



# **M. P. Institute of Social Science Research**

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***National Seminar on***  
**Strategies for Human Development and People's Participation:**  
**Challenges and Prospects in Rural India**  
**(February 12 & 13, 2014)**

***Sponsored by***  
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It has been a mission for our national governments to free India from hunger, illiteracy, malnutrition and gender inequality. After six decades of planned development still a significant portion of our rural India is infamous for poverty, malnutrition, illiteracy, child and maternal mortality and gender inequality. On the one hand, few Indian states have achieved remarkable progress in enhancing status of human development in their rural areas through inclusive and participatory policies. On the other hand, some others are having dismal pictures. It is a proven fact that those states who have moulded their development strategies according to the real aspiration of the people and have ensured just participation of people; have performed well in comparison to others. Thus, in the present situation participation of people is a basic prerequisite for planning and effectively operationalising human development policy in the rural areas.

Human development is a process of enlarging choices. The process of human development is not only a process through which choices are enlarged, but it also focuses on the outcomes of enhanced choices. Enlarging human choices is critically linked to two issues: capabilities-functioning and opportunities. The functioning of a person refers to the valuable things a person can do. Human capabilities can be enhanced through the development of human resources: income, good health, nutrition, education etc. However, capabilities cannot be used unless opportunities exist to use them for productive purposes or participation in social, political or cultural affairs. Therefore, human development seeks not only to increase both capabilities and opportunities but also to ensure appropriate balance between them. In any progressive nation, a balance of human development is possible where humanistic interventions are undertaken to augment capacities of the people backed by creation of equal avenues of opportunities for these enhanced capacities of the people. A holistic human development therefore refers to development of the people, development for the people and development by the people.

In this context, attaining just human development is not the only domain of policy makers; it also depends upon participation of people and their social environment. Rule of law, relative equality and freedom are important pillars of socio-political system in facilitating human development in rural areas. Equal opportunities irrespective of gender, race, creed or caste for choices according to one's own preferences is a basic prerequisite for human development. Inequality in status and power restrict exercise of choices of those who are at the lower ladder of the hierarchy. In a situation where very wide gap in status and income prevails between those who are at the higher echelon and at the bottom, the later are vulnerable to the dictate of the powerful. In such situation, autonomy of the lower strata in identifying choices is restricted. To facilitate the equitable human development in the rural areas, some basic necessities i.e. education, nutrition, sanitation, immunisation, drinking water, transport, communication, irrigation, agricultural extension facilities are needed to be maintained by government according to the aspirations of the people. Further, for enhancing people's opportunities for a good rural life employment, avenues productive activities, easy credit, warehouses, market facilities etc. are vital for promoting human development in rural areas. Irrespective of the governments initiative people themselves should proactively participate in these initiatives for its success. Therefore, in the plan document of Seventh and Eighth Five Year plan, participation from people and civil society organisations was strongly advocated for all rural development initiatives.

In the 1990s onwards, Indian human development strategies witnessed a paradigm shift in its inclusive development initiative and governance. In the history of rural governance in India, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act was a landmark legislation that passed by the Parliament in April, 1993. This Amendment provided a Constitutional status to the Panchayati Raj Institutions in India in order to facilitate

full-fledged participation of rural citizens in the governance process. The Amendment started the institutionalisation of people's participation at grassroots level. The 73rd Amendment has also made special provisions on reservation for marginalised sections of society and equal representation for both the gender in the Panchayati Raj Institutions at grassroots level. According to the new provisions in some rural areas not only Panchayats acted as instruments of development but also as platforms for fighting against rural vested interests and raising the hopes of the people and unleash struggles for implementation of an alternative human development strategy. Since then several strategies for human development have been initiated in the field of poverty eradication, education, watershed development, joint forest management, self employment, wage employment, health and immunisation etc. in the rural areas. Some of these initiatives have been involving as well as facilitating the rural people and the results are positive. Whereas in some other areas participation of people is conspicuously absent despite extensive provisions of people's participation in these schemes and programmes resulting into very low response and dismal achievements.

Keeping this background in view, M. P. Institute of Social Science Research, Ujjain is organising a **'National Seminar on Strategies for Human Development and People's Participation: Challenges and Prospects in Rural India'** to discuss threadbare the multi-faceted issues of human development and people's participation.

#### **Themes of the Seminar**

- ***Human Development Disparities across the Rural India (Income, Food Security, Literacy, Employment, Health outcomes, Immunization, Household Amenities etc.)***
- ***Human Development Initiatives and its Impact in Rural India (Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, National Rural Health Mission, Mid Day Meal Scheme, SGSY, Public Distribution System, Indira Aawas Yojana, etc.)***
- ***People's Participation in Rural Development Programmes (MGNREGS, SGSY, JFM, FRA, Watershed Management, Irrigation Management etc.)***
- ***Challenges for People's Participation in Rural Scenario (Caste, Class, Gender, Disability)***
- ***Panchayati Raj and Processes of Human Development in Rural Areas***
- ***Role of NGOs and Innovations for Human Development in Rural Areas***

We invite you to participate in the National Seminar on ***Strategies for Human Development and People's Participation: Challenges and Prospects in Rural India***. We propose to bring out an edited volume of the selected papers presented in the Seminar. MPISSR will reimburse travel cost and will arrange local hospitality for the invited delegates.

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