

District Poverty Initiative Project A Report on Process Monitoring

I. INTRODUCTION

The District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP) was initiated by the Government of Rajasthan with support of the World Bank in 7 districts of Rajasthan in the year 2000. The project aims at building networks and organisations of the poor at the community level to address needs of the poor and to empower them in this process. The project has tried to reach the poor by adopting a group approach around a common interest. It was felt that this approach would help the poor gain power, voice and status. The main objectives of the project are stated in Box 1.

This report provides a detailed analysis of issues that have emerged during process monitoring exercises carried out in five districts namely Dausa, Tonk, Churu, Rajsamand and Dholpur.

Box 1: Objectives of DPIP

- Mobilise and empower the poor and help them to develop strong grassroots organisations that facilitate access to and participation in democratic and development processes;
- Expand the involvement of the poor in economic activities by improving their capacities, skills, access to social and economic infrastructure and services and employment opportunities;
- Improve the abilities of non-government, government and panchayati raj institutions to hear, reach and serve poor clients, i.e. to function in a more inclusive and participatory manner;
- Supporting small scale sub-projects that are priority chosen, planned and implemented by the poor;

Source: Project Appraisal Document, DPIP, Rajasthan, March 31,2000

Process Monitoring in DPIP

In DPIP Process Monitoring (PM) is a part of a learning system and focuses on understanding:

- how various inputs in the project get converted into outputs;
- what issues are critical in the conversion process and
- what action is necessary to increase effectiveness?

The three main elements of PM are Group Self Assessment (GSA), Peer Review (PR) and Focussed Studies.

In the context of learning, Process Monitoring facilitates those involved in the programme to look critically at their own processes on a continuous basis for revising both attitudes and actions. It helps capture what is happening in the present, within the project through collective engagement of the poor and other stakeholders. In DPIP action is at multiple levels. The smallest action at any level may have an impact, which needs to

be understood, as it is important for learning and planning the future course of action. Process monitoring will also help in problem solving, mid-course corrections, monitoring relations between actors and project implementation.

Thus, in practice, we understand through Group Self Assessment the processes adopted by Common Interest Groups(CIGs), the Community facilitators(CF) and the District Project Coordinators (DPCs); the processes involved in design and implementation of sub-project activities; and in building relationships between various agencies. Besides, GSA, Peer Review would help learning from successes, small or big. Focussed studies would help in problem solving and designing future course of action.

Methodology

The IDSJ research team developed the basic design and tools for PM. The basic tool for GSA has been Focus Group discussions (FGDs) around a number of open ended questions for critical review of processes in the project area which have been documented in detail. The attempt has also been to identify key domains of change. Along with the members of the CIG an effort was made to interact with members of the village community, the DPMU project staff, NGO coordinator, CF and BCs. The Process Monitoring Team has visited 49 CIGs spread in 5 of the 7 DPIP districts during the period April-September, 2002. See Table 1.

Table 1: Districtwise distribution of the number of Common Interest Groups covered by Process Monitoring Team

District	Number
Churu	9
Dausa	15
Dholpur	5
Rajasama nd	9
Tonk	11
Total	49

The issues arising from the field work of the PM team are discussed in six sections. Section II discusses the process of selection of Community Facilitators (CFs) as well as their roles. Section III analyses the formation of CIGs. Section IV describes the processes related to Sub Project Activities and also discusses some of them in detail. The Quantitative Participatory Assessment is presented in Section V. The Issues raised in the Report are summarised in section VI.

II. COMMUNITY FACILITATORS: PROCESSES OF IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION

The role of the CF in DPIP is central to mobilisation and development of Common Interest Groups (CIG) at the village level. Efforts are made to select a person from the village(s)in which she/ he would work or from a nearby area to ensure cultural and geographical familiarity. The CF is expected to be the best informed person on behalf of the project and represent the project at the village level and will occupy a position of importance. It is envisaged that the CF would receive continuous support from the NGO

to build cohesive and stable groups at the village level.

In the process of identification of suitable candidates for the position of CFs, a common feature observed across districts has been advertisement of the position in local newspapers. Some NGO coordinators met influential persons in the village to identify a suitable candidate. A few others organised a *gram sabha* and inquired about 'educated unemployed persons' in the village who would work with commitment and a selfless attitude in a new programme being implemented by the state government. In some villages the panchayat secretary or the Principal of the local government school was also present during the initial meetings.

Interested applicants were then called to the NGO office for a written test and interview and the final list of selected persons was communicated within a month. After selection the selected individuals were given a 13 day training in IGPRI, Jaipur where in they were given inputs on various issues related to DPIP with special emphasis on group formation and functioning of CIGs.

The case from Churu district presents a typical selection process adopted in various villages. See Box 2.

Box 2: Identification and Selection of a Community Facilitator in Churu District

In October 2000 when DPIP was started in the district the team from the Bhoruka Charitable trust visited the panchayat bhavan in village Bachrara. A gram sabha was organised and information regarding DPIP was given. The team members also gave information regarding the role of CF and interested individuals were asked to fill out a form. There were two persons who filled the form and were later asked to come to the office of the NGO. At the NGO office in Churu both the DPC and DPM were present at the time of interviews. A group discussion was organised which was followed by a written test. In the interview we were asked questions related to the village and panchayat. After the interview we were told that if selected the appointment letter would be directly sent to us.

The GSA exercises indicate that the selection process has more or less followed the same pattern across villages in Dausa, Tonk, Churu and Dholpur. However, in Rajsamand the applicants were called directly for an interview through the newspaper advertisement and no written test was administered. The NGOs have largely selected women and men from the village or nearby area as CFs. Their qualification range from Standard VIII to BA. Most of the CFs in the 5 districts belong to the general category. Also there are very few CFs from within the BPL category. The qualification for women wanting to join the programme is Secondary level but their numbers continue to be small in DPIP. See Table 2.

Most of the women CFs are *bahus* of the village. This factor inhibits their interactions and mobility in the village as segregation norms and observation of *pardah* restricts interaction with village elders especially men. It is also evident that many women CFs take the support and help of the male members in the family (husband or brother) in carrying out their day to day responsibilities. They are often accompanied by the men if they have to move out of the village to the *tehsils*, NGO office etc. The discussions reveal that some women had also left the programme as it was difficult for them to travel to

other villages on their own.

Table 2: Distribution of Community Facilitators by district and gender in the first phase of implementation

District	Men	Women	Total
Churu	12	1	13
Dausa	22	2	24
Dholpur	14	2	16
Rajasamand	19	3	22
Tonk	16	4	20
Total	83	12	95

It is seen that both caste and political patronage have played a part in the selection of CFs. Local pressure groups, factions and even the Sarpanch and MLAs also seem to have a say in the selections. An official from the DPMU indicated that there was immense political pressure in the selection of CFs and in some cases these applicants were given a preference. In one district the Block Development Officer prepared a list of candidates to be selected as CFs and sent it to the DPC/NGO. In another case the influential members of a community reached the office of the NGO with bribes, demanding that a particular women CF be appointed. Tension between the CF and members from the richer and dominant groups have also been reported. See Box 3.

Box 3: The Case of a CF

The village is dominated by Jat households. I belong to the Nai community. The men in the village resent the fact that I am working as the CF. The earlier CF was a woman from their own community but was not regular in her work and I was appointed in her place. I am afraid of going to the village at night, as the men are unpredictable, get drunk and threaten me with dire consequences.

Selection of CFs: Emerging Issues

It is apparent that the selection process adopted has been fairly routinised based on steps as indicated in the Project Implementation Plan (PIP). While in some places it was broad based i.e. through *gram sabha* meeting or panchayat meetings, at others it was fairly narrow based i.e. a few influential persons in the village were informed about the programme and nominations /applications were invited and no extra effort was put in by the NGO at the village level.

Two factors seem to have influenced the selection of CFs in most areas- the lack of a sound base of the NGO in the project area and time target set by the programme. It is evident that while most of the NGOs who were identified as project partners in the first phase had varied experience of working with the poor and marginalised groups, they did not have any ongoing /planned activity in the project area. A resultant factor then has been that these groups did not spend adequate time on rapport building, essential for any community based work. Very few gram sabhas or meetings with the poor were organised

by the NGOs in the districts. The PRA activities were also carried out in routine manner. Secondly, during the initial phase of the project most of the NGO contracts with SPMU were drawn up for a period of one year within which the NGOs were expected to complete implementing the programme. Therefore, to accelerate the process of implementation most NGOs seem to have taken recourse to short cuts with the focus on completing a task in a given time. The pressure of time was constantly cited as a reason for not adhering to 'processes' in the field.

More recently, another model is being used by Sewa Mandir in the newer clusters in Rajsamand where the NGO has appointed its own trained workers as CF.

Role of Community Facilitator

The role of the CF as envisaged in the project is both demanding and time consuming. Discussions with the CFs indicate that after the initial training most of the CFs have largely concentrated on conducting PRA, identifying the BPL families and initiating the process of CIG formation. Most CFs introduced DPIP as a program for the poor, in which 90 per cent subsidies are provided for some activities.

The responsibilities and expectations of the CF in the field are many. It is apparent that most of the CFs have been preoccupied with issues related to CIG formation and identification of Sub-project activities. As a consequence other activities have taken a back seat. The support of the NGO to the CF also seems restricted to these two activities.

A number of issues were raised by the CFs in these districts relating to their own work expectations and responsibilities. These are the following:

- Most CFs aired that there was a gap between the inputs given during initial training and actual field level situations. They had been told that DPIP is not a target driven programme, there is greater flexibility as compared to other programmes and so on. But these do not match the realities in the field. They had not been prepared for the problems they encountered in the field.
- The CFs complained that the procedural delays in sanctioning of the projects were counter productive at the field level as it was difficult to keep a group 'going' without a purpose. The group members lose trust as promises of quick implementation are not met and they find fault with the CFs. Also it takes the CFs a lot of time to collect the relevant documents and registries from the Tehsil offices.
- The delays in payments of salaries and travel reimbursements to CF were other issues, which came up for detailed discussion. The normal procedure is that the travel bills are submitted to DPMU and are then sent to SPMU for clearances, verification and approval. The delay is in the range of 3-6 months.
- Finally in most districts the ongoing tension in the relationship between the DPMU and DPC has impacted on the working of the CF. A common statement heard was “*do saal se do paton ke bich pis rahein hain*” which is often a result of conflicting instructions issued to the CFs by the DPM of DPMU and DPC of the NGO.

The case of the CF in a village in Dausa district indicates the need for careful selection of CF. In this village the CF delayed depositing the contribution of the group in the bank by three months. The CF used the money for personal work. The CIG members came to

know about this lapse only when they asked him for their passbooks and found only an entry of Rs.500. The CF pressurized the CIG members not to reveal this to the officials and promised to deposit the money in the bank. The CIG members expressed that they had lost trust in the CF but could not voice their grievance or complain openly as the CF was a resident of their own village and belonged to an upper caste. It was also evident that the DPC/NGO had not taken up this issue in earnest with the CF. This breaking of the trust by the CF has left a sense of uneasiness among the group members. This instance runs contrary to expectations from the CF that he/she would work in the interest of the 'poor' and facilitate the CIG to access benefits from the project

III. FORMATION OF COMMON INTEREST GROUPS

The processes envisaged in the formation of CIGs are inclusionary and require substantial time for continuous interaction with the poor and the community at large (See Box 4).

Box 4: Formation of Community Interest Groups

- The CFs would conduct several rounds of dialogue with the village poor and special efforts would be made to access the 'excluded poor'.
- During the process the community would be encouraged to identify sincere and committed people who could initiate the process of CIG formation and become members of the CIGs themselves.
- The lead members of the CIG would receive training in social mobilization and group building. The CF and NGO would conduct training using module developed for the purpose. Besides there would be training of all group members at the habitation level by the CF and NGO.
- The best groups would be identified and developed as resource groups, to which members of the other groups in the area could be brought on exchange visits.
- Qualified and committed group members/ leaders would be identified and trained as habitation level leaders and trainers. They would be paid stipends by the CIGs. These leaders would take over more and more responsibilities for sustaining groups within their habitation.
- The above mentioned leaders would take more and more responsibilities for sustaining groups within their habitations and would assist CFs with new groups as they are formed. As a strong cadre of village leaders is developed, CFs would transfer responsibilities for day to day support of the CIGs to them. At the same time they would enlarge their own area of coverage to newer habitations and channel their efforts to developing new groups, performance improvement of existing groups, and preparation of sub project proposals for financing under the CIF.

Source: DPIP, PAD document

Processes of CIG formation

In practice, field level interactions reveal that the process of CIG formation as envisaged in the PAD is not followed.

As a first step most CFs approached the BPL households and gathered preliminary information about them and their livelihoods. Little attempt was made to include the poor

not enlisted as BPL. In the earliest phase of the programme the CFs were allowed the time to organise Self Help Groups and subsequently identify the sub project activity. In the latter period, based on a probable sub project activity the CIGs were formed from among the BPL households. In some villages PRA was also conducted but it does not get reflected in the process of CIG formation. Thus the process outlined in the PAD, namely, accessing the excluded poor and involving the community in CIG formation and selection of SPA has not been followed.

Wherever there has been an ongoing traditional activity being undertaken by a group which has most of the members in the BPL list, the formation of the CIG and the selection of the SPA was instinctive based on the traditional activity . The Munj Ban activity in Alooda, the Band in Paparda, Leather work at Kushalpura and Embroidery in Sindoli in Dausa district are examples of such formations. This shows that there exists an unmet demand for inputs by certain groups for their ongoing economic activity. These are easily fulfilled by providing productive capital/ line of credit to the members of the group.

Membership of CIGs

Most of the CIGs formed have members of the same caste and in many cases they are kins. Wherever the group consists of near and distant kin, the relations between the members is already defined, individual behaviour are known to each other and the leader emerges without much ado. While the chosen leader may be the eldest amongst the kin, actual work may be undertaken by a younger and educated member of the group. One of the major outcome of a caste based group is the alienation of the CIG from the larger community. What would be the consequences of such formations are yet to be discerned. In subsequent assessments we shall capture these dimensions.

However, in mixed caste groups, the shift from traditional occupation to new economic activity can also be noticed. In mixed groups caste based relations are being redefined including caste discrimination. Leadership in such groups may be contested but who takes decisions in the group and leadership roles has to be explored further and strategies devised accordingly.

In some mixed caste groups who have chosen an activity for building village infrastructure, it is found that they have succumbed to pressures from the powerful groups in the village community. They have not been able to identify an economic activity that would directly benefit them. Such groups may be described as weak whose access to resources is through a conduit controlled by the rich in the village.

Gender Relations

The process of formation of CIGs raises several gender concerns. Efforts have been made in all the districts to organise women CIGs. In DPIP the BPL list is the main basis for identification of beneficiaries. The name of the household head in BPL list is invariably the male. The identity of the women member is linked to the male member. In majority of the cases men form their own CIGs and identify an economic activity for themselves. In some cases men decide that their wives would form a CIG and also identify an activity for them. Women are subsequently informed that they have become members of a group. In very few cases have CFs made an extra effort to reach out to directly to women for formation of a CIG. Even women CFs have followed similar processes.

Training of CIGs

The training of CFs and members of CIGs gives little emphasis to social mobilisation and group building. Since conscious efforts to social mobilisation are far and in between, the group evolves on its own. While it develops substantial internal cohesiveness they remain fundamentally weak in their relations with other groups in the village. Consequently, the leadership that emerges is weak and is not able to assist the CF in formation of other groups. In some cases these groups are also not able to resist pressure from dominating groups in the village. This occurs despite the groups having close social relationship.

Impact of Procedural delays

The formation of the CIG, identification of the sub project activities, and providing access to credit has to be done in a year's time. Most of the time of the year goes in waiting for clearance of the CIG and the Sub Project Activity. These procedural delays affect the functioning of the group in many ways. There have been instances where members have lost their interest to the point of leaving the group. Understanding programmes for child nutrition, health, sanitation, reproductive health, animal health, soil and water conservation, etc. have seldom come on the agenda.

The CIG formation is deeply affected by seeing the SPA as an end in itself. In the process the means become relatively unimportant. This is seen in most infrastructure projects where the rich have been able to mobilise resources for community assets in the name of the CIG. Such processes further lead to deprivation and disempowerment. In other cases, where building social capital merely means strengthening kin identity, in the absence of interaction with the remaining village community is the processes counter productive? Will they alienate the group or strengthen them? These are some questions that remain to be explored.

IV. SUB PROJECT ACTIVITIES

One of the objectives of the DPIP is for the CIG to undertake a Sub Project Activity (SPA) for generating a sustained income source for its members. The members have to collectively identify an economic activity that they would like to undertake, design it with the help of the CF and the NGOs and implement the same.

Choice of Activities

In most districts a pre- determined list of economic activities prepared by the SPMU has guided the choice set for selecting the SPA. So far there have been very few deviations from the given list. There could be many other activities that may exist and can be explored given people's capabilities and resources. Instead of expanding the worldview of the CIGs, the SPMU has limited them to a selected group of activities. Even the NGOs have restricted themselves to the list and do not seem to think in terms of widening options. There are exceptions as well but those are few.

Drawing the proposal for SPA

The SPA proposal is drawn invariably by the CF in collaboration with the participating NGO experts. In most districts NGOs have failed to make project preparation as a learning process for the members of the CIGs who are only informed about the Project. The Project Appraisal Officers (PAOs) often suggest some changes. While some of the suggestions are valid, others are reported to be flimsy and uncalled for delaying sanctioning of the project. However, the PAOs also make little effort to reach out to the CIGs to explain to them why the project design has been changed and losing the opportunity to make the process participatory.

The process of project preparation requires collection of a range of documents to be obtained from various government and bank functionaries. The CF or the DPC have the main responsibility of collating these documents and for which the CF has to invariably run after the *Patwari*, *Sarpanch*, secretary of the panchayat, bank officials, Line Departments and so on. This is one of the factors contributing to the procedural delays, as many of these functionaries do not cooperate. In many of these tasks the DPMU can be an easy facilitator but these tasks are seen as the primary duty of the CFs/ NGOs.

Use of Technology

The technology used in most SPAs is simple and is already in practice. Most of these technologies are in people's knowledge as well. The overall environment created is such that there is little, if any, thinking on innovations in technology. Thus SPAs remain tied to existing skills and products. No new products are being produced by the CIGs.

The Sub project activities in DPIP are categorised as Land based activities, Income generation activities (Micro-enterprises), Community Infrastructure Development projects and Social services activities. The land-based activities include vegetable production, irrigation wells/tube wells, vermi-compost, land improvement, horticulture, Med bandi, anicuts, social forestry, nursery, wasteland development and pasture development.

Land Based Activities

Integrated Agriculture Development Project (IADP), Dausa

Integrated Agriculture Development Project (IADP) is a farm-planning project based on available resources to the farmers. The objective is to diversify the crop composition, make rational use of water and maximise the returns to water and other inputs.

The main components of the scheme are the following:

1. Irrigation systems: diesel engines and accessories are provided for the group of farmers.
2. Sprinkler Sets and delivery pipes: While those not having irrigation facilities so far join the lot of irrigated farmers along with sprinkler sets, others economise use of water using sprinklers.
3. Cropping pattern: Farmers are encouraged to grow vegetables, long term plantations and a green fodder plan for the entire year along with grains, pulses and oilseeds. They are also encouraged to grow *munj* on the farm boundaries.
4. Vermi Compost: The available cow dung is processed to produce Vermi Compost. A shed is constructed for which a provision of Rs 11,000 is made. Vermi compost reduces the cost of cultivation, decreases the incidence of pests and insects, increases productivity in the long run ensuring sustainable agriculture.
5. Storage of foodgrain: Brass utensils are provided for storing foodgrain as the capacities of the poor farmers to store their own produce is poor.
6. Other components: Machines such as those used for spraying and ferron traps are also provided.

The total project cost of the IADP ranges between Rs 150,000 and Rs 450,000.

The above project has evolved over almost a year. Initially it entailed only a diesel pumpset and sprinklers and later other components have been added. Our Process monitoring team visited some of the earlier projects only. This effort shows how people, NGO and the Manager Project Appraisal at the DPMU, himself an agricultural scientist

have cooperated in the endeavor to design the project. The result is a activity that addresses the environmental needs, sustainability, efficient and optimum use of water as well as "minor" needs of the farmer households. The synergy achieved in the Project will be studied further.

Micro Enterprise Activities

Munjban

Munj crushing and rope making activity has been taken up by some women CIGs in Dausa. The tasks primarily include collecting raw material, crushing the *munj* and making it into ropes. Traditionally the crushing is done by hands. The objective of the activity is to increase manufacturing capacity of the households by introducing simple diesel operated machines for crushing the *munj*.

We present here a case of village Alooda, Dausa where an all women's CIG has undertaken this activity. According to the women members of the CIG, initially they started with formation of a SHG. The CIG was formed subsequently and the project activity was identified. Initially the group identified gemstone *bindai* work (beading of gemstones) as the sub project activity. They bought a *bindai* machine from their own resources i.e. from savings of the SHG. However this activity could not succeed due to the slump in the gemstone industry. Later the group realized that improving on their traditional occupation would benefit them more and a new project proposal of Munjban (jute crushing and rope making) was prepared with the help of the CF. The proposal was sent to the DPMU and was approved. The estimated cost of the project was worked out at Rs. 58, 000. The contribution of the group i.e. 10 percent of the project cost was also deposited in the bank prior to the sanction of the project. The equipment for jute crushing i.e. the machine, engine was purchased from the market. The women stated that Husbands/ male members from the member households went with the CF to purchase the equipment.

The machine is common for the group but rest of the work is undertaken individually. The *Munj* (raw material) is usually collected from neighbouring villages/ hamlets or purchased from the business men for Rs.5-7/kg. and ready rope is sold in the market for Rs. 20/kg. All members buy or sell according to their capacity and individual requirement. The machine time is distributed on rotation basis with every member getting a chance on the machine after 10 days. The women stated that one woman member uses the machine for a whole day and when the day is over it is her responsibility to fill up the fuel tank for the next person. Girls from the member households also help in the activity. They felt that distribution of work on a rotation basis is beneficial for all. They have been involved in the activity for last 4 months and the group members seemed to be satisfied with their increased production. It is faster and less laborious, women said that 'the project has made them financially stronger'.

Earlier when they used to perform this task manually, production was less but now it has increased and group members are in a position to save some amount of their earnings. The male members of the household sell the finished product in the market, as women are not allowed to move outside the village. Usually a transport is hired collectively to take the produce to the market.

All members of this group not only belonged to the same caste, (low in the hierarchy) but had also close kinship ties. The men of the community are travelling vendors and the

women stay in the village with children. Some men also remain behind. Given the nature of women's and men's activities they traditionally maintain an integrated network of interpersonal and inter household obligations. The *munj baan* activity has further integrated these networks. The thinness of the market of the produce leads the group to a collective bargaining process thereby pooling their risks. Such risk pooling also contributes to strengthening the networks. This is reflected in many ways, such as the CIGs addressing the communities needs. The village women in the leadership of the *munjban* group's women collectively applied for repair of the well and installation of a handpump in their village.

Community Infrastructure Projects

The infrastructure projects in DPIP are to be undertaken by the VDAs for the benefit of all communities in the village. The activities range from link roads, causeway, cement roads, drains, health centres, drinking water facilities, construction and repair of community ponds, pasture development.

Construction of a Cement Road

Ghumanda is situated on Jaipur Bikaner highway, 10 km from Ratangarh. A CIG was formed in September 2001. There are 270 households in the village of which 109 are BPL. Four CIGs have been formed in Ghumanda.

Initially the group proposed that there should be a B.T. road from Ghumanda to Tidiassar covering a distance of 2.5 km. This was felt necessary as a pressing need because the *kutchra* pathway is sandy preventing access to the Highway. During rains the run-off brings more sand on the pathway. The DPM initially refused to clear the road construction proposal reportedly saying that such an activity is not allowed.

Subsequently, the group decided that they would lay a *kharanja* road to improve movement inside the village and prevent encroachment by households (for cattle sheds and housing). It was decided that the Gram Panchayat would carry out the construction. An estimate of Rs. 3, 20, 700 was drawn up for the activity in April 2002 and the project was sanctioned in May 2002.

The first installment of Rs 1,15, 452 was received by the group in June 2002. Whereas the CIG members did not make the stipulated 10 per cent contribution, some well to do households in the village collected the required amount. The CIG members got labour opportunities only for a few days as other labour also had to be employed because a large number of labourers are required at a point of time. The Panchayat undertook the road construction activity and the CIG transferred the received amount to the Panchayat. The Panchayat invited tenders for the materials and carried out other formalities.

During discussions with the CIG members it was evident that they were not quite aware of the amounts of money involved or the procedures followed. The second installment was yet to be received by the CIG and the panchayat was persuading the CIG members to get the second installment. In this manner the panchayat maintains a hegemonic relationship with the CIG. This perhaps, becomes a disempowering process for the CIG.

The experience of many infrastructure projects is similar. Though there is no evidence, it is said that the amount contributed by the well to do goes back to them.

The Dairy Unit

In the DPIP the Dairy Unit is categorized as an income generating activity. A sum of Rs.1,36,200 is the unit cost of the activity (in Dausa district). This includes an equipment

cost of Rs.9,000 and a building cost of Rs.128,200. Wherever the dairy projects have been initiated in Dausa district, milk is being collected and payments are being made according to the fat content. In most places all villagers are using the facility.

In Rajasamand many CIGs have opted for the Dairy Project as a sub project activity. They are yet to be initiated.

It was found that many CIGs opted for the project expecting that they would be able to get buffaloes at 10 percent of the cost, given that the subsidy amounts to 90 percent. However, it turned out that no such finance would be available to them through the DPIP.

In most villages there is a need for the Milk Collection Centre. And we feel that all villagers without any exclusion would use the Centre. Such infrastructure would be useful in all such villages, which have remained outside the Collection Network and where there is substantial supply of surplus milk for the market. In the absence of infrastructure in these villages they have remained out of the marketing network. The Dairy Project as presently envisaged is an excellent infrastructure development project and need not be confused as an income-generating project for the BPL households.

An example of a dairy unit, which may be considered "income generating" is the one where fat, is separated from the milk collected. The fat and the whey are sold in the market. One such unit has been financed in the Tonk district. See Box

Box 5: Dairy Project, Sunthada

Sunthada is situated on Jaipur-Kota highway, 13 km. from Uniara. The CIG, named Shree Ganesh Samooh, has eight members and was formed in November 2000. Initially, the Group wanted to take up an Oil Mill activity but since the village did not have regular electric supply and no past experience of operating an oil mill, the group decided to opt for a dairy unit as there was no dairy in the vicinity while there is supply of milk from within the village and nearby. The Dairy Unit includes breed development, collecting milk from within and nearby villages, a machine to separate fat from milk. The milk would be sold to nearby tea shops while fat would be converted into ghee and then marketed. The total cost of the Project is Rs 369, 300 which includes a bull shed including its tarbandi, a hand pump, building, milk separata machine, fat testing machine, ghee processing machine, cans and some furniture etc. The CIG estimated that there is a possibility of 1,400 litres milk being available per day in the area as there is no other dairy nearby. One-week training was organised at Vanasthali Vidyapeeth in which along with other groups, all the 8 CIG members were trained about the methods of increasing milk production and processing.

V. QUANTITATIVE PARTICIPATORY ASSESSMENT

VI. CRITICAL CONCERNS

As mentioned earlier, the DPIP Process Monitoring is a part of a learning system and focuses on understanding:

- how various inputs in the project get converted into outputs;
- what issues are critical in the conversion process and
- what action is necessary to increase effectiveness?

In this Report we have mainly looked at the processes of CIG formation, the selection and working of the CF and the design and implementation of the SPA.

We have seen the range of inputs used in mobilising the CIG and the nature of CIG formed. Let us compare, on the one hand, the Munj ban CIG and the dairy CIG that first opted for the oil mill and the infrastructure, on the other. The former group had an opportunity to look for options, make a choice, even experiment (with the bindai machine) and subsequently decide on an activity. The dairy unit also considered the oil mill option and rejected it on two accounts. First there were a number of such mills in the nearby and second the activity is seasonal (lasting no more than 4 months in rabi and 1 month in kharif). They wanted an activity which spanned the entire season so as to keep them employed through the year. They then selected the dairy unit. In this manner the two CIGs explored various options and decided on an activity and strengthened themselves in the process. Compare this with the infrastructure project where the CIG was "used" by the well-to-do in the village and the entire process was disempowering with the poor succumbing to the pressures of the rich in the village.

The critical issues in the conversion process in the above examples are (a) time taken for the identification and finalisation of the SPA; (b) detailed information on available options; (c) support from experts in the NGO and the DPMU; and (d) knowledge base of the actors involved.

Long term interests and Short term goals

There is a mismatch in the way the Programme has been conceptualized in the PAD and internalised by the SPMU. The PAD states that DPIP is a people's programme with the poor in the centre. The emphasis is on building various capacities and skills of the poor so that they can meet their strategic interests in which the long term goals are inherently fulfilled. This is to be achieved by ensuring processes that would lead to empowerment of the group. In this process the government functionaries, the NGO partners and PRIs are expected to hear, reach and serve the poor. The PAD also states that to meet practical needs an economic activity may be taken up.

Various DPIP handouts (Yojana ka Sankshipt Parichaya), Circulars etc. produced by the SPMU emphasise the practical needs aspects. The first task given is to form the CIG and identify the income generating activity to be taken up. This becomes the primary focal point of the Project managers with all energies being concentrated on accomplishing this task. All differences between various partners seem to emanate from this activity. It is

evident that processes for meeting the strategic interests of groups have not been given due cognizance. The NGOs whose task is to build such capabilities is also deeply influenced by the governments manner of deciding priorities and targets .

Sustaining Government- NGO Partnerships

The two main facilitators in DPIP are the NGOs and government who are expected to bring synergy to the project by working in partnerships. Being part of the large government network, with its immense power, the DPMU are characterised by their adherence to line management, centralized rule governed functioning, and reliance on codified word rather than personal encounter. Such institutional behaviour limits implementing programmes for change. The mind set has a clear division of rule, work and hierarchy. Work is 'allotted' and instructions issued from time to time. There is no sharing of the concerns and combined efforts to clear the bottlenecks.

The role of the NGOs in DPIP is to ensure mobilisation and organisations of the people at the grassroots. The NGO has both a Project implementation role and a capacity building and support role. While this role of the NGO is accepted by the DPMUs, they are seen as a part of the government hierarchy though down in the order.

As the state reproduces its norms and behavioral patterns, rigidities have started settling in the DPIP. The programmes are beginning to be supply driven and pre conceived. The processes being put in place remind us of the IRDP Programme, which failed due to neglecting the flexibility required in the design of schemes. More importantly, this is affecting the behaviour of the NGOs who are now turning to be less flexible and less innovative. Instead of the NGOs being able to inculcate these attitudes in the government, the latter has been successful in restructuring the NGOs working.

Linking Gender and poverty

Gender Equity has been recognised as an important goal in DPIP. The three elements, which have been identified as essential for successful gender interventions in DPIP, are:

- Environment building
- Capacity building and
- Setting up of Women's Resource Centres

At the project implementation level a number of issues have been identified in the PAD to facilitate mainstreaming gender concerns in DPIP. Prominent among them are gender appraisal of sub-projects, capacity building, project management issues, linkages with other development programmes and so on.

The group self assessments clearly highlighted that efforts have been made in all the districts to identify women beneficiaries in the project and to organise women CIGs. However, the need for using the gender lens at all stages of planning, implementation and evaluation has not become an institutional habit, nor is it an assimilated perspective.

The PRA reports reveal an absence of a gender perspective in diagnosing the gender roles and responsibilities of women and men in project villages. No mention is made in the documents of assessing disparities in access and control over resources within the community and inequalities between women and men, which inhibit their participation in decision making.

Targeting resources at poor women may help project beneficiaries but the underlying causes of female poverty- deep-rooted inequalities in control over assets, pervasive gender discrimination, and lack of voice in the power structures and public spheres remain unaddressed. While Women CIG/SHG members articulated they would invest their increased income in the well being of the family and children's education, the question of how women's personal control over resources will help in altering patriarchal relations and impact gender asymmetry, preference for male child, violence against women and ensure equal opportunities for girls in choosing their future does not bear clear articulation and remains unclear to program managers.

However, there is considerable scope for building linkages with other programmes both government and NGO experiences which can help strengthen women's bargaining power.

Capacity Building Efforts

Capacity building efforts in DPIP are aimed at improving the abilities of target communities to plan and manage development programmes and influence the economic social and political environment in which they are implemented. The capacity building process would also consist of training and networking initiatives for government and NGO partners. Discussions with the CFs reveal that the initial training of the CFs has remained inadequate and limited given the objectives of the Project. The CFs themselves expressed that there was a gap between the ground realities and the inputs given to them during the training.

The IGPRI has the main responsibility for capacity building activities. We need to explore the comparative advantage of a government institution such as this and NGOs themselves for training grassroots development workers for community mobilisation activities.

Group Self Assessment

GSA is a participatory research tool which would enable the CIGs, VDAs CFs and DPMUs to reflect on their own organisational rules, resources and practices, processes and outcomes and help assess their own organizational and capacity development. It is based on a collective analysis and would enable understanding the ‘invisible processes’, which influence outcomes. GSA would be undertaken periodically. The GSA would be facilitated through FGDs and Workshops.

A QPA of CIGs would help to keep track of all groups at a given point of time as the Data emerging from QPA will be comparable across groups.

Method of Group self assessment

We have been able to develop a design of GSA based on the experience of visiting groups in Dausa and Tonk districts. The basic method/tool for GSA will be FGDs around a number of open-ended questions. The following section presents an outline of the content of the FGD.

The Group Self-Assessment of a CIG is initiated by the IDS Team (hereafter Team) through FGD. The purpose of the exercise is to make the Group assess their own processes in the context of DPIIP interventions and analyze the present situation as well as to plan and implement a future course of action. The following steps are involved:

The Team first introduces itself and explains clearly the purpose of the exercise namely, to collectively reflect on what the group has done in the past and what it intends to do in the near and distant future. This is important as it helps to establish a distinction between the role of the process monitoring team and the implementing agency personnel. The Group in turn also shares the basic information about its members, the numbers, gender, caste and kinship ties and occupation, land holdings. The gender dimensions of the group is revealed at this juncture. Some of the questions included are: Who is included, who is excluded? Which men, which women? What are the norms of entry into the organisation? Who leads? In cases where separate men/women’s groups and/or caste based groups have been formed a question on why mixed group have not been formed is posed. Similarly, caste and kinship ties, if any, are revealed at this point. This discussion brings out factors that influence internal cohesiveness.

Field level interactions reveal that each Group has christened itself with either an abstract name, names of god or goddesses or development oriented titles i.e. Pragati Samooh, Vikas Samooh etc. Attempts are made to explore why the group has chosen a particular name and how and why was it preferred over other names? The process of social construction of the name given to the group would to some extent reveal identity, associations, networks and ideology. The discussion subsequently explores the relationship with other members of the community and determines the participation of the group/ members of the group in democratic processes. In this context, the group is asked about their participation in the gram sabha or ward sabha in the past as well as in the present.

The process of group formation is discussed in detail. Some of the important dimensions include- How did the Group come into being and start functioning? Was it the Self -Help Group that came first? Does it still continue? With this discussion the Group is initiated to think about inter-relationships within the group and how these can be reinforced.

The discussion on characteristics of the group is followed by tracing the development of the CIG and the Choice of Sub Project Activity (SPA). How many options were considered? Who suggested the options, and why? How the project was formulated? Who took the lead role and why? Whose interest in the CIG was fulfilled and whose interest was marginalised? How was the SPA finally chosen? Does it reflect a felt need? Does the group know details of the amounts involved, expenditure incurred and income flows? The purpose of this discussion is to make the group reflect on whether it considered various activities or was led into choosing a particular option. The discussion is expected to lead the group to review its internal functioning and think about what more can be achieved in terms of economic activities and how?

The inter relationships are further explored in the discussion on the functioning of the SPA. In general, what has been the performance of the group vis-a vis the objectives? How does the group benefit from the SPA? How do individual members share the use of assets or services provided in the SPA? What are the norms? Are there possibilities of exclusion or some members benefiting at the cost of the others? It is expected that this discussion would lead to a consciousness for group work. Besides, questions on power relations are also discussed: How is power shared within the group? How are resources and responsibilities allocated? What are the power relations between the CIGs and other stakeholders?

What has the Group done or achieved beyond the SPA? Has it been able to meet or at least voice its needs? Has the nature of their interaction with other members of the community, local institutions, PRIs and the state changed? How are social capital networks being used? How is goodwill maintained with other stakeholders.

This discussion leads to test the confidence levels of the group in dealing with the community at large and resolving conflict situations, if any. At the same time it tells us about the responsiveness of external support of service organisations.

8. One of the aims of the GSA is to produce knowledge within the group through collective reflection, The relevant questions posed to understand this dimension include- What knowledge is produced and how? Does the production of knowledge affect institutional practices that reproduce social inequality?

Output:

The sharing and collective reflection with CIGs

The narratives(documentation)

QPAs

Team's analysis and suggested area of action.

Contribution to the Newsletter

Peer Review

The PAD suggests undertaking peer review of a limited number of activities with pre-defined inputs and outputs for cross- group learning. The process monitoring perceives a non-linear relationship between inputs and outputs. Responses to inputs and actions generated by the inputs have unpredictable effects and do not produce the same results in all conditions. The outcomes, to a great extent, will be determined by local variables and contexts and in many instances can be unpredictable. The Process monitoring would understand the activities, inputs and outputs in this context.

Peer Review will involve experience sharing and learning from groups with similar

interests e.g. CIG formed around the same activity, VDA/CFs who are addressing similar issues or DPMUs who are managing particular project components. Peer Review will focus on a limited number of activities or topics. The groups will undertake joint analysis and reporting.

The PR would primarily focus on identifying and selecting key domains of changes in four specific areas i.e in

people's lives

people's participation

Nature of activity

in sustainability

These changes will be identified and reported by group members, NGOs and DPMU, highlighting why the changes are considered important and what difference they have made and why.

Peer review should be seen as a strategic intervention which will enable different actors to look observe and learn from the other and from positive experiences. Since inter-district movement/facilitation has budgetary implications, Peer Review to begin with will be facilitated within the district.

Output

Identification of positive experiences of CIGs and SPA

Facilitation of Cross group learning through workshops involving all actors.