

## Status of integrated watershed management programme (IWMP) in Himachal Pradesh and its role in poverty alleviation

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### Abstract

Poverty is a global dialog. Poverty eradication is considered integral to humanity's mission for sustainable development. The purpose of the present study was to examine the status of integrated watershed management programme (IWMP) in Himachal Pradesh and its role in poverty alleviation. Structured interviews and self-developed questionnaires for beneficiaries and coordinators of concerned programme were used for data collection. Results showed that monitoring and evaluation process is very slow in IWMP in Himachal Pradesh. People's participation is also very low in Shimla districts as compare to Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh. Non-governmental organisation (NGOs) provides technical support in implementation of IWMP which is not sufficient. Watershed coordinators put suggestion that village level watershed committees are not formed according to common guideline of IWMP. In Hamirpur district IWMP starts working in 2000. Total 11 projects are running in the district. Block development officer, agriculture department are the major implementing agencies for watershed projects. IWMP are operating in 135 panchayats of Hamirpur district. Total 75621 hectare area is treatable under watershed programme. In Shimla watershed management programme was started in 1999. 43 project works are running in 10 blocks of Shimla district. Total treatable area in Shimla district is 201273 hectare with total project cost of 24916.6 lakhs. 224 panchayats are covered under watershed management programme. Eight Watershed projects are running in the 3 blocks of Kinnaur district. 45 panchayats are covered under the Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP). Total treatable area under watershed programme is 23500 hectare with total project cost of 3525 lakhs. The scheme IWMP played significant role in poverty alleviation in Himachal Pradesh as survey was conducted to assess the improvement in irrigation, increase in agriculture production and positive impact on the income of people. The most of people in all the three districts responded positively that this scheme has made positive improvements in all the above mentioned indicators. In Hamirpur, about 82 percent responded positively that this scheme has made significant improvements in irrigation system. In Shimla about 76 percent respondents reported that IWMP played significant role in improving the irrigation system of the district. In Kinnaur Districts about 80 percent respondents stated in favour of it.

**Keywords:** Rural; Poverty; IWMP; Development; Programme; Soil Erosion

### 1. Introduction

Himachal Pradesh is a part of the Indian Himalayas. It has wide valleys imposing snow Mountains, limpid lakes, rivers and gushing streams. Himachal region is called 'Deva Bhoomi'. The rural society of Himachal Pradesh has its own identity and psyche regarding traditions, culture & heritage. Therefore, within the overall rural development strategies, there has to be an explicit recognition of its identity. At the time of its formation in 1971, Himachal Pradesh was a economically backward rural state (93% rural population in 1971). Its rural population was deprived of basic amenities such as health, education and drinking water. Rural infrastructure i.e. rural roads, electricity, housing, transport, banking and market network was also very poor. Almost half of rural household were living below the poverty line. To accelerate the pace of economic development and significantly improve the standard and quality of living of rural people, the government of Himachal Pradesh took bold steps to improve their socio-economic condition

Rural development implies both the economic betterment of people as well as greater social transformation. The Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRDP) aims at providing self-employment to the rural poor through acquisition of productive

assets or appropriate skills which would generate additional income on a sustained basis to enable them to cross the poverty line. Increased participation of people in the rural development programmes, decentralization of planning, better enforcement of land reforms and greater access to credit are envisaged for providing the rural people with better prospects. Economic growth and social development of HP is much better as compare to other hilly states of the country.

### 2. Sampling Design and Procedure

For this study three districts viz Kinnaur, Hamirpur and Shimla were selected from the 12 districts of Himachal Pradesh through purposive sampling, because these districts are representing tribal, lower and upper population of Himachal Pradesh.

Further three blocks from Kinnaur, four blocks from Hamirpur and five blocks from Shimla were selected through simple random sampling. From each block of Kinnaur and Hamirpur district 25 beneficiaries of each rural development scheme were selected conveniently. Similarly in case of Shimla district 20 beneficiaries of each rural development scheme were selected. Instead of selected blocks, the data from the coordinators of the selected schemes was collected on whole

district which included all blocks of the district for studying the current status and implementation of the rural development programmes.

### 3. Tools Used For Data Collection

The tools used for primary data collection are as follows:

- Pre-Structured Questionnaires/ Schedules/ Interviews
- Focus Group Discussions
- Observations

The sources, indicators and tools for data collection are as mentioned below:

#### Sources

The tentative sources of primary data were amongst the various stakeholders of the rural development such as:

- Co-ordinators of selected rural development schemes.
- Beneficiaries of selected rural development schemes
- NGOs

### 4. Results and Discussions

Data of IWMP is collected from the coordinator of Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Hamirpur, Shimla and Kinnaur districts of Himachal Pradesh. District Rural Development agencies (DRDAs) coordinates with non-governmental agencies (NGOs) for awareness, capacity building & training of beneficiaries of watershed programme. Monitoring and evaluation process is very slow in IWMP in Himachal Pradesh. People's participation is also very low in Shimla districts as compare to Hamirpur district of Himachal Pradesh. Non-governmental organisation (NGOs) provides technical support in implementation of IWMP which is not sufficient. Watershed coordinators put suggestion that village level watershed committee are not formed according to common guideline of IWMP.

#### 4.1 Status of Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Himachal Pradesh

In Hamirpur district IWMP starts working in 2000. Total 11 projects are running in the district. Block development officer, agriculture department are the major implementing agency for watershed projects. IWMP are operating in 135 panchayats of Hamirpur district. Total 75621 hectare area is treatable under watershed programme. All six blocks of Hamirpur district are covered under IWMP scheme of rural development. 96% funds received under IWMP are utilised for project work. Majority of projects are in progress. In Hamirpur district for better implementation of IWMP, there is need for capacity building and training programme of watershed community development committee (WCDC), Watershed Development Team (WDT) and Project implementing agency (PIA).

In Shimla district watershed management programme was started in 1999. 43 project works are running in 10 blocks of Shimla district. Total treatable area in Shimla district is 201273 hectare with total project cost of 24916.6 lakhs. 224 panchayats are covered under watershed management programme. 94.6% of funds received are utilised for the various promotional and implementation activities of Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP). In district Shimla integrated watershed management programme, the work of institutional development and capacity building is very slow and not upto mark of guideline of ministry of rural

development. In district Shimla watershed project work is in better position including blocks Theog, Basantpur, Mashobra, Rampur and Narkanda. Monitoring and evaluation is also upto mark in these blocks. Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) starts working later in Chopal, Rohru and Jubbel blocks of district Shimla. Public participation in implementation of watershed work is also very poor in Chopal, Rohru and Jubbel blocks. Awareness campaign and training programmes are not properly organised in these blocks to accelerate the progress of watershed work.

Eight Watershed projects are running in the 3 blocks of Kinnaur district. 45 panchayats are covered under the Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP). Total treatable area under watershed programme is 23500 hectare with total project cost of 3525 lakhs. 77.7% of funds received are utilised for the watershed projects in district Kinnaur. Progress of IWMP in Kinnaur district is slow as compare to other districts of Himachal Pradesh. Due to implementation of integrated watershed management programme in district Kinnaur, small farmers, marginal farmers, landless and BPL families are getting benefit of employment. Three batch of watershed programmes are running in three blocks of district Kinnaur. Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) including Plan foundation, Sadguru foundation, Hind Swaraj Trust are working for awareness of watershed, management of watershed, training and skill development of watershed programmes. Gram panchayats are playing very significant role in the implementation of integrated watershed management programmes. Public awareness and public participation is major requirement for successful implementation of IWMP.

#### i) Status of Integrated Watershed Management Programme in Hamirpur District

In Hamirpur district there 229 Gram Panchayat out of which 135 Gram Panchayats are covered under Integrated Watershed Management Programme of rural development. Total cost of IWMP in Hamirpur district is 6039.65 lakhs & amount received for IWMP till April 2015 is 3665.21 Lacks. 60.7% of project cost of IWMP in Hamirpur district has been received which is very high as compare to amount received in other district of Himachal Pradesh. Majority of projects of IWMP are in progress and delay in proceeding is due to delay in amount received for projects.

#### II) Status of Integrated Watershed Management Programmes (IWMD) in Shimla District

In Shimla district there are 363 Gram Panchayats out of which 224 Gram Panchayats are covered under IWMP of rural development. First project of integrated watershed management programme in Shimla district started in 1999 in Mashobra block, which is now completed. 61.7% Gram Panchayats of Shimla district are covered under integrated watershed management programme. Total costs of projects proceeding in Shimla district is 24916.6 lacks, out of which only 6963.95 lacks are received till April 2015. Only 29.95% of amount is received for implementation of project work. Majority of projects in district Shimla are in very poor status due to non-availability of funds & poor technical support from department of rural development. 34 projects of integrated watershed management programme (IWMP) are proceeding in 10 blocks of Shimla district. Process of monitoring &

evaluation of watershed programmes is also very poor and slow due to non-availability of funds in time. Institutional development and capacity building phase in watershed programme in Shimla district is also very poor & at slow rate for implementation of project work.

**III) Status of Integrated Watershed Management programme (IWMP) in Kinnaur District**

In district Kinnaur there are 65 Gram Panchayats out of which 45 Gram Panchayat are covered under integrated watershed management programme. Eight projects are sanctioned in district Kinnaur. Integrated watershed management

programme starts working in district Kinnaur in 2009-10. IWMP starts working in district Kinnaur very late as compare to other district of Himachal Pradesh. Stake holders of watershed are not participating in development of programme as per the requirement of project. Public participation in watershed projects is also very poor due to poor training & capacity building programmes. Total cost of 8 projects in district Kinnaur is 3526 lacks. Amount received for IWMP in district Kinnaur is 723.23 lacks i.e. only 20.76% of total cost of projects. Due to delay in allotment of funds, the cost of the project also become high which decline the quality of project work.

**4.2 Role of IWMP in Poverty Alleviations in Rural Areas**

**Table 1.1:** Role of IWMP in poverty alleviations in Himachal Pradesh

IWMP		Hamirpur		Shimla		Kinnaur	
		N	%age	N	%age	N	%age
Improvement in Irrigation System	Yes	82	82	76	76	60	80
	No	18	18	24	24	15	20
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Increase in production of agriculture and horticulture	Yes	87	87	78	78	55	73.33
	No	13	13	22	22	20	26.67
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100
Positive impact on Income	Yes	81	81	88	88	62	82.67
	No	19	19	12	12	13	17.33
	Total	100	100	100	100	75	100

Source: Primary Survey conducted on role of IWMP in poverty Alleviations

The scheme IWMP played significant role in poverty alleviation in Himachal Pradesh as survey was conducted to assess the improvement in irrigation, increase in agriculture production and positive impact on the income of people. The most of people in all the three districts responded positively that this scheme has made positive improvements in all the above mentions indicators. In Hamirpur, about 82 percent responded positively that this scheme has made significant improvements in irrigation system. In Shimla about 76 percent respondents reported that IWMP played significant role in improving the irrigation system of the district. In Kinnaur Districts about 80 percent respondents stated in favour of it.

In similar manner, most of respondents stated that IWMP scheme has made significant improvements in agriculture and horticulture production. In Hamirpur, about 87 percent responded positively that this scheme has made significant improvements in in agriculture and horticulture production. In Shimla about 78 percent respondents reported that IWMP played significant role in improving the in agriculture and horticulture production of the district. In Kinnaur Districts about 73 percent respondents stated in favour of it.

The most of respondents also believe that IWMP has made significant improvement on the income part. In Hamirpur, about 81 percent respondents accepted the fact that IWMP has made significant impacts in the improvements of their household’s income. In Shimla, about 88 percent made such claims that this scheme has made significant impacts in improving their household’s income. Similarly in Kinnaur district, about 83 percent responded in its favour.

Integrated watershed management programme is very fruitful in the hilly state like Himachal Pradesh. Ground water level is improving in the watershed implemented areas. Technical

support is very poor as per information received from the beneficiaries of the scheme.

**5. Conclusion**

Watershed programme is an opportunity for development of water resources, treating degraded lands, improving groundwater level and starting new irrigation schemes in Himachal Pradesh. 80% beneficiaries of watershed projects told that there is increase in production of agriculture and horticulture in Himachal Pradesh. Income of farmers in watershed areas is increasing due to more productivity in agriculture and horticulture. As discussed with coordinators of watershed projects, technical support is very poor in implementation of programme. Availability of funds is not in time which is major Obstacle in the success of watershed projects in Himachal Pradesh. New heights can be achieved if technical support and funds are provided in time to watershed projects.

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