

EVALUATION REPORT ON PROVISION OF HOUSE-SITES- CUM- HOUSE CONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO THE RURAL LANDLESS LABOUR HOUSEHOLDS

1. The Study

In order to ameliorate the lot of rural people, a scheme for allotment of house-sites to the rural landless agricultural labourers/artisans was introduced in October, 1971. It was made a part of the Minimum Needs Programme (MNP) and Prime Minister's 20-point programme enabling them to build house/hut with their own resources and to live without eviction threats by the owners of the land. Initially the scheme was intended to benefit the landless rural labourers but was later extended to cover even the rural artisans.

The study was undertaken by the Programme Evaluation Organisation at the behest of Planning Commission to examine the progress and impact of the scheme.

2. Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- i) to study the methods followed for identification of the rural landless labour households for the allotment of house sites-cum-house construction assistance under the schemes,
- ii) to find out the extent to which the identified rural landless labour households had been given assistance in terms of (a) house sites and their development and (b) construction of houses,
- iii) to study the administrative set up and the institutions including corporations which provided housing subsidy and loans to the identified beneficiaries under the scheme,
- iv) to study the types and cost of houses constructed and the material used,
- v) to examine the extent to which those beneficiaries who had constructed the houses (or for whom the houses had been constructed) were actually residing in them,
- vi) to assess the socio-economic consequences in terms of the impact on (a) productivity (b) Social status and (c) change in approach and attitude towards living, and

vii) to assess the views and reactions of the beneficiaries to various components/strategies of the scheme.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Sample Selection

In all 16 states comprising 12 progressive and 4 non-progressive were selected for the study. From the selected States, two districts each having the maximum number of identified households having been allotted housesites, were selected. From the selected districts, two blocks from each district where the scheme was in operation, were selected on random basis. On the same criteria, two villages were selected from each block. From each pattern of assistance i.e. (i) provision of house sites and development assistance and (ii) provision of developed house sites and construction assistance/constructed houses 10 beneficiary households were randomly selected. The actual number of beneficiaries canvassed were 1278. The coverage of the study was as follows:-

Number of States 16

Number of Districts 32

Number of blocks 64

Number of villages 128

Number of beneficiaries 1278

4. Reference Period

The field work was conducted during April-July, 1983 and the data/information were collected for the years 1974-75 to 1981-82.

5. Main Findings

1. It was observed that there was no uniformity with regard to the departments dealing with the programme in different States. In most of the States, there was no separate administrative organisation or staff at State/district/ Block/village level exclusively for the implementation of the programme. The Collector/ Deputy Commissioner/Development Officer at the district level and the Block Development Officer at the block level executed the programme as a part of the duties in carrying out developmental activities of various nature in their jurisdiction.

2. In many states, allotment of house-sites was processed by one department and the remaining part of the scheme like arranging of land/construction of houses by other departments or agencies such as housing boards, corporations etc.
3. It was noticed that many State Governments constructed the houses and allotted the same to the beneficiaries, while in practice the beneficiaries were required to construct houses with their own labour on the land allotted by the Government.
4. Through the response from the village level officers and the actual beneficiaries of the scheme a notable variation observed in the type of benefits. The stipulated size of house-sites under the scheme was 100 sq. yd (about 84 sq meters) but the same varied from State to State.
5. Availability of facilities like School, PHC, Hospital/Maternity Centre, Post office, Market Centre and Bus stop was reported by higher proportion of beneficiaries in progressive States than non-progressive States.
6. About 94% of the beneficiaries were living in Kutcha houses, rented or shared with other prior to receiving benefits under the scheme and it was observed that 32 percent of houses constructed were pucca and 68 percent Kutcha/mixed. There was no noticeable difference between the progressive and non-progressive States.
7. 83 percent of the beneficiaries reported the quality of material as good for the construction of houses. In non-progressive States 94 per cent of beneficiaries stated use of good material for the construction of houses as against 81 per cent in progressive States.
8. Sixty percent of the beneficiaries reported construction of one room tenement under the scheme while a large number of houses with two and more room tenements were constructed in non-progressive States as compared to only 33.6 percent in progressive States.
9. Out of 649 beneficiaries, only 25 beneficiaries (24 from progressive States and 1 from non-progressive states) were not residing in the houses constructed/allotted. Out of 25 beneficiaries 4 kept their houses locked while the remaining were using these houses as cattle shed, store, godown, shop, etc.
10. It was observed that Voluntary Organisation did not play any significant role in the allotment/development of house-sites. The contribution of the local bodies in this regard was negligible.
11. Most of the beneficiaries reported considerable improvement in social aspects like health, social status, living conditions etc. due to availability of more space and area.

12. Though the scheme envisaged the rural poor as the target group, it included a substantial percentage of beneficiaries belonging to the income group above the poverty line as 74% of the beneficiaries belonged to income group upto Rs. 35000/- and about 24 per cent of them belonged to income group of Rs.3501-6000.
13. Female beneficiaries constituted a larger percentage (16%) in non-progressive States as compared to 9 per cent in progressive States. Majority of beneficiaries belonged to age-group of 26-50 years.

6. Major Suggestions

In order to remove arbitrations and vested interests, there is need for applying corrective measures in the procedure for identification. It was suggested that necessary guidelines need to be provided to the State Governments for following uniform pattern with regard to processing implementation and the involvement of voluntary agencies/local bodies for identifying the target group beneficiaries.