

**Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Government of India**



Evaluation Study

**Functioning of Dr. Ambedkar
Foundation**

TRUAGRICO

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EVALUATION REPORT

MARCH 2021

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TransRural Agri Consulting Services Pvt. Ltd.

1. Executive Summary

Since the inception of Dr. Ambedkar Foundation (DAF) in March 1982, the efforts are being made for the implementation of programmes and activities for strengthening and spreading the ideology and messages of Dr. Ambedkar among the masses in India as well as abroad. The Foundation has been entrusted with the responsibility of managing, administering and carrying on the important and long-term schemes and programmes identified during the Centenary Celebrations of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. But, in the present context four schemes namely Medical Aid Scheme, Scheme for Social Integration through Inter-Caste Marriages, National Relief Scheme for SC victims of atrocities and Scheme for the celebration of Birth Anniversary of Great Saints have been considered for evaluation.

To assess the outcomes of the intervention and to improve the efficiencies and effectiveness of the programmes, the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment organises evaluation and impact assessment studies of its schemes. Also, the ministry treats evaluation of its policies, programmes, schemes, projects and interventions as an instrument of accountability. Considering the size and scope of the programme implementation, the policymakers and implementers must know the benefits and impacts of such development intervention. Further, issues and challenges limiting the effective implementation of the programme at the grass-root level can be diagnosed through a detailed micro-level data analysis and corrective measures can be outlined, accordingly.

2. Objectives of the Evaluation Study

The overall objective of the current study is to diagnose and identifying the factors contributing to success/ or failure of various interventions under the scheme and deriving lessons for improving the performance through mid-course corrections and better design of future programmes. The specific objectives of the study are as envisaged in the ToR document.

3. Methodology

The study is based on discussion with beneficiaries, data received from DAF and discussion of consultant with the implementing agency i.e. DAF.

4. Major Observations

4.1 Medical Aid Scheme

The average age of the beneficiaries was 47 for male and 46 for female. It indicates that the people who have received the benefit are most deserving as usually, people of this age are the bread earner of the family. The proportion of ST category was larger among both male and female categories. The reason behind this scenario was that the larger proportion of beneficiaries was from Mizoram, and almost all the beneficiaries from this state are scheduled tribe category. Hence the proportion of ST among the beneficiaries is visible.

The findings of the study indicate the appropriateness and effectiveness of the schemes. There is a considerable proportion of beneficiaries those having limited average annual household income. Slightly less than three-fourths i.e. 73 percent including labourer, not fit for working, unemployed and housewives having household income ranging from 65 to 95 thousand, availing medical aid facilities. The beneficiaries having the incomes of Rs. Rs. 2.76 and 3.8 lakh, their proportion is limited

to the extent of 5 and 8 percent respectively. It can be concluded that the benefits of the scheme have reached to the neediest people within the marginalised section of the society.

It can be inferred that the public servants deployed at hospitals and other departments are playing a major role in awareness generation among the beneficiaries. Hence, they can be major change agents in popularising the schemes among the communities in general and marginalised section of the society in particular. The role of print media and social media are contributing considerably.

There are sufficient coverage and quickness in the implementation of the scheme as per its provisions. The timeliness in processing application to provide medical assistance on time was satisfactory in most of the cases. A substantial proportion of the beneficiaries as three-fourth reported that they were satisfied with the treatment they received. It means that the scheme has yielded desirable results. It has also emerged that a limited proportion of the beneficiaries was secured with insurance policy.

As of now, the treatment facility under the scheme is provided at a limited number of hospitals. While these hospitals are at the most accessible locations, still the geographical spread of beneficiaries makes it difficult to access the services. In some cases, there are alternative hospitals where the same service can be provided but without availing the benefits under the scheme as those hospitals are not empanelled. To extend the benefit of the scheme to a larger mass and easing the accessibility of the prospective patients, the DAF may enlist more hospitals at the district level.

The study also reveals that the beneficiaries visited the hospital many times before receiving the treatment. After treatment, not all the patients have visited hospitals for a follow-up consultation. While a patient might be negligent, still to make the best use of the money invested by government, DAF should issue a guideline for the hospitals to give a reminder call to the patient for follow-up treatment or to get the feedback on the health of beneficiaries.

The study also concludes that largely, patients have derived satisfaction from the scheme due to doctors' and staff's behaviour and provisions of medicines. The beneficiaries were also satisfied with the treatment of the disease and process as well as ease in enrolling for the service.

The study also concludes that there is a section of the beneficiaries, which was dissatisfied with the scheme/ treatment. Long distances covered for treatment and absence of diagnosis facility were the major reasons for dissatisfaction.

4.2 Inter-caste Marriages

The study indicates that the majority of the beneficiaries are from Urban localities. Further, it was found that the average age of the husbands was 31 years while it was 28 years for wives enabling them in taking self-decision as per their choice. The dependence on the incentives offered by DAF is very high in bringing some stability in their married life.

The study concludes that occupational pattern and income structure of both wives and husbands in general and husbands, in particular, playing an important role in inter-caste marriages. The level of educational attainment among the couples also plays a major role in bringing stability in the marriage life. There is no considerable difference between husbands and wives in education attainment. With

certain exceptions, only one percent point difference can be noted in attaining education at different class standard.

The role of family and friends were considerable in generating awareness towards inter-caste marriages. The role of the scheme initiated by DAF is also important. About one-fifth of the beneficiaries got to know about the scheme from the website of DAF. Around 18 percent of the beneficiaries have received the information from government officials deployed at district and village panchayat levels. The role of both print and electronic media played an important role in awareness generation.

The study pointed out that there exist various difficulties in arranging documents from different sources. Largely, it came into the notice that the level of difficulties in the arrangement of document ranges from just fine to very easy. However, in the cases of a recommendation letter by sitting people's representative include MLA/MP, it is very difficult. It has been experienced that the behaviour of the people's representatives is dictated by the community's characteristics as a whole. Similarly, sometimes, these representatives do not favour such inter-caste marriages and they remain reluctant to provide the recommendation letter on their behalf.

Most of the beneficiaries have reported that the district level officers have asked for submission of documents multiple times. A few beneficiaries are yet to receive the money despite they had submitted their application more than a year back. In the absence of a tracking mechanism for the application, the applicants are highly uncertain about the acceptance/ rejection or status of release of incentive.

The study also highlights positive aspects of inter-caste marriages. In most of the cases, the parents of couples have accepted their marriages. Also, relatives and friends have accepted such marriages. However, initially not less than 45 percent couples faced resistance from family as well as the society that maybe because of the conservative attitude of the communities. It has also emerged during the discussion that Inter-Caste Marriages could help in minimising the effects of social evils like the caste system.

4.3 Victims of Atrocities

There is a considerable decrease in budgetary provision as well as the number of applications received by the foundation. A decreasing trend in the number of beneficiaries, as well as financial provisions under schemes, doesn't necessarily mean that the atrocities against SCs and STs have decreased in the society. Complex and lengthy process in getting the case finalised might be one of the major reasons behind the reduced number of applications. Also, the involvement of district level officers, as well as the state department, is crucial in increasing the outreach of the scheme.

4.4 Celebration of Birth anniversary of great saints

It can be inferred from the secondary data that there is a considerable expansion in the number of beneficiaries as well as institutions involved in organising the events on the celebration of birth anniversaries of great saints. However, due to lack of administrative resources in terms of the required number of manpower for speedy processing of applications and absence of proper MIS system, it is difficult to assess the impact the scheme has left on society at large.

5. Recommendations

Based on foregoing observations, certain recommendations can be put forth so that the program can be more effective in the time ahead.

5.1 Medical Aid Scheme

It has been noted that there was a limited proportion of the beneficiaries availing the health insurance facilities. It is essential to bring the individuals under health insurance cover. In this regard, efforts should be intensified to generate awareness to avail of the benefits of health insurance.

DAF may empanel more hospitals with facilities of treatment provisioned under the scheme. Also, the DAF can consider examining the feasibility to empanel reputed private hospitals with adequate facilities so that the benefits under the scheme will be easily accessible.

It is found that a patient had to visit the hospital multiple times before the initiation of treatment. Besides, people continue their visits until their satisfaction regarding the expected treatment. To make it easy and rational, DAF needs to establish a helpline to coordinate between hospital and patients to expedite the process of treatment based on the merit of priority.

There are certain instances where a section of the beneficiaries was found dissatisfied with the scheme/ treatment. One of the reasons for such dissatisfaction was relating to the behaviour of the staff including doctors and others. In such a situation, a mechanism orientation/ dialogue between attendants and representative of the hospital should be developed. It will help in improving the system and making the services more efficient.

5.2 Inter-caste Marriages

The DAF may consider removing the clause of 'Recommendation Letter from MP/MLA/DC etc.' as this has been reported as the most difficult aspect faced by the applicant while applying for the incentive. Also, the DAF may introduce an MIS system where not only the progress of the scheme can be recorded but also the applicants of the schemes (all the schemes implemented by DAF) can track the status of their application.

Also, a similar system of grant exist at respective state level and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment also grants the incentives to the States, the DAF Scheme is duplication. Therefore, the Scheme which started on trial basis in 2014 and has been continued thereafter, may be considered to be discontinued.

5.3 Victims of Atrocities

To keep tracking the progress of the scheme and evaluate the outcome, the DAF must introduce MIS system for internal purposes as well as the option for tracking of the application by the applicants. If the tracking of application will be available with even district level officers, they could give a clear status of the application to the victims of atrocities.

Since there exist provision under PoA Act for grants by the State Government, the Scheme may be re-aligned and after availing details i.e. (i) copy of the FIR lodged under SC/ST Atrocity Act, (ii) Death

Certificate /Medical Report (iii) Legal heir of the deceased (iv) Bank Details (v) forwarding under the signature of concern DM/DC.

5.4 Celebration of Birth anniversary of great saints

The DAF may prepare and distribute an additional format in which the organizations receiving the grant for the celebration of birth anniversaries of great saints may collect the name and contact details of the attendees of the events which will highly helpful in assessing the real impact of the programs under this scheme.

There exist similar Scheme in the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment. The Scheme, which is regarding Celebration of Great Saints, does not seem to be serving the objective of DAF. Therefore, the Scheme may be modified to make it more transparent by online registration. The Governing Body may considered to replace the Scheme by a new Scheme for substantive help to the SC/ST students in terms of Career Counseling and Guidance, Mentorship Training and Skill Development etc.



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