

Relevance of Sir Chhotu Ram Vision on Sustainable Development of Agrarian Society in the Changing Scenario of Haryana

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Abstract:

The paper examines the vision of Sir Chhotu Ram for making his consistent efforts for ameliorating the *socio-economic* conditions of the *farmers*. He also made a consistent effort for rural development through establishment of small scale and *cottage industries* in the *rural areas*. All his efforts for ameliorating the *agrarian relations* are still relevant for *sustainable development*. Keeping in view the present agrarian relations it become imperative to execute the practical approach of Sir Chhotu Ram to improve the *socio-economic* status of the farmers so that a sustainable position may take place in the present *changing scenario*. His vision on *land reforms*, *revenue settlement* and devolution of power to the '*Gram-Panchayats*' have been proved conducive for sustainable development in the changing scenario of *Haryana*.

Key Words:- *Sir Chhotu Ram Contribution, Agrarian Society, Problematic Areas, Institutional Reforms, Changing Scenario of Haryana.*

Introduction:

Sir Chhotu Ram has played a significant and vital role for improving the socio-economic conditions of the peasantry class in the late 30s and early 40s in the Punjab region. He has given a pioneer contribution to uplift the farmers, belonged to different categories, during the pre-independence period. His vision on different problematic areas of the peasantry class has been proved conducive to raise the voice of the farmers, against the 'discriminative policy' of the British. His views on revenue collection, plight with the agricultural labourers, the 'despotism' by the British officials etc. Cumulatively, given rise to deteriorate the agrarian relations among the farmers, belonged to different categories. In order to highlight the pioneer contribution of Sir Chhotu Ram, Chaudhary Tika Ram(1946) has rightly said that the life of Chhotu Ram was full of hard work, self-sacrifice and much constructive thinking and planning. He worked mainly for the rural people and particularly the Punjab peasantry. He took the peasantry as the starting point and hoped to develop a comprehensive plan including all sections of society in course of time. He was an uncompromising man for communalism the most devastating plague that has been eating into the vital of our public life, and a full-throated nationalist.

In order to highlight the pioneer contribution of Sir Chhotu Ram, Madan Gopal(1977) has commented on the outstanding contribution of Sir Chhotu Ram, who was personally responsible for a good many of the enactments for amelioration of the poor and the downtrodden which were hailed as pioneer measures in the modern economic history of India. The National Unionist Party was formed by Sir Chhotu Ram, aiming at fair distribution, fair representation of all class, check on economically backward classes by the economically

dominant classes, promoting indigenous industries, banish illiteracy, securing economy in administration and preserve intact the Punjab Land Alienation Act as a measure of protection to backward classes. Vidyalankar, Dharam Chandar(2001) has reviewed the work of Chhotu Ram for the peasantry class-barring any caste, creed or language. He has aired the grievances of the peasantry class before the British administration, and ultimately achieved the desired results. H.L. Agnihotri and Shiva N. Malik(1978) has referred the biography of Sir Chhotu Ram, as a profile of courage which was indeed a great courage, who has raised the voice of the peasantry class under highly unfavourable conditions in the British period. Chaudhary sahib realised that the peasant was the pivot which sustained the entire super structure of the society and that the government, but his soul rose in revolt against the social system that had allowed the exploitation of the peasant to continue. Sir Chhotu Ram was socialist in the sense that he concentrated on economic problem without confusing it with religion or communism. He organised the Zamindars on an economic program that was non-religious and non-sectarian. He did not allow self-seekers to exploit the smoke-screen of religion to beguile the peasantry.

The contribution of Sir Chhotu Ram for the farmers and its relevance in the present scenario:

Sir Chhotu Ram has been given a significant contribution to understand the problematic areas of the farmers, belonged to different categories. He had fought against the discriminated policy of the British toward the farmers. The English has tried to develop a 'Despotism' on the poor farmer, by imposing taxes, as revenue, and the discriminative policy of the British on 'revenue settlement' which was controversial for a long time. There was resentment among the farmers, particularly among the small and marginal farmers, who have been sufferers. The whole deteriorating situations of the farmers has been given rise to deteriorating the agrarian relations during the 30s and early 40s. As a result, Sir Chhotu Ram has raised the voice, against this 'Despotism' and discriminative policy of the British, on various institutional issues.

All these issues, related to agrarian relations are still posing a problem and become a plight for the farmers, particularly with small and marginal farmers. The problem like fragmentation and scattering of lands, the sharing system of leasing in and leasing out the land, the problem of agricultural labourers and their working conditions, frequent occurring of drought like conditions, particularly in southern region of Haryana have been major problematic areas. All these problematic areas directly or indirectly, deteriorated the 'agrarian relations' in Haryana. Keeping in view, the deteriorating agrarian relations in Haryana, it become imperative to review the Chhotu Ram's vision on 'agrarian relations' and try to execute the strategies, used by Sir Chhotu Ram in relation to changing scenario. As a result, it will hold good for taking preventive measures to stabilize the deteriorating agrarian relations in relation to prevailing local conditions in the rural areas of Haryana. Though the different governments of Haryana, which have been formulating the agricultural policy, which were more or less in accordance with the visions, developed by Sir Chhotu Ram, in the British period. As a result, a considerable change has been experienced among the socio-economic conditions of the farmers, particularly the conditions of small and marginal farmers, has been changed to a considerable extent. The revenue officials, belonged to different administrative hierarchy have been working in accordance with the rules and regulations, framed by the government from time to time in Haryana. All these rules and regulation are based on true spirit of the vision of Sir Chhotu Ram, which is still prevalent in the agrarian society of Haryana.

The strategies adopted by Sir Chhotu Ram on raising the issues like working conditions of agricultural labourers, the relation between the farmers and the agricultural labourers. The issues such as share-cropping, which include the terms and conditions of share cropping in different types of lands compensation policy on the crops destroyed by the hazards, drought like conditions, hail storms and locust attacks, are still relevant even today. The approaches of Sir Chhotu Ram towards the solutions, have been widely accepted by the government of Haryana and enacted with the rules and regulations, framed as 'Agricultural Policy'. All these attributes, considered by the governments, cumulatively, given rise to sustainable agricultural development in the present changing scenario. In order to strengthening the institutional framework of agrarian society, Sir Chhotu Ram

has always focus on devolution of power to the local self government, the Gram Panchayats, so that the rural development policy may be executed in accordance with the prevailing local conditions. In this view, Sir Chhotu Ram has always been focus on rural development through Gram Panchayats, which is still relevant with changing scenario. In this context, the 73rd Amendment on Panchayati Raj, by the Indian constitution, indeed a realization of the vision of Sir Chhotu Ram in the present changing scenario. As a result, the process of empowering the Gram Panchayat, become a land mark achievement by the agrarian society. Now the rural employment generating programme, like MNREGA, has been implementing through the Gram Panchayats. Apart from generating the rural employment, the public representatives at a grass-root level give a good periodic feedback to the district administration for hearing the grievances of the people, belong to different strata of rural society. It is all 'visualization of Sir Chhotu Ram's visions sustainable development' of the rural society.

In order to strengthening the institutional framework of agrarian society, Sir Chhotu Ram has given an emphasis on rural industrialization too. In this context, he has tried to setting up the rural industries through small and cottage industries in the rural areas, so that the farmers may get a supplement income from these small enterprises. Keeping in view, this view of Sir Chhotu Ram, the governments of Haryana have been giving various incentives to the rural entrepreneurs in Haryana. This policy is just coincides with the Sir Chhotu Ram's vision on urgency of rural industrialization in Punjab. This vision has a still relevant for the progress of agrarian society, and become an integral part of 'sustainable development' of our country side.

Sir Chhotu Ram's vision on the necessity of education of the children of rural areas has an 'extensive meaning' for the development of rural society. According to Chhotu Ram, "The education of the children is very essential, so that the villagers may become to understand the function of rural society". This vision of rural children, has given rise to develop the educational infrastructure in rural areas of Haryana. It has given rise to a steady growth of literacy rates among the male and females, during different successive periods, infect the result of the vision of Sir Chhotu Ram, which has been visualized in the present changing scenario. Hence, it obvious from the different viewpoints on examine the problematic areas of agrarian society Sir Chhotu Ram has been given a outstanding contribution in protecting the in protecting the rights of the farmers. His vision on decentralization of power to the Panchayati Raj, the spread of education for the children, rural industrialization etc. have a still relevance for 'sustainable development' for the agrarian society. In present rural development policy, Sir Chhotu Ram has given an outstanding contribution for providing basic parameters for the policy makers in the changing scenario for 'sustainable development' of the agrarian society in Haryana.

Conclusion:

Sir Chhotu Ram vision on different problematic areas of agrarian society has given an outstanding contribution to identifying the different strategies and solutions to overcome these problems in rural areas. His view points on the rural industrialization through small and cottage industries empowering the Panchayati Raj system, have brought a tremendous change in the development of rural areas of Haryana since formation of Haryana, the rural development policy which has been amended from time to time, have been more or less coincides with the Chhotu Ram's vision on rural development. His consistent efforts for land reforms, uplifting the socio-economic conditions of the farmers, particularly for the small and marginal farmers have been given a contributory feedback for the policy-makers, so that the policy may be responsive in accordance with the local conditions. His multifaceted views on various problematic areas of agrarian relations have a great relevance for sustainable development for agrarian society of Haryana.

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