

**Determinants of Successful Implementation of Poverty
Alleviation Policy in Sri Lanka: With special reference to
Dlvi Neguma Program.**

by

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Declaration of Student

The work described in this thesis was carried out by me under the supervision of Prof. (Mrs.) R.L.S.Fernando and a report on this has not been submitted in whole or in part to any university or any other institute for another degree/diploma.

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Declaration of Supervisor

I certify that the above statement made by the candidate is true and that this thesis is suitable for submission to the university for the purpose of evaluation.

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Determinants of Successful Implementation of Poverty Alleviation Policy in Sri Lanka: With special reference to Divi Neguma Program.

ABSTRACT

Poverty is a critical issue. It is a common phenomenon both in the developing and developed world. As a result of that, countries are taking many actions in combating with this evil. Sri Lanka too has taken many initiatives from past to present. Among those, Janasaviya, Samurdhi, and today the Divi Neguma are the most important. Though many resources have been invested on these poverty alleviation initiatives it is observed that still people are struggling to defeat poverty. Thus, many researchers were tried to understand the causes behind the failure of those poor targeting program. As a result of that, they came up with many reasons, such as, poor targeting, poor coordination and communication, lack of monitoring, and the implementation problems. Among the causes identified, scholars have argued that implementation is the bane of successful implementation of program. Therefore, Implementation has attracted increasing attention in many literatures. But, analyzing the factors towards the successful implementation of poor targeted programs were not much seen anywhere in the world. Therefore, this paper carries out an empirical study on identifying the factors which affects successful implementation of poverty alleviation policy, especially in Sri Lanka with special focus on Divi Neguma, the current poverty alleviation program. Other than the primary objective this study also tried to identify the problems of current poverty alleviation program. In collecting data both qualitative and quantitative methods were used. The primary data was gathered from 71 officers who directly attached with the implementation process in Divi Neguma program at the national, district, and divisional levels, by using questionnaires in

achieving the primary objective. Second objective was achieved by conducting the interviews with 10 officers. Gathered data was analyzed by using the SPSS version 16.0 and also the thematic analysis was utilized. This study found that capability, disposition, number of people involved in the implementation, and past experience of the implementing officers are significantly correlate with the successful implementation. Furthermore, study found that communication, poor targeting, and poor attitudes of the implementing officers are the problems with the current program. These findings are supported with some prior studies. Finally, based on the findings researcher has developed a model where, the future researchers can taken into consideration.

Key words: Poverty, poverty alleviation programs, implementation, success factors

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background

Sri Lanka is an island of 65,610 square kilometers with a population of little over 20.4 million people. The country is divided into nine provinces and twenty five administrative districts. For the purpose of socio economic studies the country has also been divided into three sectors; the Urban, Rural and Estate. According to the figures of Central Bank Annual Report (2013), large regional disparities are seen (urban 18.35%, rural 24.4%, estates 12.62%) in Sri Lanka. According to the indicators such as quantity of calorie intake, literacy, life expectancy, rate of infants deaths, equal status for women, environmental protection in development activities etc. Sri Lanka is in a high ranking position. Further, according to the Human Development Index, 2013 Sri Lanka it was ranked 73 out of 187 countries. But, it is disheartening to note that, still the statics by Department of Census and Statistics reveals that 313,600 families belongs to the poverty groups and each family may contain average number of 4 persons. The analysis of location of poverty also draws attention to several noteworthy features. The heaviest incidence of Absolute poverty is still to be found in the rural sector compared to the urban sector. It is about 9.4% (Central Bank Annual Report, 2013). Therefore, Poverty is identified as the major problem that has drawn the attention of planners and program makers in Sri Lanka since independence in 1948. This has been a critical issue in other part of the world also. According to the Global Poverty and Inequality Report (2013), global official poverty rate has increased from 12.5 percent in 2007 to 15 percent in 2012. Yet, it is mostly the

developing countries that face with serious and worsening aspects of poverty. Therefore, one of the main issues in development debates is how to tackle poverty. To answer this, efforts have been made by many countries especially, through the safety net programs. There are instances in which the safety net has responded reasonably well to the challenges of the poverty. It has delivered substantial poverty relief during the great recession and this has also been modified in various ways to effectively respond to the particular demands of the poor (Global Poverty and Inequality Report, 2013). Those have resulted in increased employment and income in rural areas.

According to the Central Bank Annual Report (2013), Sri Lanka's economy recorded a rapid growth with the end of the war. It is accounted for 7.4% of the annual increase of the GDP. It has given the people a sense of hope about the future. Huge infrastructure developments were seen in almost all parts of the country. However all these developments hide the harsh reality that people in Sri Lanka are still suffering from poverty. Annual Report of Central Bank (2013) Sri Lanka has recorded 8.9 percent poverty rate which is higher than that of GDP. Therefore, one of the central objectives of the "Mahinda Chinthana"; the development strategy of the previous government of Sri Lanka was to restore economic growth and thereby, effectively eliminate poverty from Sri Lanka. Over the years, Sri Lanka has initiated a number of anti-poverty programs; Janasaviya, School midday meal program and Samurdhi program etc. Even though many programs were implemented to solve this poverty issue, even a single does not achieved its targets (Samaraweera, 2010). Hence, many people not have seen poverty alleviation programs as serious efforts to reduce the poverty level. Programs are less consistent with other development ventures and are not fully integrated into the overall development planning process. Planners and

program makers tend to be quite skeptical of the overall outcome of the numerous interventions of poverty projects (Kurian, 1989). Therefore, main issue that should be considered is that, whether it would be possible to derive more generalized program and operational guidelines from projects under implementation.

Efforts to reduce poverty must begin with an understanding of the nature and the magnitude of poverty. Poverty is described as a characteristic that reflects peoples' inability to fulfill the basic needs that are vital for their living and to gain social justice (Samaraweera, 2010). Further, poverty can be identified as the situation where the people are unhappy. Since independence, Sri Lankan government has established the social safety net program covering food security, health, education, employment creation and community empowerment. These have become the initial undertaking of various poverty reduction and social protection programs in Sri Lanka. Starting with the food subsidy program, subsidization of the cost of food to consumer in 1943, then the ration scheme, distributing fairly the essential food items under subsidized scheme, food stamp program in 1979, in 1988 people based program janasaviya, recently Samurdhi in 1994 making prosper the lives of the people, and today divineguma program covering wider sections of the community have been carried out by the subsequent government in combating with widespread poverty in Sri Lanka. Though Sri Lanka has selected social development as a strategy, with preference to growth in the redistribution of wealth and alleviating poverty of the masses, little emphasis has made on strong growth oriented strategies to alleviate poverty (Rathnayake, 2009). He further explains that the programs designed to alleviate poverty have failed either to reduce the incidence of poverty appreciably or to make qualitative changes in the economy. Therefore, what it reflects, though many

resources have been invested in these programs, is that the results have not been commensurate with the investments. Many efforts taken to combat poverty have ended without good results. Many problems have been encountered due to and with program failures. The main roots of failures are poor targeting, implementation issues, mismanagement of resources etc. (Samaraweera, 2010).

Among the issues in program failures, a major challenge remains in the implementation of the programs, is the necessary to achieve Sri Lanka's social and economic objectives. In the past, many sound initiatives failed at the implementation stage of the programs (Marasinghe, 1993). There was little evidence on implementation success. Implementation process of Gamidiriya program at village level is comparatively successful when the social and economic impact of project is concerned. (Samaraweera, 2010). He further explains that it also remains something to further clarify, where it hides the idea that it did not succeed at all. Also, not all the programs were successful at the implementation stage. According to the National Strategy for Poverty Reduction, (2006) they have made the following observations with regards to the implementation of program targeting the poor.

'It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that implementation problems have proved to be the bane of program and program initiatives on poverty reduction. Indeed, implementation failures have become so generic that improving on implementation is now more correctly seen as a core strategic challenge rather than a mere matter of administration.'