

Lila Report

Village: Indpur, Himachal Pradesh

Findings

During the duration of the stay at the village the following observations were made.

- Most villagers cultivate vegetables in their yards for own use.
- Few sell vegetables amongst the villagers
- Water sources in form of streams, canals and some perennial sources that are stored in ponds and tanks are available. These are dispersed and getting water to the farms is a difficulty.
- Ram Dayal, one of the farmers told that their crops were damaged due to bad climate the past year.
- Most of the land is owned by zamindars. They close off their farms and restrict entry for villagers.
- Few villagers own small stretches of land. Majority are agricultural labourers who work for zamindars
- Government does not have any free land.
- Land owned by villagers were either sold off or taken over by zamindars.
- Main produce of the villagers are
 - Mangoes
 - Oranges
 - Litchi
 - Loquat
 - Brinjal
 - Pumpkin
 - Bitter gourds
 - Ridge gourds
 - Cucumber
 - Guava
 - Pearl millet
 - Wheat
 - Rice
 - Maize
- Few farmers sell their produce directly to market which are mainly Pathankot, Jassur and Jammu.
- They have to pay additional tax for sale in Jammu
- Farmers face acute water scarcity in their farms
- 4-5 trucks of vegetables and fruits go to market on a daily basis
- 2000 tonnes of mangoes and oranges each are grown by villagers annually.
- Approximately 50 tonnes of loquat and litchi each are produced annually
- They have a turnover of about 1 Crore annually
- Small scale farmers are totally dependent on rainwater
- They had relied on the pipeline that was planned earlier but due to the influence of the large scale farmers the pipe line was taken near their farm lands. So these small scale farmers are totally dependent on the rain water which is not a reliable resource.
 - The bore well facilities were also denied to these farmers.

- Forming the cooperative society might not work as they had trust issues with one another. And also they felt they might not be getting the entire profit money.
 - The small scale farmers did not get benefits from the policies and schemes implemented by the government.
- Curry leaves are available in abundance, they grow in the wild and are neither farmed nor sold in market.

Problems:

After meeting the villagers and the farmers, the following have been identified as the major problems they face:

- **Water Scarcity**
The major problem farmers' face is the scarcity of water. They depend on rainfall. The Agricultural Department introduced bore wells for the farmers but this was biased as those in immediate requirement of bore wells were ignored and those who already had access to water sources were given preference.
- **Man animal conflict**
The meagre crops that they manage to produce are frequently damaged by stray cows, boars and monkeys. They have not been able to find a solution to address these issues
- **Fertilizer prices are high because of middle men**
Farmers do not have access to government provided fertilizers and pesticides. These are in turn supplied by middle men who charge high prices for the same. They are not aware of the prices at which government supplies the fertilizers and pesticides
- **Dependence on Merchants**
The agricultural produce are not directly sold off to the market and are usually sold to middle men or merchants. These merchants take the goods at very low prices. Very few farmers venture to sell their produce to the market directly.
- **Low Return on Investment**
Due to the above mentioned factors, farmers have very low return on investment. They have to spend huge amount of money for fertilizers, pesticides, labour, etc. and they do not get ROI due to the low cost at which they have to sell it at the market or to the middle men.
- **Trust issues**
Villagers seldom trust outsiders and they are not that co operative amongst themselves either.
- **Climate changes**
The past year farmers received scanty rainfall and this led to wide scale crop damages

Resources:

- HIMFED (Himachal Pradesh State Cooperative Marketing And Consumer's Federation Ltd)

The State Govt. has allowed cost subsidy on complex fertilizers NPK 12:32:16, NPK 10:26:26 and NPK 15:15:15 @ Rs.1000/-per MT. Apart from this, cost subsidy @ 25% is also being provided on 100% water soluble complex fertilizers to the farmers (limited to Rs. 2500 per farmer). In order to ensure adequate supply of fertilizers, the Govt. has entrusted this responsibility to HIMFED/Cooperative Societies.

- Soil Health Cards

Soil testing has great importance for raising agriculture production. The Agricultural Department provides free soil testing facilities to the farmers. Department has 11 Soil Testing Laboratories besides four mobile soil testing labs to provide free soil testing facilities to the farmers. Besides this Soil Health Cards are being provided to the farmers. Soil testing service has also being included under H.P. Govt. Public Service Act, 2011 in which the soil health cards are being made available to the farmers through online service within prescribed time limit.[3]

- Co-operative Society

In an agricultural cooperative society, farmers pool their resources in certain areas of activity. A broad classification of agricultural cooperatives includes agricultural service cooperatives and agricultural production cooperatives. Agricultural service cooperatives provide various services to their individually farming members. In agricultural production cooperatives, production resources (land, machinery) are pooled and members farm jointly.

There are two primary types of agricultural service cooperatives, *supply cooperative* and *marketing cooperative*. Supply cooperatives supply their members with inputs for agricultural production, including seeds, fertilizers, fuel, and machinery services. Marketing cooperatives are established by farmers to undertake transportation, packaging, distribution, and marketing of farm products (both crop and livestock).[2]

- Micro Irrigation

Micro irrigation, is an irrigation method that saves water and fertilizer by allowing water to drip slowly to the roots of plants, either onto the soil surface or directly onto the root zone, through a network of valves, pipes, tubing, and emitters. It is done through narrow tubes that deliver water directly to the base of the plant. Himachal Government has decided to launch a new project, Rajiv Gandhi Micro-Irrigation Scheme with an outlay of Rs154 crore over a period of four years. under the proposed Rajiv Gandhi Micro-Irrigation Project, 8,500 hectare area would be brought under drip or sprinkler irrigation system which would benefit more than 14,000 farmers in the state. State Government has also implementing Dr YS Parmar Kisan Swarojgar Yojana in the state, under which 85 percent subsidy was being provided to the farmers to set up poly-houses.[1] In addition, 2.50% assistance for construction of farm tank, 3.50% assistance for construction of shallows wells, 4.50% assistance for

lifting water with electric motor of 3 HP and 7.5 HP and above i.e. low and medium lifts and 50% assistance for pumping machinery is provided by the government.

- Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee, Kangra
This is controlled in the State through H.P. Agricultural and Horticultural Produce Marketing (Development and Regulation) Act, 2005. Under this Act, H.P. State Agricultural Marketing Board has been setup. At present, 10 market committees are functioning. 52 markets have been made functional. Market information is being disseminated through different media i.e AIR, Doordarshan, print media and through Net to farmers. The work of development of marketing infrastructure is done out of the funds of Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee. Information on daily market rates is also disseminated through AIR/ DD. Market rates of 39 commodities are also disseminated through agmarknet.nic.in.
<http://hpsamb.nic.in/apmc/kangra/home>

Solutions:

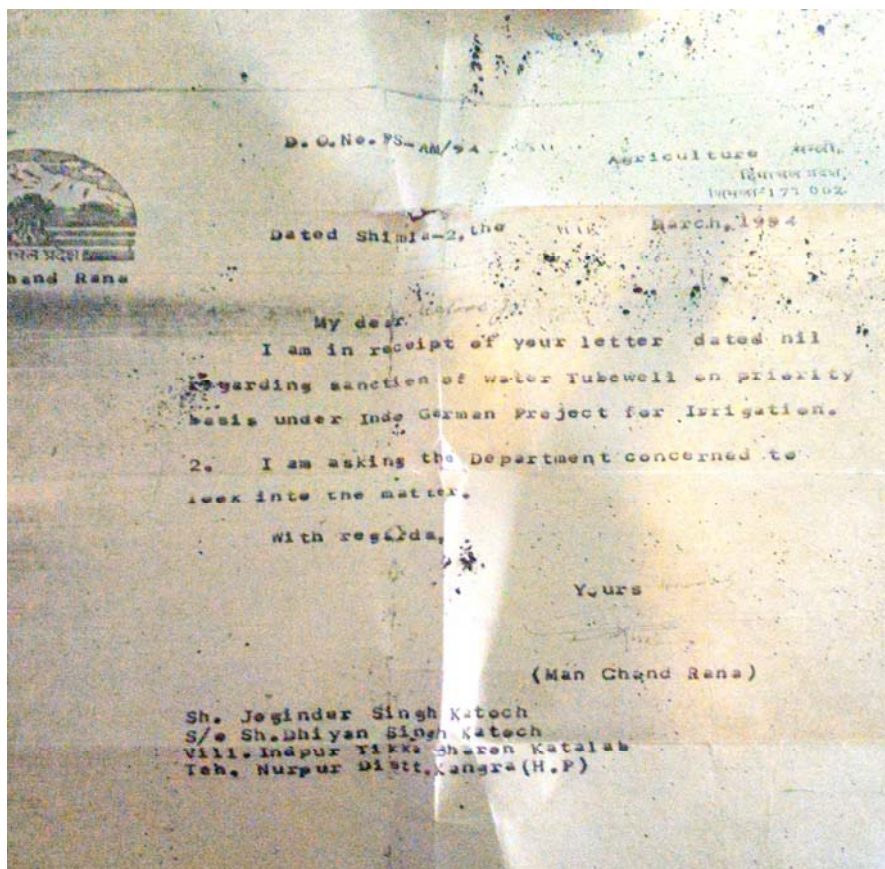
- Water Scarcity
In addition to the schemes and subsidies like Micro Irrigation and Bore Well Scheme provided by the government, farmers might have a difficult time operating bore wells due to the lack of electricity in remote fields. Solar powered pump sets to get water from bore wells can be a solution to this. Similar model has been done in Tamil Nadu but with subsidy provided by government.
<http://www.thehindu.com/todays-paper/tp-national/tp-tamilnadu/5hp-solar-pumpsets-to-be-given-to-farmers-on-80-subsidy/article5708572.ece>
- Man Animal Conflict:
Monkeys, stray cows and pigs cause much damage to crops. Villagers have been unsuccessful in trying to find a solution for this. Our suggestion is to use fences to keep out stray cows and pigs. To address the problems of monkey, we can suggest to plant turmeric and ladies finger near the fences. This method has been found to be effective in villages in Uttaranchal. It has been observed that turmeric and ladies finger causes irritation to the monkeys and hence they avoid it. Villages in Kerala cover trees with nets to protect it. Feasibility of the same should be checked.
- Fertilizer prices are high because of middle men:
Identify offices of Himfed. Check whether the fertilizers that have subsidy are useful for the farmers. Update prices of the fertilizers on Panchayat Notice Board on a daily basis. This ensures that middle men do not provide fertilizers at exaggerated prices.
- Co operative society:

By establishing a Cooperative society farmers can support each other. A Marketing cooperative can help farmers to undertake transportation, packaging, distribution, and marketing of farm products. This can be taken to Agricultural Produce Marketing

Committee, Kangra or to markets in Jassur, Pathankot and Jammu. Registering as a dealer in APMC Kangra can also help eliminate the trouble of middle men.

Personal Experience & Reflections

One particular conversation with a villager Mr. Joginder Singh Katoch struck me and will stay with me for a long time. Mr. Joginder Singh Katoch, a farmer is facing acute water storage and is unable to tend to his farms. He was sanctioned water tube well on a priority basis by the government under Indo German Project for Irrigation 22 years ago. He is yet to receive it. Meanwhile others who have influence have selfishly taken the help that was sanctioned to him. He is not in a position to go against them. He always has the letter with him(see picture below). This incident shook me up and I felt as helpless has him.



Even though I come from an urban area I have spent time in a village, my native place. Due to many reasons, over a period of time my visits to the village reduced and I have lost my connection with the place. My visit to Indpur was more or a less a revival of those times and I was on many occasions flooded with my childhood memories. Due to this I could easily connect with Indpur and its people. I will surely carry memories of our brief but memorable stay at Indpur where given an opportunity I would visit again.

Sources

- [1] <http://www.dailypioneer.com/state-editions/chandigarh/hp-to-launch-rs154-cr-rajiv-gandhi-micro-irrigation-scheme.html>
- [2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Agricultural_cooperative
- [3] http://farmer.gov.in/imagedefault/handbooks/schemes_programmes_2014_hp.pdf