

**EVALUATION STUDY OF THE WORKING OF
ANTYODAYA PROGRAMME IN RAJASTHAN - 1979**

1. The Study

The Programme was launched by the Government of Rajasthan on 2nd October, 1977 for the upliftment of the 'Poorest of the Poor' families in the State by providing the means of livelihood through various schemes of self-employment, wage employment and old age pension in each village. The Programme envisaged to identify 5 poorest families from each of the 33,000 villages in the state, thus intending to benefit about 1.60 lakhs families in total. The Programme Evaluation Organisation of the Planning Commission conducted an evaluation study of the Programme in 1978 and published its report in 1979.

2. Objectives

To examine the mechanics of the implementation of the Programme, the criteria for the selection of beneficiaries and method of their identification, the type of assistance rendered and the reaction of the village people towards the programme.

3. Sample Size/Criteria for Selection of Sample

The five districts which had been selected by the state government for its pilot study, were retained by the PEO for its study. These districts were Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Jhunjhunu and Chittorgarh. A total of 25 families (5 in each of the 5 selected villages in the selected districts) were taken for collection of data.

4. Reference Period

The study covered the period from 1977 to 1978.

5. Main Findings

1. The target of identifying 1,60,517 poorest of the poor families was achieved in about three months. The process of identification, by and large, was fair as it was carried out by people who were completely abreast of the pulse of the villages.

2. The benefits provided to the Antyodaya families included, among others, old age pension, land allotment, milch cattle units, goats and sheep units, land improvement, purchase of bullocks, agricultural inputs, hand operated looms, sewing machines and loan for running petty shops.

3. In case of the villages selected for indepth study, 15 out of the 25 identified families acknowledged an increase in their employment and income after they were brought into the Antyodaya Programme. Of these 25 families, as many as 18 belonged to scheduled castes. Of the 1,24,261 beneficiary families in the state upto 15th September, 1978, about 41% received loan, about 32% were allotted land, about 20% received old age pension and about 4% were benefitted from wage employment.

4. The beneficiaries, after receiving loans or land, were groping in the dark, because they had not been provided any technical know-how in management or production and marketing. They also complained that the rate of interest charged by the co-operatives were excessively higher than that charged by the commercial banks under differential rate of interest scheme.

5. The lack of motivation of banks held back the tempo of the Programme during the initial period.

6. Some of the identified families refused to accept loan assistance. The percentage of such families was higher in case of Jhunjhunu district. The fear complex created by the money lenders discouraged the identified families from participating in the programme to a large extent.

7. The general complaint of the beneficiaries who were allotted land was that the land given to them was inferior and required, in most cases, considerable expenditure on improvement.

8. There was no complaint of any time-lag between the selection of families for inclusion in Antyodaya programme and the provision of benefits in respect of schemes for allotment of land and sanction of old age pension.

9. It was observed that the programme was being implemented by the officers of the Revenue and Development Departments enthusiastically and with a clear sense of responsibility. However, their constant involvement with this programme affected their efficiency and speed in discharging their normal departmental duties.

6. **Major Suggestions**

1. The gap between the number of families identified and the number to which loan is disbursed should be brought down.

2. Special Programmes like Antyodaya should be dovetailed to area planning so that complementary arrangements which facilitate programme implementation can be provided for in the area planning.

3. Provision of adequate and timely credit must be ensured to make the units viable. It is advisable to offer credit facilities to the beneficiaries to meet their emergency consumption expenditure. It is also imperative to extend loan assistance for the improvement of the waste land provided as part of the Programme. Introduction of the scheme of "Risk Fund" would encourage financial institutions to advance loan liberally to the beneficiaries.

4. A Supportive Secretariat/directorate may be constituted to ease the excess burden of the Special Schemes Commissioner who has been entrusted with the complete charge of the implementation of the Programme, in addition to many other activities.

5. Imparting of technical education to the beneficiaries, a regular system of concurrent evaluation, schemes to protect the poor from unscrupulous elements etc. can add to the efficacy of the Programme.