



EVALUATION
OF
RURAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES
IN
DISTRICT SIRMOUR
WITH
SPECIAL REFERENCE
TO
NREGS

DISTRICT SIRMOUR, HIMACHAL PRADESH

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EVALUATION
OF
RURAL EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES
IN
DISTRICT SIRMOUR

with special reference to

National Rural Employment Guarantee
Scheme

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PREFACE

Employment generation has been an integral part of all the rural development programmes. Rural Development Programmes have laid great emphasis on self employment as a result of some life supporting and sustaining training Inputs to the beneficiaries. Generation of adequate employment and substantial reduction In poverty has been the goal of successive plans In India, for quite sometime, It was thought that the growth in the overall production would take care of poverty and employment as increased production creates a capacity to deal with the problem of poverty, unemployment as well as under-employment. Experience, has shown that there has been a slow growth In production and hence the 'trickle down' effects were rather limited. The problem of unemployment and under-employment in rural areas is a serious one. This has been compounded by more than two thirds of population deriving its livelihood from agriculture, which still continues to be dependent on the vagaries of monsoon.

The Rural Employment Guarantee Programme under the statutory provisions contained in the scheme and popularly known as National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005(NREGA-2005) Is the latest and the most ambitious of all these programmes. The objective of the scheme Is to provide for the enhancement of livelihood security of the households In rural areas of the country by providing at least 100 days of guarantee wage employment in a financial year to every household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. This universal and enforceable legal right Is the most basic form of employment. This is an attempt to provide employment security in the rural areas as the unemployment is directly related to growth, development and absence of hunger from the rural areas. One of the major differences between the earlier employment programmes and the NREGA-2005 is the applicability of the programme to rural households.

FORE WORD

National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme is being implemented in the Chamba and Sirmour district of Himachal Pradesh. Employment generation has been a major component of all the rural development programmes and after taking a chronological journey of the rural development programmes and employment components in these programmes; the need has been felt for conducting this study.

Himachal Pradesh is predominantly a rural area with more than 90 per cent of its population living in villages. Agriculture/horticulture is the major absorption area for the labour force available in the state. The unemployment scenario in the state has been compounded by the fact that the literacy in the state has jumped past 75 percent and a majority of those registered on the employment registers of the state of the total unemployed force of 9 lakhs.

The National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme has been started in the two of the most backward districts of the state i.e. Sirmour and Chamba. District Sirmour which has been selected for this study has an area of 2825 sq.km. and a population of 4,58,593 consisting of 81,441 households.

The study has been conducted to figure out certain salient issues like - Why the local people after a certain level of education don't prefer to work with their own hands; What are the reasons for the local educated people for migrating to urban areas in search of jobs; Whether the agricultural practices have diversified and the extent to which these diversifications have absorbed the additional labour force etc. In addition to these, there are certain other pertinent questions such as, what is the attitude of beneficiaries, government officials, and financial institutions towards the effectiveness of this scheme? What is the success and failure ratio of this scheme? Is this scheme able to fulfill the expectations of the stakeholders and also fulfill the broader objectives of Rural Development Programmes?

The study would enable the planners to know as to 'who' are the people who actually work in the villages as most of the educated people, as the popular perception is, do not prefer to work in their own homelands with their own hands. Similarly, the reasons as to why some people prefer to work in the villages will also be known and will throw light on the composition of work force working in

the villages. The study also points out whether apart from the rural female folks and the other men who could not move out for any better avenues only work in the villages. The study aims at bringing out whether the diversification within the agriculture and outside It has been made by the respective Panchayats, dovetailing the schemes under the employment programmes with the other on-going programmes of other departments.

HIPA is grateful to the National Institute of Rural Development, Hyderabad for sponsoring the study. We are especially thankful to **Dr. Arun Kumar & Dr. Kulwant Pathania, Consultants** for this study for extending valuable contributions which has helped this effort enormously. At the same time, HIPA wishes to place on record the co-operation extended by officers and staff of different departments of Govt. of Himachal Pradesh In providing necessary help and data to our study teams.

Our thanks are also due to **Sh. Satish Sharma, Deputy Director (Research)**, of H. P. Institute of Public Administration for offering help and encouragement to the study team from time to time and their contributions towards drafting and timely completion of this report. The staff involved in this study comprised **Sh. Rajeev Bansal, Research Officer** for report writing and team of Investigators for data collection, also deserve special mention and sincere thanks.

The report highlights major areas of concern which hopefully will be useful to the National Institute of Rural Development as also the Rural Development Department of Himachal Pradesh for future course of action In Implementing such schemes.

(Ajay Mittal)
DIRECTOR


DATE: 25th February, 2008.

PLACE: Fairlawns, Shimla.

GEOGRAPHICAL MAP OF DISTRICT SIRMAUR



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