



Resource Use and Management of Livelihood Context in Rural Households in India

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Abstract

The concept of livelihoods and use of resources have become increasingly important and vital in the issues of poverty reduction, environmental management and human development. Livelihoods are defined as the means by which the households obtain and maintain access to the resources, necessary to ensure their immediate and long term survival. Livelihoods comprise of the capabilities, resources, assets and activities that are required to enhance one's living conditions. There is an interconnection between the use of resources and management of livelihood framework. The main purpose of this research paper is to understand the resource use and management of livelihood context in rural households in India. The main areas that have been taken into account include, the sustainable livelihoods framework, significance of resource use and management of livelihoods, natural resources and livelihoods of individuals in rural areas, utilization of resources, characteristics of rural livelihoods, assets of individuals in rural areas, rural health and rural education.

Keywords: Communities; Households; Livelihoods; Resources; Rural Areas; Sustainable Livelihoods Framework

Introduction

In the present existence, it has been comprehensively recognized that rural households in developing countries depend upon their income usually generated from the agricultural sector. In India, over 70% of the population resides in rural areas. They are mostly engaged in agriculture and farming practices. The other occupations that they are usually engaged in include, small scale industries, production of handicrafts, pottery making, weaving, or they open tea stalls and grocery shops. These occupations help them generate a source of income to sustain their living conditions. The individuals residing within rural communities also depend upon forests and natural resources to meet their household requirements. The individuals are able to obtain items in accordance to their income. With the increase in income, when one is able to generate more wealth, then the dependence on fuel wood declines. Instead of making use of traditional stoves, they are able to make use of electric stoves [1].

Conservation of resources can help in the alleviation of poverty. The reason being, low returns to collection do not leave surplus to acquire assets. Such a policy is unlikely to alleviate the conditions of poverty. An increase in the dependence upon the resources with income indicates that the collection of resources is a high-return

activity and the development that has taken place due to natural resources is potentially feasible. The use of resources and the management of the livelihood context depends primarily upon the income of the rural households. There are seven major sources from where income is generated, these include, agriculture, livestock rearing, common-pool resource collection, household enterprise, wage employment, transfers [1] and assistance obtained from other organizations or agencies. In rural areas, mainly the families affected by the conditions of poverty and scarcity of resources depend upon other organizations for obtaining food, health care facilities, education, skills development training and so forth.

The sustainable livelihoods framework

The sustainable livelihoods framework has been used in order to acquire a better understanding of the livelihoods of the individuals in rural areas and issues in concern with rural development. The livelihoods framework enables in acquiring a better understanding of the poverty and other problems that the individuals are experiencing. They usually lack many opportunities that are required in the social, economic and political lives of the individuals. In order to sustain better livelihood opportunities and to alleviate the conditions of poverty, it is vital for the individuals to learn how to exploit the opportunities by making operative use of assets. Even

though the individuals possess traditional viewpoints, they are either not educated or possess low literacy skills. In spite of these factors, they need to be aware regarding how to overcome the barriers that arise within the course of promoting better livelihood opportunities [2].

The sustainable livelihood approaches recognize the diversity of the farm household livelihoods. The various activities and functions of the members of the households, making use of diverse assets lead to multiple priorities and strategies and therefore produce numerous outcomes [2]. There is an interconnection between the utilization of resources and in meeting the livelihoods requirements. The individuals need to make use of opportunities in an appropriate manner and not get involved in any activities or tasks that cause wastage of resources. When understanding sustainable livelihoods approaches, there are certain aspects that need to be understood and these have been stated as follows: [2].

Livelihoods are defined as the ways of obtaining the essential assets, required to enhance one's living. They are usually defined in terms of capabilities, assets, both material and social resources, and the activities and functions that one is engaged, in order to improve one's living conditions. Possession of knowledge and skills are regarded as imperative to perform well in one's tasks and functions. Terms such as, living, income, occupation, maintenance, employment and occupation are regarded as synonyms of livelihoods. In rural areas, it is vital for the individuals to form effective communication terms with other members. The reason being, working in co-operation and integration, not only help them to improve their livelihoods, but also they are able to form an effective social circle.

The individuals belonging to all categories and backgrounds make use of the concept of five capitals: natural, e.g. water, physical, e.g. infrastructure, financial, social, e.g. social networks and human, e.g. skills. The human, physical, natural, financial and social capitals that people possess or have access to affect their livelihoods for alleviating poverty. The reason being, possessing various capitals can enable them to take advantage of the opportunities. Expanding the capitals of individuals belonging to poverty stricken families can reinforce their position and their control upon their lives. Given a particular framework, policy, politics, history, agro-ecology and socio-economic conditions, various combinations of livelihood resources, i.e. the five capitals can enable a household to implement a variety of livelihood strategies, such as agricultural strengthening or extension, or livelihood diversification and movement. The main purpose is to accomplish a set of varied results.

The analysis of sustainable livelihoods framework focuses upon how various capitals are made use of to sustain the livelihoods of

the individuals. Water is regarded as an imperative resource that is required in the agricultural sector, as well as in the implementation of other activities and functions. Water is a natural capital, but requires both social and human capital connected by physical capital, i.e. infrastructure to provide the desired services. The services, therefore result from the collaboration of at least three capitals, and are measured in terms of availability of water and productivity. The functioning of these capitals assists individuals in making the selection of precise agriculture-based livelihoods strategies, most often strengthening and diverse. The individuals are able to accomplish expected livelihood effects and eventually help build the financial capitals that they need to sustain their livelihoods. The livelihoods outcomes could be increased through more constant income, improved nutrition and health, and reduced poverty [2].

There are five main interrelated dimensions of the relationship between accessibility to agricultural water, socio-economic development of the individuals and the measures implemented to bring about reduction in poverty. These factors include, production, income, employment, food security and welfare. There are mainly ten areas that have an impact upon the livelihoods of the individuals and these are, production, employment, consumption and food costs, output and income stabilization, backward linkages and second round effects, non-farm rural output and employment, nutrition, multiple uses of agriculture water supply to satisfy other basic needs, equity and environment and health [2].

When individuals are able to satisfy these ten areas in an appropriate manner, then it is stated that they are able to sustain their livelihoods. In order to lead to enhanced livelihoods, it is vital for the individuals to get engaged in employment, and generate a source of income, so that they are able to satisfy the other needs and requirements of their family members. These include, diet and nutrition, medical and health care, education, provision of civic amenities and other facilities within their households and other materials, which prove to be beneficial to them, such as use of digital technology. On the other hand, when individuals are unable to meet any of these areas, then they experience problems in adequately sustaining their livelihoods. Unawareness and illiteracy imposes detrimental effects upon the existence of the individuals. For this purpose, it is vital for the individuals to possess the awareness, in terms of how they would alleviate their conditions of poverty and generate welfare.

It is essential to acquire understanding of the activities that contribute to sustainable livelihoods framework. The majority of the population in rural areas are engaged in agriculture and farming practices. Another source of income is animal husbandry, particu-

larly dairying. Another is working in small scale industries. Women contribute a major part in reproductive, productive, community organisation and household management activities. Children quite often help women in accomplishing some of their responsibilities. The other occupations that individuals are engaged in include, bangle sellers, jewellers, dyers, butchers, water carriers, artisans, craftsmen, weavers and musicians. The major cause of poverty of the rural individuals is exploitation by the moneylenders. The burden of debt and poverty even compel the individuals to get engaged in criminal acts. These include, vehicle theft, kidnapping, illegal mining, stealing wild animals, cattle smuggling and so forth. Landlessness, low regional geographic endowments in the non-agricultural sector have induced livelihood insecurity to a major extent. The problems like gender inequality, illiteracy, poor health conditions and high infant mortality rate are primarily due to lack of awareness among the individuals [3]. It is essential for them to possess adequate knowledge of child development.

Significance of Resource Use and Management of Livelihoods

The concept of livelihood approach has become vital in terms of development policies, programmes and practices in recent years not only in India, but in other parts of the world as well. Livelihoods are usually referred to economic activities, involving self-employment or wage-employment by utilizing human and material efforts. Generation of suitable resources, cash and non-cash for meeting the requirements of self and the household, put into practice in a repeated manner has become a way of life. Government of India has been one of the largest organizations involved in livelihood promotion determinations to enhance the living conditions of the individuals. Livelihoods project is an approach to enable the rural people to acquire more economic values, and bring about improvements in the production system and social justice. Hence, Government of India put into practice various rural development programmes, including Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) [4].

India is the country of diverse cultures, ethnicities, traditions, religions and values. The individuals normally manage their livelihood contexts and use the resources, based upon their cultures and backgrounds. For instance, if individuals are artisans, then it is likely their children would also follow the profession of their fathers. Even though the per capita income is at the national level, the villages have not been authorized in an appropriate manner. Most of the villages are experiencing the problems of destitution and inequalities. The major inequalities are found in livelihood security, in the basic necessities such as nutrition, housing and

attires. When the individuals experience scarcity of the basic requirements, they lead to destitution among rural population. Additionally, the environmental effects of poverty, such as, deforestation, declining land productivity, soil erosion and others have negative effects on providing rural livelihood security [4].

In rural areas, the density of the population, imposes detrimental effects. The distribution of income among the households in rural areas varies. This is due to the fact, they are engaged in different occupations. Agriculture is stated as the main occupation, but their occupations may be different as well. Meeting all the needs and requirements of daily living are difficult for the individuals in rural areas. There are differences in the livelihoods opportunities of the wealthy and the poverty stricken individuals [4]. The variations in the livelihoods opportunities between the wealthy and the poverty stricken are immense. The wealthy individuals are able to send their children to reputed educational institutions, they do not experience any problems in meeting the medical, health care, nutritional and other requirements, the individuals are well-educated and they are able to obtain good employment opportunities and generate adequate source of income. Well educated individuals are able to develop effective communication skills and enhance their livelihoods.

In rural areas, individuals are residing in backward conditions and they do find some or the other means to generate a source of income. As it has been stated above that agriculture is the major occupation. In the present existence, individuals have recognized the significance of education in rural areas and they are willing to send their children to schools. They in some cases possess the viewpoint that education is meant for the boys, whereas girls should be trained regarding the implementation of household chores. The girls need to be skilled and proficient in managing the household responsibilities. They should learn how to carry out the household chores, such as, preparation of meals, fetching water, cleaning, washing, and taking care of the needs and requirements of family members, especially in the absence of their parents. On the other hand, the male children are encouraged to go to school and acquire education. The parents possess this viewpoint that if their sons will be educated, they would be able to obtain good employment and hence render an effective contribution towards the sustenance of their living conditions.

In the present existence, there have been changes brought about in the perspectives and viewpoints of individuals in rural areas. The major transformation that has taken place is, both boys and girls are looked upon equally and parents are encouraging educati-

on of the girls too. The effectual use of the resources and the management of livelihoods is primarily carried out through generation of awareness and acquisition of education. The girls are getting enrolled in educational institutions and enhancing their skills and abilities. Research has indicated that both boys and girls, belonging to rural households are emerging to be professionals, such as, doctors, lawyers, engineers, teachers, researchers, educationists, and so forth. There are number of individuals migrating to urban areas, in search for better livelihoods opportunities. They usually possess the aspiration of obtaining good educational qualifications. In rural areas, the system of education is not very well developed, hence, they migrate to urban areas to get enrolled in reputed educational institutions. The rural individuals primarily migrate to urban areas to get enrolled in higher educational institutions. They possess the awareness and are keen in obtaining masters and doctorate degrees.

It is vital for the individuals in rural areas to generate awareness in terms of the sources to secure their livelihoods. Livelihood security is dependent upon the number of approaches and strategies that have been undertaken by rural people. Some of the strategies include, wage labour, social pension, allowances from the members of the households working in urban areas and unpaid domestic and farm labour. Within the course of time, all these activities have proven to be beneficial to the individuals to live a productive life within the community. There are numerous activities that are involved in the enhancement of rural livelihoods. It is vital for the individuals to generate awareness and enhance their skills and abilities to perform their tasks and functions appropriately. Agriculture has rendered an imperative contribution towards the economic development of the country. Access to other forms of income and to assets reinforces the distribution of resources within the households [4].

Natural Resources and Livelihoods of Individuals in Rural Areas

Natural resources are regarded as contributing a significant part in sustaining the livelihoods of the individuals residing in rural areas. When individuals are residing in remote rural areas, in hilly regions and they do not have access to other organizations or agencies or institutions, then they primarily depend upon the forests and natural resources to meet their needs and requirements. They follow their traditional norms and patterns in the implementation of all activities and functions in life. For instance, in the case of illnesses, medicinal herbs are obtained from forests. In most cases, individuals obtain food items and wood from the forests to meet their nutritional requirements. The tribals are the ones that are scattered all over the country in hilly and remote regions. They are dependent on the natural resources to implement all the activities

that are required in the sustenance of livelihoods. When individuals are dependent upon natural resources, then they do have to generate awareness regarding conservation methods. For instance, one has to keep the water bodies, clean, make adequate use of materials obtained from forests and so forth.

In rural households, the problem of poverty is regarded as the major one that is a hindrance within the course of obtaining adequate livelihoods opportunities. Due to this problem, the individuals are experiencing problems in the acquisition of education, obtaining proper medical and health care facilities, obtaining adequate diet and nutrition, child development, and meeting their overall household requirements. With financial problems, one also experience difficulties in transferring from one place to another. Due to this problem, in some cases, there have been prevalence of conflicts and disputes within the households. The individuals have one major objective, i.e. to alleviate the conditions of poverty and backwardness. For this purpose, they aspire to obtain a source of income. In order to generate a source of income, the individuals need to make effectual use of natural resources. They also need to be skilled in the rearing of livestock, as livestock also helps individuals to generate a source of income and sustain their livelihoods. For instance, cattle is made use of in agriculture and farming practices.

Recent method differentiates between making provision of services responsible for supporting the livelihoods of individuals, making services appropriate, basic eco-system procedures, cultural services, non-material ecosystem benefits, and associate services. This is a suitable approach, the reason being, it puts emphasis on the specific functions that are obtained through the eco-systems, and thus upon the sustainability of those services in supporting human livelihoods. The main services of the natural eco-systems in supporting livelihoods of individuals in rural areas include, providing basic soil and water resources for productivity of crops, rearing of livestock, regulating air, water, and climatic processes, assisting the biophysical processes of photosynthesis, soil formation and nutrient cycling, and assisting in providing diversity of social, cultural, spiritual, and recreational aspects to life. More precisely, one can ascertain several key natural resources on which individuals are dependent to a major extent. These include, land, water, forests, fisheries, climate, crop genetic resources and mineral resources [5]. One needs to be skilled in the performance of tasks. For instance, when working in mines or doing fishing, one has to possess adequate knowledge regarding how to carry out these tasks.

Utilization of Resources

When one talks about the utilization of resources then it primarily means utilization of resources by the individuals on the basis of

their age, gender, status, occupation and background. For instance, wealthy individuals residing in rural communities would make use of resources to a lesser extent as compared to other individuals, belonging to deprived and marginalized communities. The individuals residing in the conditions of poverty will make use of resources to a major extent. For the poverty stricken people in some cases, it becomes difficult to make provision of food, hence, individuals obtain fruits and other food items from the forests. Children consume breakfast at home, before going to school, but on their way back home, they consume wild fruits [6]. In rural areas, wood is considered as an important resource. It is used for construction, preparation of meals, and other purposes.

Individuals need to make provision of kitchen hut, bedroom hut, wood is used for producing fire, particularly in winter season, construction of poles, roofing poles, thatching grass, and it is also used in the construction of cattle sheds. The individuals obtain wood from the forests. Fuel wood serves as a source of energy that is utilized for preparation of meals. The construction of houses is regarded as a major task that makes use of resources. Forests are regarded as major areas that make provision of resources to the rural individuals [6]. From the forests, they obtain wood, plants, flowers, and certain food items. Water is obtained from the water bodies, especially when the individuals experience scarcity of water at home. Either the individuals collect water and bring it home or they go to the water bodies to carry out the activities of daily living.

The natural resource management institutions have acquired understanding of the customs, rules, organizations and policies that determine the accessibility of the individuals to different types of natural resources. The role of the natural resources have been critical in influencing the lives of the individuals in rural areas. This has been stated, mainly due to their occupations and backgrounds. When they have limited income, they are dependent upon obtaining materials from the natural environment, so that they are able to carry out their tasks and functions efficiently. The main areas through which natural resources are obtained include, forests, water bodies, fisheries, and so forth. The activities that are integral to the management of the household determine, what natural resources need to be utilized to obtain what types of materials. It is vital to give adequate attention to the policies and institutions that mediate access to natural resources [7].

Natural environmental conditions even make provision of occupations to the individuals. The rural dwellers are fishermen, miners, wood-cutters, and so forth. The natural environmental conditions have rendered a significant contribution in generating

a source of income for the individuals. Rearing of livestock is not an easy task and it also involves utilization of resources to a major extent. Individuals need to provide adequate diet and nutrition to their livestock. Grazing in the forests or other areas is regarded as one of the imperative sources of making provision of food for the livestock. In the present existence, the rural individuals have been able to acquire adequate knowledge and information regarding how to bring about changes in their livelihoods through the operative utilization of resources. When individuals are making use of resources, it is necessary that they should implement steps and procedures that are needed to preserve the natural environment. The livelihood approaches are regarded to be people-centric and holistic [7]. They make provision of the integrated view regarding how the individuals within evolving social, institutional, political, economic and environmental frameworks generate awareness in terms of making effectual use of resources.

Financial resources are regarded as the most imperative resources that the individuals struggle for. The individuals get engaged in occupations and work to generate a source of income. Financial resources are the main through which implementation of all activities and functions takes place. When individuals have generated income, it is vital that they possess adequate knowledge of financial management and not waste money on things that they do not require. The individuals with limited income are required to make savings for the future. They need to spend money on providing education to the children and another important area is transportation. One cannot carry out all the tasks and functions, while sitting at home, it is essential for the individuals to transfer from one place to another, hence transportation costs are important.

Food, clothing and shelter are important areas that involve utilization of resources. Either the individuals have to make provision of these through obtaining assistance from the other organizations or they have to work them out on their own. The other areas that involve the utilization of resources, particularly financial include, child development, rearing of livestock, production of items, which are then sold, taking care of the needs and requirements of elderly members of the household, medical and health care facilities and overall management of the household. In order to acquire resources and enhance their livelihoods, there have been rural individuals, who migrate to urban areas. They are of the viewpoint that in urban areas, they will be able to find better employment opportunities that would help them to sustain their living conditions in an improved manner. The individuals migrate to urban areas, leaving their families in rural areas within the main purpose of finding employment. When they find a job and earn well, then they may call their families and educate their children in urban schools.

Characteristics of Rural Livelihoods

When acquiring understanding of rural livelihoods, it is vital for the individuals to obtain information in terms of the occupations and areas in which the rural masses are engaged in to generate a source of income. These include, agriculture, farming practices, household activities and enterprises in the informal economy. Some of the activities involve large amount of labour and less capital. In the agricultural sector, the individuals own commercial, smallholder family and co-operative farms [8]. The characteristics that are used to differentiate between rural livelihoods from those of other groups have been stated as follows: [8].

- **Partial Integration into Imperfect and Incomplete Markets:** Partial incorporation refers to the households that attain some of their resources through markets, and only putting some part of their produce in markets. Social networks, including the household itself, are vital non-market institutions for exchange purposes. There have been engagement of individuals in market exchanges, then the markets for their resources, i.e. land, labour, credit and produce are often inadequate. The inadequacy is mainly due to less number of buyers or sellers dominating the market, less amount of information and incomplete, with the market weakening to function and thus being unsuccessful in the supply or demand of resources or produce at certain times of the year or in certain localities or to particular individuals.
- **Part Societies with Part Cultures:** The individuals engaged in agriculture and farming practices are part of the larger society. The agricultural labourers, as well as the other rural individuals have their own cultures, norms, values and way of living. When groups of individuals have their distinct identities, then it signifies that they are partially integrated within the society. They associate with the larger groups of individuals, but have to maintain their own identities, social norms, values, cultures and standards. For instance, the individuals may migrate to urban areas and find employment opportunities in offices, companies or work as domestic helpers. When they are working with individuals, belonging to other status groups and backgrounds, then they have to follow their norms and procedures. But there are differences in the cultures and norms of individuals, belonging to rural and urban communities.
- **Transition:** The meaning of the term, transition is bringing about changes within the course of time. The individuals belonging to rural areas are bringing about changes in their livelihoods with the introduction of innovative and modern techniques and methods. In the present existence, technology is considered as an imperative aspect that has brought about changes within the livelihoods of the individuals in rural areas. Individuals are making use of digital technology and computers. They are obtaining television and radios in making provision of a source of recreation. The individuals are also developing literacy skills among themselves. There have been establishment of schools in rural areas, where adults are able to enhance their literacy skills, those who have not been enrolled in school before, or have dropped out at an early age.
- **Subordination:** The individuals belonging to rural communities are mainly subordinated by upper classes. The agricultural labourers are subordinated by other authoritative groups. In most cases, they find minority jobs, and in these jobs, they are subject to the decisions made by the other members of the society. The power of decision making and the behaviour of others have influenced the lives of the individuals. For instance, if a person is working in a restaurant or a grocery shop, then he has an employer above him. He is supposed to follow the rules and obey the instructions given to him by the employer. In case, he needs leave from work, due to family issues, then he can leave, only when his employer grants him leave. Hence, subordination is regarded as an important aspect within the lives of rural individuals.
- **Family Labour:** Research has indicated that individuals usually get all the family members involved in the implementation of tasks. As they have the main objective of generating a source of income. In rural areas, individuals usually have large families. There are normally more than two children within one family. When the children are below 14 years of age, then in most cases, they are engaged in either cleaning jobs or sell produce. Their main perspective behind having more children is that all children would contribute towards generation of income. More family members would work co-operatively in the sustenance of the living conditions of their households and communities. When individuals have their own family business, then they usually train their children from an early age, so that they become actively involved in the generation of income. The main viewpoint is, more number of individuals will enhance productivity and profitability.
- **Multi-activity Livelihoods:** The rural individuals are primarily involved in multiple tasks. One of the tasks that is of utmost significance is management of the household responsibilities. There are numerous aspects that are involved in the management of the households. Women are the ones that are mainly vested with this function. The other activity is getting engaged into occupations. Men and women, both are engaged in occupations that are regarded as imperative sources of income. Besides management of the households and occupations, the other activities that the individuals are engaged in include, getting enrolled in educational institutions, or training centres to enhance their literacy skills, child development, meeting the needs and requirements of elderly family members, participating in social events and functions, looking after the health care needs and requirements of the individuals within the households, socializing with other community members and so forth.

- **Double Source of Income:** As it has been stated above that rural individuals reside in the conditions of poverty and backwardness. Their main objective is to generate a source of income and alleviate their conditions of poverty. In the agricultural sector, there have been involvement of both men and women. On the other hand, when women are not involved in the agricultural sector, they get engaged in some other work to supplement the source of income. The other kinds of work, that women are engaged in include, production of handicrafts and artworks or they make certain food items for selling purposes. Some of the individuals are successful in marketing their produce. On the other hand, when individuals are unable to market their produce, they have to sustain their livelihoods through just one source of income. In order to market their produce, it is vital for the individuals to possess adequate knowledge in terms of marketing strategies, how to transfer from one place to another, generate awareness regarding nearby cities and towns and they need to develop effective communication skills with the other individuals.
- **Heterogeneity:** It is however imperative that one would have a comprehensively applicable understanding of the livelihoods of the agricultural labourers, farmers, artisans, craftsmen, weavers, potters, industrial and factory workers. When individuals are engaged in different occupations, then there are differences in their livelihoods on the basis of their occupations. The reason being, individuals, whose livelihoods share vital features with the livelihoods of the agricultural labourers, then they make up a considerable proportion of the rural individuals, who are residing in the conditions of poverty. This is a fact that individuals are in different occupations, but usually the norms, cultures and traditions of the individuals in rural communities are similar. Even if their livelihoods do not all the time match all of the measures used to define peasant livelihoods and in most cases, poverty stricken rural people reside in the societies, which are evolving from, and share significant characteristics with the societies of other agricultural labourers and farmers.

Assets of Individuals in Rural Areas

In general, the problem of poverty experienced by the individuals in rural areas investigates the health and the education outcomes for the poverty stricken as well as the other individuals. This is along with the access to basic health and education services, and physical infrastructure, these include, electricity, roads, water, and communication. However, this information is not always disaggregated for rural and urban areas. Despite the different levels of access to human and physical infrastructure in those areas is required. Further, poverty assessments seldom look beyond access to human and physical infrastructure to other components that affect rural livelihoods and the probability of residing in the conditions of poverty and backwardness [9]. The assets of the individuals in

rural communities have been classified in terms of agricultural production and marketing [9].

- **Land Use and Ownership Patterns:** The land use and ownership strategies include the information on type of land. The various forms of land are, pasture, forestry, and crop. The quality of land is irrigated or rain-fed. The cropping patterns, and the land tenure arrangements, include the title, customary, communal shared, and farm size. The rate and the influence of rural investments on the rural poverty stricken and backward individuals depends to a large extent upon the farm structure and the distribution of land. The individuals either have their own lands or poor farmers work on the land owned by other individuals.
- **Housing Assets:** The housing assets are normally referred to the materials and equipment that the individuals have within their houses. For instance, in some cases, there are shortage of civic amenities within the households. In case of shortage of water supply, the individuals usually fetch water from the wells and water bodies nearby. Research has indicated that within rural households, there are provision of stoves, furniture, cooling and heating equipment and in some cases, even electronics such as, phones, television, radio etc. The provision of these assets within the households has rendered an imperative contribution in enriching the lives of the individuals.
- **Livestock Ownership:** In rural areas, individuals own livestock and render an efficient contribution in their rearing. The livestock are considered imperative in the generation of income. Individuals own bullock carts through which they transfer from one place to another. The other livestock is used in the production of items, which are marketed to sustain one's livelihoods. The individuals are primarily engaged in obtaining milk and producing milk products. Sheep is owned for obtaining wool and other livestock also prove to be beneficial. The individuals need to appropriately take care of their needs and requirements. Provide them sufficient food and water, provide them medical treatment in case of illnesses and maintain their security.
- **Access to Technical Assistance and Market Information:** In the present existence, as it has been stated above that individuals in rural areas are also making use of technology. Access to technical assistance and market information has helped them in improving their livelihoods. The major contribution of technical assistance and market information has been towards generating awareness, so that they are able to do well in their occupations and business. When one has to market one's goods and services, then it is essential to obtain knowledge and information in terms of marketing strategies and other factors. Within the course of time, it is vital for the individuals to bring about improvement in productivity through making use of innovative techniques and methods. It is vital to make efficient use of technology, as it not only

enhances one's knowledge but also facilitates communication with individuals at even distant places.

- **Social Capital Assets:** Social capital assets are referred to mainly participation of the individuals in community and national organizations, which have been connected to extended access to other assets for bringing about economic development and upgraded risk management. For example, producer organizations and community organizations can be crucial towards agricultural marketing. The social capital assets are primarily utilized in an operative manner with the objective of implementing one's tasks productively. When individuals seek assistance from other organizations and agencies with the purpose of enhancing productivity, then it is termed as social capital assets.

Rural Health

The main factors that influence rural health include, household influences, community and environmental influences and health system influences [9].

Household influences on health outcomes

Among the poverty stricken individuals residing in rural households, the health conditions are more deprived as compared to individuals residing in urban areas. Deprived health conditions may be explained by numerous household, community, environmental and institutional factors that aggravate the health conditions in rural areas and limit the demand and supply of health services. The dependence of rural households on agriculture generates impulsiveness in the consumption and income levels and in the quality of consumption, which may affect the health outcomes. This includes mainly nutrition and compel the demand for health services. Housing conditions may also augment health outcomes in rural areas. The areas, which are polluted and unclean contribute to long-term recurrent exposure to soil and dust. These are, predominantly in areas with reduced sanitation, and reduced ventilation causes an increase in the risk of indoor air pollution. The materials that are made use of in constructing houses in rural areas may also provide breeding grounds for certain disease vectors.

Rural residents may have less access to health and nutritional knowledge, thereby limiting their ability to effectually evaluate health risks and implement practices that promote good health and nutrition. In particular, the use of biomass fuels such as charcoal, twigs, leaves and dung for cooking, heating and lighting in rural households are the causes of indoor air pollution that increases the risk of respiratory diseases. Moreover, using pesticides contributes to the disease problems among rural households engaged in farming practices. Agricultural labourers, farmers and their families are subject to detrimental health effects from pesticide use. The

problem is severe, when its use is excessive. The farmers make excessive use of pesticides, when they are unaware or when they do not have the proper gear.

Community and environmental influences on health outcomes

The lack of adequate and safe water and deprived sanitation facilities contributes to the risk of water borne and water related diseases in rural areas. In some cases, in remote areas, individuals experience problems in obtaining services to medical and health care services. In order to promote good health conditions for the members of the community, it is vital to maintain the roads and infrastructure. When roads are not well developed, then transfer from one place to another becomes difficult for the individuals. It is also necessary to establish a medical centre or a health care facility nearby the community, so that the individuals do not experience any problem in meeting their needs and requirements.

Within the rural environment, there are many diseases and health problems that are prevalent. The individuals are usually engaged in manual jobs, which involves great extent of labour. When working in the outside environment, using pesticides, exposing oneself to heat, cold, rain does effect the health of the individuals. Lifting heavy loads would also cause pain in the joints. In rural households, when there is shortage of water supply, then individuals are required to obtain water from the wells or water bodies. The water may not be clean and may lead to numerous health problems that are caused due to contaminated water. Making use of wood, charcoal for cooking purposes, may cause indoor pollution, hence, it is vital for the individuals to put into practice the measures that are needed to curb environmental pollution. Maintaining cleanliness, hygiene and sanitation are some of the factors that are used to sustain one's health care and well-being.

Health systems influences on health outcomes

Health systems are referred to the measures and the ways that are used to maintain good health of the individuals. Within rural communities, there are number of factors that affect the health conditions of the individuals in an unfavourable manner. The problems that they experience in terms of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment are severe and have an impact upon their mind-sets. The individuals are overwhelmed by stress, anxiety, helplessness, anger and frustration. These are referred to as psychological problems that have an impact upon the physical and psychological health of the individuals. It is vital for the individuals to remain calm and develop positive thinking. Providing solutions to problems can be difficult but not impossible. They need to analyse their conditions and weaknesses and wisely implement the solutions.

With the advancement of technology and with the development of modern and innovative techniques and methods, individuals are leading progressive lives. In the agricultural sector and farming practices also, individuals have generated awareness regarding the usage of technology to enhance production. These factors have rendered a significant contribution in promoting well-being of the rural communities. For instance, earlier bullock carts were made use of in ploughing the fields, but in the present existence, there have been utilization of tractors and other machines in ploughing the fields. The generation of awareness of rural individuals regarding technology and modern and innovative techniques has not only led to improvement in their livelihoods but also their health conditions.

Policies for rural health

The policies that are required to be understood for improving health outcomes have been stated as follows: [9].

The living conditions of the individuals are required to be appropriate and well maintained. Whether the house comprises of just one room or multiple rooms, whether there is a backyard or a front yard, in other words, irrespective of the size of the house, it is vital to ensure that it is kept clean. The individuals train their children from the initial stage that they should keep the home environment clean.

Clean water is considered as an imperative aspect in maintaining good health. Water is required for multiple purposes, such as, cleaning, bathing, washing, drinking, preparation of meals, rearing of livestock and so forth. In rural areas, there have been spread of diseases due to contaminated water, hence, it is vital to ensure that the water utilized is clean. Another important point is, it is vital for the individuals to ensure that they have adequate access to water. In some cases, individuals have to travel long distances to fetch water.

Within the home environment, it is essential that there should be better ventilation, utilization of sources of fuel that causes less pollution, such as, butane gas, lighting and heating, and energy efficient cooking stoves that could contribute in the reduction of risk of indoor air pollution. The indoor air pollution is regarded as the most unfavourable, especially for young children and the elderly members of the households, when they are not ambulatory.

The measures that have been formulated for curbing air pollution usually include, planting more trees, spreading greenery, preserving the environment, the use of natural resources should be limited only to one's requirements, and one should not make excessive use of them. Water pollution can be prevented by kee-

ping the water bodies clean. One should not put any kinds of waste materials into the water bodies. Research has indicated that waste materials have been found from the rivers and lakes to a major extent. There have been implementation of measures and policies against those individuals, who contribute towards environmental pollution.

Rural Education

The system of education as well as the rate of education is in a backward state in rural areas as compared to urban areas. In India, there are immense differences in the educational attainment of the rural individuals and the individuals residing in urban areas. There have been cases of individuals, belonging to rural communities, who send their children to urban areas to get enrolled in reputed educational institutions. The factors that affect the rural education outcomes have been stated as follows:

- **Limitations in the Education System:** The opportunities of continuing education beyond the primary level are limited. The system of education is not well developed and in some cases, there are numerous limitations experienced. For instance, there is shortage of teachers, the teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies are not in a well-developed state, the provision of extra-curricular activities is not well-organized and so forth. The usage of technology is limited and individuals experience problems with scarcity of resources and innovative techniques. Research has indicated that in some schools in rural areas, the individuals studying in class five are unable to read class three textbooks, hence, this shows that the system of education is not well developed.
- **Lack of Infrastructure and Facilities:** While promoting education, it is necessary to make use of efficient infrastructure and other facilities. In schools in rural areas, there is lack of proper furniture within the classrooms, unavailability of heating and cooling equipment, lack of clean drinking water and even unavailability of restrooms. Due to scarcity of these facilities, not only the students experience problems in learning, but also teachers and the staff members experience problems in performing their job duties well. For learning to take place in an appropriate manner, it is essential to make the learning environmental conditions amiable. When students experience the scarcity of civic amenities, their parents too feel reluctant in sending them to schools. The lack of clean drinking water and proper infrastructure imposes severe problems within the course of one's understanding and attentiveness.
- **Lack of Extra-curricular Activities:** Getting involved in creative and extra-curricular activities are stated as essential aspects in enhancing education. These activities stimulate the mind-sets of the individuals and arouse interest and enthusiasm within them to study. In urban schools, individuals

are taught numerous kinds of extra-curricular and creative activities. These include, singing, music, dancing, role playing, art-works, handicrafts, sports, games, yoga, meditation and so forth. In rural schools, the promotion of these activities are not in a well-developed state. The students are taught certain artworks and handicrafts, music, dance and get involved into sports activities, but their quality is not very well-developed. In order to improve the system of education, it is essential to make adequate provision of extra-curricular activities in schools.

- **Use of Technology:** In the present existence, the use of technology has not only enhanced communication, marketing and overall living standards of the individuals in rural areas, but also it needs to be utilised in educational institutions and schools to promote learning. The teachers would also be able to perform their job duties well by improving the teaching processes and putting into operation, effective instructional strategies. On the other hand, students would also take pleasure in learning through the use of computers and internet. The main problem in the system of education is, the utilization of technology has not gained much prominence. The teachers are making use of text-books and technology has not been promoted to a much extent in the implementation of teaching-learning processes.
- **Attitude of the Teachers:** In rural areas, when students are enrolled in elementary or middle schools, they tend to neglect their studies and get engaged in other activities. Research has indicated that the attitude of the teachers is usually strict. They depict strictness, when the students do not complete their class and home-work assignments on time and when they depict a poor performance in class tests and exams. Strictness on the part of the teachers usually arouse apprehensiveness within the mind-sets of the students. In some cases, when they feel that their teachers would punish them for not doing their home-work, there is an increase in the rate of absenteeism and the ultimate outcome is dropping out of school. Hence, in order to promote education, it is vital for the teachers to be decent and approachable in attitude.
- **Physical Accessibility:** The physical accessibility of the individuals to the schools is limited in some rural areas. This is mainly due to, when individuals are residing in remote areas and schools are located at a distance (Cord, n.d.). When children are young, they are dependent upon their parents to take them to school and bring them back. On the other hand, when children are grown-up, they can go to school independently, but have to find means of transportation. For the individuals, belonging to poverty stricken and deprived communities, accessibility to schools becomes a barrier within the course of pursuance of education.
- **Financial Problems:** Among the individuals financial problems are severe. The acquisition of education involves costs. Even if education is provided free of costs in schools, the individuals have to spend money on other things, these include, uniforms, school bags, text-books, notebooks, stationary, and transportation. Due to these problems, it becomes difficult for the individuals to meet all the costs, particularly when they have limited income. The individuals in rural communities do recognize the significance of education, but when financial problems become severe, they even have to drop out of school.
- **Viewpoints of the Individuals:** The individuals among rural communities are of the viewpoints that education would prove to be productive for the boys. They believe in sending the male children to school. They feel that when their boys would acquire education, they would obtain a good job and render a significant contribution in bringing about well-being of their family as well as the community. On the other hand, the viewpoints in terms of girls include, they have to eventually get married and go to other households, hence, they should be trained appropriately regarding the implementation of household chores. The girls are provided training regarding marketing of goods, if their parents are engaged in family business. On the other hand, they are also given some financial knowledge required to make purchases of items from the market. The parents usually discourage their education, because they feel that they would not be able to utilise it in an effectual manner and would eventually have to manage the household responsibilities.
- **Employment Opportunities:** The main objective of rural households is to generate a source of income and alleviate their conditions of poverty. Taking into consideration this objective, they encourage their children to look for employment opportunities from an early age. While pursuance of education, in most cases, children are also engaged in jobs, to supplement family income. They possess the viewpoint that they are pursuing their education to enhance their skills and abilities, so that they can find a good job. On the other hand, when they get engaged in a job, while pursuing their education, they may not find sufficient time for studies, as result, they may drop out of school.
- **Performance of Household Responsibilities:** The children are usually engaged in the performance of household responsibilities, when their parents are engaged in full time jobs. They need to take care of the needs and requirements of their younger siblings as well as the elderly family members. Due to this, they usually do not find time to study, and hence score low grades in class assignments and tests. The individuals are of the viewpoint that domestic responsibilities are more important than going to school and hence, get wholeheartedly engaged in the performance of household chores. The ultimate outcome is, they show low academic performance and eventually have to drop out of school. This is especially in terms of girls.

Conclusion

In order to enhance the livelihoods of the individuals, it is vital for them to generate awareness regarding the measures to effectively utilize the resources. The livelihoods strategies incorporate the assets, and approaches that the individuals need to understand. Well-being is viewed within the socio-economic framework as well as within the framework of policies, practices, institutions and processes, which have a bearing on how these assets are transformed into the courses that are consistent in accordance to the livelihoods strategies of the individuals. Inequitable access to livelihoods opportunities leads to income disparity and extensive poverty along with environmental degradation, social insecurity and political instability.

Rural livelihoods establish the economic, social and cultural world wherein rural families make their living. Majority of the poverty stricken people in rural areas are engaged in agriculture, either as wage labourers or marginal farmers. The other activities that the individuals are engaged in include, employment in small scale industries and factories. They work as artisans, craftsmen, jewellers, weavers, potters, painters, carpenters, plumbers, electricians and are engaged in rearing of livestock. Women are mainly responsible for the management of the household chores, and child development. In order to perform their job duties efficiently, it is vital for the individuals to operatively utilize the resources. Wage employment, both in the agricultural sector and other services, constitutes a significant means of livelihoods in rural India.

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