

**STUDY OF CRASH SCHEME FOR RURAL  
EMPLOYMENT (1971-74) - 1979**

**1 The Study**

The Government of India initiated during the early seventies several schemes for increasing employment opportunities in the country. The Crash Scheme for Rural Employment (CSRE) which spanned from 1971-72 to 1973-74 was one among them. The scheme aimed at direct generation of employment in all the districts of the country at the rate of 2.5 lakhs mandays per annum in each district through the execution of labour intensive projects and creation of durable assets in consonance with local development plans. The evaluation study carried out in 1975 by the Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission was originally designed to make an assessment of both the CSRE and Special Employment Programme (SEP) but the scope of the study had to be restricted to the assessment of the programme under CSRE only. The Study report was brought out in 1979.

**2. Objectives**

- i) To assess the impact of CSRE on rural unemployment and on the creation of productive assets.
- ii) To study the extent of income accrued to the weaker sections among the rural unemployed or under-employed and of the availability of alternative avenues of employment on popular works through plan and non-plan activities of the government.
- iii) To analyse the nature of the schemes or activities undertaken, the quality of their formulation and implementation, the benefits arising out of investments and the degree of wastage and non-completion of works etc.

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

The study covered 590 beneficiaries on 53 works in 29 districts of 18 States.

Keeping in view the availability of resources and the time for field work, one to three districts were selected purposively from each state. The broad criteria adopted for selection were the expenditure incurred and employment generated.

The selection of beneficiaries was based on stratified multi-stage sampling with States, districts, works, villages and beneficiaries forming different stages. In the selected districts, one work each for the schemes for irrigation, land development and road construction was selected at random with probability proportional to the number of mandays employed. In the penultimate stage, the villages benefited from the selected works were identified and one village with the maximum number of mandays of employment was selected for each of the categories. In the final stage, 12 beneficiaries who belonged to the category of marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and non-agricultural labourers were selected from each selected village through simple random sampling.

#### **4. Reference Period**

The field work was conducted during the period July-October, 1975 in all the selected states except J&K. The data were collected for the period 1971-72 to 1973-74.

#### **5. Main Findings**

1. The total expenditure on CSRE, distributed across the States and the Union Territories, was Rs.126 crores. Of the total expenditure of Rs.104.72 crores reported to have been incurred by the 16 reporting States, 71.31% was spent on road construction, 15.9% on land development and 12.8% on minor irrigation. This was diametrically opposite to the C.S.R.E. guidelines which had suggested to give least importance to road construction. It was maintained that, had the focus been on land development and irrigation, the rural asset creation would have been greater.

2. The average volume of tasks performed in the selected works per month fell drastically short of the norms, with the exception of some large projects such as widening and deepening of fish ponds, construction of irrigation tanks etc.

3. The State Governments, in general, nearly achieved the targets in employment generation under the CSRE. However, the number of works undertaken and the employment generated therefrom differed noticeably across states and districts. That in most States, the share of wage component in total expenditure was well above its normative minimum proportion substantiated their success in labour mobilisation. The share of the wage component in the total cost of road construction and land development works was more than 75 per cent.

4. The daily wage earned by labourers from works ranged from Rs.1.5 per day in Maharashtra, Orissa and Madhya Pradesh to Rs. 15 per day in J&K. In the States of Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Kerala, Meghalaya, Karantaka and Nagaland wage rates were much higher than the prescribed rates of Rs.4.00 per day.

5. The norm in terms of average stage of work was achieved only in 5 out of 29 districts.

6. About 40% of the sample households acknowledged participation in the CSRE programme. The number of mandays of employment per participating household was 101.6 a year. Assessed from the angle of per-capita mandays of employment, the weaker sections of the village community benefited more from the scheme than others. Of the three categories of rural population, the participation of agricultural labourers was the highest and that of marginal farmers was the lowest. Among SCs, STs and others, STs benefited most. Female participation in the Scheme was abysmally low due to non-existent in 11 out of 27 districts.

7. Inadequate publicity for the scheme, chances of better wages elsewhere, contractual obligations and pre-occupation with own holdings were the main reasons for non-participation in the programme.

## 6. Major Suggestions

1. The placing of rural works must be in tune with the state of local development and preferences.

2. There should be a set of principles to determine priorities. The priorities, in turn, must be integrated to district planning.

3. The centre should take the States into confidence regarding the objectives, scope and duration of rural works and the terms of central assistance.

4. The adequacy of field level organisations which administer works and tasks must be ascertained.

5. Adequate flow of supplementary resources to finance programmes must be ensured.

6. An immaculate system of accounting, monitoring and feedback must be built up to facilitate the effective implementation of programmes.

7. Measures like district level assessment of plan outlay, greater mobilisation of manpower through departmental agencies and subsidisation of labour cost of small and marginal farmers should be considered for immediate action.