



RESEARCH ARTICLE

SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOOD APPROACH: A FRAMEWORK FOR ANALYZING LIVELIHOOD ISSUES OF RURAL YOUTH

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture sector is playing a critical role in sustaining rural economy of the country even in the era of liberalization and globalization. In India, about 75 per cent people are living in rural areas and directly and indirectly dependent on agriculture. In recent years, commercialization, diversification and human resource issues in agriculture have been emphasized in several policy documents. Agriculture is a labour intensive activity, there was 12 per cent increase in overall labour force in India between 2001-2011 whereas in agriculture there was 3.6 per cent decline in labour force. The unemployment rate in labour in India was very high due to lack of marketable education and skills. Without productive human capital, it cannot complete a demographic transition to improve socio economic development of rural areas. Across the world. 1.8 billion people belong from 15-35 years of age and in India, youth population is 460 million. About 65 per cent of India population is below the age of 35 years and unemployment rate among youth is 10.6 per cent. The integration of rural youth into agriculture and allied activities will increase the level of labour productivity. Keeping this in mind, it is necessary to tap their strength and reap the benefits of their creativity and energy. In the effort to develop a more inclusive approach, the sustainable livelihood approach is being pursued. The framework will help to identify use of sustainable natural resources, vulnerable factors, policies, local rural institutions and the livelihood outcomes for rural youth.

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is an important and integral component of every phase of economy of the nation. In India, about 75 per cent people are living in rural areas and directly and indirectly dependent on agriculture based livelihood. In recent years, commercialization, diversification and human resource issues in agriculture have been emphasized in several policy documents. Agriculture is a labour intensive activity, there was 12 per cent increase in overall labour force in India between 2001-2011 whereas in agriculture there was 3.6 per cent decline in labour force. The unemployment rate is high (10.6 per cent) due to lack of marketable education and skills. Without productive human capital, it cannot complete a demographic transition to improve socio economic development of rural areas. Most of the world population is comprises from youth, they can play a critical role in the development of the nation.

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In India, youth population is 460 million and about 65 per cent of India's population is below the age of 35 years. Majority of the young rural people work in family farming and informal sector, which can be considered as low levels of income and productivity, poor working conditions, absence of social protection, limited opportunities for advancement and lack of social development. The integration of rural youth into agriculture and allied activities will increase the level of labour productivity. So it is necessary to tap their strength and reap the benefits of their energy and creativity. In the effort to develop more inclusive approach, the sustainable livelihood approach is being pursued. Chisom (1990) suggests a framework for understanding rural youth that can help to analyze youth livelihoods. This livelihood approach helps to identify resources and activities, remove constraints, identify various ways of making livelihoods as a whole and seeks to improve developmental policy and practice in rural areas by recognizing the complexity of livelihood strategies. According to Annan (1998) various negative perceptions about youth are commonplace in both policy and practice. So it is necessary to understand the factors responsible for sustainable livelihood

among rural youth that can help to generate employment and reduce migration by understanding of multifaceted phenomena including poverty as a lack of economic resources, social status, health and employment opportunities of rural youth.

Livelihood issues of rural youth

Globalization and technological advances shows profound impact on labour markets throughout the world. Young people faced number of challenges associated with these developments that may affects the employment situation of them. Most of young people work in family farming and informal sector, where jobs are usually characterized by low income and productivity, poor wages, poor working conditions, absence of social protection and limited opportunities for advancement. Issues such as securing a good job locality by local family connections, an appreciation of the high quality natural environment, and access to appropriate employment and vocational training opportunities to youth enhance the livelihood options of rural youth. Lack of skills, limited access to markets, assets, finance and infrastructure in rural areas, coupled with perceived employment opportunities in urban areas are the major issues that affect the livelihood of rural young people. Youth may spend significant resources on job training, but in many countries much of the training occurs in unregistered, small scale, and often informal institutions (Van Adams, 2008). For reducing youth vulnerability, a multi-dimensional approach that is sustainable livelihood approach is designed to analyze the macro and micro issues related to rural youth's livelihood. Scoones (1998) livelihood approach challenged to the single-sector approach, solving complex rural development problems. It focuses on 'how different people in different places live' and 'how and why people make the choices that they do'. Moser (1998) also suggest the fundamental precept of approach (livelihood assets). It seeks to identify what people have rather than what they do not have. Youth are not a homogenous group; each sub-group has its own set of constraints so it can be observed through different young women and men, different ages and different geographical location. Thus, for analyses it is necessary to identify factors responsible for livelihood of the rural youth.

Sustainable livelihood framework

SLA evolved as a developmental approach by which practitioners were seeking to maximize the effectiveness of their interventions to help the disadvantaged. Sustainable livelihood approach is used as a diagnosed tool to provide framework for analyzing developmental processes. It focuses on how people strategically use the resources and making their livelihoods, how development intervention affect the local resources and way people interact with these resources. Livelihood can be defined as the means of making a living with various activities, capabilities and resources that allow people to live. Sustainable livelihood approach (SLA) helps to understand the various dimensions of one's livelihood, related opportunities and constraints. According to Chamber (1992) livelihood comprises from capabilities, assets and activities required for a mean of living. A livelihood is sustainable when it can cope with and recover from stress and shocks, maintain its capabilities and provide sustainable livelihood opportunities

for the next generation. Developing an understanding of young people that is based on the reality of their lives necessarily goes beyond the boundaries of individual disciplines (Wen and White, 1997). This framework draws upon some of the critical insights of socio-economic, cultural and environmental factors which influence the role of youth, create opportunities to stimulate their entrepreneurial skills in a manner that enhances innovation, productivity and environmental sustainability.

Objectives of SLA

- To assess the access to quality of education , information, technologies, training, better nutrition and health conditions in rural areas for the development of rural youth,
- To provide supportive and cohesive social environment for the development of rural youth that can help to the development of family as a whole,
- To provide more secure access to, and better management of, natural resources available in rural areas,
- To analyze basic, facilitating infrastructure and financial resources required for making a living,
- To suggest the policies that supports multiple livelihood strategies and promotes equitable access to competitive markets.

Components of sustainable livelihood approach

A combination of different types of information is needed to understand the sustainable livelihood approach.

Livelihood assets: Assets are the base which is needed to understand the sustainable livelihood a range of assets to achieve positive livelihood outcomes. Livelihood framework depends upon access to assets and availability of resources. In the livelihood framework, assets are basically natural capital, physical capital, human capital, financial capital and social capital. Datta (2014) emphasize livelihood analysis is a way of development not only includes employment income and a means of living, but also provides an identity and a place in society. Sanderson (2012) proposed a livelihood model, sets an analysis of people's assets (financial, social , human, political, physical) within a cycle of access to resources how people build their assets, which external shocks they are vulnerable to and the ability to meet basic needs. These assets and resources provide relevant education and training to youth rural people that linked to the needs of the labour market. It also helps to ensure that income-generating initiatives provide young rural youth with comprehensive support by linking components on technical training, access to productive assets, promotion of youth-sensitive institutions and improved access to land and appropriate financial service.

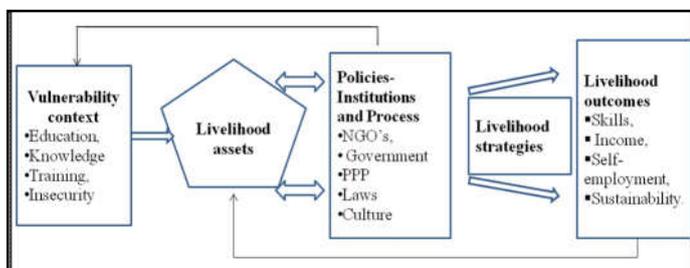
Vulnerability context: Vulnerability is defined as the state of susceptibility to harm from exposure to stresses associated with environmental and social change and from the absence of capacity to adapt (Adger, 2006). The vulnerability context frames the external environment in which people live. Vulnerability has two facets, an external side of shocks and an internal side of defenselessness caused by lack of ability and

means to cope with. The notion of "vulnerability" and "sustainability" in the context of livelihoods can be viewed as two ends of a continuum. World Development Report (2007) summarizes five major areas of life in which young people make significant choices on the path to adulthood there are continuing to learn, starting to work, developing a healthful lifestyle, beginning a family and exercising citizenship. It highlights how the choices made in these different arenas can enable young people to realize their full potential in adulthood as citizens, household heads, workers, entrepreneurs and leaders, therefore, how constrained or can have significant adverse implications for their human capital and future capabilities.

Policies, institutions and processes: Policies, institutions and processes are man-made external factors which shape the options that in achieving the livelihood goals. These factors can influence access to assets and vulnerable factors. Singh and Hiremath (2010) proposed the concept of sustainable rural livelihoods, encompassing the protection and assurance of the means of livelihood for people and society, and the current concerns and policy requirements pertaining to sustainable development.

Livelihood strategies: Livelihood strategy is the combination of activities are choices that people make to achieve their livelihood goals. Ashley and Carney (1998) sustainable livelihood framework have been recommended as strategies for widening choices, diminishing powerlessness, promoting self-respect, reinforcing cultural and moral values of the poor and focusing on the way poor people live. Increase financial capital in the short-term, through the conversion of human, physical and social capital. Increase financial capital in the long-term (through investment in human, physical or social capital) as for example through investing in education to improve formal employment prospects. Reducing the reliance on financial resources by developing other assets that result in direct livelihood benefits.

Livelihood outcomes: Livelihood outcomes are the results of livelihood strategies. It may be economic (food and income to meet basic needs), biological (measures of livelihood outcome as mortality and malnutrition) and social (the right to life with dignity is one of the fundamental principle).



Livelihood framework for rural youth

The vulnerability context describes the internal and external factors that affect the rural youth's livelihood. It includes lack of education, knowledge, vocational skills, training programme, assets and employment opportunities. All of these factors will affect the assets that people have and thereby the sustainability

of their livelihoods. The sustainable livelihoods framework is build on the belief that people need assets to achieve a positive livelihood outcome. People have different kind of assets to help them achieve the livelihoods what they want. Human capital is one of these assets, and refers to the skills, knowledge, ability to labour and good health that enable people to achieve their desired livelihoods. Social capital refers to the social resources that people can get help from in order to achieve their livelihoods. Natural capital refers to the natural resources such as land and water and more intangible products such as the atmosphere and biodiversity. Physical capital includes the basic infrastructure that supports the livelihoods that people seek. Financial capital is the financial resources that people can use to achieve the livelihoods that they are striving for. Transforming structure and process includes the institutions, organizations and policies that frame the livelihoods of the poor, and they are found at different levels. These processes and structures determine the access that rural youth have to different kinds of assets, and therefore the importance cannot be overemphasized. Livelihoods strategies are the ways of achieving their desired livelihood. Access to different assets may affect the strategies that rural youth employ, structures and processes in a given society also creates opportunities and constraints on the strategies that people are able to use. Finally Livelihood outcomes are the achievements of people's livelihood strategies. However, outcomes are to be described by the local people themselves, since these include much more than income.

Conclusion

The sustainable livelihoods approach encourages rural youth for their overall development. It is shifting from conventional approaches to developmental approach that aims to identify problems and finding solutions. It can analyses the linkages and relationships of different stakeholders involved in framing policies so that development activities can become more process-oriented. It compels them to look for multiple entry points and to move beyond a homogenous community view and a narrow sector perspective. It represents an important shift away from the focus on project inputs and outputs. In particular, the sustainable livelihoods approach stresses the importance of understanding institutions by mapping the institutional framework and linking the micro to the macro and the formal to the informal. It can also helps to identifying policies and rural institutions for the development of rural youth and linkages between them, Addressing poverty and livelihood patterns of rural youth. Identifying use of natural resources in livelihood of rural youth and developing livelihood strategies for better livelihood outcomes. One important criticism has been that it overemphasizes the notion of self-help for the poor population to whom it is usually applied, while focusing on the complexity of their livelihoods.

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