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Analytical Study of Social Forestry Programme in Gujarat State with Special Reference to Factors Associated with Successful Implementation of Farm Forestry and Village Woodlot in Valsad District

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The ecological imbalance, environmental pollution, erratic behaviour of monsoon, frequent occurrence of drought and soil erosion have been traced to be due to deforestation that has been taking place throughout the country over the years. The forest lands in India have been shrinking at an alarming rate. At present, the forest in the country covers only 22.7 per cent of its total geographical area. Recognising the urgent need of afforestation, a number of programmes and projects have been implemented by the Government under new 20-point programme. Social forestry is one of its significant components.

Some of the objectives of the social forestry programme have been achieved to some extent but the programme at many places are not operating at a full stream. This study is an attempt to analyse the promoting and constraint factors of farm forestry and woodlot components of social forestry progaramme through following objectives :

1. To determine the success of social forestry programme at individual (farm forestry) level and community (woodlot) level.

2. To know the job performance of the grassroot level functionary of social forestry organisation.

3. To know the characteristics of farmers, community and grassroot level extension functionary.

4. To determine the association of various characteristics of farmers, community and grassroot level functionary and the success of social forestry programme.

5. To explore the constraints faced by the farmers, village panchayats and grassroot level functionary in successful implementation of the social forestry programme.

6. To seek the suggestion from the respondents for successful implementation of the social forestry programme.

METHODOLOGY

For attaining the objectives, the investigation was carried out in the Valsad district of Gujarat State. A sample of 210 respondents comprised of 20 village panchayats, 140 farmers and 50 forestry extension functionaries was selected randomly for this study and 200 respondents were interviewed. The data were collected by personal interview with the help of structured schedules. Averages, standard deviations, t-tests, coefficients of variation, intercorrelations, multiple correlations and regression coefficients were used to analyses the data.

For the dependent variable, success of social forestry progaramme was measured in terms of level of adoption of various aspects of social forestry porgramme at individual and community levels, while at organisational level, it was measured as the job performance of extension workers.

FINDINGS

The study revealed some of the antecedent variables having significant influence on the success of social forestry programme at individual level, community level and organisational level.

At individual level, farmers' education, holding size, occupation and socio-economic status influence the success of farm forestry programme. The thirteen significatly correlated antecedent variables explained 53.45 per cent variation in the success of farm forestry programme. Main occupation of the respondent was negatively correlated which indicated that respondents having business as main occupation had higher success as against the respondents having service as main occupation. None of the psychological variables of the farmers appeared significantly correlated with the success of farm forestry.

The community level, none of the selected variables showed significant relationship in partial regression analysis with the success of village woodlot programme. Three variables viz., SC/ST population in the community, communication facility and tree growers' co-operative society facility available in the village were found significantly correlated with the success of woodlot programme and explained 31.80 per cent variation in the success.

At organisational level, partial regression indicated six variables viz., age, education, caste, service experience, empathy and job satisfaction were found to have significant influence on the job performance of the functionary. The multiple correlation between job performance and eight significantly correlated antecedent variables of the functionary explained 77.41 per cent variation in their job performance. Negative influence was found in case of age, service experience and job satisfaction with job performance. None of the socio economic variables did show significant influence on job performance.

Constraints faced by the farmers for successful implementation of farm forestry were (i) long gestation period of tree plantation, (ii) market problem, (iii) non-remunerative price of produce, (iv) problem of stray cattle, and (v) lack of irrigation facility.

Constraints mentioned by the panchayats for successful implementation of woodlot programme were (i) problem of funds with panchayat, (ii) lack of people's co-operation, (iii) lack of follow-up action by forest department after plantation, and (iv) unwillingness of villagers to spare Gaucher land for forestry.

At organisational level, constraints stated by the grassroot level functionary were (i) lack of people's co-operation, (ii) lack of aftercare by the villagers, (iii) problem of stray cattle, (iv) people think the programme as Government affair, (v) prejudices among villagers that trees provide shade which mars crop growth, (vi) lack of recognition for good work, (vii) more table work, and (viii) heavy work load.

The suggestion expressed by the farmers for successful implementation of farm forestry programme were (i) forest department should help to get remunerative prices of forestry production, (ii) latest rules regarding cutting/felling and transport of forestry produce be advocate to the villagers, and (iii) literature regarding tree plantation techniques should be supplied along with the seedlings.

Village panchayats suggested that (i) forest department should motivate villagers to cooperate in social forestray activities through film shows, group discussions and literatures, (ii) forest department should protect the woodlot upto first harvest, and (iii) due attention should be given by the forest department for high survival rate.

suggestions offered by the forest extension functionary were (i) physical targets should be fixed looking to the local situation, (ii) intensive 'shibirs' should be arranged, (iii) staff of executive and motivation work be merged, (iv) table work of field staff be reduced, (v) motorcycles be provided to the foresters, (vi) residence facility be provided at village level, and (vii) proper recognition be given for good work.

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