

JBIC Project: Integrated Natural Resource Management and poverty Reduction in Haryana

The ongoing JBIC Project: Integrated Natural Resource Management and poverty Reduction in 7 Districts of Haryana, supported by Haryana Forest Department.

Executive Summary

The Household Survey on “Integrated Natural Resource Management and Poverty Reduction in 7 districts of Haryana” is part of the effort to assess various poverty indicators, village resources and to find out strategies to reduce poverty in these areas. The present survey has made a serious attempt to deepen our understanding of the poverty status in villages, needs and areas of concern relating to reduction of poverty. The survey has been conducted in 85 villages of seven districts from the state of Haryana.

Objective of the Survey

To undertake baseline survey across a sample of caste and class structure, including gender, in project designated villages to understand the existing inequity and assess poverty status.

Key Indicators

- Identification of actual annual income and expenditure.
- Income sources, the percentage of people into agriculture, animal husbandry, labour, service class, business class and into other diversified segments.
- Identification of poverty level, i.e. number of households living below poverty line in villages as per Planning Commission of India / BPL ration card provided by state government.

- Land holding pattern amongst the communities: landless, small and marginal farmers etc.
- Livestock details.
- Identification of Caste composition.
- Identification of Head of the household.
- Education standard of the household.
- Awareness / Participation level regarding SHGs.
- Awareness level regarding natural resources management, e.g. soil and water conservation, plantation, and management of forestry.

Methodology

The survey methodology is based on participatory interaction and observation through focus group discussions with the villagers of the designated villages through village level meetings to identify among others the key indicators of the study. The second part of the survey was based on stratified random sampling to target one-third of households in each village. The adoption of sampling technique would be in such a way that it represents the actual overall position of the households combine together in the targeted village. For that, one third respondents from each section i.e. BPL/APL households, landless, landholders, SCs, BCs, and general castes, would be taken to represent the actual population of the village being surveyed.

Coverage

The survey covered nearly 15000 households taking around 150 to 200 households from each designated village who were interviewed through Household Questionnaire. Our sample is dispersed among 7 districts and 85 designated villages of Haryana. The total population figure around 4, 766,06 from a total of 82,730 households. Data were collected through intensive field survey

using a structured interview schedule and supported with participant observation through village level survey. The study duration was for five months.

Major Findings

Village Profile

The village profile depicts a clear picture of demography of the specified villages in details. It consists of population, caste, land resources, education, health facilities, agriculture, water sources, climatic conditions, communication, livestock, and wage pattern. The data is collected through participatory assessments at village meetings.

Baseline Household Survey

Caste: The focus on caste is highlighted in the household survey as most of the lower caste; especially the SCs do not have any land property/assets, which is considered as the route to resource generation. We have given the caste scenario of each specified village.

Gender Disparity: It has been a long tradition in Haryana villages that males enjoy more prerogatives than females in any decision making process, whether within their households or beyond. This gender discrimination can be considered to be one of the major causes for poverty as the main workforce, i.e. the female population, in these villages is not considered as an important constituent in the decision making process.

Education: Our findings say that households with lower level of literacy/education have higher poverty incidence than those with higher levels of literacy/education.

Poverty Level: The poverty level is not homogeneous in terms of their natural, social, or economic environments. A vast majority of population from SC community is poor.

Livestock Details: Almost all the villagers, irrespective of their caste and economic level, in all the districts have livestock. Income from livestock is not much as it should be. This potential has to be tapped by formation of *dairy cooperatives* to generate regular sources of income on a continuing basis and initiating the empowerment process more particularly to the women sections of the society.

Income Source: The households of these seven districts of Haryana are dependent on different sources of income such as agriculture, wage labour, service in government and private sectors, business, animal husbandry, etc. Most of the people in the villages are highly dependent on agriculture, though some have diversified income sources since they are unable to meet their basic needs through agriculture. Our analysis shows that there is a move away from agriculture. It reflects the interaction of several factors, including access to land, water, and credit; land degradation; population growth; technological change; and market forces. In some villages persistence of poverty damages the fragile resource base and the environment of all people in general.

Awareness level and interest of SHG: We have found two different statistics about the awareness and interest level of people about SHGs. The awareness level about SHG is very less. Once they are aware of the benefits of SHGs, they start taking interest in formation of SHGs. The women take interest in SHGs formation more keenly than their male counterpart. They feel it is one such source through which the income can be increased.

Awareness Level about INRM: Though the people are aware of the integrated natural resource management, they are divided in their opinion to our

questionnaires on soil and water conservation, plantation, and management of forestry.

Conclusion

On the basis of our survey and data analysis, we have found that the rural poor lacks access to adequate land, water, and credit facilities. They have little human capital in terms of minimal skills required for involving themselves in any other source of income, apart from their traditional sources of income. They encounter limited employment opportunities in villages. There has been a high level of illiteracy in SC community as compared to overall scenario of the villages and also high degree of Gender Disparity.

Suggestions

An Empowerment Approach is needed particularly amongst the females. The importance of pursuing an “empowerment” approach is more important than a “delivery” approach that treats beneficiaries as mere recipients and not as subjects of change. Improvement in Female Education is also essential as it can have synergistic effects on both education and income generation. The institution building process needs to be strengthened starting with SHGs, and followed by cooperatives by involving three/six SHGs under one cooperative for initiating various activities in the socio-economic domain.