

IDS Process Monitoring Report No. 4

Dovetailing District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP) activities with Drought Relief Involvement of the Poor

Introduction

The drought of Samvat 2059 in Rajasthan, the fifth drought year in succession, the worst in the last hundred years, saw livelihoods at stake and life threatened. Peoples' own occupations, agriculture and animal husbandry offered very little for survival, and they had little savings to fall back upon. Consumption loans in the informal sector became dearer and were generally denied to the poor. People looked desperately for work and the drought relief works of the Government of Rajasthan came as a big help; though they only partially met the demand for work. The DPIP also responded, in a meaningful manner, to the crisis, by providing employment opportunities in constructing socially useful productive assets. It dovetailed the cost of material from its own resources to the wage component provided by the Department of Relief of the state.

Dovetailing the DPIP with the drought relief works required combining the administrative norms of two organisations, the SPMU and the Relief Department. The dovetailing, besides providing material costs, was to ensure the quality of work and participation of the poor; in a manner that not only met their felt needs but also empowered them in the process of implementation. The physical quality of work was to be ensured by delimiting the proportion of material cost in the total cost; the past problematic in maintaining the 60:40 ratio of wages:material in construction works was done away with¹. The poor were to be involved in deciding what work to undertake, but the work itself was to be undertaken by the Panchayati Raj Department on recommendation of the CIG or the VDA chaired by the *sarpanch*. According to the Circular issued by the DPIP, it is quite clear that the poor were to be involved to the extent of identifying the activity but not in the processes of implementation (See Box 1).

¹ This proportion created problems in construction works undertaken as the amount allocated for material cost was inadequate and dilly dally had to be met from wage component by fudging names of persons employed, thus encouraging corruption.

Box 1: Characteristic features of the dovetailing sub projects.

The sub-projects under DPIP may be dovetailed with relief works subject to the following conditions:

1. Material component may be provided from DPIP and labour component from relief.
2. There is no fixed percentage of material and labour in terms of total costs. The quality of work should be ensured and assets created of permanent and durable nature. Hence, actual requirement of material should be reflected in estimates, irrespective of its percentage of total costs.
3. The work proposed should be as per works permitted under DPIP and should benefit the poor in particular. A demand from the poor persons in the village for the said work is a pre-requisite.
4. For such works, and its implementation, the VDA under the chairmanship of the Sarpanch could be the CIG for the sub-project.
5. There has to be complete adherence to all guidelines and procedures under DPIP.
6. The estimates for work be prepared by technical official designated by the Collector. NGO and DPMU staff is to assist in the preparation of the sub-project proposal as per formats prescribed.
7. The implementing agency for the sub-project could be the Panchayat or the Line Department, but the work is to be awarded formally by the CIG (or VDA as CIG) to such agency as per the subsidiary agreement.
8. Adherence to DPIP guidelines on procurement would be ensured by such agency. Moreover, the CIG (or VDA as CIG) would need to sign the prescribed sub-project agreement with such agency. The component of financing under relief and under DPIP needs to clearly spelt out. A draft of the sub-project agreement for this purpose is being sent separately.
9. The community would be required to give an under taking that it will maintain the assets created and provide the necessary cost for the same.
10. **Beneficiary Contribution:** The 10 percent beneficiary contribution can be provided over a period of 1 year. The 10 percent will be calculated as percentage of DPIP component. To the extent that such contribution is proposed to be provided upfront (i.e. cash/ material) or during the sub-project implementation (i.e. cash/material/labour), it may be included in the total sub-project cost. However, in case the same is proposed to be provided over the extended period, it would need to be in cash, and would be deposited in the separate Bank Account of the CIG (not Project account, but Maintenance account), to be used later for maintenance.

The above relaxation is only in respect of community infrastructure sub-projects sanctioned up to 31.7.03.

DPIP circular (F. 1(66) RD/DPIP/2002)

The present study

This study focuses on understanding the processes of decision making at the village level regarding selection and implementation of works, and involvement of the poor in these processes. The main questions addressed are the following:

Selection

What are the nature of works undertaken and why? What is the decision making process? Who participates in decision making? What role has been designed for the CIGs?

Implementation

Who manages and controls funds? Is the process transparent? What has been the involvement of DPMU, the *panchayats* and the NGOs? What are the linkages between DPMU and SPMU? What was the nature of participation of the BPL households?

The IDS Team visited 29 dovetail works in the seven districts. A list is appended.

District Experiences

The information flow

Interestingly, we have seven different modes, one in each district, of transfer of information regarding dovetailing works to those stakeholders who were to implement them, reflecting how the DPIP programme is perceived differently by the administration. We find different levels of participation of DPMU, Block Development Officers (BDOs) and *sarpanchs*.

The chief executive at the district level is the Collector who not only manages law and order but also heads the rural development hierarchy. She/he has many options to choose from: to carry out rural development works by authority in a centralized manner, delegating powers to the subordinate officers, directing a large number of officials and elected representatives, and involving other stakeholders such as the NGOs and the people themselves. In a disaster management situation, given the urgency and other constraints, the efficiency of the actions initiated by the chief executive depend mainly on the nature and functioning of the panchayati raj and other informal institutions including their capacity to respond to the exigencies of a disaster situation. In Rajsamand, the Collector appraised the Line Department officials along with BDOs about the dovetailing programme and asked the BDO to inform the *sarpanchs* about the programme. In turn, the BDOs appraised the *sarpanchs* in a meeting called for the purpose: strengthening a hierarchy where the locally elected representatives are at the tail. Consequently, the central authority gets established. More or less this happened in most other districts with slight variations in the extent of participation of stakeholders.

In a meeting with the BDOs, the Collector of Jhalawar instructed the BDOs to scrutinize the proposals passed by the *gram sabha* in the January 26, 2003 meeting and submit them

indicating the priority. The Collector thus took advantage of an earlier participatory process of the *gram sabha*. The exigency of the drought situation demanded an urgent and efficient action, which seems to have dictated his decision.

In Churu the process was more decentralized than in Rajsamand and Jhalawar where BDOs were asked to call the *sarpanchs* for a day long meeting with the DPMs and other concerned staff to share information about the dovetailing project. In Dholpur too the process was decentralized with the DPMU taking initiative and reaching out to the *Panchayat Samities*, organizing meetings with the *sarpanchs*, and sharing information on the dovetailing project. In Tonk district meetings were held at block office, Todaraisingh and in the village Aligarh of Uniara block involving *sarpanchs* from all the gram panchayats, BDO, NGO-DPC, DPM. Proposals were received from *sarpanchs* on the same day. The urgency of the situation, perhaps, demanded that proposals already passed by the *gram sabha* are considered, and it was not necessary to approach the CIGs and VDAs. It was quite apparent that the DPMUs and the BDOs chose to work with one another as their official relations (government to government and through government with the *panchayat*), are well defined; institutions and their rules of functioning, including those related to economic rent, if any, are quite well understood; and enormous efforts are no more required to deal with the CIGs and VDAs, perceived as nebulous and weak, or the supporting NGOs, at times perceived to be of nuisance value.

In Baran district the Collector chose to advertise in the local newspapers inviting panchayats to submit proposals for dovetailing works, passed by the *gram sabha* on 26 January 2003. The Collector of the District also instructed all the BDOs through a letter asking them to submit proposals. The BDO in turn informed the *sarpanchs* in their respective areas. The advertisement reached out to wide publics who were thus informed of the dovetailing effort but there were no efforts to engage the CIGs in this activity.

Only in Dausa district the implementing NGO was involved in selection of works for the dovetailing activities.

Implementation

The informal directive from SPMU said that an infrastructure project could be taken in each panchayat with a maximum limit of Rs 5 lakhs. In some districts the *sarpanchs* were given a form in which details of the works, the estimated budget, number of BPL

households, material: labour composition, and labour contribution were to be sent to the DPMU.

The panchayats have a long experience of undertaking infrastructure works. In Dholpur, Baran, and Churu most of the projects have been directly taken up by the Panchayats, VDAs were not constituted to oversee the projects, and the Sarpanch took up the responsibility of purchase of material. On the other hand, in Jhalawar district, VDAs were constituted where CIGs undertook the work, but not where the panchayats held the responsibility. According to the DPM- Jhalawar, the work undertaken by the CIGs/ VDAs was more satisfactory than those of the panchayats, as they used adequate and quality material compared to the *panchayats*. The panchayats did not give priority in engaging BPL, SC, ST, OBC households for work, while the CIGs employed more BPL households. In Tonk, the proposals sent by VDAs were hardly entertained. In Dausa works were also sanctioned to the associated NGO, and the CIGs undertook most works. Some characteristics of the implementation processes are discussed here. In Kalu ka Pura, Block Basedi, no committee or VDA was constituted to oversee the works, few BPL households were involved, women were totally excluded, and the *sarpanch* and his sons managed the works including purchase of material; transparency in expenditure was not even considered. In the same vein, in Village Pajantori, Block Shahbad the *sarpanch* broke the old wall of the Rajiv Gandhi Pathshala and constructed a new one using stones of the broken wall; and siphoned the money saved out of the material cost. This was quite transparent to the villagers.

Where labour work was assigned to a particular CIG, as in Village Hathakhera, Block Manoharthana, the CIG members readily accepted it since there was insufficient food in the household and chances of obtaining any other employment were weak. But, the enthusiasm of working was short-lived; the members of the CIG received less than the due wages and complained bitterly of corrupt practices by the *mate*. The CIG members, with no other choices, were forced to compromise with whatever payments they received; however, that they could at least voice their grievances when wronged, is a positive move towards empowerment. That the CIG did not try and take the entire responsibility of the works, reflects the lack of confidence in themselves and *albeit* a fragile character.

While there may be other experiences, similar to Hathaikhera, some good practices are also evident. A participating NGO, supported the CIG Maharan Pratap Samuh, Village Dhadawata, Block Ratangarh, to have 9 sets of bathroom and toilets constructed in the dovetailing programme. The President, treasurer, and group members, with support from the CF, purchased the building material and successfully implemented the work providing employment to members of the CIGs and some other poor households as well. The second instance is of the six *Meena* women of the *Vikas Samooh* CIG in Chunchadia ka Bas (Ramsinghpura) of Panchayat Ralawata who chose to build a health sub centre in the village. The women negotiated with the VDA and the Panchayat that the group would undertake the work and no other labour would be hired from outside. The VDA and the *panchayat* refused to pay the 10 per cent contribution, but the CIG came forward and made the contribution.

Where the CIG members have acted in unison and successfully negotiated their terms with the panchayat, identified their needs and planned accordingly, duly helped by the CF or the NGO, and supported by a positive attitude of the DPMU and the BDO, they have stood to gain, not only in terms of employment and income, but also empowerment.

The detailed descriptions of select works and villages are given in the Annexure.

Nature of works undertaken

A total of 1,939 useful construction works, likely to have long term social gains, have been undertaken under the DPIP dovetailing programme. As can be seen from Table 1, in four districts Anganwari Centres and health sub centres have been the most preferred construction work, which would support young mothers and children in the long run. One-third of total construction activity has been to augment the existing school buildings - verandahs, classrooms, toilets - and buildings for alternative schools. The share of water related structures and roads is 10 per cent each. Incidentally, in none of the districts, money was allocated for building kitchen/ kitchen sheds in schools where Mid Day Meal is cooked.

Table 1: Nature of works undertaken in the Dovetailing Project

S.N.	SPAs in Dovetailing in DPIP	Baran	Churu	Dausa	Dholpur	Jhalawar	Rajsa mand	Tonk	Total
	<i>School buildings</i>	41	243	171	49	82	43	31	660
1	Verandahs and additional rooms in Primary, Upper Primary and Middle	37	208	148	49	-	11	29	482

	schools								
2	Verandahs in RGP/SKP/Sanskrit/Alternative schools	4	35	-	-	22	2	-	63
3	Rajiv Gandhi Pathshalas	-	-	23	-	60	30	2	115
	<i>Health infrastructure (including veterinary centre)</i>	7	268	154	3	219	183	5	839
4	Aanganwari Building	1	219	128	-	204	183	2	737
5	Health sub-centre	6	49	26	1	15	-	3	100
6	Veterinary Centres	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	2
	<i>Other community infrastructure</i>	5	27		17	5	3	4	61
7	Community Halls	4	26	-	16	5	3	3	57
8	Repairing panchayat building	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
9	Retaining Wall	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	2
10	Graveyard Boundary wall	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1
	<i>Water related structures</i>	1	35		14	111	7	17	185
11	Community tank (kund) for drinking water	-	5	-	-	-	-	2	7
12	Small ponds (Johad) repairing	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	6
13	Water tanks	-	13	-	2	-	-	-	15
14	Drains	-	11	-	2	-	-	-	13
15	Irrigation Drainage System	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
16	Hydraulic Structure	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1
17	Water Harvesting Structures	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
18	Anicut, Pond. Facewall	1	-	-	9	46	5	15	76
19	Pitching Ponds	-	-	-	-	64	-	-	64
	<i>Roads</i>	23	144	-	9	-	3	15	194
20	Khuranja (gravel and cement roads)	20	140	-	7	-	3	13	183
21	Khurra Bridges	3	4	-	2	-	-	2	11
	Total	77	717	325	92	417	239	72	1939

Dovetailing works versus SPAs

One of the dominant and oft repeated concerns in the DPIP has been the slow pace of formation of CIGs, sanctions of projects, disbursement of funds to the NGOs, leading to spending a very small proportion of the total DPIP budget. The dovetailing exercise provided a momentum, characteristic of a mission: in some districts the budget utilized for dovetailing works in three months exceeded or was nearly equal to the total expenditure of DPIP incurred since inception of the DPIP. For process monitoring, it is important to understand what enabled this change, where the system shed its slow pace and responded expeditiously? There can be many reasons for this: the exigency of the situation, good leadership, coordination between departments, timely action, and management using existing rules and practices of the *panchayats*.

Our field level findings tell us that it has been a combination of all the above. As already mentioned, the drought situation was very serious, and it is not only in DPIIP areas but also elsewhere where the government responded effectively to the crisis. The SPMU leadership played a positive role. Certain superfluous issues like physical verification of the CIGs, which was a time consuming process, were done away with. Working with the CIGs required procurement of land records, which was also time consuming; pooling their 10 per cent contribution was difficult, but fairly easily managed by most *panchayats*; and their inexperience to handle works and finances could not win the confidence of the DPMU to sanction them works. Comparably, working with the *panchayats* did not need sanctions of the Line Departments to undertake works; did not involve NGOs (with doubtful technical competence, as perceived by most DPMUs); paper work was considerably reduced; and no sanction was required from the SPMU.

Comments and Conclusions

Contributing to the state response for managing an unprecedented drought situation in the state, the dovetailing works, around 2000 in number, have helped build useful assets and provided employment to the poor. Initially, the response of the officials was to work in a hierarchical mode, but wherever the dynamics of people's share in decision making unfolded, the officials took cognizance and worked accordingly. It did not happen in all places, though, but that some groups have been able to assert themselves, and take control of the implementation, shows the inherent potential in the DPIIP programme, notwithstanding its complicated administrative structure.

An important achievement of the dovetailing programme has been that socially useful infrastructure, which reflects the diverse felt needs of the communities has been built; the infrastructure is expected to yield long term social gains. Long lists of such works that can be undertaken have been prepared by each *gram sabha* in the state. The DPIIP provides an opportunity to meet these demands.

Wherever the works were controlled by the *panchayat* alone, the poor were marginalised in decision making, as is generally the case with other poverty reduction programmes. In many places the CIGs were excluded from the programme. In some others they were not given their due wages, and economic rents were reported. But where the active and empowered CIGs made the *panchayats* work with them, the construction has been of

good quality and economic rents have been less, the poor gained substantially as in the case of Meena women's group.

Social infrastructure construction on common lands requires approval of the *panchayats* and CIGs cannot take up such works on their own without their approval. We conclude that ideally infrastructure works be undertaken by the *panchayats* with the involvement of the CIGs who execute the work and also control the finances. The success of such partnership will depend on how empowered are the CIGs; if weak the partnership may weaken them even more. Besides, long term economic gains can come from economic activities undertaken by them. In these circumstances the decision to involve the CIGs in infrastructure projects may not be done through an SPMU direction. It can be undertaken probably by an informed DPMU in consultation with the NGO. Otherwise they can be undertaken by *panchayats* alone. The partnership of the DPIP and the *panchayat* and Rural Development Department has worked well during the drought period. It may be worthwhile to consolidate these gains.

Cases of Dovetailing Works in Select Villages

Box: 1

Kallu ka Pura, Block Basedi, Dholpur

Kallu ka Pura is located 15 km from the Block headquarters Basedi. The population of Kallu ka Pura is about 750 persons. The village is dominated by Rajputs and other communities include Jatavs and Brahmins. The village has electricity and about 28 households have private connections. There are three handpumps in the village, of which only one is functional. A bore well, which is owned by the Sarpanch of the village, meets the water needs of the village members. There is a primary health sub-centre in the village. The ANM visits the village once a month. There is no school in the village. Children go to village Mamodhan which is 2 km. from Kallu ka pura. All children in the village are enrolled in school. Girls are often made to discontinue their education after the primary level. There is an Anganwari Centre where there is regular distribution of supplementary nutrition.

The Sarpanch of the village informed the village community that infrastructure works were to be sanctioned under DPIP. He also informed that the upper limit for smaller works was Rs. 1 lakh and for bigger works was Rs. 5 lakhs. In a meeting of the gram panchayat a decision was taken that a community hall would be constructed in the village as there was no such facility in the village. A sub project was prepared with a budget estimate of Rs. 2,56,000 and sent to DPMU under the following heads- DPIP contribution was 1,38, 000, community contribution was Rs. 25, 600 and Rs. 92, 400 from department of rural development (FRW). A joint bank account (Panchayat and DPIP) was opened in the Alwar Bharatpur Gramin Anchalik Bank, Basedi and the community contribution was deposited alongwith the contribution of the DPMU.

The construction of the community hall was directly taken up buy the Panchayat. No Village Development Association was constituted to oversee the construction. The materials were purchased by the sarpanch and his sons and the accounts maintained by the sarpanch.

The construction work began on 21 March 2003 in which 6 masons and 12 persons were employed to carry out labour. The Masons were paid a wage of Rs, 115-125 and the labour were paid Rs.60 in the form of 10 kg wheat and Rs 14 in cash. The wages were paid within 15-20 days.

The members of the CIG and other community members pointed out that the Sarpanch identified persons who would do labour on his own. The members of BPL households were not given priority and women were also excluded.

At the time of the visit of the IDSJ team 90 percent of the construction had been completed.

Box:2**Village: Pajantori, Shahbad, Baran**

Pajantori is located 14 kilometres from Shahabad the block headquarter There are 120 households in the village which belong to Kirad, Balai, Chamar, Ahir, Nai, Dhobi and Ojhas. The main occupation is agriculture. Given the severe drought conditions in the area most people have been dependent on the Famine Relief Works started by the state government.

The village is connected by road and the main means of transportation are private buses and jeeps. The village got power connection a decade back. There are 6 handpumps in the village, 3 are functional and the others have dried up. The two community wells have also dried up. There is an Anganwari centre in the village where supplementary nutrition is distributed by the AWW on a regular basis. There is no health facility in the village.

The educational facilities in the village include an upper primary school where about 200 children are enrolled of which 40 percent are girls. For senior sections the children have to go to Devri which is 10 kms away. Most girls drop out after completing their upper primary education as parents are not willing to send girls as far as Devri.

Discussion with the Sarpanch revealed that a meeting was organised at the Panchyat Samiti wherein functionaries from the DPMU, the PS Officials, and all the Sarpanchs of the block participated. In this meeting information pertaining to dovetailing of DPIIP with drought relief works was shared. All the Sarpanchs were requested to submit proposals for works that could be undertaken in their village.

In this village the Sarpanch alongwith other members of the community decided to undertake the construction of a boundary wall in premises the of the Rajiv Gandhi Pathshala. A sum of Rs. 1, 65, 000/- was sanctioned for the activity which was deposited in the joint bank account of the panchayat and DPIIP.

The Sarpanch purchased all the material and no VDA was formed to oversee the work. A muster roll for 15 persons was prepared. In the preparation of the muster roll BPL families have not been given a priority. At the time of the visit around 60 persons had been employed. However, some of the community members complained that the Sarpanch did not inform them about the construction of the boundary wall. They also alleged that the old wall of the RGP was broken and the stones from the old wall have been used to construct the new wall and that the Sarpanch has pocketed the money as no new stones were purchased.

Box:3**Village: Hathaikhera, Manohar Thana, Jhalawar**

Hathaikhera is situated 6 km. on the north to block Manoharthana. There are 40-50 households in the village belonging to Meena, Kumhar, Gurjar, Rao, Chamar and Brahmins. There are 28 BPL households in the village and two CIGs have been formed in the village with 6 members each from these households. Remaining BPLs are engaged in wage labour and agriculture work. Praja vikas samooh was formed in August 2001. There are 6 members in this group and all of them have their own agriculture lands. This group had taken up the construction of an Anicut as a SPA on the common land. However there was a dispute with the other CIG (Panchayat vikas samooh) and the Praja group decided not to carry out the activity.

The members of the Praja group indicated that they had been informed about the dovetailing programme. They also said that they decided that they take up the construction of anicut as a dovetail project as employment avenues were limited in the village and they had to provide food at home.

The project proposal was made by the Junior Engineer and Rs. 2,55,000 were sanctioned for the work. Contribution of Rs. 2528 was deposited by the group members and remaining amount would be adjusted with the labour

At the time of the visit of the research team the mate informed that work had started one and half months back and payment is made according to the measurement of work done by a person.

However the group members complained that they are given less wages as the measurements are not done properly. They also alleged that the mate is corrupt.

Box: 4

Chunchadia ka Bas (Ramsinghpura), Ralawata, Dausa

Chunchadia ka Bas is located 12 km. from Dausa town. It is a village dominated by Meenas. There is one primary school in the village. Children have to travel 5 km. to attend the upper primary school. There are 3 handpumps in the village all are dysfunctional. The main source of drinking water are wells.

Six CIGs have been constituted in the village under DPIP. The CIGs have taken up different activities i.e Buffalo-rearing and IADP. When the dovetailing works were started one of the CIGs (Vikas samoo) which had taken up Buffalo rearing activity decided to take up the construction of a health sub-centre. The land identified for the centre fall on the boundary of two villages. The VDA which had been constituted earlier, gave its acceptance. A meeting was organised in the village and general consensus on the contribution was taken. Later on people refused to make the necessary contribution. The group members themselves then deposited the 10 percent contribution of Rs. 6600. The women members also negotiated that since they had given the contributions, employment would be given to the group members only and no labour from outside would be involved. The estimated amount for the work was Rs. 2,48,000 but Rs. 2,43,000 was sanctioned for the work. The model and amount sanctioned for the construction of the health sub centre is same for all such centres constructed in the district.

At the time of the visit of the IDSJ team (in May) the walls of the centre had been constructed. Three muster rolls had changed and the payments had been sanctioned to the labour i.e Rs.14 and 10 kgs of wheat.

Box:5**Village: Thathawata, Ratangarh, Churu**

Village Dhadawata is located near the National highway no. 11 on Sikar – Bikaner road and is situated at the distance of 24 km. from the block headquarter. The village falls under Viramsar gram panchayat. There are 300 households of Rajput, Meghwal, Brahmin, Nayak, Nai, Dholi, and Prajapat communities. The village has basic amenities like electricity, drinking water, schools, health sub-centre and telephone connections. A large number of people from different communities have migrated to the Gulf countries and visit the native village every 2 years. Due to drought conditions members of seven Meghwal households have migrated to Punjab to work as agriculture labourers.

Two CIGs have been working in this village which were formed by the participating NGO. The Maharana Pratap Samooh was formed in July 2002 and was sanctioned in January 2003.

The group undertook Sanitation work i.e construction of toilets in individual homes as a dovetailing activity. According to the CF, this work was not be sanctioned by the DPM but was sanctioned under dovetailing. A proposal was drawn up for Rs. 77000, which was sanctioned. According to the president of the group, 9 sets of bathroom and toilets have been constructed. Two members of the CIG however refused to undertake this work.

A muster roll worked for 5 days one mason and three labourers were engaged for 9 units constructed. While priority for labour was given to the members of the households who got the toilets constructed, additional labour was drawn from other BPL households. 4 units were constructed in first muster roll and 5 units have been completed in second muster roll. The building material was purchased by president, treasurer, and group members with support from CF.