

Application of Developmental Fund under the Welfare of Schedule Castes Scheme in Orissa and West Bengal: Evaluation of Activities on Vocational Centre, Crafts Centre and Computer Centre

INTRODUCTION:

The evaluation study on “Application of Developmental Fund under the Welfare of Schedule Castes Scheme in Orissa and West Bengal: Evaluation of Activities on Vocational Centre, Crafts Centre and Computer Centre” was part of the effort to assess the impact of the implementation of various programmes undertaken by the government through various implementing agencies for social, educational and economic development of the Scheduled Castes. Further, as part of the study it is required to find out the overall difficulties, functioning and implementation of the existing Scheme of Supporting Projects of All-India or Inter-State Nature (Research & Training) for the Development of the Scheduled Castes, of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt of India.

A number of activities under the scheme the Welfare of the Scheduled Castes are being implemented by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India. The aim of the scheme and its component activities, as the title indicates, is the welfare of the scheduled caste population in India, considered socio-economically the under privileged strata of the society. The Special Component Plan was introduced in 1979-80 by the government to specifically address the needs of the scheduled caste population and raise them above the poverty line. It is an umbrella programme under which all schemes implemented by the Union and state governments are dovetailed for addressing the different needs of the Scheduled Castes.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF THE BENEFICIARIES AND AREA:

The beneficiaries of the vocational, crafts and computer centre being implemented by various NGOs in the targeted states of Orissa under the scheme the Welfare of the Scheduled Castes of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, belong basically to the scheduled castes. Most of the beneficiaries in the vocational and computer centers completed their education at a minimum of 10 plus level and in the age category of 18-25. They belong to both urban as well as rural areas. Majorities of the families of the beneficiaries are coming under the below poverty line category (ninety percent cases in Orissa and eighty-five percent cases in West Bengal). As far as immovable assets of the beneficiaries' family are concerned, eighty-five percent in Orissa and seventy-three percent in West Bengal live in thatched houses with little agricultural land for cultivation. The major movable assets of the beneficiaries' family are bi-cycle and motor cycle / scooter. Fifteen percent of the beneficiaries' families own motor cycle / scooter in Orissa and twenty seven percentages in West Bengal. The bicycle is owned by over eighty percent of the beneficiaries' family in Orissa and West Bengal. In seventy per cent cases in Orissa and sixty-five percent cases in West Bengal the parental education background are essentially illiterate and semi-literate with little formal education. The income earning sources of parental family relies on descending order on the following sources: menial work (fifty five per cent cases in Orissa and forty-five percent cases in West Bengal), regular occupational services (twenty fifty per cent cases in Orissa and thirty five percent cases in West Bengal), agricultural sources (fifteen per cent cases in Orissa and twenty seven percent cases in West Bengal), miscellaneous sources , e.g. trade, small business, etc. (seventeen per cent cases in Orissa and twenty nine percent cases in West Bengal).

OVERVIEW OF DEVELOPMENTAL ISSUES AND THE SCHEDULED CASTE POPULATION:

Any social developmental activity should be for enterprise creation and entrepreneurship development for sustainable income generation.

The issues are:

- (i) Knowledge development on production management, supply sourcing, inventory management, storage, processing, packaging and marketing.
- (ii) Skills training,
- (iii) Right attitudinal orientation and motivation.
- (iv) Inter-institutional coordination or networking: rural technology development, transfer and dissemination; market collaborations; cluster to cluster collaborations; and training and skill development in rural enterprise management; network of training institutes in micro enterprise management and a network of rural technology institutions.
- (v) Mobilizing people, i.e. entrepreneurship role, mobilize tiny rural producers and upscale their operations to make them competitive enterprise. It involves training the SCs in different trades, training them in business skills and marketing.
- (vi) Provision of varieties of services to the scheduled castes at different stages of an enterprise development, in addition to credit and technology, raw materials supply, skills training, business management and marketing.
- (vii) Skills for management of small business, documentation skills, marketing skills, entrepreneurship for small business, technology sourcing skills, financial, accounting and economic management skills, and networking for services skills.
- (viii) To act as a facilitator, catalysis for sustainable income generation through rural entrepreneurship development.

- (ix) Training the scheduled castes on technical and managerial functions for managing their own enterprises and by linking their enterprises with technical, managerial or financial institutions for sustainability.
- (x) Capacity building of the members of the scheduled caste through education and training for entrepreneurship development.

OBJECTIVE:

The primary aim of the study was to evaluate implementation of the scheme in relation to these activities in the targeted states of Orissa and West Bengal for the Scheduled Castes.

As per the objective the present study attempted:

- (a) To evaluate the activities/training carried under the scheme in the targeted states of Orissa and West Bengal and the scope for entrepreneurship development and self-employment;
- (b) To examine the relevance/viability of the activities under the scheme to the changing demands of industry, business and market, and suitable alteration, modification and substitution, if any;
- (c) To examine the scope and relevance of collaboration with industry and business for reinforcing/reinventing the mutualities of interest, particularly in the context of employers demand for a motivated and competent workforce; and
- (d) To evaluate the training activities for the scheduled castes implemented under the scheme in Orissa and West Bengal and the existing and futuristic scope for self-employment and employment opportunities in relation to the training in industry/business.

METHODOLOGY:

The methodology was based on interview and questionnaires of the beneficiaries covered under the Scheme and the NGOs functionaries in the states of West Bengal and Orissa. The elicited information among others on the following:

- (a) The level of knowledge, skills and attitudes of the present and past participants from the Centres vis-à-vis the level of competency and motivation achieved in relation to self-employment and employment;
- (b) Training under the scheme and the scope and motivation for self-employment;
- (c) The learning types, i.e. for multi-skill, job rotation and new technologies; and
- (d) Relevance of imparted training vis-à-vis the changing needs of industry and business in the region.

UNIVERSE OF THE STUDY:

The sample evaluation study conducted as per the following:

- (a) 28 sample NGOs from the two-targeted states under the scheme for the development of the scheduled castes were selected, as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India, for the purposes of evaluation in the following manner:

- i. 23 NGOs from Orissa,
 - ii. 05 NGOs from West Bengal.
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- (b)
 - i. A total of 588 participants/beneficiaries in the scheme, @ 21 from each of the NGOs, were covered in the study;
 - ii. NGO functionaries, @ one from each of the sample 28 NGOs.