

Factors Influencing The Unsatisfactory Functioning Of Rural Development Programmes: A Comparative Study Of Public Representatives' Perspectives In Mysuru And Dakshina Kannada Districts

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Abstract:

Background: The ultimate goal of rural development is to reduce poverty, increase economic opportunities, and improve the overall standard of living in these areas. Despite the importance of rural development, several factors hinder the satisfactory functioning of RD programmes. In the present study, an attempt is made to explore some of the key factors that influence unsatisfactory functioning of rural development programmes as opined by the public representatives.

Materials and Methods: A total of 100 public representatives from Mysuru and Dakshina Kannada districts were selected through stratified random sampling with equal numbers. They were administered a structured questionnaire. The data were subjected to both descriptive and inferential statistics-chi-square.

Results: Results revealed that factors like Financial instability (70.0%), Caste politics/ group politics (65.0%), Lack of funds released by higher levels for programme implementation (57.0%) and Non-cordial relationship between local and state government (53.0%), were the major factors as opined by the public representatives in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Communication problems (49.0%), Interference by politicians (48.0%) Non-payment of taxes by villagers (40.0%) Negligence by officers towards public and RD programmes (39.0%), Lack of good leadership (33.0%), Ineffective administration by the local governance (31.0%), Lack of participation by local people (26.0%) were also the factors as opined by the public representatives in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes to some extent.

Conclusions: Public representatives from Mysuru indicated Non-cordial relationship between local and state government. Lack of good leadership, negligence by officers towards public and RD programmes, and Interference by politicians were the factors more than Public representatives from Dakshina Kannada district in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Strategies for satisfactory functioning of RD programmes have been delineated.

Keywords: Rural development programmes, unsatisfactory performance, public representatives, Mysuru and Dakshina Kannada districts

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I. Introduction

Rural development programmes are vital for improving the quality of life and economic well-being of rural populations, addressing issues like poverty, poor infrastructure, and limited access to services such as healthcare and education (Chand & Srivastava, 2015). These initiatives, typically supported by both governmental and non-governmental organizations, aim to create a sustainable improvement in the livelihoods of rural communities. However, many rural development programmes often fall short of achieving their intended outcomes. Public representatives elected officials or local leaders play a central role in the design, implementation, and oversight of these programmes. Their perspectives are crucial for identifying the root causes of these failures (Jha & Srinivasan, 2011).

This research aims to explore the factors that contribute to the unsatisfactory functioning of rural development programmes, as viewed by public representatives. The failure of such programmes can often be traced to a combination of structural inefficiencies, inadequate funding, social and political challenges, and poor community involvement (Rao, 2006). Understanding these perspectives allows for a better identification of the barriers to success and can help inform strategies to address them.

Public representatives often highlight governance issues, such as bureaucratic inefficiency, corruption, and poor coordination between local, state, and national government levels, as major obstacles (Singh, 2010). These challenges contribute significantly to the unsatisfactory outcomes of rural development initiatives.

Inadequate funding, delays in fund disbursement, and the misallocation of resources can lead to the failure of rural development projects. Public representatives frequently point to these financial hurdles as key reasons behind the unsatisfactory functioning of rural programmes (Desai & Pillai, 2019). The lack of active community involvement in the planning and implementation of rural development programmes is another factor identified by public representatives. Without adequate consultation, these programmes often do not align with the needs and priorities of the local population, leading to inefficiency and disillusionment (Mishra, 2014).

Political interference, a lack of political will, and social dynamics often undermine the success of rural development programmes. Public representatives report that such issues hinder the equitable distribution of resources and undermine the sustainability of development efforts (Pritchett & Woolcock, 2004). Insufficient capacity-building initiatives for local leaders and stakeholders often result in ineffective management and implementation of rural development programmes (Rao, 2006). Public representatives argue that more investment in local training and leadership development is crucial for better programme execution. Weak or non-existent monitoring and evaluation frameworks are another significant issue in rural development initiatives. Public representatives often highlight the inability to track progress and identify problems in real-time, which leads to the continuation of ineffective programmes (Singh, 2010). In many rural areas, limited access to modern technology and digital tools impedes the effective delivery of services, transparency, and communication between stakeholders. Public representatives view this technological gap as a key factor in the unsatisfactory functioning of rural development programmes (Chand & Srivastava, 2015).

In light of these issues, it is critical to identify and address the underlying factors that influence unsatisfactory functioning of rural development programmes can achieve their intended goals. In the present study, an attempt is made to explore some of the key factors that affect the effective functioning of RD programmes, where opinion of the public representatives have been analysed as well as comparisons between public representatives from Mysuru and Dakshina Kannada districts have been attempted.

II. Materials And Methods

A total of 100 public representatives from various taluks in Mysuru and Dakshina Kannada districts were selected through stratified random sampling. Fifty each respondent from Mysuru and Dakshina Kannada districts were included. The selection was based on the identification of public representatives who are directly involved with local and state governments in implementing rural development programmes. They were personally contacted by the first author and requested to answer the questionnaire on factors influencing unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher in consultation with the experts in the field considering all the possible options. Further, the questionnaire was subject to content validation too. Once the data were collected, they were analysed by frequency, per cent and chi-square tests.

III. Results

Table 1: Presents Distribution of Selected Samples by Responses on factors influencing unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes and the Result of Test Statistics

Factors	Responses	Districts			Total	Test statistics
			Mysuru	Dakshina Kannada		
Caste politics/ group politics	Yes	F	35	30	65	X ² =1.099; p=.402
		%	70.0%	60.0%	65.0%	
	No	F	15	20	35	
		%	30.0%	40.0%	35.0%	
Non-cordial relationship between local and state government	Yes	F	16	37	53	X ² =17.704; p=.001
		%	32.0%	74.0%	53.0%	
	No	F	34	13	47	
		%	68.0%	26.0%	47.0%	
Financial instability	Yes	F	37	33	70	X ² =0.762; p=.513
		%	74.0%	66.0%	70.0%	
	No	F	13	17	30	
		%	26.0%	34.0%	30.0%	
Lack of good leadership	Yes	F	23	10	33	X ² =7.644; p=.010
		%	46.0%	20.0%	33.0%	
	No	F	27	40	67	
		%	54.0%	80.0%	67.0%	
Lack of participation by local people	Yes	F	12	14	26	X ² =0.208; p=.648
		%	24.0%	28.0%	26.0%	
	No	F	38	36	74	
		%	76.0%	72.0%	74.0%	
Ineffective administration by the local governance	Yes	F	13	18	31	X ² =1.169; p=.387
		%	26.0%	36.0%	31.0%	
	No	F	37	32	69	
		%	74.0%	64.0%	69.0%	

Negligence by officers towards public and RD programmes	Yes	F	74.0%	64.0%	69.0%	X ² =9.458; p=.004
		%	27	12	39	
	No	F	54.0%	24.0%	39.0%	
Lack of control and supervision by higher authorities	Yes	F	23	38	61	X ² =0.585; p=.611
		%	46.0%	76.0%	61.0%	
	No	F	11	8	19	
Lack of funds released by higher levels for programme implementation	Yes	%	22.0%	16.0%	19.0%	X ² =1.999; p=.225
		No	F	39	42	
	%	78.0%	84.0%	81.0%		
Non-payment of taxes by villagers	Yes	F	32	25	57	X ² =2.667; p=.153
		%	64.0%	50.0%	57.0%	
	No	F	18	25	43	
Communication problems	Yes	%	36.0%	50.0%	43.0%	X ² =0.360; p=.689
		No	F	24	16	
	%	48.0%	32.0%	40.0%		
Unnecessary interference by village leaders	Yes	F	26	34	60	X ² =0; p=1.00
		%	52.0%	68.0%	60.0%	
	No	F	23	26	49	
Interference by politicians	Yes	%	46.0%	52.0%	49.0%	X ² =10.256; p=.003
		No	F	27	24	
	%	54.0%	48.0%	51.0%		
Lack of good leadership	Yes	F	12	12	24	X ² =7.644; p=.010
		%	24.0%	24.0%	24.0%	
	No	F	38	38	76	
Lack of participation by local people	Yes	%	76.0%	76.0%	76.0%	X ² =0.208; p=.648
		No	F	32	16	
	%	64.0%	32.0%	48.0%		
Ineffective administration by the local governance	Yes	F	18	34	52	X ² =0.208; p=.648
		%	36.0%	68.0%	52.0%	
	No	F	18	34	52	
%	36.0%	68.0%	52.0%			

Caste politics/ group politics: On the whole, majority of 65% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that caste politics/ group politics is one of the factors in the unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed (X²=1.099; p=.402), revealing that pattern of responses was same by public representatives in both the districts.

Non-cordial relationship between local and state government: On the whole, majority of 53% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that non-cordial relationship between local and state government is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a significant association was observed (X²=17.704; p=.001), revealing that majority of the public representatives in Dakshina Kannada opined non-cordial relationship between local and state government is one of the factor than the public representatives in Mysuru district.

Financial instability: On the whole, majority of 70% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that financial instability is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed (X²=0.762; p=.513), revealing that pattern of responses was same by public representatives in both the districts.

Lack of good leadership: On the whole 33% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that lack of good leadership is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a significant association was observed (X²=7.644; p=.010), revealing that majority of the public representatives Mysuru opined more lack of good leadership than public representatives Dakshina Kannada.

Lack of participation by local people: On the whole, minority of 26% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that lack of participation by local people is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed (X²=0.208; p=.648), revealing that pattern of responses was same by public representatives in both the districts.

Ineffective administration by the local governance: On the whole, minority of 31% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that ineffective administration by the local governance

is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed ($X^2=1.169$; $p=.387$), revealing that pattern of responses was same by public representatives in both the districts.

Negligence by officers towards public and RD programmes: On the whole, minority of 39% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that negligence by officers towards public and RD programme is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a significant association was observed ($X^2=9.458$; $p=.004$), revealing that majority of the public representatives in Mysuru opined more of negligence of officers than the public representatives in Dakshina Kannada district.

Lack of control and supervision by higher authorities: On the whole, 19% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that lack of control and supervision by higher authorities is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed ($X^2=0.585$; $p=.611$), revealing that pattern of responses was same by public representatives in both the districts.

Lack of funds released by higher levels for programme implementation: On the whole, majority of 57% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that lack of funds released by higher levels for programme implementation is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed ($X^2=1.999$; $p=.225$), revealing that pattern of responses was the same by public representatives in both the districts.

Non-payment of taxes by villagers: On the whole, minority of 40% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that non-payment of taxes by villagers is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed ($X^2=2.667$; $p=.153$), revealing that pattern of responses was same by public representatives in both the districts.

Communication problems: On the whole, minority of 49% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that communication problem is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed ($X^2=0.360$; $p=.689$), revealing that pattern of responses was same by public representatives in both the districts.

Unnecessary interference by village leaders: On the whole, minority of 24% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that unnecessary interference by village leaders is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a non-significant association was observed ($X^2=0$; $p=1.00$), revealing that pattern of responses was same by public representatives in both the districts.

Interference by politicians: On the whole, minority of 48% of the selected sample of public representatives irrespective of the districts opined that interference by politicians is one of the factors in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes. Further, when the association is verified between districts and responses, a significant association was observed ($X^2=10.256$; $p=.003$), revealing that majority of the public representatives in Mysuru opined interference by politicians more than the public representatives in Dakshina Kannada.

IV. Discussion

Major findings of the study:

- Factors like Financial instability (70.0%), Caste politics/ group politics (65.0%), Lack of funds released by higher levels for programme implementation (57.0%) and Non-cordial relationship between local and state government (53.0%), were the major factors as opined by the public representatives in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes.
- Communication problems (49.0%), Interference by politicians (48.0%) Non-payment of taxes by villagers (40.0%) Negligence by officers towards public and RD programmes (39.0%), Lack of good leadership (33.0%), Ineffective administration by the local governance (31.0%), Lack of participation by local people (26.0%) were also the factors as opined by the public representatives in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes to some extent.

- Public representatives from Mysuru indicated Non-cordial relationship between local and state government. Lack of good leadership, Negligence by officers towards public and RD programmes, and Interference by politicians were the factors more than Public representatives from Dakshina Kannada district in unsatisfactory functioning of RD programmes.

Financial instability, caste/group politics, lack of funds for program implementation, and non-cordial relationships between local and state governments are common challenges faced in the functioning of rural development (RD) programs. These issues can significantly impact the effectiveness and efficiency of programs designed to improve living standards and socioeconomic conditions in rural areas. Financial instability is a critical barrier to the successful implementation of rural development programs. The lack of consistent funding and budget allocations can halt the progress of projects. In India, for example, rural development initiatives often suffer from delayed or inadequate financial releases from the central or state governments, which directly affect the quality of services delivered. Research shows that financial instability is often linked to macroeconomic factors such as inflation, government budget constraints, and a lack of fiscal discipline (Sharma & Saxena, 2014). These factors result in an inconsistent flow of funds, causing delays in infrastructure development, poverty alleviation programs, and social welfare schemes. Financial instability leads to underfunded projects or the complete cancellation of certain programs, which undermines public trust and overall program effectiveness (Jha, 2015). Research by Patel & Sharma (2013) on rural development in India highlights that bureaucratic delays and lack of coordination often result in a shortfall in funds leading to program inefficiencies. Programs such as rural infrastructure development, healthcare, education, and poverty alleviation are especially vulnerable when there is a lack of timely financial support.

Caste and group-based politics remain deeply ingrained in Indian society, and these political dynamics often influence the execution of rural development programs. Public representatives, who play a crucial role in decision-making, may prioritize their caste or community's needs over broader developmental goals. This creates inequitable distribution of resources and benefits, often marginalizing already vulnerable sections of society. Numerous studies emphasize how caste politics can skew policy implementation. According to Rajasekhar (2002), caste and community-based loyalties can lead to favouritism in the selection of beneficiaries for rural development schemes. When politicians or local leaders focus more on securing votes from specific caste groups, it can lead to the inefficiency of public service delivery and social exclusion. The relationship between local and state governments is another important determinant of the success or failure of rural development programs. In many cases, power struggles, political rivalry, and lack of coordination between these levels of government create significant obstacles to the effective execution of programs.

According to Nair & Venkatesh (2017), the fractured relationships between state and local governments often lead to overlapping responsibilities, where each government entity blames the other for shortcomings in program execution. These tensions may manifest as miscommunication or delayed action on important projects. Local governments, especially in rural areas, often feel side lined by state-level bureaucracy, leading to a lack of ownership and accountability in program implementation.

The confluence of financial instability, caste politics, funding issues, and strained inter-governmental relationships ultimately compromises the effectiveness of rural development programs. Public representatives, who are often the primary point of contact between government bodies and the community, become disillusioned with the system, undermining their ability to execute projects effectively. Research on rural development in India consistently points to the need for improved governance, transparency, and stronger coordination between government levels to overcome these barriers. According to Singh (2016), fostering a collaborative environment among local, state, and central governments, alongside addressing financial issues, can mitigate many of these problems. Additionally, programs that encourage community participation and inclusive decision-making can reduce the negative influence of caste and group politics (Chaudhary, 2008).

While the public representatives from Mysuru identified the above factors, representatives from Dakshina Kannada district emphasized slightly different issues in their assessment of RD program effectiveness. As noted in the previous discussion, the challenges in Dakshina Kannada were more focused on financial instability, caste politics, lack of funds, and strained local-state relations. While both districts share common issues, such as lack of coordination between local and state governments, Mysuru's unique challenges such as leadership deficits, bureaucratic negligence, and political interference are more related to governance failures at the local level. In Mysuru, the focus appears to be on human resource management (in the form of leadership quality and officer diligence) and political dynamics that interfere with the developmental agenda. In contrast, Dakshina Kannada's challenges are tied more to broader structural factors, such as financial constraints and community-based politics that may prevent equitable distribution of benefits.

V. Conclusion

Understanding the perspectives of public representatives is essential in addressing the challenges that hinder the effective functioning of rural development programmes. Through their unique positions and insights

into local realities, these representatives can provide valuable recommendations for enhancing the performance of such programmes. This research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of these challenges and to inform future policy-making and rural development strategies that can better serve rural populations.

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