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RESEARCH ARTICLE

NEED FOR YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Agriculture, economy and social development are the driving forces of rural development are the acting as propellants for the inclusive development in rural areas. Youth are the energizing this development passively. Ministry of Rural development has vision of Sustainable and inclusive growth of rural India and this vision is attainable when the rural youth are involved in it and they are the major human resource for development, key agents for social change. India stands to gain from the 'youth bulge' which is not available even for the developed countries. Young people can contribute a great deal through their perspectives and experiences. The wide network of youth, National Service Scheme (NSS) and the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) could serve for the amelioration of the rural India. The vibrant youth capital as a strongest resource of the country should be utilized as valuable partners in the process of national planning and development.

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INTRODUCTION

Rural development is a dynamic process as it has several dimensions of growth. For the past three decades the concept of rural development has been changing from agricultural development, economic and social development of rural poor to the inclusive development. Right from the community development programme till the panchayati raj institutions there are so many schemes and programmes that has been implemented through various five year plans for rural development. And in the present scenario the Ministry of Rural development has vision of Sustainable and inclusive growth of rural India and the mission for sustainable and inclusive growth of rural India through a multi-pronged strategy for eradication of poverty by increasing livelihood opportunities, providing social safety net and developing infrastructure for socio-economic growth and improvement of quality of life in rural India. The main important component of all these programmes which has been forgotten or not aware is that, most of the programmes are targeting for the rural development are having its beneficiaries as rural youth only. But they are not actively involved for the development process but just act as passive beneficiaries. There are three main divisions under which the Ministry of Rural Development is implementing its programmes. They are Livelihoods, Infrastructure and Social security. Under the livelihoods, for enhancing and improving livelihood security by providing minimum 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in every financial year to every household Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and for providing livelihood opportunities to BPL households Swarnjayanti Gram Swarozgar Yojana (SGSY)/ National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) are implemented. In the infrastructure category PradhanMantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) which is for All-weather rural connectivity to

unconnected rural habitations and up gradation of existing roads and Provision of Urban Amenities in Rural Areas (PURA) Providing urban amenities in rapidly urbanizing rural areas and improve the quality of life and Indira Awas Yojana (IAY) which aims for Providing basic housing and homestead to BPL households are being implemented. In the last category of Social Security for providing Social assistance to the elderly, widow and disabled persons National Social Assistance Programme (NSAP) is being implemented. Except the National Social Assistance Programme, the other five basic programmes centrally sponsored programmes have rural youth as the beneficiaries.

The Power of Youth Resource

Youth is the vast majority in the world today. Young people in all countries are a major human resource for development, key agents for social change and driving force for economic development and technological innovation. Their talents, dynamism, imagination, ideals, considerable energies and vision are essential for the continuing development of the societies in which they live. Youth is increasingly being viewed for bringing potential benefits to other generations. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) has placed young people at the forefront of international attention which consists of eight goals, with each of these goals relates directly or indirectly to the well-being of children and young people. The National Youth Policy (NYP) 2003 defines Youth as in the age group of 13-35 whereas the draft NYP 2012 aims to cover the age-bracket of 16-30 years into three subgroups. The first sub-group of 16-21 years also covers adolescents whose needs and areas of concern are substantially different from youth under the other age-groups. The second sub-group of 21-25 years includes those youth who are in the process of completing their education and getting into a career and the third sub-group of 26-30 years comprises of young women and men most of whom have completed their education, including professional, and are,

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more or less, settled in their job and in their personal life. India is having the richest resource of Youth of Population as its 70% of India's population is below the age of 35 years. According to the initial figures of the 2011 census, the youth population in the country including adolescents is around 550 million. So India stands to gain from the 'youth bulge' which is not available even for the developed countries. It is a great Demographic dividend has to be carefully planned. This is the nature gift for the country.

Lack of Youth Participation

Youth people have a fundamental right to determine how power and resources are used in their societies. Public policies do not seem to have taken the broad views and opinions of young people. By not including them in decision making process, either in the public or private sector, countries lose a crucial resource base. Young people can contribute a great deal through their perspectives and experiences; no governance structure can be successful without them. Youth as a vibrant and strong resource of the country is focused not only as beneficiary but also as valuable partners in the process of national planning and development. The youth of the country need to be empowered to effectively participate in the process of decision making.

Role of Youth in Decentralised Governance

Youth participation in Governance process is extremely crucial towards ensuring people's representatives function effectively, facilitating provision of delivery of goods and services from the mainstream agencies in a transparent manner as well as quick redressal of poor people's problems and grievances etc. Youth participation in local self-grassroots governance will certainly strengthen the functioning of government as well as civil society organisations. *"Young people should be at the forefront of global change and innovation. Empowered, they can be key agents for development and peace. If, however, they are left on society's margins, all of us will be impoverished. Let us ensure that all young people have every opportunity to participate fully in the lives of their societies."* – Kofi Annan, United Nations Secretary-General. As the Youth are the future, they can be good agents of changes given that they are usually less resistant to change and are eager to embrace new ideas. They can play a vital role in raising awareness about issues important to the general public through ICTs such as radios, tele centers, Internet, etc. The rural masses are largely influenced by the local village leaders, priests, and other religious men and particularly with many superstitious beliefs. Their mind set could be broadened by only by the active participation of the local youth. Many social evils like child marriage, dowry, illiteracy, caste discrimination, corruption etc., could be eliminated from the society. In the political sphere too, the youth can help in cleansing the entire political system as it is infested with opportunism, nepotism, corruption, deception, fraud, intrigues and shrewd tactics. Youth are making significant contribution in the economic reconstruction in our country, so they could also bring modern outlook in the rural development also.

Ways and Means for Youth Participation for Rural Development

India is having a wide network of youth through the National Service Scheme (NSS) and the Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS). They are innovative multipurpose institutions could be properly utilized for the youth participation as the basic purpose of this scheme is to enable such youth to help the process of rural development and popularize

national objectives. Today, NSS has more than 3.2 million student volunteers on its roll spread over 298 Universities and 42 (+2) Senior Secondary Councils and Directorate of Vocational Education all over the country. NYKS is the largest grassroots level organization; one of its kind in the world. It channelizes the power of youth who are in the age group of 13-35 years on the principles of voluntarism, self-help and community participation. Over the years, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan has established a network of youth clubs in villages, where Nehru YuvaKendras have been set up. NYKS has targeted to identify areas of harnessing youth power for development by forming Youth Clubs, which are village level voluntary action groups of youth at the grassroots level to involve them in nation building activities. The core strength of NYKS lies in its network of youth clubs. Youth Clubs are village based organizations working for community development and youth empowerment. Youth Clubs are composed of youth members ranging between the age group of 13-35 years. The basic objective for creation of youth clubs is to render community support through developmental initiatives involving activities with particular focus on youth empowerment. The implementation of programmes and activities of youth clubs is based on local needs and requirements by mobilizing resources from various government departments and other agencies, which include both national, State level and multilateral institutions. The youth clubs and its member volunteers form the base of the NYKS's vast national rural network.

Conclusion

The 73rd amendment Act, gave way for youth to political participation and power to gramasabha. But the success rate of functioning of these two important indicators of good grass root democracy is very pathetic because of not involving the rural youth in the local governance. There are success stories of young panchayat leaders who voluntarily involved in their own village development. But this speed of rural growth is not enough when India is competing with other developed countries. To have a rapid rural development a biggest human resource that too the youth has to be involved and should make them to participate in all the rural development policies, schemes and programmes, projects etc. The NSS and NYKS youth resource may be used for resource mapping of their villages, youth led development, participatory planning, surveys etc. Mutual understanding between the Ministry of Youth affairs and Ministry of Rural Development could do wonders for the development of the country.

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