LIVELIHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND VILLEGGE DWELLERS IN JAFFNA – A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

This study emphasizes the importance of governmental and non-governmental support for livelihood development of village dwellers through encouraging people participation in possible ways. In the post war scenario of Jaffna, the rural development for sustainable livelihood activities was impressed by all the developmental planners. This articles which based on social anthropological fieldwork in a village in Jaffna peninsula, Sri Lanka during the later part of 2010, explores the role of livelihood programme for the rural development in the rural poverty alleviations. The main thrust of this study is to discuss (1) the physical and social background of the village, (2) the nature of activities for the uplifting of their livelihood, and (3) analyze the contributions made by the government and non government sectors in relation to uplifting. This research finding indicate that about 70 percent of the population are living below the poverty level without any outside help or only a minimum assistance for their development. This study concludes with the concept of social capital which is a key factor for livelihood development and social exclusion which is a barrier for livelihood uplifting in this village and suggests that the measures to be taken to reduce this condition of the people.

KEYWORDS: Livelihood, Rural Development, Poverty.

INTRODUCTION

The world societies have been attempting to create a society with a common global socio - culture for the future through the advanced information technology, however village dwellers of the third world continue to work hard to earn the very basic finances needed for their living. Social anthropology will be able to play a still great role in the livelihood development process. The concept of development is wildly used by the social science researcher for their different purpose. Especially in the field of social anthropology this term is applied to discuss the cultural changes and evolution of a particular society which is either primitive or present complex societies. At the same time, it is noteworthy that the livelihood development processes in rural
areas of third worlds countries are correlated with the poverty alleviations programs of these regions.

Even though, several scientific disciplines particularly economics paid their concerns to define the concept of development, there is not a holistic perspective in the definitions of development. But, after sociology and anthropology came into the field of development as a new arrival, defining the concept of development had been transformed multi-dimensional term from the perspective on numerical or economic value to holistic perspective including socio-cultural and political development thoughts. Further, the measurement for development also changed from quantitative to qualitative.

When a researcher defines the status of societies in the developmental views, he should consider the socio-cultural life style of the particular societies rather than their financial income. Thus, it has been mentioned that financial is one of the factors to find out the status of societies. In this background, there are sub field related to the development have emerged as an important fields such as economical development, cultural development, social development, livelihood development, etc.

In this context, this study will explore the challenges faced during livelihood development of the village dwellers in Jaffna peninsula, Sri Lanka. More than 70 percentage economic activities in the third world countries is related to the village economic particularly farming and agricultural activity. At this juncture we should pay attention to what Mahathma Gandhi said about third world countries’ economy ‘true economics stands for social justice, it promote the good of all equally including the weakest and is indispensable for decent life’. (Behera, 2007)

CONCEPTS

The foundation concept of livelihood is that the resiliency and inventiveness of rural people in constructing a means of living by adapting to their environment and managing complexity. Then, more academics and development practitioners who have discussed about the concept of livelihood in the multi-dimension developed a unique ideology. There is a consensus that livelihood is about the ways and means of making a living. Most widely accepted definition of livelihood stems from the work of Robert Chambers “a livelihood comprises the capabilities, assets (material and social resources) and activities required for a means of living.

Rural development which is one of the concept mostly related to livelihood development, has emerged as a distinct field of research and has acquired a central role in the theory and practice of development right from 1950s (M.C Behera 2005). The term rural development is a subset broader theme of development. Development is a universally cherished good of individual families, communities and nation all over (Singh, 2007), If we examine the concept of rural development using the view of Singh, he pointed out that rural development is a strategy to enable a specific group of people, poor rural women and men to gain for themselves and their children more than what they want and need.
SCOPE OF STUDY

Despite implementing of many social development projects related to the livelihood activities of the village by government and non-government organizations, the rural poverty and social problems has been continuing in this village. In this situation, this study attempt to analyze the major challenges faced by the village dwellers for their livelihood development in the Jaffna villages and will try to suggest what village development strategies should be undertaken. The following objectives will form the basis of this study to bring out the desired social challenges of village dwellers for their livelihood development,

- To explain the physical and social background of the village
- To bring out the nature of activities for the uplifting of their livelihood.
- To analyze the contributions made by the government and non government sectors in relation to uplifting

METHODOLOGY

Socio anthropological research methodology has been used in this study. The primary data was collected using the questionnaire, interviews and case studies through the fieldwork carried out during the later part of the 2010. Questionnaire was based on the conceptual model, and was given to 10 percent of the total population. The total families of this village are around 186 and 19 sample families were taken for this study. For the purpose of this study, we conducted 10 interviews with the government authority officers, non government officers and village leader and interested people who are in this village and recorded case studies related to their livelihood problem from 15 families. Further, secondary date for this study was collected from the record of the Grama Sevagar (G.S), Divisional Secretariat and the project of the Kamenegu. Few data also was gathered from the records of CBO’s documents.

RESEARCH AREA

More people are living in the village area in the third world countries, including Sri Lanka, India, Bangladesh and other African countries rather than the western countries. At the same time, the economic activity of village dwellers in these countries is related to its environment. And also these countries’ major budget income depends on these villages economic activities. In this situation this research was undertaken in the village of Anthiran that is located in the Divisional Secretariat of Chankanai in Jaffna District, Sri Lanka. This village is named after the seasonal canal Anthiran that run through this village during the rainy season.

CONCEPTUAL FRAME

The following conceptual model elucidate the relationship between the village livelihood development
RESULT AND DISCUSSION

628 members belonging to 186 families live in this village, the following tables I & II show the detail of the families:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Population Details of Gender</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>628</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Details of the Heads of the Families</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male Headed</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Headed</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>186</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source G.S Report 2009

The data was analyzed based on the simple social statistics and descriptive statistical techniques. Further when we summarized the data, we consider several Key informant interviews and selected sample surveys of case studies to maintain the validity of the data.

Several socio-economic, cultural and physical factors appear to be the major barriers for the development of livelihood of the people in this village. Their life style is very much related to the environmental patterns. In this regard when we analyzed the data, it explicated that the following factors are the major challenges to the upliftment of this particular village dwellers.

1. FEW PEOPLE BELONGED TO THE LAND OWNERSHIP

Land ownership is very importance in the village community as their occupation for their livelihood development is more related to multiplicity of activities. When we discuss with the leader of the community, he said that less than 30% of the people owned very little land for their residence but they did not have any land for the purpose of the agricultural activities.
2. SEASONAL EMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Most of the people are of the wage earning labourers. During the summer season they have very little or no work. As a result they face financial crisis for they have no savings to tide over the difficult times. This is generally the case with labour class of the villages in this country. The following table shows the nature of occupational patterns of this village dwellers. The sampling data is presented in table III, it is collected from ten percent of families out of 186 families by using the random sampling techniques.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Patterns of the occupational</th>
<th>total</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agricultural labour</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire wood cutters</td>
<td>01</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mason</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>04</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – Surveys 2009

Out of the total families, 78% of them are day to day labourers

3. HOUSING CONDITION AND SANITATION FACILITIES

Healthy life of individual and social group is closely related directly or indirectly with supply of basic needs. First and foremost a place to live in is very important, in this regard the following table IV shows the nature of the housing conditions in the Anthiran village:-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Housing Condition</th>
<th>Numbers</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Huts</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Semi Permanent House</td>
<td>05</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent House</td>
<td>00</td>
<td>00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source – Surveys 2009

About 74% of the people live in huts constructed of mud and thatched with palmyrah or coconut leaves; a few used tin sheets for the roof. The balance 26% lives in semi permanent buildings. The sample data indicates that there is not a single permanent house in this village.,
Further over 76% of the people are without basic sanitation facilities, most of them answer the call of nature in the open air, which add to the unhygienic conditions of the area. There is no drinking water facilities, most of them have to walk nearly 3km to obtain their water supply.

4. DEPENDING ON THE GOVERNMENT DRY RATIONS AND LACK OF PEOPLES’ PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT ACTIVITIES

The people depend on the dry rations supplied by the government, without this a large percentage of the people cannot survive, yet there is a lot of criticism about this dry ration, those who criticize are of the view that this make the people depended and does not give them an opportunity for their own development.

Samurthi is a welfare project to alleviate poverty, a fixed sum of money is given to the poor people to obtain rations from cooperative societies. This a good program, but the people are not happy about it for they have to undertake compulsory savings, with this they will be able to obtain loans from the Samurthi itself but the people do not seem to make use of this. The failure of this is either due to the poor understanding of the project itself or they are so poor, they are unable to pay the money they are expected to save or are unable to pay the monthly subscriptions for the loans they have obtained. The data for this was obtained from Samurthi Officers and Samurthi holders.

5. SHORTCOMINGS OF THE NGOS PROJECTS AND DISCRIMINATION RELATING TO THE SOCIAL IDENTITY

Ngo’s projects are always designed to uplift the life of the people, and the people anxiously awaited for the help of these projects for a better future for an examples even though Carritas Hudec’s project related to social empowerment was initiated, the project is incomplete and no success is seen. The caste structure of this village is a big obstacle for any progress. Most of them belong to the so called depressed caste structure, but within this caste structure itself there is division and the lowest of this caste structure are usually ignored and this is the group that live in this village. This is made worse by the attitude of some of the government employees.

THEORITICAL BACKGROUND

The livelihood development is a multidimensional concept most related to physical and social environment as well as to the political situation. While considering the challenges faced by the people of Anthiran village for their livelihood development, it could be realized that some the factors behind this problem are particularly the limitations or the total absence of physical resources and economical resources as well as the lack of social capital. These two factors are the major areas contributing to the challenges for livelihood development in the third world countries. However the social capital plays a major role in the livelihood development in this village.

The concept of social capital is used in a wide area of social science and it is used to analyze the social studies related to poverty reduction programme as well as economic and social development activities. According to the work of Pierre Bourdiew, social capital refers to the
aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of durable network of more or less institutionalized relationship of mutual acquainted and recognition. At the same time Collier said that social capital is social because it involves people’s non market interactions of agents which nonetheless have an economic effect (Dhammika Herath, 2008). In this conceptual background we could realize that the dwellers of Anthiran village have a poor social capital. They are unable to achieve new advancement as well as to obtain the support from others during their difficult times. This is the consequence of their poor social capital. They are unable to even obtain the little help that is provided to the village due to their being cut off from the rest of the society as consequence of their caste. It is this idea that is being explained by sociologist as social exclusion.

Social exclusion states that the poor are in that situation because they are squeezed out of decent standard of living due to the action of others. In other words for this process is one of marginalization. This approach stresses the differences in power between the various groups of a society (Stephen Moore, 1996). In this case one could see that caste has played a significant role in the social exclusion of the village of Anthiran in all development activities.

SUGGESTIONS

From the analysis of this study the following suggestions are proposed to promote the lively hood development in this village.

1. Conducting awareness programme to redeem them from their poverty these will include encourage them to save at least a minimum amount from their earnings. Encourage them to live a contended life with what they have.

2. In order to spend the time fruitfully they should be encouraged to occupy themselves with some form of self employment.

3. The entire society must come forward to help the villagers must come forward to encourage these long neglected people to come up in life, casting away their cast prejudices.

4. The poor have very little access to information often they know next to nothing about plans and programmes designed only to promote their development and the way for livelihood development is designed and administered dose not much enthuse the poor people, everything comes from above. So this situation must be changed with the participation of the poor people.

REFERENCES


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