsidy element has led to large scale corruption on the part of lower level functionaries who certify beneficiaries as being below the poverty line.
- Large numbers of milch animals are often bought for beneficiaries at the same time in cattle fairs, pushing up their price. The difference in the price and quality of financed assets over their market price, along with the costs of time, out-of-pocket expenses, and payments to middlemen is estimated to raise the transactions costs to the borrower
- Administrative problems such as frequent transfer of key officials, inadequate assessment of the ability of beneficiaries to utilise programme service, carelessness in identifying the beneficiaries, corruption
- Credit was not accompanied with adequate infrastructural support by way of extension, marketing, etc. IRDP is generally successful where infrastructural and institutional support is available. These are the regions where many people even without the subsidy would have taken to entrepreneurial activities.
- The poor are not able to secure economies of scale because of indivisibilities in marketing costs and in insurance opportunities. Low price received by poor for their products is also because of interlocked output and capital markets, lack of value addition technologies, poor organisational base and insensitive government policies. NGOs could take initiative in some of these sectors; they cannot change exploitative government policies.

- Most poor people operate in very limited segments of highly segmented product and labour markets, and therefore demand for their products gets saturated fast.
- There was an implicit assumption that the poor loanee possessed information and skills to choose viable options, had access to raw material supplies, and were able to overcome the structures of exploitation which made them poor in the first place.
- There is still an under-emphasis on activities which require no fixed assets at all such as a large number of trading, service and even simple processing activities.
- IRDP totally neglects savings, on the mistaken belief that the poor cannot save at all. The distinction made by banks between the acceptable use of credit for productive purposes and its unacceptable use in consumption is an artificial one in the context of poverty.
- To sum up, although some poor have made moderate gains, despite attempts to increase public participation in the identification of beneficiaries, IRDP remains a highly bureaucratic programme whose benefits could be achieved far more cost-effectively by reforming the regular credit delivery system on the one hand, and strengthening credit reception systems through the SHG movement on the other.

Swaranjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana

Swarnajayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY) has been launched with the objective of bringing every assisted family above the poverty line within three years, through the provision of micro enterprise. The yojana has been implemented Since 1 April 1999 after restructuring and merging the erstwhile IRDP and its allied programs. It is rooted in the belief that the rural poor in India have competencies and, given the right support can be successful producers of valuable goods/services. SGSY is conceived as a holistic programme of micro-enterprises covering all aspects of self-employment viz. organisation of the rural poor into self-help groups (SHGs) and their capacity building, planning of activity clusters, infrastructure build up, technology, credit and marketing.

It has been conceived as a holistic Programme of self-employment. It covers all aspects of self-employment of the rural poor viz. organisation of the poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their capacity building, training, selection of key activities and planning of activity clusters, infrastructure build up, technology and marketing support.¹²

The SGSY is designed to incorporate the three important approaches i.e. Group Approach, Cluster Approach & Project Approach. The emphasis under SGSY is on the cluster approach. For this, 4-5 key activities are identified for each block based on the resources, occupational skills of the people and availability of markets. Selection of the key activities is with the approval of the Panchayat Samitis at the block level and the DRDA/ Zilla Parishad (ZP) at the district level. The major share of SGSY assistance is in activity clusters

Project Approach is for each key activity. Project reports are prepared in respect of identifies key activities. The banks and other financial institutions are closely associated and involved in preparing these project reports, so

as to avoid delays in the sanctioning of loans and to ensure adequacy of financing.

The Group approach which involves organisation of the poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) and their capacity building. Efforts are made to involve women members in each SHG. Besides, exclusive women groups continue to be formed. At the block level, at least half of the groups are exclusively women groups. SGSY particularly focus on the vulnerable groups among the rural poor. Accordingly, it has been decided that the SC/STs should account for at least 50% of the Swarojgaris, women for 40% and the disabled for 3%.¹²

The program aims at bringing the assisted BPL families above the Poverty Line through (i) organizing rural poor into Self-Help-Groups (ii) establishing micro enterprises in rural areas based on the ability of the poor and potential of each area. (iii) provision of credit linked capital subsidy to help beneficiaries acquire income-generating assets (iv) training of beneficiaries in group dynamics and skill development for managing micro-enterprises (v) marketing support with focus on market research, up gradation and diversification of products, packaging, creation of marketing facilities (vi) provision of infrastructure development fund to provide missing critical links.¹¹

The SGSY suffered from major deficiencies, such as (i) weaknesses in the planning and implementation process, improper formation, nurturing and working of SHGs, not strictly as per NABARD guidelines (ii) subsidy acted as a tempting factor rather than enabling one to acquire income generating assets through bank credit resulting in unsatisfactory loan repayment as compared to SHGBank-Linkage Program (iii) estimated income was not generated because of lack of effective coordination and systematic monitoring of SGSY implementation (iv) heavy concentration on agriculture and that too milch animals (v) inadequate use of funds earmarked for capacity building and skill development training, infrastructure development and marketing support.¹¹

Implementation of IRDP till November 1999 and SGSY since April 1999 could not alleviate rural poverty as expected, as according to NSS round [2004-05], 41.8% rural population had monthly per capita expenditure of Rs.447, which some economists consider Below Starvation Line instead BPL. Besides according to Multidimensional Poverty Index [MPI] worked out by UNDP and Oxford University, July 2010, about 645 million people [55%] in India were poor. The MPI reveals a vivid spectrum of challenges facing the poorest households. MPI considers 10 sharp indicators, namely Education [child enrolment and years of schooling]; Health [child mortality and nutrition] and Standard of living [electricity, drinking water, sanitation, cooking fuel, flooring and assets].¹¹

National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)

India has unacceptable levels of rural poverty, estimated at 42%. In some of the northern and north eastern states, there is an even higher level of rural poverty. Government of India has been deeply concerned about rural poverty in India. To eradicate rural poverty, National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) has been established. By the end of 2010, the Mission Document of the NRLM has been finalized and the mission was formally launched in June 2011. Major problem identified by the Radhakrishna Committee on Credit Related Issues under SGSY 2009) is that most of the SHGs remain crowded in low productivity, primary sector

activities. The success of the program depended on raising their abilities to diversify into other high productive activities. Even in the better performing state of Andhra Pradesh, the income gain to a swarozgari from enterprise activities under SGSY was a mere Rs 1,228 per month. The small income gain was due to low productive, traditional activities in which they were engaged and due to low absorption of technology. The magnitude of the task of rural poverty alleviation through direct interventions in selfemployment is enormous. Out of the estimated 7.0 crore rural BPL households², 4.5 Crore households still need to be organized into SHGs.¹³

Aajeevika - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) was launched by the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India in June 2011. Aided in part through investment support by the World Bank, the Mission aims at creating efficient and effective institutional platforms of the rural poor, enabling them to increase household income through sustainable livelihood enhancements and improved access to financial services. NRLM set out with an agenda to cover 7 Crore rural poor households, across 600 districts, 6000 blocks, 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats and 6 lakh villages in the country through self-managed Self Help Groups (SHGs) and federated institutions and support them for livelihoods collectives in a period of 8-10 years. In addition, the poor would be facilitated to achieve increased access to rights, entitlements and public services, diversified risk and better social indicators of empowerment. DAY-NRLM believes in harnessing the innate capabilities of the poor and complements them with capacities (information, knowledge, skills, tools, finance and collectivization) to participate in the growing economy of the country. In November 2015, the program was renamed Deendayal Antayodaya Yojana (DAY-NRLM).¹⁵

NRLM implementation is in a Mission Mode. This enables (a) shift from the present allocation based strategy to a demand driven strategy enabling the states to formulate their own livelihoods-based poverty reduction action plans, (b) focus on targets, outcomes and time bound delivery, (c) continuous capacity building, imparting requisite skills and creating linkages with livelihoods opportunities for the poor, including those emerging in the organized sector, and (d) monitoring against targets of poverty outcomes. As NRLM follows a demand driven strategy, the States have the flexibility to develop their livelihoods-based perspective plans and annual action plans for poverty reduction. The overall plans would be within the allocation for the state based on inter-se poverty ratios.¹⁵

The Mid-Term Assessment Report put forths¹⁴-intensive implementation of NRLP was initiated by states in a phased manner – 13 blocks in FY 2011-12, 124 blocks in FY 2012-13, 183 blocks in FY 2013-14 and 54 blocks in FY 2014-15, bringing the total to 374 blocks by Dec.'14 (as against the target of 400 blocks). These include 55 resource blocks supported by NROs and 14 partnership blocks in Jharkhand and 3 in Maharashtra supported by PRADAN and MAVIM, respectively. Within these blocks, the project had its footprint in 74% of the GPs and 60% of the villages.

By Dec.'14, the state Missions had a vast reservoir of professional staff (over 7,000), recruited primarily from the market through a transparent selection process. The state Missions need to focus on two areas viz., attrition among the staff and relatively high rate of turnover among the senior

management, particularly, the CEOs/SMDs in some states. The rate of attrition among staff was particularly high in Assam, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Gujarat,

The mobilization of total households at the end of Dec.'14 stood at 3.2 million (52% into the new SHGs and 48% into the revived and strengthened SHGs). The average rate of mobilization per resource block works out to 7,547 households.

Social Inclusion; The emerging results of mobilization clearly demonstrates that the states have adopted highly inclusive strategies. The 374 blocks under implementation are characterized by a significant presence of the STs, the SCs and other vulnerable communities. Of the 3.2 million households mobilized into NRLP fold, 29% belong to the STs, 21% to the SCs and 9% to the minority groups, reflecting the inclusive character of the entire mobilization process. There was representation to the minorities as well as physically challenged persons.

Promotion of SHGs; SHGs are the building blocks on which the entire edifice of community institutional structure is built. Commencing relatively slowly in FYs 2011-12 and 2012-13, the promotion of SHGs gathered momentum during FY 2013-14 and thereafter Dec.'14, a total of about 1.44 lakh new SHGs were promoted, besides reviving 1.31 lakh pre-project SHGs.

Age Analysis of SHGs ; The age analysis of the sample SHGs reveals that 8% are about 1 year old, 31% are in the age group 12 to 18 months, 26% in the group 18 to 24 months and 34% over two years old. The preponderance of relatively young SHGs indicates that a good deal of capacity building and nurturing support would be required for the SHGs to become self-sufficient and sustainable.

Capacity Building of SHGs ; The project has been organizing basic SHG training (3 days) as well as training in bookkeeping (5 days) and MCP (3 days), using core modules designed/customized by Mission states.

SHG Bank Accounts ; A necessary pre-requisite for all SHGs is to have savings bank accounts within three months of their formation. As of Dec.'14, 84% of the SHGs under the project fold had savings bank accounts with the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh reporting a relatively lower percentage of SHGs having bank accounts.

SHG savings; the average cumulative savings per project SHG stood at Rs.14, 353/- (Rs.1, 259/- per member) at the end of Dec.'14. The revived SHGs brought under NRLP account for a larger average amount of Rs.20, 116/- per SHG (Rs.2502/- per member). The rate of average saving is commensurate with the average age of the SHGs.

Grading of SHGs; the sample data indicates that about 61% of the SHGs had attained 'A' grade and others were catching up rapidly. The study also indicates the need for instituting a mechanism that would ensure grading of SHGs at regular intervals.

Revolving Fund; As of Dec.'14, 63% of eligible SHGs (3 month old and adhering to Panchsutras) were provided RF and efforts were afoot in the Mission states to cover all eligible SHGs by Mar.'15. The sample data indicates that the RF coverage of SHGs was even higher.

ROAD AHEAD IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN SCENARIO

The Indian economy comprises of varied cultures, income group, regional disparity, population groups and

basically agrarian economy. Rural development and Self employment have been a perennial concern for the government since decades. The following points give a bird's eye view of current demographic, geographic and economic Indian scenario. Few are conducive for the implementation of self employment programs and some are challenges.

1. Favourable demographics and the increasing size of the middle class population are the biggest drivers. Improved demand creates income growth and higher savings. India hasn't fully capitalised on its demographic advantage in the last 10 or 20 years due to weak governance. Now, the governance framework is improving and we can get a higher benefit from demographics.¹⁶
2. In India, more than 280 million more people will be eligible to enter the job market by 2050, a third more than the current number. In India, the size of the working-age population increased by 300 million between 1991 and 2013, while the number of employed people increased by only 140 million — the economy absorbed less than half the new entrants into the labour market.¹⁷
3. If we don't take any action towards population control, basic minimum living standards including food, water and energy will become a struggle for us. It will impact the 3Es – education, employability and employment. These three issues put together have adverse effects on our economy – reduced rate of capital formation, lower standard of living, and adverse effect on per capital income and so on. This is what we call the vicious circle of poverty.¹⁸
4. The financing gap for SMEs in the developing country has a few well-accepted causes. These include information asymmetries, higher risks, sizeable transaction costs and a lack of adequate collateral. These factors can be exacerbated by institutional factors within a country.¹⁹
5. Total bank credit to MSME sector stood at Rs 833 billion in FY 2005 and has grown at a compounded average growth rate of 25 per cent plus to Rs. 7.9 trillion in 2014. As Foreign Banks have been reluctant lenders with lowest growth in their loan book, Private Sector Banks' loan book is growing at a CAGR of 36 per cent.²⁰
6. The Economic Survey 2014-15 has stated that as per the Labour Bureau Report 2014, the present skilled workforce in India is only 2 percent, which is much lower when compared to the developing nations. As per the report, the number persons aged 15 years who have received or be receiving skills is merely 6.8 percent. The Economic Survey 2014-15 stated that as per the National Skill Development Corporation there is a need of 120 million skilled people in the non-farm sector for the period 2013-14. T Dearth of formal vocational education, lack of wide variation quality, high school dropout rates, inadequate skill training capacity, negative perception towards skilling, and lack of industry ready skills even in professional courses are the major cause of poor skill levels of India's workforce.²¹
7. The integration of the domestic economy through the twin channels of trade and capital flows has

accelerated in the past two decades which in turn led to the Indian economy growing from Rs 32 trillion (US\$ 474.37 billion) in 2004 to about Rs 153 trillion (US\$ 2.3 trillion) by 2016. Simultaneously, the per capita income also nearly trebled during these years. India's trade and external sector had a significant impact on the GDP growth as well as expansion in per capita income.²²

8. Apart from being a critical driver of economic growth, foreign direct investment (FDI) is a major source of non-debt financial resource for the economic development of India. The Indian government's favourable policy regime and robust business environment have ensured that foreign capital keeps flowing into the country. According to Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), the total FDI investments in India during April-September 2017 stood at US\$ 33.75 billion, indicating that government's effort to improve ease of doing business and relaxation in FDI norms is yielding results.²³

At large government policy measures like Make in India, Demonetisation, Relaxing FDI norms, Skill India have become a boon for India. The SHG model suits the Indian Economic system and will be advantageous in the long run. The need is awareness on part of people to reap the benefits of the government initiatives and strong governance to purposefully implement it.

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