P07 / Policies for Rural Poverty Alleviation in the 21st Century: New Challenges and Possibilities

Topic : POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

Chair : Avanindra Thakur (O P Jindal Global University)

GENERAL OBJECTIVES, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND SCIENTIFIC RELEVANCE

Poverty is still a major issue in the policy agenda. According to the most recent estimates, in 2015, almost 750 million people in the world lived on less than a $1.90 a day. The majority of the global poor live in rural areas, are poorly educated, employed in the agricultural sector, and under 18 years of age. Policies to reduce rural poverty have been implemented over the last decades in several countries through a broad mix of strategies and policy tools. There is a general consensus that these policies have contributed to social and economic inclusion, creating alternatives for poor families and communities, as well as promoting economic development. Despite the progress made, troubling signs are emerging as the pace of poverty reduction is slowing. Furthermore, fast economic and technological transformations in the world economy, rapid expansion of multinational agribusiness complexes in Latin America and Africa, and new demands derived from the impact of climate change, stablished a new set of challenges for policy makers involved in rural poverty alleviation policies. As the strategic importance of rural poverty alleviation policies became acknowledged, there also remains many new issues and important questions that need to be addressed, such as: Are there different ways to define and measure rural poverty in different contexts? What conditions, causal mechanisms or different modes of rural poverty might be identified both historically and in the present? Are there important changes in these mechanisms? Why the decline in rural poverty has slowed in recent years? Are there new important behavioral or institutional issues that should inform the design of a new generation of rural poverty alleviation policies? How should we decide about the proper policy strategies and the policy tools that should be adopted to reduce rural poverty? How these choices should be guided by the new demands related to environmental sustainability, equal rights, labor rights, population health, among others? What do rural poverty alleviation mean for the development processes in different political, institutional and cultural contexts? Can strategies adopted in the developed world inform new demands for rural poverty alleviation in the developing world (or vice-versa)? How rural poverty alleviation policies should address multi-level governance issues? What are the best arrangements for stakeholder participation in promoting sustainable solutions for rural poverty alleviation? How to evaluate the role of firms/NGOs in the creation and capture of business/social value in alignment with rural poverty alleviation policies? What are the drivers, the impact and the risks of adopting new technologies and innovative business models as part of the strategy for rural poverty alleviation? How new logistics solutions and innovative business models can contribute to rural alleviation policies in the developing world?

This panel is aimed at contributing to the recent debate on new challenges and possibilities related to rural poverty alleviation policies in the developing world (Latin America, Africa, Middle-East, Eastern Europe and Asia). We are interested in analytical papers, case studies and assessments regarding new modes of governance, the choice and adoption of technological innovations, new business models, and new monitoring and evaluating strategies, especially those aimed to reduce income and categorical inequalities as well as promoting environmental sustainability.

CALL FOR PAPERS

Policies to reduce rural poverty have been implemented over the last decades in several countries through a broad mix of strategies and instruments. There is a general consensus that these policies have the potential to contribute to social and economic inclusion, creating alternatives for poor families and communities, as well as promoting economic development. In an attempt to address these issues, a number of studies have been conducted, analyzing past experiences and suggesting strategies and tools for improving policy management. However, with rare exceptions, these studies have achieved quite modest results. As a consequence, many important questions related to the best strategies to manage and evaluate policies for rural poverty alleviation remain unanswered.

Amidst the fast economic and technological transformations in the world economy and new demands derived from the impact of climate change, new challenges and possibilities arise for defining policies'

content, scope, goals and strategies, as well as in the way of formulating, implementing and evaluating their actions and results.

This panel is aimed at contributing to the recent debate on new challenges and possibilities related to rural poverty alleviation policies in the developing world (Latin America, Africa, Middle-East, Eastern Europe and Asia). We are interested in analytical papers, case studies and assessments regarding new modes of governance, the choice and adoption of technological innovations, new business models, and new monitoring and evaluating strategies, especially those aimed to reduce income and categorical inequalities as well as promoting environmental sustainability.

P07 / Policies for Rural Poverty Alleviation in the 21st Century: New Challenges and Possibilities

Chair : Avanindra Thakur (O P Jindal Global University)

Session 1 POLICIES FOR RURAL POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN THE 21ST CENTURY: NEW CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

Thursday, June 27th 10:30 to 12:30 (MB 2.265)

Discussants

Mario AVILA (University of Brasilia)

What keeps the poorest farmers from benefiting from technology? A study of agricultural technology and poverty in Bihar, India

Alicia Harley (Harvard Kennedy School)

While poorest farmers almost certainly enjoy the fruits of the plough and the hoe, whether and under what conditions modern agricultural technologies such as high yielding seed varieties, drip irrigation, or new cultivation practices benefit the poorest farmers, is an important empirical question. This paper focuses on the barriers preventing the poorest farmers from realizing greater benefits from agricultural technologies. Using a sociotechnical approach which conceptualizes technology as inextricably linked to the institutional systems necessary for scale (Brooks, 1980), this paper uses a mix of ethnographic research (conducted over a year in the field) and survey data (authors own survey) to study the sociotechnical causal mechanisms (STCMs) preventing the poorest farmers from realizing greater benefits from technology in Bihar, India. The paper finds that in the context of Bihar, the primary STCMs preventing the poorest farmers from benefiting from agricultural technology are missing infrastructure and misaligned incentives. The STCMs that play a lesser role in preventing the poorest farmers from benefiting from agricultural technology include lack of individual farmer capacity, weak capacity for collective action, and missing market linkages. While these findings are specific to the context of Bihar, the paper offers a novel framework for studying the impact of technology on poverty that can be used across contexts. Methodological approaches such as the one used in this paper are important for ensuring that the poorest and most vulnerable groups are served by the global innovation systems across sectors from agriculture to energy to healthcare.

SOCIAL INTERVENTION POLICIES AND POVERTY REDUCATION IN NIGERIA: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S TRADER MONI INITIATIVE

Anthony Onyishi (University of Nigeria, Nsukka)

Anthony Onyishi (University of Nigeria, Nsukka)

SOCIAL INTERVENTION POLICIES AND POVERTY REDUCATION IN NIGERIA: THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S TRADER MONI INITIATIVE

By

Tony Onyishi

Department of Public Administration and Local Government, University of Nigeria, Nsukka

&

Ogbu Collins

Department of Political Science, University of Abuja, Nigeira

Abstract

National development is but wishful in the absence of rural development. In 2016, a World Bank report

showed that 95,604,255 (ninety-five millions, six hundred and four thousand, two hundred and fifty-five) people in Nigeria live in rural areas. Efforts towards developing strategies for improving economic and social lives of these indigent citizens have evidently achieved little success. Panting on a mountain of campaign promises, the government of President Muhammadu Buhari, faced with disproportionate development balance in terms urban/rural dichotomy, initiated the Trader Moni scheme, an interest-free loan initiated under the Government Enterprises and Empowerment Programme (GEEP), which ensures initial cash transfer of N10,000 (ten thousand naira), and could rise to N100,000 (one hundred thousand naira), to specifically petty traders and artisans across the country. This study seeks to examine the foci and strategies of this policy by interrogating the efficacy of the policy thrust. It sets to find out whether the policy formulation and strategy of implementation followed an inquiry into the felt need of the beneficiaries. The study also intends to ascertain the extent to which the beneficiaries participated in the formulation of this scheme and, by the same token, their acceptance of the programme. The study follows the analytical framework of endogenous development theory which explains rural development as a product of combination, animation and maximization of rural resources. Diagrammatized on the resource-based model of rural development, the study will observe the triangulation of documented data from government publications, interview of 7 (seven) critical informants reflecting the views of programme desk officers in each of the 6 (six) area councils in Abuja and one from the Bank of Industry (BOI) which provides the organizational auspices for the implementation of the policy. Correspondingly, questionnaire instrument will be used to elicit opinions of sampled beneficiaries from the six Area Councils of the Federal Capital Territory. The study will conclude and recommend in line with its findings.

KEYWORDS: rural development, trader moni, Buhari Administration, endogenous development theory, resource-based model

Exploring relevance of Land reform policy in the era of Neo-liberal Reform in addressing poverty alleviation in India: A field based observation

Avanindra Thakur (O P Jindal Global University)

Since independence, in Indian Planning, Land Reform policy package had gained much attention and has been conspicuous by its prominence in policy documents as the most important poverty alleviation programme. In policy formulation, one of the major arguments in support of land reform policy packages has been in terms of higher productivity. It has been held that land reforms might lead to higher productivity as small farms are more productive than large farms (this argument is based on Chayanov's and Sen's model where they have argued that small farmers use more family labour input and therefore higher labour input enhance productivity). Besides, land reforms were also thought to hold the promise of a relatively equitable rural society which is otherwise characterised by high degree of land inequality. Also, the land reforms, by increasing access to land, were expected to significantly increase the demand in rural areas which in turn could improve the viability of investments in non-farm sector.

However, the situation has changed since then. Under the neo-liberal regime agriculture has become less profitable and more technology intensive. Not only the share of labour input in total cost has declined but also the substitution of capital with family labour has apparently become difficult. In this scenario it is difficult to say whether productivity is still negatively related to the size of the holdings. And this puts a question mark on the economic viability of the land reforms. It is rather marked by a shift towards the reorganisation of the formal sector. It has been argued that instead of engaging overwhelming rural population in the agricultural sector, the poverty alleviation strategy should focus on structural transformation of the workforce and therefore more jobs should be created in formal sector such as manufacturing etc. Besides, it is generally argued that during the last three decades there has been a massive shift in the ownership regime of lands primarily due to migration of farmers and fragmentation of lands in families. This, according to a major section of the policy makers, has jeopardised the significance of the land reforms, especially in its ability to promote social equality.

In order to realise the true potential of the land reforms as a marked game changing policy, one needs to weigh the pros and cons in the light of its actual importance. Rather than discarding the land reform policy packages in the pretext of its unviability in the hey days of neo liberal reforms, this paper has tried to re-evaluate it under the changed policy regime (the neo – liberal era). Based on field survey of 466 households in North Eastern Bihar, this paper would focus on the direct and indirect benefits of access to lands (such as impact of access to land on calorie intake, on access to institutional finance, on incidence of migration etc.). Further, it would also compare the relative importance of land ownership in rural areas with respect to other means of livelihood particularly with respect to alleviating poverty in rural India.

Commons Participation in Technology Transfer for a Better Quality of Life, Livelihood Generation, and Poverty Alleviation in Rural India

Somnath Ghosal (Indian Institute of Technology Kharagpur)

Technology transfer is no more a job which is confined within the group of technology developers and policy implementer. Commons participation in technology transfer has become a new trend across the globe. Commons understanding of newly developed technology is becoming more important than the development of technology itself. Technology adoption and diffusion are becoming more important compared to technology innovation by the specially trained innovative group. Thus, technology adoption by rural folk can ensure their inclusive growth, technological empowerment and sustainable growth in the long run.

Rural poverty alleviation is one of the most burning issues for today's developing world, where high population growth is taking place at a brisk rate. New livelihood generation approaches and strategies are adopted by an individual as well as community level; new zones are created for this purpose, and suitable infrastructures are also coming up to tackle with the rising poverty level. This helps to reduce the vulnerability of the rural populace in general. However, due to a lack of fundamental life support system the target is yet to be achieved. The lack of very basic support system is making common people paralyzed to take the opportunities. It is particularly true for rural areas in the Global South.

One of the most important problems which affect rural lives in India is the lack of purified drinking water supply and consequently the ill health problems. Millions of villagers are compelled to consume contaminated drinking water. Studies show that more than 80% of diseases which are affecting rural livelihood generation are reasons for drinking water born diseases. Subsequently, these diseases are making the rural workforce more vulnerable to be productive as much they need to be. As a result, villagers who are mostly daily wage labourer cannot go for their jobs on a regular basis. Therefore, their earning is affected considerably and thus affecting the quality of life of rural people in the process. Through our newly designed technology driven poverty alleviation model we have provided rural people with a good quality of water. The project has demonstrated that good quality of water is helping villagers to have a healthy life and, thus, their earning has increased radically. Here, the technology that is used by villagers to have the best quality of drinking water is already available in the market. However, through this project, villagers have been operating, maintaining and running these water purification units according to their own need and requirements. The way the technology is managed, adopted and utilized by rural people is an absolutely innovative approach. The project has demonstrated that if a simplified technology is provided to villagers to address their basic needs, it works better in terms of having good health and, subsequently, to increase their earnings for economic empowerment.

Food insecurity: Haiti’s half-empty, half-full cornucopia dilemma

Etienne Franca (Universidade de Coimbra)

Walter De Oliveira (FAO of the UN)

Several factors perpetuate poverty in Haiti, which can be attributed to deeply entrenched social problems – e.g. low instruction levels, resulting in lack of professional qualification and, inevitably, low income levels and inability to exercise basic rights – and political issues, including volatility, fragmentation and lack of accountability in the country. Poverty and vulnerability are also associated with scarce governance tools and deficient implementation of existing policies, strategies, plans and programs. Most importantly, subjacent poverty causes include very low and non-inclusive economic growth, with insufficient agricultural output regarding the local market demand.

Haitian agriculture could not only significantly improve the country’s food security, but also boost its economy and development prospects. Yet, despite its potential, the country does not produce enough even to feed its own population. In 1985, one year before the implementation of structural reforms on agricultural markets, only 8% of the rice and 35% of all cereals were imported, while there were substantial agricultural exports. Now Haiti imports nearly half the food and 83% of the rice consumed in the country.

A survey of the National Coordination Agency for Food Security (CNSA, December 2016) a branch of the Ministry of Agriculture Natural Resources and Rural Development, shows that, in rural areas, 77% of households have spent at least a day without eating during the previous month, while in urban areas 51% of households are in a similar situation. Over 80% of the poor live in rural areas, 38% of which do not have anything to eat. This makes the households that depend exclusively on agriculture the poorest of the poor.

Population growth, changes in dietary habits and processed food imports have a direct impact on demand.

In addition, the loss of arable land due to uncontrolled urbanization and reduced soil fertility by erosion drastically reduces the country's chances to improve its agricultural output. Climate change has both direct and indirect effects on agricultural productivity in Haiti, including changing rainfall patterns, drought, flooding and geographical redistribution of pests and diseases.

These challenges are compounded by weak institutions and political instability. Power conflicts between the Executive and Legislative are common and tend to degenerate into acute political crises, affecting the functioning of institutions and policy implementation. Governance issues have also led to a concentration of power and services in the capital, Port-au-Prince, and other metropolitan areas. This centralization has hindered the development of local governance mechanisms, leading to lack of coordination between central and local administrations, duplication of services, lack of transparency and poor accountability.

Recent initiatives by the international community to reduce food insecurity in Haiti can help develop public policies and governance tools. This article will analyze a sample of such projects – implemented by faith-based organizations and international NGOs with support from multilateral development organizations and bilateral cooperation – exploring the effects of the interventions on policy formulation and their potential for institutionalization into official programs and public policies.

This article will also discuss the role of external actors in policy formulation in Haiti and their impact on food security governance mechanisms and tools in the country. A better understanding of the influence of international actors as exogenous policy stakeholders can shed light on broader post-colonialism concerns in a globalized world. Such dynamics might exist – and not be perceived as clearly – in other contexts with stronger institutions or in more advanced democracies.

Population growth, changes in dietary habits and import of processed foods, loss of arable land, use of inappropriate agricultural practices and climate change – all factors present in the case of Haiti that limit agricultural output and the ability to ensure food security, eradicate poverty and achieve sustainable development – are threats to other countries and regions alike. The case of Haiti can be considered extreme and can help identify similar issues in other countries, contributing to the debate about food security in the world.

Through desk review, case studies and interviews, the authors will seek to analyze food security issues and innovative solutions in the context of Haiti, identifying innovations, lessons learned and potential for replication in other developing countries. The cases studied include: Kore Lavi, a safety net program to improve access to locally produced foods among vulnerable households; Food for the Poor, which is developing a prison farm project as part of international efforts to improve Haiti's prison conditions; and Action Against Desertification, which is implemented by the Food and Agriculture Organization to increase resilience and reduce food insecurity in the country.

Low-tech innovations and Poverty Alleviation in semi-arid areas of Brazil

Melo Sued (University of Brasilia (UnB))

Martins Cesar de Oliveira Susan Elizabeth (University of Brasília - UnB (Universidade de Brasília))

Rural poverty mitigation has been a challenge addressed in different ways in various public policies recently implemented in Brazil. Taking in account the importance of innovation for fostering economic development, this paper is aimed at analyzing the impact of Brazil's Technical Assistance and Rural Extension programs as governmental strategies for inducing innovation in small holder farming in semi-arid areas of Brazil. Arguing that even low intensity innovations can improve production and management practices, leading to potential increases in income, the research proposes a conceptual review, aiming to contribute to the discussions regarding design, implementation and efficiency of a new generation of rural poverty alleviation public policies.

Although the literature regarding agriculture innovation policies usually focuses on the analysis of strategies for fostering cutting-edge research and development and the adoption of advanced technologies, this paper outlines the importance of small-scale innovation for the specific challenging environment of Brazil's semi-arid region. Small-scale product and process innovations are considered to be priorities in the context of family farmers, as they can be applied immediately, require fewer financial resources and can greatly improve the livelihood of low-income families. New forms of cultivating the land, such as agroecological production, and simple management techniques are examples of this type of innovation.

When compared to technology intensive initiatives, the paper demonstrates that, in several cases, low-tech interventions, such as the incentives promoted through the mechanisms of technical assistance and rural extension programs, are better equipped to successfully reach remote and marginalized communities in the Brazilian territory. The paper, therefore, argues that rural extension programs can be perceived as part of

innovation policies instead of aid policies. The paper focusses on the Semi-Arid, a large region encompassing several states, mainly in Northeast Brazil (approximately 982,000km2), which concentrates higher levels of poverty as compared to other regions in the country. The region has adverse climate conditions (extremely dry seasons), low productivity and difficult market access. The diversification of income sources, strategies for climate adaptation, sustainable natural resources management and alternative animal feed systems are a priority in the semi-arid. These demands are part of the scope of low-tech innovations and can be induced through technical assistance and rural extension programs.