ABSTRACT

The thrust area of inclusive growth is to provide better living standards by reducing poverty and spread this benefit across all segments of the society. The purpose is to ensure that society benefit equally from the economic growth of the country. Unfortunately such equality is far from existence due to significant inequality between urban and rural areas. As such it is evident that urban areas receive more focus and attention from both giant companies targeting higher profit margins and politicians looking for healthy voting bank. Hence the fruits of economic growth in the form of better education, infrastructure, heath care and better living standards are first offered to the urban areas. The major point of concern here is that such economic growth will become a challenge to sustain if the majority of Indian population i.e. 70 per cent living in the rural areas are ignored in the growth process. The 750 million village people are definitely a site for empowerment and entrepreneurship if India wants to grow holistically in real sense. Just by parking in more funds on development programmes do not really generate expected output. There exist gaps in integrating the efforts put by the government and channelling the funds for the right purpose and correct audience. For India to live this dream of equality and sustainable inclusive growth, it is important to converge technology and innovation for harnessing the potential of every state, every village and every individual of the nation.

This research attempts to bridge important gaps in the way one conceptualizes the evolution of innovations in the informal sector, by means of formally untrained minds that have the potential for generating grassroots innovations. Grassroots innovators may be at the bottom of the economic pyramid but it would be a big mistake to place them at bottom of the pyramid in every aspect. They possess the strength to withstand the challenges, they possess the knowledge that global practitioners are lacking, they provide solutions at micro level with applicability at macro level and their role emerge when existing systems and practices fail to serve people’s needs. Grassroots innovation emerges through imagination and creativity which needs to be developed by external resources and support provided by government, corporate and citizens. Hence it becomes collective effort for overall economic development and also harnesses the creativity and traditional knowledge of India. The research analysed the role of government and NGOs in spreading and promoting the inclusive growth faster and wider by employing seven comprehensive case studies of grassroots innovators spread across Gujarat. Also a capacity building model for grassroots innovations was developed to attain the overarching goal of sustainable inclusive growth.