



IMPACT OF INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL OLD AGE PENSION SCHEME : A CASE STUDY OF THIRUVANNAMALAI DISTRICT

V.M.Suneela shyam

Ph.D Research scholar, Post graduate & Research Department of Economics, Presidency College, Chennai

Introduction

India is a welfare State. The State is concerned about the well being of its subjects. Ensuring the minimum subsistence level is the least expected of the Government in a welfare State. A welfare state is a state in which organized power is deliberately used (through politics and administration) in an effort to modify the play of market in at least three directions, first, by guaranteeing individuals and families a minimum income irrespective of market value of their work or property; second, by narrowing the extent of insecurity by enabling individuals and families to meet certain Social Contingencies (for ex, sickness, old age and unemployment) which lead otherwise to individual and family crises and third, by ensuring that all citizen without destination of status or class are offered the best available in relation to a certain agreed range of social services. India's older population aged 60 or above, is the second largest in the world. This column analyses the effects of India's National Old Age Pension Scheme on the wellbeing of the elderly. It recommends that the Indian government should increase the pension amount to lower the risk of poverty among the elderly, and work to expand inclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

The Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme (IGNOAPS) was an age old non-contributory pension scheme which covered 60 and above years old and also those who live under Below Poverty Line (BPL) families. The respondents were aware about the scheme and its fixed pension amount either through advertisements or policies demonstrated by the government.

Profile of study area

Thiruvannamalai district is located in the northern part of Tamil Nadu, and it is one of the youngest districts in Tamil Nadu. Agriculture is the backbone of the district's economy and most of the population depends on agriculture and allied activities. The district comprises plain lands except for the Eastern Ghats in the north-western part of the district and small hills in Polur and Chengam taluks. Cheyyar and Pennaiyar are the rivers passing through the district. They are seasonal in nature and there is no perennial river in the district (GoTN, 2007). The district has a strong historical background.

Social security schemes in Thiruvannamalai District

The Government of Tamil Nadu implements five pension schemes for the poor people. The scheme was implemented through the revenue department. In each district a special deputy collector (social security scheme – SSS) and in each taluks a special thahasildar (social security scheme – SSS) was appointed for the implementation of the social security scheme.

The present topic aimed at examining the impact of pension beneficiaries under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme in Thiruvannamalai District (Tamil Nadu). The primary data have been generated through an extensive interview of the pension beneficiaries in all five blocks in Thiruvannamalai district. The study reveals that majority of beneficiaries are females and Hinduism is the dominant religion among the respondents. Schedule caste and backward class beneficiaries are shared a large portion in the study area. It is found that most of the beneficiaries are belong to illiterate and married. It is interesting to note that households with two earning members accounts for nearly three-fourth of the total respondents. The study shows that the average income of the respondents has significantly improved after adding pension amount to their savings. The level of loan borrowed by the respondents has significantly decreased after availing the pension. It is interesting to note that agriculture laboures and farming accounts for about 87% of the study area.

The study also analyzed the living conditions of the pension beneficiaries, like their income contribution to their family and their level of satisfaction, position of decision - making, level of independence of spend their income etc.

The following important aspects of the respondents are being analyzed in this topic.

1. Difficulties faced by the respondents
2. Pension grievances of IGNOAPS
3. Impact of IGNOAPS



Table 1: Difficulties faced by the respondents in applying for pension

Blocks	Yes	No	Total
Thiruvannamalai	8 (6.3)	120 (93.7)	128 (100.0)
Arni	7 (5.8)	113 (94.2)	120 (100.0)
Cheyyar	5 (4.9)	98 (95.1)	103 (100.0)
Vandavasi	6 (4.8)	119 (95.2)	125 (100.0)
Jawadhu Hills	3 (3.7)	78 (96.3)	81 (100.0)
Total	29 (5.2)	528 (94.8)	557 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of the respective block's share out of the total.

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

Table provides information pertaining to difficulties faced by the respondents while applying for the pension. It is evident from the Table 5.4 that 29 (5.2 per cent) of the respondents agreed that they faced difficulties while applying for the pensions and 528 (94.8 per cent) of the respondents did not face any difficulties. Block-wise classification portrays that a single digit respondents at the block level opined that there is difficulties while they apply for the scheme. It is very clear from the table that majority of the respondents have not faced any problem while applying for the pension as they were guided in a proper manner and were well attended by the officers and other staff about the details needed to apply for the pension.

Table 2: Nature of difficulties faced by the respondents for pension

Blocks	Document related	Office related	Total
Thiruvannamalai	3 (75.0)	1 (25.0)	4 (100.0)
Arni	3 (60.0)	2 (40.0)	5 (100.0)
Cheyyar	4 (80.0)	1 (20.0)	5 (100.0)
Vandavasi	3 (60.0)	2 (40.0)	5 (100.0)
Jawadhu Hills	8 (80.0)	2 (20.0)	10 (100.0)
Total	21 (72.4)	8 (27.6)	29 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of the respective block's share out of the total. **Source:** Field Survey, 2016.

The pension holders had expressed the difficulties faced at the time of applying pension. Above table shows that majority 21(72.4 per cent) out of 29 respondents reported that they faced document related difficulties and respondents 8 (27.6 per cent) faced office related difficulties at the time of applying for pension. Among the block-wise distribution maximum (80 per cent) of the respondents from Cheyyar and Jawadhu Hills blocks and minimum (60 per cent) of the respondents in Vandavasi and Arni blocks faced document related difficulties followed by a meagre number of respondents (40 per cent) in Arni and Vandavasi blocks and only one respondents (20 per cent) from Cheyyar and Jawadhu Hills blocks faced office related difficulties at the time of submission of the pension application. It is noticed from the cross classification that in all sample blocks few pension holders expressed that they faced office related difficulties i.e., voluntary delay made by the officials, seeking irrelevant documents, misplacing of applications, etc. It is interesting to note that majority of the respondents were facing documents related issues. Land documents or other identification documents were difficult for respondents to submit.



Table 3: Beneficiaries satisfaction over the pension amount

Blocks	Yes	No	Total
Thiruvannamalai	114 (89.1)	14 (10.9)	128 (100.0)
Arni	106 (88.3)	14 (11.7)	120 (100.0)
Cheyar	91 (88.3)	12 (11.7)	103 (100.0)
Vandavasi	110 (88.0)	15 (12.0)	125 (100.0)
Jawadhu Hills	72 (88.9)	9 (11.1)	81 (100.0)
Total	493 (88.5)	64 (11.5)	557 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of the respective block's share out of the total.

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

One of the objectives of the study is to examine the satisfaction of pension beneficiaries regarding pension amount. The pension amount at present is fixed at Rs.1000 per month. The above table provides the opinion of the pension beneficiaries regarding the satisfaction derived from the pension amount fixed at Rs 1000. It was found from the study that respondents 493 (88.5 per cent) were satisfied with the pension amount but 64 (11.5 per cent) respondents were not satisfied with the pension amount they receive. Block-wise distribution also revealed the same fact. It could be inferred that the resources were planned by IGNOAPS on the basis of their needs and expectations.

Table 4: Agencies responsible for irregular payment of pension

Blocks	Government	Bank	Post Office	Total
Thiruvannamalai	107 (83.6)	9 (7.0)	12 (9.4)	128 (100.0)
Arni	97 (80.8)	10 (8.3)	13 (10.8)	120 (100.0)
Cheyar	85 (82.5)	8 (7.8)	10 (9.7)	103 (100.0)
Vandavasi	105 (84.0)	9 (7.2)	11 (8.8)	125 (100.0)
Jawadhu Hills	65 (80.2)	7 (8.6)	9 (11.1)	81 (100.0)
Total	459 (82.4)	43 (7.7)	55 (9.9)	557 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of the respective block's share out of the total.

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

The above Table reveals the main reason for irregular payment of pension. It is clear from the table that 459 respondents (82.4 per cent) expressed that due to sudden changes in government policies lead to irregular payment of pension. It is found that 43 respondents (7.7 per cent) opined that circumstances associated with bank and 55 respondents (9.9 per cent) felt post-office were also responsible at times for irregular payment of pension. It is evident from the above table that majority of the respondents agreed that due to sudden changes in the government policies, payment of pensions became irregular which affected their livelihood. Simultaneously there were few complaints regarding banks and post office. With reference to block - wise classification it could be inferred that maximum (84.0 per cent) respondents in Vandavasi block and (80 per cent) from Arni and Jawadhu Hills block revealed that due to changes in government policies also leads to irregular payment of pension; (8 per cent) of the respondents from Arni and Jawadhu Hills blocks and respondents (7 per cent) from the remaining blocks revealed that the banks were responsible for the irregular payment of pension followed by (11.1 per cent) respondents from Jawadhu Hills block and (8.8 per cent) respondents from Vandavasi block revealed that the post office was one of the agency responsible for the irregular payment of pension.



Table 5: Mode of receipt for the pension

Blocks	Direct Deposit in Bank SB Account	Direct Deposit in Post Office	Total
Thiruvannamalai	100 (78.1)	28 (29.9)	128 (100.0)
Arni	89 (74.2)	31 (25.8)	120 (100.0)
Cheyar	79 (76.7)	24 (23.3)	103 (100.0)
Vandavasi	96 (76.8)	29 (23.2)	125 (100.0)
Jawadhu Hills	69 (85.2)	12 (14.8)	81 (100.0)
Total	433 (77.7)	124 (22.3)	557 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of the respective block's share out of the total. **Source:** Field Survey, 2016.

Pension amount is disbursed in two modes: Post-Office and Bank. Initially, the pension amount was disbursed through post-office in account of the fact that majority of the old age people do not possess a bank account. But nowadays, due to the announcement of Jandhan Yojana, every individual is requested to open no frill bank account. The above Table outlines the mode of receiving the pension amount. It is ostensible from the table that about 433 (77.7 per cent) reported that their pension amount is disbursed through bank account and 124 (22.3 per cent) reported that their pension amount is disbursed through post-office account. A deep look at the table indicates that about (85.2 per cent) pension beneficiaries in Jawadhu Hills block and (74.2 per cent) of the respondents from Arni block were used to deposit pension in bank account. Most of the respondents (29.9 per cent) in Thiruvannamalai block and (14.8 per cent) of the respondents from Jawadhu Hills block used to deposit in post-office.

Table 6: Main source of income

Blocks	Pension	Others	Total
Thiruvannamalai	111 (86.7)	17 (13.3)	128 (100.0)
Arni	99 (82.5)	21 (17.5)	120 (100.0)
Cheyar	95 (92.2)	8 (7.8)	103 (100.0)
Vandavasi	101 (80.8)	4 (19.2)	125 (100.0)
Jawadhu Hills	72 (88.9)	9 (11.1)	81 (100.0)
Total	478 (85.8)	79 (14.2)	557 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of the respective block's share out of the total. **Source:** Field Survey, 2016.

The above Table provides the information regarding the main source of income of the respondents. It could be found that 478 (85.8 per cent) pension as the main source of income and the remaining 79 (14.2 per cent) express other income as their main source of income. It is further noted that the high proportion of pensioners in (92.2 per cent) in Cheyyar block and most of the respondents (80 per cent) from the remaining blocks revealed that pension as the main source of income. On the other hand (19.2 per cent) respondents from Vandavasi block and (17.5 per cent) respondents from Arni block opined that other sources of income is main for their household income.

Table 7: Addressing the issues of the pensioners

Blocks	Collector Office	Panchayat President	Total
Thiruvannamalai	119 (93.0)	9 (7.0)	128 (100.0)
Arni	113 (94.2)	7 (5.8)	120 (100.0)
Cheyar	98	5	103



	(95.1)	(4.9)	(100.0)
Vandavasi	119 (95.2)	6 (4.8)	125 (100.0)
Jawadhu Hills	67 (82.7)	14 (17.3)	81 (100.0)
Total	516 (92.6)	41 (7.4)	557 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of the respective block's share out of the total. **Source:** Field Survey, 2016.

It is evident from the Table that 516 (92.6 per cent) respondents reported they will go to Collector office to report about their pension related issues, followed by 41 (7.4 per cent) reported that they will address the problem to the panchayat presidents. It was found that among the block-wise distribution that minimum respondents (82.7 per cent) from Jawadhu Hills and majority (slightly over 90 per cent) of the respondents from all the remaining blocks reported that they would address their problems with the collector office officials followed by (17.3 per cent) respondents from Jawadhu Hills block and (4 per cent) in Cheyyar and Vandavasi blocks would report their issues to the panchayat president. It is interesting to note that majority of the respondents agreed that they used to address the issues with the collector office officials.

Table 8: Grievances attended immediately

Blocks	Yes	No	Total
Thiruvannamalai	119 (93.0)	9 (7.0)	128 (100.0)
Arni	110 (91.7)	10 (8.3)	120 (100.0)
Cheyyar	96 (93.2)	7 (6.8)	103 (100.0)
Vandavasi	119 (95.2)	6 (4.8)	125 (100.0)
Jawadhu Hills	75 (92.6)	6 (7.4)	81 (100.0)
Total	519 (93.2)	38 (6.8)	557 (100.0)

Note: Figures in the brackets are percentages of the respective block's share out of the total.

Source: Field Survey, 2016.

From the above Table it could be noted that out of 519 respondents (93.2 per cent) agreed that their grievances were attended immediately and 38 (6.8 per cent) reported that their grievances were not attended immediately. As per the block-wise classification majority of the respondents (90 per cent) from all the sample blocks agreed that their grievances were attended immediately and (8.3 per cent) in Arni block and (4.8 per cent) from Vandavasi block reported that their grievances were not attended immediately.

Conclusion

The present chapter aimed at examining the impact of pension beneficiaries under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme in Thiruvannamalai District (Tamil Nadu). The researcher has collected information from 557 respondents who were spread over five blocks of Thiruvannamalai District of Tamil Nadu viz. Thiruvannamalai, Arni, Cheyyar, Vandavasi, and Jawadhu hills. The study reveals that all the beneficiaries are satisfied with the Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme. Most of the respondents agreed that their application processed on time and have not faced any problems while applying for the pension. All the respondents revealed that they were satisfied over the pension amount and agreed that mode of receipt of receiving pension amount is in SB account directly in the first week of every month. The study found that for all pension beneficiaries accepted that pension as their main source of income. Respondents used to be more independent in spending their income and also revealed that their standard of living increased in the society. Majority of the respondents agreed that their grievances used to attend immediately. The problems faced by the beneficiaries before getting pension and after receiving pension are also discussed in the chapter.

The study also observed that beneficiaries used to face various difficulties in some times like documents submission, application verification and submission, delay in application processing time, distance between the pension disbursement



office to village etc. The study also found that all the beneficiaries opined that the pension amount and the supply of freebies provided by the government to be increased for the better increase in standard of living.

The findings of this research suggest that the Indian government should increase the pension amount to lower the risk of poverty among the elderly and rationalise and simplify the procedures for obtaining pension to minimise exclusion of the most vulnerable groups.

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