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Developing world and agriculture

We must ensure surplus in agriculture production, investment in industrial sector with a view to earning more foreign currencies. Again it is possible to earn more foreign currencies through creating competitive market, producing quality goods at reasonable cost, writes **M. Azizur Rahman**

THE people of the developing world live in villages. In the developing world urbanization is inadequate. Geographically, a developing country seems to be a village. Streets both brick-built and earthen, bridges and communication are not developed enough. There is lack of gas, electricity, bank, insurance, markets and shopping centers. Schools and colleges are remote form residences. In the developing world people dependent on agriculture cannot send their children to school because of poverty. Sometimes, law and order situation is adverse and so their lives are threatened. Due to illiteracy and ignorance, birth rate is higher in villages in comparison with that of cities. As most of the people in developing countries live in villages, they are deprived of development, standard life and happiness.

According to population reference Bureau 1997, world population data sheet (Washington D.C Population Reference Bureau) 1997, World Bank, World Development Report 1997, the total population of the World is 5.84 billion. Of them 43% live in cities and the rest 57% in villages. People living in developed countries are not too many. In developed countries most people live in cities. 20% or in other words 1.175 billion of the world population live in cities. 80% people or 4.666 billion people live in developing countries. Only 36% people of the developing countries live in cities and the rest 64% live in villages. In the developing world, continent and sub-continent the number of city dwellers is very small. For example, in Africa only 31% people live in towns. In south Asian countries only 27% people live in cities. In East Asian cities the number is 35%. It is mentionable that in Bangladesh, though urbanization is praise-worthy, only 20% people live in cities. Latin American and Caribbean islands are not developed enough. Even if Latin American and Caribbean countries are still developing, like developed countries 72% people here live in cities.

It has already been mentioned in the developing world per capita income as well as prosperity is low. In the developing world, people being dependent on agriculture and cannot afford food, clothe, housing, education and health-care. They are especially busy in solving basic problems like food, clothing and housing and so, they can hardly take care of education and health. In the developing countries natural resources, utilization of natural resources, rate of literacy, education facilities, resources and capital are inadequate. On the whole, in agriculture dependent developing world, people cannot but use old and traditional methods and technology in the fields of development. Production system is ordinary, especially agricultural productivity is low. Agricultural production and management is not commercial and marketable. In Asian and Latin American countries agricultural production is operated by leasing system of lands. Since the cultivators are deprived of the lion's share of the production, they are reluctant to increase productivity. They own very small area of land. These farmers provide food for themselves and for city dwellers at the same time. In all, a farmer has to supply food for 10 to 15 people on an average. The cultivation system is old and depends on wooden plough, oxen, buffalos and manual labour.

If we take a look at export sector most of the goods of the developing countries are primary commodities, which account for 71% of total export. According to World Bank Development Report 1994 (New York, Oxford University press-1994) export goods in industrial sector are limited as much as 29%. On the other hand in developed countries the percentage of export goods is 82 and only 18% are primary commodities. Primary commodities include agriculture, fuel, forest resources, raw materials and cash crops other than food. It is worth mentioning, in Sub-Sahara African countries 80% of export commodities are primary products. Most of the export products of developed countries are industrial goods and tertiary services.

For the development of the developing world internal savings, foreign aid and loan facilities are needed. At this time of sluggish world economy, foreign loan facilities are decreasing. Again a significant part of the foreign loan is spent to meet interest of previous loans. As a result, in the developing world the amount of loan and domestic capital are comparatively small. In villages and agro-based economy absence of competition, lack of productivity and standard goods at reasonable price are regular scenario. A person cannot start a business any time of his choice. Not only that, he cannot get rid of the responsibility of the trade once started because of various regulatory impediments. Various unproductive market traits push the village and agro based societies backward. For rural and agro based developing countries development is not easy without agricultural development. Productivity in agriculture must be increased. There should be researches in agriculture invention of high-breed seeds, irrigation, pesticides, machinery and modern cultivation system, latest technology, natural resources, education, expansion of vocational education and thus human resources development at every sphere. At the same time the developing world and its agriculture sector should make effort to earn more foreign currency by increasing production of rice, wheat, maize, soybean etc. For rapid development of the developing world a big push in investment as well as increase in savings is a must. We must ensure surplus in agriculture production, investment in industrial sector with a view to earning more foreign currencies. Again it is possible to earn more foreign currencies through creating competitive market, producing quality goods at reasonable cost.

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