

Participation and constraints faced by farm women of watershed programmes in Bundelkhand region of central India

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Introduction

The watershed programme is primarily a land based programme, which is increasingly being focused on water, with its main objective being to enhance agricultural and grassland productivity through increased *in-situ* moisture conservation and productive irrigation for socio-economic development of rural people and its success in soil and water conservation often requires a combination of various measures and needs to be integrated with in a comprehensive agricultural management system. Hence, in order to gain the potential ecological and economic benefits from soil and water conservation, policy and funding support are necessary. The region of Bundelkhand in central India (24⁰-26⁰ 30' N latitude and 78⁰ 10'-80⁰ 30' E longitude) comprises seven districts of Uttar Pradesh and six districts of Madhya Pradesh states. Out of total 7.04 m ha geographical area of Bundelkhand region, 3.01 m. ha. falls in the State of Uttar Pradesh (Gupta, 1981) and remaining 4.01 m. ha in Madhya Pradesh (BDA, 1986). Three fourth area of the region depends on rainfall for its agriculture. Hence, there is a need for participation of farm women in successful watershed management programmes in the region.

Materials and Methods

For the purpose, a study was conducted in Bundelkhand region of central India during 2008-2012 under capacity building programme for which one good watershed namely, Kalipahari developed and managed by the trained officers and another watershed namely, Agora-Rawatpura developed and managed by the untrained officers were selected in district Datia (M.P.). The data were collected personally from 100 farm women beneficiaries (50 farm women in each watershed).

Results and Discussion

The results indicated that the majority of farm women in watershed and outside watershed areas belong to middle aged group (35-50 years) followed by young (15-35 years) and old aged (above 50 years). The majority of women in watershed areas had undergone SWC training programmes, however a maximum (72%) women were untrained in outside watershed areas. Similar results were found in case of social participation, risk preference, level of knowledge, symbolic adoption, actual adoption, attitude, participation in planning, implementation and maintenance of watershed activities. Further, the results showed that majority of farm women of watershed areas were involved in soil & water conservation activities followed by agriculture/crop production and live-stock management activities respectively. Whereas, a highest percentage *i.e.*, 54 per cent farm women of outside watershed areas were involved in live-stock management activities followed by 38 percent in agriculture/crop production and only 8 per cent in soil & water conservation activities. Further, the major constraints faced by the farm women of watershed areas were source of irrigation, timely availability of inputs, high cost of technology and marketing whereas training & exposure visits, high cost of technology, social conflicts and source of irrigation were the major constraints faced by the farm women of outside watershed areas.

Conclusion

Based on the above results, it is concluded that the farm women can play an important role for managing the natural resources like, soil, water, vegetation particularly the grasslands and livestock in watershed areas. Therefore, it is recommended that similar facilities available for the farm women of watershed areas should also be provided to the farm women of outside watershed areas including more exposure and skill oriented training programmes for their livelihoods and all round development of Bundelkhand region in central India through participatory integrated management of natural resources.

References

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