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Impact on Change in Family Income of Beneficiary Farmers through Adoption of MPOWER's Interventions in Western Rajasthan, India

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A study on impact assessment of Mitigating Poverty in Western Rajasthan (MPOWER) project was done during 2017 in six districts of western Rajasthan. The findings of the study revealed that income of the beneficiaries was increased by 31.8% due to adoption of agricultural and horticultural interventions in the project. Thereby so increased income through agricultural and horticultural interventions was used to purchase animal, construction of house and for other domestic purposes of the farmers. Average annual income of beneficiary respondents before inception of the project was Rs. 58602/- which was increased to Rs. 77263/- after inception of the project in the surveyed blocks.

Introduction

Mitigating Poverty in Western Rajasthan (MPOWER) is a poverty reduction initiative that is supported by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) within its framework of the current Country Strategic Opportunities Paper (COSOP), Sir Ratan Tata Trust (SRTT) and the Government of Rajasthan. The lead implementing agency is the Department of Rural Development (DRD), Government of Rajasthan, through its umbrella society for all livelihood projects in the State - Rajasthan Grameen Ajeevika Parishad – RGAVP. The Centre for Micro Finance (CMF) is the nodal agency as well as the Lead Resource Agency for the project. The project with an estimated investment of USD 62.54 million is being implemented over a six-year period. The Project Management Unit has been set up at Jodhpur. The project areas of MPOWER fall in the hot and arid and semi-arid districts of Rajasthan. The MPOWER has a programme under implementation in eight blocks one each in Jaisalmer, Barmer, Pali, Jalore and two each in Jodhpur and Sirohi districts of Western Rajasthan for mitigation of poverty of the target groups households through strengthening capacity, improved livelihood, sustainable enterprises, natural resources management and increased access to credit and markets. The objective of the study is to assess the impact of the MPOWER project on “livelihood generation through agricultural and horticultural interventions in the six blocks of western Rajasthan with special reference to change in economic benefits after adoption of MPOWER project”. The study was conducted in all project districts namely Jaisalmer, Barmer, Jodhpur, Pali, Jalore and Sirohi.

Methodology

The study was conducted in the seven selected blocks of six districts namely Bap, Balesar (Jodhpur), Abu Road (Sirohi), Bali (Pali), Sanchor (Jalore), Baitu (Barmer) and Sankara (Jaisalmer). The MPOWER project is being implemented by agricultural and horticultural interventions in around 150 clusters of six selected districts through eleven partner agencies. One cluster comprises 300 - 350 households, hence, the project covering around 50,000 households. Out of 150 clusters, 15 clusters (10% of total) were selected by lottery method from all six districts proportionally for the study. To collect information related to the questionnaire; the study was conducted in the purposely selected seven blocks of six targeted districts of MPOWER project. The MPOWER project covers about 300-350 households in one cluster; hence the total number of beneficiaries in 15 clusters are about 5250. Out of the 5250 beneficiaries, about 525 beneficiaries (10% of the total beneficiaries in 15 Clusters) were selected by the lottery method for the study. Here, we assessed the impact of the project's agriculture based livelihood interventions on the beneficiaries compared to non-beneficiary respondents; therefore, both beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents were selected for the study in an equal proportion. Though keeping the need of the study in mind, total 1050 respondents were selected from both beneficiary and non-beneficiary respondents (525 beneficiaries & 525 non-beneficiaries) from 15 clusters.

Result and discussion

Annual income: Across the blocks, about 97% beneficiary respondents had annual income of less than 1.0 lakh from all the sources whereas 87% of non-beneficiary respondents were getting annual income from 1.0-2.0 lakh. Further, 12% of non-beneficiary farmers were fetching higher income from 2.0 →5.0 lakhs annually (Table 1).

Table 1: Annual Income of Beneficiary and Non-Beneficiary Respondents in the Surveyed Areas of MPOWER Blocks

Annual Income	MPOWER block															
	Abu Road		Baap		Baitu		Balesar		Bali		Sanchor		Sankara		Total	
	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB	B	NB
UP to Rs. 1.0 lakh	69	6	59	18	128	20	31	5	60	6	55	11	52	6	454	72
Rs. 1.1 -2.0 lakh	1	57	11	50	12	116	4	25	10	60	15	30	14	52	67	390
Rs. 2.1 to 3.0 lakh	-	4	-	2	-	4	-	3	-	2	-	20	4	9	4	44
3.1 to 4.0 lakh	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	8	-	-	-	11
4.1 to 5.0 lakh	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	1	-	2	-	7
> 5.0 lakh	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1
Total	140	140	70	70	70	70	35	35	70	70	70	70	70	70	525	525

B=Beneficiary, NB=Non Beneficiary

On block basis, higher number of beneficiary respondents acquired an annual income of Rs. <1.0 lakh in Baitu, Balesar and Abu Road blocks compared to other blocks while higher number of non-beneficiary farmers (91-97%) in Baitu, Baap and Bali earned more income as compared to other blocks. In the Sanchore block, 29% of non-beneficiary respondents were getting higher annual income from Rs. 2.0-3.0 lakhs compared to other blocks. It showed that non-beneficiary

respondents were comparatively richer than beneficiary farmers but due to the project interventions, BPL beneficiary respondents earned a good amount of money.

Across the blocks, on an average, beneficiary respondents increased their annual income after inception of this project to the extent of 31.8% from all the sources including agriculture and horticulture interventions compared to that recorded before inception of the project (Table 2).

Table 2: Average Annual Income of Beneficiary Respondents before and after Inception of the Project in the Surveyed Blocks

Annual income (Rs.)	MPOWER block							
	Abu Road	Baap	Baitu	Balesar	Bali	Sanchor	Sankara	Total
Before inception of project	45171	69714	47200	55057	56057	63786	82857	58602
After inception of project	64957	86186	61486	78914	75829	85600	104471	77263
% increase	43.8	23.6	30.2	43.3	35.2	34.2	26.1	31.8

Investment priority of additional income generated: Across the blocks, it was apparent that 92% of beneficiary respondents (525), had their foremost priority for purchasing milch animals, so that they could generate an additional income. About 56% respondents utilized their additional income to purchase household domestic goods which, in turn, reflected the improvement in the living standard. Third priority was to create housing facilities including rain water storage tanka (new/renovations). However, purchasing farm implements or domestic machines was the last priority of 15-17% farmers (Table 3, Fig. 1).

Table 3: Investment Priority of the Additional Income Generated

Particulars	Abu Road	Baap	Baitu	Balesar	Bali	Sanchor	Sankara	Total
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
House	36	50	50	57	57	29	43	46
Animal	100	93	86	97	91	83	100	92
Machines	31	21	3	34	29	6	1	15
Farm Implements	3	3	4	26	19	41	39	17
Domestic Material	49	30	89	71	66	36	29	56

INVESTMENT PRIORITY OF THE ADDITIONAL INCOME GENERATED

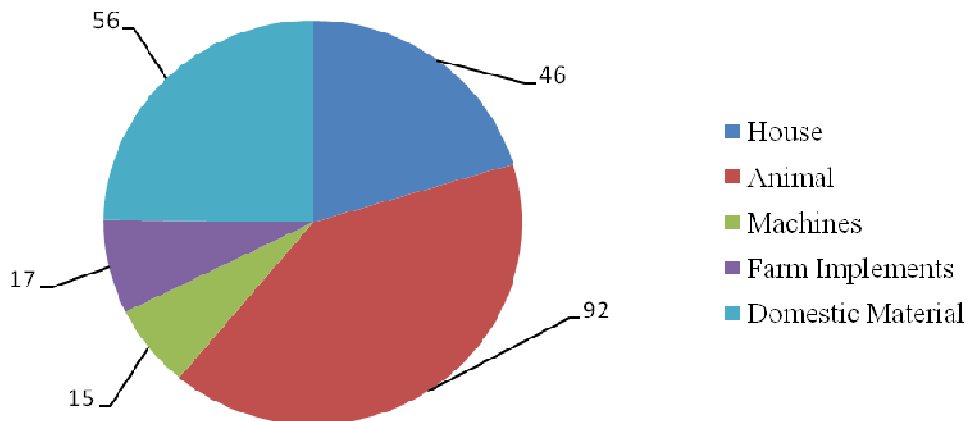


Fig. 1: Investment Priority of the Additional Income Generated

It was evident that the first priority of investment by respondents in all the blocks was to purchase animals from the additional income generated. Second priority was to incur their additional income for purchase of household domestic materials in Baitu, Balesar and Abu Road blocks. Third priority of the beneficiary respondents was to create housing facilities in Baitu, Baap, Balesar and Bali area whereas Sankara and Sanchor respondents had their third priority to purchase farm implements because of more acreage under irrigation.

Conclusion

Beneficiary respondents increased their annual income from all the sources after inception of MPOWER project including agricultural and horticultural interventions compared to that recorded before inception of the project. Models of livelihood (farm based) executed by MPOWER in western Rajasthan can be proved as catalyst for doubling farmers income by integrating them with non-farm activities of the rural areas.