



## Role of common interest groups (CIG) in empowering dairy farmers

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**ABSTRACT:** The dairying in India is mostly contributed by small herd owners, residing in the villages. The role of livestock in providing employment and in tackling poverty to a limited extent had been studied by many people. The major objective of the study was to know the socio-psychological profile of members, its functioning and its role in empowering the members. Along with this, the constraints faced were also studied. The study was conducted in three districts of Rajasthan state. A total of 18 CIGs from six blocks of the three districts were studied and all the 250 members of the group were taken as respondents. The study showed that majority of the respondents were illiterate and upto 35 years of age. 64 per cent were having a larger family size of five or more members and about 86 per cent were already involved in rearing cattle. Functioning of CIG groups studied on the basis of six functions revealed that thirteen out of eighteen groups were functioning effectively than the rest. The role in empowering the dairy farmers by CIG, on the basis of ten characteristics revealed that ten groups out of eighteen had above average scores for all ten characteristics except group interaction, group co-operation and group decision making.

**KEY WORDS:** Common interest group, Poverty, Dairy farming and empowerment

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### INTRODUCTION

It is now realised that development planning in India has to concentrate on generation of more employment as it is one of the effective ways of poverty alleviation, reduction of inequality and meaningful growth. Poverty can be defined as a social phenomenon in which a section of the society is deprived of basic requirements of life. According to the planning commission, a person needs 2400 calories per day in rural area and 2100 calories in urban areas and in terms of money a person's annual income is not less than Rs. 20,000. Any person getting less calories and income than the recommendation made, is living below poverty line.

According to 2001, census 26 per cent people are living

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below the poverty line in India. To overcome this poverty, three states namely; Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh have started a new scheme "District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP)". In Rajasthan, this project was running with the help of World Bank in 7 districts namely, Baran, Churu, Dausa, Dholpur, Jhalawar, Rajsamand and Tonk. The objectives of this scheme were to mobilise the poor in the rural areas and build up their capacities, and utilisation of the available resources on the basis of priorities of the poor. For implementation of this programme, different NGOs are being selected to work in a cluster of villages by the State Project Management Unit (SPMU). They helped in the implementation of this scheme at district and village level. They appointed a "Block Coordinator and Community Facilitator" (1 for 3 villages), who then constituted the "Common Interest Groups (CIGs)" by including Below Poverty Line (BPL) families, having common economic and social conditions and which are ready to take common work.

The long-term goal of CIGs was to reduce the poverty of the members. The specific objective of the CIGs was to improve the living standards and the socio-economic status of the members. The CIGs were empowering the members through building the capacities of its members, and improving their infrastructure services and resources on the basis of their