

Constraints Faced by the Developmental Officials in Implementation of District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP)

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ABSTRACT

An investigation was carried out to identify the constraints affecting the performance of developmental officials working in the District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP). The study was conducted in Rajasmand and Baran districts of Rajasthan. Total thirty four developmental officials were interviewed as sample for the study. The study had established administrative, technical, operational, and financial constraints. Frequent transfer of staff from one project to another, illiteracy among the beneficiary farmers caused problems, inadequate number of staff at field level and large area of jurisdiction under a single supervisor and lack of transport facilities for project personnel to visit the project area due to financial shortage were pointed out as the most serious constraints faced by developmental officials. Based on these constraints, some possible suggestions were made for augmenting their role in effective implementation of second phase of District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP) or other development programmes.

Key words: Constraints; Developmental officials; District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP)

The dairy enterprise is an important intervention for the anti-poverty programme of District Poverty Initiative Project for the economic self sufficiency of the beneficiary farmers. Economic self sufficiency of rural population can greatly contribute to the eradication of poverty in rural area. Several anti-poverty programmes were launched after the independence. These programmes were revamped and re-focused from time to time to increase their effectiveness. However; there are many constraints and problems during the implementation stage of the programme which reduced the effectiveness of the programme. So, the need of the hour is to strengthen the programme as a part of broader policy in the effort to alleviate such problems and constraints faced by the developmental officials in functioning of the DPIP Programme for its successful in greater way.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Rajasthan state, which is situated in North-West of India. Developmental officials worked under the DPIP project were selected at the district, block and village level to assess the constraints perceived by them in implementation of the project as respondents for the study.

All the managers *i.e.* Manager (Community Development & Training), Manager (Monitoring & Learning), Manager (Programme Appraisal) and Manager (Finance) with their assistant manager, therefore 16 developmental officials were selected from these two districts as respondents.

One District Project Coordinator from each of the selected block was taken as respondent; therefore six District Project Coordinators were interviewed from six selected blocks of two districts.

One community facilitator was selected from each of the selected dairy CIG village; thus 12 respondents were selected from 12 dairy CIG villages each of these two districts. The total number of respondents *i.e.* developmental officials of two selected districts were 24.

A standard interview schedule was developed to measure the various constraints encountered by the developmental officials in implementation of the District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP). Further these constraints were classified into administrative, technical, operational, and financial constraints. Mean weighted score was worked out for each constraint. The data were solicited by personal interview method. The responses were obtained on three-point continuum scale *viz.*, most serious, serious and not so serious with the

scoring of 2, 1 and 0, respectively. The respondents were asked to respond about the constraints as per their perception in any of the above referred three response categories. The weighted mean score of each individual constraint was computed and ranked in descending order. Weighted mean score, Percentage and rank methods of statistics were used for analyzing the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An attempt has been made to identify the various constraints faced by the development officials in implementation of DPIIP programme. The constraints perceived by the respondents have been presented under different headings as under:

Administrative constraints: It could be observed from the Table 1 that “frequent transfer of staff from one project to another” was perceived important constraint (75.00%) among all the administrative constraints studied. The second most serious constraint was “heavy work load during peak season (69.00%)” and third was “Lack of coordination and linkage with other line departments (67.50%)”. These findings are in line with findings of Choudhary (2002), Sailaja (2002), Nachimuthu (2002), Kumar et al (2005), Manivannam (1997), Bairathi (1993), Sharma and Makhija (1991) and Gill and Parmer (1990).

Table 1. Administrative constraints perceived by the developmental officials

Sr. No.	Constraints	Developmental Officials (n= 34)	
		Weighted mean Score	Rank
1	Frequent transfer of staff from one project to another	1.50(75.00)	I
2	Heavy work load during peak season	1.38(69.00)	II
3	Lack of coordination and linkage with other line departments	1.35(67.50)	III
4	Poor documentation of the work done by the project personnel	1.12(56.00)	IV
5	Planning of project activities were faulty	1.06(53.00)	V
6	Faction among executive members	1.00(50.00)	VI
7	Poor information system	0.97(48.50)	VII
8	Direction from the supervisor authorities are delayed	0.94(47.00)	VIII
9	Political affiliation vibrate the environment	0.76(38.00)	IX
10	Favoritism and nepotism in management	0.73(36.50)	X
11	Inadequate staff in the project	0.56(28.00)	XI

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

The other administrative constraints experienced by developmental officials were “poor documentation of the work done by the project personnel”, “planning of project activities are faulty”, “faction among executive members”, “poor information system”, “direction from the supervisor authorities are delayed”, “political affiliation vibrate the environment”, “favoritism and nepotism in management” and “inadequate staff in the project”.

From the above findings it can be concluded that frequent transfer of staff from one project to another was highlighted a major constraints, when they were getting transferred frequently, at every place it will take time to settle and establish rapport with the farmers. This is of utmost importance while grass-root level workers are concerned. To be an efficient field worker, the project personnel should be a mono-purpose worker. Because of heavy work load, officials had performed inefficiently both the administrative and field works. Most of the time of the project workers was lost in co-ordination of line departments and proper guidance from the superiors.

Technical constraints: Among the technical constraints (Table- 2), “illiteracy among the beneficiary farmers cause problems” as most serious constraint were found with weighted mean score percent 94.00 followed by “lack of resources in the project area” with 78.00 weighted mean score per cent and “lack of facilities for conducting extension activities with 73.50 per cent”; respectively. These findings are in agreement with the findings of Anand (2009), Srilatha (2005), Choudhary (2002), Nachimuthu (2002), Sailaja (2002), Sankhala and Ramchand (1998), Manivannam (1997), Kaushik and Singhal (1992) and Gill and Parmer (1990).

From the above findings it can be concluded that illiteracy among beneficiary farmers caused serious problem in better understanding of training programmes and other activities. Project personnel faced many problems to deliver any ideas, or techniques to the farmers efficiently and effectively. Developmental officials also faced problem regarding lack of resources in project area. Officials were also faced the several basic problems/constraints like unavailability of space to conduct the meetings and training programmes, lack of transportation facilities, lack of education facilities and lack of irrigation facilities in project area.

The other remaining important constraints perceived by the respondents were “inaccessibility to communication media (66.00%)”, “lack of trained and well qualified staff in the project (64.50%)”, “no

provision for the refresher courses for the programme functionaries (59.00%)". "Untimely communication among in the departmental officials" (35.50%) and "trainings conducted poorly" (29.50%) which were comparatively less serious. It can be inferred from the above results that there was no provision of development of human resource in the policy document of the project. It is, therefore, recommended that emphasis may be given on this aspect to deliver the services efficiently and effectively to achieve the objectives of the project.

Table 2: Technical constraints perceived by the developmental officials

Sr. No.	Constraints	Developmental Officials (n= 34)	
		Weighted mean Score	Rank
1	Illiteracy among the beneficiary farmers caused problems	1.88 (94.00)	I
2	Lack of resources in the project area	1.56 (78.00)	II
3	Lack of facilities for conducting extension activities	1.47 (73.50)	III
4	Inaccessibility to communication media	1.32 (66.00)	IV
5	Lack of trained and well qualified staff in the project	1.29 (64.50)	V
6	Lack of technical competence among the staff regarding various enterprises	1.26 (63.00)	VI
7	No provision for the refresher courses for the programme functionaries	1.18 (59.00)	VII
8	Untimely communication among in the departmental officials	0.71 (35.50)	VIII
9	Trainings conducted poorly	0.59 (29.50)	IX

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

Operational constraints: Table-3 clearly indicated that "inadequate number of staff at field level and large area of jurisdiction under a single supervisor" was ranked first with (79.50%) weighted mean score. The finding is in line with the findings of *Anand (2009)*, *Choudhary (2002)* and *Sharma and Makhija (1991)*. This was followed by "inadequate extension services and training programmes with 70.50 per cent weighted mean score" which was also supported by *Nachimuthu (2002)* and *Sailaja (2002)*.

It can be concluded from the above findings that large area of supervision, which make it difficult for the developmental officials to visit the field and organize meetings in time, resulting failure in giving timely

instruction for field problems. This kept the farmers in difficulties and inconveniences for which developmental officials are often criticized. It has also found that inadequate extension services and training programmes was major constraint. This might be due to the fact that lack of audio visual aids, extension materials and other facilities which were essential for conducting trainings by extension experts were not available in project area.

Table 3. Operational constraints perceived by the developmental officials

Sr. No.	Constraints	Developmental Officials (n= 34)	
		Weighted mean Score	Rank
1	Inadequate number of staff at field level and large area of jurisdiction under a single supervisor	1.59 (79.50)	I
2	Inadequate extension services and training programmes for beneficiaries	1.41 (70.50)	II
3	Inadequate guidance and cooperation among the line department	1.38 (69.00)	III
4	Lack of proper planning and coordination with concerned department	0.94 (47.00)	IV
5	Lack of rapport between beneficiaries and programme functionaries	0.91 (45.50)	V
6	Inadequate and improper programme policies	0.85 (42.50)	VI
7	Poor knowledge about smooth functioning of the project	0.79 (39.50)	VII
8	Lack of involvement of NGO and PRIs in enhancing community participation	0.74 (37.50)	VIII
9	Lack of coordination within and between the project personnel (NGO, DPMU, PRIs, VDO etc.)	0.71 (35.50)	IX
10	Delay in approval of beneficiaries as well as fund	0.68 (34.00)	X
11	Poor reporting by the field staff	0.59 (29.50)	XI

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

Developmental officials also reported the important constraints as "inadequate guidance and cooperation among the line department" (69.00%), "lack of proper planning and coordination with concerned department" (47.00%), "lack of rapport between beneficiaries and programme functionaries" (45.50%), "inadequate and improper programme policies" (42.50%), "poor knowledge about smooth functioning of the project"

(39.50%) and “lack of involvement of NGO and PRIs in enhancing community participation” (37.50%). Whereas “lack of coordination within and between the project personnel (NGO, DPMU, PRIs, VDO etc.)” (35.50%), “delay in approval of beneficiaries as well as fund” (34.00%) and “poor reporting by the field staff” (29.50%) which are comparatively less serious. Finally, it can be concluded that proper co-ordination is highly need in the implementation part of the project otherwise the project aim and objectives could not be ascertained in the manner it was planned.

Financial constraints: It could be observed from the Table- 4 that “lack of transport facilities for project personnel to visit the project area” was perceived most serious constraint (57.50%) among all the financial constraints studied. This finding was in revelations with findings of *Srilatha (2005)*, *Nachimuthu (2002)*, *Kumar et al. (2005)*, *Sharma and Makhija (1991)* and *Gill and Parmer (1990)*.

Table 4. Financial constraints perceived by the developmental officials

Sr. No.	Constraints	Developmental Officials (n= 34)	
		Weighted mean Score	Rank
1	Lack of transport facilities for project personnel to visit the project area due to financial shortage	1.15 (57.50)	I
2	Delayed in distribution of salary to project personnel	1.09 (54.50)	II
3	Utilization of fund was not proper	0.41 (20.50)	III
4	Delayed in repayment of loans by the beneficiaries	0.35 (17.50)	IV
5	The budget earmarked for a particular activity was diverted towards other activities	0.21 (10.50)	V
6	Untimely release of fund by the donor agencies	0.15 (7.50)	VI

Figures in parenthesis indicates percentage

The second most serious constraint was “delay in distribution of salary to project personnel” (54.50%) and third was “utilization of fund is not proper” (20.50%). The other financial constraints stated by developmental officials were “Delay in repayment of loans by the beneficiaries” (17.50%), “budget earmarked for a particular activity is diverted towards other activities” (10.50) and “untimely release of fund by the donor agencies” (7.50%) were also some of the other

constraints reported by the developmental officials which are comparatively less serious.

It may be summarized that funds should be made available in time for the project activities from all the concerned agencies otherwise it get delayed the implementation of project activities and create mistrust among the beneficiaries which may affect the overall output of the project. There should be provision of funds for hiring a vehicle in the project for proper monitoring and supervision of project activities so that efficiency of the project can be enhanced.

CONCLUSION

It is concluded that the developmental officials perceived major constraints as frequent transfer of staff from one project to another, heavy work load during peak season, illiteracy among the beneficiary farmers caused problems, lack of resources in the project area, inadequate number of staff at field level and large area of jurisdiction under a single supervisor, Inadequate extension services and training programmes for beneficiaries, lack of transport facilities for project personnel to visit the project area due to financial shortage and delayed in distribution of salary to project personnel.

From the findings of the study, it is imperative to call for attention from Government, Policy makers, and Planners to design effective policy/strategy that would ensure to overcome the constraints faced by the developmental officials for promoting participation and involvement in rural developmental programmes, the following suggestions are being provided: i) Frequent transfer of the project personnel done mainly under political pressure, must be avoided, ii) Work load must be reduced, iii) Provide educational facilities to the farmers under the project so that project personnel can easily provide information and technology to them, iv) Provision of more appointments of staff at field level, v) Conduct more training programmes in the project area, vi) Provision of proper extension services for the personnel those providing training, vii) Increase budget for conducting field activities, viii) Timely distribution of salary, ix) Provision of recruitment of well trained staff in the project especially in agriculture and dairy farming sector, x) Development and create resources and infrastructure facilities in project area and xi) Project personnel must be encouraged by providing them with incentives and rewards for good work done.

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