

# Scheming development in rural

**T**here are many facts which will be useful while thinking of skill development planning for rural India. According to the socio-economic census 2011-12, nearly three-fourth of Indians live in rural areas; nearly 51 percent of the households depend on manual work and are casual labourers working just for sustenance and 51 percent of the rural households are not involved in cultivation. Therefore, skill planning need to consider these facts in all its manifestations before skill planning for a village can be thought off. This means skill set required for any non-farm employment is to be initially identified and then planned, first within the village to see whether it is possible and feasible and then outside the village.

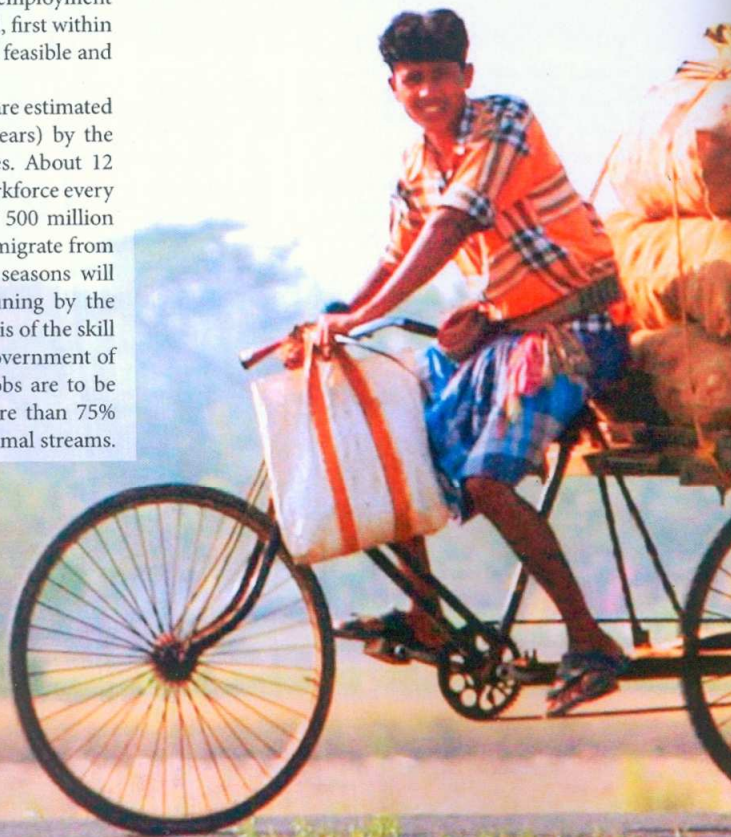
In India, more than 700 million people are estimated to be in the working age group (24-59 years) by the year 2020, according to industry estimates. About 12 million persons are expected to join the workforce every year. The question is when approximately 500 million workers including those who temporarily migrate from rural to urban areas in lean agricultural seasons will require some kind of vocational/skill training by the year 2020, no one has done a deeper analysis of the skill set required for each village. As per the Government of India estimates, about 50 to 70 million jobs are to be created over the next five years, with more than 75% falling largely in the unorganized and informal streams.



As 12 million people joins the workforce sector every year, the need to facilitate jobs, skills and vocational training to rural population

becomes a necessity for Government of India.

**V Mukunda Das** writes about the requirement of deeper analysis and approaches in this sector





However, there are no detailed projections for jobs to be created at the micro unit of a village. The present attempt is look at the different steps and approaches required for skill planning at the village level so that a geographical unit of a village is given proper importance and focus. In the present internet age, this kind of planning is not difficult, if policy makers decide to think in a multi-dimensional perspective on skill planning, in the coming years.

#### PRAGMATIC STUDY

On the one hand, the absorption of labour units in agricultural activities are not increasing in India and on the other hand, rural population as well as the rural job seekers in the agricultural sector is increasing manifold. Nobody has studied the extend of disguised unemployment in agriculture. If this disguised unemployment in agriculture is also considered, the skill planning for rural areas will become even more complex. Therefore, the question is to identify, realistically, employment requirements in non-farm sector or other sectors for placing the skill trained labour force.

We are proposing a cluster approach for skill development

**In our country, about 12 million persons are expected to join the workforce every year**

planning for rural India. Each cluster of villages will be having an employment exchange. This employment exchange will cater to a maximum population of 5000 persons. Limit of the proposed employment exchange is put as 5000, to facilitate interaction with the skill training seekers, through better geographical accessibility. The cluster can emerge in different ways. For example, if a village has only 500 population, the cluster approach will help villages with larger population

and smaller population to get converged. If a single village has 5000 population, the employment exchange can function in that village. This employment exchange for non farm sector employment seekers can be made known to the corporate recruiters, so that they will know the number of persons requires in different trades like; technicians, welders, fitters etc. Another dimension of this proposal is that priority should be given to such cluster/s which has the highest level

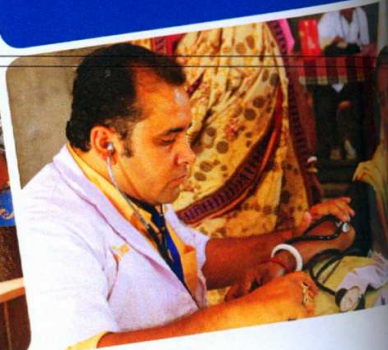
of poverty mainly due to the lack of nonfarm employment or even sufficient farm employment now.

It is also suggested here, that the employment exchange will have information on the choices of the skill training seekers and also trained workers. The skill training, therefore,





## SOCIAL CHANGE



has to develop a matrix which will include on the one side all individuals' poverty level and on the other side, the choice of skill which he will like to undergo for training. All the information relating to probable wages/ compensation, after the skill training should also be made available to the skill training seekers, skill wise. If potential for agricultural/ food processing exist in the location/s, the local population can be given necessary skill training in skills required for such activities.

### FAILED APPROACHES

The timing of the skill training in rural areas is also equally important, what past experience shows. Therefore, another suggestion is to initiate skill training during the 'off-season' in agriculture in each location. This means that the skill training will not start on a particular date of a particular month in all villages in India.

History of many failure stories of Government programmes, at the micro level, during the last five plus decades, clearly show that the local or ground reality was not given adequate attention in such national programmes. Therefore, the 'adaptation' of such programmes did not reach the desired level. It is in this context that in skill training during off-season is suggested.

One could see, so far, many documents on skill planning at the national level did not consider these micro planning requirements and how such micro planning becomes fruitful in improving 'poverty alleviation' through skill training.

Our institute has already initiated steps in this direction of Micro Level Skill Planning at village level/ village clusters. We found, through our observations and data collected from villages, in Bihar that appropriate skill planning with the background of the poor will make a great difference in achieving the goal of reducing economic inequality and poverty.

### INITIATIVES AT MICRO LEVEL

We have systematically used the internet technology for realizing our objectives of collecting and collating data and

**Apt skill planning will make a great difference in achieving the goal of reducing poverty in Bihar**

even simulating different scenarios; based on different combination of factors, such as the personal preferences of the skill seeking person/s in the choice of skills and the probable remuneration that they can get through such training. The potential number of skill training seekers available in each village was also considered. Our analysis also found that the distance between the future employment location and the present living location of the potential skill trainees are equally important in making such skill training a success.

This initiative also studied the micro skill planning strategy of India in all its details. What has happened, so far, is the macro plan mechanically pushed down to the micro level which, according to our experience, is totally ineffective at the village level. This is more relevant when it comes to the fact that the infrastructure at the village level and the supply of skill training seeking population are correlated. For example the road length, the number of educational institutions etc. are not getting appropriate considerations while 'macro level plans are listed out and published'.

The cluster approach will also help in giving the probable skill training seekers a chance to clearly understand the consequences (positive and negative) of their existence.

This skill planning task at the level of village / clusters of villages has evolved with the help of demographers, economists, sociologists, skill planners and development management researchers. The effort by this multi disciplinary team was to simulate the population growth, working age population (24-59 years) now and in future for the concerned village/ cluster of villages. We have also identified people available for skill training in future with the rate of growth in present population, and in future, for the next ten years. ▀

*(The writer has over three decades of experience in researching on different dimension of rural India. Currently, he is director of Chandragupt Institute of Management Patna. Alok Kumar Raj has assisted him in this study)*