

Peoples' Participation in Watershed Development Programme : A Case Study of Rajasthan

Chitranjan Sharma¹ and S.S. Sisodia²

1. Asso. Prof. (Agril. Extension) , DEE, Udaipur 2. Asstt. Prof. (Agril. Extension) LWMRTI, MPUA&T, Udaipur

ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to know the involvement of people at different stages of National watershed development programme viz. pre project implementation stage, project implementation stage and post project implementation stage. Molela watershed of Rajsamand district of Rajasthan was selected for this purpose. Total 180 watershed beneficiary farmers were selected and personally interviewed for the study. The findings indicates that majority of farmers have participated in public meeting called for formation of users committee at pre project implementation stage. While large numbers of beneficiaries were employed in terms of labourers and they have attended the meetings called by the users committee during project implementation stage. At post project implementation stage, project staff was regularly conducted the visit of the site to look after the project assets and farmers were participated in maintenance of soil and water conservation work done on pasture land.

Key words : *People participation; Watershed development programme*

The Govt. of India has launched National Watershed Development Project for Rainfed Areas (NDWPRA) in the different states of the country for regeneration of rainfed areas by concentrating efforts on soil and water conservation with human resource development. Nambiar (1996) has stated that the nerve center of a watershed development programme is the village institution without which coordination and implementation is an impossible. Shah (1993) also reported that it is wrong to think that technology will save efforts. Only, an active and willing partnership between the government and people can achieve the objectives. The people's participation can only be obtained by assuring them that the benefits from watershed activities will be given to them. Thus in present study an attempt has been made to study the involvement of people at different stages viz. pre programme implementation stage, programme implementation stage and post programme implementation stage of NWDPR. Keeping this view the study was undertaken with an objective "to assess the involvement of beneficiaries in NWDPR".

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Molela watershed of Rajsamand district of Rajasthan. A list of watershed villages was collected from office of the Deputy Director, Watershed development and soil conservation, Rajsamand. Thereafter, office of the Assistant Engineer (Agriculture), Delwara was contacted for a list of presidents of users committee. List of beneficiaries of each village was collected from the presidents of respective users committee. Total 180 respondents were selected from the area. Final data were collected through personal interview technique.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Farmers' participation at pre-programme implementation stage : The majority of farmers have participated in the public meetings called for formation of user's committee as it was ranked 1st (Table 1). The farmers consent was taken before the initiation of the programme (ranked 2nd). Their consent was also taken before construction of soil and water conservation structures as on 3rd rank.

Table 1. Involvement of beneficiaries at "Preimplementation stage"

S. No.	Statement	Mean score	Rank
1	Farmers participated in the public meetings called for formation of user's committee.	0.63	1
2	Farmers consent taken before the initiation of the programme	0.58	2
3	Farmers consent taken before construction of soil and water conservation structures	0.57	3
4	Farmers consent taken while selection of fruit plants and their species for introduction in the areas per local requirement.	0.47	4
5	Type of perennial trees and their species were finalized as per farmer's suggestions for the area.	0.46	5.5
6	Grass species were finalized prior as per farmers suggestion	0.46	5.5
7	Farmers gave suggestions while framing the plan of work	0.43	7
8	Farmers consent taken prior to conduct vegetable demonstrations	0.31	8.5
9	Different HHP's were finalized as per the requirement of the area.	0.31	8.5
10	Animal husbandry activities were finalized as per the need of the area.	0.27	10
11	Crop demonstrations were finalized as per farmers suggestions	0.26	11

The farmers were intimated about the fruit plants purchased by the department, was assigned 4th rank.

Whereas, farmers were least involved in activities like finalization of animal husbandry activities rank 10th and selection of crop seed for the area rank 11th.

Farmers' participation during programme implementation stage : The data of Table 2 indicates that a large number of beneficiaries were employed in terms of labourers during soil conservation work (rank 1st). Beneficiaries have attended the meetings called by users committee (rank 2nd). Farmers consent was taken before construction of soil and water conservation structures and selection of fruit plants and their species for introduction in the area (rank 3rd and 4th).

Table 2. Involvement of beneficiaries during programme implementation stage

S. No.	Statement	Mean score	Rank
1	Farmers contributed in project in terms of labour	0.93	1
2	Farmers have attended the meetings called by users committee	0.87	2
3	Farmers have planted fruit plants as per the guidance of WDT members	0.58	3
4	Farmers have planted perennial tree as per the guidance of WDT	0.57	4
5	Farmers have participated in growing grasses in pasture lands	0.47	5
6	Farmers have conducted crop demonstrations as per the guidance of WDT members	0.46	6.5
7	Farmers have taken their animals in cattle treatments camps	0.46	6.5
8	Farmers have cultivated vegetables as per the guidance of WDT members	0.35	8

Whereas, the farmers have not conducted crop demonstrations as per guidance because the efforts of field functionaries were restricted up to distribution of seed1 kits and they have not seen demonstration plots (rank 6.5). Only limited number of farmer's has taken their animals in animal treatment camps organized by the Department of Watershed Development and Soil Conservation (rank 6.5). The farmers could not utilize the

vegetable seed kits due to lack of irrigation water (rank 8th). *Farmers' participation at post programme implementation stage* : The present research study was conducted at the last phase of the project period hence the farmer's role regarding management and maintenance of project assets has been recorded and the results are presented in table 3. The results of table 3 points out that project staff were regularly conducted visits of the site to look after the project assets (rank 1st). Farmers were participated in maintenance of soil and water conservation work done on pasture land (rank 2nd).

Table 3. Involvement of beneficiaries at post programme implementation stage

S. No.	Statement	Mean score	Rank
1	Project staff was regularly conducting the visit of the site for look after the project assets.	1.02	1
2	Farmers have participated in maintenance of soil and water conservation structure	0.72	2
3	Farmers have participated in meetings called to solve the disputes.	0.48	3
4	Farmers have participated in distribution of share either in the form of grass or fuel wood	0.38	4

Whereas, they were least participated in distribution of grass share of village pasture land as their pasture land have started yielding grass sufficient for their domestic animals.

CONCLUSION

Farmer's better involvement at pre programme implementation stage was recorded for meeting called for formation of users committee. Farmer's consent was taken before construction of soil and water conservation structures. Whereas, least involvement was recorded in case of animal husbandry and crop production activities. During programme implementation stage, it was recorded that at least one family member was employed during project period and beneficiaries have attended the meeting called by the users committee. At post programme implementation stage, the project staff has regularly conducted visits to look after the project assets and farmers were maintaining conservation structures.

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