

## **9. Rural Development Programmes in Karnataka: People's Perception**

*I Maruti*

### **Introduction**

The Government of India, since independence, has initiated several measures for eradication of poverty and unemployment. As part of this objective, the Government has been allocating funds under different heads towards plan outlays from time to time for various developmental programmes being implemented by the State Government. However, the common belief is that these programmes have not delivered the expected benefits, mainly on account of lack of coordination between administrators and policy makers. Even at the grassroots level the desired results have not been achieved because of improper implementation of the programmes, ineffective selection procedure, procedural delay, corruption and so on. The present study examines the beneficiaries' awareness, perception and assessment of the rural developmental programmes implemented by the Central Government and the Government of Karnataka.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To examine the extent of beneficiaries' utilisation of development programmes intended for their welfare.
- To analyse the differences between the approaches followed by the government in designing and implementing the rural development programmes.
- To elicit the people's perceptions and conduct case studies on the developmental programmes.
- To examine the caste biases, if any, in the selection procedure of the beneficiaries and their incremental income generation.

### **Methodology**

The present work is exploratory in nature and is based on the primary data collected from Baroor, a revenue village, in Bidar district of Karnataka State. Bidar district has been selected as being representative of most backward regions of Karnataka. These areas do not have sufficient access to information. A small proportion of the 200 households of this village was taken for the purpose of the study.

Baroor village consists of 200 households, of which 88 are covered under various rural developmental programmes. All the 88 households were taken for the purpose of the study. Twenty-five non-beneficiary households were also selected. A structured questionnaire was administered to these respondents and unstructured focus group interviews were conducted. To get acquainted with people's problems and understand their perceptions about rural development programmes, the participant-observation method was followed with the researcher staying for about a month in the village. The sources of information were the village headman, rural elites, young and educated personnel and related officials of the rural development programmes. The data were analysed using simple statistical techniques.

## Findings and Suggestions

- Baroor village is poorly situated with respect to infrastructural facilities like transport, communication, etc. Agriculture is the main occupation. Jowar, blackgram and greengram are the important crops grown in the village. Of the 214 households, 49 per cent are in the landless category and are mostly agricultural casual labourers. Most of the land is owned by the dominant Reddy caste.
- Among the developmental programmes, Nirmala Grama Yojana was appreciated by the beneficiaries. They felt that this scheme should be implemented in all households and throughout all the villages. Under IRDP two components like sheep rearing and trade and service were found favoured when compared with other activities like petty business and cycle repair shops.
- Lack of awareness prevents the villages from seeking development activity assistance. The major constraint is the elected/local leaders who are not willing to disclose the schemes that are meant for the welfare of the poor.
- It was felt that the Government should take the necessary steps to create awareness among people through media campaigns, conducting meetings on IRDP, etc. Beneficiaries felt that the relatives of local leaders, elected representatives and the officials were the first to get the benefits. The Reddy community, in the interest of securing the loyalty of its labourers, favour them by getting minor assistance for their own labourers called 'Varasadal'.  
'
- Most of the respondents felt that many hurdles have to be overcome to avail of the benefits of Government programmes. Many respondents stated that they had no alternative but to bribe the local leaders, elected representatives and the officials in this regard.
- The beneficiaries who have taken loans have not repaid them, mainly because they believe the loans need not be repaid. Moreover, as they have paid bribes to avail of the loans they feel there is no need to pay it back.
- Proper selection of beneficiaries of IRDP and other programmes should be made through Grama Sabhas and the decisions should be taken on the spot with the list being announced immediately. This will ensure transparency.
- Respondents felt that the local public should be responsible for the development of their own village. The respondents are aware of it but remain indifferent thanks to interference from the local and political leaders.

## **Policy Suggestions**

A few suggestions have been made for the proper implementation of the IRDPs, which in turn, could contribute towards the development of rural areas.

1. For the development of any village, town and city it is essential to provide transport and communication facilities. The village under study lacks these facilities, and necessary steps should be taken to provide them.
2. Instead of giving temporary relief and immovable assets, surplus land may be distributed to the landless from Government lands or CPRs. Meanwhile, families should be brought under the safety net.
3. Under IRDP, sustainable allied agricultural schemes like sheep rearing, trade and business and dairy development should be encouraged.
4. The cumbersome process of getting loans needs to be smoothed as the political leaders and officials exploit the people by demanding bribes.
5. The majority of the respondents felt that the grama sabhas should be called and selections made on the spot, a suggestion that the Government would do well to consider seriously.
6. Beneficiaries who are under the impression that loans are free need to be made better informed. Farmers should be educated on how to avail of benefits, the importance of the programmes, how to utilise them to repay the loan amount, etc.