ROLE OF TRIBAL WOMEN IN WATERSHED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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ABSTRACT

Women especially from the small and marginal farming families perform over 60% of on-farm activities and almost all off-farm activities. Tribal women play an important and significant role in watershed development activities. The present study was carried out in Kundam block of Jabalpur district in Madhya Pradesh to know the level of participation of tribal women in watershed development practices. The study revealed that tribal women had medium/average participation in watershed practices.

Key words: *Tribal women; Participation; Watershed practices*

INTRODUCTION

The tribal populations of India tend to live in the afforested and hilly areas of the country. Next to Africa, India has the highest tribal population. Belonging to over 550 communities, though only 427 are officially recognized and forming 227 ethnic groups. A characteristic common to all such areas is remoteness and absence of good communication facilities. The state of Madhya Pradesh hosts perhaps more remote tribal people than other states because the state is so large and infrastructural development falls for short of national standards.

The tribal population of Madhya Pradesh constitutes around 23 per cent of the total tribal population of the state (1991 Census). Such tribal people have a definite way of life and particular socio-cultural and religious characteristics. The government efforts have been directed to bring about social, economical, educational and cultural development of the tribal people by implementing various programme like watershed management programme.

People's willingness and cooperation are the important factors, which determine the success of watershed development programme. Watershed development is essentially a group and community oriented programme.

Tribal women actively participate in different activities i.e. soil-water conservation, crop production practices, practices for fodder, fuel and vegetable production and other practices like poultry, goat rearing, small scale industry etc. But tribal women's contribution in sustainable agriculture system and watershed practices has been inadequately understood or largely ignored. Hence, an investigation was conducted with the following specific objectives:

1. To determine the extent of participation and role played by tribal women in watershed development programme.
2. To know the association of socio-personal traits with extent of participation.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted during 2000 in seven villages of Kundam block of Jabalpur district. From each of the identified villages, a list of beneficiaries having land under watershed area was prepared. From this list, 120 beneficiaries were selected randomly. The beneficiaries were personally interviewed with the help of pre-tested interview schedule.

The improved practices related to three components of watershed development programme included in the study were:

Practices for soil and water conservation and food purpose: These practices include contour bunding, strip cropping, mixed cropping, crop rotation, contour cultivation, surface water resources, underground water resources, soil conservation, pasture land development, barren land development, wind break, recommended fertilizer dose.

Practices for cultivation of fodder, fuel and vegetable crops: These practices include cultivation of suitable crops for fodder, suitable plants for fuel and vegetable farming.

Other Practices: Other practices include small scale industry, self help group, saving scheme, poultry and goat rearing, literacy programme and training programme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Extent of participation in the practices for soil and water conservation and food purpose: Table 1 that of the total beneficiaries of complete participation category, 47.50 per cent were having complete participation in contour bunding followed by pasture land development (34.16 %). Majority of respondent showed a trend of partial involvement in under grpond water resource development (66.33%) follwed by surface water resource conservation (58.33%) activities. No participation has reported particularly in adopting fertilizer management and windbreak practices. Partial and no participation had reflected in activities more direct benefits not to get immediataly.

Extent of participation in the practices for cultivation of fodder, fuel and vegetable crops: Complete participation was shown by 47.50% respondents particulary vegetable farming followed by fodder crop cultivation. It may be due to direct benefit to and within shorter period towards fulfilling their felts needs.

Extent of participation in other practices: Nearly half of the respondents were shown complet involvement in self-helf group and saving scheme. In training programmeorganised under watershed development programme and activities

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Table 1. Distribution of beneficiaries according to their extent of participation in watershed management practices

S. N.	Recommended watershed practices	Complete participation			Partial participation			No participation		
		f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank	f	%	Rank
Practices for soil and water conservation and food purpose										
1	Contour bunding	57	47.50	I	42	35.00	VIII	21	17.50	X
2	Strip cropping	21	17.50	VII	58	48.33	IV	41	34.16	VI
3	Mixed cropping	22	18.33	VI	42	35.00	VIII	56	46.66	III
4	Crop rotation	21	17.50	VII	45	37.50	VII	54	45.00	IV
5	Contour cultivation	21	17.50	VII	53	44.16	V	46	38.33	V
6	Surface water resources	22	18.33	VI	70	58.33	II	28	23.33	IX
7	Underground water resources	23	19.16	V	76	63.33	I	21	17.50	X
8	Control of soil erosion	38	31.66	IV	53	44.16	V	29	24.16	VIII
9	Pasture land development	41	34.16	II	47	39.16	VI	32	26.66	VII
10	Barren land development	39	32.50	III	60	50.00	III	21	17.50	X
11	Use of wind break	22	18.33	VI	40	33.33	IX	58	48.33	II
12	Recommended fertilizer dose	21	17.50	VII	25	20.33	X	74	61.66	I
Practices for cultivation of fodder, fuel and vegetable crops										
13	Suitable crops for fodder	22	18.33	III	40	33.33	I	58	48.33	II
14	Suitable plants for fuel	27	22.50	II	33	27.50	II	60	50.00	I
15	Vegetable farming	57	47.50	I	40	33.33	I	23	19.16	I I I
Other practices										
16	Small scale industry	60	50.00	III	29	24.16	V	31	25.83	II
17	Self help group	70	58.33	I	29	24.16	V	21	17.50	V
18	Saving scheme	68	56.66	II	30	25.00	IV	22	18.33	IV
19	Poultry farming, goat rearing	60	50.00	III	43	35.83	II	17	14.16	VI
20	Literacy programme	22	18.33	V	41	34.16	III	57	47.50	I
21	Training programme	36	30.00	IV	54	45.00	I	30	25.00	III

Table 2. Relationship between Socio-personal characteristics and extent of participation

S.N.	Characteristics	x^2 - Values
1	Age	0.40
2	Level of Education	13.33 *
3	Type of family	10.429 *
4	Family size	1.522
5	Size of land holding	11.04 *
6	Material possession	4.19 *
7	Occupation	8.106 *
8	Annual income	10.1*
9	Farm Power	1.04
10	Social participation	10.51 *
11	Extension contact	6.9 *
12	Economic motivation	12.29 *
13	Knowledge	16.776*

* Significant at 5% level of probability

pronded particularly poultry, goat trearing , the extent of participation was partial.

The results of Chi-square analysis appear in Table 2. An examination of Table 2 indicates that age, family size and farm power had non-significant association with extent of participation in watershed practices. However level of education, type of family, size of land holding, material possession, occupation, annual income, social participation, economic motivation, knowledge of watershed practices and contact with watershed worker had significant association with extent of participation in watershed practices.

CONCLUSION

The study leads to conclude that the tribal women play an important role and have medium participation in watershed practices. However in the category of other practices, their participation is maximum in self help group, saving scheme and small scale industry respectively. Their participation is affected by education, type of family, land holding, material possession, occupation, annual income, social participation, extension contact, economic motivation and knowledge of watershed practices.

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