

2. Situation in the State

The socio-economic life of the state mainly depends up on agriculture and forest. It has 29.61 % area under forest cover. Despite one of the major minerals producer state of the country it has very poor infrastructure for catering for basic services to its citizens.

In spite of several efforts for tribal development by government under tribal sub plan, more than 50 % of the total population is still below poverty line. Livelihood issue is crux of the problem as productivity of resources, individual and governance mechanisms is reducing at fast pace. Despite abundance opportunities of employment in sectors related to natural resources, most of the opportunities available for local people are as wage labourers only. However as per one view due to lack of orientation to-wards development, the people are not able to utilize the benefits and opportunities provided to them by the governments and other agencies.

Due to low productivity and failure of monsoon the employment generation opportunities are reducing in agriculture sector. Under the influence of market forces and lack of supporting structures farmers are forced to make distress sale of their produces.

In last 50 years the forest cover has come down from 50% to 27%. Indiscriminate exploitation of natural resources (like firewood, timber, and minor forest products etc) by vested interest groups has reduced availability of resources to the people. Minor forest produce (MPF) are one of the major source of livelihood but due to malpractices of middleman in marketing, poor tribal are unable to get proper returns.

The situation forces people to migrate to cities and other states in search of livelihood. This creates other problems like cultural degradation, ill health, sexual harassment of women at work place, malnutrition, lack of educational and health facilities for the children of migrants etc. Women and children are the worst victim of all sorts of external exploitation and migration.

Continuous postponement of Panchayat elections for last 27 years is a barrier in de-centralization and people centered development. The culture of local self-governance of the village elders committees of tribal has diminishing.

The villagers are unable to interact with the government official and system on equal footing. There are reports of misappropriation of resources at district and block level government development programme. A section of vested interests group like government officials, political leaders, contractors etc are dominating the social, political and economical scenario and as a consequence people have little access on the survival opportunities.

The quality of basic services dispensed through the government infrastructure. Quality and contents of the education do help students to face competition and earn livelihood. It is reported that medical services are intermittently and at unpredictable intervals in some parts of the state¹.

Land Use pattern-Degrading Natural Resources²		
Classification	% Of Total Area-1997-98	% Of Total Area-1955-56
Net Sown Area	22.68	23.5
Forest	29.27	40
Uncultivable Waste Land	7.19	5
Non-Agricultural Use	9.89	4.8
Orchards	1.38	1.8
Pasture	1.10	
Culturable waste Land	3.48	5.8
Current & other fallow	25.01	15.5
Total	100.00	100

¹ Information from situational analysis given the project proposals is also used in writing this chapter

² Source-Statistical office Bihar- Published in Jharkahnd-Land and People-Rajesh Publication