

**A Socio-Environmental developmental audit of a Village in India: Some reflections  
pressing dire needs for legal initiatives, environmental planning and management  
strategies in wake of globalization: A Case Study**

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**Abstract**

Globalization is a boon for human being but it has its limited relevance only. It can prove to be a ban also for a man, society and environmental if proper attention is not devoted. Villages in India, likewise have received market- sustainable results of globalization but there can be adverse impacts as well for a larger human society, can be realized by going through this paper.

The universe of the case study is a village which has attained returns of economic sufficiency and prosperity for almost total population of inhabitants but lost a lot in respects of environmental wealth, social customs and rituals, human attitudes of volitional fellow feeling etc. during a time span of twenty years.

The results thus, present bewildering pictures of a village lost in terms of its age-old sanctity of precious magnificent benevolent characteristics for humanity, society, environment and nation. Accordingly, it is apt to remark: if a village is lost, India is lost for Indianness, as India resides in villages is the celebrated truthful adage.

**Keywords:** Modernization, Environment, process of enslavement of labour force, audit and evaluating of policies, still rural culture, de-welfare activity.

**Introduction**

This paper relates to the description of a villages past and present status over a time span of twenty five years. The village concerned is called as Matuk Chapra in the district of Siwan and state of Bihar in India. This village is selected as the specimen subject of the study because it is located at a distance of three kilometers from the district headquarters – Siwan - a very old town where persons of this village have been serving government offices and business enterprises in every generation of population and irrespective of the factor of small distance from town and village could be distinctly identified as rural site of this paper until 25 years back but now it cannot be easily termed as a district rural cite. This very metamorphosis evokes so many questions to address which relates to environmental planning and management and are the subject matter of this paper.

## **Hypothesis**

The hypothesis about 25 years underhand is that at a point when there was not much technological advancement, human resource development, development in matters of infrastructure as well as output, knowledge and skill-boom, abundance of various life style facilitators owing to multiple welfare oriented government schemes and most significantly financial prosperity in every family unit although the traditionally existing joint families have as it as a common practice disintegrated into fragmented nuclear families, there existed a volitional community fellow feeling and cohesive rural culture meriting a specific civilisational nomenclature - a village - which could be easily distinguished from a neighboring town and where man enjoyed symbiosis with nature and rural specificities - cattle, ponds, open landscapes, surrounding mango, groves, strong convictions and inexplicable rejoices of festivals - holi, diwali, Id, Dasshera and Makar Sankranti to a name few – outdoor sittings of patriarchs of families, chaupals, sadhus and their huts at the outskirts of the village, primary and middle schools - the very important centres for attracting not only students but also associating the elderly men and women on the occasions of saraswati puja and Ganesh puja in cultural, spiritual and devotional resonance all through the village an overwhelming cooperative attitude amongst hindus and muslims on the occasions of muslim and hindu festivals like Id-ul-Zuha and holi, number of annual fares organized on the occasions of hindu and muslim festivals and most characteristically bonds of unitary fusion practised by one and all of the village day in and day out all through the year and especially on the occasions of marriages and death rituals. This all except a few has simply vanished at present. At this point a researchable problem comes up for eliciting multiple questions bearing upon perspectives of development environmental management and planning in a developing or non-developing village.

Needless to state that the changes over a period of twenty five years are not limited to this village only, rather they have become the common habitat features of most of the villages almost all through the State. This is being reported after the researcher has visited several villages of the various districts of the state e.g. Patna, East champaran Siwan and Saran. In the above backdrop perspectives that call for analytical examination can be enlisted as follows:

### **1. The audit and evaluation of state sponsored policies.**

India has been called as a nation whose vast population lives in villages. Taking the experiences of the sample village into account the above statement does not hold truth at present of late migration from this village to cities within and beyond India has been practiced as the first

objective of every educated and uneducated youth. In the past while every evening there were large number of boys present in the playgrounds playing various games, at present playgrounds are unattended and the playgroup boys are found seated closeted with television-sets in their houses or wandering in the village - market or along the sides of the highway. In times to come, it is expected that with the perpetual succession of the above life style villages are bound to lose identity and suffer identity crisis. At this instance an important big question evolves: What can be village specific most suitable programme of environmental planning and management that could subserve in the selfguarding disintegrating identity and habitat of a village? Preserving rural identity is important for agricultural productions, environmental protection and man-power generation on one hand and on the other for maintaining India's cultural heritage of diversities occurring in abundance in villages. It is opportune to mention here that notwithstanding that in India different states have their different rural demographic and socio-economic states attracting them the label of developed or underdeveloped state in the matters e.g. agricultural productivity, literacy, employment and essential facilities like hospital, school, electricity, road, market and bank etc. it is urgently important to draw a common rural comprehensive environmental planning and management program to apply to all states/ villages all over India - so that the traits of modernity are implemented in villages for fruitful purposes but there traditional knowledge, culture, rituals, life-style, environment and identity are not adversely affected. In other words there is an utter need of preserving rural identity with its age - old traditional communitarian mind-set also. This can be explained with the help of one such bare examples (they are however numerous.): the village under study is gravitatedly impoverished in matters of labour force now- a- days- the reason? Perhaps a drastic change in the mind-set of the labor force who were until about a decade ago persons to practice without hesitation a spirit of joining hands in farming activities in other's fields to fetch them not only regular income but also interpersonal relationship and communal harmony as the farming was a participatory activity different from a private individual's domain of pride and wealth; this all has become a practice out of date now! The labour forces and either flee to out state cities or simply sit in their houses enjoying the fruits of state sponsored schemes in cash and kind or start some private small enterprises bound eventually to be wound up due to various unavoidable reasons and this transformation for limited reasons is not less than a process of enslavement of human force. Government policies for welfare are welcome but the mindsets generated through such policies are questionable from the stand point of environment

planning and management in rural culture. Thus, such policies are required to be audited and evaluated so that a balance between preservable traditional rural lifestyle and modern technological invasions and welfare state so-called egalitarian distribution harmoniously maintained. It is apt to state that there are persons in village who are not beneficiaries of various State sponsored welfare policies. Justice demands that this interest be also taken care of.

## **2. Money Not the Culture & Environment as the Guiding human Ideal:**

The village under study has become tree less village over a span of twenty five years. The multiple mango- groves are extinct now. My successive generation would not believe that this village was surrounded by thick fruit producing gardens, ponds, puddles, green pastures, wide open government lands, temples and outskirt hermitages! No one seems to be puzzled over this sea-change loss! Every time I visit this village in holidays during interactions with my peers and elders. I come to know that over and above all guiding ideal occupying the active cognizance of everyone, is money and he or she is least bothered about preserving or maintaining the sum totality of the traditional heritage of a village of which green environment and plenty of rich environmental resources were the first entitlements. This is a very services destructive shift on the mind-set of populace which makes a subject matter of research from human resource aspects of environmental planning and management of a village.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To find out the positive and negative impacts of modernisation on the rural culture.
2. Explanation - Modernisation depicts a process of material advancement bringing about life style facilitators and mind-set promoters. They include household goods and commodities, employment opportunities knowledge and skill boom, unbound tele-contacts & communications and resultantly a nuclear man within web of science, technology and materialistic life - philosophy.
3. To find out whether the modernization impacts have drastically resulted into withdrawing mankind of rural populace from the prosperity of communication bondage to a constricted mind-set of selfish interests?
4. To find out whether the present life-style philosophy permeating the rural mind-set (acquisition of self-centred acquisitions) is worth an ideal philosophy required for sustenance of rural culture? Needless to emphasis that in the opinion of the author it is

more important to protect the rural identity than to permit it to be so inter-mingled with city culture that given this phenomenon a large dimension the very rural culture will be extinguished.

5. To find out the scheme of environmental management and planning for villages in India, whereby a holistic environment friendly life-style philosophy could be promoted amongst the members of rural community so that rural environment could be best developed in as scientifically planned way of accommodating preservation of rural-enviro-specific benevolent rituals as well as welfare oriented techniques of technology.
6. Explanation- The word environment is a wider connotation including physical, social, economic, moral, philosophical and cultural aspects of human settlements on one hand and natural resources on the other. In the opinion of the author any Planning & Management of the environment must monitor and result into material advancement natural & environmental conservation as well as moral progress hand in hand; and neglecting either of the aspects would be deleterious to the rural culture.
7. Law is always a temporal apparatus of human prudence to effectuate justice, prosperity, peace and development. Legal methodologies could be able to achieve their best results provided they are empowered with best culture-specific management skills. It is, therefore, the ultimate objective of this paper to find out how law and management could lend support in developing the rural culture with modern scientific and technological know-how as well as preserving the best human welfare rituals of rural culture so that the 'rural entity' is not extinguished.

## **Methodology**

The methodology of this research paper is empirical based on analysis of facts and live cases within a time span of twenty five years since year 1985. The methodology also involves interviews and discussions with different sections of people of the concerned village on different aspects of this piece of continuing research.

## **Material**

Within a span of 25 years, the village could be depicted in the following frontiers of crisis. The first paragraph of every section narrates the past and the second one explicates the present. The two paragraphs compared together would lend material for measuring the shift in

rural habitat, habit, taste and temperament within the time-frame due to impacts of modernization.

1. Insufficiency being the ruler of majority but sincere application of labour was a customary attempt to overcome it. Quite a few acres of land, the minimum odd or luckily the minimum even number of cattle a poor house and irregular income within counts were the average possession of members of this village. Insufficiency of resources was thus the cruel ruler which forced people to simply embrace its varied object states. They however observed respect to labour and never agitated to launch demonstrations to press for any grant from State. The present times have witnessed a phase of victory over insufficiency. Due to modernization as well as State-sponsored programs accentuated by political awakening, people are now emancipated from the vicious circle of insufficiency. Money has become the first objective of mankind and he or she leaves no stone unturned for this. Given the law and order situation in tune with rule of law, people have been able to shed off the deadly burdens of insufficiency. Every family unit has good concrete dwelling with modern facilities and sufficient funds to support. However, the only uncomfortable thing having entered into the process is massive disintegration of joint families and joint plots of lands.

2. **The surplus of time:**

Stricken with insufficiency, the rural folk were burden to themselves. They had no enough work, therefore, they were found idle also. Time was exceptionally surplus for members of those sections of society who were landless and cattleless etc. Therefore, they depended on daily agricultural robs which might not be available in even manner all through the year. Thus, the surplus of time was a big problem but a native characteristic of this village.

The scenario has changed now in the village. About three fourth of the youth population have sought avocations in distant inland and outland cities and the best one fourth are busy in engaging themselves in any sort of chorus which could fetch them regular income, irrespective of its being meager. It is the only old, infirm, retired persons and housewives who stay at houses and do not go out for job. Thus the surplus of time adage is not the rule of the life-style of people as it was earlier.

3. **Child birth, education and marriage:**

About 25 years ago planned parenthood was not in much practice. Parents however always preferred to have male children. Proper education initiatives and supports were not available to girls. They were all the most made literate or matriculate. Marriage was the first and foremost purpose for them in the mind-set of society.

Now the scenario has changed. Planned parenthood is practiced, however, craving for male child is not in disuse. For this reason female foeticide cannot be ruled out. With the help of State - sponsored welfare schemes girl children are now sent to schools and colleges but the ratio is not more than 25 to 30 percent. Still much more enlightenment and awakening amongst parents is called for. As regards marriage, sooner the better girls are married once they attain puberty. In some cases child marriages also take place.

#### **4. In the lap of nature:**

Until about 25 years back the village was placed in the lap of nature. Green groves, ponds, puddles and wide agricultural fields bedecked the surrounding. Now, groves are nowhere standing, ponds and puddles are dried up and extinct and agricultural fields are made the locals for accommodating fragmented families concrete houses on the basis of such human settlement pattern, it is simply impossible to conceive that the village is in the lap of nature, but rather actually it is neither a village nor a town an entity with little remnants of a village and big propensities of an urban culture. While the members of the village serving jobs far away visit it, everytime they find some new construction work in progress, the open space is getting covered more and more as if with a competitive race amongst managers of fragmented family units with a foreseeable consequence that the village may lose its identity in very near future, the intention of the author to pen these lines is to emphasis single big purpose of arousing concerns over the drastic impacts of such blind transformations at the cost of depletion of natural resources and extinction of cultural diversities.

#### **5. Flying far off for riches:**

Flying far off for riches has become the cult of the youth in this village. Except the chosen few who prefer to involve themselves in higher studies or join services in the country, majority fly far off for big purse. This is a very serious human resource-degeneration malaise in my opinion. The aspirants as well as users of this cult are not specialists. They are not more than bare working hands they go out of the country,

amass their income and return home after a considerable period of time. On return they are counted as wealthy persons. They operate bank accounts which is a strong catalyst for their marriage settlements. Marriages are made on basis of such status but there are very sad live cases which reveal altogether very displeasure some human rights violations. They can be listed as follows with the help of following case story:-

Mr. X arranged money for air fare and incidental expenses by personal borrowing from Mr. Y a money lender by profession in the village. Mr. X promised Mr. Y to repay the debt with interest on return and until that time he also requested Mr. Y to advance money to his family members as and when asked for. On returning home after about three years Mr. X found himself entrapped in such a huge amount of debt that even after exhausting his whole savings abroad that he brought the debt could not be fully repaid and remained unquenched. Mr. X was consequently forced to continue in the footsteps of the debt tradition that had started since he started acting upon the cult of flying far off for riches. Now he is in a bad trap of debt and not able to either construct his house or educate his children. Flying far off for riches has now become unpleasure some compulsion for him. It is uncertain when he will have his own riches !

The above is not an exceptional case in which the misfortune has befallen in the course of flying far off for riches! Professionally skilled and unskilled young persons are reported to be cheated and entrapped by agencies running such schemes for sending such persons abroad. Many a time it is a big news that engineers had to wash utensils and graze cattle in forests or perform other unexpected works. This process of non systematic gains and riches was not even conceivable about 25 years ago. The long time repercussions of this exercise are very relevant subject matters for research in environmental management and planning in rural India.

### **Results and Discussion:**

On the basis of the facts stated above the issues that come up for discussion and result are as follows:-

1. Over a period of twenty five years the village under study has under gone drastic change. The change is however unplanned and therefore, it adversely affects the very morphology of the village. It can be well submitted that if the chain of unplanned development continues, it will result into death of the cultural entity and environmental



sanity and specificity of a village. Development requires to be promoted in an architecturally designed planned manner and not on the basis of personal choices but community welfare, public health, environmental protection and all the more important, the preservation of rural identity.

2. The village turned treeless within 25 years tells a big tale. The patriarch in the village have imbibed the philosophy of money machine. . The inducting effect of this philosophy has percolated to the mind-set of manpower in family units. Migration for money from village to inland and outland places is the only method available to people. This has resulted into neglecting the environment which is a serious problem to be taken care in course of planning a scheme for environmental planning and management of a village.
3. The depletion of other natural resources like pastures, ponds, puddles and village forests is another big environmental problem. The concerned village had the above all in the past but due to human selfish illegal encroachments such sites are either turned into plains or culpably damaged and diminished. If the said sites are not rejuvenated through a comprehensive uniform scheme of environmental planning and management for villages, it would result into serious environmental damage.
4. For a village it is not only the physical environment but also with human source development that calls for an urgent long-term environmental planning and management. In the understanding of the author the physical environment is shaped and affected only through the socio- economic and moral environment. The latter is a part of human- resource development. In course of interaction with several youths of the village, it was revealed as an alarming learning that they wished to sell off their lands and settle in towns - the purpose being securities of income , comfortable life as well as better education for children. Upon my arguments that all are possible provided proper initiatives with a dedicated mind-set coupled with sincerity of efforts and fixity of goal are operationalised, the youths were difficult to be convinced. This poses an affinity crunch or moral. Crisis amongst the youth which needs to be looked into analytically and remedially by state. It is opportune to mention here that while the youths under reference were remind that the very lands they were planning to sell off were earned and saved by their late parents and grandparents through great hardships and toils, but this did not influence them either and they reacted that they were not

concerned with the past, rather preferred to manage the present and shape the future of their family ! This mind-set of uprooting from the rural homeland is a serious psychological maladjustment which requires to be treated through multifaceted counseling and socio-economic therapy as a part of environmental planning & management. At the back of environmental planning & management, there is a seat of pool of ideas and priorities of man and society, therefore, it is required that idea and priority management should also be taken care of. If a sensitive researcher who is well aware of the village's past and present analyses the situation he can without any difficulty and doubt find to state that in the root of idea and priority degradation as outlined the responsible causative factors are multiple, political turmoil's, state's apathy, lack of development facilities and proper policies and above and over all lack of availability of important informations about planning and managing human life in village.

5. In year 1983 the author had depicted in one of his papers the state of affairs of the then same village in following ten quips:

- Insufficiency as limitation to progress.
- Hanging over the hand and mind the surplus of time.
- Unplanned parenthood, improper pre-natal and post-natal care.
- Upbringing impoverished.
- Development-inert environment.
- Adolescence attracting delinquency labels.
- Community confinement.
- Symbiosis in the lap of nature.
- Life a debt to pay by life.
- After all a valley of still culture!

In other words the village had the indices of insufficiency of material resources delimiting human progress, the lack of job opportunities resultantly the overflowing everready surplus of time, unplanned parenthood, improper prenatal and postnatal cares and impoverished upbringings ; development inert environment, delinquency infested adolescence as a common rule subject to few exceptions ; rural community as if a world imprisoning human resource within its confinement, however, nature as the grand sovereign nurturing and

disciplining man in its lap; life-time and after-life indebtedness but ultimately not much agitation and demonstration for the cause of rural development rather maintaining the status of a still culture! At the turn of a quarter of century the above all characteristics have been shed off under the influence of modernization within the widest signification. This is a welcome trend but the spate of ensuing present development as discussed earlier has advantages as well as dire degenerative and disintegrative evil consequences also which need to be timely analysed and removed keeping in mind long term rural development, environmental planning & management.

In context of above items from 1 to 4, the author would like to discuss the presently prevalent voluminous practice of flying far off riches. In the author's opinion it is a de-welfare activity while the welfare state has failed to provide opportunity of job to every person, he is forced to fly. If minutely analysed this process involves human rights violations on a large scale. Youth who take-up this recourse are victimized by indebtedness and frauds also. How far the process helps in developing their personality and how much moral satisfaction and self pride they earn is a different subject - matter of sociological ,psychological and economic researches. It is however , apt to mention here that in lack of proper monitoring of this practice by law and State the process simply lends support to strengthening some odd developmental trends only.

## **Conclusion**

On the basis of material and discussion the following conclusion can be possibly deduced:

The village under study is a specimen village narrating the set of interwoven complex facts and issues of the societal progression from a still culture to a developing culture of a village. The merits of the still culture status were that there was the least environmental damage rather all the more a preserved natural habitat and continuing rural rituals and practices emphasizing communitarian unity and integrity and ever burgeoning diversities of different religious ways of life on the other hand, there were demerits as well. But the demerits did not out number the merits. Although the demerits were multitudinous e.g. stark insufficiency of material resources, meager average income, perpetual indebtedness, lack of proper initiatives and drives for education on a mass scale, lack of adequate facilities for medical treatment, poor or unscientific pre-natal and post-natal care and impoverished adolescence etc. the resultant effect

of the demerits was not disastrous to damage the natural canopy and environmental attributes of the village. The village was still very much in the lap of nature and all that missing was generation of per capita income, large scale human resources development and a multi-pronged far-sighted rural environment suited economically viable and globally progressive management programmes and planning endeavors. After a span of twenty five years the village has gone transformed into a jungle of concrete human settlements where the philosophy of life is more and more riches and selfish enjoyments and a withered away mind-set of living in symbiosis with nature and communitarian fellow feeling . The present state of affairs attracts serious environmental management and planning programmes so that the ancient heritage of Indian village could be preserved although accommodating suitable skills, traits and know-how of scientific and technological development and modernization. In light of this conclusion the following recommendations deserve to be proposed :

### **Recommendations:**

1. A comprehensive village development plan requires to be evolved with its following terms of reference.
  - a. Mapping of indispensable minimum green surroundings in every village.
  - b. Preservation of decadent natural resources.
  - c. Promotion of afforestation activities.
  - d. Preventing and punishing the deforestation activities.
  - e. Generation of adequate job opportunities in every village to cater to the ensuring of per capita income making village self sufficient.
  - f. Establishment of institutions for training of village trades and industries.
  - g. **Moral counseling:** This becomes very important because the author has been seized of the increasing tendencies in the youth of cessation from the commune and constriction to the self. If this is not abated the villages after four generations would be very much into slum-dwellings.
  - h. Promulgation of programmes to arrest the practices of flying far off for riches.
  - i. Implementing effective public sanitary systems making uses of solar and wind energy.
  - j. Providing sufficient number of development programmes to address not only politically important classes of people but the entire population without any over- emphasis over any strata of society on the basis of any preferred political or other consideration whatsoever.
  - k. Subsuming special life-style package programmes for rural girls educating them about procreative health, pre-natal and post natal care and necessary health tips.
  - l. Legal literacy about solving the problems relating to marriage, inheritance and adoption etc.

- m. Environmental education.
- n. Introduction of national service schemes on yearly basis to promote and accomplish global recommended environmental goals as well as village centred specific environmental development targets.
- o. **To promote sincere respect for labour:** This includes shedding off the mind-set that labour is meant for earning livelihood only and if the latter is ensured with the help of State sponsored programmes it is not improper to desist from participating in others farming and related activities. This mind-set instead requires to be corrected with the ideology and philosophy that labour is ultimately directed to national construction and re-construction and labour is not commodity but a national or communitarian virtue which every two hands have to practice and translate without selfish motives.
- p. To implement loan schemes through banks not on the basis of individual security but on state guarantee.
- q. To announce various medals and prizes for promotion of activities relating to environmental protection and advancement.
- r. To launch special drives for stopping migration from villages to towns.
- s. To imitate youth directed action programmes in order to channelize and tap their vast potential for environmental up-gradation, preservation and national construction.
- t. To launch effective family counselling programmes in order to embolden the spirit of joint family structure and dissuade disintegration of joint families into nuclear families and lastly,
- u. To rejuvenate village based small scale and large scale industries e.g. cottage industries sugar mills and handicraft enterprises etc.

In sum and substance, it is submitted that villages being the heartlands of India require to be developed in material, moral as well as environmental respects so that they are preserved as the treasure-troves of diverse eco-friendly traditional rich rituals and community responsive behavior patterns fomenting national unity and prosperity and are evermore bedecked as the everlasting rejoicing and attractive habitats. May the Indian village entity live long diversely and nurture nature and environment to contribute to peace of mind and soul!