

GAP IN WATERSHED PROJECT ACTIVITIES – A STUDY AT MICRO LEVEL

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The national Watershed Development Programme was launched in India during 1995. Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India has formulated guidelines and circulated to all concerned for effective implementation of the programme. The guideline emphasized upgradation and adoption of low cost technologies and materials for sustainable development, capacity building of the people through training and exposure as well as development of entrepreneurial skills. The watershed association will relieve funds from DRDA and utilize as per the action plan formulated. So, the programme is people oriented programme and the guideline provides sufficient operational flexibility at different levels enabling to respond to different situations and aspirations of the watershed communities. Attempt was therefore made to make a study to assess the gap in watershed development project activities.

Review of literature

Schumacher (1973) expressed that development does not start with goods but with people, their education, organization and discipline. An entirely new system of thought based on attention to people and not to goods for their involvement in the programme is essentially required.

Joshi (1994) observed that participation and involvement begin in the initial stages of designing and planning through the implementation, monitoring & evaluation stages and leads up to the continuous follow-up stage of maintenance & benefit sharing among participating group.

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Methodology

The study was undertaken in Kandhamal district of Orissa. One watershed each from 4 different blocks of equal number from two sub-divisions of the district was randomly selected for the study. President, Secretary, volunteers of the watershed association and watershed committee chairman of each watershed were purposively selected where random sampling technique followed in selecting six respondents from each user & self-help groups, one from women group and 2-3 from weaker communities. Thus a total of 82 respondents were personally interviewed with a structured schedule pre-tested earlier. The results obtained are analyzed herewith.

Result

The study attempted to find out gap in prescribed and adopted practices in respect to (i) Institutional arrangements (ii) operational procedure (iii) Programming (iv) Implementation of programme (v) Monitoring and (vi) maintenance of created assets.

1. Institutional arrangement

The guideline clearly indicate of assigning duties and responsibilities to organizational units as well as individual involved in the programme. A deviation has been observed in case of institutional arrangements as has been shown in Table-1.

Table-1: Gap in institutional arrangements

Sl. No.	Statements	Max. obtainable score	Score obtained	Difference (%)
1.	Co-operation of PIA	5	3.22	35.60
2.	Selection of PIA	5	3.99	20.20
3.	Linkage with related departments	5	2.60	48.00
4.	Release of funds.	5	2.67	46.60
5.	Maintenance of accounts	5	4.33	13.40
6.	Performance of duties and responsibilities	5	3.94	21.20

The score against each statement was obtained on a 5 point scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The gap against each statement depicted that it is highest in case of linkage with related departments followed by release of funds, co-operation of PIA, performance of duties & responsibilities and procedure followed in selection of PIA. The findings reveal that primarily; the watershed programme has not followed the guidelines as instructed. With so much gap in the matter of institutional arrangements, one can not expect better results. It may be mentioned that these institutional arrangements could have been done provided the machinery geared properly.

2. Operational procedure

The operational procedures of watershed programme comprised of (i) consultation of G.P./ village for selection of site (ii) Priority fixation (iii) Awareness camp (iv) PRA exercise (v) formation of uses & self-help groups (iv) Training (vii) Involvement of users in each activity. The reaction of sample respondents towards operational procedure followed in watershed programmes are summarized in Table-2.

Table-2: Reaction about operational procedure of the project

Sl.No.	Reactions	Percentage	Rank
1.	Fully positive	37.27	II
2.	Partially positive	41.80	I
3.	Not positive	20.93	III

Information presented in table reveal that about 37.27% of the respondents only carry positive views on procedures followed in watershed activities followed by 41.80% partially positive and rest 20.93% negatively viewed. In other words, the operational procedure followed implementations of watershed project are not up to the expectation. When operational procedures are not adopted properly, the out come of the project is bound to be affected.

3. Implementation of the project

Implementation procedures of the watershed development project consists of sub-items like (i) Formation of watershed association (ii) Membership in association (iii) Committee formation (iv) Regular meeting (v) Monitoring of progress and (vi) Operation of accounts by various groups. The reaction of the sample about implementation of project as stated is presented in Table-3.

Table-3: Reaction towards implementation procedure

Sl. No.	Area	Mean score	+/- than average
1	Formation of association	3.77	+
2	Membership in association	3.89	+
3.	Committee formation for action	3.85	+
4.	Regular meeting	3.67	+
5.	Monitoring	4.33	+
6.	Operation of accounts by each group	1.60	-
	Average	3.51	

Analysis reveals that except operation of accounts by each group/individual undertaking any activity, all other function as shown in the table found to be above average. Among the functions, monitoring, committee formation and membership drive are found to be very much satisfactory.

4. Monitoring of the project

As per the guideline circulated by Govt. of India, the components of monitoring of the project consists of (i) Reporting (ii) Action plan approval (iii) Regular review by DRDA (iv) Supervision, (v) Solving problems and difficulties and (vi) Evaluation. The reaction of the beneficiaries obtained in 5 points scale is presented in Table-4.

Table-4: Reaction towards monitoring of the project

Sl. No.	Area	Mean score	Gap %
1.	Timely reporting	4.01	19.80
2.	Approval of the report	3.88	22.40
3.	Regular review meeting	3.87	22.60
4.	Supervision	3.24	35.20
5.	Solving problems	1.96	60.80
6.	Evaluation of the progress	1.46	70.80
	Average	3.07	38.60

Analysis reveals that gap in case of proper evaluation and solving problems & difficulties during execution of programmes are as high as 70.80 and 60.80 percentage respectively. However, the result shows that timely reporting and approval of report for action are quite satisfactory. The over all gap in case of monitoring of watershed project is found to be 38.60%.

5. Asset maintenance

Maintenance of created assets at post phase period is an important aspect for which the guideline has given sufficient thought. Proportionate contribution in shape of labour/material is to be provided by the beneficiaries undertaking any activities and its equivalent amount deducted from project and deposited in watershed fund for the purpose. The response recovered in this regard in 5 point continuum is reflected in Table-5.

Table-5: Reaction towards maintenance of created assets

Sl. No.	Area	Mean score	Gap %
1.	Commitment to maintain	4.13	17.40
2.	Proportionate contribution	2.76	44.80
3.	Development fund used exclusively	4.13	17.40
4.	Fund used with common decision.	4.33	13.40
5.	Follow-up action by DRDA	2.23	55.40

Analysis of the table reveal that proportionate contribution and follow-up action by DRDA is the major reaction of the beneficiaries in use and maintenance of created assets. The beneficiaries however made commitment for the maintenance of created assets and used development fund exclusively with common decision for the purpose. The study therefore suggest for proper follow-up action and suitable mechanism for raising development fund towards use and maintenance of created assets.

Further analysis was made to know the extent of gap observed in implementation of prescribed procedure which is reflected in Table-6.

Table-6: Gap in prescribed procedure of various activities

Sl. No.	Procedure	Max obtainable score	Actual score obtained	Gap (%)
1.	Institutional arrangements	40	28.0	35.0
2.	Organizational procedure	30	22.63	24.57
3.	Implementation procedure	35	28.07	19.80
4.	Monitoring & evaluation	40	24.27	39.33
5.	Maintenance of assets	25	18.59	25.64

Considerable gap of 20 to 40 percentage were observed in all the prescribed procedure in implementation of watershed development project as revealed from the table. The study therefore suggests that sufficient knowledge and exposure of the people is requires for a clear understanding about the guideline and various watershed activities for successful implementation.

Attempt was also made to know the influence of socio-economic variables of the people with the gap observed in different watershed components by using Pearson's zero order coefficient of correlation. The responses are reflected in Table-7.

Table-7: Relationship of socio-economic variables and gap in procedure

Sl. No.	Variables	Correlation value				
		Institutional arrangements	Organizational Procedure	Implementation	Monitoring	Assets maintenance
1.	Age	- 0.048	- 0.348*	0.087	0.126	0.055
2.	Education	- 0.303*	- 0.356*	- 0.068	- 0.238	- 0.505**
3.	Social Participation	- 0.175	- 0.963**	- 0.279	- 0.275	- 0.282
4.	Extension Contact	- 0.341*	- 0.636**	- 0.206	- 0.228	- 0.197
5.	Information Sources	- 0.221	- 0.544**	- 0.342*	- 0.138	- 0.979**
6.	Income	- 0.047	- 0.117	- 0.167	- 0.206	- 0.392*
7.	Membership Position	- 0.680**	- 0.611**	- 0.475**	- 0.648**	- 0.601**

* Significant at 0.05 level.

** Significant at 0.01 level.

The correlated value was further examined with test of significance for confirming the significancy. It is observed from the analysis that membership position in the association had much relationship in reducing the gap in adoption of all prescribed procedures. It indicates that members like president, secretary, volunteers and chairman of the watershed committee had more exposure and involvement in various watershed activities due to their position in the association than ordinary members. It confirms that sufficient exposure and understanding of the people to the guideline and various activities makes people more knowledgeable and clear understanding which helps in proper implementation of the project. Other variable like sources of information and education had better influence in adoption of prescribed procedure than other variables undertaken in the study.

Conclusion

The study on gap in watershed development project activities results that considerable gap of 20 to 40 percent was observed in adoption of prescribed procedure as envisaged in the guideline. Maximum gap observed in linkage with related departments, released of funds in time, operation of accounts

by each group/individual, solving problems & difficulties encountered in the execution process, evaluation, contribution to development fund and follow-up action. Office bears of the watershed association had better knowledge, understanding and adoption of prescribed procedures than other members due to their exposure as well as involvement. The study therefore conclude that sufficient exposure and understanding of the guidelines and watershed activities are essentially required by the watershed people for successful implementation of the project.

Reference:

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