

Community-Based Collective Cash Transfer:

SEWA's Experience in Implementing Social Assistance

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About SEWA

- Organization of poor, self-employed women workers founded in 1972
- Two main goals: increasing self-reliance and full employment
- Now over 9.6 lakh members in 7 states of India
- Four-Pronged Approach
 - 1) Organizing Women
 - 2) Building New Skills and Capacities
 - 3) Encouraging Capital Formation
 - 4) Increasing Social Security

Collective Community Cash Transfers

- SEWA implemented Jeevika - livelihood security program in 2002 with the support of
 - the State Government,
 - Central Government,
 - International Fund for Agricultural Development and
 - World Food Programme.
- Programme was implemented in 400 villages covering 40,000 households.
- Thrust was towards building the capacities of the community members to work towards their own development through collective community cash transfers.

Social Protection through Social Cohesion

Participatory Planning and implementation

- Involvement of the community in the Microplanning process, using Participatory Rural Assessment tools
- All members of the village involved in forming the microplans
- Participation of the poorest of the poor in the planning process and their needs brought out and addressed

Participatory Monitoring through the Village Development Committees

- Formation of the Village Development Committees (VDCs), who work in close coordination with the Panchayats.
- Formation of VDC involved a democratic process and the representation from each community, caste, economic class was ensured
- VDC monitored and ensured smooth implementation of the plans prepared by the community

Social Security and Food Security

- During the planning exercise, every demand (small and big) of the community was discussed.
- Ensured provision of basic healthcare, childcare, insurance and shelter services for the households.
- Ensured the food security of all the members by setting up grain bank.
- Members were also provided with food grains along with cash as payment for work by linking up food distribution with SEWA's traditional support system of nutrition, childcare, attendance, education, total livelihood, participation and performance improvement.

Convergence

- Financial need was first linked up with the existing government schemes.
- The gap was later on bridged by project funds.
- This way duplication in implementation was avoided and proper convergence with the government could take place.
- The members were given trainings on planning and budgeting and cash flow management.
- The gap amount was transferred by SEWA to the village directly in a separate account that was opened and managed by the VDC members themselves.

Community based Collective Cash Transfer

- The plans were consolidated at the block and the district levels. The funds flowed from the district level to the block level and finally to the village level.
- A one-time transfer of maximum of Rs. 25 lakhs was made to the VDC. The next tranche was released only after seventy five percent of the earlier transferred amount was spent and expenses submitted and accounted for.
- Their ability to control and use the money to implement their plans gave them sense of ownership and pride.
- This also made them vigilant towards fund management and prioritizing the development work.

Achievements

- Sense of Ownership
- Involvement of the Poorest Members of the Village
- Optimum Use of Resources and facilitated convergence
- Strengthening Local Market Economies
- Food Security

Challenges

- Overcoming social dynamics at the village level - ensuring each member's participation regardless of social standing
- Time Consuming process involved in ensuring the participatory planning from all community members

Results

- Poorest members of the village were involved in the planning process and their needs were addressed
- Poorest households were supported in developing a vision for longer-term development and created some innovative survival strategies.
- The participatory planning approach allowed the funds to address gaps between needs that households could fulfil on their own and needs currently covered by public programmes.

Results (Contd..)

- Community members gained the experience of envisioning, planning, and implementing the projects by themselves.
- All economic levels benefitted from the support and each household was able to maintain at least one form of livelihood and income.
- Household migration was reduced by almost 96%.

THANK YOU