

Sub Project Activities in DPIP
How Near, How Far from Good Practices

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Introduction

The District Poverty Initiatives project (DPIP) has been in place for the past 2 ½ years. The Common Interest Groups (CIGs) formed within the project have moved from their infancy to a mature stage. A total of 3247 groups have been formed upto January 2004 in the 7 districts where the project is being implemented. Among other activities CIGs have to plan and undertake Sub Project activities (SPA) according to their needs and priorities. The SPAs are expected to yield direct or indirect economic benefit to the members of the CIGs.

A large number of different SPAs have been supported in DPIP. The diversity in the nature of activities points to the potential of the rural economy to absorb these interventions. Box 1. shows the different kinds of SPA designed in the project.

Box.1: SPAs designed in DPIP

Nature of activities	Sub Project Activities
Land-based activities	Vegetable production, irrigation wells/tube wells, vermi-compost, land improvement, horticulture, <i>med bandi</i> , anicuts, kund, social forestry, nursery, wasteland development and pasture development.
Income generation activities (Micro-enterprises),	Carpet weaving, gem stone beading , livestock, dairy, <i>munjbaan</i> , tent house, Band, poultry, readymade garments, leather works,
Community Infrastructure Development projects	Tanks, anicut, school rooms, health sub-centre, gravel roads/khuranja, Community hall,
Social services	Toilets, drinking water

The present report reviews some SPAs in DPIP with a view to learn from these examples. While several factors seem to have played a critical role in determining the outcomes of these initiatives, the report also attempts to identify some key ingredients for success of a SPA. The IDSJ team made an effort to identify some completed or nearly completed SPAs, which had started yielding economic returns. The district teams - DPMUs and the affiliated NGO partners helped in identifying these cases.

On the basis of our field-work, we distinguish the SPAs by the following:

- a. Characteristic design led either by environmental factors, some innovations or input use efficiency;
- b. Deep market penetration through wide reach of services and creating demand;
- c. Unique manufacturing process using appropriate technology and organisation; and
- d. Building on existing skills through augmentation of equipment.

In each of the above categories, we shall discuss the relevance of the SPA to the poor, the nature of economic returns and the sustainability of interventions. In this manner, we also attempt to locate how far and how near SPAs are from good practice.

I. Characteristic Designs of SPAs

In this section, we discuss some designs of land-based and livestock rearing activities in different districts of the DPIP. The land based activities include "Integrated Agriculture Development Project (IADP)", "Land leveling" and "Goat rearing". We shall discuss each of these in some detail.

Integrated Agriculture Development Project (IADP)

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:

- (i) Irrigation systems: diesel engines and accessories are provided for the group of farmers.
- (ii) 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.
- (iii) 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.
- (iv) 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.
- (v) Storage of foodgrain: Brass *tankies* are provided for storing foodgrain as the capacities of the poor farmers to store their own produce is poor.
- (vi) 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.

Land leveling Project have mostly been undertaken in the Rajsamand district, which is characterised by undulating mountainous terrain. The initial step in the Project is to level the land manually, and clear the land of the larger boulders. The stones so obtained are used to construct the *medbandi*/boundary wall, which conserves soil and water. Subsequently, fruit trees may be planted and inter-tree cropping encouraged. The land can also be used for other agriculture purposes.

Livestock rearing SPAs have been promoted in almost all districts. The main feature is construction of a shed, which helps to keep wild animals at bay, and provide shelter from excessive heat, cold and rain. Livestock get space to lie down and their hoofs are also protected from worms and insects, as sanitation is taken care of. Feed and fodder are also not wasted as provisions are made for their storage and *thaan*.

Relevance to the Poor

These projects have evolved over almost a year. Initially they entailed using only a few inputs: say a diesel pumpset and sprinklers in the IADP, simply leveling the land, and in case of livestock rearing providing 15 goats and a he-goat. Later other components like vermi compost, horticulture, and construction of animal shed were added to the project design. This shows that as the understanding about the poor, their needs, and the environment increased among the DPMU and the NGOs, they looked for technological solutions available and the project design was refined. The result is that the SPAs addressed the environmental needs, sustainability aspects, and efficient and optimum use of water as well as "minor" needs of the farmer households.

Nature of Economic Returns

The *Bhoomiya Baba Samooh* at Dabar Kalan, Dausa, put up a proposal for Integrated Agriculture Development with a proposed budget of Rs. 1,33,000. The Group purchased a diesel pump set. Each member has also received 20 pipes each for the sprinklers. In addition the group purchased two net frames and 3 sprayers. So far the Group has sown two vegetable crops of tomato and green chillies and each member has made profits to the tune of Rs 10,000. The Group has also taken interest in vermi compost and has used the manure thus produced to successfully increase the *rabi* production. It is also in the process of applying for an additional pump set. In the case of land-leveling projects, the CIGs who had used *safed musli* for horticulture plantation had to face a crop failure due to drought. Subsequently, they have planted *ber* and hope to take one more crop yielding annual benefit of Rs 2000-5000 per year.

Sustainability of Interventions

The sustainability factor is largely built into the design of the SPAs discussed above. Use of organic farming, water harvesting structures and sheds for animals are interventions which the poor may not have been able to take on their own without the design input and financial support of the DPIP.

II. Market penetration

The SPA for tent house provides for hiring of a large shop space varying between 180-250 square feet. The place is generally selected where transport is accessible. Along with items such as utensils and rugs, some CIGs have also added electric fittings for decoration and a generator-set to their assets. A sewing machine is also procured for sewing torn tents. These articles are rented out to the community. The renting activity is organised by the group collectively.

The Tent House project meets the demands of all groups in the village and the neighbouring villages. In many villages the equipment used to be hired from far-off places. The market for tent house is far from saturated. The demand for tent house is sporadic but is high during the marriage season. The sporadic demand in the past remained largely unfulfilled as it was too expensive to transport just a few accessories such as cots, and chairs from distant towns where tent houses were located. In that sense, the demand remained unmet. Nevertheless, the demand could be partially met by borrowing the equipment from the neighbourhood or the village *panchayat*. In this

manner, we find that new markets have been created within villages and markets outside the village have been penetrated.

Relevance to the Poor

The poor are now able to meet their demand within the village: the costs of hiring are substantial lower, the equipment is new and clean, and adds to the social-status and self- image of those hiring-in these articles. For the CIG members it has meant working together and managing the enterprise. It remains to be seen how the newly acquired skills would benefit them in the long run.

Nature of Economic Returns

The *Jai Shankar Samooh* in Angai, Dholpur purchased a number of items such as tents, generator-set, chairs, mattresses, utensils, crockery, and sewing machine spending Rs 2.5 lacs. The members were waiting for the release of the third installment to purchase more items. The group has taken 3 shops on rent at Rs 450 per month. The members manage the shops on a rotation basis. The group has been able to run the enterprise successfully. Between January-November, 2003 the CIG had rented the tent house materials for 20 weddings and earned a total of Rs 42,000. The other 3 tent houses in the village were reported to have 'failed' as people preferred this new tent house. The CIG has saved Rs 30,000 from it earnings of the tent house so far. The group is planning to use the saving to expand their work by purchasing more tent house material like fans, battery, mattresses and decorations for *mehafil*, and expanding to other villages. The group members were of the view that when they start earning more they would like to give their children better education.

Sustainability of the interventions

So far, there has been demand from the new tent houses. It would continue to remain high if the CIG is able to procure new variety of articles and add to its capital. Most CIGs have been able to save collectively and are planning to invest in the Tent House Project.

III. Manufacturing processes

Munj crushing and rope making activity has been taken up by women CIGs in DPIP districts. The tasks primarily include collecting raw material, crushing the *munj* and making it into ropes. Traditionally the *munj* crushing was 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*. 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 transport is hired collectively to take the produce to the market.

Relevance to the poor

In Alooda, the *Munj Ban groups* has members belonging to one 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.

In Ranoli, two castes came together to take up the *Munj Ban* SPA. And the group so formed, again mainly women, has learnt the trade and acquired the necessary skills. It remains to be seen how the group pools its risks and strengthens its network.

Nature of Economic returns

The economic returns at Alooda are and not more than Rs 2000 per household per annum or Rs 20,000 per CIG per annum at Ranoli.

Sustainability of interventions

The *munj ban* products are used mainly for tying animals, shuttering in construction works, and ropes for the *charpai*. The substitutes for these items, mainly plastic products have not found place in the communities. Nevertheless, the production process will be more sustainable in regions where there is ready availability of the raw material. On this account, the activity will be more sustainable in Ranoli than in Alooda. On the contrary as a group, Alooda might be more sustainable as members belong to one caste with kinship ties and also have been traditionally involved in rope making.

IV. Building on existing skills through augmentation of equipment

The SPA of the Band is undertaken by those who have been traditionally playing the Band. The groups have acquired equipments which they had not handled earlier including electric organs. The Band has also procured gen-sets and trolleys.

Relevance to the poor

Being in the village itself, the poor can now also afford to have a band play on some occasions. Previously the CIG members in Shahbad were bonded to a contractor, but now they can play their own band and earn a decent living.

Nature of Economic returns

The CIG members working collectively would earn upto Rs 5,000 per annum each.

Sustainability of Intervention

The band is used to working in a collective and sustainability is therefore assured on this account. However, like other CIGs the members of the band have not shown the ability to save and purchase new equipment. Unless, they enhance their capacity to save, the efforts may not be sustainable. Involving their women in a SHG may help in this regard.

Conclusion

The DPIP was designed to have multiple impact on the livelihoods and social conditions of the poor. One of the direct intended impact is augmenting incomes. The above cases have shown that members of the CIG have engaged themselves in economic activities, the full impact of which is yet to be discerned. However, we find that project designs are innovative: taking account of multiple needs, local environmental conditions, and building capacities of the poor to undertake these activities. Some activities have led to creation of new markets and penetrating the existing markets; the scale though small may enlarge, if proper savings and investments are taken up by the CIGs. The CIGs have adopted successfully new technologies and enhanced their skills. Together these factors lead to good practices.

Inability of some to pool their risks, diversify their sources of income, and learn new skills keeps them at a distance from good practices.

Annexure

Some Cases

Name of CIG- Bhomyababa Samuh- Village- Dabar Kalan, District Dausa

IADP

Dabar kalan is located 35 km from Lalsot and is a village with a mixed population of Meena, Kumhars and Brahmin. The CIG was formed in January 2001 with a membership of 12 men from BPL households. All members belong to the Meena community. When the CF discussed the various options available for the SPA, the CIG members decided to take up some land based activity since all of them had irrigated land which was contiguous.

The CIG put up a proposal for Integrated Agriculture Development with a proposed budget of Rs. 1,33,000. The Group purchased a diesel pump set. Each member has also received 20 pipes each for the sprinklers. In addition the group has purchased two net frames and 3 sprayers. So far the Group has sown two vegetable crops of tomato and green chillies and each has made profits to the tune of Rs 10,000. The Group has also taken interest in vermi compost and have used the manure thus produced to successfully increase the *rabi* production. It is also in the process of applying for an additional pump set.

The above project evolved over almost a year. Initially it entailed only a diesel pumpset and sprinklers and later other components were added. This effort shows how people, NGO and the Manager Project Appraisal at the DPMU, himself an agricultural scientist have cooperated in the endeavor. The result is a project that addresses the environmental needs, sustainability, and efficient and optimum use of water as well as "minor" needs of the farmer households.

Bhairon Baba Pashudhan Vikas Samiti, Village- Gironia, District- Dholpur

Goat Rearing

Village Gironiya is located 80 km from Dholpur. There are 21 households of Jodhan Rajputs and 1 Gujar household in the village. The village has no power connections. There is acute shortage of water in the village. The handpump is dysfunctional and the residents are dependent on a small spring for drinking water. There is a SK school in the village and the teachers come from a nearby village. The education of girls is limited to Class V as they are not sent out of the village for further schooling. The nearest upper primary school is located 8 km away in Jhiri. Also this area is dacoit prone and looting is a common occurrence. There are no health facilities available in the village. The main source of livelihood is selling of wood which is cut and sold in Sarmathura. There is no person with a government job in the village.

The CIG was formed in June 2002. Initially members of the NGO visited the village and interacted with the members of the village community. Several PRA exercises were carried out and a list of poor households was prepared on the basis of wealth ranking. The details of DPIP and the various activities that could be taken up within the project were also shared with the community. However given the location of the village, it was decided that the group could take up the activity of goat rearing as there was fodder available for goats in the neighbouring area.

A CIG of 13 women was formed in June 2002. Most of the members of the group were primarily involved in household work and had never been part of any group activity. The women are in the age group of 22-55 years. 8 women have reading and writing skills and 5 women are non-literate. The group meets every week and they are

also contributing Rs. 10 per month towards the group fund. Two members contribute Rs. 2 every month as they are very poor. A girl who has passed Std. V in the village maintains the records of the meeting.

The bank account of the group has been opened in Sarmathura. The members of the group also take loans from the savings fund at an interest rate of 24 per cent. Rs. 2 per 100. The short term lending is for a period of three months and is given to group members only. The common reasons for borrowing include- marriages, visiting parents, organising death feast and purchase of clothes. At present the group has a saving of Rs. 6000/-.

The CIG was approved in September 2002 and the SPA proposal of Rs. 3.92 lakhs was submitted in February, 2003. The SPA was approved in April 2003. At the time of the visit the money had not been released.

The SPA entails that each member will buy 15 goats and a he-goat. The upper limit set for purchase of goats is Rs 2000/- and for a he-goat is Rs 2500/-. The group contribution works out to be Rs 51, 500 of which the group has saved Rs. 6000. Of the remaining Rs. 45, 500 each member's contribution works out to be Rs. 3500/-. Most of the women have raised this amount by pawning jewellery with the local moneylender in Sarmathura at a interest rate of 36 per cent.

The NGO organised a one day training programme for members of CIG in April 2003. A two day training programme on goat rearing was also organised in May 2003 where 60 women participated.

All women in the group were articulate and had the required information regarding the SPA. They felt that due to regular savings they did not have to depend on other members of the family for money.

Santoshi mata Vikas Samiti, Chandan ka pura, Aligarh, Dholpur

Dairying

The CIG Santoshi mata Vikas Samiti was formed in March 2002 and CIG was approved in December 2002. There are 10 women members in the CIG –8 Jatav, 2 Kushwaha who are in the age group of 24-50 years. All women except one are literate. The group meets regularly and has been saving Rs. 10/- per month. The group lends money internally to its members. If money is lent to a woman outside the group then a member has to give a guarantee for that person.

An SPA proposal for dairy activity with an estimated budget of 4.58 lakhs was submitted to the DPMU which included the building of a milk collection centre. The contribution of each member worked out to Rs.3850/-for purchase of buffalo. The savings of the group were also used as contribution and the remaining money was borrowed by the women form the moneylender at a high rate of interest.

The buffaloes have been purchased and each member has received the buffalo and each buffalo is giving 8-9 litres of milk per day. A milk collection centre is also under construction.

Jai Shankar Samooh Village: Angai, District Dholpur

Tent-house

The CIG was formed in January 2001 and was sanctioned in March 2001. There are 6 BPL members in the CIG belonging to Jatav, Prajapat, Rajput and Brahmin castes. All the group members except one are literate. The CF informed the members about the various sub-project activities that the CIG members could take up viz. Animal husbandry, poultry, band, flour mill and tent house. Most of the members were

primarily engaged in agriculture labour and would get work only for a period of 15-20 days. The rest of the days they were mostly at home without any work and earnings.

The CIG members decided to take tent house management as a SPA. A proposal with an estimated budget of Rs 3 lac was submitted to DPMU in June 2002 and the same was sanctioned in August 2002. The members of the group deposited 10 per cent contribution from the group savings and their wages.

A bank account has been opened in Bari and group is saving Rs 50 per member in a month. A number of items such as generator, chairs, mattresses, utensils, crockery and sewing machine have been purchased by the group. A sum of Rs 2.5 lacs has been spent on these items. The members were waiting for the release of the third installment to purchase more items. The group has taken 3 shops on rent at Rs 450 per month. The members are given responsibility of managing the shops on rotation basis. The group has been able to run the enterprise successfully. Since January 2003 the CIG has rented the tent house materials for 20 weddings and earned a total of Rs 42,000. The other 3 tent house in the village were reported to have 'failed' as people preferred this new tent house. The CIG has saved Rs 30,000 from its earnings of the tent house so far. The group is planning to use the saving to expand its work by purchasing more tent house material like fans, battery, mattresses and decorations for *mehafil*. etc.

The group members were of the view that when they start earning more they would like to give their children better education.

Mahila Vikas Samooh, Ranoli, Dausa

Munjban

The all women's CIG was formed on December 5, 2000. There are 10 women in the CIG from Nai and Kumhar households. Most of these households are landless and have been dependant on wage labour in traditional occupations i.e barber and potters. The women came together as a group as they thought that DPIP would enable them to work collectively and increase their household incomes.

The CF told them about the various options available within DPIP but since there was availability of raw material i.e *munj* in the village and neighbouring areas the group decided to take up crushing of *munj* as an SPA.

The materials and equipment provided by the DPIP include : Diesel engine, *munj* crushing machine, weighing machine and plastic tank to store water. The diesel engine was bought from Lalsot and Jaipur.

The women collect the raw material from the fields and sort the *munj*. Subsequently it is crushed and woven by hand to make a rope. The rope comes into use for making *charpai*.e cots. The diesel engine consumes 1 litre of diesel per hour which costs Rs.23. The women are able to crush 20 kgs of *munj* per day. They charge Rs. 5 for crushing 1 kg of *munj*. The group has earned Rs. 15,000 in the past one year from crushing *munj*. Each group members share has been Rs.1500-2000.

The shed for storing the *munj* is yet to be constructed.

The women articulated that after coming together as a group and starting the SPA they are in a position to save some amount of their earnings. Their mobility has also increased. They would like to use their income for improving the education and health conditions of their children. Earlier these women did not attend the *gram sabha* but now they have started participating in the *gram sabha* and voicing their concerns.

Krishna Samooh, Shahbad, Baran

Band

There are 40 households in the village who have been traditionally involved in playing Band during marriages and festivals. Therefore, a group of 14 members was formed and Band was selected as a SPA. All the members are neighbours and belong to Dhanka community. The total budget sanctioned for the activity was Rs. 1,51,810. The members deposited their contribution either from their daily wages or from loan taken. The President and Treasurer were selected/elected unanimously by the group members. The group opened a bank account with the help of community facilitator(CF).

Two installments have already been received. Instruments have been purchased but the group is yet to purchase the lights. The group has planned to purchase the remaining necessary equipments once they receive the third and final installment. The group does not have any shop so the band instruments are kept in the premises of the temple.

Earlier the members were bonded to a Band owner and they did not have their own instruments. But now since they own instruments, and their income has increased they are in a position to return their debts. The group is planning to invest their savings for pucca house and on sending their children for higher education.