

Impact Evaluation of Special Central Assistance (SCA) on Horticulture Development of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Farmers in Himachal Pradesh

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Abstract-The Special Central Assistance (SCA) was conceptualized to provide an added thrust to the scheduled castes Sub- Plan (SCSP) and Tribal Sub- Plan (TSP) in order to accelerate socio-economic development of the SC and ST categories. The main objective of SCA to SCSP and TSP is to give a thrust to family oriented schemes of economic development of SCs/STs with reference to their occupational pattern and the need for increasing the productivity of and income from their limited resources as well as by providing resources for filling the critical gaps and for providing missing vital inputs so that the scheme can be more meaningful. Similarly, resource inadequacy affecting the implementation of various schemes/ programmes under Tribal Sub- Plan had prompted the Government of India to supplement the efforts of the State Government by extending SCA as an additive to the state TSP. The scheme called SCA to TSP and SCSP was launched in 1977-78 to bridge the resource gap for the implementation of SC/ST schemes. Thus, in order to bridge the economic disparity between farmers of tribal and non-tribal areas and also between general categories and SC/ST farmers, Government of India has providing a special grant in the form of SCA to Tribal Sub- Plan. The SCA scheme has been implemented in villages having 50 per cent or more ST population and 100 or more ST persons in non-scheduled areas. After the implementation of SCA for more than

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35 years it is now necessary to evaluate whether the assistance has been able to fulfill the objectives for which it was implemented or not.

Keywords: Profile of SCA, Impact of SCA on horticulture development of SC/ST farmers, Assistance or benefits received by SC/ST farmers, Constraints faced in availing the benefits by those farmers and their suggestions for the betterment of programme implementation.

Introduction-Agriculture is the main occupation of the people of Himachal Pradesh and as one of the important activities of state economy and this sector of economy, which comprises agriculture, horticulture and livestock production accounts for the largest single share in the gross state domestic product. About 15 per cent of the total GSDP comes from agriculture and its allied sectors. The state is characterized by a significant number of opportunities in production/cultivation of high value agricultural commodities. The state's agriculture is dominated by high value horticulture commodities, which accounts for about 44 per cent of the cropped area and contribute about 48 per cent of agricultural Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Horticulture in the state has been responsible for many of the positive outcomes in employment, wages, and in turn, poverty reduction. Notwithstanding the significant potential of horticulture production in state to contribute to higher economic growth and poverty reduction objectives, the state faces a number of sectoral, institutional and policy challenges which need to be addressed systematically if the potential is to be realized and translated into a sustainable development impact. The scheme called SCA to TSP and SCSP was launched in 1977-78 to bridge the resource gap for the implementation of SC/ST schemes. Thus, in order to bridge the economic disparity between farmers of tribal and non-tribal areas and also between general categories and SC/ST farmers, Government of India has providing a special grant in the form of SCA to Tribal Sub- Plan.

Objectives: The present research paper is based on these following objectives i.e.

- 1) To analyze the impact of Special Central Assistance on Horticulture Development on income and living standard of SC and ST farmers in the region under study.
- 2) To study the assistance and benefits received by SC and ST farmers under SCA on horticulture development and constraints faced by them in

receiving that assistance under the programme and suggest policy measures to overcome these constraints in the selected districts of the state.

Methodology

This research paper is based on the secondary as well as primary data collected during the year, 2016. The multistage-purposive-cum random sampling technique was used in selection of districts, blocks and households. Two districts namely, Shimla and Kinnaur were selected for the study purpose, where, district Shimla has largest number of SC beneficiaries and district Kinnaur has largest number of ST beneficiaries, under Special Central Assistance programme. The present research paper was based on a total sample of 150 farm households, whereas, 50 beneficiaries and 25 non-beneficiaries (control group) were selected from each block of selected districts.

Horticulture Industry in the State

According to the research study of AERC, “Horticulture industry in the state has developed as a business proposition since long and has been witnessing continuous rise in area and production”. The area and production of fruits has increased by 1.81 and 2.62 per cent respectively annually, whereas apple alone accounted 48 per cent of area among all fruits and 73 per cent of total fruit production in the state. Therefore, it is also included that area and production of all fruits has been continuously increasing in the state and a stage has been reached where horticulture sector is being extended to marginal lands which having negative impact on productivity and profitability of horticulture sector.

Major Findings

The present research paper is based on some major findings about SC/ST farmers intervention under SCA programme and assistance/benefits availed by them in the form of subsidy on horticultural development inputs/implements. Following are the some major findings of the research paper;

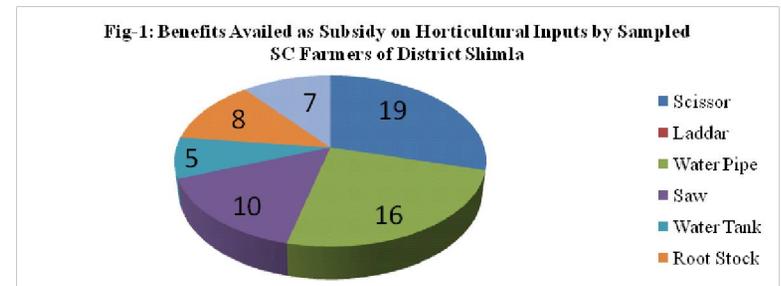
1. Assistance/Benefits received by SC/ST farmers under Special Central Assistance Programme

There were different types of horticultural inputs, for which SC and ST farmers received assistance under this programme and the assistance provided by the government in the form of subsidy on these horticultural inputs to the SC/ST farmers.

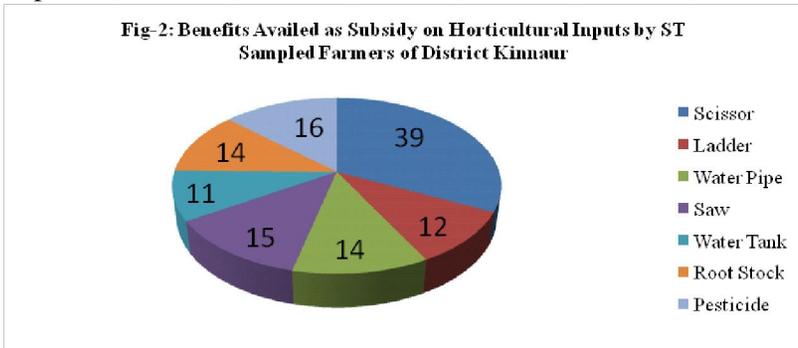
Table No-1: Benefits Availed on Subsidy by the Sampled Farmers of the State in different Years

Sr. No.	Particulars	District Shimla (SC Farmers)					District Kinnaur (ST Farmers)				
		Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	Total	Marginal	Small	Medium	Large	Total
		1.	19	-	-	-	19	18	16	4	1
2.	Ladder	-	-	-	-	3	6	2	1	12	
3.	Water Pipe	16	-	-	-	6	4	3	1	14	
4.	Saw	10	-	-	-	5	5	4	1	15	
5.	Water Tank	5	-	-	-	5	3	2	1	11	
6.	Root Stock	8	-	-	-	6	2	5	1	14	
7.	Pesticide	7	-	-	-	7	4	4	1	16	

The details of information related to assistance/subsidy received by the farmers have been presented by Table No-1, which indicates that in district Shimla, all the SC households were marginal farmers which received assistance in the form of subsidy on different types of horticultural inputs and majority of they got assistance in the form of subsidy on Scissor input, followed by water pipe, saw, root stock, pesticide and water tank respectively (Fig.1).

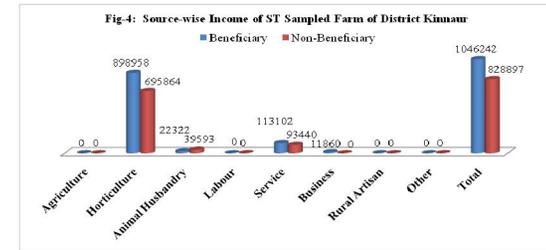
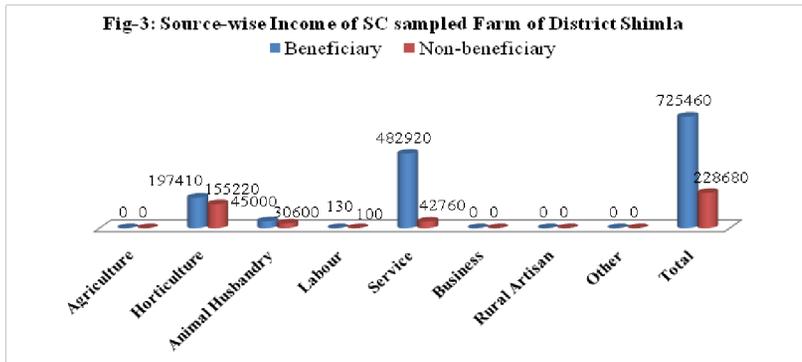


While in district Kinnaur (ST farmers), majority of marginal and small farmers received the subsidy for purchasing the scissor and followed by water pipes, ladder, root stock and other horticultural inputs, respectively (Fig. 2). In relation to medium farmers, most of them received assistance on root stock and followed by scissor, saw, pesticides and other inputs of horticultural usage. There was only one farmer in the sample in district of Kinnaur who took the assistance on all components which are indicated in the table.



2. Annual Income earned by Sampled Beneficiary and non-Beneficiary Farms

Per farm income of beneficiary and non-beneficiary farms have been presented in Fig-3&4, which indicated that SC beneficiary farms of district Shimla got higher income from the service sector (Rs. 4,82,920), and followed by horticulture (Rs. 1,97,410), animal husbandry and labour sources of income, respectively. But in case of non-beneficiary farms, they earned more income from the source of horticulture, which was calculated Rs. 1.55,220 per farm annually (Fig-3).



Whereas ST beneficiary and non-beneficiary farms of district Kinnaur got higher income from horticulture, which was calculated Rs. 8,98,958 and Rs. 6,95,864 per farm annually (Fig-4) and followed by service, animal husbandry and labour sources of income, respectively. Finally, it can be concluded that the income from horticulture was higher on the beneficiary farms as compared to non-beneficiary farms in both districts of the state and it shows better intervention of SC/ST farmers with their horticultural development under SCA programme in the state.

3. Impact of SCA on the Living Standard of SC/ST Beneficiary farms

The standard of living of group can be judged from the modern durables present and also on the quality of these durables owned by them. For this purpose, the analysis of household durables owned by sampled farmers is becoming necessary and highlighted by the Table No-2.

Table No-2: Modern Durables owned by Sampled Farms

Sr. No.	Particulars	District Shimla (SC Farmers)		District Kinnaur (ST Farmers)	
		Beneficiary	Non-beneficiary	Beneficiary	Non-beneficiary
		1.	Television	56	25
2.	Call Phones	104	54	106	38
3.	Computer	0	0	1	0
4.	Refrigerator	15	10	36	12
5.	Motor Cycle	50	0	45	0
6.	Car/Jeep	5	0	10	4
7.	Cooking Gas	50	15	50	23
8.	Induction Stove	37	24	40	18
9.	Soft Set	30	16	29	12
10.	Dining Table	28	12	39	12
11.	Sewing Machine	23	19	46	22
12.	Washing Machine	20	12	46	17
13.	Total	418	187	499	182

Keeping in view the ownership pattern of modern durable on both beneficiary and non-beneficiary farms, it is observed from the table that the number of modern durables with beneficiary farms was in large number and hence it can be said to have better standard of living and showed positive impact on SCA programme affected families.

4. Impact of the Benefits availed on the different components of Horticultural Activities-As per the information highlighted by Table No-3, all the beneficiary farmers opined that the production has increased up to 5-10 per cent due to better quality of rootstocks. 40 per cent of beneficiary farmers reported that the production increased up to 8-10 per cent due to use of pesticide. The use of pipe and water tank for irrigation had also the impact on the production of the apple. About 30 per cent beneficiary farmers opined that the apple productivity by using the pipe and water tank has increased in the range of 5-7 per cent and 10-20 per cent, respectively. The impact of these two components was on the percentage fall in the use of water and 40 per cent beneficiaries reported that there was decline in the use of water up to 10-15 per cent and 10-20 per cent by pipe and water tank, respectively.

Table No-3: Impact of the Benefits Availed by the Farmers

Sr. No.	Particulars	Benefits derived/ Name of the Components						
		Rootstock	Pesticide	Scissor	Saw	Ladder	Pipe	Water Tank
1.	% Increase in production	5-10	8-10	0	0	0	5-7	10-20
2.	% Fall material cost	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
3.	% Fall in water use	0	0	0	0	0	10-15	10-20
4.	% Fall in labour cost	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5.	% Reduction in losses	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
6.	% Increase in price of output	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
7.	% Improvement in soil	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
8.	Improvement in human health	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

5. Constraints faced by SC/ST Farmers in availing the Benefits under SCA Programme

Following are the problems faced by SCA affected farmers;

- Out of total sample of beneficiary farms only about 18 per cent beneficiaries faced some constraints while availing the benefits of the schemes is the testimony of the fact that the scheme is being implemented with high efficiency in the state. Some they reported that influential people by splitting their families managed four to five Ration Cards to draw maximum benefits from the programmes. And few deserving poor have been left out.
- About half of the beneficiary farmers stated that the information about the scheme reached them in very comprehensive manner. This leaves a wide gap in flow of information to farmers and this aspect need to be taken care of urgently to still better results. It was also heartening to note that some of respondents made complaint of the nature that the SCA Programme has a bias towards large farmers or it is being implemented with such a bias by the programme implementers and that poor quality of materials/machinery are supplied.
- Most of the apple orchardists of lower elevation were not in good condition because of poor varieties and of low productivity of plants. Hence, most of farmers have planned to uproot these orchards (standard varieties) and plan to establish the high density/ semi density apple orchards in this process. But they have faced some major problems such as, non-availability, lack of timely availability, poor quality, high cost and high incidence of diseases of rootstock.
- Lack of irrigation facilities was the major problems of sampled farms because they felt that due to lack of irrigation the fruit setting and growth are badly damaged and this affects both quality and quantity of fruits.
- Plant protection chemicals with high cost, poor quality and timely not available was the another major problem faced by all the cultivators in the state.
- Lack of information about the programme was the main reason for not availing the benefits by non-beneficiary farms in the state.

Policy Implications

During the interaction with beneficiary and non-beneficiary farmers of SCA Programme, many policy recommendations for improvement in the programme were observed.

- Information about aims and objectives of the SCA on horticultural inputs should be provided to all the farmers and there is a need for providing the technical advice in more comprehensive manner.
- The programme should get wider publicity for ensuring the inclusion of non-beneficiaries. Thus, the scope of the programme should be widened to include all the crops of farmers. This will definitely motivate the non-beneficiary farmers of SCA to join it. The provision of technical advice even to non-participant farmers would in better interests of development of not only the non-participating farmers but also for the agricultural sector.
- The most common suggestion was the provision of subsidy under the programme should be extended to all the crops.
- Irrigation should be included in the programme component for the betterment of the farming community, mostly required by sample orchardists.
- Best quality of inputs/implements such as rootstock, plant protection chemicals and other horticultural inputs should be provided in the form of better provision of subsidy under SCA programme. All these horticultural inputs should be provided timely to SC/ST farmers for their horticultural development.
- Some of respondents made complaint of the nature that the SCA Programme has a bias towards large farmers or it is being implemented with such a bias by the programme implementers and that poor quality of materials/machinery are supplied. Thus, the nature of programme should be blind and rational among all the programme affected families. Implementing and monitoring system of the programme should be free from the elements of favoritism, nepotism and corruption.

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