



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

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

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priorities in social and economic needs. The participation of the stakeholders in a development programme is essential to come out with desired impact. The evaluation of the on-going programme in terms of its socio-economic and environmental impact will definitely help in identifying the factors facilitating and hindering the working with CIGs, thereby developing an appropriate strategy and mechanism to make the programme more effective. With this interest, the study was planned in Rajasthan with the objective to study the socio-economic profile of members of CIG, to ascertain the functioning of CIG and to identify the role of CIG in empowerment of dairy farmers.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in the Rajasthan, a state of India. Large numbers of “Common Interest Groups” (CIG) are working on alleviation of poverty of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) farmers. Rajasthan is one of the pioneer states in the country which operationalised the concept of Common Interest Groups (CIGs) for poverty eradication of the Below Poverty Line (BPL) rural farmers.

A World Bank project namely, “District Poverty Initiative Project (DPIP)” is running in the seven district of state and out of this seven districts three districts were selected through lottery method for the research work namely, Churu, Jhalawar and Baran. Two Blocks were selected randomly from each selected district, thus the study was conducted in a total of six blocks.

Three CIGs which are working on dairy farming were selected from each selected block of the selected districts. Total 18 numbers of CIGs were selected for data collection from the selected blocks of three districts. All the members of selected CIGs were taken as the respondents for this study. Total number of respondents for this study was about 250 dairy farmers.

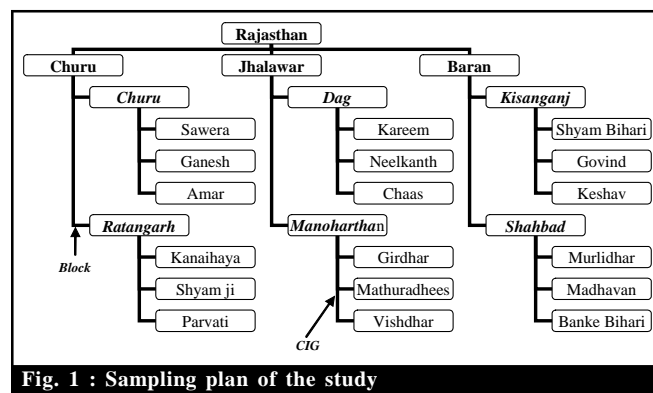


Fig. 1 : Sampling plan of the study

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Data from the respondent were collected by using structured interview schedule and were analyzed by using appropriate statistical techniques.

Socio-economic profile of CIG:

The socio-economic profiles included age, education, caste, family size, land holding, herd size, participation of family members in dairy and annual income of all the CIG members were studied and the findings are listed in the Table 1.

The result indicates that 58.0 per cent of the members belonged to the age group of upto 35 years and 42.0 per cent members belonged to the age group of above 35 years. Majority of the members of CIG were illiterate (71.6%), followed by 9.2 per cent of the members who had education upto Middle School. It is evident from table that majority of CIG members belonged to backward castes (55.2%) and schedule tribe (19.2). The members of the CIG have a large family size of more than 5 members (64.0%).

The study stated that 40.4 per cent members were land less. The members with marginal and small holdings were 21.2 per cent and 19.6 landless which provide a good evidence of joining the common interest group by the members.

The people in the state were keeping animals which is well supported by Table 1. The study clearly enunciated that all the members of the CIG possessed dairy animals and 86.4 per cent of members possessed two animals, while rest of the members were maintaining more than two animals.

Participation of female members was found to be more on daily activities like dung disposal, cleaning of animal shed, washing, feeding and watering, milking, collection and carrying of fodder and lesser as compared to male counterpart on sale of milk. The results showed that the members were spending six to nine hours per day for dairy farming activities.

The figures related to the income from dairying is also presented in Table 1 which showed that 53.2 per cent members were earning money upto Rs. 5000 and 46.8 per cent were earning above Rs. 5000 per year from the dairying.

Functioning of CIGs based on six identified functions:

The functioning process of the eighteen groups was studied on the basis of six identified functions. These functions were awareness building about scheme, collection of fund from members weekly or fortnightly, conducting meeting weekly or monthly, identifying the problems of the members and seeking their solutions, implementation of approved sub-project, training to CIG members and their leaders. For each of these functions, the score was calculated based on the members' response in 'Yes' and 'No' the functioning was evaluated in terms of respondents wise.

The study shows the functioning of each identified function. Table 2 indicated that the functions like awareness building about the schemes, collection of funds from members' weekly or fortnightly and conducting meeting with the members' weekly or monthly, majority of members' i.e. 96.8, 92.0 and 83.2, respectively replied 'yes'. It means these three functions were performed effectively. In case of remaining

Table 1 : Socio-economic profiles of the common interest groups members (n=250)

Sr. No.	Variables	Category	Frequency	Percentage
1.	Age (years)	Upto 35	145	58.0
		Above 35	105	42.0
2.	Education status of CIG members	Illiterate	179	71.6
		Below Primary School	20	08.0
		Primary School	21	08.4
		Middle School	23	09.2
		High School	7	02.8
3.	Caste of CIG members	Scheduled tribe (ST)	48	19.2
		Scheduled caste (SC)	40	16.0
		Other backward classes	138	55.2
		General	24	09.6
4.	Family size	Upto 2 members	11	04.4
		3-4 members	79	30.6
		5 and above	160	64.0
5.	Land holding	Land less (No land)	101	40.4
		Marginal (Upto 1 hectare)	53	21.2
		Small (1.1 –2 hectares)	49	19.6
		Medium (2.1-4 hectares)	32	12.8
		Large (above 4 hectares)	15	06.0
6.	Herd size	Upto 2 animals	216	86.4
		2-4 animals	26	10.4
		Above 4 animals	8	03.2
7.	Participation of family members in dairy farming activities per day	Upto 6.66 hrs	34	13.6
		6.67 to 9.26 hrs	185	74.0
		Above 9.26 hrs	31	12.4
8.	Annual income from dairy	Upto Rs. 5000	133	53.2
		Above Rs. 5000	117	46.8

functions *i.e.* Identifying the problems and seeking their solutions, implementation of approved sub-project and training to CIG members and their leaders, the members replied 49.4, 44.8 and 36.8 per cent out of 250 selected members that these functions were performing below the average. On the basis of these responses, it can be concluded that all the selected functions were working effectively but due to lack of training, illiteracy and non-availability of funds on time, some CIGs were not functioning properly in terms of keeping records of project related activities.

Role of CIG in empowerment of dairy farmers based on functional variable and role performing scale:

A role performing scale was developed including group interaction, group co-operation, interpersonal trust, group decision-making, manageable group size, group goals achievement, need satisfaction, group competition, group leadership and group cohesiveness as ten variables to evaluate the role of CIGs in empowerment of members. For these

characters, the value was calculated. The groups were evaluated depending upon the above average and below average groups based on the mean role performing score.

For particular, Common Interest Group (CIG) role performance was calculated. The mean of these characteristics was used to categorize the groups into above average and below average groups. The results are shown in Table 3.

Group interaction:

As far as the variable group interaction is concerned, it was stated that 8 groups had above average groups interaction to other "common interest groups". The interaction score of these groups can be attributed to the small geographical spread of the residence of the members compared to other groups where geographically spread of the residence was not so compact.

Group co-operation:

The high extent of cooperation prevailing in the above

Table 2 : Distribution of common interest groups members based on functioning of group members (n=250)

Sr. No.	Functions of the common interest groups	Responses of CIG members				
		Yes		No		
		F	P	F	No	P
1.	Awareness building about the schemes	242	96.8	8	03.2	
2.	Collection of fund from members weekly or fortnightly	230	92.0	20	08.0	
3.	Conducting meeting with the members weekly or monthly	208	83.2	42	16.8	
4.	Identifying the problems and seeking their solutions	121	49.4	129	51.6	
5.	Implementation of approved sub-project	112	44.8	138	55.2	
6.	Training to CIG members and their leaders	92	36.8	158	63.2	

F – frequency; P - percentage

group was a positive impact on effective functioning of those groups, which was clearly reflected in the above average role performance score. The table clearly indicates that half of the total group has above average in group cooperation.

Interpersonal trust:

The half of the group have high personnel trust value which may be attributed to high group interaction score of these groups, which provided enough opportunities for the group members to get acquainted. The higher interaction might have paved way for melting out of the apprehension in the minds of group member about each other and thus interpersonal

trust score was more in those groups with higher group interaction score.

Group decision making:

The result indicated that the score was above average in 10 groups and they were involved in democratic decision making style where each member had a say in the decision regarding the group. This could be the possible reason for the low indices of these CIG as far as decision making variable is concerned. Thus, groups which resorted to participatory decision making approach had high group decision making value.

Table 3 : Distribution of common interest groups based on functional variable (n=250)

Sr. No.	Name of CIGs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	CIGRPS
1.	Group I	0.884*	0.893*	0.755	0.817*	0.760	0.884*	0.827*	0.764	0.720	0.836*	0.814*
2.	Group II	0.733	0.706	0.707	0.746	0.667	0.693	0.747	0.747	0.813*	0.707	0.727
3.	Group III	0.840	0.897*	0.778	0.862*	0.791*	0.867*	0.813*	0.782	0.782	0.756	0.817*
4.	Group IV	0.782	0.782	0.724	0.778	0.688	0.782	0.760	0.796*	0.827*	0.760	0.768
5.	Group V	0.840	0.920*	0.787	0.853*	0.813*	0.867*	0.813*	0.827*	0.800*	0.760	0.828*
6.	Group VI	0.737	0.773	0.858*	0.831*	0.862*	0.782	0.804*	0.871*	0.738	0.856*	0.811*
7.	Group VII	0.805	0.766	0.817*	0.772	0.734	0.794	0.817*	0.811*	0.778	0.794*	0.789
8.	Group VIII	0.883*	0.905*	0.794*	0.816	0.778*	0.811*	0.794*	0.783	0.867*	0.805*	0.824*
9.	Group IX	0.866*	0.861*	0.794*	0.750	0.800*	0.694	0.778	0.756	0.805*	0.728	0.783
10.	Group X	0.816	0.911*	0.867*	0.883*	0.772*	0.828*	0.839*	0.794*	0.717	0.850*	0.828*
11.	Group XI	0.888*	0.883*	0.883*	0.872*	0.800*	0.789	0.750	0.705	0.694	0.844*	0.811*
12.	Group XII	0.946*	0.906*	0.887*	0.840*	0.745	0.853*	0.813*	0.773	0.853*	0.720	0.834*
13.	Group XIII	0.817	0.751	0.720	0.769	0.706	0.747	0.817*	0.747	0.849*	0.764	0.769
14.	Group XIV	0.795	0.795	0.693	0.844*	0.693	0.742	0.804*	0.796*	0.689	0.640	0.749
15.	Group XV	0.884*	0.800	0.791*	0.773	0.845*	0.787	0.760	0.764	0.809*	0.813*	0.803*
16.	Group XVI	0.844*	0.791	0.778	0.804	0.715	0.813*	0.751	0.827*	0.840*	0.800	0.796
17.	Group XVII	0.933*	0.871*	0.795*	0.813	0.773*	0.680	0.849*	0.782	0.787*	0.836*	0.812*
18.	Group XVIII	0.826	0.857*	0.747	0.826*	0.756	0.804*	0.809*	0.769	0.764	0.818*	0.798
Mean score		0.840	0.838	0.787	0.814	0.761	0.789	0.797	0.783	0.785	0.783	0.798

* indicate score above average

1. Group Interaction, 2. Group Co-operation 3. Interpersonal Trust 4. Group Decision Making 5. Manageable Group Size
 6. Group Goals Achievement 7. Need Satisfaction 8. Group Competition 9. Group Leadership
 10. Group Cohesiveness

CIGRPS: Common Interest Group Role Performing Scores

Manageable group size:

A high manageable group size score revealed preference of CIG members for group with a group size of 5-10 members.

Group goals achievement:

In the case of those CIGs the group with above average role performance (eight) for group goal achievement, the dairy farmers have joined these CIGs in order to achieve common goal. The feeling that group goals are within their reach inspired the members to work in the group. Thus among the members of those groups personal goals were working above the group goals resulting in low group goal achievement performance.

Need satisfaction:

Out of 18 groups, 12 were found above mean performance. Table 3 clearly reveals that majority of the members of these CIGs were found above the average mean score when categorized based on the mean value. For most of the members, the production activity undertaken by the group was a major source of income to make a living. Besides this, most of the members of these groups had a strong feeling in their mind that their social status was uplifted after becoming group members.

Group competition:

Table 3 gives a clear picture that highest group competition was seen in five groups while three have above average score and one was having equal score. This clearly reveals the negative effect of groups competition on the performance of the CIG. The groups which were found with high group competition scores revealed a high level of group competition among the group members.

Group leadership:

Majority of the groups were observed to have a good

leadership quality. Through focused group discussions and non-participant observation of group activities, it was very clear that the leadership style followed in these groups was democratic, where the role played by the leader was merely facilitating in nature. Every member of the group had his/her say in decisions of the group.

Group cohesiveness:

Eleven out of the total 18 groups were found above the average performing score. The above group were having above average role performing score for group interaction, co-operation interpersonal trust, group decision making etc. All these factors might have facilitated the members to maintain the cohesiveness of their groups. Those groups were having below average score might have resulted in lower group cohesiveness. Awasthi *et al.* (2002) and Das (2004) have also worked on the topic related to the present investigation.

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