

**EVALUATION OF THE PERFORMANCE OF SC/ST COLONY
INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES SCHEME UNDER THE
SCSA/TSA FOR THE PERIOD OF 2014-2015, 2015-2016
AND 2016-2017.**

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Executive Summary

The Scheduled Caste Sub Plan (SCSP) and the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) were strategized in the 1970s to ensure that there is optimum allocation of plan resources for the development of the Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Caste population. Since its inception, the Tribal Sub Plans and Special Component Plans have been an integral part of Annual Plans as well as Five Year Plans, making provisions therein non-divertible and non-lapsable, with the clear objective of bridging the gap in the socio-economic development of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. With SCSP and TSP in place, there are provisions to augment the SC's and ST's living conditions by guaranteeing funds from all related development sectors both at the level of State and Centre in proportion to the size of their respective population. The SCSP and TSP have rightly been deemed as one of the most efficient initiatives by the then Planning Commission in taking cognizance of the need for a distinction between 'incidental' benefits for SCs and STs from the existing government interventions and 'direct policy-driven' benefits.

According to the 2011 census, there are about 166,635,700 SCs and 84,326,240 STs in this country which roughly translates into 16.2 per cent and 8.2 per cent of the population. The SCSP and TSP envisage that the funds get earmarked for various schemes related to health, education, skill and employment generation, infrastructure, etc. to ensure a better quality of life of the SC/ST population.

To this end, the government of Karnataka adopted the Karnataka Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan (Planning, Allocation and Utilization of Financial Resources) Act in 2013. Karnataka is only the second state after Andhra Pradesh to do this. The Act calls for earmarking a portion of state plan outlay for the Scheduled Castes Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan in proportion to the population of SCs/STs, which is 24.1 per cent now as per the 2011 census. According to the Act, the State Council for the Development of SCs/STs" with the Chief Minister as chairman is in charge of planning and implementation of the schemes under the Act. The Social Welfare Minister heads the Nodal Agency at State level, and the Deputy Commissioner of the district heads the district-level committees to review and monitor the implementation of the Act.

The Sub-Plans of the departments are supposed to include only such schemes that secure the direct and quantifiable benefit to the SC/ST individuals, SC/ST households or SC/ST

habitations that have the potential to bridge the ‘gaps in development’, especially their individual educational and economic empowerment. Each department, after estimating the gaps in the development of the SCs/STs, is supposed to prioritize the development needs of the SCs/STs through a consultative process.

In order to appraise the efficacy of the SC/ST colony infrastructural facilities schemes under the purview of SCSA/TSA, an evaluation study was conducted from 2014 to 2015, 2015-16 and 2016-2017. The evaluation study seeks to understand the process of selection of colonies and schemes. The study has examined the extent to which the beneficiaries are aware or involved in the selection of activities for the development of colonies. Further, the study attempts to measure the impact of these schemes on the living environment of the residents in the aforementioned colonies. The study rates the developmental progress and completion status by making a comparative analysis of the performance of the scheme across all the divisions and sample districts. The study attempts to answer whether or not the infrastructures like community halls, cement roads and drainage system are being used in a desirable manner or not. While analyzing the overall impact, the study provides insights on the intersectoral/interdepartmental coordination across concerned departments (PWD/RDPR/SWD) of the government associated with the implementation of the works under the said scheme. The evaluation study examines the non-coverage colonies in the district to assess the depth of the impact of these schemes.

The study was conducted in 4 divisions, 8 districts, 54 talukas of Karnataka to evaluate the works executed through the Public Works Department (PWD) and Social Welfare Departments (SWD). The study has employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis synergistically, which has been supplemented by an extensive review of the literature. The study includes both primary data collected from the field, and it also draws from a rich repository of the secondary data from various reports and surveys. In-depth interviews and Focused Group Discussion (FGDs) comprising both the open and close-ended questions were used to derive insights.

There were 5,111 respondents in total, out of which 72.2 per cent of the beneficiaries were male, and 27.8 per cent were female beneficiaries. The average age of the sample beneficiaries is 40, and the average annual income is INR 15,602. The educational profile of the beneficiaries shows that 29.5 per cent have completed high school education, 26.5 per cent of them were no-schooling group, 13.6 per cent of them studied still pre-university, 13.4

per cent of them studied still middle school, 10.4 per cent studied graduation, and 6.6 per cent studied their primary school. 64.95 per cent of the respondents were aware of the infrastructural facilities, while 64 per cent of the people were consulted, and 54.8 per cent of the people were involved in the process. Following are some of the major findings of the evaluation study:

Cement Roads

Cement Road plays a pivotal role in ameliorating the living environment as they augment access to other socio-economic infrastructures and services. It helps in facilitating the process of reducing inequalities and influencing the process of knowledge gain. During the survey, it was concluded that the Vijaypur district had gained maximum access and mobility owing to the infrastructural works of cement road. Sedam of the Vijaypur district with an index score of 83.8 was the best performing talukas amongst all others. Chamrajanagar is the worst performing district with an abysmally low index score of 25.0, respectively. The study inquired into the respondents about the utilities of the cement roads like drying of agricultural crops. Kalaburgi registered the highest utility index, while Chamarajanagar got the lowest score of 3.8. Since Chamarajanagar has got a low index score, and naturally the residents are not finding other utilities of the road.

Tracking the benefits - reducing maternal and infant deaths due to improved access to medical care, it was noted that Belagavi and Vijayapur districts have highest scores for benefits of laying cement roads with the scores being 48.6 and 65.6, respectively. Thus, it may be concluded that laying cement road achieved the intended outcome of enhancing access, transportation., overall satisfaction and mobility across the colonies have received average satisfactory responses from the beneficiaries.

Drinking-Water Facility

Access to clean drinking water is one of the major determinants of health and well-being. The evaluation study sought to gather information regarding drinking water facilities created in SC/ST colonies in the state of Karnataka across eight districts. As far as water access is concerned, Tumkur and Kalburgi districts are leading with 0.83 index scores each. At the same time, Belgavi district has a leading score of 0.63, while Vijaypur district has the least index score in water quality. Belagavi district also has the highest index score of 0.61, as far as the hygiene of the water is concerned, while Chamarajanagar and Vijaypur trailed with each scoring 0.50. Kalburgi residents reported a continuous supply of water with a score of

0.78, while Chamarajnagar registered an abysmally low score of 0.61. It was noted that any infrastructure related to drinking water in Chamarajanagar was not up to the mark. Lack of access to drinking water, hygiene and sanitation can lead to fatal diseases and other health complications.

Drainage works

Sanitation is one of the primary requirements for better living conditions. There is a high correlation between sanitation and well-being. Improper drainage facilitates the growth of disease breeding organisms in the locality. The present study sought to evaluate the extent to which drainage infrastructures have been laid down in the SC/ST colonies. There were three broad areas of focus viz. whether the drainage projects colonies were completed on time; whether the quality and scientific execution of drainage works is efficient or not; and whether the maintenance of the same is being undertaken or not.

Belagavi has the best quality of drainage work and cleaner drainage with an index score of 0.66 and 0.65, while Vijaypur with an index score of 0.24 and 0.25 respectively was at the bottom. All the districts have agreed that the drainage infrastructure was completed on time. One of the key personnel of the nodal department during the IDIs opined that there is no coordination between the PWD, SWD and the local authorities to examine the need for the drainage work and ensure timely completion and maintenance of the same. Overall, 56.2 per cent of the total respondents agreed that diseases like TB, Malaria, Encephalitis, Diarrhoea, etc. have reduced after the drainage work in the colony. So, we can conclude that building of drainage facilities has ameliorated the living conditions in the SC/ST colonies, however, in some colonies the works are incomplete affecting the overall living conditions of the community in the colony.

Community Halls

Community Halls provide a safe space for socio-cultural integration and other activities which may be all-encompassing in nature like education, sports, and other events. Vijayapur district with an index score of 3.9 indicates maximum usage of the community hall, while Mysore with an index score of 2.6 reflects the lowest usage of the Community Hall. About 52.21 per cent of the beneficiaries expressed dissatisfaction over the quality and maintenance of the community halls. From the IDIs, it was found that the absence of periodic monitoring system and lack of coordination between concerned departments are some of the main reasons for low quality and maintenance of community halls. In one of the Talukas of the

Tumkur district, it was noted that the construction of the hall is incomplete, and the activity has been stopped, and there is no progress from the past four years. However, in colonies of Raibagh and Chikodi in Belagavi district, these halls were used for various programs organized by the government which includes training programs for women who are part of self-help groups, and children of the colony use it for academic and recreations purposes reasons.

In sum, it has been observed that about 64.2 per cent of the respondents have agreed that the implementation of these infrastructural works in SC/ST has augmented and enhanced their standard of living. Amongst the eight districts surveyed, Kalburgi and Vijayapur have expressed highest index scores of 81.9 and 71.6 respectively, which reflects high satisfaction and acceptance that their standard of living was enhanced due to the implementation of infrastructural works. Correlation analysis reveals that there has been a high positive significant correlation between the overall living standard index and all the utility indicators developed for the various developmental works undertaken in the colony. The building of cement roads has a 0.95 correlation coefficient with Overall Living standard Index, while general health with a coefficient of 0.58 lags in this regard. However, it was also reported that there were stark differences in the development indicators between the beneficiary group and the non-beneficiary group.

From the major findings for the study, a few broad generalizations can be made: first, the beneficiaries are about the scheme(s), but not informed and consulted in identifying the works in the colony; second, the impact on the beneficiaries due to infrastructure works varies across districts and divisions in the state. Such variations are attributed to lack of need-based allocation of works and/or lack of inter-sectoral/interdepartmental coordination to identify, sanction, implement and monitor works related to infrastructure facilities in SC/ST colony. Third, the role of the District Monitoring Committees (DMCs) in examining the status and quality of works is critical for the expected outcome of the scheme. Fifth, the method of execution of works in colonies is important to ensure better living conditions for the beneficiaries in the colony, and finally, the qualitative and quantitative impact of works on the individual community/life of the beneficiary needs to be assessed periodically to identify the need for new works and/or maintenance of the existing works.

Recommendations

Short-term Recommendations

1. The SC/ST colony infrastructural facilities scheme in its current form can be linked to other schemes like Rural Water Supply Scheme and Grants for Urban Water Supply Scheme for providing drinking water; Namma Grama Namma Raste Scheme (NGNRY) for laying roads; Trainings and courses-Mountaineering, Pilot license, fitness training and Skill Development Training under Skill Development Mission- community halls or Samudaya bhavans could be used for training purposes; and Development of SC/ST colonies scheme for overall development of the colonies.
2. To ensure intended outcomes and transparency in the implementation of infrastructure projects, the SWD should evolve guidelines for ensuring annual social audit of infrastructure works under the SCSA/TSP scheme. Under the social audit, the beneficiaries, along with representatives of the department personnel, could assess the progress of the work and its quality. The social audit could be linked to the existing directorate under the MGNREGA.
3. More than 50 per cent of the beneficiaries have expressed their dissatisfaction over the quality and maintenance of community bhavans. The Nodal agency in consultation or collaboration with implementing agency or local authorities shall outlay a dedicated fund and conduct periodical assessment of quality and maintenance of community bhavans.
4. Majority of the beneficiaries suggest that the works identified under the infrastructure scheme needs to be revisited/changed. There is a need to consult the beneficiaries to identify their needs before sanctioning and implementing works. A needs assessment should be undertaken by the nodal department and the local authorities to prioritize the needs of the beneficiaries to bridge gaps in development.
5. A Detailed five-year action plan must be prepared to implement the schemes. The five-year action plans must consider the need for basic awareness and colony-wise data or requirement to be procured by the respective personnel and implementing agency. And further, the action plans must make provision to utilise general funds and SCSP, TSP funds to areas where there is less than 50% of SC/ST habitation.

6. Periodically identify the gaps in development that contribute to human development at the taluka and district level, District Human Development Reports once in five years would aid in estimating development gaps among the beneficiaries.

Long-term Recommendations

1. The performance of the SC/ST colony infrastructural facilities scheme will be more effective if there is a robust strategy to enable interdepartmental convergence to identify, implement and evaluate the schemes and its impact on the beneficiaries. With multiple agencies/departments associated with a scheme, has resulted in a lack of accountability, leading to delays or incomplete or low-quality of works.
2. Funds for effective utilization of Samudaya Bhavans/Community Halls to engage in skill/vocation training can be sourced from various state and national programs/schemes (For instance, departments of higher education, youth empowerment, skill development, and labour), in addition to Sub-plan. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) funds can be considered for providing facilities, training, and awareness programs at the Samudaya Bhavans/Community Halls.
3. Department must take appropriate measures to ensure the continuous supply of quality drinking water by providing mini-mineral water plants and hygienic miniature tanks as part of the scheme to the SC/ST colonies. In the present study, the beneficiaries expressed average satisfaction over the water infrastructure and the indicator for continuous water.
4. The Nodal Departments shall set up district level Grievance Redressal Cell (GRC) in all the districts in the office of District S C Sub-Plan Officer and District Tribal Welfare officer.
5. There shall be an Ombudsman as Appellate Authority under grievance redressal system appointed by the Governor in consultation with State Government with necessary support staff to enquire into the complaints relating to SCSP/TSP implementation.