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The Impact of Drought Prone Areas Programme in Banaskantha District of Gujarat State

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ABSTRACT

A sample of eighty farmers and twentyfive programme executors was selected to know their perception for seven major schemes of Drought Prone Areas Programme in operation in Banaskantha district of Gujarat. It was revealed that only two schemes were found to have a good impact on farming community. The level of education, age and participation in *shibirs* of farmers were significantly associated with the extent of their benefit.

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INTRODUCTION

About twenty per cent area of the country periodically suffers from drought conditions leading to considerable loss of agricultural production and livestock wealth. To restore this kind of ecological balance, the Government is paying concentrated attention since long. Large sums have been spent by the Government for providing relief to the affected people after occurrence of droughts. Looking into the complication and urgency of the problem, it is utmost crucial that war footing measures must be taken to steeprise the imbalances already existing in the drought prone areas. Efforts that are being made in this direction, must be properly responded by the people for whom the programme is meant. Realising this fact, it was considered timely to assess the impact of Drought Prone Areas Programme. This study was carried out to assess the extent of benefit gained by the farmers through different schemes, to determine whether there was consistency in the opinion of the farmers and the officials with regard to the extent of benefit to the farming community and to know the association, if any, between the personal characteristics of the farmers and their perceived impact of Drought Prone Areas Programme.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study was conducted in eight villages selected at random in Dhanera taluka which consists of a total of 131 villages in Banaskantha district of Gujarat State. The beneficiaries of individual schemes of DPAP were enlisted. The study sample comprised of ten beneficieries selected at random from each village with a total of eighty respondents. In addition, twenty five programme executors were also selected for the study.

With a view to measure the extent of benefit of the DPAP, seven major schemes were selected (Table-1). Forty activities under these major scheme

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were identified. A list of these activities was sent to 22 judges to rate them on a five point continuum for relative importance. The judges were the individuals who were directly concerned with the implementation of the programme including extension specialists. To know the consistency in the responses of the judges, Kendall coefficient of concordance (W) was calculated. It was considered to be significant at 0.01 level of probability, in order to conclude that the judges were consistent for the weights assigned by them to different activities of the DPAP.

A five point rating scale was constructed to record the responses of the farmers as well as the programme executors. The questionnaire was administered individually. The benefit score for each of the sample respondents on each activity as well as on the entire scheme was calculated on the basis of the procedure followed by Sharma and Prasad (1972). The significance of the difference in the opinion of the farmers and the programme executors was tested by applying 't' test.

A separate schedule was constructed to collect the data regarding personal characteristics of farmers such as age, education, size of land holding and participation in the *shibirs*. The scale developed by Trivedy and Pareek (1963) was adopted for measuring socio-economic status of the farmers. The null hypothesis that there was no association between each of the personal characteristics of the farmers and their benefit scores on DPAP was also tested through the test of Coefficient of Contingency (C).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A consolidated picture of each of the seven major schemes under DPAP operating in Banaskantha with regard to extent of benefit to clienteles, as perceived by the farmers and the officials, is presented in Table-1.

TABLE 1

Perception of extent of benefit to clienteles through major schemes of DPAP.

Title of the scheme	*WA given by the farmers*	*WA given by the officials*	*Significance of difference*
Afforestation and pasture land development	2.32	3.44	**
Dryland development	2.91	3.38	*
Animal husbandry and dairy development	3.11	3.77	**
Minor irrigation	3.20	3.86	**
Drinking water supply	3.76	4.10	*
Cooperation and credit management	4.24	4.20	NS
Scheme for SF/MF/AL	4.30	4.24	NS

NS=Non-significant

* = Significant at 0.05 level of probability

** = Significant at 0.01 level of probability

The WA scores indicating the extent of benefit, showed that there was not a single scheme which resulted in the most effective impact in view of the farmers. However, on the other side, the farmers also did not condemn any scheme totally. The poorest response of farmers appeared to be against 'afforestation and pasture land development' scheme (2.32 WA). On the contrary, the officials considered the impact of this scheme to be moderate.

Pooled 't' test was applied to know the significance of difference in opinion of farmers and officials for the extent of benefit to the clienteles by different schemes of DPAP. The non-significant values of 't' were found for the 'scheme for SF/MF/AL' and 'cooperation and credit management'. The result was in conformity with the WA scores, as the difference in the scores assigned by the two categories of sample was quite low.

An attempt was also made to know the influence of personal characteristics of the farmers over their response through Chi-square test. The results (Table-2) revealed that the benefit scores assigned by the farmers were directly associated with their level of education. The age of the farmers was also directly associated with the benefit scores with regard to DPAP, assigned by themselves. The socio-economic status of the farmers as well as size of and holding were not associated with the benefit scores for the DPAP assigned by the farmers themselves. This may be true in this study as the programme was particularly meant for economically weaker sections. However, further studies are necessary to verify and generalise the results.

TABLE 2

Association between personal characteristics of the farmers and their overall benefit score on DPAP.

Personal characteristics	*Chi-square value*	*'C' value*
A. Level of education	6.448*	0.273
B. Age	6.103*	0.266
C. Socio-economic status	0.327 NS	0.064
D. Size of land-holding	2.133 NS	0.161
E. Participation in *shibirs*	6.799**	0.280

NS = Non-significant

* = Significant at 0.05 level of probability

** = Significant at 0.01 level of probability

Participation of the farmers in the *shibirs* showed substantial association with their benefit from the scheme. Hence, it is suggested that the concerned agencies must organise *shibirs* in the villages and utility of the programmes be highlighted. More involvement of the people be encouraged in such *shibirs*. From the findings of the study, it was quite obvious that those who could read and write, perceived more benefits of the programmes. The programmes must be given wide publicity through different media among illiterates so that they may also be educated about the programme.

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