

Opinion of Farmers and Project Officers about Watershed Management

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ABSTRACT

Study was conducted in 2 watersheds namely Akhnoor and Bari-Badhori in Jammu district to document the farmers and officials' opinion on various aspects of watershed programme. To get first hand information 400 respondents were interviewed from both areas. It was observed that the respondents of both sites were benefited after implementation of watershed programme. Moreover farmers of watershed-1 explained that the officials of the programme do not provide any thing and behave like officers (86.33%) and poor farmers were not attracted/ interested in watershed management programme (86.00%). On the other hand participatory farmers were in view that living standard of rural poor has increased and various types of fruit, fodder, fuel wood and timbers easily available after implementation of watershed programme. Project officer of watershed-1 not satisfied with the local people and opinioned that less publicity of the watershed programme leads to low participation of farmers. Further, the officer of both watersheds told that lack of time, visit and advice by the supervisory staff results into poor participation and progress.

Key words: Watershed; Participation; Opinion; Living status

Survival of any living organization on earth is essentially depends on two basic resources- soil and water, nature's two valuable gifts to mankind. Mother Nature gives protection to these resources through natural vegetation. This protective shield of land is disturbed by our interference, making the soil susceptible to detachment and transportation. A no- care attitude and gross negligence coupled with our ever- increasing needs and demands over the years have taken the problem to a threatening dimension. It is estimated that about 5433 tones of soil along with 10 million tones of plant nutrients are lost annually in India. 'Soil with out water is desert and water with out soil is useless'. Here comes the adoption of soil and water conservation methods and technology, combining together, in agricultural developments plans for treating these two resources, for achieving the long and sustained use of them towards increasing production. Application of sound and comprehensive programme of soil and water conservation within the natural boundaries of a watershed is termed watershed management. Watershed development offers on eco-friendly way that is both cheap and effective in arresting, and indeed reversing, the degradation of out natural resources. It involves and encourages the direct participation of people at the local level who take an avid interest in seeing the scheme to fruition and beyond. Watersheds also promote judicious and balanced use of land and water. People feel a sense of responsibility towards improving the environment they live in. Keeping above situation in mind an effort was

made to document the opinion of the beneficiaries and official on watershed management either by government control or people participation in district Jammu (J&K).

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Jammu district. The district has 2 watersheds namely Akhnoor (no involvement of people in planning and management stage) and Bari-Badhori (people participated in each stage of management). Fourteen out of 72 villages under the command area of Akhnoor watershed and all 6 villages of Bari-Badhori watershed were selected for the present investigation. From each watershed area 200 respondents were selected randomly. In this way 400 respondents were interviewed from 20 villages. Here, Akhnoor (no involvement of people in planning and management stage) and Bari-Badhori (people participated in each stage of management) were treated as watershed -1 and watershed-2, respectively in the entire study. Opinions of the farmers and officials were gathered in three point continuum scale and on the basis of weighted score rank was awarded to each problems.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

1. Farmers' opinion on watershed management:

The farmers' opinion on various aspects of watershed programme and its contribution towards overall development of villagers were taken and have been

presented in table 1, reveals that the respondents of both sites were benefited after implementation of watershed programme. Moreover farmers of watershed-1 explained that the officials of the programme do not provide any thing and behave like officers (86.33%) and poor farmers were not attracted/ interested in watershed management programme (86.00%). These findings are logically true because watershed-1 was completely managed by government official and local people work as a hired/paid labour. Side by side it is also true that landless farmers were did not have direct livelihood from watershed. Further, for positive side farmers in the opinion that the various types of fruit, fodder, fuel wood and timbers easily available after implementation of watershed programme (68.00%). The soil conservation work has speeded up due to the watershed management programme (63.66%) and crop yield of farmers has increased after implementation of watershed management programme (63.25%). On the other hand farmers of watershed-2 told first positive changes of after implementation of the project

such as, living standard of rural poor has increased due to the implementation of watershed management programme and the various types of fruit, fodder, fuel wood and timbers easily available after implementation of watershed programme. The weighted score provided by the farmers of both areas was 72.00 and 71.67 percent, respectively. Further they were in the opinion that crop yield of farmers has increased after implementation of watershed management programme (68.33), village industries are getting momentum due to watersheds (66.67%), The soil conservation work has speeded up due to the watershed management programme (64.33%) and Watershed is the combined effect of various agencies on all around development of the rural poor (64.17%). In all it could be inferred that farmers of participatory watershed having good opinion and allotted more weighted score as compared to watershed-1. Similar type of suggestion was given by Turton et al. 1998; Dogra et al., 2005.

Table.1 Opinion of farmers about watershed management programme

S. No	Statement	Watershed-1	Watershed-2
1	Standard of rural poor has increased due to the implementation of watershed management programme	52.00	72.00
2	Watershed management programme offers more benefits to rural people	48.00	64.17
3	Village industries are getting momentum due to watersheds	46.00	66.67
4	Poor farmers are not attracted/interested in watershed management programme	86.00	53.33
5	Crop yield of farmers has increased after implementation of watershed management programme	63.25	68.33
6	Watershed is the combined effect of various agencies on all around development of the rural poor	60.33	64.17
7	The various types of fruit, fodder fuel wood timbers easily available after implementation of watershed programme	68.00	71.67
8	The ample fodder is available due to Watershed programme	58.22	60.00
9	The soil conservation work has speeded up due to the watershed management programme	63.66	64.33
10	The officials of the programme do not provide any thing and behave like officers	86.33	61.67

Table-2: Opinion of project officers on watershed management

S. No	Statement	Watershed-1	Watershed-2
1	Top officials failed to provide adequate leadership to field staff	56.52	48.75
2	Watershed officials failed to coordinate various development agencies	62.00	50.25
3	Delay in the communication of message at the right time has become barrier to the successful participatory management of the watershed	72.00	55.00
4	Top level officers who are not regular in their visits cause hindrance to the participatory management of watershed	56.00	45.00
5	Less publicity of the watershed programme leads to low participation of farmers	86.00	52.00
6	Un-commendable jurisdiction of watershed programme implementation hampers the progress	78.00	81.25
7	Lack of awareness among the rural people is not allowing to participate in management of watershed	82.66	51.25
8	Lack of time, visit and advice by the supervisory staff results into poor participation and progress.	60.00	58.75
9	The provision for marketing and availability of input are not adequate.	54.00	52.50
10	The number of plants granted to the beneficiaries is sufficient to create new assets	80.34	80.75

Opinion of project officers: A cursory look on data presented in table 2 revealed that project officer of watershed-1 not satisfied with the local people and opinioned that less publicity of the watershed programme leads to low participation of farmers (86.00%), lack of awareness among the rural people is not allowing to participate in management of watershed (82.66%) and the number of plants granted to the beneficiaries is sufficient to create new assets (80.34%). These were the statement where officers allotted maximum weighted score. Where as officer of watershed-2 assigned maximum score, to Un-commendable jurisdiction of watershed programme implementation hampers the progress (81.25%). The number of plants granted to the beneficiaries is sufficient to create new assets (80.75%). Further, the officer of both watersheds told that lack of time, visit and advice by the supervisory staff results into

poor participation and progress, top level officers who are not regular in their visits cause hindrance to the participatory management of watershed and the provision for marketing and availability of input are not adequate. In this direction Rao, 2000 recommended planning on watershed basis through participation of the people at all stages, active involvement of voluntary organizations and coordinated effort resulting in a convergence of treatment.

CONCLUSIONS

From the above result it was concluded that to ensure people participation in watershed programme, visit of top officer must be ensured and there should be proper marketing facilities so that farmers could make marketing for input and output.

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