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BENEFICIARY PERCEPTIONS AND ATTITUDES IN FIJI

FACILITATING MIGRATION FROM PAPER-BASED TO ELECTRONIC BENEFIT DISTRIBUTION
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FACILITATING MIGRATION FROM PAPER-BASED TO ELECTRONIC BENEFIT DISTRIBUTION

Jonathan Sibley
2009
Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme

The Pacific Financial Inclusion Programme (PFIP) is a joint programme of the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the European Union/Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Microfinance Framework Programme (EU/ACP). The mission of the PFIP is to increase the number of low income and rural households, micro and small enterprises in Pacific Island Countries (PICs) that have on-going access to quality and affordable financial services. The outcome of the programme is for 250,000 new clients in the target market segment to have new and/or improved access to appropriate, sustainable financial services including, but not limited to savings, money transfers, insurance and loans. The PFIP has several instruments to achieve its outcome, including (1) generating knowledge of the demand for and supply of financial services through research; (2) sharing knowledge through workshops and conferences; (3) providing direct expert advice or making expert consulting services available to stakeholders; (4) advocating the removal of constraints to financial inclusion and (5) providing financial support to partners that can help PFIP achieve this outcome.

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Summary of Findings

There are no major constraints to the migration of beneficiaries from the receipt of the benefit by paper based voucher encashment to receipt of the benefit by payment to a bank account. The principal constraint is beneficiary inertia which is re-enforced by the structure of the voucher encashment system. This has caused voucher encashment to become a habit for many beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries who receive their Benefit by Voucher

There is considerable consistency in the reasons cited by beneficiaries who continue to receive benefit payment by voucher:

Comfort and Familiarity with the Voucher Process

The principal reason cited by beneficiaries as to why they continue to receive benefit payment by voucher is comfort and familiarity with the voucher encashment and voucher book renewal processes. Beneficiaries generally see no reason to change.

Perceived Control over the Voucher Encashment Process

The voucher encashment process provides beneficiaries with a high level of perceived control over the process relative to the control available to beneficiaries who receive their benefit by credit to a bank account. This re-enforces the self-efficacy of beneficiaries who receive their benefit by voucher encashment. Every focus group, irrespective of whether the beneficiary receives their benefit by voucher or by credit to a bank account noted the delays which can occur with payment to a bank account and the resultant difficulty experienced in receiving payment. Beneficiaries who receive their payment by voucher consistently stated that, for the duration of the voucher book, receipt of their benefit was certain.

Lack of Familiarity with Banks

There are a considerable number of beneficiaries who receive their benefit by voucher who have little or no experience of banks and therefore do not understand how a bank operates. A number of these beneficiaries also do not regard a bank as an institution which would be interested in having them as a customer.

Bank Fees

Bank fees (and the consequent erosion of the net benefit payment) were cited by every focus group as a reason why beneficiaries do not have their credited to a bank account. Conversely, beneficiaries who have switched to bank deposit, whilst complaining about fees, tended to acknowledge the benefit from owning and operating a bank account out-weighed the cost of the fee.

Lack of Understanding of Information Privacy

A number of beneficiaries stated they were reluctant to open a bank account because the Department of Social Welfare would know how much money they had saved and possibly terminate their benefit. There was a wide spread lack of understanding by beneficiaries as to their rights to information privacy.

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Limited English Literacy

Limited English literacy is a major inhibitor of change. Payment of the benefit can be effected by thumb-print
by beneficiaries who cannot write. By contrast, use of a bank account to withdraw money requires the ability
fill out a withdrawal slip and/ or to read instructions on an ATM and key in required instructions. This prevents
beneficiaries with limited English literacy from switching to receipt of their benefit by credit to a bank account.

Beneficiaries who have their Benefit credited to a Bank account

There is also consistency in respect to the reasons stated by beneficiaries who have their benefit paid to a
bank account as to why they prefer bank payment to voucher encashment.

Security and Enhanced Cash management

The most common benefit cited by beneficiaries who have their benefit credited to a bank is the security
provided by keeping money in a bank account and the opportunity this provides to better manage household
cash flows and to save for future expenditure.

Flexibility and Simplicity

Flexibility and simplicity were also commonly cited, in particular the ability to access funds from a wide variety
of locations, both bank branches and ATM's, rather than a specified Post Office outlet. Several beneficiaries
noted that it was easy to arrange for someone to withdraw funds from their account via an ATM withdrawal if
they were ill or unable to get to the bank.

Beneficiaries also frequently cited simplicity as a reason for preferring to receive their benefit by credit to a
bank account. Once the direct credit was established the benefit was received and there was no need to go to
the Department of Social Welfare every six months to collect a new voucher book.

Better Service at Bank Branches

Beneficiaries who receive their benefit by credit to a bank account stated the quality of service at a bank
branch was better than at a Post Office outlet. This was expressed in terms of shorter queues, more helpful
and knowledgeable staff and very short wait times at ATMS.

Beneficiaries’ attitude to money and money management

Beneficiaries exhibit a well developed cognitive model of money. Most beneficiaries perceive money as
positive and associate having money with the ability to meet household requirements, achieving household
goals and social status. The association of money with social status was more pronounced in urban and peri-
urban focus groups. Rural focus groups placed greater emphasis on community and extended family
contribution.
Beneficiaries’ indicative financial competence

Beneficiaries’ generally exhibit limited financial competence and tend to engage in tactical activities to manage household cash flows. Few beneficiaries are able to describe a budget (although most beneficiaries claim they have a budget) or keep copies of financial documents. Many beneficiaries prioritise spending; however the prioritisation tends to relate to current rather than future spending. Many beneficiaries have a limited understanding of banks and few beneficiaries use a bank account to manage household cash flows and tend to spend money as it is received. Beneficiaries who use a bank account to manage household cash flows exhibit more competent financial behaviour. Indo-Fijian beneficiaries appear to be generally more financially competent than Fijian beneficiaries.

Beneficiaries engage in a wide range of activities to manage household cash flows. Activities cited include, restricting spending to small increments, gardening and bulk buying. Rural Fijian beneficiaries also use store credit to smooth cash flows.

The most common activities cited are not, however, household cash flow management but income augmentation. A broad array of activities was cited by beneficiaries as means of improving household income. The most common activities involve making and selling items in particular food and handicrafts.

Beneficiaries’ use of a mobile phone

Between 30% and 50% of beneficiaries own a mobile phone. Mobile phone ownership is higher in urban communities than rural communities. Use of mobile phones is, however, limited. Most beneficiaries are able to receive phone calls and to make phone calls. However several beneficiaries stated they seek assistance when they need to make phone calls. Very few beneficiaries use their mobile to either send or receive text messages.

Constraints to Change

Literacy

Literacy is a significant barrier to migration from voucher encashment to the use of a bank account for receipt of the benefit. It is recommended that, if process and regulatory changes to facilitate the operation of a bank account by beneficiaries who cannot write are unable to be implemented, beneficiaries who use a thumb-print for identification when cashing their benefit are grandfathered and allowed to continue on a fee free basis. Given the majority of these beneficiaries are elderly it is also recommended, that if this approach is adopted, no further beneficiaries be allowed to commence receiving their benefit by voucher encashment and thumb-print identification.

Financial Competence

Financial competence is an issue constraining the use of bank accounts by beneficiaries. It is recommended a financial literacy program be deployed to urban and rural communities to educate beneficiaries in the management of household cash flows, the importance of keeping financial records and the use of a bank account for managing household cash flows and banking system and banks in Fiji. This training should be additional to training to educate beneficiaries in the use of a bank account.
Department of Social Welfare

Many beneficiaries appear to lack trust in the DSW. This needs to be corrected. In part a change in beneficiary attitudes to DSW will be consequent on an improvement in DSW systems and an improvement in service standards. Beneficiaries also need to be educated about their rights to information privacy; in particular beneficiaries need to be advised that the DSW does not have the right to search beneficiary bank records.

Summary of Recommendations

Facilitating Migration from Vouchers to Bank Accounts

Reduce the attractiveness of vouchers and enhance the attractiveness of bank accounts

The voucher and bank account distribution channels favour inertia. There is currently no reason for beneficiaries to change:

- DSW systems must be improved to ensure the benefit is paid on time and beneficiary details are accurate (these issues appear to be partly process related and partly related to the very poor state of the DSW beneficiary database). This is a pre-requisite to successfully implementing a migration program.
- The financial disincentive to use a bank for receipt of the benefit must be removed and beneficiaries must be advised of this.
- The financial incentive to use voucher encashment at the Post Office must be removed and beneficiaries must be advised of this.

Use mass media channels to convey instrumental messages

Changes to bank fees and voucher conditions should be conveyed by mass media using instrumental rather than emotional messages. Media used to convey messages must be capable of being controlled by the sender. If control of the communication is lost there is a risk the message will not be conveyed and, potentially, an inappropriate message being conveyed. It is recommended interactive media channels not be used as part of the communications program.

Use role models to re-enforce the benefits of using a bank account and to convey emotional messages

The benefits of using a bank account need to be conveyed directly to beneficiaries using communication trusted by beneficiaries. Local advocacy, using beneficiaries who have switched from the voucher system to the use of a bank account for receipt of their voucher speaking at small meetings in communities is a very effective way of achieving this and also enables beneficiaries to ask questions that they may not be willing to ask if the presentation was given by someone they did not know. If possible visits to communities by DSW field staff and bank staff to discuss bank accounts would support the migration program.
Develop Targeted Migration Programs

A stepped communication, training and migration program should be used:

*Early adopters*

It is likely early adopters will not be elderly, will live in urban or per-urban communities and will be financially competent. It is likely this group will be encouraged to migrate from voucher encashment to the use of a bank account for receipt of their benefit when the disincentives to migration are removed and incentives to migration are introduced. Consequently it is probable 25-30% of beneficiaries who continue to use vouchers will migrate of their own accord once changes are introduced to overcome inertia.

*Urban and Peri Urban Communities*

The urban and per-urban communities are likely to require training and advocacy, in addition to changes to overcome inertia and to facilitate migration. Urban and peri-urban beneficiary communities will benefit from financial literacy training, training in the use of a bank account, advocacy by beneficiaries who currently have their benefit paid into a bank account and the opportunity to discuss with DSW and Bank staff.

*Rural Communities*

Rural communities are likely to require a more sustained program in order to achieve migration from voucher encashment to the use of a bank account for the receipt of the benefit. In addition to the programs discussed above, it is recommended traditional communication channels be used as these are likely to elicit a greater response from beneficiaries.
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Introduction

Department of Social Welfare Policy Objective

There are currently in excess of 27,000 people receiving government funded social assistance in Fiji. The social assistance programs are managed by the Department of Social Welfare. Recipients of social assistance encompass a broad range of social groups (including *inter alia* the elderly, the disabled and chronically ill, and single parents). The number of people receiving social assistance is steadily increasing. Beneficiaries live in a range of locations across Fiji. However, the majority of beneficiaries live on Viti Levu.

Since 2007, the Department of Social Welfare has been seeking to encourage beneficiaries to change from the current voucher encashment system to a bank account based (electronic) benefit payment system. The use of vouchers is expensive and time consuming and is considered to encourage poor cash management practices as the benefit is received in cash rather than being drawn as required from a bank account. Voucher encashment can be expensive as some beneficiaries must travel long distances to cash vouchers.

Whilst the migration of beneficiaries from the voucher system to electronic payment has, to date, met with modest success, the Department of Social Welfare has committed to migrating beneficiaries from the current voucher system to an electronic system by 2010.

There are potentially significant benefits which will accrue from the migration of beneficiary payments from vouchers to electronic benefit payment:

- Beneficiaries will benefit from a more secure form of benefit payment which will also potentially reduce access costs.
- Electronic benefit payment will increase the level of participation in the banking system by beneficiaries.
- Electronic benefit payment may encourage more competent management by beneficiaries of their household cash flows.
- The benefit distribution system will be more efficient and scalable.

Objective of the Study

The objective of the present study has been to explore factors which may be inhibiting Financial Assistance Beneficiaries in Fiji from migrating from the paper based and manual voucher payment system to an electronic benefit payment system, in particular credit to a bank account. In particular the study has sought to examine:

- Environmental and economic constraints which may prevent beneficiaries from migrating to receipt of their benefit by credit to a bank account
- Social constraints, in particular whether there is significant per and family pressure to continue to use the voucher system
- Skill constraints, in particular whether beneficiaries understand the use of a bank account to facilitate management of household cash flows and adopt good household cash flow management practices.
- Attitudinal/ perceptual constraints, in particular whether there are significant and pervasive issues in respect to attitude to money and/ or the banking system which are resulting in beneficiaries being reluctant to migrate away from the use of vouchers.
The study has also sought to identify educational and communication themes and actions which may assist in the creation of positive beneficiary attitudes toward migration from the voucher system to the use of a bank account.

**Attitudes, Beliefs and Perceptions**

People’s attitudes and beliefs have a significant impact on their behaviour. If beneficiaries do not believe an electronic benefit payment system will benefit them, it will be very difficult for beneficiaries to change their behaviour. Azjen (1991) has argued that a person’s attitude influences their behavioural intention and this in turn influences their behaviour. Azjen’s research has shown that attitude is likely to affect behaviour when:

- The person’s attitude includes a behavioral intention
- Both the attitude and the behavioral intention are very specific
- The attitude is based on first-hand experience

**Theory of Planned Behaviour**

![Diagram of Theory of Planned Behaviour](image)

Ajzen has argued that behavioral beliefs will produce a favourable or unfavourable attitude toward a specific behaviour, normative beliefs will result in perceived social pressure and control beliefs will generate perceived behavioural control. Within the context of benefit payments, beneficiaries’ beliefs about the personal consequences changing their mode of receiving their benefit payment will influence their attitude toward changing their behaviour.

The study has sought explore beneficiaries' perceptions of the personal consequences of changing their mode of receiving a benefit payment and the ways in which these perceptions are influenced by other people's perceptions of the use of a bank account for receipt of benefit payments. The study has also explored beneficiaries’ perceptions of control, in particular whether beneficiaries perceive they have greater control if they continue to use the manual voucher system rather than migrating to electronic benefit payment.
Overcoming Resistance to Change

Self efficacy has a significant role in facilitating perceptual and attitudinal change as a precursor to behavioral change. Self efficacy is a person's perception of their agency, their ability to deal with a situation (Bandura, 1986). Self-efficacy influences the choice of activities people will engage in, the amount of energy they will expend on these activities and their persistence. In general, higher levels of self-efficacy for a given activity are associated with higher participation in that activity. If a beneficiary is not self-efficacious about their ability to effectively and positively change their mode of benefit payment, they are unlikely to change their attitude or behaviour.

Social learning also has a significant role in determining attitude and behaviour (Bandura, 1986). Social learning influences beneficiaries' normative beliefs. The study has explored the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of beneficiaries who have successfully migrated from the voucher system to receiving their benefit through the banking system. These beneficiaries' self-efficacy has permitted (and has been subsequently re-enforced by) behavioral change.

Key Themes explored by the study

Fishbein and colleagues (Fishbein et al., 1991) have determined that, for a given behaviour to occur, a person must:

- Have strong intentions to perform the behaviour
- Have the necessary skills to do so
- Not be restricted by environmental constraints.

The study has therefore explored beneficiaries' skill in operating a bank account and possible environmental constraints which may prevent beneficiaries from operating a bank account. Fishbein and colleagues have also determined there are a set of factors which will, individually, influence the strength and direction of the behavioural intention:

- The person believes that the advantages outweigh the disadvantages of performing a behaviour
- The person perceives there is more social pressure to perform the behaviour than to not perform the behaviour
- The person perceives that performance of the behaviour is more consistent with their self image than inconsistent
- The person's emotional reaction to performing the behaviour is more positive than negative
- The person perceives that they can perform the behaviour (self-efficacy)

The study has focused on the following themes:

- Environmental pre-conditions which may constrain or facilitate migration.
- Pre-existing behaviours which may be indicative of financial competence and which may support or constrain an intention to change behaviour.
- Beneficiaries' perceptions of their control over an electronic benefit system.
- Beneficiaries' perceptions of the personal consequences of changing their mode of receiving a benefit payment.
- Beneficiaries' perceptions of how other people (people they know) perceive the migration from a voucher to an electronic payment system.
- Beneficiaries' attitudes to money and the formal financial system
Beneficiary Overview

Focus group participants were drawn from the beneficiary populations in Lautoka and Suva/ Nausori. Beneficiaries in Lautoka were sampled from the Indo-Fijian community. Beneficiaries in Suva/ Nausori were sampled from the Fijian community (refer Appendix for a discussion of the research methodology and sampling). Beneficiaries were drawn from urban, peri-urban and rural communities. Enrolment was undertaken using snowball sampling based on a pre-determined sampling frame.

Whilst anecdotal evidence suggests the sampling is generally representative of the beneficiary populations in Lautoka and Suva/ Nausori, it is not possible to know this with any degree of certainty as accurate beneficiary details could not be provided by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW). The generalisability of the results of the study must, therefore, be treated with some caution. Until the DSW is able to develop a robust and accurate database against which the beneficiaries sampled during the study can be compared it will not be possible to know if sections of the Lautoka and Suva/ Nausori beneficiary populations have been, inadvertently, excluded from the study.

Participants in the focus groups are evenly distributed in respect to gender and age group. A greater number of Fijian beneficiaries (62%) participated in the focus groups than Indo-Fijian beneficiaries (38%). This is due to enrolment in Lautoka not including rural beneficiaries. Whilst it is possible rural Indo-Fijian beneficiaries may exhibit a different attitude to payment of their benefit into a bank account than other beneficiaries who participated in the study, this is considered unlikely given the consistency of responses across the focus groups. Evidence from the sample indicates there is likely to be a difference between the Fijian and Indo-Fijian populations in respect to willingness to migrate to receipt of benefit payment to a bank account.

Most focus group participants (75%) receive their benefit by voucher encashment. The low number of bank recipients is due to the difficulty in locating beneficiaries who have their benefit paid into a bank account. Anecdotal evidence suggests the ratio of voucher to bank recipients who participated in the focus groups is similar to that of the beneficiary population.

Evidence from the sample suggests there may be a difference in household structure between the Indo-Fijian and the Fijian beneficiary populations. Overall the number of beneficiaries who stated that they lived alone is higher in the older age group (23%) than in the younger age group (9%). There is a significant difference between the number of older Indo Fijian beneficiaries who stated they lived alone (33% - 50%) and the number of Fijian beneficiaries who stated they lived alone (10% - 21%). The reasons for this difference are not known.

There is also a significant difference in the mix of benefit types between the Fijian and the Indo-Fijian participants in the focus groups. As discussed above, because of the poor state of the DSW database it is not possible to know whether the mix of beneficiaries is generally representative of the total beneficiary recipient population. The most significant difference between the Fijian and the Indo-Fijian focus group participants is in respect to the proportion of beneficiaries receiving the ‘Elderly’ benefit (43% Fijian versus 18% Indo-Fijian). It is important to note that recipients of illness/disability and desertion/ death of spouse benefits are not necessarily aged less than 65 years (the age for receipt of the elderly benefit category). For example, the median age of focus group participants receiving the elderly benefit was 70 years (with a standard deviation of 7 years), whereas the median age of participants receiving the chronic illness benefit was 59 years (with a standard deviation of 12 years). The median age for other benefit categories was 48-51 years (with a standard deviation of 8-12 years).
Indicative Financial Competence

In order to determine the ability of beneficiaries to operate a bank account and to use a bank account to facilitate household cash flow management, an understanding of beneficiaries’ financial competence is required. Beneficiaries who have limited financial competence are more likely to require training in the ownership and operation of a bank account and using a bank account to manage household cash flows than beneficiaries who are financially competent. The study has not sought to measure financial competence in detail. However, several key competencies have been measured in order to develop an indicative understanding of beneficiary financial competence:

- Ownership and operation of a bank account
- Understanding of budgeting
- Retention of financial documents

A cluster analysis\(^1\) was performed. Cluster analysis is used to examine the extent to which people can be grouped or classified based on specified similarities. The analysis specified two clusters and allocated each participant in the study to a cluster. A specified cluster approach was used as the objective was to classify beneficiaries based on indicative financial competence. The two clusters which emerged during the analysis were:

- Not competent: Beneficiaries who do not own a bank account, who do not understand budgeting and who do not keep copies of financial documents.
- Competent: Beneficiaries who are more likely to use a bank account, and who are more likely to know what a budget is and who are more likely to keep some or all copies of household financial documents.

The analysis revealed a higher percentage of Indo-Fijian beneficiaries are (indicatively) financially competent than are Fijian beneficiaries. This is particularly evident in the number of beneficiaries who keep no copies of

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\(^1\) Two-step (hierarchical) clustering (Norusis, 2006, pp. 355-384)
financial records. 71% of Fijian participants stated they keep no financial records, against 39% of Indo-Fijian participants. In addition, the Indo-Fijian community appears to avoid store credit, whereas the use of store credit by Fijian participants varies between 35% for beneficiaries who are financially competent and 72% for beneficiaries who are not financially competent. There are also differences in financial competence between rural and urban Fijian beneficiaries. This is particularly evident in the use of store credit. 92% of rural beneficiaries who are not financially competent state they use store credit. The use of store credit by rural beneficiaries who are financially competent is also high at 67%.

The differences in indicative financial competence between the Indo-Fijian and the Fijian participants and between urban and rural Fijian participants are significant (p<.01):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Not Competent</th>
<th>Competent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>&gt; 20K</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>&lt; 20K</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Fijian</td>
<td>&lt; 20k</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Indicative Financial Competence by Ethnicity

Importantly, financial competence is not directly related to receipt of benefit payment to a bank account. A quarter of participants who stated they have a bank account continue to receive their benefit payment by voucher. In addition, a significant proportion of beneficiaries who continue to receive their benefit by voucher appear to be financially competent. For these beneficiaries, therefore, it is reasonable to conclude the decision to continue to receive benefit payment by voucher is due principally to factors other than a lack of understanding of banks or a lack of general financial competence.

![Figure 2: Indicative Financial Competence by Ethnicity and Benefit Payment Type](image-url)
Attitude to Money

Beneficiaries generally exhibit a positive attitude to money. Descriptions of money provided by beneficiaries and the importance placed on money are primarily instrumental: Money is perceived as an enabler permitting household needs to be met and assisting in the achievement of personal and household goals. Most beneficiaries regard money as being essentially good, although there is a general recognition that money can bring heightened tension within the family and higher crime in the community. All focus groups tended to regard people who have more money as having achieved more in life, in particular to view having money is an indication of hard work and thrift.

The Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities appear to view the intangible aspects of money slightly differently, in particular the association of money with status. A number of Indo-Fijian focus groups stated that having money brought a sense of self worth and of being wanted by others. Indo-Fijian focus groups tended to place more emphasis on money as a symbol of success and a primary measure of worth.

By contrast the Fijian focus groups, in particular the rural Fijian focus groups, tended to regard money as one of a range of symbols of success. Other symbols discussed included knowledge and skill, and meeting community, vanua and family obligations. Fijian focus groups tended to place more emphasis on the negative aspects of money than Indo-Fijian focus groups, in particular the ways money can bring ill-feeling and selfishness which can separate family members and cause issues in the community.

There appears to be some difference in attitude to money between beneficiaries who receive their benefit by credit to a bank account and beneficiaries who continue to receive their benefit by voucher. Voucher recipients, in particular urban voucher recipients, appear to be more likely to associate money with success, whereas the beneficiaries who receive their benefit by credit to a bank account are more likely to regard money as a means to an end and one of many symbols of success. This is possibly an indication of a greater sense of control over money by these beneficiaries.

Factors Influencing Mode of Benefit Payment

In order to assess several factors which may influence the likelihood of a beneficiary having their benefit paid into a bank account rather than by voucher a logistic regression was performed. Logistic regression is used to predict a dichotomous dependent variable (a variable that can take one of two states). The two states examined were receipt of the benefit to a bank account and receipt of the benefit by voucher. The model contained five independent variables from the self-completion survey (Gender, age, mobile phone ownership, whether the beneficiary lived alone or lived with others, the distance the beneficiary has to travel to get to the nearest bank or Post Office outlet) and the beneficiary's indicative financial competence derived from the cluster analysis.

Because of the differences between the Indo-Fijian and the Fijian communities in respect to proximity to the nearest bank branch or Post Office outlet, the mix of benefit types, the level of indicative financial competence

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2 Refer Norusis (2006), pp 313-353
and the slight differences in attitude to money, separate logistic regression models were constructed for the Fijian and the Indo-Fijian samples.

**Fijian Beneficiaries**

The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant ($X^2 (6, n=125) = 48.18, p<.001$). This indicates the model was able to distinguish between Fijian focus group participants who receive their benefit by voucher and participants who receive their benefit by credit to a bank account. Overall, the model explained between 32% (Cox and Snell $R^2$) and 48% (Nagelkerke $R^2$) of the variance in mode of benefit receipt, and correctly classified 80% of cases. As shown in Table 3, only two of the independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model (Distance to the nearest Bank branch or Post Office outlet, and Indicative Financial Competence). The strongest predictor was Indicative Financial Competence, recording an odds ratio of 18.93. This indicates that Fijian beneficiaries who are financially competent are nearly nineteen times more likely to have their benefit paid into a bank account than beneficiaries who are not financially competent (controlling for all other factors in the model). The odds ratio of 0.86 for distance to the nearest Bank branch or Post Office outlet was less than 1. This indicates that, for every additional kilometre of distance the beneficiary has to travel to get to the nearest Bank branch or Post Office outlet, they are 0.86 times less likely to have their benefit paid into a Bank account (controlling for other factors in the model).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Benefit being paid to a Bank Account - Fijian Beneficiaries</th>
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<td><strong>B</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gender (Male)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Age</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mobile Phone ownership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Household Type (Live alone)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distance Bank/ Post Office</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indicative Financial Competence</td>
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**Table 3: Likelihood of Benefit Being Paid to a Bank Account - Fijian Beneficiaries**

The results from the model have implications for the migration of Fijian beneficiaries from receipt of their benefit by voucher to receipt of their benefit by credit to a bank account. The relationship between indicative financial competence and payment of the benefit to a bank account suggests the migration of Fijian beneficiaries should be preceded by a capability development programme to enhance financial competence. The program should focus, *inter alia*, on increasing Fijian beneficiaries’ understanding of banks and the banking system, how to operate a bank account and the role a bank account can play in household cash flow management. The programme should also focus on basic budgeting and the importance of household record keeping.
The inverse relationship between the distance beneficiaries have to travel to the nearest bank branch or Post Office outlet and receipt of the benefit by credit to a bank account suggests greater emphasis may need to be placed on communicating with, and educating, Fijian beneficiaries who live in rural communities.

**Indo-Fijian Beneficiaries**

The full model containing all predictors was also statistically significant for Indo-Fijian participants ($\chi^2 (6, n=86) = 29.29, p<.001$). This indicates the model was able to distinguish between Indo-Fijian participants who receive their benefit by voucher and participants who receive their benefit by credit to a bank account. Overall, the model explained between 28% (Cox and Snell R squared) and 42% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the variance in mode of benefit receipt, and correctly classified 82.6% of cases. As shown in Table 4, only two of the independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model (Gender and Household Type). The strongest predictor was Household Type, recording an odds ratio of 10.08. This indicates that Indo-Fijian beneficiaries who live alone are ten times more likely to have their benefit paid into a bank account than beneficiaries who live with others (controlling for all other factors in the model). Gender is also an important factor. The positive relationship (positive B) and odds ratio of 5.78 indicates that women are nearly six times more likely to have their benefit paid into a bank account than men (controlling for other factors in the model).

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Likelihood of Benefit being paid to a Bank Account - Indo-Fijian Beneficiaries</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>B</strong></td>
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</table>

**Table 4: Likelihood of Benefit Being Paid to a Bank Account – Indo-Fijian Beneficiaries**

The results from the model have implications for the migration of Indo-Fijian beneficiaries from receipt of their benefit by voucher to receipt of their benefit by credit to a bank account. The model suggests that Indo-Fijian women who live alone (the majority of Indo-Fijian beneficiaries who live alone are women) are more likely to have their benefit paid into a bank account. As discussed above, Indo-Fijian beneficiaries appear to be more likely to live alone than Fijian beneficiaries. It is likely, therefore, that these women have experienced less family pressure, and possibly peer or community pressure than Fijian beneficiaries.

Overall the Indo-Fijian beneficiary community appears to have greater financial competence than the Fijian beneficiary community. Therefore, in seeking to facilitate the migration of Indo-Fijian beneficiaries from the voucher system to credit to a bank account, less emphasis may need to be placed on education. It is likely
Indo-Fijian beneficiaries will be more willing to migrate to receiving their benefit by credit to a bank account once economic and environmental constraints are removed.

**All Beneficiaries**

When the sample of beneficiaries who participated in the study is taken as a whole, the only significant factor determining whether a beneficiary will have their benefit paid into a bank account is the distance they live from the nearest Bank branch or Post Office outlet.

Whilst not statistically significant, age may have an influence on beneficiaries' willingness to migrate to payment of the benefit to a bank account. 70% of beneficiaries aged less than 60 years receive their benefit by voucher. The commensurate figure for beneficiaries 60 years or older is 80%. Younger women appear more willing to receive their benefit by credit to a bank account, 34% of the female participants in the focus groups aged less than 60 years have their benefit paid to a bank account.

If these factors are combined with the factors identified in respect to the Indo-Fijian and Fijian samples, it is possible to develop a tentative picture of beneficiaries who are more likely to be more receptive to having their benefit paid to a bank account:

- Not elderly
- Living in urban/ peri-urban communities
- Financially competent
- Capable of making independent financial decisions

This group comprises approximately 30% of the sample of whom only 40% currently have their benefit paid into a bank account.

**Literacy**

An additional factor which emerged during both the Indo-Fijian and the Fijian focus group discussions and which is likely to have an influence on beneficiaries' ability to migrate from voucher encashment to receipt of the benefit by credit to a bank account is the beneficiary's English literacy, in particular the beneficiary's ability to read and write in English.

Nine of the sixteen voucher focus groups raised poor English literacy as a reason for continuing to receive the benefit by voucher. Literacy was cited by both Indo-Fijian and Fijian beneficiaries and rural and urban Fijian beneficiaries. Specific reasons for not using a bank included an inability to fill in forms at the bank and an inability to read instructions on the ATM screen. Fijian beneficiaries also cited difficulty in understanding spoken English as bank staff typically do not speak Fijian. Specific reasons for continuing to use the Post Office for voucher encashment included the ability to cash the benefit voucher using a thumb-print and, for Fijian beneficiaries, the ability to speak with staff in Fijian.

The extent of poor English literacy among the beneficiary population is not known, but is likely to be pervasive, in particular among older beneficiaries, both Fijian and Indo-Fijian. A lack of English literacy may be a barrier to migration from the voucher system to the banking system.

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3 This may be more of a perception than a reality.
It is beyond the scope of this study to consider possible process changes required in the banking system to accommodate beneficiaries who have limited English literacy. However, possible adaptations could include enabling interchange between the Post Office and Banks other than Colonial to allow beneficiaries to continue to use the Post Office; the use of multi-lingual forms at all Bank branches, the use of thumb-prints for withdrawals by beneficiaries who cannot write and, in respect to ATM’s, the use of voice instructions.4 Alternatively it may be more appropriate and simpler to continue to provide voucher based benefit payment for beneficiaries who do not have sufficient English language literacy to use the banking system. Given the likelihood that most illiterate beneficiaries will be older, it may be possible to implement this on a ‘grandfathered’ basis.

Beneficiaries who use Vouchers

Reasons Cited for Continued Use of Vouchers

The single most pervasive reason cited by beneficiaries as to why they continue to receive their benefit by voucher is inertia. Beneficiaries who continue to receive their benefit by voucher prefer the current system and see no reason to change. The receipt of the benefit by voucher is therefore a habit and beneficiaries have arranged their lives around voucher encashment (For example, several focus groups stated that they arranged their bill payment to coincide with cashing their voucher). Habits can be difficult to change and can require incentives. Habitual behaviour tends to be rationalized post hoc, with rationalisations accorded causal status (for example ‘more friendly staff at Post Office outlets’).

Many beneficiaries are also very comfortable with the environment at the Post Office and consider that the Post Office is both convenient and provides good service. Several focus groups stated that staff at the Post Office understand beneficiaries’ needs, in particular the needs of elderly, ill or illiterate beneficiaries (for example the provision of separate queues for the elderly at Post Office outlets and the ability to cash the benefit by thumb-print). Many beneficiaries claimed they did not have to wait long at the Post Office (although when asked how long they had to queue to cash their voucher they typically stated between 30 minutes and an hour).

Most focus groups alluded to the absence of fees if beneficiaries received their benefit by voucher. The groups also stated that payment was certain if the voucher system was used, whereas payment was not certain of the benefit was credited to a bank account due to delays in crediting the benefit.

Several focus groups stated that vouchers provided better features than bank accounts. There was a perception that there was less security at a bank as ‘anyone could withdraw funds if the passbook was lost’. Conversely, several beneficiaries stated they considered vouchers preferable as the beneficiary could arrange for another person to cash the voucher on their behalf if they were ill and unable to get to the Post Office. Several beneficiaries stated they preferred the Post Office because they could pay other bills at the same time as cashing their voucher. Several focus groups, however, cited the time required to obtain a new voucher book as a negative feature of the voucher system.

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4 This may already be the case with ATM’s in Fiji.
Several focus groups stated they liked the ability to withdraw all their money at once by cashing their voucher. There appeared to be a perception that this could not happen if the benefit was credited to a bank account. A number of beneficiaries who had opened bank accounts to receive their benefit and subsequently closed them stated that receipt of their benefit to their bank account was delayed and resolving the issue had been difficult. Conversely beneficiaries who receive their benefit by voucher repeatedly stated they were certain of receiving their funds when they cashed their voucher.

**Beneficiaries’ Attitude to Banks**

Beneficiaries who continue to receive their benefit by voucher do not, in the main, do so because they dislike banks *per se*. Most focus group participants understood the use of a bank account was a good way to save money and could assist with household cash-flow management, in particular as the benefit could be withdrawn progressively. In general focus group participants considered banks were safe and provided good service and were convenient. Several focus groups mentioned that the queues at a bank were usually shorter than at the Post Office.

Fijian focus group participants were, however, more inclined to state that banks could be very busy and that service could be inconsistent. Some beneficiaries felt that money ‘might get lost’ if it was credited to a bank account. However, these statements must be weighed against a relatively high level of ignorance about banks and bank services by beneficiaries who receive their benefit by voucher. A considerable number of beneficiaries had no experience of banks. Statements made are therefore just as likely to be representative of received information rather than direct experience. Within this context several beneficiaries stated that banks ‘were not interested in people like us’ and did not want to have customers who were elderly or ill, rather they were only interested in ‘businesses people and people who had money’. A number of participants considered banks did not understand the ‘purpose of the benefit’.

The most common negative statements made by beneficiaries’ about banks was the imposition bank fees and the delays in receiving the benefit if it was credited to a bank account. Several beneficiaries had, as a consequence of representations made by DSW field staff, changed from voucher encashment to having their benefit credited to their bank account. These beneficiaries had subsequently changed back to the voucher system when the bank imposed a fee and when delays were experienced in the receipt of their benefit. Several beneficiaries stated they had been mislead by the DSW field staff who had advised them there would be no account fees if their benefit was direct credit to a bank account.

A number of beneficiaries stated that using a bankcard at an ATM would be difficult, primarily because of the difficulty in reading the screen and understanding how to withdraw money. Several beneficiaries also felt it would be difficult to remember a PIN number.

There was a misconception by some beneficiaries that the DSW would check up on them if they used a bank account in order to see what money was in the account and that, if the beneficiary was saving then their benefit would be stopped.

**Peer and Family Perceptions**

Beneficiaries who continue to receive their benefit by voucher appear to be influenced by comments made by members of their family or by peers. Focus group participants consistently stated that family members or
friends had advised against shifting from receipt of the benefit by voucher to receipt of the benefit by credit to a bank account, primarily because of bank fees and the likelihood of delays in the receipt of the benefit payment, but also because the beneficiary ‘was too old to punch numbers’. Beneficiaries cited a range of comments made by friends and family members including ‘banks make people run around’, withdrawing the benefit from the bank will mean having to go to the bank more than once which will be time consuming and expensive, ‘banks are for businesses’ and ‘the priority is food and not saving’.

Whilst beneficiaries stated family and friends had tended to advise against the use of a bank for the receipt of the benefit, they also stated family members and friends had said that banks were safe, that money could be withdrawn anywhere in Fiji at any time rather than at a specific Post Office within a specific time period, and that having a bank account meant money could be saved which made it easier to spend wisely and to ensure money would be available for emergencies.

Constraints to change

There do not appear to be, with the exception of illiterate beneficiaries, major constraints preventing beneficiaries from moving from voucher based receipt of their benefit to the use of a bank account. However, unless there is a compelling reason to change it is unlikely many beneficiaries will change voluntarily. Both the receipt of the benefit in cash as a lump sum and the environment within which the benefit is cashed appear to suit many beneficiaries and lead to a perception that the receipt of the benefit by voucher provides greater self-efficacy than would be the case if the benefit was received by credit to a bank account.

The principal constraints to change appear to be economic and process related. If the bank fee were to be removed and DSW were able to ensure the benefit was always paid on time, the major constraint to change would be removed. The cost of travel is not a constraint to change as it is the same irrespective of whether the beneficiary is going to the Post Office to cash a voucher or the bank to withdraw funds. The only group for whom the cost of travel is significant are rural beneficiaries who appear to spend up to 20% of the benefit payment in travel costs. It is unlikely these beneficiaries will reduce transport costs by migrating to payment of their benefit to a bank account as a trip to town is still required in order to withdraw funds and to pay bills.

The voucher system appears to have developed a range of adaptations to facilitate the encashment of vouchers by beneficiaries. Examples of this include separate queues for elderly and ill beneficiaries, the use of thumb prints for illiterate beneficiaries and the subsidization of voucher encashment costs by the State. These adaptations also create a constraint to change.

Changing habit is unlikely to be successful by persuasion alone. The structuring of the two distribution models (voucher and bank account) encourages inertia and entrenches habit. The most significant incentive for change among beneficiaries for whom accessing the benefit by voucher has become a habit will be to remove the disincentives to change and to implement an incentive to change. If the transaction cost differential is removed (the Bank Fee) and DSW service standards can ensure timely payment of the benefit, the disincentives to change will have been removed. If a transaction charge is subsequently imposed for voucher encashment, a disincentive to inertia will have been imposed. In addition, obtaining a new voucher book is regarded by many beneficiaries as time consuming and a nuisance. Reduction of the duration of the voucher book to three months will provide an added incentive to migration. Beneficiaries who continue to use the voucher system due to an inability to access the banking system (for example illiterate beneficiaries who obtain their benefit using a thumb print) will need to be grandfathered.
Beneficiaries who use Bank Accounts

Reasons Cited for the Use of a Bank Account

Beneficiaries who have migrated from voucher encashment to receipt of their benefit by credit to a bank account cite a range of reasons why they have switched their mode of benefit payment. In the main the reasons cited by focus group participants are post hoc and derive from beneficiaries’ experience of operating a bank account. For example, focus group participants commonly cited having their benefit credited to an account was easier than having to go to the Post Office to cash their voucher or to renew their voucher book. They also cited the flexibility of using a bank, in particular the ability to withdraw funds at multiple locations and out of trading hours through an ATM as a major benefit.

The principal a priori reason cited by focus group participants for switching from voucher receipt to the use of a bank account appears to be that beneficiaries were advised to do so by DSW field staff and accepted that advice.

Focus group participants who use a bank account cited a range of benefits from using a bank account to receive their benefit, these relate primarily to having funds in a bank account rather than receiving funds in cash. For example, the flexibility provided by being able to access funds from multiple locations was frequently cited along with the flexibility provided by being able to access funds from an ATM which enabled money to be accessed out of trading hours and for children to access funds if the beneficiary was ill and the ability to deposit funds (including offshore remittances) direct to the bank account. Risks associated with providing a PIN number to someone else were not mentioned by focus group participants.

Improved money management was also frequently cited as a benefit by focus group participants, in particular the ability to keep funds in the bank until they were required to pay bills along with the ability to save. Several focus groups cited the ability to earn interest on savings. One focus group noted that ‘the use of a bank encourages saving whereas the use of vouchers encourages spending’. Several focus groups also cited the use of a bank account assisted with management of household cash flows and enabled better planning of expenditure. Several Fijian focus group participants noted that the use of a bank account enabled them to meet their cultural obligations without exhausting their funds. One Fijian focus group noted however that, since having their benefit credit to a bank account they had received additional requests for assistance from members of their extended family.

The benefits cited by focus group participants commonly relate to improved control over the use and management of money as a consequence of being able to keep money in a bank account. The operation of a bank account therefore provides greater self-efficacy. Once beneficiaries make the switch to a bank account, and providing the benefit is received regularly, beneficiaries appear to regard the payment of the benefit to a bank account as being preferable to receiving the benefit in cash.

Focus group participants noted two issues in relation to receipt of their benefit by credit to a bank account. The issues were the same as those cited by voucher recipients as reasons why they had not migrated from voucher encashment to having their benefit credited to a bank account: Bank fees and delays in receiving their benefit (and the consequent difficulty in resolving issues). Focus group participants noted that resolution could require two or three trips to the bank and to the DSW offices before the issue was resolved.
**Beneficiaries' Attitude to Banks**

Beneficiaries who receive their benefit by credit to a bank account have a positive attitude to banks. Reasons for beneficiaries’ positive attitude were typically instrumental and related to safety, accessibility, the potential to save, and the potential for better management of household cash flows. Two Fijian focus groups stated that banks were good because they did not discriminate.

In addition to safety and ease of access, focus group participants also cited service as a reason for preferring to use a bank for receipt of their benefit. In particular focus group participants cited shorter queues than the Post Office and more professional staff. Common waiting times cited by focus group participants were 5-15 minutes to use an ATM or a branch, although some groups stated that the wait at the bank could be protracted on particularly busy days. Several focus groups noted that bank branches were typically clean and tidy. In general, beneficiaries who received their benefit by credit to a bank account perceive their wait time to be shorter than that perceived by beneficiaries who receive their benefit by voucher encashment at the Post Office and also perceive the experience of withdrawing funds to be more professional than experienced at the Post Office.

Beneficiaries who use a bank appear to have a high level of self efficacy in respect to the operation of the bank account and are able to control their interactions with the bank. Focus group participants stated that they were able to resolve issues at the bank if they arose and cited examples such as using the Enquiries Counter and contacting the DSW Welfare Officer for assistance. Several beneficiaries did, however, state that issues could be time consuming to rectify, in particular issues relating to delayed benefit payment.

**Beneficiaries Use of a Bank Account**

A common theme in the responses from focus group participants who have their benefit credited to a bank account was the importance they placed on owning an account. The ownership of a bank account appears to be a source of self esteem. Several beneficiaries stated that since opening their bank account more people had recognised and appreciated them. Focus group participants were also proud that, because they were better able to manage their money, they did not need to ask others for money.

Most beneficiaries who have their benefit credited to a bank account operate the bank account themselves rather than arranging for someone else to withdraw funds on their behalf. There appears, however, to be a significant difference between Indo-Fijian and Fijian beneficiaries in respect to the operation of the bank account. Whilst a larger proportion of Indo Fijian beneficiaries appear to be financially competent than Fijian beneficiaries; Fijian beneficiaries who have a bank account appear to be more confident in using the account than Indo-Fijian beneficiaries. All Fijian Beneficiaries who have a bank account stated they have a bankcard and most Fijian beneficiaries stated they use the card themselves. Conversely only a third of Indo-Fijian beneficiaries who stated they have a bank account also stated they have a bankcard and only a third of Indo-Fijian beneficiaries who have a bankcard stated they use the card themselves⁵.

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⁵ The sample of Indo-Fijian beneficiaries who have and use a card is small and may not be generally representative of Indo-Fijian beneficiaries.
Ownership and Use of a Bankcard

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Table 5: Ownership and Use of a Bankcard

This behaviour pattern suggests that, whilst it may be easier to migrate Indo-Fijian beneficiaries from receiving their benefit by voucher to having their benefit credit to a bank account, training will be required to ensure Indo-Fijian beneficiaries are confident in making electronic rather than simply counter withdrawals.

Peer and Family Perceptions

Focus group participants who have their benefit credited to a bank account commonly stated that family members and friends viewed banks positively and had advised them to switch from receiving their benefit by voucher to having their benefit credited to a bank account. The reasons provided by friends and family members were similar to the benefits of having a bank account cited by beneficiaries: Banks are safe and accessible, banks are less crowded, there is 'less hassle' withdrawing funds from a bank account than cashing a voucher. Several beneficiaries noted that friends had advised them to ‘think of their life and save'. Other beneficiaries noted that family members had advised funds could be kept in a bank until required and that this would assist with budgeting and planning ahead, and would ensure funds were not misused.

In addition to positive family and peer advice, it is possible beneficiaries who have switched from receiving their benefit by voucher to having their benefit credited to a bank account are more confident than beneficiaries who are reluctant to change. A number of focus group participants mentioned some family members and friends had expressed negative opinions about banks, particularly in relation to fees and possible delays in the receipt of benefit payments. One focus group noted that friends had stated: ‘everyone understands vouchers but not everyone understands banks'. Another focus group noted that family members had said that banks ‘are for the wealthy' and that if the benefit is paid into a bank account ‘people will see you differently'. Importantly, these beneficiaries appear to have acted against family and peer advice.

Given the positive experiences of beneficiaries who have migrated from the voucher system to the banking system and the possible greater confidence of these beneficiaries, it may be valuable to consider using beneficiaries who have migrated as role models and to involve these beneficiaries in an education program.

Ways in Which Beneficiaries Maximise the Value of their Benefit

Beneficiaries adopt a range of strategies to maximise the value of their benefit and to augment their income.

Use of Benefit

Focus group participants stated they used their benefit payment to meet their basic needs and the needs of their family. For a significant number of beneficiaries the benefit appears to be the principal, and in some
cases, the only source of income. The usage patterns cited by beneficiaries were consistent across all focus groups. It is evident beneficiaries are very conscious of the need to use the benefit carefully. Whilst most beneficiaries do not budget, prioritisation of expenditure is common. Usage patterns were consistent across urban focus groups. Focus group participants typically use the benefit to provide for food, to pay for services (electricity, water), to pay for housing, in particular rent; to pay for medical bills; to pay for transport costs, to pay for school fees and to meet community and religious obligations. Few beneficiaries appeared to regard the receipt of the benefit as a right (although several older beneficiaries did consider this to be the case). Focus group participants did; however, appear to be seeking to convey that the benefit was essential in enabling them to provide for basic needs.

There was a difference between the rural and urban Fijian focus groups in respect to the use of the benefit payment. Rural focus group participants stated that their priority after receiving their benefit payment was to repay outstanding credit obligations, in particular store credit and transport costs, before paying other bills or providing for household needs. As discussed above, rural focus group participants typically evidenced less competent financial behaviour. The use of store credit appears to be associated with a lack of financial competence (Sibley, 2009). The use of store credit was less prevalent among urban Fijian focus group participants (although it was more prevalent among less financially competent urban Fijian focus group participants) and was not cited by urban participants as a priority following receipt of the benefit payment. The use of store credit was not cited by Indo-Fijian participants.

**Actions to Maximise Benefit**

Beneficiaries engage in a range of activities in order to maximise the value of their benefit. There is a difference in the pattern of answers between Indo-Fijian and Fijian participants. Indo-Fijian participants typically stated that they engaged in a range of activities to manage their money, in addition to minimising food expenditure by growing vegetables, and in some cases, raising chickens to provide food for the household and using firewood for cooking. Indo-Fijian focus group participants also cited a range of activities to augment their income. By contrast, Fijian beneficiaries did not cite money management activities. Fijian focus groups only cited minimising food expenditure and activities to augment household income. This is consistent with the greater level of financial competence exhibited by Indo-Fijian focus group participants. Fijian focus group participants mentioned a greater range of income augmentation activities.

Activities undertaken by Indo-Fijian participants to manage their household cash flows included prioritising spending, planning and carefully controlling spending, saving up to buy items, getting food rations, cutting down on meals, buying items in bulk in conjunction with other family members or neighbours, sharing the cost of items purchased with either family members and purchasing items a little at a time.

Indo-Fijian focus group participants stated they sold food (including sweets) and did sewing to augment their benefit. Fijian focus group participants, in particular urban participants, cited a broad range of activities undertaken to augment their income. Activities cited included: Selling grog; selling beans, cigarettes, iceblocks, soft-drink, and snacks; baking and selling cakes and jams; making and selling patchwork quilts, brooms and doormats; running a small canteen; and selling flowers.

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6 At the end of each focus group participants were provided with the opportunity to comment on any matter raised during the focus group or any matter relating to their benefit. Every focus group stressed the benefit payment was inadequate to meet their basic needs and requested that the level of payment be increased.
Changing the Mode of Benefit Payment

Use of Mobile Phones

A potential enhancement to the benefit distribution system is to use mobile phones to access the benefit and (potentially) to make small cash transfers and small payments. Questions relating to mobile phone ownership and usage were included in the study.

Mobile phone ownership

In order to develop an understanding of beneficiaries' competence with the use of mobile phones, ownership and use of mobile phones was discussed during the focus groups. In addition a question about mobile phone ownership was included in the self-completion survey.

Overall, 38% of beneficiaries who participated in the study own a mobile phone. An analysis was undertaken to determine factors which best predict ownership of mobile phone ownership in order to identify the group most likely to be receptive to use of the mobile phone for cash transactions. A logistic regression to assess several factors which may influence the likelihood of a beneficiary owning a mobile phone was performed. The model contained seven independent variables from the self-completion survey (Gender, age, ethnicity, whether the beneficiary received their benefit by voucher or by payment to a bank account and the distance the beneficiary has to travel to get to the nearest bank or Post Office) and the beneficiary’s indicative financial competence derived from the cluster analysis.

The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant ($X^2 (7, n=211) = 33.21, p<.001$). This indicates the model was able to distinguish between beneficiaries who own a mobile phone and beneficiaries who do not own a mobile phone. Overall, the model explained between 14.6% (Cox and Snell R squared) and 19.8% (Nagelkerke R squared) of the factors influencing ownership of a mobile phone, and correctly classified 66.4% of cases. As shown in Table 6, two independent variables made a unique statistically significant contribution to the model (Age and indicative financial competence). In addition, distance to the nearest bank branch or Post Office outlet was important. Whilst slightly outside the usual boundary of significance ($p<.05$), given the exploratory nature of the research, distance to the nearest bank branch or Post Office outlet (which is a surrogate for proximity to town) should be included as a factor predicting ownership of a mobile phone. The strongest predictor was Age. The Odds Ratio of 0.96 for age is less than 1, indicating an inverse relationship: Younger beneficiaries are more likely to own a mobile phone than older beneficiaries (controlling for other factors in the model). Indicative financial competence was also a strong predictor. The Odds Ratio of 2.88 indicates that beneficiaries who are financially competent are nearly three times more likely to own a mobile phone than beneficiaries who are not financially competent (controlling for other factors in the model). The Odds ratio of 0.48 for distance to town (where distance to town is less than 5 kilometres), and the lack of a significant relationship for distance to town where distance is greater than 5 kilometres, indicates that the closer a beneficiary lives to town the greater the likelihood they will own a mobile phone.
### Table 6: Likelihood of Mobile Phone Ownership

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<th>B</th>
<th>S.E.</th>
<th>Wald</th>
<th>df</th>
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<td>Distance to Bank/Post Office &gt;5k</td>
<td>-0.77</td>
<td>0.54</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.15</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.16 – 1.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Constant</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>1.49</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>3.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Beneficiaries who own a mobile phone are therefore less likely to be elderly, to live in urban areas and to be financially competent\(^7\). Within the context of the present study this group comprises 24% of the sample, of whom 65% currently own a mobile phone. This is the group most likely to be receptive to the use of the mobile phone for payments or for receipt of their benefit. If this group is extrapolated across the estimated beneficiary population, it is likely the initial market for benefit payment related mobile phone services would be 6,500 – 7,500 beneficiaries.

The significance of the relationship between urban and rural beneficiaries is evident when beneficiaries who live close to a town are compared with beneficiaries who live in rural and peri-urban areas:

### Table 7: Location and Mobile Phone Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Own a Mobile Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian &lt;5k</td>
<td>42%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian &gt;5k</td>
<td>24%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Fijian &lt;5k</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Fijian &gt;5k</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Whilst the analysis of beneficiary financial competence is indicative, the relationship between financial competence and mobile phone ownership can be seen in the sharp difference in mobile phone ownership between beneficiaries who are not financially competent and beneficiaries who exhibit financial competence:

### Table 8: Financial Competence and Mobile Phone Ownership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Own a Mobile Phone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not competent</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competent</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^7\) This group has significant overlap with group of beneficiaries most likely to be receptive to having their benefit paid to a bank account.
Competence using a Mobile Phone

Beneficiaries currently have limited competence in using a mobile phone. Only one beneficiary stated they used a mobile phone for texting. All other beneficiaries who stated they own a mobile phone use the phone only to receive and to make calls. Consequently, if additional mobile phone functionality is to be provided it is likely training will be required to enable beneficiaries to become competent using the additional functionality.

Facilitating Migration from Vouchers to Bank Accounts

Most beneficiaries who continue to use the voucher system do so primarily because of inertia. Other factors inhibiting migration are a distrust of DSW and a lack of financial competence. Encouraging migration from the use of vouchers to the use of a bank account can therefore be facilitated by a set of targeted interventions:

Reduce the attractiveness of vouchers and enhance the attractiveness of bank accounts

The voucher and bank account distribution channels favour inertia. There is currently no reason for beneficiaries to change. In fact if beneficiaries do migrate they will be financially worse off and may encounter delays in receiving their benefit. Correcting these two inhibitors is likely to have the greatest impact on encouraging migration:

- DSW systems must be improved to ensure the benefit is paid on time and beneficiary details are accurate (these issues appear to be partly process related and partly related to the very poor state of the DSW beneficiary database). This is a pre-requisite to successfully implementing a migration program.
- The disincentive to use a bank for receipt of the benefit must be removed and beneficiaries must be advised of this.
- The incentive to use voucher encashment at the Post Office must be removed and beneficiaries must be advised of this.

It is recommended that current bank fees be subsidised or a mandated ‘basic bank account be introduced’. It is also recommended that, following this a fee be introduced for voucher encashment and the duration of the voucher book be reduced to three months. This will have the effect of reversing the current incentive by beneficiaries to maintain the status quo. Beneficiaries who must continue to use the voucher system due to an inability to access the banking system (for example illiterate beneficiaries who obtain their benefit using a thumb print) will need to be grandfathered.

There may also be a benefit in requiring banks to have Hindi and Fijian speaking counter staff and to encourage all banks to introduce separate counters (on benefit collection days) for elderly or the ill beneficiaries.

During the focus group discussion all focus groups tended to focus on the instrumental aspects of money. This suggests that communication messages to encourage beneficiaries to migrate from voucher encashment to bank credit should focus on the instrumental benefits, in particular the improved ability to manage household

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8 It is understood a policy decision has been made to subsidise bank fees. It may, however, be more efficient to follow practice in other jurisdictions and to mandate banks must provide a fee free basic bank account.

9 This may already be the case. The comment reflects beneficiary perceptions.
cash flows. In advising changes it is important for the DSW to maintain control over the communication. It is therefore recommended passive communication is used:

- The removal of the transaction fee (or the introduction of a basic bank account) should be advertised in the national media (for example the national daily newspapers). Advertisements should be instrumental rather than emotional and should advise beneficiaries of the change. This should be accompanied by a detailed press release.
- The imposition of a fee for voucher encashment and the reduced duration of the voucher book should be similarly, but separately, advertised. It is also recommended the advertisement be instrumental, advising the changes) and should be accompanied by a detailed press release.

**Use appropriate media channels**

Media used to convey messages must be capable of being controlled by the sender. If control of the communication is lost there is a risk the message will not be conveyed and, potentially, an inappropriate message being conveyed. It is recommended interactive media channels, including 'talk back' radio and unscripted interviews not be used as part of the communications program.

**Use role models to re-enforce the benefits of using a bank account**

A key communication activity is to influence informal conversations beneficiaries have with their friends and family. A low cost and efficient way of doing this is to use local role beneficiaries who have already migrated from the voucher system to the use of a bank account for receipt of their benefit.

The benefits of using a bank account need to be conveyed directly to beneficiaries using communication trusted by beneficiaries. Local advocacy, using beneficiaries ('local heroes') who have switched from the voucher system to the use of a bank account for receipt of their voucher speaking at small meetings in communities is a very effective way of achieving this and also enables beneficiaries to ask questions that they may not be willing to ask if the presentation was given by someone they did not know.

Local advocates can re-enforce a positive self-image associated with ownership and use of a bank account and the greater control they have over their lives as a consequence of having their benefit paid into a bank account. This enables an emotional underpinning to be provided which can re-enforce the instrumental mass-media messages. This will also enable targeted communication with specific communities, for example the emphasis which will need to be placed in rural Fijian communities on the ability provided by a bank account to improve the management of household cash flows whilst concurrently meeting community obligations.

If possible visits to communities by DSW field staff and bank staff to discuss bank accounts would support the migration program.
Constraints to Change

Literacy

Literacy is a significant barrier to migration from voucher encashment to the use of a bank account for receipt of the benefit. It is recommended beneficiaries who use a thumb-print for identification when cashing their benefit is grandfathered and allowed to continue on a fee free basis. Given the majority of these beneficiaries are elderly it is recommended no further beneficiaries be allowed to commence receiving their benefit by voucher encashment and thumb-print identification.

Financial Competence

Financial competence is an issue constraining the use of bank accounts by beneficiaries. It is recommended a financial literacy program be deployed to urban and rural communities to educate beneficiaries in the management of household cash flows, the importance of keeping financial records and the use of a bank account for managing household cash flows and banking system and banks in Fiji. This training should be additional to training to educate beneficiaries in the use of a bank account.

Department of Social Welfare

Many beneficiaries appear to lack trust in the DSW. This needs to be corrected. In part a change in beneficiary attitudes to DSW will be consequent on an improvement in DSW systems and an improvement in service standards. It may also be appropriate to establish a phone service (in Fijian and Hindi) dedicated for the use of beneficiaries who have not received their benefit. This will enable beneficiaries to maintain self-efficacy over receipt of their benefit.

Beneficiaries also need to be educated about their rights to information privacy; in particular beneficiaries need to be advised that the DSW does not have the right to search beneficiary bank records. This communication should be undertaken by the DSW and by Bank staff and should be personal rather than through the media. This will ensure the communication is able to reach beneficiaries who do not or are unable to read a newspaper will provide beneficiaries with an opportunity to ask questions.

Develop Targeted Migration Programs

A stepped communication, training and migration program should be introduced, commencing with beneficiaries who are most likely to be willing to migrate from the voucher system to the use of a bank account for the receipt of their benefit (early adopters). These beneficiaries are likely to require little incentive to change. The second group should be urban and peri-urban beneficiaries. It is probable Fijian beneficiaries will require more financial literacy training than Indo-Fijian beneficiaries. However, Indo-Fijian beneficiaries are likely to require training in the use of a bankcard. The third group should be rural beneficiaries, in particularly rural Fijian communities. This group will require a different approach, using traditional communication channels. Rural beneficiaries are also likely to require more training and re-enforcement in communication.
Early adopters

It is likely early adopters will not be elderly, will live in urban or peri-urban communities and will be financially competent. It is likely this group will be encouraged to migrate from voucher encashment to the use of a bank account for receipt of their benefit when the disincentives to migration are removed and incentives to migration are introduced. Consequently it is probable 25-30% of beneficiaries who continue to use vouchers will migrate of their own accord once changes are introduced to overcome inertia.

Urban and Peri-Urban Communities

The urban and peri-urban communities are likely to require training and advocacy, in addition to changes to overcome inertia and to facilitate migration. Urban and peri-urban beneficiary communities will benefit from financial literacy training, training in the use of a bank account, advocacy by beneficiaries who currently have their benefit paid into a bank account and the opportunity to discuss with DSW and Bank staff.

Rural Communities

Rural communities are likely to require a more sustained program in order to achieve migration from voucher encashment to the use of a bank account for the receipt of the benefit. In addition to the programs discussed above, it is recommended traditional communication channels be used as these are likely to elicit a greater response from beneficiaries.

A Tentative Migration Path

It is recommended the staged migration, communication and training program is deployed over three – six months. It is not possible to recommend a timed migration program (in particular until the time frame for correction of the DSW database and process issues has been determined), however the following stages are recommended: Remove barriers to migration, target early adopters, then target urban/peri-urban beneficiary communities and thirdly target rural communities, Finally introduce barriers to continued use of voucher encashment for receipt of the benefit:

### Tentative Migration Path

- **Stage 1:** Remove barriers to migration
- **Stage 2:** Target early adopters
- **Stage 3:** Target urban/peri-urban beneficiary communities
- **Stage 4:** Target rural communities
- **Stage 5:** Introduce barriers to continued use of voucher encashment

**Figure 3: Tentative Migration Path**
References


Appendix: Research Design and Field Work

Research Design

The objective of the study is exploratory rather than confirmatory, and is pragmatic (Cresswell, 2003). It is therefore appropriate to employ mixed method design. Verbal reports can be accepted as data (Ericsson & Simon, 1980). Qualitative interviews are suited to a situation in which little is known about the reasons for behaviour. The objective of qualitative interviewing is to understand the research topic from the interviewee’s perspective and to understand how or why this perspective exists (King, 1994). The study has not sought to obtain personal or sensitive information. Rather the objective has been to understand comparative patterns of belief, attitude and behaviour between beneficiaries who have migrated to the electronic benefit payment system and beneficiaries who continue to receive their benefit by voucher. Focus group interviews are therefore an appropriate primary data collection mode, augmented by a self-completion survey.

Qualitative: Focus Groups

Focus groups are particularly useful when the research is seeking to explore beliefs and attitudes which are likely to be significantly influenced by peer/family or social pressure (as is the case with the present study). Small group discussions, comprising people who have common characteristics, enables group dynamics to emerge. This, in turn, provides a supporting environment for the discussion of motivations, belief and attitudes which underpin behaviour, in particular socially derived attitudes (for example attitudes to banks) which beneficiaries might otherwise be reluctant to discuss (Goldenkoff, 2004).

Focus groups were conducted in either Fijian or Hindi (depending on the ethnicity of participants) as participants’ conversational language is unlikely to be English. The interviews were simultaneously transcribed in English. This approach was considered to be more efficient and effective than subsequent translation.

Quantitative: Individual Self Completion Survey

In order to better understand beneficiaries’ use of a bank account and household cash management the focus group interviews were augmented by a brief self-completion survey. The objective of the survey was not statistical; rather the use of self-completion questions enabled a wider data set to be collected more quickly.

The survey was conducted in either Fijian or Hindi (depending on the ethnicity of participants). As many beneficiaries have limited literacy, the self completion questions were read out by the focus group moderator and completed individually by participants. Some participants required assistance with completion; this was provided by the focus group moderators. In the case of rural Fijian focus groups, assistance was also provided by the turanga ni koro.
Sampling

Population

The majority of Family Assistance beneficiaries in Fiji are clustered in the Western and Central regions of Vanua Levu. There are significant clusters of beneficiaries in and around Suva/Nausori and Lautoka. It was therefore decided to focus the study in these two areas.

The study is exploratory, therefore the purpose of the sampling frame has been to ensure participants are broadly representative of the beneficiary population. The language used in the focus groups and self-completion questionnaires was Fijian and Hindi. It was determined most participants would not be fluent English speakers, nor would they be able to read fluently in English. Sampling was separated into Fijian speaking and Hindi speaking samples. The Department of Social Welfare (DSW) advised the majority of beneficiaries in the Western region were Indo-Fijian. It was decided to sample the Indo-Fijian population in and around Lautoka and to sample the Fijian population in and around Suva/ Nausori.

As a consequence of the extensive issues with the DSW beneficiary database it has not been possible to develop an accurate picture of the beneficiary population in Lautoka or Suva/ Nausori. Whilst anecdotal evidence indicates participants in the study are broadly representative of the beneficiary population, this cannot be confirmed by reference to an accurate data source.

Sampling Frame

The sampling frame was designed to ensure a spread of gender, age, location and benefit payment types. Fijian men and women tend to adopt different financial behaviours (Sibley, 2009). Whilst it is not known if Indo-Fijian men and women also adopt different financial behaviours, it was determined prudent to interview men and women separately. It was also considered appropriate to interview beneficiaries who may be working separately from beneficiaries who are likely to be retired as it was thought there may be age related differences in financial behaviour. The selection of 60 years as an age at which beneficiaries are likely to be no longer working is somewhat arbitrary, but was considered reasonable.

Within each cell, three focus groups were enrolled: Two urban focus groups and one rural focus group. A distance limit of 20 kilometres from the nearest bank/ATM or Post Office was set for urban participants. This limit is somewhat arbitrary, but is considered a reasonable differentiator and has been used in previous studies (Sibley, 2008, 2009). The urban focus groups were separated into recipients who receive their benefit by voucher and beneficiaries who receive their benefit by credit to a bank account. This differentiation was not made for rural focus groups as anecdotal evidence indicated there were likely to be few rural beneficiaries using direct credit to a bank account.
### Sampling Frame

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Age &lt; 60 years</th>
<th>Age &gt; 60 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Women**      | 2 urban/peri-urban focus groups (1x voucher, 1x electronic)  
                 | 1 rural focus group (mixed) | 2 urban/peri-urban focus groups (1x voucher, 1x electronic)  
                 | 1 rural focus group (mixed) |
| **Men**        | 2 urban/peri-urban focus groups (1x voucher, 1x electronic)  
                 | 1 rural focus group (mixed) | 2 urban/peri-urban focus groups (1x voucher, 1x electronic)  
                 | 1 rural focus group (mixed) |

**Table 9: Sampling Frame**

It had been intended to select beneficiaries by randomly sampling from the DSW beneficiary database. However, an examination of the beneficiary database revealed extensive inaccuracies and coding inconsistencies in the dataset. It was determined the most effective sampling method in urban areas would be to select locations in which it was known groups of beneficiaries lived (for example HART Housing and informal settlements) and to use snowball sampling. In rural areas sampling was undertaken in conjunction with local community leaders. The principal means of enrolling beneficiaries was a combination of direct approach and referral. In both urban and rural areas the DSW database was used where possible to seed the sampling.

### Sample

**Target Sample**

The study has a significant ethological component. Morse (1994) has recommended qualitative ethological studies include 100-200 units of observation. Wilmot (2005) has recommended 60 to 100 participants if group interviews are used. The study has sampled two discrete beneficiary populations: Fijian and Indo-Fijian communities. Therefore, to achieve sufficient coverage it was considered appropriate to sample 100 – 150 people from each of the Fijian and Indo-Fijian beneficiary populations. The target size for each focus group was 10-15 participants.

**Sample**

A total of 227 beneficiaries participated in the study: 140 Fijian beneficiaries and 87 Indo-Fijian beneficiaries. The mix of beneficiaries is different to the target established in the sampling frame. This is due to two factors:

- A lower level of enrolment of beneficiaries receiving payment to a bank account (25% of sample). Anecdotal evidence indicates the ratio of voucher recipients to bank account recipients is similar to that of the beneficiary population overall.  
- No enrolment of rural Indo-Fijian beneficiaries.

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10 Due to inaccuracies in the DSW database it is not possible to determine the ratio of voucher recipients to bank recipients accurately.
A total of 23 focus groups were held:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Bank</th>
<th>Voucher</th>
<th>Rural</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indo-Fijian</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10: Focus Groups

The rural focus groups comprised voucher recipients only as there were no beneficiaries who had their benefit paid to a bank account. The following cell populations participated in the study:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Ethnicity</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Distance</th>
<th>Benefit Type</th>
<th>&lt;60 years</th>
<th>&gt;=60 years</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fijian</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>&lt;20k</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;=20k</td>
<td>Voucher and/or Bank</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>&lt;20k</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;=20k</td>
<td>Voucher and/or Bank</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Indo-Fijian Male</td>
<td>&lt;20k</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;=20k</td>
<td>Voucher and/or Bank</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>&lt;20k</td>
<td>Voucher</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bank</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>&gt;=20k</td>
<td>Voucher and/or Bank</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 11: Sample

- within target number of participants
- sample less than target
- sample greater than target
Instruments

Focus Group

A template was developed for the focus group discussions. The focus group interviews were semi-structured; therefore a questionnaire was not appropriate. The objective of the template was to guide the discussion rather than to provide a set of questions to be answered and it was important that moderators had flexibility to explore topics as appropriate.

Topics covered by the focus groups were:

- Why participants chose to receive their benefit by (either) voucher (or) direct deposit to a bank account
- Waiting time and cost of travel to (either) the nearest Post Office (or) bank branch
- Statements made by friends, family and other acquaintances in respect to receipt of benefit by direct credit to a bank account
- For beneficiaries to had a bank account, the importance they placed on ownership of an account and whether they operate the account themselves
- Beneficiaries’ opinion about money
- Beneficiaries’ use of a mobile phone
- How beneficiaries maximise their benefit

11 focus groups were held in Lautoka (Lovu HART, Lovu Sangam and Field 40 temple). 8 focus groups were held in Suva/ Nausori (Naisinu and Lami) and 4 focus groups were held in Nabukaluka with participants from the village and the surrounding district. Average attendance was slightly under 10 beneficiaries per group. There was excellent discussion at each of the groups. Moderators were either experienced teachers and interviewers or counsellors. All focus group moderators were experienced at fostering discussion and to ensure all participants had an opportunity to contribute.

Self-Completion Survey

The self completion survey was anonymous. The objective of the self-completion survey was to obtain demographic information which could not be collected during the focus group and to explore several aspects of financial competence:

- Whether the beneficiary made spending decisions on behalf of their household
- Ownership and use of a bank account and a bankcard
- Use of a voucher to obtain items from a store
- Use of store credit
- Understanding and use of a budget
- Retention of copies of financial documents
- Ownership of a mobile phone

The self-completion survey was completed at the commencement of the focus group. To assist beneficiaries with limited literacy, the focus group moderator read out each question. Members of the survey team and other beneficiaries not participating in the study assisted beneficiaries who were illiterate. This was considered acceptable as most questions were closed and beneficiaries were able to explain their answers to open questions. A total of 227 surveys were completed.
Translation

The participant information sheet, focus group template and self-completion questionnaire were translated into Hindi and Fijian. A forward translation model was used. An initial translation was undertaken by members of the survey team. The translation was then reviewed by each member of the relevant focus group moderation team. The documents were discussed by the team at the commencement of the training and were amended, by agreement of all moderators, as necessary. This method is more time consuming than single translation but ensures greater construct validity.

Field Work

Moderator Selection and Training

Two groups of moderators were recruited and trained: A Suva based Fijian team and a Lautoka based Indo-Fijian team. Each team participated in a one day training and practice session prior to the field work. The principal objective of the training was to familiarise the teams with the study and the instruments.

Lautoka

Eight Hindi speaking moderators were recruited in Lautoka. Moderators were either trainee counsellors, or recently retired teachers. Moderators were grouped into teams comprising a moderator and a transcriber. Each team comprised a retired teacher and a trainee counsellor. It has been intended that the women’s focus groups be moderated by women, and the men’s focus groups moderated by men. However, due to circumstances, three male and five female moderators were recruited. Consequently, one team comprised a male and female moderator. This team did not encounter issues during the field work, due primarily to the sensitivity of the moderators. The Lautoka teams did not participate in enrolment.

Suva/ Nausori

Four Fijian speakers were recruited in Suva/ Nausori. Moderators were either experienced interviewers or recently retired teachers. Moderators were grouped into gender based moderator/transcriber teams for the focus groups. The Suva/ Nausori team was also responsible for enrolment. During enrolment mixed gender teams were used as enrolment required extensive local contact.

Enrolment

Enrolment in Lautoka was managed by manager from DSW. Lists of beneficiaries were constructed from a scan of physical files. The local DSW field manager visited beneficiaries during the day and in the evening. This approach was successful for the urban focus groups. However, due to the time required to enrol participants and the limited resource, it was not possible to enrol rural Indo-Fijian focus groups.

Enrolment in Suva/Nausori was undertaken by the team of four focus group moderators. The DSW database was used to seed enrolment. Snowball methodology was used to build the sample. Enrolment was undertaken by visits to beneficiaries at their home.

Focus Group Transcription

Each moderation team comprised a moderator and a transcriber. Participants’ answers were transcribed into English during the focus group. At the completion of the focus group the transcription was reviewed by the
moderator and transcriber and adjusted as necessary and then signed by both team members as an accurate record of the key points made by focus group participants. Direct transcription was used as it is both immediate and enables the transcriber to record observations.

**Quality Assurance and Ethics**

**Quality Assurance**

The beneficiary status of each participant was confirmed prior to the commencement of the focus groups. Quality assurance was embedded in the study design. The teams of moderators were self-auditing as the transcriptions were reviewed and signed at the completion of the focus groups.

**Ethics**

All participants were enrolled on the basis of voluntary informed consent. A Participant Information Sheet, incorporating participants' rights, was provided to each participant and was read out prior to the commencement of the focus group by the moderator. The moderator also explained the purpose of the study and ensured participants were aware they should only answer questions they were comfortable discussing and could leave the focus group at any time. Signed Consent Forms were not obtained from each participant. It had initially been intended to obtain signed consent at the commencement of the discussion. However, due to distrust of DSW by focus group participants and their suspicion that, if their names were by known by DSW this could affect their benefit, it was decided not to require signed consent. Focus group moderators stressed at the commencement of each discussion that participation was voluntary. Participants were provided with an opportunity to ask questions about the study.

The focus group transcripts and self-completion questionnaires will be archived in an appropriate and secure archive. Coded data is held in soft-copy by the researcher.