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Success Status of Government Development Programmes: An Experience from Cooch Behar District,West Bengal, India

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Abstract - **Based on the demographic data of 2001 census, a total number of *4,612* revenue villages have been identified by the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Govt. of West Bengal, India as the most backward in the state. Cooch Behar (one of the sub Himalayan district of the said state) also had declared 52 (fifty two) villages as backward in two consecutive phases. Some extra developmental impetus had been given in those villages to facilitate growth and prosperity. The present investigation was undertaken in the backward villages of Cooch Behar District of West Bengal (India) to study the success status of government development programmes running in the villages. A sample of 10% families was taken randomly for the study. Besides analyzing the secondary data obtained from ICDS projects (Integrated Child Development Project) and village Panchayat, an index called Composite Success Index (CSI) was developed for assessing the present status of success of the development programmes undertaken by the government agencies. The study revealed that the success of development programmes were low to medium in most of the villages. It is also revealed that success status is more where backwardness is more i.e. more backward villages achieved more success with respect to implementation of different development programmes.**

Keywords: **Development Programmes, Composite Success Index, Backward Villages, Backwardness Index**

I. Introduction

Backwardness is a perceived state in developmental dynamics and while aspiring for a balanced growth countries adopt a strategic way to reduce the former through developmental works. Likely while the government of India takes various pro developmental programmes throughout the country there emerges a need to identify the most vulnerable zone to concentrate the activities. In various attempts to determine backward areas in the country, different committees set by the Planning Commission of India taken the districts as a unit of assessment. But, the first West Bengal Human Development Report, 2004 revealed that the picture within a district was not a uniform one. There existed grave inter- village disparities due to which the residents of some of the villages were largely deprived, measured by their low levels of economic progress and human development. To locate the areas where people in the lowest ranks of Human Development Index reside in West Bengal, various queries were run on the Census 2001 demographic data. As a result, a total number of 4,612 revenue villages have been identified by the Panchayat and Rural Development Department, Govt. of West Bengal in 2004 as being the most backward in the state. These identified backward villages are spread over 1140 Gram Panchayats [out of a total of 3354 Gram Panchayets(GPs)], and in 245 Blocks (out of a total of 341 Blocks) in the state (Annonymous, 2009). Cooch Behar district also had declared 52 (fifty two) villages [3 villages are uninhabitated at the time of survey] of this district (out of 1190, spread over 32 GPs in 12 Blocks) as backward in two consecutive phases. A study was initiated and facilitated by the District Development Cell of Cooch Behar district, West Bengal during November, 2007 to January 2008 in all the backward villages of this district to update the status of backward villages of Cooch Behar district on developmental scale. Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya (North Bengal Agricultural University, West Bengal, India), the only University of the district, acted as the monitoring institute for this study. Some extra developmental impetus has also been given in those villages to facilitate growth and prosperity. The present study was an extension of investigation based on that database with the following objectives:

1. To assess the success status of selected government development programmes in the backward villages of the district;
2. To assess whether concentration of development efforts was done according to the backwardness of the villages *viz.* to assess the relationship if any between backwardness and success status of the selected development programmes of backward villages.

II. Methodology

A. *Collection of Data*

A team of experts from different academic institutions present in the district were engaged for this purpose. Analysis was done based on primary data generated from sample survey and secondary data as available from Panchayet, Block and District Census Cell. Tools like Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) and Nominal Group Technique (NGT) were employed while interacting with the villagers.

B. *Measuring Indicators*

To identify backward areas, the Planning Commission of India in its previous investigations considered the district as the smallest unit for study (Nyyar, 1992; Govt. of India, 1980 and 1997). But on the light of 2004 Human Development Report of West Bengal, Department of Panchayet and Rural Development, Government of West Bengal considered a village as the smallest unit of investigation and used female literacy (percentage of literate female population) and percentage of marginal and non-worker people as proxy indicators for backwardness for calculation of backwardness based on the available village level data from Census Report, 2001 (Annonymous, 2009). Based on these indicators, backwardness was measured in this study as follows:

$$\text{Backwardness Index (BI)} = \frac{(100 - X) + Y}{2 \times 100}$$

Where, X= Female literacy (percentage of literate female population).

and, Y= Percentage of marginal and non-worker people of total workable population.

C. *Backwardness Category*

BI Value	Level
>0.66	Highly backward
0.34 – 0.66	Moderately backward
<0.34	Marginally backward

Government development programmes under the purview of Food and Social Security, Infrastructural Development, Health and Sanitation, Child Development and In-Situ Job Opportunity were taken into account for comparison. To measure the success of the programmes, another index called Composite Success Index (CSI) was developed in this study. CSI has been measured and categorized as indicated in Table I.

Table I Indicators, Scale Values And Sub-indices Adopted To Calculate Csi

Programme Purview (Code)	Indicators	Measure	Scale Value Adopted	Sub-Index
Food and Social Security (FSS)	Accessibility to food security scheme (Annapurna Yojana)	Percentage of people getting benefit out of eligible people.	100 % taken as 1.	FSS Success Index = Average of scale values of all indicators
	Accessibility to social security scheme (National Old Age Pension Scheme	- do -	- do -	
Infrastructural Development (ID)	Provision of dwelling units (Indira Awas Yojana)	- do -	- do -	ID Success Index = Average of scale values of all indicators
	Road condition	Road covered by Black top (B), Gravel (G), Kuccha (K)	K=0.5; K+G=0.6; K+B=0.7; K+G+B=0.8; G+B=0.9; B=1.0	
	Power access	Percentage of people getting electricity	100 % taken as 1.	
	Creation of drinking water facilities	Percentage people getting quality drinking water (Tube well / PHE).	- do -	
Health and Sanitation (HS)	Implementation of Total Sanitation Campaign	Percentage people having hygienic latrine	- do -	HS Success Index = Average of scale values of all indicators
	Immunisation campaign	Immunization Percentage	- do -	
Child Literacy and Nutrition (CLN)	Functioning of ICDS Centre	Percentage of people satisfied with their service.	- do -	CLN Success Index = Average of scale values of all indicators
	Retention of girl students in primary education	Percentage of girls retained out of admitted	- do-	
	Functioning of Mid Day meal	Access to Mid day Meal	Yes=1, No=0	
In-Situ Job Opportunity (JO)	Status of NREGA	Percentage of people satisfied with NREGA functioning	100 % taken as 1	JO Success Index = Average of indicator scale value
Composite Success Index (CSI) = Weighted average of FSS Index, ID Index, HS Index, CD Index and JO Index (in this study all sub-indices are given equivalent weight)				

D. ***Success Category***

CSI value	Success level
>0.67	Highly successful
0.34 – 0.66	Moderately successful
<0.34	Marginally successful

CSI=1 indicates full success and CSI=0 indicates no success

III. Results And Discussion

A. ***Status of Backward Villages on Development Scale***

The average backwardness index value of Cooch Behar villages is 0.59 (Table II). Inter block comparison reveals that the backwardness of villages in Cooch Behar-II, Dinhata-I, Tufanganj-I, Mathabhanga-I & II and Mekhliganj are more than the district average. In this regard blocks like Sitai, Sitalkuchi, Haldibari, Cooch Behar-I and Dinhata-II ranks in lower range comparatively with the formal group. From baseline data, it is seen that, in case of Tufanganj & Sitalkuchi, Sitai & Mekhliganj the backwardness has been confronted by women literacy while for the blocks like Dinhata-I & Mathabhanga-I, the combating support comes from new employment.

B. ***Success Status of Government Development Programmes***

Performance of government aided developmental programmes taken in the said backward villages as measured by Composite Success Index (CSI) scale has been explained in Table III. The two digit decimal figure may be perceived as their respective acquire in percentile scale. CSI value 0.34 means that the village acquires 34% success out of target of 100.

Table II Status of Backwardness of The Backward Villages In The District

Sl.No.	Name of the Block	Total no. of villages	No. of Backward Villages*	No. of backward villages under**			BI-Value		
				Highly Backward	Moderately Backward	Marginally Backward	Range	S.D.	Mean
1	Cooch Behar-I	149	3 (2.01)	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	0	0.37-0.75	0.202	0.52
2	Cooch Behar-II	119	4 (3.36)	2 (50.00)	2 (50.00)	0	0.58-0.75	0.187	0.66
3	Dinhata-I	135	5 (3.70)	1 (20.00)	4 (80.00)	0	0.61-0.67	0.024	0.64
4	Dinhata-II	119	1 (0.84)	0	1 (100.00)	0	NA	NA	0.42
5	Haldibari	62	5 (8.06)	0	5 (100.00)	0	0.34-0.57	0.096	0.49
6	Mathabhanga-I	102	6 (5.88)	0	6 (100.00)	0	0.54-0.65	0.043	0.62
7	Mathabhanga-II	93	1 (1.06)	1 (100.00)	0	0	NA	NA	0.69
8	Mekhliganj	154	10 (6.49)	4 (40.00)	6 (60.00)	0	0.55-0.75	0.066	0.65
9	Sitai	53	6 (11.32)	0	6 (100.00)	0	0.43-0.54	0.040	0.51
10	Sitalkuchi	72	4 (5.56)	1 (25.00)	3 (75.00)	0	0.61-0.67	0.101	0.56
11	Tufanganj-I	77	3 (3.90)	2 (66.67)	1 (33.33)	0	0.65-0.70	0.025	0.68
12	Tufanganj-II	55	1 (1.82)	0	1 (100.00)	0	NA	NA	0.56
District		1190	49 (4.12)	12 (24.49)	37 (75.51)	0 (0.00)	0.34-**0.75**	0.099	0.59

Data source: Primary Survey during 2007-2008 villages are uninhabitated at the time of survey

*Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage of total villages

** Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage of total backward villages

As per the table, the CSI value for 49 villages dispersed over 12 blocks ranges between 0.16 and 0.54. It means that there is wide variation in executing and thereby acquiring the goal while implementing developmental programmes for augmenting socio-economic status of the said villages duly. Even the maximiser could achieve only moderate success. On the other hand 23 villages (46.94% of total) could not even cross the lower bar of CSI value fixed on 0.33 marks. Other 26 villages (53.06% of total) may be regarded as considerable lot of moderators achieved CSI ranges between 0.34 and 0.54.

It is pertinent to note that in general the performance of governmental programmes in the backward villages of Cooch Behar district is not impressive. And here lies the requirement of special drive to improve the same not only by the way of mere sanctioning of new fund or programme but some strategic governance procedure is to be taken care of to fulfill the goal. Villages nearer to Indo-Bangladesh borders (block-Sitai, Mekhliganj and Sitalkuchi suffer more.

An inter-block comparison of average CSI value reveals that Cooch Behar-II is the best performer [4 villages, all closed to CSI value 0.50 (range between 0.58 and 0.75)] whereas Sitalkuchi is the poorest (4 villages, 3 ranks CSI value below 0.33). It is to note that two villages of Cooch Behar-II block namely Multiguri and Ghierhari has been visited by the Hon'ble Governor of the state in recent past when massive developmental works was carried out by the district authority. However, due to lack of follow up programmes CSI value has been eroded over time. On the other hand, villages of Sitalkuchi belong to Indo-Bangladesh border (far away from district head quarter) and the population exists with typical agro-pastoral rural cult. In reality, the developmental programmes find little way to reach this place partly because of remoteness along with low social voice of stakeholders.

TABLE III SUCCESS STATUS OF DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES IN THE BACKWARD VILLAGES OF THE DISTRICT

Sl. No.	Name of the Block	Frequency of villages under different success categories based on CSI-value			Success under different programme purview					CSI-Value		
		Highly successful	Moderately successful	Marginally successful	ID Index	FSS Index	HS Index	CLN Index	JO Index	Range	S.D.	Mean
1	Cooch Behar-I	0	1 (33.33)	2 (66.67)	0.22	0.10	0.79	0.54	0.08	0.31-0.40	0.049	0.34
2	Cooch Behar-II	0	4 (100.00)	0	0.47	0.08	0.87	0.75	0.32	0.48-0.53	0.140	0.50
3	Dinhata-I	0	4 (80.00)	1 (20.00)	0.34	0.03	0.79	0.42	0.28	0.16-0.54	0.136	0.37
4	Dinhata-II	0	1 (100.00)	0	0.24	0.15	0.87	0.44	0.00	NA	NA	0.34
5	Haldibari	0	2 (40.00)	3 (60.00)	0.23	0.09	0.50	0.62	0.29	0.28-0.45	0.063	0.35
6	Mathabhanga-I	0	5 (83.33)	1 (16.67)	0.46	0.00	0.66	0.58	0.25	0.33-0.48	0.066	0.39
7	Mathabhanga-II	0	1 (100.00)	0	0.50	0.00	0.90	0.80	0.20	NA	NA	0.50
8	Mekhliganj	0	2 (20.00)	8 (80.00)	0.27	0.07	0.54	0.42	0.29	0.24-0.38	0.035	0.32
9	Sitai	0	1 (16.67)	5 (83.33)	0.25	0.14	0.67	0.45	0.06	0.25-0.38	0.042	0.31
10	Sitalkuchi	0	1 (25.00)	3 (75.00)	0.21	0.18	0.60	0.41	0.11	0.24-0.41	0.076	0.30
11	Tufanganj-I	0	3 (100.00)	0	0.46	0.03	0.65	0.81	0.22	0.40-0.48	0.042	0.43
12	Tufanganj-II	0	1 (100.00)	0	0.53	0.05	0.90	0.33	0.29	NA	NA	0.42
District		0 (0.00)	26 (53.06)	23 (46.94)	0.32	0.08	0.67	0.53	0.22	0.16-0.54	0.083	0.36

Data source: Primary Survey during 2009-2010

*Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage of total villages

** Figures in the parenthesis indicate percentage of total backward villages

NB. ID Index=Infrastructural Development Index; FSS Index=Food and Social Security Index; HS Index=Health and Sanitation Index; CLN Index=Child Literacy and Nutrition Index; JO Index=In-situ Job Opportunity Index.

For assessing the performance of Government programmes, the later has been clubbed into five groups namely Infrastructure Development (ID), Food and Social Security (FSS), Health and Sanitation (HS), Child Literacy and Nutrition (CLN) and In-Situ Job Opportunity (JO). The overall success index value of Infrastructure Development of the district is 0.32 (out of 1.00) indicates poor success. The same performance is observed for programmes like Food and Social Security (0.08), In-Situ Job Opportunity (0.22). Programmes on Health and Sanitation achieved highest score (0.67) followed by Child Literacy and Nutrition programmes (0.53). The overall composite value (CSI) of the given five category programmes is 0.36 for the district indicating medium achievement as a whole.

The block level disintegration of the given data reveals that out of 12 blocks, only five blocks namely, Cooch Behar-II (0.47), Mathabhanga-I & II (0.46 and 0.50 respectively) and Tufanganj-I & II (0.46 and 0.53 respectively) could achieve moderate performance in providing infrastructural assistance to backward villages. In context of the food and social security, the programmes failed to attain any success. However in context of the performances on Health and Sanitation, people all over the district received due benefit. One of the perceived reason behind this success may be the existence of stable health service networks (through ICDS programmes by WHO) observed functional throughout the year. Achievement on Child Literacy and Nutrition programmes do also deserve appreciation and 25% blocks could achieved good success (above 0.66 index value) followed by medium success by others. The acknowledgement again goes in the favour of ICDS providers as because of their intensive coverage even upto the said remote villages of the district. Regarding assurance of job under NREGA programme the said district could not break its functional inertia till the date. On the basis of the composite performance of given five programme groups block level performance of Government programmes could achieve moderate success that is confirmed from numerical index value of respective blocks.

C. *Correlation Between Backwardness and Success Status of Development Programmes*

The correlation between backwardness index (BI-values) and success of government programmes in the said area (CSI) reveals that only programmes under infrastructure (ID) and in-situ job opportunity (JO) have significant positive correlation (r=0.374** at p=0.05 and r=0.232* at p=0.1) with backwardness (Table IV). From these findings, it is once again established that these two programmes should be given basic priority while scheduling for any developmental activities in backward areas. Programmes like food and social security (FSS) is negatively correlated (r=-0.321** at p=0.05) with backwardness. The result confirmed the poor execution of the said programmes among the backward villages by executing authority. The failure may have aggravated vulnerability of the poor. The two most successful programmes like Health and Sanitation (HS) and Child Literacy and Nutrition (CLN) have no significant correlation with backwardness.

Table IV Correlation Between Success Indices Of Differen t Development Programmes And Backwardness

Sl. No.	Programme Purview	r-value
1	Infrastructure development	0.374**
2	Food and social security	-0.321**
3	Health and sanitation	0.033NS
4	Child literacy and nutrition	0.083NS
5	In-situ Job opportunity	0.268*
6	Overall CSI-value	0.232*

*p=0.1 **p=0.05 NS = Non-Significant

However, in general, in relation to the most of the programmes, success status (CSI-value) and backwardness have a significant positive correlation (except in case of food and social security programmes) indicates that the implementing agency had given due attention to backwardness when concentrated their developmental efforts to these backward villages.

IV. Conclusion

It is noteworthy to mention that basic livelihood of peoples of Cooch Behar district of West Bengal, India still depends on primary sector that thrives mainly upon natural resource base. Due to demographic upsurge per capita availability of such resources are decreasing and thereby parity between job seekers and job opportunity become destabilized. There is limited scope of augmenting this situation only by increasing cropping intensity which again will face deterrence from poor market demand. However there remain ample pace for driving this surplus workforce towards other service sectors at least as wage earner. This can be done either by in situ job creation or by outward migration but before redressing that, capacity building is a prerequisite for the villagers of this backward area. In absence of in situ scope, the able villagers adopt seasonal migration to participate the job market elsewhere in the country. According to capacity and willingness, villagers of backward villages now migrate to other blocks, other districts even to other state also. However from the social stability point of view it needs to create in situ job for them.

For this, an array of diversified job opportunity is to be tried within the village fringe which is also a challenging task in this agro based region. To address the problem of backwardness through developmental programmes, Government needs to be selective and proactive. Special emphasis is to be given for developing infrastructure and creation of in-situ job opportunity. Again programmes like Food and Social security should not be denied rather target oriented achievement is likely to be ensured under the said schemes. Besides that, befitting monitoring is required for securing the execution of basic assistant programmes like Food and Social security.

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