

AGENDA 2030 OF UNITED NATIONS: Will it make a difference in poverty and inequality landscape of India

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Abstract:

Economic development is a continuous process and it is not new for us in any sense. But the UN Agenda 2030 has brought a new network of interrelated set of Sustainable Development Goals to pursue development in a holistic and universal manner.

This paper attempts to ask a set of questions which are not answered in SDGs framework, for reduction of poverty and inequalities in India. This paper is presented in five sections. Firstly, a discussion on Indian development experience. Secondly, approach during planned era. Thirdly, why inequalities are increasing. Fourthly, how Agenda 2030 is helpful and finally, an insight into the overall process and discussion.

A well-known fact recognized and realized, was the failure of Trickle-down effect in the early 70's to tackle poverty and a number of targeted group approaches for anti-poverty programs as part of our planned effort. Our present agriculture development efforts to promote productivity by creating infrastructure and support is not promising enough for the betterment of standards of living for the landless labor; with the given Agricultural crisis exhibiting 'cost of cultivation' as a contention to be dealt with. In this context, one needs to give a serious thought to the whole process of improving the living conditions of the landless laborers within this framework of development; as it is a doubtful attempt for the task of inclusive growth possibilities.

What happened during these decades of rural transformation in India has made it clear beyond doubt that there is no possibility for the marginal and small farmers or landless agriculture labor for any upward movement in the ladder of rural social hierarchy of socio-economic development

Keywords: Trickle-down effect , Agricultural crisis, landless agriculture labor.

1.Introduction

A discussion on Indian development experience

Our present Endeavour of Economics is more for productivity and efficiency rather than people centric.

As Gandhi said, the poor of the world cannot be helped by mass production, only by production by the masses, the system of mass production, based on sophisticated highly capital intensive high energy-input dependent and human labor saving technology. Presupposes that you are already rich are for a great deal of capital investment is needed to establish one single work place.

This system of production by the masses mobilizes the priceless resources which are possessed by all human beings, their claver brains and skill full hands and supply them with first class tools.

The technology of mass production is inherently violent, ecologically damaging self defeating in terms of non renewable resources stultifying for the human person. The technology of production by the masses making use of the best modern knowledge and experience is

conducive to decentralization, compatible with the loss of ecology, gentle in its use of scarce resources and design to serve human person instead of making him the servant of machines.

I have named it intermediate Technology to signify that it is vastly Superior to primitive technology of bygone ages but at the same time much simpler cheaper and freer than the super technology of the rich one can also call self-help technology or democratic or people's technology to which everybody can gain admittance and which is not reserved to those already rich and powerful.

The concept of human development as "...the process of widening people's choices and the level of well-being they achieve or at the core of the notion of human development.. the essential choices for the people are to lead along and healthy life to acquire knowledge and to have access to the resources needed for a decent standard of living. Human Development does not end there, however, other choices highly valued by many people, range from political, economic and social freedom to opportunities for being creative and productive and enjoying self respect and guaranteed human right".

Economic development is the process by which the economic well being and quality of life of a nation, region or local community are improved the diversity and the vast spread of regions and community in the Indian subcontinent one way or the other experiences they agony of socio-cultural drama of ancient Indian legacy in the respective regions and castes and classes from centuries. But our modern context and concern starts to see life of people and regions with the different perspective, to judge in terms of physical available of and access to material needs for decent standard of living.

2.Approach during the planned era

The directive principles of our constitution lay down: "the state shall, in particular, direct its policy towards securing..

- a) that citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood:
- b) that the ownership and control of the resources of the community are so distributed as best to sub serve the common good:
- c) that operation of the economic system does not result in the concentration of well and means of production to the common detriment."

The directive principles of the Indian Constitution are, thus, an expression of the wheel of the people of India for rapid economy growth accordingly the Government of India adapted planning as a means of fostering economic development. The planning commission set out the following four long term objectives of planning.

1. to increase production to the maximum possibly extent so as to achieve higher level of national and per capita income;
2. to achieve full employment
3. to reduce inequalities of income and wealth; and
4. to set up a socialist society based on equality and Justice and absence of exploitation.

The first five year plan expressed clearly the long term objectives or goals of academic planning in India as follows: "Maximum production and full employment, attainment of economic equality, social justice which constitute the accepted objectives of planning and the present day conditions are not really so many different ideas but a series of related aims which is the country must work for. None of these objectives can be pursued to the exclusion of others a plan of development muscles balance depresses on all of these".

“Securing rapid economic growth and expansion of employment, reduction of disparities in income and wealth prevention of concentration of economic power, and creation of the value of attitude of a free and equal society have been among the objectives of all our plans.”

3. Why inequalities are growing

“In some countries such as China, India, Thailand and income gap has a significant urban rural bias and these income differences having increased over the 1990” consequently the phenomenon observed in the Indian economy it has started growing at fast rate of 7 per cent per annum, the rich are reaping the benefits of development the poor are disillusioned since the benefits do not percolate to raise their level of living.

The common argument is; let us increase the rate of growth of the economy to 8-10 per cent. Ultimately all will benefit so don't worry about the poor but the hard reality is that is a growing at the rate of 15 per cent per year in the private sector in India the highest in the world. Fresh IIM graduate are getting Rs. 5000 per day for 365 days in the year. But millions of poor rural laborites are paid 60 rupees a day, that too only for 100 days in a year under the Employment Guarantee Program. Such glaring inequalities are unethical and their continuance is dangerous for social stability.

Why we worry?

Income inequalities can curtail a person's human rights through discrimination, abuse and lack of access to justice, income inequalities can erode social cohesion lead to political polarization, and lower economic growth. When sustainability is our concern we cannot afford growing inequalities.

How it all happened?

This is discussed in ‘capital in the 21st century’ by Thomas Picketty Translated by Arthur goldhammer-at heart though, his argument turned on well-founded economic principles notably $r > g$, Meaning that ‘the rate of return on capital’ significantly exceeds ‘the growth rate of the economy’ In Picketty gloss. It logically follows that when such conditions prevail Then wealth accumulate in a few hands faster than it can be broadly distributed.

‘Capital and ideology’ by Thomas piketty proposes a vision for a fairer economic system grounded in participating socialism he writes true social ownership of capital ‘A just wage’ for everyone and the more equal distribution of economic power. Picketty’s definition of a just society where all members have access to fundamental goods like education, health, the right to vote so that Even The least advantaged can enjoy the highest possible life conditions. Picketty emphasizes both pre - distribution gets things right (that is ensuring law doesn’t drive inequality in its construction of the market or the state) and redistribution to undo the wrong.

“.....Law Makes Productive Capacity the Private Property of individuals, workers don’t share fairly in the value they create and private capital becomes concentrated.”

4. How does Agenda 2030 helpful

On 25th September, 2015, 193 member countries assembled together at the UNs General Assembly to take a note to transform the world into better place to live and to ensure the development takes place in such a way that natural resources are sustained and passed unto future generations unimpaired by means of adapting Agenda 2030 the United Nations has listed a total of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the first goal is eradicating poverty in all its forms.

The set of 17 Global goals of united nations which are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which aims to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure peace and

prosperity has created in new environment to pursue development as an interconnected integration and with the cooperation between government, businesses civil society and individuals worldwide with sustainability concern that is meeting the needs of the present without compromise in the ability of future generations to meet the needs at the same time balance in academic growth, social inclusion and environmental protection.

It has created an environment of a Global network of various interrelated and interconnected aspects in the pursuit of reducing poverty and inequality with other SDGs earlier it is individual schemes and programmes for the reduction of poverty and inequality through a policy prescription of individual governments and Organizations.

In a way it has revitalized lives to bring a transformation in the socio-economic landscape in the process of the pursuit of development activities.

The Government of India also introduced the task force known as NITI- Aayog (National Institute for transforming India) previously the planning commission whose task is to look after the objectives set by the UN SDGs and utilize and implement those objectives into action within the country in the fullest way possible so that the SDGs Agenda 2030 can be achieved with in due course.

5. An insight on the overall process and discussion

Growth fails to reduce poverty and it is concentrated in sectors that prominently benefit elites, without creating many jobs and few spillovers to the rest of the economy, and where governments fail to raise revenues and increase spending on public services and social programmes.

Translating growth into poverty reduction requires investments that directly touch the lives of the poor people, where they live today, but it also requires investments in parts of the economy that are quite distant from the lives of the poorest, but which drive urbanization and structural change without which sustained poverty eradication is impossible.

Financial inclusion has emerged as a critical driver for economic growth and poverty mitigation worldwide. Financial inclusion stands at the forefront of sustainable development, serving as a catalyst but economic growth, poverty alleviation and social progress.

Firstly, the vast literature available identified the following aspects need to be recognized in the process of implementing these schemes to reduce poverty and inequalities.

In this globalization privatization and liberalization environment the public sector role on natural resource management is important since there is conflicting interests in our society regarding public ownership processes need to be addressed.

Secondly, the ownership of natural resources, we need to work towards ensuring community rights over resources

Thirdly, constitutionally guaranteed aspects of dignity and justice need to be emphasized in providing these development goals.

Fourthly, Prospects for development with an expectation of sustainability must have a strong protection from human rights angle

Finally, as long as the privatization the priority of the governments, these SDGs ability to bring change in the development scenario will be Limited. Most importantly how the new Institute NITI-Aayog be able to implement the SDGs in the grass root hostility needs to be examined.

To put it in nut shell, after examining the four streams of above discussion primarily, the kind of technology used for productive activities and technologies used in business and

marketing is not supportive and yielding any benefits for the people in the bottom of income distribution which are having lower incomes and access to the economic activities.

Secondly, the constitutional guarantees and expectations or very much acceptable for the concerns of people in the lower rungs but economic policy pursued is not matching to the grass root realities.

Thirdly, when it comes to inequalities, they ought to increase since the rate of return on capital and legal endorsement to the private investment naturally increases and the people in the lower incomes have no option but to receive low wages.

Fourthly, economic policy and technology is playing a role against the spirit of SDGs and the objectives of the implementing agencies.

The hostile environment in the grass roots has to be altered to shoot the activities in which these sections involved, both the sectors and nature of activities have a low possible productivity.

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