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# Prakasam district farmer's participation in Non governmental organizations (NGOs) watershed programme

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**Non governmental organizations (NGOs) have played a pioneering role in the field of rural development. Alternatively, they may concentrate on selected rural development activities covering a wide geographical area. They may also stimulate and promote people's participation in governmental programmes like watershed and there by play a supportive role in the fields of rural development. Watershed brings them many favours like improvement in the ground water levels, restoration of eroded soils, crop rotation, improved agricultural technology, increased and improved animal husbandry, more green fodder to their milch and draught cattle etc. The approach of the NGOs is holistic and people-oriented (Pradeep, 2005). Hence the present study focuses on the management of watersheds by the NGOs and the extent of participation of the farmers in the various stages of watershed programme in Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh.**

**Key words:** Non governmental organizations, rural development, people's participation, watershed, farmers.

## INTRODUCTION

Non governmental organizations have played a pioneering role in the field of rural development. Notwithstanding their limitations to undertake rural development programmes nation wide, they may contribute their mite by undertaking special projects in selected pockets by implementing them with an element of information and flexibility which is the distinctive feature of their work. Alternatively, they may concentrate on selected rural development activities covering a wide geographical area. They may also stimulate and promote people's participation in governmental programmes like watershed and there by play a supportive role in the fields of rural development. Watershed brings them many favours like improvement in the ground water levels, restoration of eroded soils, crop rotation, improved agricultural technology, increased and improved animal husbandry, more green fodder to their milch and draught cattle etc (Ramesh, 2004). Hence the present study focuses on the management of watersheds by the NGOs and the extent of participation of the farmers in the

various stages of watershed programme in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh.

## STUDY AREA

Prakasam district in Andhra Pradesh was purposefully selected for this study. The district was selected because of two reasons, firstly in most of the areas in the district agriculture is rain-fed and the rain fall is scarce and erratic. Secondly it is one of the few districts not only in Andhra Pradesh but also in the country where a number of watershed programmes have been launched in the rain-fed areas and a number of NGOs were entrusted with the initiation and management of watershed programmes.

## Sample selection

### *Selection of NGOs*

Between 1999 and 2003, 19 NGOs were entrusted with watershed programmes in the Prakasam district. The 19 NGOs covered 114 watersheds in 114 villages in 19

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**Table 1.** Selected of NGOs and villages sample farmers.

Name of the NGOs	Name of the Mandal	Name of the village selected	Total farmer families	Sample families
<b>Ongole division</b>				
HELP	Korisapadu	Pamedipadu	455	72
RDS	J. Pongalur	Chandalur	466	74
RASO	Ballikurava	Vemavaram	730	116
<b>Markapuram division</b>				
CALL	Donakonda	Badapuram	139	22
SNIRD	Dornala	Bommalapuram	308	49
ASSIST	Markapur	Bhupatipalli	100	16
<b>Kandukur division</b>				
SARDS	H.M.Padu	Pedagolla palli	264	42
RRS	Lingasamudram	Muttamvaripalem	376	60
PDES	V. V. palem	Polineni cheruvu	187	29
Total			3025	480

Source: Annual Report. (2006), District Watershed Management Agency, Prakasam.

mandals of the district. 9 NGOs which claimed success in the watershed programme and further confirmed by the government agencies which entrusted the programme were selected for the study (District Planning Office, 2004).

### **Selection of villages**

Since each watershed covered 500 acres of land in 1 village, 9 villages, one under each of the 9 selected NGOs were selected for the study. The NGOs themselves were asked to select one village each which they considered as most successful in implementing the watershed programme.

### **Selection of sample farmers**

In each of the selected 9 villages, 16% of the farmers were selected to make in depth analysis of watershed impact on them. In the selection of the sample farmers, care was taken to select almost equal percentage of farmers from different social divisions in each of the 9 villages. Table 1 shows the scheme of sample selection.

### **Data collection**

The data for the study was collected from both primary and secondary sources from January to December 2005. During the period of one year several visits both extended and short were undertaken to the selected villages. The primary data were collected through a

structured schedule, informal interviews (using detailed checklists), key informant interviews and observation. Secondary data and information were collected from DPAP, DWMA project directors, Mandal Revenue Officers (MROs), Mandal Development Officers (MDOs) and selected NGOs of the Prakasam district.

### **Data analysis**

The data collected from the sample beneficiary farmers had been analyzed and presented in the form of simple and bivariate tables. Both actual frequencies as well as percentages have been mentioned in the tables.

## **WATERSHEDS AND PARTICIPATIONS**

Watershed programme is conceived as a multi pronged development effort particularly all-round development of rural areas in the third world countries including India. As mentioned earlier, watershed aims at restoration of environmental degradation, raising ground water level, providing irrigation and drinking water facilities, control of soil erosion, afforestation, improvement in livestock and productivity in agriculture etc (Government of India, 1966). In a word, watershed is synonymous with upliftment of all sections of people particularly rural people. It has been long realized by the NGOs, planners and administrators that watershed programme cannot be a success unless the people and communities to whom it is intended are involved in all facets of the programme. There are 5 stages (Government of India, 2001) in which beneficiaries can be involved and they are:

- i) Pre project stage,
- ii) Planning stage,
- iii) Implementation stage,
- iv) Maintenance,
- v) Evaluation.

To achieve both of the objectives, the NGOs organized extensive education programmes much prior to the programme initiation and continued till the end of the programme. It could be appropriate to examine the degree of respondents' participation in extension education activities launched by the NGOs.

### **Participation in different stages of watershed programme**

Participation by the beneficiaries at pre-project stage is important from the point of understanding the concepts and objectives of the programme because this will motivate them to participate at later stages of the programmes. Participation in pre-project stage is operationally defined as the extent to which the beneficiary was involved in the activities like meetings, discussions about problems, participation in bench mark surveys etc. Participation at planning stage is crucial from the point of developing need based programmes. A plan which is prepared on the basis of mutual consensus of implementing agency and people will have far reaching influence on effective programme execution (Kallur, 1997). In this context, participation at planning stage is operationally defined as the extent to which the beneficiary has been involved in watershed development programme in taking decisions to formulate mutually acceptable programmes for execution of watershed technology. People's participation at implementation stage refers to the participation of people in various activities with the technical guidance of the watershed development officials and adopting the recommended practices. In the present context, participation at implementation stage is operationally defined as the extent to which the beneficiary has been involved in carrying out various activities of watershed development programme. The assets generated in the watershed development programme are to be maintained by the beneficiaries in order to get continuous benefit from such assets. Therefore, maintenance of assets is considered to be an important factor for measuring people's participation in the programme. It is operationally defined as the extent to which the beneficiary has been involved in maintaining the assets developed under watershed development programme (Rammohan, 1996). People's participation at evaluation stage includes the participation of people by helping the project authorities in giving the feedback on benefits and problems encountered in the programme. Active people's participation at evaluation stage helps to suggest suitable modifications for future programme implementation. It is operationally defined as

the extent to which the beneficiary has been involved while evaluating the various activities of watershed development programme (Prabhakar, 2010). The analysis of the information on the participation of sample farmers in the five stages of watershed management clearly indicates that in all the 31 activities, the NGOs were able to motivate majority of the farmers to participate only partially.

Percentage of partial participation ranged from 45.2% (cooperation with the officials) to 69.7% (participation in PRA activities like resource and social mapping etc). Full participation of farmers ranged from 13.8% (maintaining the works by the user groups) to 41.3% (bench mark survey). The percentage of non participants ranged from 8.4% (demarcation of watershed boundary) to 27.6% (proposed soil conservation and water conservation methods).

### **CONCLUSION**

People's participation is considered to be an important component for the successful implementation of watershed programmes. The extent of success of NGOs in motivating the beneficiaries to participate in all the five stages of watershed management could be looked in two ways. Firstly, according to the data in Table 2, majority of the respondent farmers participated only partially and effort of the NGOs may be viewed as partial success. If those who participated fully and those who participated partially are combined, the extent of participation is very high and the effort of the NGOs can be said as success. Even the NGOs did not expect 100% participation by the beneficiaries' participation in the five stages of the watershed programme. As all the 9 NGOs during the field work expressed that there were some political reasons for certain beneficiaries for not participating in any activity during the five stages of watershed programme; however when some of the farmers in the sample who did not participate at all were interviewed, did not agree that they failed to participate because of political reasons. According to them they felt that the way the programme is being implemented would not provide any benefits to them. Not only this, a few of them blamed the NGOs, they claimed that they did not approach them in proper manner. It is not that all the respondents who attended fully were convinced of their participation would get those full benefits. Some of them said that they participated because of political reasons, while some others reported that they were intimate with the personnel from the NGOs implementing the programme and had to participate when they approached them. No doubt, a large segment in this group did say that they were interested in making the programme a success, hence they fully participated.

Majority of the respondents participated partially and the reasons given by them why they did not fully participate were lack of time, otherwise busy, NGOs did not provide them proper information about the meetings

**Table 2.** Item analysis of extent of people's participation in watershed programme.

Item	FP	PP	NP	Total
<b>Pre-project stage</b>				
Participation by attempting to gain information about objectives of the programme.	120 (25)	280 (58.3)	80 (16.7)	480 (100.0)
Participation in training programmes conducted by NGOs	166 (34.6)	146 (30.4)	168 (35.0)	480 (100.0)
Participation in formal and informal meetings to discuss about village problems.	108 (22.5)	320 (66.7)	52 (10.8)	480 (100.0)
Participation in PRA techniques like resources mapping, social mapping, transact walks etc.	98 (20.5)	335 (69.7)	47 (9.8)	480 (100.0)
Participation in preparation of bench mark survey report.	198 (41.3)	221 (46)	61 (12.7)	480 (100.0)
<b>Planning stage</b>				
Participation in discussion to identify the production problems of village and technological.	129 (26.9)	257 (53.5)	94 (19.6)	480 (100.0)
Participation in formal and informal meetings to approve the proposals for activities in work plan.	98 (20.5)	298 (62)	84 (17.5)	480 (100.0)
Participation in deciding the location and design of proposed soil and water conservation structures/measures like bunds, waterways, farm ponds, nala bund, check dam, gully checks etc.	74 (15.4)	274 (57)	132 (27.6)	480 (100.0)
<b>Implementation stage</b>				
Participation by contributing resources like land, labour, money, animal, etc.	132 (27.5)	277 (57.7)	71 (14.8)	480 (100.0)
Participation by attending meetings to review the progress of works/activities.	135 (28.2)	278 (57.9)	67 (13.9)	480 (100.0)
Participation by supervising on-going activities/works undertakes in the fields and community lands.	138 (28.8)	261 (54.3)	81 (16.9)	480 (100.0)
Participation by adopting graded, contour bunds, gully checks, farm ponds, check dams, diversion channels, etc, in the field.	98 (20.4)	254 (53)	128 (26.6)	480 (100.0)
<b>Maintenance stage</b>				
Participation by popularizing the importance of maintenance of assets developed under programme.	149 (31)	283 (59)	48 (10)	480 (100.0)
Participation by fixing responsibility among user groups to maintain the works/activities taken up under programme.	66 (13.8)	327 (68.1)	87 (18.1)	480 (100.0)
Participation in maintaining soil and water conservation works/structures taken up under programme.	115 (24)	258 (53.7)	107 (22.3)	480 (100.0)
Participation by protecting the trees in the developed forest plots.	93 (19.4)	300 (62.5)	87 (18.1)	480 (100.0)
<b>Evaluation stage</b>				
Participation in determining the success of programme by supplying information on the benefits received from the programme.	85 (17.8)	298 (62)	97 (20.2)	480 (100.0)
Participation by expressing problems encountered in the programme to officials.	72 (15)	321 (66.9)	87 (18.1)	480 (100.0)

Table 2. Contd.

Participation by assisting the officials in collection of feedback.	130 (27)	238 (49.6)	112 (23.4)	480 (100.0)
Participation by suggesting suitable modifications for future programme implementation.	109 (22.7)	268 (55.8)	103 (21.5)	480 (100.0)

etc. It is clear from the activities and works undertaken under watershed programme by the NGOs that they went about it systematically and methodically. The approach of the NGOs is holistic and people-oriented.

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