

AN ANALYSIS OF POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES IN THE POST-REFORM PERIOD IN HARYANA

Rashmi and Dr. Karan Singh

Department of Economics,

Baba Mastnath University, Asthal Bohar, Rohtak, Haryana

dr.gdg1985@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

In 1991, India embarked on a journey of economic liberalization that introduced sweeping changes to its economic policies, aimed at integrating the Indian economy with the global market. These changes included deregulation, privatization of various sectors, and an opening up to foreign investments, leading to significant economic growth. However, the distribution of benefits from these reforms was uneven across different regions and demographics. Haryana, in response to the rapid industrial growth and resultant challenges, implemented a series of state and central government programs to alleviate poverty and improve social welfare. These initiatives, such as the Public Distribution System (PDS), Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), aimed at enhancing social security, employment opportunities, and living conditions. Despite notable successes, these programs faced challenges such as corruption, inefficiency, and a lack of accessibility, highlighting the complex dynamics of policy implementation in diverse settings.

Keywords: Economic Liberalization, Poverty Alleviation, Public Distribution System, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

INTRODUCTION

In 1991, India introduced significant economic changes aimed at transforming its economy and connecting it more closely with the global market. These changes included reducing government regulation, privatizing many sectors, and opening up to foreign trade and investment. According to a study by Ahluwalia (2002), these reforms led to rapid economic growth and widespread industrial development. However, not everyone benefited equally, and there were notable differences in how different regions and social groups experienced these benefits.

The state of Haryana, which saw significant industrial growth and urbanization, implemented specific programs to help those who were negatively affected. According to Kumar and Gupta (2013), Haryana developed several state

and central government initiatives aimed at reducing poverty and improving social welfare. These programs focused on both rural and urban areas, providing social security, better job opportunities, and improved living conditions for the less fortunate.

For example, the Public Distribution System (PDS) in Haryana has been essential in ensuring that the poor have enough food, which is crucial given the state's agricultural economy that can be affected by changes in weather and market conditions. This was highlighted in a 2021 report by the Government of Haryana.

Additionally, national programs like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) have guaranteed 100 days of paid work each year to rural households, which has helped them financially and contributed to the development of lasting community assets. The Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY), mentioned in a 2020 report by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, has been vital in providing affordable housing in urban areas, aiming to improve living conditions and reduce slums. Despite these initiatives, the programs have faced several challenges. Problems such as corruption, inefficiency, and the failure to reach those most in need have often undermined their success. this paper presents an analysis of poverty alleviation programmes in the post-reform period in Haryana.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology for this study involved collecting data through a detailed questionnaire during the fiscal year 2022-2023, focusing on various districts in Haryana to capture the socio-economic diversity of the region. The questionnaire was designed to assess public perceptions of the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs and was distributed in hard copy to ensure it reached a wide audience, including those in remote or less technologically equipped areas. This method was chosen to facilitate a thorough and inclusive data collection process.

The sample was stratified to represent the diverse demographic landscape of Haryana, including different genders, occupations, educational backgrounds, household incomes, marital statuses, and household sizes. This stratification ensured that the data reflected a broad spectrum of experiences and viewpoints, essential for understanding the public's engagement with government initiatives aimed at reducing poverty.

In total, 209 respondents participated in the survey, with a nearly balanced gender distribution of 109 males and 100 females, enhancing the study's ability to perform a gender-sensitive analysis. The respondents' occupational backgrounds varied widely, including unemployed, self-employed, homemakers, students, employed, and retired individuals. This occupational diversity provided valuable insights into how different employment statuses affect perceptions and interactions with poverty alleviation programs, highlighting the direct impact of economic stability and resource access on the effectiveness of these initiatives.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Demographic Analysis

The demographic analysis conducted for the fiscal year 2022-2023 surveyed various districts of Haryana, aiming to understand the socio-economic conditions affecting public perceptions of poverty alleviation programs. A comprehensive questionnaire was distributed manually in hard copy to ensure broad accessibility, targeting a representative stratified sample of the state's diverse population. This approach captured a range of demographic variables including gender, occupation, education level, household income, marital status, and household size.

The data gathered from 209 respondents reveals a nearly balanced gender distribution with 109 males and 100 females, offering insights into different societal experiences and enabling a gender-sensitive analysis. The occupational diversity included unemployed, self-employed, homemakers, students, employed, and retired individuals, reflecting varying economic activities and engagement levels in the workforce. Such diversity is crucial for understanding the effectiveness of poverty alleviation programs across different economic statuses.

Table 1: Overview of Demographic Characteristics

Description	Details
Total Respondents	209
Gender Distribution	Males: 109, Females: 100
Occupational Diversity	Unemployed, Self-employed, Homemakers, Students, Employed, Retired
Educational Levels	From no formal education to postgraduate studies
Household Income Range	₹10,000 to ₹50,000 per month
Household Sizes	From single individuals to large families
Marital Status Categories	Single, Married, Divorced, Widowed

This table 1 encapsulates the key demographic attributes of the participants, providing a snapshot of the socio-economic factors that influence public engagement with government initiatives aimed at reducing poverty. The diversity observed in the sample highlights the importance of tailoring poverty alleviation efforts to address the varied needs and conditions within the community, ensuring that these initiatives are effective and inclusive.

Awareness and Perception Analysis

Table 2 offers insights into the community's views on poverty alleviation programs, based on feedback from 209 respondents. The data highlights a positive perception and broad agreement on the effectiveness and necessity of these initiatives. A notable 43 respondents explicitly acknowledge being well-informed about these programs, indicating good public awareness.

However, responses reveal mixed feelings about the accessibility of these programs. While there is general satisfaction with the benefits received and the support provided by these initiatives, as evidenced by 55 respondents affirming personal or family benefits, the accessibility and the ability to leverage these programs effectively show

room for improvement. This is seen in the frequent 'Somewhat Agree' responses regarding ease of access to the programs.

The survey also reflects strong approval of specific impacts like employment creation, education, health, and infrastructure improvements, with many willing to recommend these programs to others. Yet, there's a call for more robust outcomes in employment opportunities and sustained benefits, highlighting areas where further enhancements could be made.

In conclusion, while the community appreciates the efforts and impacts of poverty alleviation programs, there is a clear desire for better accessibility, effectiveness, and sustainability. These insights are pivotal for refining and advancing these programs to more effectively meet the needs of the population.

Table 2: Awareness and Perception Analysis Summary

Statement	Count	Unique Responses	Most Agreed Response	Frequency of Top Response
Awareness of Programs	209	7	Agree	43
Importance for Reducing Poverty	209	7	Agree	40
Government Efforts	209	7	Agree	45
Knowledge on Access	209	7	Somewhat Agree	44
Accessibility to Those in Need	209	7	Agree	49
Benefit from Programs	209	7	Agree	55
Creation of Employment Opportunities	207	7	Somewhat Agree	47
Recommendation of Programs	209	7	Agree	45
Effectiveness of Employment Programs	209	7	Agree	50
Sustainability of Benefits	209	7	Agree	43

Experience and Impact Analysis

Table 3 presents a focused analysis of 209 respondents' experiences and the impacts of poverty alleviation programs, highlighting significant real-life outcomes. A notable 55 out of 209 respondents have confirmed benefiting directly from these programs, indicating a tangible positive effect on the living conditions of the targeted demographic. This outcome is a critical measure of success for any social initiative designed to mitigate poverty.

However, the feedback on improvements in living standards presents a more nuanced picture, with the majority, 43 respondents, indicating 'Somewhat Agree'. This response suggests that while benefits are recognized, they may not be as comprehensive or impactful as expected, pointing to areas where program design and delivery might be enhanced.

Satisfaction with the support received is paralleled by the initial affirmation of benefit, with another 55 respondents expressing satisfaction, emphasizing the effectiveness of these programs. Yet, employment creation, a key

component for sustainable poverty alleviation, received a cautious 'Somewhat Agree' from 47 respondents, signaling room for growth in this crucial area.

Moreover, the analysis shows a positive impact on education and health services access, with 44 and 51 respondents agreeing, respectively, underlining significant strides in these essential areas. Lastly, the willingness to recommend these programs, affirmed by 45 respondents, reflects a trust and endorsement of the initiatives' value.

Table 3: Experience and Impact Analysis Summary

Statement	Count	Unique Responses	Most Agreed Response	Frequency of Top Response
Benefited from Programs	209	7	Agree	55
Improved Living Standard	209	7	Somewhat Agree	43
Satisfaction with Support	209	7	Agree	55
Employment Opportunities Created	207	7	Somewhat Agree	47
Improved Education Access	209	7	Agree	44
Improved Health Services	208	7	Agree	51
Recommend Programs	209	7	Agree	45

Evaluation of Programmes Analysis

Table 4 presents a comprehensive evaluation of various poverty alleviation programs, based on feedback from 209 respondents. This feedback is crucial for understanding the effectiveness and overall impact of these initiatives on community development and individual well-being.

The Rural House Programme, designed to enhance living conditions, received positive evaluations, with 48 respondents affirming its effectiveness. This highlights the program's significant role in improving life quality for beneficiaries, underlining its contribution to overall well-being.

Employment programs, which are pivotal for economic stability and reducing unemployment, also garnered strong support, with 50 participants acknowledging their effectiveness in job creation. This feedback underscores the vital role these initiatives play in facilitating employment opportunities and contributing to economic development.

Similarly, Sanitation Programs, aimed at improving health and hygiene, received favorable feedback with 48 affirmations of their impact. This consensus reflects the critical importance of sanitation in enhancing health, particularly in underserved areas, and its direct relationship to poverty reduction.

Infrastructure Programs also received positive reviews, with 50 respondents recognizing their role in enhancing local infrastructure, indicating successful community development and accessibility improvements that support other poverty alleviation efforts.

However, the fair distribution of benefits from these programs saw a slightly lower agreement level, with 43 respondents acknowledging this aspect. While still positive, this indicates potential areas for improvement in ensuring equity and inclusivity, which are essential for the success and acceptance of these initiatives.

Significant reduction of community poverty due to these programs was acknowledged by 50 respondents, affirming the core objective of these efforts. This indicates effective strides in addressing the root causes of poverty.

Lastly, the sustainability of program benefits, agreed upon by 43 respondents, suggests a need for ongoing evaluation and adaptation to ensure long-term impact, critical for the enduring success of these initiatives.

Table 4: Evaluation of Programs Analysis Summary

Statement	Count	Unique Responses	Most Agreed Response	Frequency of Top Response
Effective Improvement in Living Conditions by Rural House Programme	209	7	Agree	48
Employment Programs Creating Jobs	209	7	Agree	50
Health and Hygiene Improvement by Sanitation Programs	209	7	Agree	48
Enhancement of Local Infrastructure by Infrastructure Programs	208	7	Agree	50
Fair Distribution of Program Benefits	209	7	Agree	43
Significant Reduction of Poverty by Programs	208	7	Agree	50
Sustainability of Benefits from Programs	209	7	Agree	43

CONCLUSIONS

The economic reforms initiated in India in 1991 have led to significant economic growth and industrialization, particularly evident in Haryana. This state has experienced profound changes due to these reforms, including increased industrialization and urbanization. To mitigate the adverse effects of these rapid developments, Haryana implemented several targeted programs aimed at reducing poverty and enhancing the welfare of its citizens. Initiatives such as the PDS, MGNREGA, and PMAY have been pivotal in providing essential services like food security, employment, and housing, respectively. These programs have significantly contributed to improving the living standards of the disadvantaged populations within the state. However, the implementation of these initiatives has not been without challenges. Issues such as corruption, inefficiency, and accessibility have occasionally undermined the effectiveness of these poverty alleviation efforts. Despite these obstacles, the programs have generally been successful in their objectives, but there is a clear need for continual assessment and refinement. Ensuring the effectiveness and reach of these programs requires addressing the systemic issues that hamper their implementation. Furthermore, the state's approach underscores the importance of adapting social welfare policies to the specific needs and conditions of the local populations to achieve the desired outcomes effectively. The experience of Haryana serves as a valuable case study in the ongoing efforts to harmonize economic development with social welfare in the context of post-liberalization India.

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