

SUCCESS FACTORS IN DONOR FUNDED PROJECTS:CASE STUDY ON INTERNAL ESTATE ROADS

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Abstract

Beneficiary participation is an important factor for donor funded projects. Since it gives many benefits and final product to the community, donors are always insisting the projects with beneficiary participation. However, for smooth execution of beneficiary participatory projects has to cross many hurdles for its successful completion. Identify those drawbacks and addressing them is necessary. The Raw data are collected through a questionnaire and analyse those according to the existing data from the donor funded executed project. The results show that there are many factors that affect the successful completion of beneficiary participatory projects. The findings have emphasis on more site visits by the management staff, budget to be suit to the site location and the conditions. Findings has extended to management staff travelling distances, vehicle allocations to staffs, payment procedure, meeting minutes to be distribute on time to site and also recommending to some team building and coordination programmes with management and beneficiary parties.

Key Words: community base projects, beneficiary participation, project management, team building

1. Introduction

There is a growing recognition in developing countries of community-based infrastructure procurement and its potential to achieve sustainable development. The advantages of such an approach are that it encourages participative negotiation of activities and speedier implementation, the use of local resources, skills and appropriate technology, and entrepreneurship within communities. Creating greater level of beneficiary participation is therefore is an important factor on infrastructure development at rural areas. There are many factors that effecting on the smooth execution of community participation projects. Identifying such restraints or obstacles is necessary for successful completion of a project.

This research has focus on identifying of factors that effecting on beneficiary participation. Providing of valued recommendations for future similar project will be a definite advantage for its targeted completion. Also it may help to reduce the return of funds to the donors without utilizing.

World Bank experience suggests that "projects tend to be more sustainable and yield higher returns when they involve those they are intended to help". According to ILO, the Civil Programmes that involve with beneficiary participation has fallen to major categories of Relief Programmes, Self-help, Employment generation, Asset generation.

As Elizabeth Stock (1996) explains there are many benefits that community can obtain by executing labour-based programmes. Such as cost-effective alternatives, temporary employments, inject cash into local community, labour-based maintenance system, transfer knowledge to community, environmental advantage, encourage development of local industry.

Bernard Van Heck has categorized the type of participation as Induce Involvements, Transitory Mobilization for Community Development and Group Formation. Also he has identified many constraints on participation. Such as political conditions, legislative obstacles, administrative obstacles, Socio-cultural impediments, etc.

The policy framework for community related procurement and disbursement, the design and implementation of community related procurement and disbursement generates a number of concerns or issues. Also it has highlighted the inadequate skills on the part of project designers in community related procurement and disbursement and this includes the lack of sensitivity to the special requirements of projects with community participation. "Creating greater levels of beneficiary participation in projects is therefore an important goal, but participation cannot simply be mandated. It is the result of decision-making rules that affect the incentives and interactions among beneficiaries, within agencies, and between beneficiaries and agencies" at its sub chapter on factors effecting on beneficiary participation.

2. Objective and Methodology

The objective of this research is to find the success factors in donor funded beneficiary participative projects and make recommendations to the future similar projects for its successful completion.

Qualitative approach is done to explore the topic. A detailed literature review was carried out to determine the factors affecting on successful beneficiary participation projects and what are the failure factors. It was reviewed after informal interviews with a few project directors and JICA and ADB project officers. Finally the questionnaire was prepared according to the factors identified at above literature review and preliminary interviews.

The prepared questionnaire was distributed among the randomly selected sample from the internal estate road rehabilitation project and the RDA officials and Beneficiaries (i.e. Estate management staff, Superintendents, work supervisors and any other beneficiaries).

When collecting the questionnaire, it was separated to successful and unsuccessful projects. The data was analysed accordingly.

3. Data analysis and discussion

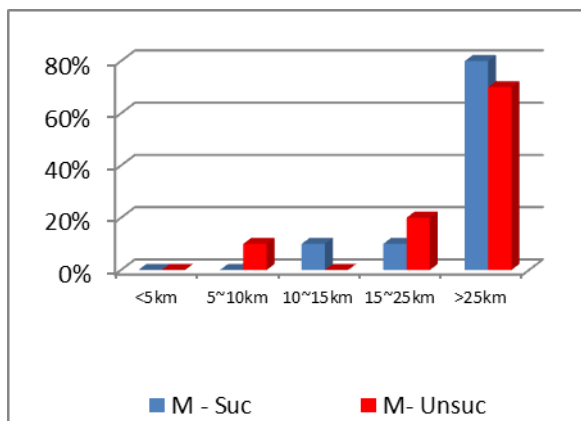


Figure 1 Average distances to site from consultant office to respective site

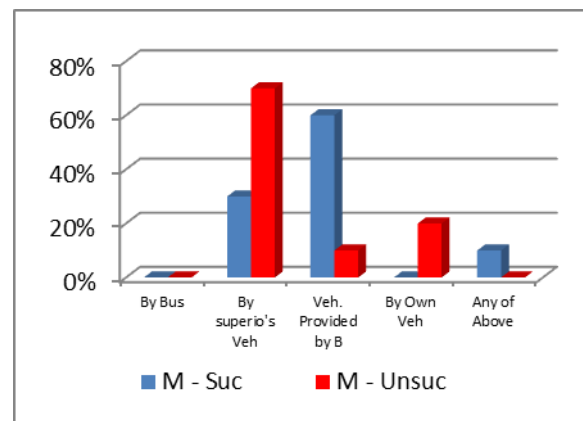


Figure 2 how management staff travels to site

According to Figure 1, 75% of the management (M) staff has to travel more than 25km (one-way) to their respective sites. As per Figure 2, 70% of management staff in unsuccessful projects has travelled on their superior's vehicle and 60% of management staff in successful projects has travelled by vehicles provided by beneficiaries. This indicates that management staff always has to rely on others vehicle to visit to the site.

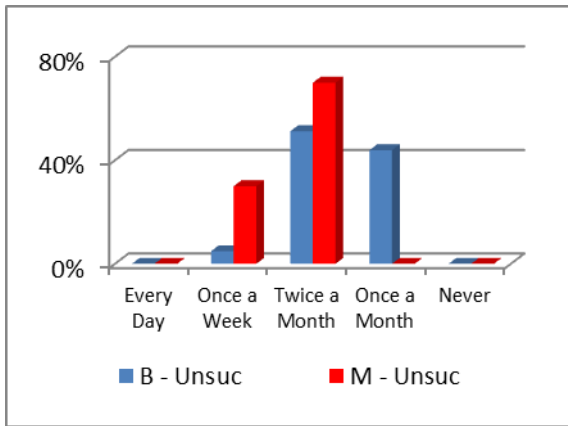


Figure 3 Site visit by management party at unsuccessful projects

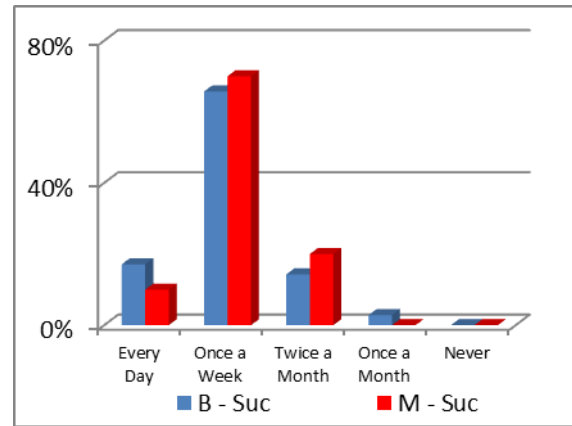


Figure 4 Site visit by management party at successful projects

The lack of inspection has a direct effect on successful completion of the project. According to Figure 3, 90% of successfully completed projects has site visit at least ‘once a week’, whereas per the Figure 4, unsuccessfully completed projects has only 30%. The above factor of ‘lack of vehicles for inspection’ is highlighted here.

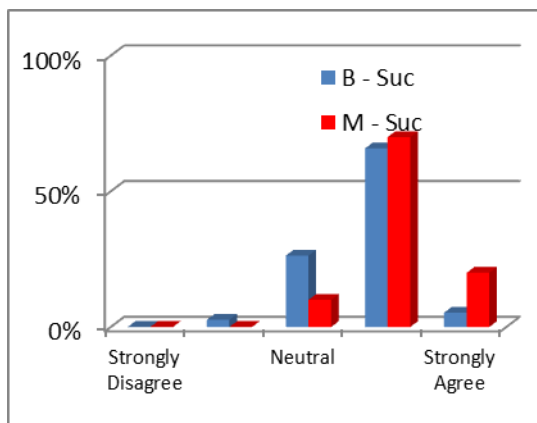


Figure 5 Technical Instruction given at Regular Intervals – successful Projects

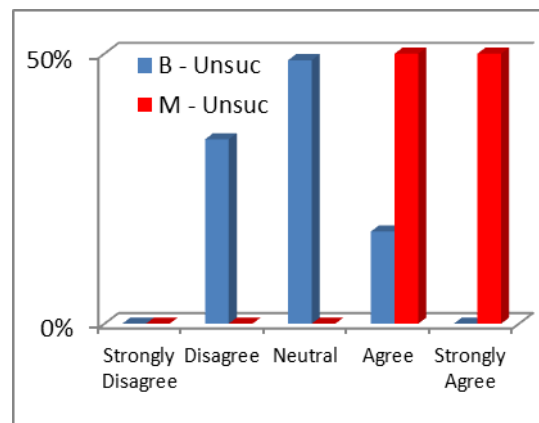


Figure 6 Technical Instruction given at Regular Intervals - Unsuccessful projects

The successful projects have hit 65% and 70% on agreed and 5% and 20% on strongly agreed. Over 90% from management staff agreed on that they have given instructions at regular interval and over 70% from beneficiaries are agreed that they have got enough instructions to cater their requirements. This will give a notification that the technical instructions at regular intervals to the site will give better results.

At unsuccessful projects, 30% of the beneficiaries have disagreed with the statement and 45% has no opinion. But management staff has different response that they have hit 100% on agree and strongly agree.

By analysing the above responds, the regular instructions will have direct influence on successful completion of the projects. At unsuccessful projects, even the management staff believed that they have given instruction at regular intervals it may not enough.

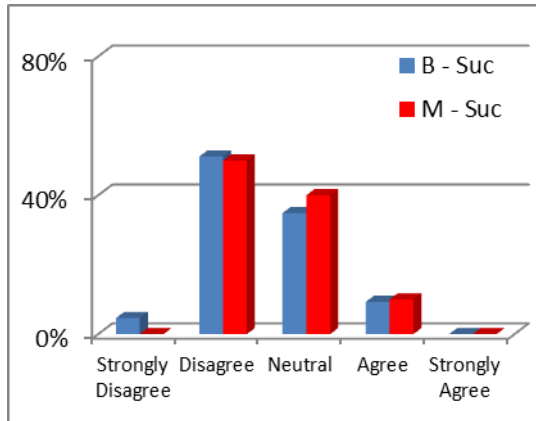


Figure 7 Payments done on-time – successful projects

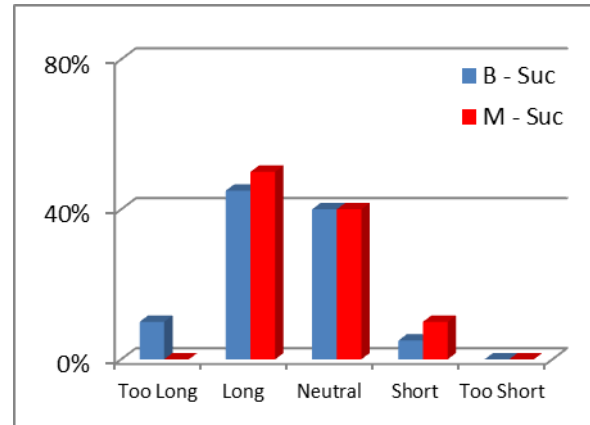


Figure 9 Payment procedure – successful projects

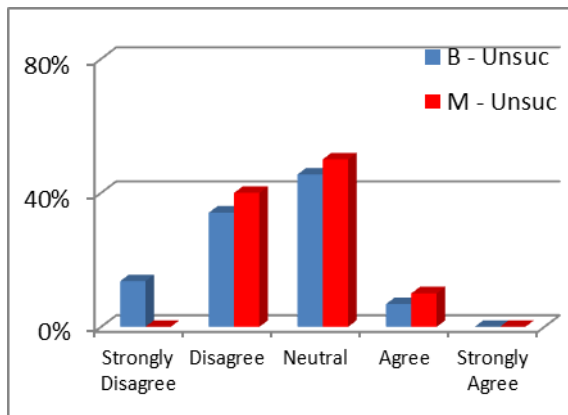


Figure 8 Payments done on-time – unsuccessful projects

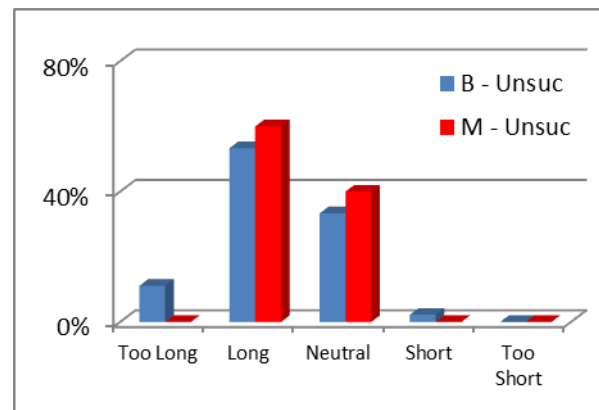


Figure 10 Payment procedure – unsuccessful projects

Payment done to the beneficiaries has most of the time get delay. As per Figures 7 and 8, it has confirmed with only 10% agreed upon the duly payments. Even the project is successful or not both beneficiary and management parties are agreed at above percentage. As per figure 9 and 10, payment procedure also both beneficiary and management parties has confirmed that it is more lengthily and take more time to reimburse the money they have spent. 50% from the successful projects and 60% from unsuccessful projects has confirmed that there payments get delays because of the lengthily procedure.

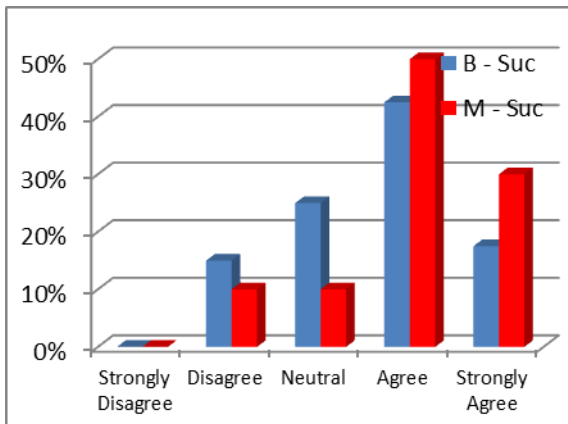


Figure 11 Payments are held up due to unavailability of core cutting m/c – successful projects

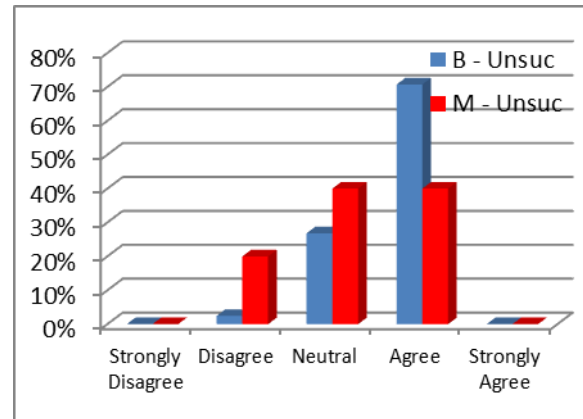


Figure 12 Payments are held up due to unavailability of core cutting m/c – unsuccessful projects

Thickness of the concrete pavement has been checked with the core-cutting machines available with the management staff. After completing the projects, it has to be confirmed thickness before approve the payments by officials. As per responses at Figure 11 and 12, this situation has delay the payments by 70% even the projects are successful or not. This may be due to lack of machinery available with supervision.

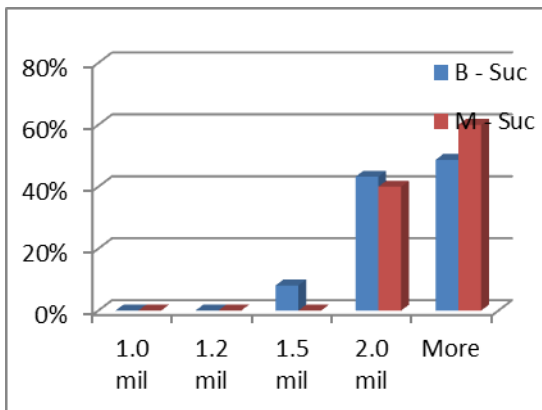


Figure 13 Minimum comfortable budget to bring the road to motorable

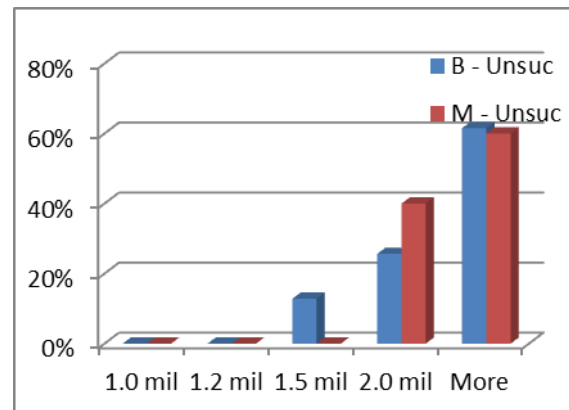


Figure 14 Minimum comfortable budget to bring the road to motorable

The allocations for unit length construction of the roads are depending upon the site conditions and the location. As per Figure 14 unsuccessful projects it has requested for more than Rs.2.0 million with 92% to make the road motorable and as per Figure 13 successful projects it will be 90%. Predetermined ceiling level will restrict the successful completion of the projects. The amount to be rehabilitated also depends on the site conditions

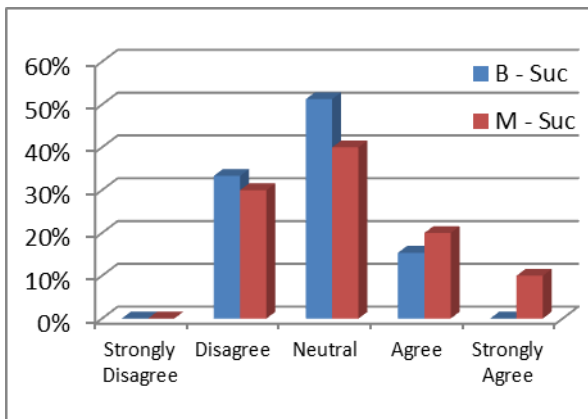


Figure 15 Construction team faced liquidity problems at procuring of materials – successful projects

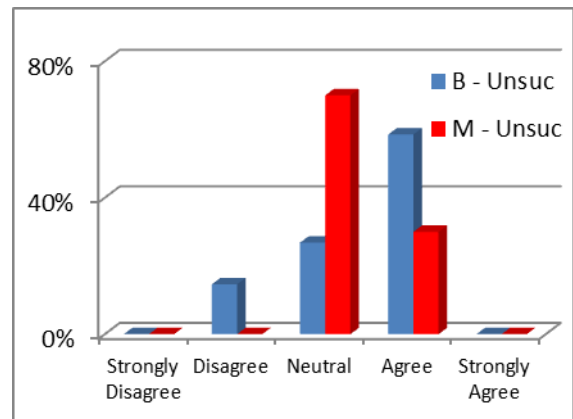


Figure 16 Construction team faced liquidity problems at procuring of materials – unsuccessful projects

Initially the expenditure should come through beneficiaries and after they can reimburse the amount according to estimations. The initial expenditure will depend on the financial soundness of the beneficiaries. as per Figure 15 it can be seen that while procuring the materials only 12% of successful projects and as per Figure 16, 55% of unsuccessful projects were effected with the procuring of materials due to liquidity matter. And it has effected to the successful completion of the project also.

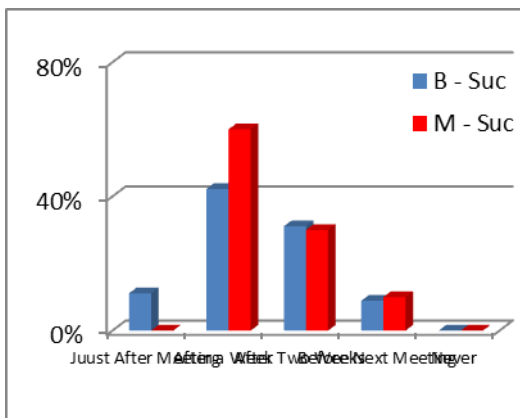


Figure 17 How quickly the site has received the meeting minutes – successful projects

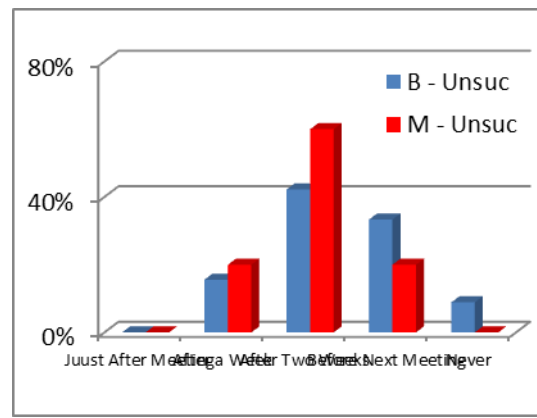


Figure 18 How quickly the site has received the meeting minutes – unsuccessful projects

Timely and accurate information is important for all project participants as it forms the basis on which decisions are made and physical progress is achieved. However, the distance between headquarters and construction sites further augments the communication barrier to achieve timely and accurate information transfer. This is more evident in construction projects carried out far away from headquarters. Wasting of time and cost in construction projects can be traced back to poor coordination caused by inadequate information — insufficient, inappropriate, inaccurate, inconsistent, late, or a combination of them all. Thus, improving communication among project participants and management headquarters is always the key factor leading to the success or failure of a construction project.

Therefore there is communication gap between site staff and head offices in unsuccessful projects. By considering that successful projects have reasonable communication with their head offices.

As per Figure 17, the successful projects have got the information more quickly than unsuccessful projects.

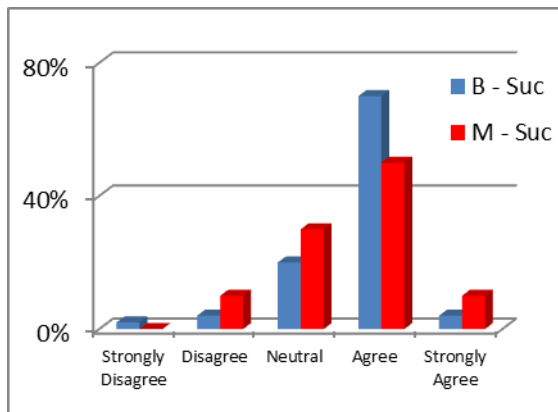


Figure 19 Get Good coordination from other party – successful projects

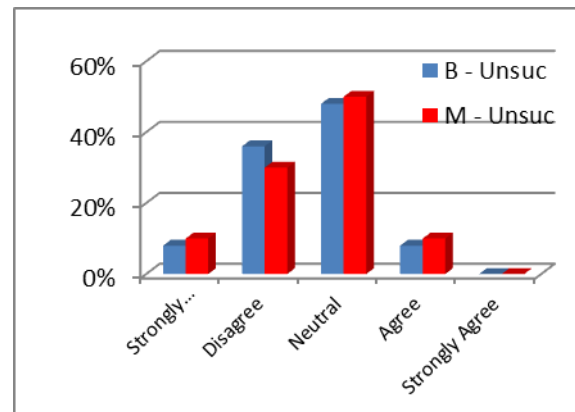


Figure 20 Get Good coordination from other party – unsuccessful projects

According to the Figure 19, 75% from beneficiaries and 60% from management at successful projects have better coordination between with each other whereas per Figure 20, unsuccessful projects rated at around 10%. Therefore there was direct effect on good coordination and successful completion of the project.

4. Conclusion and Recommendation

Successful completion of a project is one of main requirement of every stake holders. Especially at donor funded projects only have limited period to utilize the funds. Therefore followings recommendations or success factors can be used for successful completion of similar projects.

The programmes to be organised in such a way that, there should be a mechanism for regular site visit by management staff in order to provide necessary technical instructions. According to the research, the regular site visit is a one of the success factors. Based on that, it can recommended that vehicle allocation to be at least 01 for every 07~10 projects for regular inspections.

The second success factors will be the payment procedure. The payments to be processed within 15 ~ 30 days for its successful completion.. So it can be concluded that payment procedure to be improved and simple mechanism to be adopted.

Core-cutting machine plays a vital role in this kind of project, therefore it has to provide at least one core cutting machine to each project district. Therefore the necessary equipment are the another success factors, that affecting the completion. Hence some policy decision has to take to avoid unnecessary delays for the projects.

The budget has to be more flexible at estimation stage. Hence it can be recommended that the allocations should be according to the site conditions. Pre-defined fixed budget will tend to finish the projects in its' halfway.

It can be recommended to improve the initial payment methods. Who gets the initial payments has tendency on early completion. Therefore the initial payment procedure will be another success factor. The procuring capacity will have direct effect on the successful completion of a project. If the beneficiaries are not financially sound for procuring, the advance will be a great help for them.

There should be a quick way to transfer the information from head offices to site level. This is very basic, but still not executing as well. The information is more important to site to adjust the site according to the new decision taken etc. Therefore a good communication system is another success factor on duly completion projects.

Good understanding between the executing party and supervision party will be a highly rated success factor. Therefore it can be recommended to have a good coordination programme regularly for the project. More team building and coordination programmes to be conducted in order to get successful completion of a project.

Finally this recommendation was done on the study of execution level of the projects. The successful completion of a project may also be depended upon the conditions state by donors and policy makes at the higher levels.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADB	-	Asian Development Bank
FAO	-	Food and Agriculture Organisation
IFAD	-	International Fund for Agriculture Development
ILO	-	International Labour Organization
JICA	-	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NGO	-	Non Governmental Organisation
PDP	-	Plantation development Project
PPP	-	Pilot Participatory Project
PRP II	-	Plantation Rehabilitation Project
UN	-	United Nations
WB	-	World Bank
Suc	-	Successful projects
Unsuc	-	Unsuccessful projects
M	-	Management Party
B	-	Beneficiary party