

A Paradigm shift in Managing Rural Businesses – “Emerging Structural Transformation Shifts in Rural Business Structures”

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Introduction:

After over six decades of independence and industrialization in our country, still large part of population remains under poverty line. Agriculture continues to be the backbone of rural society. One of the major objectives of developmental policies in India is to provide employment to millions of unemployed rural youth and apply check on migration. The core of the problem in countries like India is surplus agricultural labor and closure of traditional village industries, resulting in increased unemployment in rural areas and migration of rural youth to urban areas in desperate search of jobs, in turn putting more pressure on the urban infrastructure and amenities. There are a large number of products and services available in rural areas, which can be leveraged by entrepreneurs to set-up new and small micro enterprises. In fact, entrepreneurship can be pursued in virtually for the present economic condition.

Industries in rural areas are mostly micro or tiny in structure and quick yielding. Their gestation period is much less, labor intensive and provide substantial employment opportunities to rural folks of all age groups as compared to large scale industries. Few examples of such type of industries are Food Processing industry, Poultry industry, cottage and handicrafts industry, etc. This also helps in balanced regional growth and promotion of artistic activities. Human resources are amongst the essential resources that are required for fostering rural entrepreneurship. It is this resource alone that makes the greatest impact on socio-economic development of rural areas.

The changing global environment raises questions about the ability of traditional, small-scale businesses in rural areas to share the potential benefits offered by the changing global environment. The rapid (though declining) population growth, coupled with even faster urbanization, creates increasing demands. In India, urban populations, in general, grow about twice as fast as the overall total, and by 2020, they may exceed the size of the rural population. Such a significant demographic trend challenges the capacities of some traditional small-scale businesses to cope with the increasing demands. And this is why Rural Entrepreneurship is becoming increasingly important in India, and already, there is a changing trend in how things happen.

Related Past Studies on Rural Business structures:

Most rural enterprises are relatively new and small. Employment growth in remote rural firms was faster than in accessible rural businesses and urban firms. Rural businesses depend more than urban firms on distant customers and suppliers. There is a direct connection between migration to rural areas and high rates of new enterprise formation. Most rural entrepreneurs are immigrants.

Keeble and Tyler (1995) suggest that companies in accessible rural areas display enterprising nature.[1]

Lowe and Talbot (2000) confirm a number of these earlier findings. They suggest that rural areas may have weaker financial and business services. [2]

Jarvis et al (2002) [13] highlight a tendency for small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) to play a pivotal role in local economic development. Their work provides a complex picture of the role of rurality in business success. A feature of the work by **Lowe and Talbot (2000)** [3] and by **Jarvis et al (2002)** [4] is to go beyond the large survey methods so successfully deployed by others. Data from the 1990s showed a decline in urban-rural difference in employment growth rates (**Smallbone et al 2002, Cosh and Hughes, 1996**). [5]

By 1994-97, rural SMEs were outperformed by urban firms (**Cosh and Hughes, 1998**) [6]. Most writers feel that geographical constraints of distance are not a problem for rural business. **North and Smallbone (1996)** [7] found that the majority of rural firms did not suffer competitive disadvantage.

However, **North and Smallbone (2000)** claim that SMEs in regions with weakly developed learning infrastructures will be less innovative than similar firms in better provided areas.[8]

The DORA project (**Bryden and Hart in press**) looks at four countries (Scotland, Germany, Greece and Sweden), and two contrasting rural areas in each, to examine the requirements for strong rural economic

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development. They suggest that differential economic performance is accounted for by the interaction of culture and society in the shift from state to market; infrastructure and peripherality; governance, public institutions and investment; entrepreneurship; economic structure and organization; human resources and demography. The review considered the role of the environment as an economic driver, which has been neglected in studies of rural economic activities. By contrast, considerable research has been undertaken to inform public decision making with regard to policy priorities through work on environmental valuation. [9]

There are some studies of **Garrod & Wills** shows how natural characteristics are used in the branding of products, the commodification of natural processes or outputs and how landscapes might benefit the economy. On occasions the environment may impede economic development. (**Garrod & Willis 1999**).[10]

Little research appears to have been undertaken which explicitly tackles the issue of analyzing the balance between a high quality natural environment as a constraint and a driver of economic activity.

Another driver is knowledge, seen as necessary for economic performance. **Benz and Furst (2002)** suggest that research has not clarified how networks have to be organized and linked to the institutional framework and whether competitive or cooperative orientations of actors are more conducive to change. The precise relationships between knowledge generation, transmission and business success, especially in remote rural regions, is still relatively under-researched.[11]

Keeble et al (1992) reported that remote rural firms also suffer some constraints on business development and efficiency, arising from shortages of skilled and technical workers, management and professional staff.[12]

For **Maskell et al (1998)**.some geographical environments are endowed with a structure as well as a culture which seem to be well suited for dynamic and economically sound development of knowledge, while other environments can function as a barrier to entrepreneurship and change. [13]

Related Past Studies on the Impact of Government Policy on rural business:

One role of the state that has received more attention is in industrial policy (**Szirmai et al. 2013; Ács and Naudé, 2013**).[14] Here, old models of import-protection and state-owned enterprises have made place for policies that rely more on the private sector and entrepreneurship, but with government still playing an important role to address market failures in the entrepreneurial startup and growth process. For example **Hausmann & Rodrik** have argued that entrepreneurial entry may be suboptimal due to the externalities that may justify 'self-discovery' through supporting innovation by SMEs and new firm start-ups, for example by reducing regulations and requirements or providing subsidized credit (**Hausmann and Rodrik 2003**).[15]

In contrast, others have argued for taxing (regulating) entrepreneurship because it may cast negative externalities. **De Meza and Webb (1987)** make the case that credit market imperfections may lead to 'overinvestment' when banks cannot accurately judge entrepreneurial ability. Because banks cannot observe any entrepreneur's ability ex ante, interest rates on start-up capital will reflect average entrepreneurial ability. If the proportion of entrepreneurs of low ability increases, it will result in higher borrowing costs, which impose a negative externality on entrepreneurs of high ability, who will consequently borrow and invest less. [16]

Ghatak et.al observed that the entry of entrepreneurs with low ability might also hinder development because such entrepreneurs may have less productive workers, who will earn reduced wages as a result, and in turn reduce the opportunity costs of self-employment, thereby causing the entry of even more low-ability entrepreneurs (**Ghatak et al. 2007:2**).[17]

According to **Ács & Naude** there is a clear case for the state to play a role in addressing the market failures that plague entrepreneurial start-up and innovation activities (**Ács and Naudé, 2013**). More research is needed to clarify this role, given the fact that many countries simultaneously exhibit various stages in different sectors. Further research on the impact of policy is reviewed briefly for spatial and land use planning, the transfer of financial resources, and governance. Governance is of particular importance and the report reviews the blurring of boundaries and the growth of self governing networks of actors and government playing a steering and guiding role Consultation, strategy and partnership are the key words in the governance lexicon. Finally the report identifies a number of policy tensions in rural economic policy delivery. They are ideological tensions; institutional tensions; geographical tensions; rural versus agricultural policy tensions; social, economic and environmental policy tensions; and globalization.[18]

Laxman and Ambla (2011), in their study on Implementation and impact of Prime Minister Employment generated programme (PMEGP) scheme in Hyderabad, Karnataka Region found that the success of the Government sponsored schemes depends to a great extent on the socio-economic conditions in which the beneficiaries live and perform their economic activities. The scientific evaluation of PMEGP indicates that the scheme is economically viable. In the backward districts of the Hyderabad-Karnataka region, the scheme has yielded positive results. Its performance may be still better in economically advanced regions. [19]

Alit Sen Gupta says the socio-economic environment hinders the emergence of entrepreneurial talent. According to the study, it is suggested that the banks can eliminate the avoidable delays, guiding the entrepreneurs to overcome initial hurdles at the time of launching their enterprise, effective monitoring and follow-up of utilization, easy way of receiving loans and rescheduling of loan repayment in case of genuine difficulty of entrepreneurs to overcome financial problem. [20]

Study by **Jitendra** concluded that Land being limited is unable to absorb the labour force in agriculture. Therefore, there is a need to develop rural industries to solve rural unemployment and rural migration to cities. Growth and development of rural economy is an essential pre-condition to development of the nation as a whole. The gap between rural urban disparities should be lessened. (**Jitendra.A,2013**) [21]

Nandanwar discussed in detail about rural industrialization and viewed as an effective means of accelerating the process of rural development. Government of India has been continuously assigning increasing importance and support for the promotion and growth of rural entrepreneurship. (**Nandanwar K.P.2011**) [22]

Sinha (2004), conducted an empirical study with the beneficiary of Prime Minister Rozgar Yojna in Tripura. The study reveals that majority of the respondents expressed that Prime Minister Rozgar Yojana training had helped beneficiaries to boost up their confidence level, self awareness, self management skills, and they had gain useful employment. Entrepreneurs have considered marketing as major problem, and also faced problem like - finance, competition, scarcity of raw material, non availability of modern machinery and equipment, delay in disbursement of bank loan, difficulty of getting loan from bank as bank demand mortgage from the entrepreneurs even though there is no provision of giving security deposit in the PMRY scheme. Study also reveals that 75-80 percent beneficiaries repaid their loan to the bank and rest 20-25 percent unable to repay loan amount due to inadequate income from business.[23]

Saad (2009), conducted an experimental survey in Bangladesh from the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies- World Bank during 1991-1999. The study result shows that credit and non credit from different microcredit bank has impact differently, it also finds that the impact of BRDB has largest non – credit effect, the reason behind this - BRDB initiates more social services that include training, awareness raising, informal education etc. Study result also reveals that the impact of credit from these institutions has long term effect on household sector and women clients are more skilled comparing to male client for effective entrepreneurship.[24]

Hossain (2012), conducted this study in Jaheedpur village of Kusthia District for assessing social impact of microfinance in Bangladesh. The study conducted with the BRAC (Bangladesh Rehabilitation Assistance Committee) clients. The objective of the study was to identify the socio-economic status of micro finance beneficiaries and the reason for taking help of microfinance. Secondly, to measure social impact of microfinance operations on livelihood of beneficiaries and third recommend guidelines for better program performance. The study finds 100% BRAC stake holders having sanitary facility after joining BRAC whereas it was 39% before their joining. Study also reveals that children's education of BRAC stakeholder has significantly improved, whereas health, nutrition and family planning issues are still insignificant.[25]

Hemlatha (2012), assesses the skill of 100 rural women SHG members engaged in small business sector under Kudumbashree program in different parts of Kerala. The study result shows majority of the respondent's skill and competence has developed after joining in SHGs under Kudumbashree scheme. It is evident from the above literature survey that government agencies play crucial role in the domain of entrepreneurship development. These agencies have been initiated steps providing training, awareness generation, loan distribution, capacity building, marketing etc. for the development of rural entrepreneurship. In this regard multiple schemes have been launched by union government of India, implementing through multiple departments at national and state level.[26]

Mathur Himendu (2007) under taken a study entitled ' Changing Role of Banks in Entrepreneurship Development in India' concludes that the Banks are expected to provide entrepreneurs with financial assistance as well as inputs to support and promote their enterprise. The banks have been found to be lacking on the concept of integrated approach to entrepreneurship development. While the infrastructure and supportive inputs like knowledge and training are conspicuous by their absence, the financial assistance made available by the banks is not entirely to the satisfaction of entrepreneurs. One of the major causes that may be identified for huge Non-Performing Assets is the negligence on the part of banks in realizing their role in the proper development of entrepreneurs. Hence, it is imperative in the present scenario that banks reorganize themselves and develop the necessary infrastructure for providing training and imparting the requisite knowledge to entrepreneurs for running their business successfully. Entrepreneurship development is the need of the hour and the banks should actively involve themselves in this task. [27]

A Glance towards Rural Business Structures:

Appreciable researches studies on the structural transformation of rural areas are found in relation to rural development are available. However very few comprehensive research studies on the changes in rural business structures relating to third world countries and specifically to Indian economy. Commendable pilot studies provides collage of literature scantily available cannot provide and overall comprehensive picture of these transformational shifts mainly in rural business structures.

Further recently introduced and implemented government policies and programmes during PM Modiji's regime, hardly any comprehensive study is available except the Annual progress Reports published and submitted by these governmental implementing agencies which are highly statistical in nature and without interpretation. These can provide a indirect glimpse of the changes taking place in rural business structures but cannot be considered as a conclusive evidence of the existing facts.

Expected metamorphic changes in Rural Business Sectors:

Traditional View of Rural Business Sectors:

While addressing the issue of rural business structures the background of the activities that are generally followed in those specified set of rural areas were considered. Further agriculture forming the base for other allied activities carried out in commercial way, taking the primary support from agriculture sectors other sectors had percolated down the lane in rural areas.

Traditional rural business were highly inclined to hang on their business, setting their bases on the raw materials that are a primary/ secondary or residual outflows from agricultural sector. Examples such as weaving, handlooms, silk reeling, pottery, dairying, poultry, piggery, fisheries etc were the agriculture allied commercial activities adopted by the rural sector as micro or small or medium enterprises where some of them are formally or informally structured/ organized into commercial activities to maintain their subsistence and survival as a secondary occupation.

Those entrepreneurs involved in these set of activities were regarded as actual or potential entrepreneurs depending upon the levels of Formalization of their agriculture allied business activities.

Present Scenario

In recent years since globalization spark had ignited in our country, the outlook towards different sectors by the government has totally changed. As a matter of opportunity or inevitability, the government had flown their thoughts to the growth and development of the economy by streamlining the existing policies and introduction of new policies causing transformational shifts in different sectors of the economy. One main sector the government hinges on is on Business sector. No doubt this sector is viewed as salvation for many Macro and Micro economic problems of the economy.

A highly significant and notable move made by the government aiming towards rural business sector is the focus of my paper. The recent policies drafted and implemented by the government broadly for various sectors is causing transformational shifts not only in those sectors but equivocally either directly or indirectly had affected the rural business structures thereby rural sectors undergoing a structural transformation in this sphere.

8 Major Drivers Catalyzing Rural Business Sectors are:

- governmental Policies and Programmes for rural businesses (**Government Policies & programmes**)
- the changing trend of the market economy responding to the globalization spree. (**Globalization**)
- changing attitudes of the rural youths and entrepreneurs (**Changing Rural Attitudes**)
- drastic positive changes in social enterprises (**Aid from Social Entrepreneurs**)

- changing trends in international markets (**International Market Trends**)
- the mobility of factors of production such as Capital and Technology (**Factor Mobility**)

- the transformation of factor Labor into skilled and resourceful Labor (**Factor Transformation**) and

- the development of Information Technology and Infrastructure (**Infra Structural Transformation**)

These 8 major drivers are expected to cause 10 major transformational shifts in rural business structures.

Expected Transformational shifts in Rural Business Structures.

(Model of expected Transformational Shifts in Rural Business Structures)

A macro level glance of major Drivers which would be causing 10 types of transformational shifts which can be listed as follows:

Governmental various inclusive policies and programmes reflect their favorable and supportive attitude towards rural businesses causing transformational shifts in rural business structures.

1. Globalization and LPG – Shifts in Market Structure

Globalization and LPG had provided scope for overcrowding industries and business entrepreneurs in urban areas to move towards rural areas to set up or extend their business.

2. Emergence of new Entrepreneurial Structure:

The entry of this new group of entrepreneurs are in the forms of :

- Consumer goods marketers/ entrepreneurs.
- Industrial Goods marketers/ entrepreneurs.
- Services / concepts marketers/ entrepreneurs.
- Social entrepreneurs,

There by causing overall Structural transformational shifts in rural business structures (**Urban Entrepreneurs in Rural Businesses/ Areas**).

Change in the growth trend of rural entrepreneurs causing transformational shifts in rural business structures:

- Growth of Actual Rural Entrepreneurs (**ARE**) (Involved in farm firm or other allied formal rural business activities)
- Potential Rural Entrepreneurs (**PRE**) (Involved in informal business activities)
- Entry of New Generation Rural Entrepreneurs (**NGRE/ SUs**) (recent start ups with new set of business activities in rural areas).
- Existing and entry of new urban entrepreneurs to rural areas (**UERA**). (Shifts/ extension of their business activities of urban entrepreneurs to rural areas).

This has caused Entrepreneurial Structural transformational shift in rural business structure.

3. Commercialization of Urban Business:

The growth of commercialization in urban businesses would cause attitudinal shift of rural entrepreneurs in administering their business from merely conducting the business, towards a Commercialized Business Administration. This would cause **Administrative structural transformation shifts**.

4. Infrastructure & Technology Advancement:

Recent advancement in IT, BT, Agriculture etc. technologies paved way for entry of new products and services into rural markets:

- initiating the Urban and Rural educated youths to go for new startups causing transformational shifts from traditional types of business to new types of business in rural areas. – **Attitudinal transformational shifts**

5. New types of Products and Services:

Introduction of new types of products and services would be causing transformational shifts from traditional types of product (Agricultural commodities) to markets with new types of product / factor markets in rural areas.- **Product and Factor (marketing) structural Transformation shifts**

6. IT Knowledge and Knowhow:

New types of products entails new knowledge and know how would be causing transformational shifts from traditional types of knowledge and know how markets to new types of knowledge and know how markets in rural areas. - **Knowledge and know How Transformational shifts**

7. New types of services and concepts: Entry of new types of Services and concepts would cause transformational shifts from traditional services/ concept markets to modern services/ concept markets in rural areas. - **Services and conceptual market structure transformational shifts**

8. Marketing Efficiency of Urban Demand Market:

Increased levels of organization and marketing efficiency of the highly urbanized DEMAND Market would be causing transformational shifts in marketing structure and organization of highly ruralized inefficient SUPPLY market.- **Marketing Efficiency Transformational shifts**

9. Increased Urban Demand for Processed or Want based commodities:

Increase in demand for rural commodities in urban market by general consumers and raw materials for industrial consumers have led for the growth of demand for rural entrepreneurs would be causing transformational shifts in rural entrepreneur Production Functions. **Production Trend transformational shifts.**

10. Rural Development & Changing Infrastructure:

a) The overall business environmental changes at the urban levels are inducing the rural entrepreneurs to make business as their primary occupation and agriculture as a secondary occupation which would be causing a transformational shift from primary sector (Agriculture) towards business (Secondary sector). – Transformational Shifts in occupational structure. - **Occupational Structure transformational shifts.**

b) The overall business environmental changes taking place at rural levels in terms of flow of technology and infrastructure is not only able to check migration of rural youths from rural areas to urban areas but also it would be causing the rural youths in urban areas to shift back to rural areas. – **Demographic Structural Transformation Shifts.**

c) Transformational shifts in agricultural production activities from NEED based production to WANT based production pattern exhibiting themselves not merely as agriculturist but primarily as industrialist / Farm Firm entrepreneurs. – **Production Functions transformational shifts.**

d) Government's rural development programmes and policies in the field of education, health, social welfare activities had caused shifts of their social status of rural business structures. – **Social Structure transformational shifts**

e) Government's efforts in strengthening up the Information technology and infrastructure facilities in the field of transportation and communication would be expected to cause shifts in the rural business infra structures. – **Infra structural transformation shifts.**

Conclusion- (Scope for further Research):

In the light of above facts and observations made, there two fundamental issues that need to be researched:

1. The change and extension in scope and perspective of the concepts of rural entrepreneur, rural entrepreneurship and rural business structures, there arises need for redefining these concepts.
2. The impact of emergence of new drivers and strengthening of existing drivers and changes these drivers are expected cause transformational shifts in rural business structure.

Much of the past studies and literature had dealt in detail issues regarding entrepreneur, entrepreneurship and business structures, are lopsided in explaining these concepts mainly with Urban orientations or basing these concepts as the extension of urbanized versions. However a special focus need to be devoted for defining the concepts of rural entrepreneur, rural entrepreneurship's and rural business structures based on rural orientations which is more distinctive to that of Urban ones in its characteristics and meaning. Hence, there arise a need for a comprehensive Research Study regarding these issues which can provide the policy framing and implementing bodies, researchers and academicians etc the right facts with evidences, which is the need of the hour.

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