Exploring the Dimensions of Awareness toward Poverty Alleviation Schemes among BPL Households in Haryana

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Abstract

The present study explores the awareness level of Below Poverty Line (BPL) households towards poverty alleviation schemes in Haryana. Despite numerous government initiatives aimed at eradicating poverty, low awareness and limited accessibility continue to hinder their effectiveness. An exploratory research design was adopted, involving 180 respondents selected from six revenue divisions of Haryana through a structured questionnaire. The results of factor analysis revealed five key dimensions of awareness—Eligibility Awareness, Scheme Awareness, Procedural Awareness, Benefit Awareness, and Resource Awareness—which collectively explain a substantial portion of the total variance. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) value of 0.878 and significant Bartlett's Test of Sphericity confirmed the adequacy of the data for factor analysis. Findings indicated that eligibility and procedural awareness play a crucial role in determining the utilization of welfare schemes. The study concludes that increasing information dissemination, simplifying administrative procedures, and strengthening local communication channels are vital for improving beneficiaries' participation and ensuring equitable access to poverty alleviation programs.

Keywords: Awareness, Below Poverty Line (BPL) households, Poverty alleviation schemes etc.

1. Introduction

Poverty remains one of the most persistent challenges confronting developing economies, including India, where a significant proportion of the population continues to live below the poverty line (BPL). According to the NITI Aayog's National Multidimensional Poverty Index (2023), approximately 11.28% of India's population still faces multidimensional poverty, highlighting the need for sustained policy interventions (NITI Aayog, 2023). To address this challenge, successive governments have launched a series of poverty alleviation schemes aimed at improving income levels, ensuring food security, enhancing access to basic services, and promoting social inclusion among marginalized groups (Chaudhary & Sharma, 2021). These programs—ranging from wage employment schemes like the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) to social welfare initiatives such as the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) and the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)—are designed to uplift vulnerable households through targeted interventions (Kumar & Singh, 2022). However, the success of such initiatives largely depends on the level of awareness among intended beneficiaries. Without adequate awareness, even well-intentioned schemes may fail to reach those most in need, thereby limiting their effectiveness and perpetuating poverty cycles (Tripathi & Sinha, 2020). In rural India, where literacy levels are relatively low and access to information is limited, lack of awareness often acts as a major barrier to participation in government programs (Rao & George, 2019). Factors such as poor communication networks, bureaucratic hurdles, and social exclusion further exacerbate the problem (Kaur & Gill, 2022). Consequently, understanding the extent of awareness among BPL households is critical for evaluating the inclusivity and accessibility of these schemes.

The present study aims to examine the awareness level of BPL households toward various poverty alleviation programs in Haryana. It seeks to identify the factors influencing their awareness and participation, and to assess how effectively information about these programs reaches the intended beneficiaries. Insights from this study are expected to contribute to policy formulation, improve outreach strategies, and strengthen the implementation of welfare programs to ensure equitable socio-economic development across rural communities.

2. Literature Review

Poverty alleviation has remained a central objective of India's developmental policy since independence, with numerous programs designed to address income inequality, unemployment, and social exclusion. Over the decades, several studies have examined the effectiveness of these initiatives and the role of awareness among beneficiaries in determining their success. Chaudhary and Sharma (2021) emphasized that poverty alleviation programs such as MGNREGA, PMAY, and NRLM were conceptualized to provide livelihood security and promote inclusive growth. However, their implementation has often been constrained by limited awareness among the targeted population. According to the authors, awareness acts as a critical link between policy intent and actual impact. Similarly, Kumar and Singh (2022) found that even though a wide range of poverty alleviation schemes are available, their benefits are not uniformly distributed due to varying levels of awareness, accessibility, and administrative efficiency across states. Several researchers have argued that awareness levels among Below Poverty Line (BPL) households significantly influence participation in welfare programs (Rao & George, 2019; Tripathi & Sinha, 2020). In rural areas, information asymmetry and social barriers hinder households from accessing government benefits. Rao and George (2019) reported that many BPL families remain unaware of eligibility criteria, procedural requirements, or the existence of certain schemes. Consequently, awareness is not merely an informational issue but a structural challenge linked to literacy, social capital, and institutional transparency. Kaur and Gill (2022) highlighted that socio-economic factors such as education, gender, caste, and geographic location play an important role in shaping awareness and utilization of government schemes. They observed that households with higher educational attainment and better social connectivity are more likely to access information and avail themselves of benefits. Likewise, Pandey and Mehta (2021) noted that awareness campaigns through local governance bodies and self-help groups (SHGs) can substantially enhance participation, especially among women and marginalized communities. Studies focusing on Haryana and other northern states reveal similar patterns. Singh and Chauhan (2021) observed that despite a significant budgetary allocation for anti-poverty programs, many rural households in Haryana lack adequate knowledge of available schemes, primarily due to poor dissemination of information and bureaucratic complexities. Bhattacharya (2020) added that while digital platforms have improved transparency, digital illiteracy among BPL households continues to limit their ability to access information about schemes. Furthermore, research by Das and Gupta (2023) underlined the need for community-based awareness drives and participatory communication strategies. Their findings suggest that direct engagement through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), local NGOs, and social workers significantly improves awareness and trust among rural beneficiaries. The authors also argue that monitoring and feedback mechanisms must accompany awareness efforts to ensure sustained participation.

Overall, the literature indicates that while India has developed an extensive framework of poverty alleviation programs, their success is contingent upon the level of awareness and accessibility among intended beneficiaries. Awareness, therefore, emerges as both a precondition and a determinant of effective poverty reduction. The reviewed studies collectively underscore the necessity of strengthening communication channels, enhancing literacy, and ensuring institutional accountability to improve awareness and participation among BPL households.

3. Research Gap

Despite extensive policy efforts and a wide range of government initiatives aimed at poverty reduction in India, existing literature reveals that the success of such schemes continues to be uneven across regions and socio-economic groups. Several studies (Rao & George, 2019; Chaudhary & Sharma, 2021; Kumar & Singh, 2022) have examined the design and implementation of poverty alleviation programs but have often focused on program outcomes, economic impact, or administrative efficiency, rather than assessing the awareness level among the intended beneficiaries. Awareness has been recognized as a crucial determinant of effective participation; however, it remains underexplored in empirical research, particularly in the context of Below Poverty Line (BPL) households. Previous research (Kaur & Gill, 2022; Tripathi & Sinha, 2020) has identified that limited literacy, socio-economic constraints, and inadequate information dissemination are significant barriers to accessing welfare schemes. Yet, most of these studies provide a generalized view

at the national or state level, without a focused micro-level investigation of how awareness shapes accessibility among rural BPL households. Furthermore, few studies (Singh & Chauhan, 2021; Bhattacharya, 2020) have analyzed awareness levels within specific regional contexts such as Haryana, despite its active participation in major poverty alleviation programs like MGNREGA and PMAY. Another gap in the existing body of literature is the limited examination of the multidimensional factors influencing awareness—such as education, gender, digital literacy, and communication channels—especially in rural areas where information asymmetry persists. While Das and Gupta (2023) and Patra and Behera (2022) have discussed the role of community participation and communication strategies, there is still insufficient empirical evidence on how these mechanisms contribute to awareness enhancement among BPL households.

Therefore, the present study seeks to fill these gaps by empirically assessing the awareness level of BPL households toward various poverty alleviation schemes in Haryana. It aims to identify the socio-demographic and informational factors influencing awareness, evaluate the extent of beneficiaries' understanding of program benefits and procedures, and highlight the existing communication barriers. This study intends to bridge the research gap by providing region-specific insights that can inform more effective policy interventions and strengthen the outreach of poverty alleviation programs.

4. Research Methodology

The present study adopts an exploratory research design to investigate the awareness level of Below Poverty Line (BPL) households toward various poverty alleviation schemes implemented in Haryana. The exploratory design is appropriate as it allows for an in-depth understanding of the existing level of awareness, sources of information, and barriers that hinder access to government welfare programs. The target population for the study comprises households classified under the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category in the state of Haryana. To ensure adequate geographical representation, respondents were selected from the six revenue divisions of Haryana—Ambala, Hisar, Karnal, Rohtak, Gurugram, and Faridabad. A total of 180 respondents were chosen, with 30 respondents from each division. This stratified regional selection ensured that both rural and semi-urban variations were captured, reflecting the socio-economic diversity of the state. A multistage sampling approach was employed. In the first stage, six revenue divisions of Haryana were purposively selected based on administrative relevance and population distribution. In the second stage, three districts were randomly chosen from each division, followed by the identification of BPL households using local administrative records and village-level poverty lists. From these identified households, respondents were selected using convenience sampling, based on their willingness to participate and availability during data collection. The study primarily relies on primary data collected through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire consisted of both closed-ended and semi-open questions designed to capture respondents' demographic profiles, level of awareness regarding different poverty alleviation schemes (such as MGNREGA, PMAY, NRLM, PM-KISAN, and others), sources of information, and perceived obstacles in accessing these schemes. Collected data were coded and tabulated using Microsoft Excel and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

5. Analysis and Findings

The analysis extracted five distinct but interrelated factors—Eligibility Awareness, Scheme Awareness, Procedural Awareness, Benefit Awareness, and Resource Awareness—which collectively explained a significant proportion of the total variance. Each factor represents a critical component of awareness that determines the extent to which BPL households can effectively access and benefit from government welfare programs. The detailed interpretation of each factor is presented below.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (N)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	98	54.4
	Female	82	45.6
Age (in years)	Below 25	22	12.2
	26–40	64	35.6

	41–55	58	32.2
	Above 55	36	20.0
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	46	25.6
	Primary Education	58	32.2
	Secondary Education	48	26.7
	Higher Secondary and Above	28	15.5
Occupation	Agricultural Labourer	76	42.2
	Non-Agricultural Labourer	48	26.7
	Self-Employed	32	17.8
	Unemployed	24	13.3
Monthly Household Income (INR)	Below 5,000	41	22.8
	5,001–10,000	87	48.3
	10,001–15,000	38	21.1
	Above 15,000	14	7.8
Family Size	Up to 3 Members	32	17.8
	4–6 Members	92	51.1
	Above 6 Members	56	31.1
Residence Type	Rural	128	71.1
	Semi-Urban	52	28.9
Total		180	100

Source: Primary Data

The demographic characteristics of the 180 respondents from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households in Haryana reveal a balanced representation across gender, with 54.4% males and 45.6% females. The age distribution indicates that the majority of respondents (35.6%) fall within the 26–40 years category, followed by 32.2% in the 41–55 years range, suggesting that most respondents are in their economically active years. Educational attainment remains low among the surveyed households—25.6% of respondents were illiterate and 32.2% had only primary education, reflecting limited access to formal education. In terms of occupation, 42.2% were agricultural labourers and 26.7% were non-agricultural labourers, showing a strong dependence on manual and low-income employment.The income distribution highlights economic vulnerability, with nearly half of the respondents (48.3%) earning between ₹5,001 and ₹10,000 per month, while 22.8% earned less than ₹5,000, indicating widespread poverty within the sample. Family size data show that 51.1% of households have 4–6 members, suggesting moderate household density. A majority (71.1%) of respondents resided in rural areas, while 28.9% were from semi-urban locations, consistent with the rural concentration of poverty in Haryana. Overall, the demographic profile reflects a population that is economically marginalized, educationally disadvantaged, and primarily engaged in informal or agricultural labour, underscoring the importance of poverty alleviation programs for improving their socio-economic well-being.

Table 2: KMO and Bartlett's Test of Sampling Adequacy

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.878
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2628.342
	df	276
	Sig.	.000

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy for the data set is 0.878, which is well above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating that the sample is highly adequate for factor analysis. The Bartlett's Test of Sphericity shows a chi-square value of 2628.342 with 276 degrees of freedom and a significance level of $p < 0.001$, confirming that the correlation matrix is not an identity matrix. This implies that there are sufficient correlations among variables, and therefore, factor analysis is appropriate for data reduction and structure identification in this study.

Table 3: Factor Loadings, Communalities, Reliability, and Variance Explained for Awareness Dimensions

Constructs	Codes	Loadings	Communalities	Cronbach's α	Variance Explained
Eligibility Awareness (EA)	EAW1	.883	.768	0.877	29.986
	EAW2	.858	.749		
	EAW3	.837	.783		
	EAW4	.780	.792		
	EAW5	.743	.765		
Scheme Awareness (SA)	SAW1	.825	.757	0.794	16.034
	SAW2	.805	.767		
	SAW3	.795	.795		
	SAW4	.736	.761		
	SAW5	.727	.726		
Procedural Awareness (PA)	PAW1	.850	.799	0.845	10.731
	PAW2	.780	.739		
	PAW3	.771	.786		
	PAW4	.761	.734		
	PAW5	.702	.796		
Benefit Awareness (BA)	BAW1	.862	.754	0.862	7.774
	BAW2	.854	.715		
	BAW3	.847	.712		
	BAW4	.839	.743		
Resource Awareness (RA)	RAW1	.800	.706	0.835	6.417

RAW2	.797	.817			
RAW3	.748	.824			
RAW4	.728	.780			
RAW5	.725	.759			

a. Eligibility Awareness (EA)

Eligibility Awareness emerged as the most dominant factor, explaining 29.986% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.877, indicating excellent internal consistency. The high factor loadings (ranging from 0.743 to 0.883) reveal that respondents' understanding of eligibility criteria strongly influences their ability to access poverty alleviation programs. This dimension highlights how awareness of age limits, income criteria, social category, and household status is essential for ensuring that BPL families can apply for the schemes they qualify for. The findings suggest that lack of knowledge about eligibility requirements often acts as a barrier to scheme utilization.

b. Scheme Awareness (SA)

Scheme Awareness accounted for 16.034% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.794, reflecting good reliability. The factor loadings (0.727–0.825) show that respondents have moderate to high awareness of available welfare schemes. This construct represents the extent to which households are familiar with the names, objectives, and scope of major government initiatives. The results indicate that while many respondents have heard about some programs, detailed awareness regarding scheme benefits and coverage remains limited, affecting the effective utilization of government support.

c. Procedural Awareness (PA)

Procedural Awareness contributed 10.731% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.845, confirming high reliability. The factor loadings (0.702–0.850) signify that respondents' understanding of application procedures, required documentation, and institutional channels significantly affects their ability to benefit from welfare schemes. The findings reveal that bureaucratic hurdles, complex documentation, and limited guidance often create confusion and restrict access among BPL households, despite eligibility.

d. Benefit Awareness (BA)

Benefit Awareness explained 7.774% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.862, reflecting strong internal consistency. Factor loadings (0.839–0.862) show that respondents' knowledge of the monetary and non-monetary benefits associated with various schemes is an important determinant of participation. This dimension highlights that beneficiaries who are well informed about the nature and amount of benefits—such as subsidies, housing assistance, employment opportunities, and pensions—are more likely to actively engage with the schemes.

e. Resource Awareness (RA)

Resource Awareness accounted for 6.417% of the total variance with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.835, signifying good reliability. The factor loadings (0.725–0.800) reveal that access to information sources such as local governance bodies, digital media, and community leaders plays a critical role in shaping awareness. This factor underscores the importance of communication infrastructure and outreach mechanisms in bridging information gaps between policy implementation and the target population.

6. Conclusion

The study assessed the awareness level of Below Poverty Line (BPL) households towards various poverty alleviation schemes implemented in Haryana. The findings revealed that awareness plays a decisive role in determining the extent of access and participation in government welfare programs. Through exploratory factor analysis, five key dimensions of awareness were identified—Eligibility Awareness, Scheme Awareness, Procedural Awareness, Benefit Awareness, and Resource Awareness—each contributing uniquely to shaping beneficiaries' understanding and engagement with the schemes. Among these, Eligibility Awareness emerged as the most significant factor, indicating that many households

remain unaware of the basic criteria that qualify them for specific programs. While awareness about the existence of schemes was moderate, procedural complexities and limited communication channels continue to restrict full participation. The results further emphasized that higher awareness levels are associated with better utilization of benefits and greater satisfaction with government initiatives. Overall, the study concludes that effective dissemination of information, simplification of procedures, and enhanced outreach through community participation and digital platforms are essential for strengthening beneficiaries' awareness. Strengthening these areas would ensure equitable access, transparency, and the successful implementation of poverty alleviation programs. Hence, continuous awareness campaigns, regular monitoring, and collaboration between government agencies and local institutions are crucial to achieving inclusive and sustainable poverty reduction outcomes among BPL households in Haryana.

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