ANALYSIS OF CONSTRAINTS PERTAINING TO TAMILNADU AFFORESTATION PROJECT (TAP) IN DHARMAPURI DISTRICT OF TAMILNADU STATE

V. Sekar, M. Ramasubramanian and S. Seeralan
Department of Agricultural Extension and Rural Sociology
Agricultural College and Research Institute Madurai- 625 104, India

ABSTRACT
Tamilnadu Afforestation Project (TAP) is a project which ensures people’s participation in improving the forest cover and bio-diversity. It is very important to find out the constraints pertaining to Tamilnadu Afforestation Project (TAP) and overcome these constraints which would otherwise counteract and collapse the very objectives of the project. This study was conducted in Krishnagiri taluk of Dharmapuri District of Tamilnadu state. The respondents were selected by using proportionate random sampling technique in and around the Krishnagiri taluk. The major constraints felt by the respondents were water scarcity to nurse the young saplings, lack of contact with higher officials, lack of agricultural and allied enterprises and lack of marketing facilities. The suggestions offered by the respondents to overcome these were more training to respondents in agricultural allied field, follow-up visit by forest personnel, increasing marketing facilities, strengthening of village forest councils and setting up of by product industries in the villages.

Key words: Tamilnadu Afforestation Project, Constraints analysis.

Tamilnadu Afforestation Project (TAP) was started with the objectives of improving the productivity of the forest by creating heterogeneity of tree species, preserving areas which are rich in bio-diversity, motivating people to adopt tree growing culture to create resources, optimizing use of land resources on scientific basis and enhancing the capabilities of Tamilnadu Forest Department by establishing Geographic Information System. There were many constraints in the implementation of the scheme which needs a comprehensive study and hence a study was undertaken to find out the constraints encountered by the respondents and to elicit suggestions to overcome the same.

Expost-facto research design was used in this study. The TAP respondents of the four villages of Dharmapuri district in Tamilnadu state were selected by following proportionate random sampling technique. Accordingly, the sample size was 120, which represented all the four villages in proportion to the total number of respondents.

The constraints were studied under five sub heads namely Technological constraints, Programme constraints, Credit and subsidy constraints, Extension constraints and Marketing constraints. The results and discussion pertaining to each constraint is given below.

Technological constraints
Among the technological constraints, the drying of seedlings due to drought had emerged as the major constraint as expressed by 75.83 per cent of the respondents. They were of the opinion that the success of recommended tree planting practices entirely depends upon the seasonal and optimum monsoon rains. Seedling mortality on transport had emerged as constraint for 39.17 per cent of the respondents, as the recommended tree seedlings were transported manually and the labourers used to transport by head load in pan or basket for planting. Non availability of desired seedlings in time was a constraint as revealed by 25.13 per cent of the respondents. An appreciable number of respondents (29.17%) felt non-availability of seedlings in time as a constraint.

Programme constraints
Lack of awareness about the programme was a constraint experienced by 34.17 per cent of the respondents. This resulted in less participation...
of beneficiaries in TAP which was reported by Sivarevathi (1996) in her research. Lack of awareness might be due to inadequate support from extension agencies, mass media and lack of contact with the officials of the forest department. This finding is in line with the findings of Jansirani (1991). Lack of conviction was expressed by 10.00 per cent of respondents which indicated that majority had conviction on TAP.

Credit and subsidy constraints

More than one-third of the respondents (35.00%) had not felt the lack of facilities to obtain credit as a constraint. TAP beneficiaries were of the opinion that the procedure for availing loan from the credit institutions like Central Co-operative bank, PACS and from Forest Department was very easy. Also these sources were ready to give more assistance to these villagers through TAP and they did not hesitate to approach them for credit, as the recovery was prompt. Almost all the beneficiaries who availed the TAP loan had repaid the dues in time.

More than half of the respondents (54.17%) considered delayed subsidy allotment to tree planting and agricultural implements, which were supplied from the Forest Department as a least constraint. Nearly, two-fifth of the respondents (37.50%) expressed the lack of agricultural allied enterprises as least constraints. The agricultural allied enterprises like poultry, fish farm and sericulture were not popular in the study area, and hence the people fully engaged in forestry related activities. With the help of TAP, the respondents had started sericulture and goat rearing units. The same observation was made by Suresh (1997) in his research on Interface Forestry Programme.

Extension constraints

Inadequate extension support was considered as the least constraint by the two-fifth of the respondents (41.67%). Lack of printed materials like leaflets, folders was considered as the major constraint by nearly three-fourth (72.50%) of the respondents which derives support from the findings of Nair (1987). One-third of the respondents (33.33%) expressed lack of training as the major constraint. Less than one-third of the respondents (28.33%) stated that lack of contact with higher forest officials like District Forest Officer, Conservator of Forest and other higher forest officials was considered as a least constraint.

Marketing constraints

Low market price for baskets, mats etc., was considered as a major constraint by 43.33 per cent of the respondents. Lack of marketing facilities was expressed as constraint by 45.83 per cent of the beneficiaries.

Suggestions offered by the respondents

The respondents were asked to suggest the remedial measures to overcome their constraints in participation of TAP. More than half of the respondents (57.17%) suggested for more training in agricultural allied fields like poultry, dairy units and agro-forestry. Follow up visit by forestry personnel was suggested by 34.17 per cent of them, because they are directly associated with TAP activities. Nearly one-third of the respondents (32.50%) had suggested for more marketing facilities for their products like baskets, mats., etc. As stated by the TAP respondents, there is lack of marketing facilities for their products, like baskets and mats. About 32.50 per cent of the respondents suggested for necessity of marketing facilities. More than one-fourth of the respondents (26.67%) had suggested for strengthening of village forest councils so that effective functioning of TAP activities can be maintained throughout the project period.

Setting up of by product industries like coir industry (17.50%) was suggested by minimum proportion of the respondents. This is because more number of coir industries was seen in this study area.

Conclusion

The Tamilnadu Afforestation Project (TAP) aimed at improving the socio-economic condition of the people who are living close to the forest area. The programme was to have specific target groups and all these groups hitherto had a low level of participation in social forestry programmes. Benefit sharing through benefit flows and joint management are new approaches to reach these target groups and also simultaneously addressing the constraints encountered by the target people. The major constraints felt by the respondents were water scarcity to nurse the young saplings, lack of contact with higher officials, lack of agricultural and allied enterprises and lack of marketing facilities. The suggestions
offered by the respondents to overcome these were more training to respondents in agricultural allied field, follow-up visit by forest personnel, increasing marketing facilities, strengthening of village forest councils and setting up of by-product industries in the villages.

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