Impact of solidarity-based Government Programme, SGSY

(Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana, on women and backward sections of society in Vasai Taluka, District Thane, Maharashtra, India)

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The problem of poverty is one of the biggest challenges India has faced since the time of attainment of Independence. India is the world’s second fastest growing economy and, in spite of a high economic growth, it is a home to one-fifth of the world’s poor.

The Indian government has made poverty reduction a priority in its development planning by increasing self and wage employment. Hence the new government strategies for alleviation of rural poverty are focused at people’s participation, building human capital and group approach.

Nearly 62% of the population of India is employed by agricultural sectors and so most of the previous programmes were concentrated around agricultural development. But to combat the problem of rural poverty and unemployment it was necessary to emphasize on self-employment ventures in non-agricultural sectors as well. Keeping these objectives in mind, an INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (IRDP) was proposed in the Sixth Five Year Plan. It was thus initiated in 1980 in all the 5011 blocks in the country.

Since the impact of IRDP was found to be of limited nature, it was recommended that all self-employment programmes should be merged and emphasis be laid on a group based approach. Swarnajayanti Gram Swarojgar Yojana (SGSY) was introduced in 1999 with an emphasis on Micro-finance through Self-Help Groups (SHGs). The objective of SGSY was to bring the assisted poor families above the poverty line by organizing them into Self-Help Groups (SHGs) through the process of social mobilization, their training and capacity building and provision of income generating assets through a mix of bank credit and government subsidy.

In India, women and Scheduled Caste and Tribe (SC/ST) are among the vulnerable groups of the society and victims of multiple socio-economic factors and though the need to empower them is at the centre of all poverty alleviation programmes, the backward sections of the rural poor remain non-benefited. SGSY focuses on establishing a large number of micro-enterprises in rural areas for sustainable income generation with emphasis on the vulnerable groups specially women and SC/ST.

The performance and impact of SGSY as a holistic programme of micro enterprise development in rural areas was studied. The research has also highlighted the aspects of social mobilization of the poor, women empowerment, involvement of women in economic activity, and impact of programme on backward sections. The objective of present study was to find out effectiveness of this specially designed anti poverty programme.
The geographical scope of the study was restricted to Vasai taluka in Thane district, Maharashtra, India as it is a rural area located near Mumbai. It was therefore interesting to study the impact of the plan on the rural people residing very close to the financial capital of India.

Various techniques of data collection were devised under the present study. Several methods like questionnaires, personal interview, personal visit, observations and examination of records were incorporated into data collection techniques. Questionnaire was simple, unambiguous and was translated into Marathi, the language spoken in the area.

Primary and secondary data was collected for this purpose. Secondary data was collected from the official reports of the Government on poverty alleviation programmes; official reports of panchayat, credit plan of NABARD and from the Ministry of Rural Development and District rural development agencies (DRDA). Officials from the DRDA, Panchayat office, NGOs, Banks and different research institutes were interviewed to understand the policies made by the Government for rural development.

During this study it was found that SGSY has empowered women by enhancing their contribution to household income. Groups having only female members were large in number as compared to groups having only male members. Seventy two percent of the SHGs were all -women SHGs. All members of the groups were rural poor and belonged to the families below poverty line. Of the total beneficiaries, 45.6% were SC/ST in Vasai taluka. SGSY actually helped in increasing women employment in rural areas. It was found that 25% of the backward class members were not contributing to household income which reduced to nil after joining SGSY. Ninty two percent of the groups were able to repay their loan amounts clearly indicating the efficacy of a solidarity based programme.

References:


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