Abstract

This paper explores the concept and significance of the Rural Non-Farm Activities (RNFAs) in a poor country using insights from literature and results from a small 1998 survey of three regions in Tanzania. Though cursory, the evidence from the survey confirms the presence of features and constraints typical of a sector at the rudimentary "stage of rural industrialisation". The contrast between advances made by countries like China and other countries of Asia and Latin America points to the need to target interventions for entrepreneurial development to the RNFAs covering aspects of production and managerial capabilities. RNFAs entrepreneurs need help to organise into "clusters" to attract providers of financial and consultancy services in the adoption / adaptation of simple technologies, production management, product finishing (quality and packing), marketing contacts etc.