
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The gender issue, especially the woman's economic role and status had not been accorded the needed focus of attention with locally specific strategies. However, there is a rethinking all over the world on the traditional notions of woman and her place in society. It is realised that socio-economic growth cannot be achieved without active involvement of woman members. India has accepted this change and several gender empowerment policies and programmes are formulated to achieve the gender equity.

Karnataka, with 42.9 lakh tribal population is focussing on welfare of tribal women through Land Purchase and Land Allotment scheme, with the main objective to empower the landless women. The scheme is expected to lead the beneficiary women to be economically independent. The scheme introduced during the year 1990 had covered as many as 965 women at the close of 2013 -14. The Government of Karnataka desired the scheme to be evaluated in terms of the impact made on the tribal households. Karnataka Evaluation Authority has engaged the services of Indian Resources Information and Management Technologies Ltd., (IN-RIMT) for the same with broad objectives of (i) assessing whether the scheme has resulted in securing economic gains and enhanced their empowerment and identification of bottlenecks/ deficiencies, (ii) compliance of scheme guidelines in implementation, (iii) achievement of its main objective of empowered women - economically & socially, (iv) problems faced in implementation and (v) offer suggestions to improve the working of the scheme.

IN-RIMT formulated a comprehensive and multi-task study design, using stratified sampling method for beneficiary survey, FGD's and interactions with Corporation's Officials, covering 133 beneficiaries (around 14%) in 41 villages, 27 taluks & 24 districts and 40 Focussed Group Discussions.

The study has attempted to analyze (i) processes followed, and (ii) socio economic impact on beneficiaries under pre and post allotment to assess the net incremental benefit as also change in social status of beneficiaries.

Findings

- It was observed that the Implementing Agency had followed the guidelines in respect of identification of land and sellers adhering to eligibility criteria; their socio economic status and other conditions. Of the 50 tribal sub-groups, the scheme has covered only eleven sub-groups. It was observed that the average time taken between identification of beneficiaries and handing over the land ranged between 6 and 24 months.
- In general, the coverage of number of women has not been very satisfactory due reasons like non-availability of land for sale and land costs going beyond the ceilings prescribed by the Corporation. The Corporation has advanced loans to the tune of Rs. 360.24 lakh under the scheme.
- The distance of the land allotted to the beneficiaries from the place of their residence varied from less than a km. to more than 5 km. But majority, i.e., 65 percent of the beneficiaries had their lands allotted at a distance between 2 and 5 km. With regard to suitability of land, around 96% beneficiaries had indicated that the land was suitable for cultivation. Bulk allotments were also made in few cases (in Kolar, Chickballapur, Koppal, Yadagir & Raichur districts), wherein the beneficiaries have been allotted land with no boundary demarcation. Of the sampled beneficiaries, as many as 64 (63.30 acres) had been allotted wet lands while 58 (115.05 acres) had been allotted dry land and remaining 11 (11 acres) got Garden lands. Lands belonging to only other communities were considered for purchase. Incidences of leasing out of the land allotted were reported from Kolar and Hassan districts.
- The age composition shows that 57% of the beneficiaries were in the age group of 31-40 years. All the 133 respondents were married, 13 among them were widows (10%). Most of the beneficiaries and their spouses were actually engaged in cultivation either on sharing basis or on contract basis, both as agriculture and agricultural labour. It was surprising to find that as many as 97 respondents (73%) reported that they had never gone to any school.
- Dry land is preferred by majority of beneficiaries as they get the land at lower price and the extent is more and also there is scope for them to go for wells under other schemes. Recent

changes in the provisions of land allotment anywhere within the taluk may not go in favour of the beneficiary since it was difficult to relocate themselves from their own villages. This may possibly lead to leasing out of the land.

- The study attempted assessment of net incremental income received by the beneficiaries which is the main objective of the scheme. As a result of possession of a valuable asset, there appears to be a great morale booster for the respondents since they receive recognition and attention from other members of the household and also the society.
- In respect of income, wide variations were noticed among the districts. Depending on the cropping systems followed by the respondents, the range of incremental incomes of respondents varied from less than Rs. 2000/- to over Rs. 1,12,500/-.
- Average annual income as per sample study is Rs. 23,187/- and the average annual income after extrapolation to whole population works out to Rs. 21,132/-.
- Almost all of them are growing crops which are popular in their region. Only two of the 133 beneficiaries had kept their land fallow. Nearly 50 percent of the beneficiaries had gone for commercial crops. This result is an indication of women's potential to grow cash crops and increase their income, if opportunities are provided.
- The beneficiaries had not carried out any development works on their allotted land with few exceptions in Jevargi (Gulbarga), Aurad (Bidar), Arasikere (Hassan) and Shikaripura (Shimoga). However, the line departments executed bunding work and digging of bore wells in respect of 28 percent and 5 percent respectively.
- Another deficiency noticed in the field is that, the land allotted to the beneficiaries had not been properly demarcated. As many as 63 beneficiaries highlighting the glaring shortcoming in implementation process.
- It was reported that in most of the southern districts of Karnataka, the availability of land for sale was scarce, while in the northern districts of Karnataka, there were more sellers than the demand from the Corporation. This is a contrasting situation in the State where owners themselves pressuring the Corporation to buy their lands. In fact, this is a good

opportunity for the Corporation to think of creating a “Land Bank” and allot the same to the beneficiaries. Another phenomenon observed was that the sellers and beneficiaries themselves settled the deals and brought the cases for financial support with the Corporation.

- Further, in respect of social status, almost all women had their say in the decision making process of the family especially marriage, financial management, land related issues, education of children etc. This transformation has been set in motion. In this context, it is necessary to observe that the social heritage of the tribal women is the fact that it is she who runs the family.
- In view of the loan waiver scheme of the Govt. of Karnataka due to recurrent drought, most of the beneficiaries had not repaid their loan installment. Of the 133 beneficiaries interviewed, only 3 beneficiaries have repaid their loan amount either partly or fully. It was quite natural on the part of the rest to think that their loan also would be waved off as done in the past.
- There was no visible convergence of the line departments with the scheme and it was quite obvious because there were no specific Government directions with the concerned Departments in lending support to the scheme.
- There is no system of follow-up and monitoring from the Corporation once the land is allotted and registered in the beneficiary name. There is no chance for the beneficiaries to give any feedback except when they want to get additional assistance, especially for bore well and they themselves approached the Corporation seeking further assistance.

Recommendations

- The achievements under the scheme is poor since only less than 1000 women have been benefitted over a period of five years keeping in view the size of tribal population. In some districts the performance is very poor and needs to be improved.
- The amended rule making provision of purchasing the land anywhere in the taluk may not have many takers since women cannot be expected to relocate to a place from their

original native village. This may encourage beneficiaries leasing out the land to the neighboring farmers / cultivators which is not permitted under the present scheme guidelines.

- Slow process of implementation due to non-availability of land in southern Karnataka is common. The Corporation should give due publicity in local newspapers and through media and whatever means available, make purchases which could be allotted to new applicants. In Northern parts of Karnataka, the land availability is very easy but there are limited applicants for land allotment. The Corporation should create a Land Bank for ST Communities and simultaneously give publicity to the scheme in order to increase the number of applicants.
- Selection of beneficiaries at Gram Sabhas needs to be ensured. After the selection of beneficiaries, the copy of the proceedings of Gram Sabha should go to the district committee for consideration. The Gram Panchayats should be advised to maintain records and resolutions approving the proposal and the same should be accessible to all.
- The present guidelines do not take into account location of lands declared/ classified as “Wet” but actually were not receiving water . Some flexibility may be allowed in such cases and depending on feasibility, the area limitation of one acre could be raised to two acres in tail-end side of the irrigation commands, so that, the beneficiaries get little higher land area than at present.
- A monitoring mechanism should be created by the Corporation to ensure the land utilization by the allottee beneficiary.
- Since the allottees are from tribal communities there should be an in-built arrangement of sponsoring such beneficiaries by the Corporation for any scheme like drilling of bore wells, sprinklers/drip irrigation system, input supply, so that, they can get holistic services.
- There is scope for involving (NGOs) in this programme. In fact, in most of the tribal development programmes, NGO’s reach out earlier than the Government.

- There is need to give wider coverage to benefit all the tribes, more so, those who are residing in inaccessible areas forest areas/remote areas, though they are numerically insignificant.
- While selecting the beneficiaries, the age factor and marital status should be considered as a pre-requisite. For example, the land should be allotted to such people who are below the age of fifty years and widowhood may be given priority.
- The land allotment should include a package of practices including productive inputs at least for two years. Further, it is suggested that this should be included in the district development plan.
- The Extension Wing of Agriculture/ Horticulture/ Animal Husbandry Universities in the State should be involved to extend their support to the beneficiaries.