CHAPTER 6
PROPOSED PLAN FOR THE
SUSTAINABLE RURAL LIVELIHOODS

6.1. Conceptual Framework

India after sixty years of independence is yet to establish a comprehensive and integrated approach combining economic planning, planning for human habitats, and environmental planning. The development strategies for economic planning and growth (the National five year plans) need to integrate demographic, economic, social, spatial, environmental, and physical elements into their infrastructure investments. There is lack of implementation of participatory planning processes which can help policy makers and the urban and rural poor engage in discussions to come up with policy options for inclusive and sustainable development.

Mahatma Gandhi had a vision that India after its independence should achieve self-sufficiency of villages in which everyone would have adequate food, shelter, clothing, proper hygienic and sanitation facilities, and every person willing to work is provided gainful employment. Let not history of India record that Mahatma Gandhi brought political independence for India but the
government could not bring economic emancipation for the rural poor. This research highlights poverty, hunger, and child nutrition and food security in the country and suggests that Twelfth Plan (2012-17) should give focused attention to significantly ameliorate the deteriorating situation. Our country is one of the fastest growing economies with the annual growth rate of gross domestic product (GDP) of over 9 percent in the recent past. In spite of this rapid growth rate, 41.80 percent of the rural populations continue to live below the poverty line (Poverty Estimates of the Tendulkar Committee for 2004-05). The key challenge, therefore, is to ensure that the economic growth is inclusive and it leads to significant reduction of rural poverty. Despite significant efforts of the Government rural poverty continues to be a major challenge.

Programmes directly targeting poor families and supporting their livelihoods promotion hold a major promise to trigger pro-poor growth. However, past record of implementation of these programmes has not been very successful and the pro-poor growth that they were supposed to generate has actually not taken place.

There was a significant shift in focus when in 1999 the integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) was transformed
to Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojan Yojanan (SGSY). The strategies of self-employment through organizing poor into Self Help Groups (SHGs) become the cornerstone of the new strategy. An overview of the implementation of SGSY over the last ten years throws up a mixed picture. There is a widespread acceptance in the country of the need for poor into S.H.Gs as a pre-requisite for poverty reduction. In the last 10 years about 250 lakh rural BPL households have been organized and brought under the SHG network. However, it has also brought into focus shortcomings like vast regional variations in mobilization of rural poor, insufficient capacity building of beneficiaries, insufficient investments for building community institutions, weak linkages with the banks leading to low credit mobilization, lack of repeat financing and lack of dedicated manpower to implement the programme. The focus on single livelihood activity has not met the multiple livelihoods requirements of the poor.

Furthermore, several states have not been able to fully utilize the funds received under SGSY, indicating a lack of appropriate delivery systems and lack of building necessary absorption capacity among the rural poor. Absence of aggregate institutions in the form of SHG federations precluded the poor from
accessing higher order support services for productivity enhancement, marketing linkage, risk management, etc.

Several evaluation studies, particularly those conducted by National Institute of Rural Development (NIRD), Hyderabad, Bankers Institute of Rural Development (BIRD), Lucknow, Centre for Management Development, Thiruvananthapuram, etc. and reports of the Steering Committee constituted by the Planning Commission for the 11th plan have also shown that the scheme has been relatively successful in alleviating rural poverty wherever systematic mobilization of the poor into SHGs, their capacity building and skill development was taken up in a process-intensive manner. In other places the impact has not been significant.

Despite all these efforts, the problem of poverty stares in the eyes of all the experts of the Indian Economy. The United Nations, in order to give a sense of urgency to poverty eradication programmes all over the world, declared the year 2015 as the year of achievement of UN Millennium Goal. But can there be eradication of poverty by the year 2015 in line with the UN Millennium goal? On 25th September 2008, the leaders of the world
assembled at the UN headquarters to discuss and review progress as per aforesaid declaration.

Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept which encompasses issues like hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter, etc. The eradication of poverty should be judged not only in terms of monthly income or per day calorie taken for the both urban and rural areas but in terms of progress achieved on all integrated issues in this write-up, the issue of shelter or housing and progress achieved in this regard will be examined with rural perspectives. India is on course to move forward to achieve the targets of millennium development goals which has accelerated its pace of poverty alleviation strategies by mobilizing greater budget resources, creating time frames for quantifiable deliverables, linking, with global frameworks of action. Major strides have been made under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), landmark legislation in India, which was enacted after a successful struggle for employment guarantee legislation. It has a direct connection with the efforts to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs in India; efforts are on towards total eradication of poverty by 2015. NREGA, with its Rights Based framework, is a paradigm shift from all other development programmes that were
traditionally supply led. Centrally funded entirely through domestic resources, the implementation of this law is supported by a budget based on demand for employment. Apart from providing livelihood to millions of households, over the last five years, the Act has become a significant vehicle for strengthening grass root level democratic processes and regeneration of India’s depleting natural resource base.

6.2. Objectives of the Proposed Plan

Based on the statements and conceptual framework, the following objectives have been formulated:

6.2.1. To look after the transparency and accountability in the implementation of rural livelihood project

6.2.2. To design and develop the participatory and people’s oriented development and welfare based rural livelihood projects

6.2.3. To enhance the qualitative and quantitative basis of projects and its implementation

6.2.4. To develop strategies and make approaches to almost all rural livelihood projects to deliver all benefits to the cent percent beneficiaries
6.3. Variables

- Rural Livelihoods
- Rural Development
- Microenterprises development
- Poverty reduction
- Employment Generation
- Uplift of disadvantaged sections and vulnerable
- Additional income
- Inclusion of Rural poor
- Management of natural resources
- Sustainable Rural Livelihoods

6.4. Methodology

The proposed plan aims to provide the strategies and approaches and various steps, in order to design and develop the rural livelihood projects in a useful manner. The proposed plan will be implemented on the basis of the aim objectives and ambition of rural livelihood projects. The plan is to be prepared on the basis of the performance and achievements of existing rural livelihood projects.

The plan is meant only for the purpose of rural livelihood based projects and their related initiatives to be established by the government. The proposed plan will be executed through the three types of categories: District level, Block level, and Cluster level/Village level. All the levels of project implementation shall be
controlled by the state/regional level. The staff of the different levels and their nature work shall be planned.

**A. District Level**

District level is the planning body to be located at every district, which aims to promote the livelihood strategies and ensure the livelihood security for rural poor, through effective implementation of rural livelihood projects. A separate organization is to be initiated under the chairmanship of head of the District Rural Development Agency (DRDA). The district panchayat president and three members are the governing body of the district level planning organization.

**A. Block Level**

The proposed plan will be conducted through block level committee, after the district level governing body. This level comprises the block development officer (projects) under the block level; panchayat union Chairman will be the head along with the two councils at PU level.
B. Cluster/Village Level

A group of villages or a single village shall be the bottom level governing body to identify the need for the beneficiaries, in order to choose the right beneficiaries as well as to make a follow-up activities periodically as per the decision of the district and block level governing bodies, under the supervision of the state/regional level planning committee.

6.5. Steps for Execution of Proposed Plan

Step-1. Bench mark survey and identification of the poor and the vulnerable. Recording the data and conduct of discussions on the basis of the people’s views.

Step-2. Developing variables and identifying the development and welfare avenues. Preparing suitable ways and means for realizing the variables and the establishment related to better implementation of rural livelihood security.

Step-3. Drawing up of a plan, after considering the suggestions, recommendations opinions and grievances from the public, along with the decision of the experts, who have the livelihood background.
**Step-4.** First and Fresh handling of the implementation of the proposed plan on pilot basis. After this, the plan shall be modified.

**Step-5.** Planning, implementation monitoring & evaluation.

**Step-6.** Public Relation and Feed back

### 6.6. Relevance of the Proposed Plan

Key components of the framework for the proposed plan comprises the livelihoods of individuals and the community, capital assets, social responsibility and social structures. The economic conditions of the poor people in the village are an essentiality to fulfill the requirements of the proposed plan. The relevance of the proposed plan is livelihood strategies indicate reflect their choices in building on their assets: gaining more from a livelihood through increased agricultural production (more outputs per unit area with increased capital or labour inputs), or by cultivating more land. Alternatively, there may be opportunities to diversify into off-farm income-earning activities, or to seek a livelihood by moving away temporarily or permanently. Poverty is a multi-dimensional concept which encompasses issues like hunger, disease, lack of adequate
shelter, etc. The eradication of poverty should be judged not only in terms of monthly income or per day calorie taken for the both urban and rural areas but in terms of progress achieved on all integrated issues in this write-up, the issue of shelter or housing and progress achieved in this regard will be examined with rural perspectives. India is on course to move forward to achieve the targets of millennium development goals which has accelerated its pace of poverty alleviation strategies by mobilizing greater budget resources, creating time frames for quantifiable deliverables, linking, with global frameworks of action. Major strides have been made under the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), landmark legislation in India, which was enacted after a successful struggle for employment guarantee legislation. It has a direct connection with the efforts to accelerate the achievement of the MDGs in India; efforts are on towards total eradication of poverty by 2015. NREGA, with its Rights Based framework, is a paradigm shift from all other development programmes that were traditionally supply led. Centrally funded entirely through domestic resources, the implementation of this law is supported by a budget based on demand for employment.