Volume : 4 | Issue : 9 | Sept 2015 ISSN - 2250-1991

Research Paper Agricultural Science

Livelihood Security of Tribal Women Through Watershed Programme

Dr. Seema Naberia Assistant Professor/Scientist (Agricultural Extension Education), College of Agriculture, JNKVV, Ganjbasoda, Vidisha (M.P.) 464221

ABSTRACT

In recent years the Government of India has adopted a 'watershed development approach' as an effort to reverse the removal of degraded land and thereby increases productivity and provides wage employment. Woman is the molder and builder of any nation's destiny. Like women of other communities women among the tribal population also play a pivotal role in agriculture development and management of natural resources.

The study reported that tribal women of Kundam block of Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh are actively participated in different activities i.e. soil-water conservation, crop production practices, practices for fuel, fodder and vegetable production. They also engaged in small-scale industries, self help groups, saving schemes and other practices. The watershed programmes in all the villages became means to harness their resources and realize their felt needs. It also helped them to develop a sense of unity, power, dignity and self-reliance. The watershed programme became a tool for the tribal women to take control of their social milieu, which affected their lives. The process provided them with an opportunity to empower themselves.

KEYWORDS livelihood, tribal women, watershed

INTRODUCTION

Unpredictable variations in agricultural productivity in rain fed areas coupled with increased exploitation of the natural resources had led to an increasingly fragile ecosystem. According to some estimates, half of the total land area of India, approximately 170 million hectares, is classified as degraded land. Roughly half of this degraded land falls in undulating semi-arid areas where rainfed farming predominates. In recent years the Government of India has adopted a 'watershed development approach' as an effort to reverse the degradation of these lands and thereby increases productivity and provides wage employment. Watershed development has been adopted in India to address land degradation and the need for increased agricultural productivity.

Indian women are extensively involved in agriculture and allied activities. However, the nature and extent of their involvement differs with the variations in agro-production systems. Women play a significant role in any economy. Most of the women perform various types of work for their livelihood and agriculture is considered as the biggest unorganized sector where large number of rural women takes part actively. There is need to improve education and income generating activities of rural women so that their poverty can be reduced and improvement is made through efficient utilization of natural resources. Like women of other communities women among the tribal population also play a pivotal role in agriculture development and management of natural resources i.e. soil & water. As soil and water are the finite elements of nature. Hence, it demands for appropriate management.

METHODOLOGY

Kundam block in Jabalpur district of Madhya Pradesh was purposely selected for the study because it is only block having tribal population and the watershed programme under operation by non-governmental organization. Out of 19 adopted villages, 7 villages were randomly selected. From each of the identified villages, a list of beneficiaries of 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.

Component wise improved practices related to watershed development programme included in the study were:

I. **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.

II. **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.

III. **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

1. **Extent of participation in the practices for soil and water conservation and food purpose:** It is clear from the Table 1 that out of total beneficiaries of complete participation category, 47.50 per cent were having complete participation in contour bunding followed by pastureland development (34.16 %). Majority of respondent showed a trend of partial involvement in under ground water resource development (66.33%) followed by surface water resource conservation (58.33%) activities. No participation has been reported particularly in adopting fertilizer management and windbreak practices. Partial and no participation had reflected in activities more direct benefits not to get immediately.
2. **Extent of participation in the practices for cultivation of fodder, fuel and vegetable crops**: Complete participation was shown by 47.50% respondents, particularly vegetable farming followed by fodder crop cultivation. It may be due to direct benefit to and within shorter period towards fulfilling their felts needs.
3. **Extent of participation in other practices:** Nearly half of the respondents were shown complete involvement in self-help group and saving scheme. Whereas partial participation was found in training programme organized under watershed development programme and activities pronged particularly poultry, goat rearing.

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	III
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

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 highest 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.

It is also concluded that the annual income of 25% of the respondents crossed the poverty line; there was an increase in income, expenditure and saving habits of tribal women. The SHGs had major impact on social and economic life of the beneficiaries. There was an increase in self-confidence, self-reliance and independence of rural women due to the involvement in the income generating and other activities of SHGs.

REFERENCES

Manjula N. and Belli R.B. (1994). Attitude of farmwomen towards watershed management | programme. Maharashtra Journal of Extension Education, XIII pp.227 | Singh, Meera, Verma N.C. and Sitalakshmi S. (1994). Extent of participation of women in | agriculture, allied and house hold activities. Maharashtra Journal of Extension Education, | XIII pp.72-74 | Anita, Deshpande, P.V. and Majumdar, S.D. (1993) Participation of Tribal women in agricultural | operations. Maharashtra Journal of Extension Education, XII.