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Social Impact of Livelihood Support Programs in Rural Society of Sri Lanka: A Case Study of Dry Zone Livelihood Support and Partnership Program in Monaragala District

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Livelihood development program is a common strategy introduced under the poverty alleviation programs in Sri Lanka. Dry Zone Livelihood Support & Partnership Program (DZLiSPP) is a specific program planned to improve livelihood of the rural people in four districts in Sri Lanka. Monaragala is one of the districts that come under this program as it is the main poverty stricken district in the country. This program was launched in year 2005 and completed in year 2012. It was implemented under the financial cooperation of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). The DZLiSPP included five components and Micro-Enterprise Development (MED) is the major activity under this program. The program management had decided to obtain the service of an external source (Service Provider) in establishing 250 MEDs in two divisional secretariats. This task has been assigned to a private entrepreneurship development agency.

The main objective of this study is to verify the input of the Service Provider as per the given Terms of Reference (ToR) and identify the success of their input in terms of the expected output of the DZLiSPP. The methodology of the study included a household questionnaire, observations, key-informant interviews, review of the physical progress of the MED activities, and review of documents maintained by the project office and the Service Provider. All collected quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS program.

The Service Provider (SP) had followed a module of training developed by the International Labour Organisation and it has been adapted to Sri Lanka. All selected families for the MED had undergone the training by the SP. It was found that the majority were happy with the given training. The SP has done a satisfactory service in almost all tasks (except two) assigned to them through the ToR.

The internal audit by the district program office has not paid adequate attention on the tasks performed by the SP. If they had monitored the progress there may have been possibilities of filling the gaps. However, all officers who were assigned tasks from both parties were found have worked under unfavourable conditions prevailing in the region due to ethnic conflicts. In addition, negative attitudes of the targeted recipients as well as general public also have made an indirect impact on the success of the MED activities. It was revealed that many villagers do not have a satisfactory level of rationalistic ideology on their livelihood. It can be concluded that, the MED activity launched by the SP has achieved given tasks up to a satisfactory level and many recipients have improved their livelihood as a result of DZLiSPP.

Key Words: Livelihood Support, Micro-Enterprise Development, Service Provider, Dry Zone, Rural Society

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