

Broad findings about government schemes in Pindwara, Sirohi (27 May to 3 June 2013)

Villages visited: Kasindra (Achpura), Ker (Isra), Richdi (Dungari), Rajpura (Sivera)

NREGA

There was an acute lack of work in all the four panchayats we visited, although people are very keen to work on NREGA. Level of awareness about the number of days every rural household is entitled to work and number of days in which payment has to be made was average. Almost no one knew the current NREGA wage rate or the politician who played the biggest role in getting the NREGA passed. In the Rajput families of the villages we visited there was minimal interest in the scheme, but the other families who depend on mazdoori reaffirmed that there is demand for work which is not being tapped.

PDS

BPL and Antyodaya households were generally getting the full quota of their PDS rations. In Kaseendra (Achapura GP) and Ker (Isra GP), even the APL cardholders were getting the 10kg of atta that they are entitled to. But in Richdi (Dugree GP) and Rajpura (Sivera GP), most APL cardholders were not getting their entitlement, although according to most of the APL ration cards that we examined, entries for 10kg wheat/atta were made for the past several months. In fact in Rajpura, many people had entries of 20kg in their ration card. Since April 2013 the government has reduced the prices of APL atta, BPL wheat and sugar, but many people were still paying higher prices till May 2013. Because of the BDO's visit in Richdi the dealer was changed for that village, but it might be useful for someone to check whether this has actually happened and whether people are getting food at the new reduced rates and APL cardholders are now getting atta. Many people complained about the bad quality of atta and some about wheat.

Pensions

It was quite heartening to see the active drives to enroll old people and widows for pensions. However, people in Rajpura and Richdi have not got their pensions since February 2013. Many people pay Rs 5-10 to the postmaster for getting their forms filled to withdraw their pension.

ICDS

We couldn't get a very good sense of the functioning of the ICDS as many of the households that we visited either didn't have children below six years of age or didn't send their children to the anganwadi regularly. But on the whole the programme didn't seem to be working too well. We couldn't visit the AWC in Kaseendra. In Ker we reached the AWC at 10:30 am but were told that the opening timing of the centre has now changed from 7 to 10 am. In Richdi the post of the Anganwadi worker has been vacant for about a year, and food is given about once in 8-9 days. In Rajpura although a total of 69 children were enrolled, we saw only two at the centre.

MDM

Although we could not actually observe children eating the midday meal as schools were shut, from talking to people we got the sense that the MDM is functioning very regularly and children and parents are satisfied with the food that is served. Except for in Richdi, we did not hear of discrimination in serving the mid day meal to children.