
ROLE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN HIMACHAL PRADESH

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ABSTRACT

Poverty is a global dialog. Poverty eradication is considered integral to humanity's mission for sustainable development. The purpose of the present study was to examine the role of rural development programmes like— MGNREGA, NRLM, IAY and IWMP in poverty alleviation in Himachal Pradesh. Structured interviews and self developed questionnaires for beneficiaries and coordinators of concerned programme were used for data collection. Results showed that The MGNREGA scheme had positive impact on education of the children of MGNREGA workers as most of respondents accepted the fact that this scheme had positive impact on the education of their children. Most of respondents stated that SHGs has made positive impacts on their earning and formation of SHGs has improved the household's income and economic status. Beneficiaries of IAY told that amount provided is not sufficient to construct the new home and it should be increased to two times to current status of fund provided. Most of respondents stated that IWMP scheme has made significant improvements in agriculture and horticulture production.

Key Words: *Rural; Poverty; MGNREGA; NRLM; IAY; IWMP; Development; Programme*

INTRODUCTION

Himachal Pradesh is a part of the Indian Himalayas. It has wide valleys imposing snow mountains, limpid lakes, rivers and gushing streams. Himachal region is called 'Deva Bhoomi'. The rural society of Himachal Pradesh has its own identity and psyche regarding traditions, culture & heritage. Therefore, within the overall rural development strategies, there has to be an explicit recognition of its identity. At the time of its formation in 1971, Himachal Pradesh was a economically backward rural state (93% rural population in 1971). Its rural population was deprived of basic amenities such as health, education and drinking water. Rural infrastructure i.e. rural roads, electricity, housing, transport, banking and market network was also very poor. Almost half of rural household were living below the poverty line. To accelerate the pace of economic development and significantly improve the standard and quality of living of rural people, the government of Himachal Pradesh took bold steps to improve their socio-economic condition

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) aims at providing self-employment to the rural poor through acquisition of productive assets or appropriate skills which would generate additional income on a sustained basis to enable them to cross the poverty line. Increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit are envisaged for providing the rural people with better prospects. Economic growth and social development of HP is much better as compare to other hilly states of the country.

SAMPLING DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

For this study three districts viz Kinnaur, Hamirpur and Shimla were selected from the 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh through purposive sampling, because these districts are representing tribal, lower and upper population of Himachal Pradesh.

Further three blocks from Kinnaur, four blocks from Hamirpur and five blocks from Shimla were selected through simple random sampling. From each block of Kinnaur and Hamirpur district 25 beneficiaries of each rural development scheme were selected conveniently. Similarly in case of Shimla district 20 beneficiaries of each rural development scheme were selected. Instead of selected blocks, the data from the co-ordinators of the selected schemes was collected on whole district which included all blocks of the district for studying the current status and implementation of the rural development programmes.

TOOLS USED FOR DATA COLLECTION

The tools used for primary data collection are as follows:

- Pre-Structured Questionnaires/ Schedules/ Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions
- Observations

The sources, indicators and tools for data collection are as mentioned below:

Sources

The tentative sources of primary data were amongst the various stakeholders of the rural development such as:

- Co-ordinators of selected rural development schemes.
- Beneficiaries of selected rural development schemes
- NGOs

ROLE OF MGNREGA IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RURAL AREAS

The primary survey conducted on the issues to assess the role played by MGNREGA in poverty alleviation in rural areas in Himachal Pradesh. The situation of MGNREGA was found to be very gloomy in all the sample districts of Himachal Pradesh. MGNREGA is an employment guarantee scheme in rural areas with 100 days employment in a financial year. Most of the respondents reported that they have not been given 100 days employment in a financial year. In Hamirpur district, merely 8 percent respondents reported that they got the employment under this scheme; however 92 percent reported that they have not been given 100 days employment under this scheme. In Shimla district, only 6 percent respondents replied that they have been given 100 days employment under this scheme; however 94 percent reported that they have been not given 100 days employment under MGNREGA scheme. In Kinnaur district, only 5.3 percent in primary survey reported that they got 100 days employment under this scheme, however 94.7 percent reported that they have been not given 100 days employment under MGNREGA scheme.

Table -1

Role of MGNREGA in Poverty Alleviation

MGNREGA in Poverty Alleviation	Hamirpur		Shimla		Kinnaur		
	N	%age	N	%age	N	%age	
Working 100 days	Yes	8	8	6	6	4	5.33
	NO	92	92	94	94	71	94.67
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Wages received through	PRIs	10	10	4	4	4	5.33
	Bank	90	90	96	96	68	90.67
	Cash	0	0	0	0	3	4
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Positive impact on your children education	Yes	82	82	78	78	65	86.87
	NO	18	18	22	22	10	13.13
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100

Source: Primary Survey conducted on role of MGNREGA in poverty Alleviation

The questions were also asked from the respondents about the mode of payments in MGNREGA scheme. Most of the respondents stated that generally they received the wages through the banks. In Hamirpur district, about 10 percent respondents reported that they received wages through PRIs; however 90 percent respondents reported that they received wages through the Banks. Among the respondents no one reported that they received their wages in cash. In Shimla district, merely 4 percent respondents reported that they received wages through PRIs, however 96 percent respondents reported that they received wages through the Banks. In Kinnuar district, about 5.33 percent respondents reported that they received wages through PRIs, however 90.7 percent respondents reported that they received wages through the Banks. Merely 4 percent respondents reported that they received the wages in cash.

The MGNREGA scheme has positive impact on education of the children of MGNREGA workers as most of respondents accepted the fact that this scheme has positive impact on the education of their children. In Hamirpur district, about 82 percent respondents stated that some or other ways the MGNREGA scheme have made positive impact on education of their children. In Shimla, about 78 percent respondents accepted the fact that this scheme has made positive impact on education of their children, however about 22 percent respondents reported negatively and stated that this scheme has not made any positive impact on the education of their children. In Kinnuar district, about 87 percent respondents accepted the fact that this scheme has made positive impact on education of their children, however about 13 percent respondents reported that this scheme has not made any positive impact on the education of their children.

ROLE OF NRLM IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RURAL AREAS

The National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) is engaged in the rural areas in imparting skill development to rural poors. The primary survey is conducted in Himachal Pradesh to assess the efficacy of this scheme. In Hamirpur district, about 58 percent respondents reported that through NRLM training was imparted to SHGs. However, about 42 percent reported that no training programme was conducted through NRLM. In Shimla, about 68 percent reported that training was given to SHGs through NRLM, however about 32 percent stated that training was not imparted to SHGs through NRLM. In Kinnaur district, about 64 percent reported that training was given to SHGs through NRLM, however about 36 percent stated that training was not imparted to SHGs through NRLM.

Table- 2

Role of NRLM in Poverty alleviation in Himachal Pradesh

NRLM		Hamirpur		Shimla		Kinnaur	
		N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Training for SHGs	Yes	58	58	68	68	48	64
	NO	42	42	32	32	27	36
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Loan for SHGs	Yes	35	35	30	30	24	32
	NO	65	65	70	70	51	68
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Joining SHGs Increase in Income	Yes	90	90	82	82	55	73.3
	NO	10	10	18	18	20	26.7
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100

Source: Primary Survey conducted on role of NRLM in poverty Alleviation

The questions were also asked about the financial assistance given by NRLM to SHGs in rural areas. In Hamirpur district, about 35 percent respondents stated that loan was given to SHGs through NRLM in rural areas however, about 65 percent reported that no financial assistance was extended through NRLM to SHGs. In Shimla, about 30 percent respondents stated that loan was given to SHGs through NRLM however, about 70 percent reported that no financial assistance was extended through NRLM to SHGs. In Kinnaur district, about 32 percent respondents reported that loan was given to SHGs through NRLM in rural areas however, about 68 percent reported that no financial assistance was extended through NRLM to SHGs. Overall nearly one third respondents reported that financial assistance was given to SHGs through NRLM, however majority of them denied the fact that any financial assistance was given or offered to SHGs under this scheme.

Most of respondents stated that SHGs has made positive impacts on their earning and formation of SHGs has improved the household's income and economic status.

ROLE OF IAY IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RURAL AREAS

Role of IAY has been assessed through beneficiaries of IAY and how many of them received full amount. The scheme was also evaluated on the basis that marginalized sections of the society were given equitable share in its implementation or not. The primary survey was conducted in Himachal Pradesh to know that Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes were adequately represented in IAY.

The survey conducted on the issue of beneficiaries of IAY revealed that marginalized sections of society were given adequate share in the scheme of IAY. In Hamirpur district, about 85 percent scheduled castes responded that they have been benefited from the Indira Awaas Yojana (IAY), however about one percent Scheduled tribes responded in its favour. The other communities were also benefited from this scheme as about 14 percent beneficiaries belong to other castes. In Shimla, more or less similar trends observed in primary survey where about 76 percent scheduled castes responded that they have been benefited from the IAY, however about 10 percent Scheduled tribes responded in its favour. About 14 percent beneficiaries belong to other castes and communities. In Kinnaur district, Scheduled tribes were given more benefits of this scheme compare to Scheduled castes while other castes were given no representation through this scheme. The percentage share of about 63 percent scheduled tribes reported that they have been beneficiaries of this programme, however 37 percent scheduled castes responded that they have been benefited from the IAY.

Table-3
Role of IAY in Poverty Alleviation in Himachal Pradesh

IAY		Hamirpur		Shimla		Kinnaur	
		N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Beneficiaries of IAY	SC	85	85	76	76	28	37.33
	ST	1	1	10	10	47	62.67
	Others	14	14	14	14	0	0
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Received full amount of IAY	Yes	90	90	94	94	70	93.33
	NO	10	10	6	6	5	6.67
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100

Source: Primary Survey conducted on role of IAY in poverty Alleviation

The most of beneficiaries of Indira Awaas Yojana responded in all the sample districts that they received full amount of IAY. In Hamirpur, about 90 percent beneficiaries responded that they received full amount of IAY, in Shimla, about 94 percent beneficiaries responded that they received full amount of IAY. In Kinnaur district, about 93 percent beneficiaries responded that they received full amount of IAY. Beneficiaries of IAY told that amount provided is not sufficient to construct the new home and it should be increased to two times to current status of fund provided.

ROLE OF IWMP IN POVERTY ALLEVIATION IN RURAL AREAS

The scheme IWMP played significant role in poverty alleviation in Himachal Pradesh as survey was conducted to assess the improvement in irrigation, increase in agriculture production and positive impact on the income of people. The most of people in all the three districts responded positively that this scheme has made positive improvements in all the above mentioned indicators. In Hamirpur, about 82 percent responded positively that this scheme has made significant improvements in irrigation system. In Shimla about 76 percent respondents reported that IWMP played significant role in improving the irrigation system of the district. In Kinnaur district about 80 percent respondents stated in favour of it.

In the similar manner, most of respondents stated that IWMP scheme has made significant improvements in agriculture and horticulture production. In Hamirpur, about 87 percent responded positively that this scheme has made significant improvements in agriculture and horticulture production. In Shimla about 78 percent respondents reported that IWMP played significant role in

improving the agriculture and horticulture production of the district. In Kinnuar Districts about 73 percent respondents stated in favour of it.

Table 4
Role of IWMP in Poverty Alleviation in Himachal Pradesh

IWMP		Hamirpur		Shimla		Kinnaur	
		N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Improvement in Irrigation System	Yes	82	82	76	76	60	80
	NO	18	18	24	24	15	20
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Increase in production of agriculture and horticulture	Yes	87	87	78	78	55	73.33
	NO	13	13	22	22	20	26.67
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Positive impact on Income	Yes	81	81	88	88	62	82.67
	NO	19	19	12	12	13	17.33
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100

Source: Primary Survey conducted on role of IWMP in poverty Alleviation

Most of the respondents also believe that IWMP has made significant improvement in their income. In Hamirpur, about 81 percent respondents accepted the fact that IWMP has made significant impacts in the improvements of their household's income. In Shimla, about 88 percent made such claims that this scheme has made significant impact in improving their household's income. Similarly in Kinnaur district, about 83 percent responded in its favour. Integrated watershed management programme is very fruitful in the hilly state like Himachal Pradesh. Ground water level is improving in the watershed implemented areas. Technical support is very poor as per information received from the beneficiaries of the scheme.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of various rural development programmes has provided an opportunity to unemployed youth in the rural areas to develop their skills & generating self employment. Rural development programmes are very fruitful in poverty alleviation in Himachal Pradesh. Government is now providing wages to beneficiaries of MGNREGA through direct banking system to avoid delays, to ensure transparency & eliminate the role of middle man. Direct payment to the beneficiaries of various schemes of rural development programmes is also fruitful in controlling the corruption. In Himachal Pradesh majority of beneficiaries of MGNREGA reported that they have not been given 100 days employment in a financial year. MGNREGA improve the economic conditions of rural poor & had positive impact on the education of their children. NRLM is also improving the economic status of the beneficiaries. Training & capacity building is very poor in Himachal Pradesh. Amount provided in IAY is not sufficient & need to increase the amount two times to the current status. IWMP is improving the irrigation system in tribal & rural area of Himachal Pradesh. Delay in availability of funds in IWMP is increasing the cost of project & decreasing the quality of work. Training & skill development to the beneficiaries of rural development programmes is very poor. DRDAs infrastructure, information technology & staff should be up to the mark.

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