

EVALUATION REPORT ON ANTYODAYA PROGRAMME (1979-81)

1. **The Study**

The Antyodaya programme was instituted for the upliftment of the poorest of the poor in the country. Launched first by the Government of Rajasthan in 1977, the programme was taken up by the Governments of Himachal Pradesh, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Manipur in 1978. The type of benefit schemes under the programme included land allotment, agriculture and land development, animal husbandry, village and cottage industries, wage employment, old age pension and housing subsidy, etc. The criterion adopted for the selection of beneficiary families was purely economic. Different norms were fixed by the States for identification of Antyodaya families. However, priority was given to those families which did not have any economic assets, nor any source of income.

In 1978, the Programme Evaluation Organisation PEO undertook an evaluation study of the working of the Antyodaya Programme in Rajasthan. In view of the widespread attention attracted by the study report, the Estimates Committee of the Parliament suggested that the P.E.O. should take up a country-wide evaluation of the Programme. Accordingly, the P.E.O. carried out an evaluation study of the programme during 1979-81 and published its report in 1982.

2. **Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to examine;

- i) The criteria for the selection of beneficiaries, method envisaged and actually followed;
- ii) The type of benefit programmes envisaged and assistance provided, scope of specific programmes, etc.
- iii) The time-lag between the identification of beneficiaries and the actual flow of benefits from the assistance;
- iv) Advance and preparatory action taken for providing technical assistance and know-how to the beneficiaries;
- v) The impact of the programme on beneficiaries with particular reference to employment and income; and
- vi) Follow-up including extension, management, production, marketing, etc.

3. **Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample .**

The study was conducted at three levels, i.e., the State, district and village. All the six states, i.e. Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh, where the programme had been in operation, were taken up for the study. 29 districts representing different geographical, agricultural and socio-economic strata were selected from these states. 2 blocks were chosen from each selected district in such a way that each one represented the distinct stratum based on geographical, agricultural and socio-economic characteristics. Further, two villages were selected from each block on the basis of the maximum number of benefit schemes provided and the accessibility of villages. From each village, a minimum of 5 beneficiaries were selected for canvassing. However, in villages where the beneficiaries were less than the required sample, all the beneficiaries were selected. The final sample consisted of 29 districts, 57 blocks, 137 villages and 674 beneficiaries spread over 6 States.

4. **Reference Period**

The field work of the evaluation study was taken up in October, 1979 and completed in January, 1981. The data analysed in the report mostly related to the period 1979-80.

5. **Main Findings**

1. The Governments of Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa employed scales graduated according to the size and population of the village to fix the number of poor families to be selected as beneficiaries from each village. Each State Government prescribed the order of selection of Antyodaya families. All the selected states stressed that the final identification of Antyodaya families was to be done at a meeting of the Gram Sabha which was to be attended by the concerned bloc and district officials, MPs., etc. Explicit instructions issued in Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh regarding the selection of beneficiaries precluded faulty identification of families in those states. Gram Sabha meetings were convened in Rajasthan and to some extent in Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Bihar and Orissa did not follow the prescribed procedure for selection, thereby resulting in faulty identification of families.

2. The Rajasthan Government provided orientation to the concerned officials for the implementation of the programme. Meetings and workshops were organised for revenue and development officials, block officials, Tehsildars, Naib Tahsildars, representatives of commercial and co-operative institutions, panchyat members, Patwaries and VLWs. The Himachal Pradesh Government deputed a team of senior officials to Rajasthan to make an on-the-spot study of the working of the programme. The Deputy Commissioners of the districts organised meetings of the district officers and the B.D.O.S. The B.D.O.s briefed the VLWs, Panchyat Secretaries and Forest Guards regarding the Programme. In other states, however, no elaborate arrangements were made.

3. The scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and backward classes together comprised of 60%, 70%, 80%, 88% and 75% of the total selected Antyodaya beneficiaries in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa respectively. The percentage of illiterate families benefited from the programme was 54.9% in Bihar, 65.7% in Uttar Pradesh, 72% in Orissa, 80.3% in Himachal Pradesh and 85.5% in Rajasthan. The percentage of beneficiaries was lower at higher levels of education.

4 The Antyodaya Programme was administered at three levels, i.e. the State, district and block. Block was the basic unit for the implementation of the programme at the field level.

5. In Rajasthan, the Commissioner for Special Schemes was in charge of the programme at the State level. A high level committee chaired by the Chief Minister and consisting of the Council of Ministers, the Chief Secretary and the Development Commissioners was constituted to lay down policy guidelines for the administration of the programme. At the district level, the programme was implemented by the officers of the Revenue and Development Departments alongwith the Project Officers of special development agencies. The District Collector was the Chief Co-ordinator at the district level. A committee under the chairmanship of the Collector was constituted for overseeing the progress. As regards monitoring, the Committee of Direction constituted under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary was very effective in tackling the problems of faulty identification, non-availability of co-operative credit, inadequate coverage by commercial banks etc. The Special Schemes Organisation had a broad system of progress reporting at the field level. Collectors and other Revenue Officers were made responsible for regular inspection of Antyodaya families. However, none of the 10 selected districts had any special arrangements for providing follow-up services to the beneficiaries.

6. In Himachal Pradesh, there was a separate department for the execution of the programme. The State Agricultural Production Commissioner acted as the secretary of the programme and the Joint Secretary to the Government was made the Co-ordinator. At the district level, the Deputy Commissioner was the Chief Administrator of the programme. No separate co-ordination committee was constituted at the district level. There was no proper arrangement for monitoring the implementation of the programme. The BDOs were required to send progress reports to the Deputy Commissioners. However, it was not regularly done since January 1979. Inadequate arrangements for the proper maintenance of records resulted in wide discrepancies in the available records.

7. In Orissa, a Committee was constituted at the State level with Chief Minister as its chairman to determine guidelines for the effective implementation of the programme. At the district level, the Collector was entrusted with the execution of the programme. He was assisted by the Project Officer of the Special Development Scheme. The District Development Officer coordinated the activities of the special agencies on behalf of the Collector. No co-ordination Committee was set up at the district level. The State planning and Co-ordination Department was vested with the co-ordination and monitoring of the programme. There was no systematic method for the collection and compilation of data relating to the programme.

8. In Uttar Pradesh, the Secretary of the Rural Development Department was in overall charge of the programme at the State level. A sub-committee of the State Council of Ministers was formed for overseeing the progress. At the district level, the Zila Parishad, guided by its chairman, implemented the programme. The Chief Executive Officer of the Zila Parishad looked after the implementation and co-ordination of the programme on behalf of the Collector. There was no arrangement for follow-up of the programme in any of the selected districts.

9. In Bihar, the programme was administered at the state level by the Rural Development Department. In the absence of any separate co-ordination committee, the one which had been constituted for administering the IRDP also reviewed the progress of the Antyodaya Programme. At the district level, the Collector was to administer, implement and follow-up the programme. The D.D.O. looked after the programme in addition to the discharge of his normal duties. A District Consultative Committee was constituted under the chairmanship of the Collector to review the credit requirements. Progress reports prepared by the BDOs were to be consolidated at the district level for submission to the Rural Development Department. However, it was observed that these reports were not regularly sent by the district authorities to the State level.

10. Almost all the beneficiaries had the knowledge of the programme. In Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Orissa, the major sources of information to the beneficiaries regarding the programme were various government functionaries. However, in Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh, the Panchayats played a crucial role in this regard.

11. In Rajasthan, about 13% of the selected beneficiaries were sanctioned old age pension and about 16% were covered under the land allotment scheme. In Himachal Pradesh, 33% of the selected beneficiaries were provided with pensionary benefits. While 13% were allotted land, only one selected beneficiary was provided with wage employment. 43 scheduled caste families were given 100% subsidy for construction of houses and purchase of sewing machines. In Uttar Pradesh, about 55.5% of the selected beneficiaries were covered by credit assistance for animal husbandry schemes and the rest were covered under cottage industries and self employment schemes. In Bihar, loans for animal husbandry schemes were advanced to 35% of the selected beneficiaries and the rest were covered under various benefit schemes. In Orissa, 91% of the selected ones were covered under loaning schemes, of which, 74% were under animal husbandry schemes.

12. The authorities took some time to deliver the actual benefits to the selected beneficiaries particularly in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. However, once the scheme was approved by the banks, the delivery of benefits did not lag much. The respondents reported that the procedural delays, non-availability of animals, disputes regarding land, lack of co-operation from the Revenue Department, etc. were the principal causes for the time lags.

13. Majority of the beneficiaries were satisfied with the terms and conditions of loans and the mode of providing benefits under the programme. Dissatisfaction was, however, due to the dislike for the allotted land, uneconomic units, lack of interest in spinning, insufficient loan amount, irregular payment of pension, absence of any arrangements for the supply of raw-materials and marketing of goods and insufficient amounts of subsidy.

14. .In Rajasthan, 89 per cent of the beneficiaries reported increase in income ranging from 20 per cent to above 100 per cent. In Himachal Pradesh, there was a rise in income varying from 20 to 100 per cent in the case of 63 per cent of the beneficiaries. In Uttar Pradesh, about 86% of the selected beneficiaries reported increase in income of varying degrees. In Bihar and Utar Pradesh, the animal husbandry scheme was reported to be not beneficial. In Orissa, the old age pension scheme had an immediate impact on the living conditions of the beneficiaries. About 27% of the selected beneficiaries in Orissa and nearly 36% in Himachal Pradesh reported that there was no increase in their income.

15. A sizeable number of selected beneficiaries acquired more remunerative occupation after their inclusion in the various benefit schemes of the programme. For instance, the allotment of agricultural land helped the beneficiary households in Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Orissa to shift to cultivation while self-employment schemes encouraged the beneficiaries to take up dairying, goat/sheep rearing, cart drawing, rickshaw pulling, small trade, etc.

16. In Rajasthan, 93% of beneficiaries acknowledged improvement in food, clothing and other aspects of standard of living compared to 52% in Himachal Pradesh, 81% in Uttar Pradesh, 44% in Bihar and 6% in Orissa. However, barring 18 beneficiaries from Rajasthan and 2 from Orissa, none reported acquisition of any asset. 18% of the beneficiaries in Rajasthan and 17% in Uttar Pradesh were able to repay their debts. One beneficiary from orissa and none from Himachal Pradesh and Bihar reported repayment of debts.

17. Due to lack of suitable infrastructure for marketing, the beneficiaries of animal husbandry schemes in Himachal Pradesh, Orissa and Uttar Pradesh faced problems of disposal of milk and milk products. The beneficiaries of the cottage industry scheme in Rajasthan had also complained regarding problems of procurement of raw-materials and disposal of their finished products.

6. **Major Suggesttions**

1. Since the Antyodaya Programme has been merged with the IRDP in all the States, some of the deficiencies may be taken care of by the agencies implementing the IRDP. The identification of target groups should be carried out by the local people through the mechanism of Gram Sabha.

2. Active support of the institutional agencies like the co-operatives and Commercial Banks should be ensured in the implementation of the programme.

3. Some provision for consumption expenditure and certain welfare schemes like free education to the children of the beneficiaries, health care and legal aid, etc. in the form of 'Total Care' of the family as in Rajasthan and Himachal Pradesh may be offered by all the states.

4. Land allotment should ensure physical possession of land by the beneficiary. This should be followed by adequate loan assistance for carrying out land improvements.

1. A regular system of concurrent evaluation of the programme should be evolved.