



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Economics

AN ANALYTICAL STUDY OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION THROUGH MGNREGP PROGRAMME AMONG THE RURAL POOR IN TIRUCHIRAPPALLI DISTRICT

KEY WORDS: Poverty – Alleviation – Inequalities of income distribution – Inter-personal comparisons.

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INTRODUCTION

Rural development has been receiving increasing attention of the governments across the world. In the Indian context rural development assumes special significance for two important reasons. First about two thirds of the population still lives in villages and there cannot be any progress so long as rural areas remain backward. Second, the backwardness of the rural sector would be a major impediment to the overall progress of the economy.

India is predominately an agricultural country and farming is their main occupation. In terms of methods of production, social organization and political mobilization, rural sector is extremely backward and weak. Moreover, technical developments in field of agriculture have increased the gap between the rich and poor, as the better off farmers adopted modern farm technology to a greater extent than the smaller ones. The all India Rural Credit Review Committee in its report warned "If the fruits of development continue to be denied to the large sections of rural community, while prosperity accrues to some, the tensions social and economic may not only upset the process of orderly and peaceful change in the rural economy but even frustrate the national affords to set up agricultural production." It was therefore felt necessary to make arrangements for the distribution of fruits of development to the rural weak and backward section of society.

The term is used to mean 'organizing things' so as to change existing conditions in favour of a better state. There may be many variants of development drawing their nomenclature from the sphere of activity where the change is managed or the type of change or the 'method' how the desired change is attained. For several decades the term was used, solely, for economic change, inclusive of the conditions which affect betterment. The concept was later extended to its wider meaning to embrace 'changes' of political, social, cultural, technological, economic and also the psychological frame of society. In its current meaning 'development' is used to express animated change for reaping utmost human potential. Technically, development is the name of a 'Policy' and its 'Consequent programmes', designed to bring about a desired change' in social, economic, political, or technological spheres of life. It is concerned with the promotion of human capacities: Physical or mental, to attain the cherished social goals. Development is potential-related, and it can be attained to the extent of the existing development potential, which is measured by the un-exploited resources, talents, margin of sophistication and the 'will power' which implements development policy. Development is the conditioning of progress, and when efforts are laid towards the use of Growth potentials in rural economy and Society, it is rural development.

Problems of the Poor

Poverty in India is judged by the income generated by the family. A family of 4-5 members need at least Rs. 11,000 (USD 275) per annum, to meet their minimum basic needs. Those who cannot earn this income are classified as poor. Unemployment and underemployment are the major causes of rural poverty. The other factors are small land holdings, harsh agro-climatic conditions, poor infrastructure and limited opportunities for rural industrial development, poor health care, illiteracy, social suppression, addiction to alcohol and exploitation by vested interests.

Land is the major resource in India, which provides livelihood to the rural population. According to a survey conducted in 1991-92, about 11.25% of the rural families are landless and among the land holders, over 69.35% own less than 1 ha (marginal farmers) and 21.25% own between 1 and 2 ha (small farmers). Water is another critical resource required to enhance the agricultural production. Out of the total arable area of 169 million ha, only 28% area is under irrigation and the rest is dependent on rains, where hardly one crop can be grown in a year. About 40% of the cropping area is located in low rainfall regions where the employment opportunity is hardly for 40 to 50 days in a year and crops generally fail twice in five years. Decline in many traditional occupations and poor institutional infrastructures have further reduced job opportunities. Thus about 90% of the rural population, who are deprived of adequate land holding have to look for other means of livelihood for their survival.

Rural Scenario in India

Out of a billion population, over 65% people are presently living in villages and about 35-40% families, who earn less than US\$ 275 per annum are classified as poor. Presently, about 25% of the villages do not have assured source of drinking water for about 4-5 months during the year and about 70-75% of the water does not meet the standard prescribed by WHO. Poor quality drinking water is adversely affecting the health and diarrhea is an important cause of infant mortality.

Traditional Indian communities being male dominated; women have been suppressed till recently. While the average literacy rate in rural areas is around 50-65%, it is as low as 20-25% among women in backward areas. Education of girls was felt to be unnecessary in the past and this has seriously affected their quality of life. Illiteracy has also suppressed their development due to lack of communication with the outside world. They are slow in adopting new practices, which are essential with the changing times. Apart from lack of communication, social taboo has also hindered their progress.

Several vested interests, both local and outsiders have exploited this situation. The rich landlords did not want any infrastructure development, which would benefit the poor, because of the fear that they would not get cheap labour to work on their farms. The local moneylenders did not want alternate financial institutions to provide cheaper credit needed by the poor. The traditional healers canvassed against modern medicine under the garb of religion and divine power. Thus, the poor continued to live in the clutches of the powerful, accepting it as their destiny. They avoided confrontation and preferred to live a voiceless and suppressed life. Tolerating the worst and hoping for better days has been their way of life.

BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

Until independence, India was exploited to the maximum by foreign rulers. Naturally, therefore, when the country gained independence, it inherited inter alia poverty in legacy. One of the main tasks before the vanguards of the nation during the post-independence era was to remove poverty and attendant misery of the masses and reconstruct the economic structure of the society.

The first thirty-six years of independence were devoted to the

socio-economic uplift of the country. All efforts were made to translate the idles of independence laid down by Mahatma Gandhi - the Father of the Nation - into reality.

But, even after over six decades of assiduous talk of development and nine Five-Year Plans, one finds a deepening economic crisis. The wisdom of hind sight has now made it clear that the plans had an elite bias. Those who lead the way and anticipate progress were affected by various misconceptions about the economic growth that took place. Higher GNP was wrongly equated with development, and some superficial attributes of the affluent West acquired to fulfill the needs, aspirations and ambitions of the elite, was wrongly equated with the common welfare. In the process, a large section of countrymen suffered callous neglect.

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:

We can know the deepness of poverty in India. We find components to alleviate poverty. We can measure poverty on the basis of absolute and relative criteria. We can know where and how the poverty alleviation programmes are to be implemented. We can measure and identify poverty in rural area. Government can review the alleviation programmes implemented by them, know the present situation regarding the monetary position of our country, by support of the study. Govt. machinery can identify the practical difficulties raised while implementing poverty alleviation programme. Hidden and concealed poverty of rural masses can be identified, measured and steps could be taken accordingly to alleviate poverty. In this way, this study would be immensely important to planners, administrators, policy-makers, Government machinery, Reserve Bank of India, academic community, researcher, future researchers, students and the people as well.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

(a) Objectives:

The objectives of the present study are the followings

1. To make an indepth of the analytical study on reducing poverty through MGNREGP in Tiruchirappalli District.
2. To make comparative study of MGNREGP Programme before and after implementation process among the rural poor in Tiruchirappalli District Tamil Nadu state.
3. To search out characteristics of the beneficiaries and non beneficiaries of the MGNREGP Programme among the selected blocks of rural poverty.
4. To identify the factors involved under the effective implementation or best performance and least performance in the blocks.
5. To review in the exacting poverty alleviation programme in Tiruchirappalli District and find out the major constraint in its implementation.
6. To study the various elements related to poverty.

I have explained here major objectives of the study. We have considered this type of objective which purely depends on availability of data. Therefore we have dropped some items of analysis in our study.

As per review of the study on particularly poverty we have decided above objectives in our study. These objectives are based on following hypothesis or assumption.

(B) Hypotheses:

- (1) Rural and urban poverty differ from each other in relation to different components that form the vector of poverty.
- (2) The rural poor have inadequate income and asset in comparison to urban poor.
- (3) Rural poor have also less occupational opportunities as compare to urban poor.
- (4) The rural poor tend to consume less nutritional element than those of the urban poor.
- (5) The problem of shelter is very inadequate and is likely to be more acute in poor rural society.

(C) Source of Data/ Information:

This study has an exploratory-cum-descriptive research design.

This study clearly based on primary and secondary data, which will be taken from different sources like records of Incentive Agricultural Development Programme (IADP), Incentive Agricultural Area Programme (IAAP), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Programme (MGNREGP), Draught Prone Area Programme (DPAP), Small Farmers Development Agency (SFDA) High Yielding varieties programme (HYVP), Integral Rural Development Programme (IRDP) etc. DRDA (District Rural Development Agency) records as well as Government of India and Government of Tamil Nadu's Records and publications, Reports, of various committees and commissions on poverty. Different studies and reports of rural development schemes. as well as Journals, Research studies, Articles also be used in this study. Issuing secondary data, district-wise analysis will be carried out in this study.

Primary data will be collected through our prescribed questionnaires which are developed by us. This study is based on personal interviews of beneficiaries as well as concerned government officers, Experts as and others as and when necessary.

(E) Time period of study:

This study is aimed to analyze One year period say 2017-18 of MGNREGP Programme implemented in Tiruchirappalli District of Tamilnadu.

Sample Selection:

Our purpose is, as stated earlier to study poverty alleviation programme implemented by Central and State Govt. of last fifteen years. Hence the inquiry will be conducted in the towns and villages of Tiruchirappalli (Rural), Manaparai, Marungapuri and Thuraiyur Taluks. Primary and Secondary data will be collected and, analyzed its inferences, results, and suggestions will be summarized in the last chapter of the thesis.

The social characteristics of the sample will include age, caste, religion, marital status, yearly income, urban or rural occupation, Education and whether occupy land or landless labourer.

The Qualitative and quantitative techniques of data collection would include (1) interview schedule (2) case study (will not be mentioned in the written report) (3) observation (4) documentary facts.

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