

Limitations and Data Gaps at Village and Block Levels on Welfare Schemes of Rural Poor Households

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There are limitations and data gaps at village and block levels on welfare schemes of rural poor households. Data is an important input to measure the impact of a scheme. However, the government offices did not collect statistics on welfare schemes. So, it is difficult to assess actual impact of particular schemes on poor households. No data are available at taluka and block levels in respect of important socio-economic indicators such as quality education, per capita income, poverty ratio, monthly expenditure, life expectancy, infant mortality, etc. Two conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, the record keeping system is not well established and not a part of system or practice. Secondly, the government functionaries were hesitant to divulge any details of spending on the schemes. Record keeping system needs to be strengthened to achieve higher impact on the targeted groups and correction of mistakes. Data sets lead researchers to find out the answers of some basic research questions.

I Problem Setting and Review of Literature

Poor households are those, whose income level is low and below the defined poverty line (Tendulkar Committee 2009). Among them mostly Scheduled Castes (SCs)¹ and Scheduled Tribes (STs)² are classified and sometimes called weaker sections. They practice similar occupations, but adopt different techniques/methods for their livelihoods.

The Constitution of India guarantees special rights and safeguards in social, economic, educational, cultural, political, service and special spheres.³ In

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¹The Government of India Act, 1935 recognised 'lower castes', i.e., depressed classes as 'Scheduled Castes' for the first time in India.

²In respect of tribal communities, now 'Scheduled Tribes' (STs), the strategy of their development was incorporated in the Government of India Act, 1935 in the form of 'excluded' and 'partially excluded areas' under the Governors' discretion. (Thakkar A.V., 1947)

³ Refer Articles of Constitution of India. Social Safeguard: Article 14, 16, 17, 23, 24, 25(2), 38, 39; Economic safeguard: Articles 43, 46, and 47; Educational and Cultural Safeguard: Articles 15, 29, and 45; Political Safeguard: Articles 164 (1), 243-D, 243-T, 330, 332, 334, 371, 371 A, 371 B, 371 C, 371 F, 371 G, and 371 Service Safeguard: Articles 16(4), 16(4A), and 335 give service safeguard to the SCs/STs; and Special Safeguard: Articles 244, 275(1) and 338.