

Factors Influencing the Participation of People in Social Forestry Programme

P. S. Swathilekshmi¹ and R. Annamalai²

ABSTRACT

Social forestry means planting of trees which are useful for community development. Forests can be preserved only through people's participation and by creating a climate under which the poor derive due benefits from forest development. In this study, factors influencing people's participation in social forestry programme was studied. The study was carried out in the Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala State, India. A total of 120 farmers consisting of 60 small and 60 marginal farmers were selected using simple random sampling procedure from 6 blocks of the district where all the programme components were implemented. Out of the nine independent variables studied only social participation of the marginal farmers and occupation of the small farmers had a positive and significant relationship with their participation in social forestry programme.

Social forestry programme in India has failed to muster people's involvement and participation in the various activities like plantation activities, strip plantations, fodder plantations and nursery activities. The social forestry schemes continue to be mainly a government programme without adequate local participation as viewed by Bapat and Shailaja (1983). The participation of the people is mainly restricted to farm forestry in their own lands. Hence an attempt was made to find out the influence of farmers socio-personal, socio-psychological and socio-economic characteristics on their participation in social forestry programme. Keeping this in view, the study was conducted with the following objectives:

i) To study the extent of participation of the respondents in social forestry programme.

ii) To find out the relationship of characteristics of respondents with their participation in social forestry.

iii) To find out the influence of the socio-personal, socio-psychological and socio-economic characteristics on farmers participation in social forestry programme.

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in Thiruvananthapuram district of Kerala State, India. Out of the total 12 blocks in Thiruvananthapuram district, six blocks were selected, since all the components of the programme has been implemented only in these blocks. From each of the six blocks selected, two villages were selected. Employing simple random sampling procedure five small and five marginal farmers from each village were selected, from the list of beneficiaries obtained from change agents. Thus the sample size was 60 small and 60 marginal totaling 120 farmers. The data was collected through a well-structured and pretested interview scheduled. Pearsons Correlation coefficient, multiple regression analysis and Chi-square test were applied to draw meaningful information from the data.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

From Table 1, it could be observed that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (98.33 per cent) had participated in farm forestry. This might be because, farm forestry involves raising of trees in the farmers own field. About 73 per cent of the farmers had participated in road avenues, 66.67 per cent in canal and river banks, and the same amount of percentage in small nursery schemes. The participation in small block plantations and large block plantations was 59.17 per cent and 45.83 per cent respectively. The Table further revealed that 45.00 per cent of the respondents participated in tree planting along the railway lines and 44.17 per cent in fodder plantations. It may therefore be inferred that the component involving the least participation of the respondents was in coastal area planting which accounted for 38.33 per cent.

The main reason was that the social forestry department had not taken up coastal area planting on a large scale, when compared to other components of the programme. So the implementing agencies should expedite the establishment of coastal area planting on a large scale and subsequently encourage the participation of the beneficiaries.

The overall participation of farmers in Social forestry Programme was studied and the results are furnished in Table 2, which showed that majority of the respondents (49.19 per cent) had a low level of participation followed by high and-medium levels (40.00 per cent and 10.83 per cent) respectively. The insignificant X^2 value showed that there was no significant association between the two categories of respondents with respect to their degree of participation.

The results of the Zero order correlation in Table 3 showed that out of the nine independent variables studied only social participation of the marginal farmers maintained a positive and significant relationship with respect to the extent of participation. This finding is in conformity with the findings of Jansi (1991) who reported the existence of a positive and significant relationship between social participation and participation of respondents in social forestry programme.

The results further revealed that except for occupation, all other variables had a non-significant relationship with the participation of small farmers in the programme.

Table 1. Distribution of respondents according to the various components of the programme (n = 120)

Sl. No.	Category	Small farmers (n = 60)		Marginal farmers (n = 60)		Total (n = 120)	
A.	Farm forestry	58	96.67	60	100.00	118	98.33
B.	Plantations on Government land						
1.	Large block plantations	41	68.33	33	55.00	74	45.83
2.	Small block plantations	38	63.33	33	55.00	71	59.17
C.	Strip plantation						
1.	Road avenues	41	68.33	46	76.67	87	73.00
2.	Canal and river banks	40	66.67	40	66.67	80	66.67
3.	Railway lines	29	41.67	21	35.00	46	38.33
4.	Coastal areas	25	41.67	21	41.67	53	44.17
D.	Fodder plantations	28	45.00	28	46.67	55	45.83
E.	Nursery schemes						
1.	Decentralized nursery	27	45.00	28	46.67	55	45.83
2.	Small nursery	42	70.00	30	63.33	80	66.67

¹P.G. Student, Dept. of Agrl. Extension and Rural Sociology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.

²Former Head, Dept. of Agrl. Extension and Rural Sociology, Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.

Table 2. Distribution of respondents according to their degree of overall participation (n = 120)

Sl. No.	Category	Small farmers (n = 60)		Marginal farmers (n = 60)		Total (n = 120)	
1.	Low	28	46.70	31	51.70	59	49.19
2.	Medium	7	11.70	6	10.00	13	10.83
3.	High	25	41.70	23	38.30	48	40.00

$\chi^2=3.87NS$

Table 3. Correlation coefficient of characteristics of the respondents with their participation in social forestry programme (n = 120)

Sl. No.	Independent variables	Marginal farmers (n=60)	Small farmers (n=60)
1.	Age	0.0069 NS	0.2091 NS
2.	Education	-0.2281 NS	-0.0265 NS
3.	Occupation	-0.0939 NS	0.2695*
4.	Material possession	-0.1219 NS	0.0346 NS
5.	Social participation	0.2552*	0.1506 NS
6.	Media participation	0.1083 NS	-0.0505 NS
7.	Contact with extension agency	0.0239 NS	0.1712 NS
8.	Economic motivation	-0.0271 NS	0.0252 NS
9.	Risk orientation	-0.0272 NS	-0.2312 NS

*,**Significant at 1 and 5% level respectively; NS - Non Significant

From the results of the regression analysis shown in Table 4, it could be inferred that except for occupation, all other independent variables had a non-significant relationship with the participation of the marginal farmers in the programme. Under the category of small farmers it could be seen that except for media participation with the participation of the small farmers. It indicates that as the media participation of the respondents increases, their participation in the programme decreases. This could be due to the fact that more exposure is given in the media for field crops when compared to tree crops. The R^2 value for marginal farmers showed that the nine independent variables

explained only 16 per cent of variation in the dependent variable participation, and the F test was found to be non significant at 5 per cent. In the case of small farmers the R^2 value showed that 20 per cent of variation in the dependent variable, participation was explained by the nine independent variables. The F test was also non-significant at 5 per cent. Thus on the whole multiple regression analysis showed that there was no significant contribution of the independent variables toward participation.

CONCLUSION

On the whole it could be seen that there was no significant contribution of the socio-personal, socio-psychological and socio-economic variables with the respondents level of participation. Social participation of the marginal farmers were found to have a positive and significant relationship with the participation of marginal farmers in social forestry programme. Hence, farmers can be organized in to small groups in the form of forest clubs to promote their interest in social forestry activities such as raising of nursery seedlings, planting of saplings along railway tracks, raising trees species in fodder plantations and along riverbanks. Mass participation of the people in the social forestry programme can be enhanced by providing more exposure in the mass media with respect to tree crops and also by strengthening of the extension efforts at the grass root level.

A full fledged extension unit needs to be established in the social forestry department so that they can focus their entire efforts in carrying out widespread campaigns, to create awareness among people in protecting their natural tree resources and motivating them in the adoption process by conducting demonstrations in planting of economically viable tree species both in their own farms as well as government lands.

Table 4. Multiple regression analysis of independent variables with dependent variable - participation in Social Forestry Programme (n = 120)

Independent variables	Marginal farmers (n = 60)			Small farmers (n = 60)		
	Partial reg. Coefficient (b)	SE(B)	't' value	Partial reg. Coefficient (b)	SE(B)	't' value
Age	-0.0174	0.0374	-0.466NS	0.0455	0.0349	1.306NS
Education	0.0349	0.1366	0.256NS	0.0500	0.1431	0.350NS
Occupation	-1.0576	0.4818	-2.195*	0.4954	0.4205	1.178NS
Material possession	-0.0083	0.0132	-0.635NS	-0.0013	0.0079	-0.167NS
Social participation	0.6366	1.5431	-0.413NS	0.8101	0.9420	0.860NS
Media participation	-0.1053	0.1581	-0.666NS	-0.2762	0.1585	-1.742**
Contact with extension agency	0.0624	0.0757	0.825NS	0.0757	0.0631	1.200NS
Economic motivation	0.1653	0.1744	0.948NS	-0.0620	0.1658	-0.374NS
Risk orientation	0.1563	0.1377	1.135NS	-0.1908	0.1668	-1.144NS

$R^2=0.16776$, $a=1.63$, $R^2=0.20084$, $a=9.86$, $F=1.11991NS$, $F=1.39619NS$; *,**Significant at 1 and 5% level respectively; NS - Non significant

REFERENCES

- Bapat and Shailaja. (1983). People's participation in Social forestry, Social forestry special supplement, The Economic Times, August 6, 1983.
- Jansi Rani R. (1991). An appraisal on Social and Agro forestry Programmes in Salem district of Tamil Nadu. Unpub: M.Sc.(Ag.) Thesis; TNAU, Coimbatore.