

Mainstreaming Indigenous Economy 'In its own Way'

¹Shreya Modi, ²Bhagyajit Raval

¹Architect and Planner, Vadodara

² Parul Institute of Architecture & Research, Parul University, Vadodara

Abstract: Indigenous economy is an economy generation concept that relies on the indigenous activities carried out by people or communities as a base for income generation. It is an income derived from indigenous activities, Skills, works and hobbies. This paper tries to discuss the findings of the focus group discussions on indigenous economy to understand the role of indigenous activities in life of people and in economic sector in the context of the present world. The methodology adopted was a focus group discussion with literature review were done before hand. A group of 8-9 persons was established and prior reading on the topics related to indigenous economy was done. Based on these readings and understanding a discussion was initiated with a few initial questions and an attempt to understanding of the topic in the current scenario. Today, economy plays a vital role in man's life. What role indigenous activities play and does it have a scope of generating a livelihood for its practitioners in today's world was the main focus of the discussion. For this reason, the discussion started with understanding a little about indigenous communities and indigenous activities and moved onto discussing the emergence and importance of indigenous economy in today's world. Also, the main concepts and principals and benefits and issues related to indigenous economy were discussed. Focus was also behind finding out the reason for shift from the earlier existing model of livelihood to economic activities of the present world and their shortcomings, which has now led us to the thought of generating income from other sources other than the existing model based on industries and exploitation of natural resources.

Keywords: Communities, Development, Economy, Indigenous, Motivation.

1. INTRODUCTION

"India is home to over 105 million tribal people, belonging to 31 different tribes." India is a country of Tribal People known as "Advasi". These tribal people have been in continuous contact with their neighbors, namely the agrarian community of India. This dates back to the Ramayana and Mahabharata period which refer to tribal communities as "Jana". These Tribal or indigenous communities survived on basis of indigenous activities in earlier times by means of joint work, cooperation and barter system. Indigenous economy was based on concepts and principals of social responsibility, reciprocity and sustainability. For indigenous communities, this means of livelihood was not only income generation tool but was a way of living (survival) or a day's cycle which was incorporated and reflected in all the rituals and customs and related laws. It was preached to the children from birth itself. Land was very closely related to these indigenous communities and was also jointly owned by community/village. Apart from a few regional variations, all tribes share many common traits like living in relative geographical isolation, being more homogeneous and self-contained than non-tribal groups. These are traits that can be rooted to sustainability. Industrialization and globalization might be regarded as the main aspects for this loss of wealth of our native communities of their indigenous skills and knowledge. There was a change of mindsets or a change imposed on the earlier mindsets through the lens of globalization. In this scenario indigenous economy started to be considered as primitive or old. A clear shift from quality of life to standard of living started developing

Also what are the main hurdles in mainstreaming the indigenous economy and a few outcomes to overcome those hurdles were discussed to support the conclusion of the focus group discussion. The focus group discussion ended with a consensus on enhancing and giving importance to indigenous economic sector and mainstreaming it by a no. of ways as a means to establish the lost link of social, cultural and spiritual satisfaction and generate a diversity of income choices and modes in the presence of current imposed economic sector as a means of livelihood [1]. Figure 1 shows the different pillars of the indigenous economy in a manner.

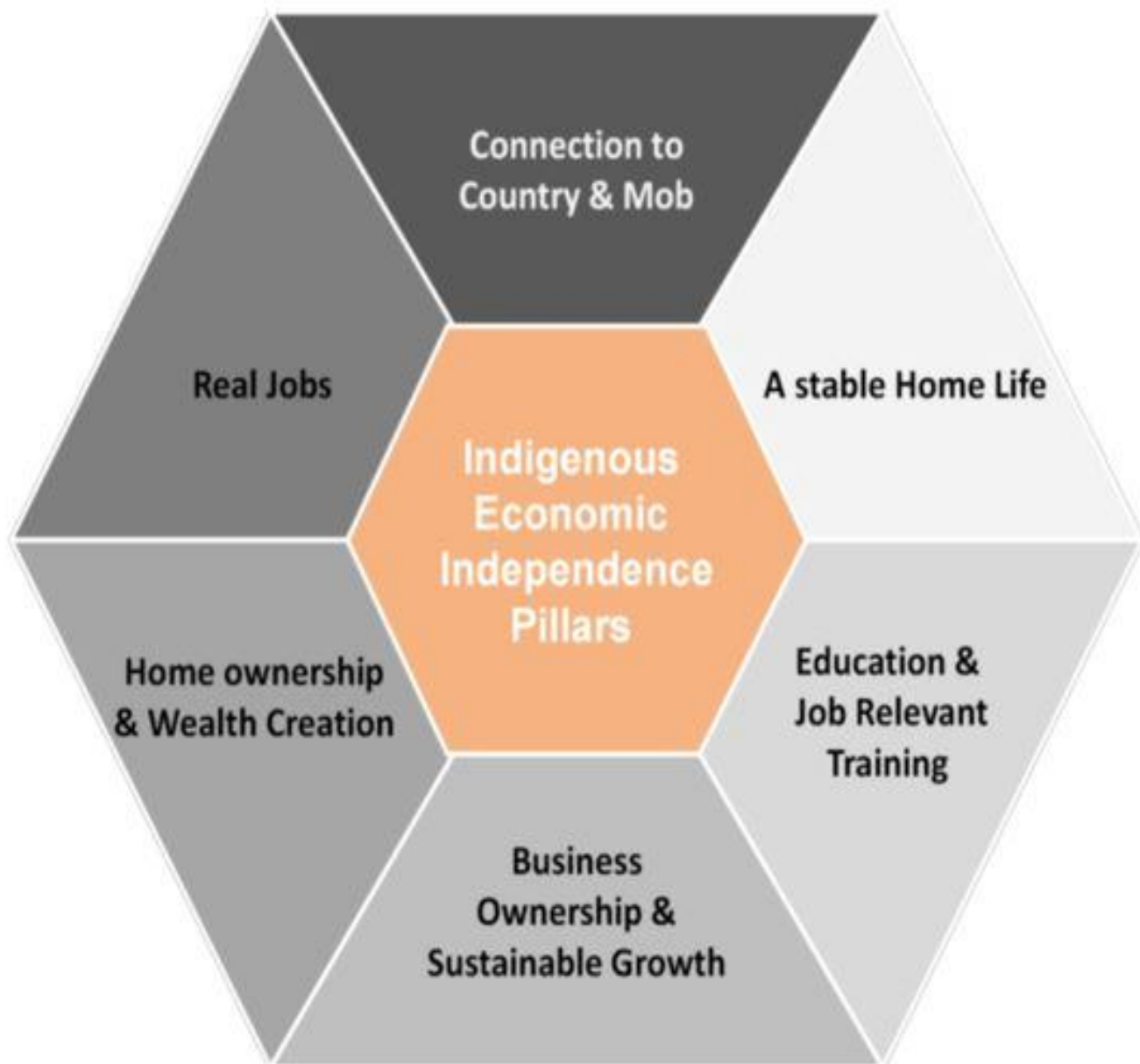


Figure 1: Illustrated the Different Pillars of The Indigenous Economy in a Manner.

Using the skills as a means of generating a livelihood pointed out to a very crucial aspect of income generation that is motivation. Imposed economy does not guarantee this type of surety. Today's world after facing a lot of environmental and socio-cultural issues, due to our present economic model, have realized the need to revive it. Also, after analyzing the current eco-tourism programme, eco-villages programme, etc., it is evident that be it in the name of indigenous economy or not, but surely, we have realized the importance of it and are trying to revive and enhance it by some means or other. Examples thus discussed in this context were Khamir Center, new available mud vessels in the market, poetry, Vishala Hotel in Ahmedabad, Morbi and the tile making industry, Animal husbandry, Fishing industry, Nadiad aashram, Homeopathy medicine making in Dediapada, Amul, Make in India, Dharavi leather industry, Papad making, Dhanvantri / hakim, etc. In the limelight of such examples, we were able to pore down to one consensus that indigenous economy can surely compete with global economy [2].

Indigenous communities and their way of living respects the nature, their setting and placement and teaches to live in coordination with the available resources which generates satisfaction among the souls. Present model of livelihood relies on income and money replacing barter system. Hence livelihood in the present context is making these indigenous activities and skills income generating. It is not rural or urban. The main aspect lies in its principals of social responsibility, reciprocity and sustainability which is true in context of both rural and urban. Current policies of industrial period are hindering the growth of people and their Indigenous activities like the Land Acquisition Act. Figure 2 shows the effective effect of the governance in different cycle.



Figure 2: Illustrated the Effective Effect of The Governance in Different Cycle.

Thus to boost the indigenous sector as a sector of economy, a few steps that can be taken are as follows: One, establishment of a proper framework; Two, setting up of tangible markets; Three, creating better awareness by means of workshops, etc. People and government hold equal responsibility for the development of such an economic platform.

Asia's Indigenous Peoples' Pact (AIPP), an organization in Asia that is directly connected to Indigenous people and talks about developing these people in their own manner. It talks of respecting their existence, recognizing

them and their rights and accepting them how they are. People are realizing the importance of such heritage of their respective countries and started to initiate a development of its kind different from the normal notion of development, the core of which are the indigenous people and their activities, their skills and experiences and preservation of it for the country and its development and such changes can be seen as a different perspective of development. Taken in a rational manner, Indigenous communities, activities, skills and experiences have started to appear in the minds of people and is helping to develop a platform where it's playing a leading role in richness of a country and hence its development. Awareness is developing regarding indigenous communities, activities, skills and experiences. Hence economic development of the country can be generated and also equalized by means of such a diverse pool of richness of our country, which in turn can benefit the indigenous peoples as well as others in general. What is needed, is to redefine our definition of development [3].

The cave paintings of Ajanta and Ellora date back to the 5th century A.D. The British had setup the Archaeological survey of India to document the wealth of material available in the country as early as in the 19th century. Setup of such a prestigious body for documenting our cultures and traditions shows that indigenous activities and economy is not a new concept and has been already taking place under a different tag name [4].

Our agricultural practices of indigenous communities have always been in place. The sustainable way of shifting agriculture places is now what we call phasing which gives the land time to rejuvenate. The practices of no weed uprooting, diversity of plantations in one area, etc. all pore down to what we call in today's time "Organic Agriculture ". Hence the tag name changes but it is the Indigenous activities that we are talking about which can lead us to a path of sustainable future. There is definitely a lot to learn from tribal cultures, which has nothing close to do with present notion of development model [5].

In recent times, there have been a no of tribal welfare initiatives by the government bodies. This pores down to government having a vision of developing activity in the tribal regions. Realization of erosion of the cultures and traditions due to commercialization and interventions in such regions was a great step forward and reforming acts and policies to preserve this culture and tradition by protecting the rights of tribal's is an well thought initiative of government. Developing this pool of resource, in a different manner, so as to uplift the nation and economic growth of both the tribal's and the nation is a huge step towards the indigenous communities and maintenance of our culture, traditions, talents and economies of a different manner[6]–[8].

With the development of Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited - TRIFED, and its initiatives, we can see a change or shift from exploiting the tribal's or indigenous people to including them and their skills and traditions as an integral part of our country and mend the ongoing development strategies and ways. Economic development is seen in a different manner now respecting both the tribal's and their experiences and skills.

2. DISCUSSION

Be it Indigenous or rural people, these people do not need the same sort of development which the general development notion defines in today's world, the one shaping our urban areas. It is necessary to provide amenities and facilities to rural areas but what should be provided under this should be an outcome of the discussions on needs of rural people [9].

High end infrastructure, multi-national companies, huge production industries, art of the class schools for education, etc. is not what the Tribal areas always demand for development. Provision is for the people (or our indigenous communities) and hence it should try to be as close to what the people need and demand. If development can be defined in 2 ways (established and indigenous), it might change the picture of our nation. Tribal's or indigenous people have their own way of living which is in all ways much closer to nature and also proven to be sustainable in many ways in today's world. Hence unnecessarily forcing them to live in the way we are is not only exploitation but also foolishness as our own system of living and economic development is not able to sustain us now. In this era when we are looking back to our mistakes, this might be a good lesson and redefining development differently with respect to the regions, its backgrounds, its richness and its vulnerability can help immensely to preserve nature and hence people as well [8].

There is a scope to enhance the skills of indigenous people. There is no need to mainstreaming the indigenous economy, at least not in a manner the current economic system is. Indigenous communities have their own way of living and it is this which needs to be encouraged. There have been efforts to mainstream indigenous economy in India, the most prominent of which is setting up of the TRIFED and its online products shopping site which sells tribal produce. To an extent it is successful but it leads to migration of tribal people towards urban or work centers and displaces them and encroaches them into vicious economy circle, away from their sustainable way of living. Hence a more suitable and reliable model should be explored and rights of tribal's must be established. One good example to consider here is the minor forest produce act that correlates to tribe's activities, does not hinder with their culture, place of living, etc. and also empowers the tribes economically as well as at community level by giving them and their work a position at par with urban and rural people [8]

The only way to successful policy formulation that can lead to development of indigenous communities and rural areas is by changing the mindsets of the people. By redefining development in context of India, in terms of indigenous communities, rural communities and urban communities, the country is empowering people and giving due respect to its ever-existing traditions and cultural which has assured our survival till date. We have failed to understand that for indigenous community it is not French fries but khichdi. But for us, the formally educated and white-collar jobs people, development is always French fries. India has always been a conservative and culturally diversified country. The age-old ways of living have developed and specialized over years and passed from generations to generations. This should be our pediment on which our future of development should rely. We should aspire for policies which take care of the daily requirements of the people, suits their mindsets and prove to be helpful to them as well as the nation. Such policies will surely become successful and can bring about a notion of equity among various sections of the society and hence development of the nation in its true sense. Indigenous communities, through understanding generated, can be stated as a name given to people and communities who had a specific way of living. For them it was survival on basis of day to day activities, that is their indigenous skills and knowledge [10].

These indigenous communities were based on concepts and principals of social responsibility, reciprocity and sustainability. Its main features were social interaction, joint efforts, sharing, connections, linkages, production of needed, etc. Which gave them a social, cultural and spiritual benefit. Industrialization and globalization might be regarded as the main aspects for this loss of wealth of our native communities of their indigenous skills and knowledge. There was a change of mindsets that was reflected in the love for surplus production which led to arising of other activities such as markets and sale and monetary gains and self-income that reflected an attitude to conquer instead of survival. In this phase, indigenous economy started losing its essence as more and more people diverted towards the newer way of living. The communities who practiced indigenous activities were regarded as pre-modern in the then existing period which was thought to be modern. A clear shift from quality of life to standard of living started developing. Social and behavioral changes started taking place. Also policies of industrial period are hindering the growth of people like land acquisition which makes the people landless and forces them to migrate and displaces them. Produces become the supreme power, which are just companies which are not personally known or owned by a person alone (no linkage). Also, industrialization led to establishment of factories and industries based on resources or services which were not native to a place or community. This hence became a sort of imposed activity leading to a chain of unsustainable practices. Also another greater change that took place was money becoming a means of accomplishment of needs which slowly started converting to wants to desires and aspirations [11].

Means of generating a livelihood in indigenous communities was closely linked to income generation through motivation. Since this means of fulfilling needs arises from a hobby or activity of daily life or art/ skill known to a person, it is always better or efficiently performed, that an imposed work or task and is hence done with a lot of care, respect, diligence and motivation. Imposed economy does not guarantee this type of surety which might be regarded as one of the main aspects due to which present economic model is failing and older model is still as reassuring as it was. Today's world after facing a lot of environmental (loss of non-renewable resources, pollution and global climate changes) and social issues (issues of unemployment, poverty, crime, etc. and changing behavior of the present generations) due to our present economic model (which was based on prevailing narrow economic analysis and interpretations) and practices are less promising, have understood the importance of indigenous activities, skills and knowledge and hence have realized the need to revive and revitalize it [12]–[14].

3. CONCLUSION

The term "indigenous economy" in the present scenario has come from the existing model of livelihood that relies on income and money replacing barter system. Hence when we talk about a livelihood in the present context these indigenous activities and skills need to be made income generating (in other words livelihood generating as it was in earlier days) which is hence termed as indigenous economy. Hence it is not rural or urban. The main aspect lies in its principals of social responsibility, reciprocity and sustainability which should be true in context of both rural and urban. That is, it is neither rural nor urban. It is neither development nor under-development. It is a new economic platform for generating diversity of choices and income modes which should exist everywhere. This might support the present alarmingly growing population and lead to existence of a no. of income generation means together (pluralism) providing diversity of choices to people.

To mainstream and boost the setup and proper beneficial functioning of the indigenous sector as a sector of economy, a few steps should be taken. One, establishment of a proper framework to bridge the gaps like an indigenous self-governance setup/ indigenous advisory council setup; Two, setting up of tangible markets or niche markets exclusively setup for indigenous goods, the market can be a place where barter system is running in this present world of surplus where all the unwanted goods can be exchanged and waste generation can be reduced, creating better awareness by means of workshops etc. could be enhanced, etc.; Three, promote legal registration of traditional occupations / recognize the people and skills officially (like a doctor , engineer , etc.) and developing a registered platform for its disbursement.; Four, establishment of proper infrastructure that does not displace people from their native regions. For this the foremost task is locating such skills based communities.; Five, establishment of a protected space which can be democratic used which does not hinder their growth.; Six, providing financial stability, both government and people in this context have equal responsibility for development of such an economic platform.

Indigenous communities and their way of living respects the nature, their setting and placement and teaches to live in coordination with the available resources which generates satisfaction among the souls. This is one thing the younger generation might have to learn for further survival from this step to face the world now onwards.

REFERENCES:

- [1] S. M. Rasmus, "Indigenous emotional economies in Alaska: Surviving youth in the village.," *Dissertation Abstracts International Section A: Humanities and Social Sciences*. 2009.
- [2] Marketing Development Federation Of India, "Ministry Of Tribal Affairs, India, Tribal Cooperative".
- [3] C. M. 2010 The International Work Group For Indigenous Affairs (IWGIA) And Asian Forum For Human Rights And Development (FORUM-ASIA), "Asean's Indigenous Peoples, Published By Asia Indigenous Peoples' Pact (AIPP)".
- [4] A. Igniting The Indigenous Economy, "Igniting The Indigenous Economy , Australia".
- [5] Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP), "Indigenous Peoples Pact (AIPP)".
- [6] St. Film And Plate, "Indigenous Peoples , Printed In Chiang Mai, Thailand".
- [7] U. Nations, "United Nations Declaration On The Rights Of Indigenous Peoples".
- [8] A. Jannie Lasimbang, "Indigenous Peoples And Local Economic Development".
- [9] Farmers Portal India, "Farmers Portal India".
- [10] India Concensus Prioritization Project, "Andhra Pradesh Priorities Project Under All".
- [11] Manish Ratti (2007), "Tourism Planning And Development".
- [12] H. K. Schneider, "A Model of African Indigenous Economy and Society," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 1964. doi: 10.1017/S0010417500003443.

- [13] N. Pearson and L. Kostakidis-lianos, "Building Indigenous Capital economy," *Aust. Prospect*, 2004.
- [14] K. H. Moahi, "Globalization, Knowledge Economy and the implication for Indigenous Knowledge," *Int. Rev. Inf. Ethics*, 2007, doi: 10.29173/irie13.