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REPORT
ON THE
Evaluation Study of the Applied Nutrition
Programme in Punjab



ISSUED BY:
THE ECONOMIC ADVISER TO GOVERNMENT, PUNJAB,
CHANDIGARH



The object of the Applied Nutrition Programme is to improve the nutritional status of the masses through dissemination of proper scientific knowledge, increased production and consumption of protective food and improvement in dietary habits. This programme was started in Punjab in the year 1964 and is being implemented under the overall control of the Development Commissioner, Punjab, through the Block Development and Panchayat Officers. Keeping in view the importance of the programme, the State Evaluation Committee, Punjab, decided to get this programme evaluated.

The results of the survey revealed that 24.7 per cent of the total villages were covered under Applied Nutrition Programme and 15.5 per cent of the households were benefited. Among the production components, progress of establishment of community gardens, school gardens and fisheries ponds was not up to the mark on account of lack of interest on the part of Panchayats and Block officials. The desired improvement in the nutritional status of the rural community could not be achieved as this programme was not being implemented properly.

My thanks are due to Shri J. S. Bhalla, Director, Bureau of Statistics for supervising the survey work and to Shri Tejwant Singh Bhasin, Research Officer for conducting the survey and drafting the report.

Chandigarh :

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A - SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

Applied Nutrition Programme was started in Punjab in the year, 1964. It is being implemented by the Directorate of Applied Nutrition Programme under the overall control of Development Commissioner. The object of the programme is to improve the nutritional status of the community through dissemination of proper scientific knowledge, increased production and consumption of protective foods.

2. *Object of the Survey.*—The object of the survey was to ascertain the impact of Applied Nutrition Programme and to study how far the individual schemes introduced under the programme are being implemented.

3. *Sampling design and methodology.*—25 per cent of the total blocks where Applied Nutrition Programme was in post intensive phase were selected by simple random sampling. In each of the sampling blocks, 3 villages were further selected by random sampling.

4. *Administrative Set-up.*—At the State level, the programme is under the charge of Development Commissioner who heads a State level Co-ordination Committee consisting of representatives of departments of Health, Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries, Education and Social Welfare. With a view to eliminating procedural and financial difficulties typical to normal departmental routine, the programme has been decentralized and handed over completely to the Panchayat Samiti. The Chairman of Panchayat Samiti, the Executive Officers of Panchayat Samiti, the members and all the Executive Officers of the concerned Directorates including Medical Officer of the Primary Health Centre and Block Education Officer constitute the Block level Co-ordination Committee. The Block Development and Panchayat Officer is responsible for implementing the Applied Nutrition Programme at Block level through the Technical staff. Mukhsevika who is incharge of all women programmes at block level has also been made incharge of the Applied Nutrition Programme. Duties of the Mukhsevika concerned under Applied Nutrition Programme are establishment of Kitchen Gardens, formation of Mahila Mandals, supervision of Feeding Demonstration. Mukhsevika is assisted by the Gramsevikas who are the incharge of the programme in the selected villages under Applied Nutrition Programme. Balsevikas are posted in the blocks which are in the intensive phase for organising the Balwaris.

5. *Consumption Pattern.*—It was observed that total caloric intake per adult was less than the required quantity. Excess consumption of cereal and low consumption of fruit, vegetables, milk and pulses was observed.

6. *Community Gardens.*—None of the 33 selected villages in 11 blocks had community gardens. Two community gardens were set-up in the Nawanshahr block, but their experiment had failed due to carelessness and lack of interest on the part of panchayats. The main

reasons for the poor development of community gardens are as follows:—

- (i) Panchayats preferred to lease out the shamlat lands for getting regular annual income.
- (ii) Lack of irrigational facilities.
- (iii) Non-availability of suitable lands for horticulture.
- (iv) Lack of watch and ward arrangements.

7. *School Gardens*.—The purpose of setting up school gardens was primarily educational and extensional. They were managed by students under the guidance of a teacher. The underlying idea was to inculcate in them the habit of setting up kitchen gardens in their houses for nutritious food.

In all the 33 selected villages, there were 22 primary, 7 middle and 4 high schools. All the schools were not having gardens. 7 primary, one middle and one high school were having school gardens. In certain cases, it was observed that some assistance in the form of barbed wire, motor or diesel engines was supplied by block authorities, but even then the school gardens were not set up due to one reason or the other. Lack of training in gardening, non-availability of chemical pesticides and manure were reported. Seed and fertilizers were also found inadequate and the supply was untimely. Watch and ward arrangements after the school hours was a serious problem.

8. *Kitchen Gardens*.—The Kitchen garden scheme was intended to play a significant role to improve upon the dietary habits of people by providing fresh vegetables and fruit. It was observed that the percentage of households having kitchen gardens in the selected blocks in intensive and post intensive phase was 25.0 and 7.9 respectively. The factors responsible for the poor progress were shortage of space in the houses, lack of irrigational facilities, etc.

9. *Poultry*.—According to the programme, poultry units were to be established at regional, block and village levels. The study in the selected blocks/villages revealed that none of the local institutions had come forward to establish poultry unit at village level. The main reason for not establishing the poultry unit was that local institutions did not consider it worthwhile to start such units in view of limited demand of eggs in the villages and lack of leadership.

10. *Household Poultry Unit*.—It was observed that only 124 units were distributed among 33 villages. The supply of birds was not only inadequate but also untimely. It was also reported that generally influential people managed to get birds.

11. *Piggery*.—The State Government had sponsored the domestic piggery units in order to improve upon the dietary habits of the people. Difficulties regarding construction of sheds, marketing of pigs and non-availability of the proper feed were reported by the beneficiaries.

12. *Pisciculture*.—Each panchayat samiti was required to arrange a total pond area of 12 to 15 acres. A fish pond was found in

one village of Nawanshahr block at the time of survey. Low grant-in-aid to the panchayat, scarcity of water, shortage of construction material and lack of publicity and effort on the part of official machinery were the main reasons for slow progress.

13. *Supplementary Feeding Programme.*—The object of the feeding Programme was to encourage additional consumption of protective food for pre-school children and expectant nursing mothers through demonstrations regarding the proper use of locally available nutritious foods and preparation of correctly planned meals. The main observations regarding feeding programme are given below:—

- (i) It was observed that selection of beneficiaries for feeding programme was not done properly by the Mukh Sevika, Gram Sevika and Bal Sevikas.
- (ii) The feeding programme was not regular on account of lack of staff, lack of funds and failure of production components, viz., gardens, poultry, piggery, fishery, etc.
- (iii) There was lack of initiative on the part of panchayats and indifferent attitude of local population. There was shortage of utensils and non-availability of fuel.

14. *Training.*—The training of officials and non-officials was essential for the successful implementation of the Applied Nutrition Programme. The survey revealed inadequacy of training to both official and non-official categories. Frequent transfers of trained staff adversely affected the training Programme. Lack of initiative on the part of panchayats was also observed.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Administrative Set-up :

- (a) At block level, work-load of the extension staff concerned with A. N. P. should be assessed and more staff should be provided wherever necessary.
- (b) Staff trained under Applied Nutrition Programme should not ordinarily be transferred earlier than five years.
- (c) Staff working under A. N. P. showing good work should be given some incentive.
- (d) Only those villages should be selected where Panchayats are willing to offer liberal contributions.
- (e) Block officials should concentrate more energy on weaker section of the society.
- (f) Quantum of supervision by the officers of the Blocks regarding Applied Nutrition Programme in selected villages should be reported in the Quarterly Progress Reports.

2. Production Components:

Community Garden.—

- (a) At least two Panchayats in each block should be persuaded to set up community gardens, and necessary assistance should be provided by the block agencies in order to make it a success.
- (b) Land should be acquired by the Government to plant fruit trees in demonstration garden.
- (c) The produce of these gardens should be utilized for the feeding programme.

School Garden.—

- (a) Before allotting the electric motor/diesel engine to any school, necessary condition should be observed.
- (b) Strict instructions from the D. P. I. should be issued to the Head Masters for taking greater interest in the establishment of the garden.
- (c) At least one teacher from every school should be trained in running the gardens.
- (d) Panchayat should also be actively associated with the management of the garden.

Kitchen Garden.—

- (a) Wide publicity regarding importance of vegetables in diet should be done by displaying the posters in the Schools, Dharamshalas, Panchayat Ghars and also by showing films.

- (b) Timely supply of seeds, fertilizers and pesticides should be ensured.

Poultry.—

- (a) Adequate No. of poultry birds should be given to the households.
- (b) The Poultry Inspector should be provided with proper conveyance for carrying out frequent supervision and guidance of poultry farmers.
- (c) The feed should be freely made available at reasonable rates.

Piggery.—

- (a) Material for constructing proper sheds should be supplied by the Block Development Officer.
- (b) Feed at reasonable rates should be supplied.
- (c) Suitable arrangement should be made to purchase the pigs from the beneficiaries.

Fishery.—

- (a) Panchayat interested in setting up fish ponds should be provided with tubewell machinery to cope with shortage of water.
- (b) The work of renovation of ponds should be undertaken by the Directorate of Fisheries in which panchayat should also contribute in terms of labour.
- (c) Selling of fish to the villagers at reasonable rates should be encouraged at the site.
- (d) In order to develop competition among the Panchayats in the field of Pisciculture, some incentives in the form of awards should be given.

3. Supplementary Feeding Programme :

- (a) Mahila Mandal and Youth Clubs should be established in every village under Applied Nutrition Programme.
- (b) Feeding programme should be held regularly and surprise checks should be made by the officers from the headquarters.
- (c) Money for purchasing the fuel should be given from the funds of the blocks.
- (d) Suitable arrangement of utensils should be made on regular basis.

4. Training:

- (a) At least 5 knowledgeable persons per village should be trained before initiating the programme.
- (b) Some neighbouring model units should be taken over and the training institutions for demonstration purposes.
- (c) Funds meant for holding training camps should be specifically earmarked and conveyed in the beginning of the financial year, so that expenses may be reimbursed speedily.