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Research Article

STATUS ANALYSIS AND PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF A VILLAGE- AN ACTION RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Every institutions is increasingly associating itself with people who are intending to integrate into global financial trade flows and put into application the system that facilitate reporting and implementation of policies that influence change in villages, Districts, and Cities for socio-economic development. This action research paper, highlights the situation analysis the study of the village for the socioeconomic development of the people living in the village. Especially in this Villages have no support from the local government and others organizations to initiate strategies and promote opportunities to access financial services for financial vulnerability reduction in the village.

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INTRODUCTION

A brief about the Panchayat

Ottuppatti is a small hamlet on the main road of the state high way Dindigul to Nilakkottai. It is located 18 km from the district headquarter (Dindigul) in south direction and 8 km in north from Nilakkottai block headquarter. Pachamalayanankottai GP is one of the big village panchayaths in the block, having 18 hamlets. The GP has around 3,000 households and population covering around (9,189 as per 2001 census) 13,000 comprising more or less equal percentage of males and females. Children and youth population are comprising upto 25% of the total population. The GP has almost 50% of SC population. The panchayat had been headed by a caste Hindu President till the reservation was proclaimed constitutionally. When SC reservation was announced, an SC person was elected as Surpanch with lot of struggles due to the hurdles created by Caste Hindu with a plan of domination to rule through nominating a proxy as their candidate. More than 3 decades of high caste President's rule, the SC villages were bypassed without implementing development works. Due to much suppression, aggressive dominance and discrimination, SC communities could not able to enjoy the fruits of development for longer period. During the period SC community people were sidetracked and other caste people were benefited from common as well as individual schemes.

Only little percentage of SC people, who were in support of Caste Hindu leadership were given some schemes inevitably to fulfill the mandatory entitlements of Govt. schemes.

About the Village

Ottuppatti is a small hamlet covering around 175 households with a population of 700 to 800 persons. It is a 100% SC village, belonging to 'Pallan' sub-caste and only 3 households belonging to 'Sakliar' is also a sub-caste of SC. Predominant occupation of the majority of the households is 'agriculture labour' and only around 40% households have small quantity of land, earnings which are coming from agriculture not sufficient for feeding their family members. Each marginal farmer's land holdings is ranging $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ acre that too hereditary properties with continuous division by the off springs lead to small holdings. Joint ownership and sub division and fragmentation of land often unsuitable for cultivation ended with quarrels among own kith and kins of the land holders.

Socio-Economic Status of the Village

Housing: More than 80% of the houses are tiled roof with mud walls, around 10% are only pucca houses which were recently built through IAY housing scheme. Remaining 10% are good looking houses built by the rich people staying in the urban centres and occupy only during festival or summer vacations. Majority of the houses are single room occupancy in nature, no

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privacy for adults due to lack of space for expansion of house or village as a whole.

Issue: Continuous sub division of available home stead area compelled the people to live in congested area without privacy for adults for reading, recreate or sleeping. Department of Adi-Dravider Welfare, Government of Tamil Nadu purchased and allotted more than 5 acres of land and provided house Patta for 100 families in the year 1998 but due to lack of approach road and other basic amenities, the allottees could not move to the new homestead area. The available approach mud road is encroached by a village rich and he creates hurdles for efforts of village administration for road development.

Basic Amenities

Drinking Water: Due to high deepening of agricultural bore wells sucked the ground water recklessly. Three decades back, the village was having adequate drinking water with its own common open well and nearby private open wells, now the ground water level has gone to more than 400 feet and water became salty all over the village. People collect drinking water from a leakage point of a major drinking water supply pipe line which pumps drinking water from 'Vaigai river' basin to district headquarter (40 km length pipeline). It was also arrested by the water department due to scarcity of water during last summer. Presently people drink salty water for survival without fulfilling the thirsty. It may create health problems in the future.

Road: It has adequate connectivity with outside villages and urban centres. Only internal roads have to be linked with village expansion area and to the occupational regions.

Drainage: Drainages were constructed for main streets without proper linkage and lack of plan for maintenance and management causing to water stagnation and mosquitoes breeding.

Electricity: Except few houses, electrification covered satisfactorily. Delay in replacement of non-functioning street lights creates havoc for many weeks.

Education: The village has an Anganwadi and one Primary School run by the state government. Due to poor quality of education many families send their children to nearby Christian Mission school located 2 km away from the village. Educational status of the village is appreciable, a good number of individuals are working in various central and state government departments holding higher positions. They all visit the village on recreation and festivity period. A good number youth population is being idle after completion of graduation and post graduation due to non-availability of employment opportunities.

Occupation: As it was mentioned, majority are agricultural labour category. They depend on nearby village for work and livelihood. If agriculture fails, majority people face difficulties to maintain the life. The MGNREGS could not cop up the problem of unemployment due to negligence by the Gram panchayat, only a family gets 50 to 60 days of employment in an year. The GP justifies its inefficiency by saying non-availability of official man power to monitor the work is reason for less number of days of employment under MGNREGS.

Agriculture: Majority of the marginal farmers cultivate vegetables and floriculture. Due to high cost of agricultural inputs, the cropping pattern has changed to seasonal agriculture i.e. during rainy season vegetable cultivation followed by fodder crops for animals. Failures and less profit in cultivation, majority farmers started animal husbandry practices as main source of income through dairy activities and goat rearing by landless households. Even in the dairy activity, due to lack of demand for milk, they are exploited by the private purchasers. The cost of cow milk is very low ranging from Rs. 15 to 18 which is lower than the production cost. Due to non-availability of alternative source of livelihood people are compelled to rely on the monopoly private purchasers.

Poverty: More than 80% of people live below the poverty line. Landlessness, non-profit agriculture, exploitation in subsidiary occupation, non-availability of alternative livelihood source, unreach of government livelihood activities, lack of vocational skills make majority households to live in cyclical and perennial poverty. Service of PDS is the only life saving scheme by the government, which feeds almost all the families throughout the year.

Lack of Own Capital and skills they could not interested in taking of small business as alternative, possibility of mobilization of credit is almost nil from formal financial institutions as far as this village is concerned. The service area bank totally boycotted this village by stopping its services due to the default of few individuals long back. More than 90% of people do not aware about the banking services, it hurdled the reach of bank loan linked government entrepreneurship related programmes. Even SGSY could not reach even less than 10% of households. Even now village moneylenders play vital role in meeting the local credit requirements. They collect high rate of interest, which further lead poor people the dept trap.

Issues

Lack of Sanitation: Open defecation is a major issue in this village. Generation to generation, people accustom to go defecation in the open field or road side, which create unwanted health issues and environmental problems. Ladies find much difficulties in the day time, hence they prefer to go during night and face with incidents like snake and other piousness insects biting. Out of 175 houses only around 10 (IAY) families constructed the toilets, even those are not in use. Even though, it is a fatal issue, nobody considered its necessity due to lack of awareness on the intensity of the issue. Non-availability of space for construction of individual toilets compelled households who really interested to construct the toilets. Construction of community toilets will be only the solution for this major issue.

Under employment and unemployment: More concentration of agricultural labourers and very less land holding cause to the problems of underemployment and unemployment, it is acute during agriculture slack season. Effective implementation of MGNREGS during summer and exploring alternative employment through linking government schemes may address the problem.

Youth Unrest: This village has attain appreciable success in education but of lack of proper guidance and lack of awareness

about finding suitable employment, majority of youth population both male and female become unemployed. Around 50 to 60 male youths, after completion of post-graduation stay idle in the village. They become burden to the families as well as to the village. They slowly get into un-lawful activities like alcoholism, quarrel in the family and pre-marital sex, etc. This trend discourages others towards the present educational system.

Proper channelizing of youth energy towards productive purpose is essential through guidance, counseling and skill building suitable to present employment market's demand.

Proposed Strategies

1. Series of counseling for changing the attitude of people for construction and use of individual or community toilets.
2. Efforts on Construction of community toilets and exploring possibility of bio-gas production through human excreta generated from community toilet.
3. Efforts to lay link road to the extended colony through MGNREGS and BRGP. Construction of houses for real needy families through IAY and state housing scheme.
4. Finding alternative employment to women through capacity building through SGSY/NREGS.
5. Encouraging panchayat administration to strengthen the delivery of basic services and people participation for ownership and management.
6. Imparting training to village people to effectively participate in Gram Sabha meetings to share and demand the right based entitlements.
7. Conduct of motivational programmes and capacity building sessions for village youth for proper settlement.
8. Construction of common library for awareness building and entertaining village youth and aged.
9. Finding suitable ways and means for augmentation and supply of water suitable to drink.
10. Adoption of self responsibility to make clean village.
11. Character building for young generation through various motivational programmes like prize money for better performing children, encouragement of sports and recreational activities for present peace and future development.
12. Linking of local institutions and government sectoral officials through their departmental schemes.
13. Plantations in the community lands as well as individual lands to protect environment and mutual benefits.
14. Construction of community hall focusing on multipurpose usage like accommodating social ceremonies and official meeting.
15. Motivating to develop savings behavior among village people and review the status of credit delivery for development activities and strengthening of livelihoods.
16. Encouraging people participation, contribution, involvement in the planning, implementation and monitoring of development schemes of both central and governments as well as own programmes.

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