

A Study of the Economic Rural Life in Rajasthan

*Dr. Priyanka Saini

Abstract

The present paper is an attempt to study the economic rural life of Rajasthan. About 75 percent population is rural in the state thus the economic growth and development of the villages are key to the overall growth and development of the state. Though over the years, the government has introduced several schemes in rural areas but they are still suffering from many problems. The rural economy life studies are important as it provides the working of various existing agrarian and other associated socio-economic institutions governing the village life and drivers of changes. The economy of the State is basically an agrarian economy. Mostly rural population depends upon agricultural and allied activities. The findings suggest that the reason behind the difference between urban and rural society is because of allocation of funds for development, in pricing, trade policies, in distribution of available credit, power and other necessary ingredients for progress and prosperity.

Key Words: Economy, Rajasthan, industry, development, urban, rural.

Introduction

Rajasthan a prominent state of nation better known as “Desert State” is situated in north-west of India. Rajasthan is the largest state of country and the seventh largest by the population. Perhaps due to the large amount of the Rajputs in this part of the state, the British called it ‘Rajputana’. This state looks like a kite and is like France in appearance. It extends from 23°03’ to 30°12’ latitude to the north of equator and from 69°30’ to 78°17’ longitude in the east. The tropic of malignant growth, 23°30’ North Latitude, goes through the limit of Dungarpur and centre of the Banswara area. It has an area of 3, 42,239 sq. KM which is 10.41% (1/10 Part) of total India's territory.

The population of 2011 suggests that Rajasthan had a population of 6.85 crore. It is about 5.66 percent to the total population to nation. The bulk of population (75.1 percent) villages that are present in the state. The remaining 24.9 percent live in urban areas. The rural area is composed of 44672 villages, out of which 1408 are uninhabited. These villages have different sizes of population; they vary from very tiny villages having a population of one single person to very large ones. So this bulk rural population in Rajasthan is important for economic growth. The socio-economic development of a state is depend on the development of rural life of Rajasthan and its villages.

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Economic Rural life of Rajasthan

The economic life of the rural people is not very happy. No doubt it has improved in the last years but when we compare them with the urban people they lag much behind.

Land

The economy of the State is basically an agrarian economy. Nearly 70% of the rural population depends upon agricultural and allied activities and so the villagers consider land as the most valuable of all assets. Although buildings and livestock constitute a part of economic resources, yet it is the land which is prized most by the villagers. Rajasthan's agriculture is very backward contrast to the fact that agriculture is very important part of Rajasthan. The productivity per hectare of land is very low in case of many crops and thus the per head income in the agriculture sector is much less than in the non-agricultural sector.

Lack of sources of irrigation, uncertain and uneven rainfall and limited surface and ground water are the main reasons for this. Rajasthan also does not have any perennial river, and so has too much depend on water sources outside the state. For boosting agricultural production it is necessary to have extension of irrigation, adequate supply of manure and fertilizers and the availability of timely credit, tested seeds and effective pesticides at reasonable prices.

Animal Husbandary

Like land, livestock constitutes one of the major economic resources of the village. The villagers mostly of arid areas supplement their income by having recourse to animal husbandry. Their cattle wealth consists of camels, bullocks, cows, buffaloes, calves, sheep and goats. For generations camels and bullocks have been the only source of power in agricultural operations in the villages. It is estimated that due to the new dairy development programme in the State during the last few years, the income of a farmer has increased from 3 figures to four figures per annum. Dairying has an important part in the economy which is largely dependent on the economy. It is of special significance for uplifting the weaker section of women population. Cattle rearing provides livelihood to a large number of people of Rajasthan. The total livestock in the state for the year 2012 is 5.77 crore out of which 2.16 crore are sheeps and 1.33 crore are cattles.

The livestock is bred for milk, milk products, meat, wool, drought as well as load purposes. The bulls of nagaur are famous and are exported to other states in thousands every year, and so is the case with camels also. The production of good camels is almost a monopoly of Rajasthan. Besides its use in all kinds of agriculture operations, it is employed as a beast of burden. The Marwari sheep is the finest sheep of India both for its fineness and good quality of wool.

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Industries and commerce

Industrially, Rajasthan is an undeveloped State. Rajasthan still continues to be one of the industrially backward states, though the State has abundance in natural resources. The factors mainly responsible for its industrial backwardness are, lack of power, water, rail and road network and low level of industrial climate.

At present carpentry, gold and silver and iron smithy, oil pressing, tailoring, weaving, cloth printing, shoe making, pottery, dyeing and colour printing, carving in stone etc. making are the main rural small scale industries. Hereditary craftsmen and skilled workers have kept alive the traditions of Rajasthan in textiles, jewelry, metalwork, marble, ivory and sandalwood carvings, pottery, lacquer work etc. they have given to Rajasthan quaint and exotic products that find a greater market not only in other states of India but also in foreign countries. Some important towns and cities of Rajasthan have specialized in one thing or the other. Jaipur is famous for dyeing and printing of cloth, for studding the gold ornament and for making the marble images. In Bikaner they make woolen blankets and carpets and also big kuppas of the camel skin. The craftsmen of Jaisalmer are expert in making the blanket form wool, bags from the hair of camels and goats. Kishangarh is famous for print in cloth, for dyeing and also for making fans from grass called khaskhas. In kota, they work on muslin and make doriya cloth. They prepare beautiful pots of silver, do ivory work. Marwar specializes itself in making chunri and bandez, dyeing and printing of cloth, knitting, and gold silver work on cloth, shoe-making, woolen blankets, ivory and marble toys. Metal pots, grinding stones, badlas (water vessels) and sweets. In Mewar, they are expert in making daggers and swords, in doing gold printing work on cloth. They make beautiful wooden toys. Shahpura is known for dyeing and printing and knitting. Sirohi is famous for making swords, arrows, bows, spears and other weapons for war.

Besides the above mentioned handicrafts, Rajasthan is also known for multi coloured wollen shawls. Paintings from Nathdwara and Phad paintings from Shahpura and Bhilwara are an attraction to the people of India and abroad.

Occupational Profile of Workers (2001-2011)

The occupational profile of women workers of Rajasthan for 2011 shows that 52.6 per cent of the female workers are cultivators, 24.2 per cent are agricultural labourers, 20.7 per cent are other workers and small proportion of the female workers is engaged in household industry (2.5 per cent). The study of the table depicts that there was a decrease in female cultivators by 14.6% in the last decade (2001-2011) whereas percentage of female agricultural labourers increased by 8%. Percentage female household industry workers was decreased by 0.3% and the percentage of female other workers was increased 6.7%. This indicates that engagement of female workers as cultivators has been reduced and females contribution as agricultural labourers has been increased in Rajasthan.

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Occupational distribution of workers in Rajasthan 2001

	2001	2011
Cultivators	67.0	52.6
Agricultural labors	16.2	24.2
Household Industry Workers	2.8	2.5
Other workers	14.0	20.7

Source: A Hand Book of Population Statistics, 1981,1991 (Censusindia.gov.in)

Conclusion

The villagers comprise the core of society and also represent the real Rajasthan. To ensure that the fruits of Rajasthan progress are shared by all sections of the society and Rajasthan's economy to be strong, the rural economy needs to grow. The government has identified several elements of social and economic infrastructure, critical to the quality of life in rural areas, and is working towards it. Over the years, the Indian government has introduced several schemes that have not only helped the Rajasthan citizens improve their economic situations, but have also addressed their physical needs. However, rural areas are still plagued by problems of malnourishment, illiteracy, unemployment, and lack of basic infrastructure like schools, colleges, hospitals, sanitation, etc. This has led to youth moving out of villages to work in cities. The state and union governments as well as its critics recognized that India lives in its villages and the growth and transformation of the economy needed accurate knowledge of the rural context. Therefore, village studies are important as it provides the working of various existing agrarian and other associated socio-economic institutions governing the village life and drivers of changes.

***Associate Professor**
Department of Economic
S.C.R.S Rajkiya Mahavidyalaya
Sawai Madhopur (Raj.)

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