

# **EVALUATION REPORT ON DROUGHT PRONE AREAS PROGRAMME**

## **1. The Study**

Inadequate and erratic rainfall was the main cause of drought and, therefore, the Drought Prone Areas were delineated on the basis of rainfall data and percentage of irrigated area to the net cropped area. The recurrence of drought had adverse effects on national resources resulting in degradation of environment. In view of this, the erstwhile Rural Works Programme of 1971-72 was redesignated as the DPAP during the Fourth Five Year Plan (1969-74). It was launched in 1973-74 with 50 percent central allocation.

At the instance of Planning commission, the Programme Evaluation Organisation undertook the study to examine the extent of drought proofing achieved, the adoption of micro-watershed approach and the existing arrangements for monitoring and evaluation of the programme.

## **2. Objectives of the Study**

The main objectives of the study were as under:

- i) to ascertain the extent to which watershed approach has been adopted and helped in mitigating the adverse effects of drought on crops and brought changes in cropping pattern, if any,
- ii) to find out the impact of the DPAP in improving and restoring ecological balance,
- iii) to examine the role of people's participation in planning and implementation of the programme, and
- iv) to assess the administrative and technical linkages obtained for integrating and dovetailing activities and identify constraints in the implementation and suggest measures to overcome the same.

### **3. Sample Size/Criteria for Sample Selection**

DPAP was in operation in 13 States. Besides Jammu & Kashmir, the other 12 States namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal were selected for the study. One district with the maximum geographical area covered under the programme from each of the state was selected. From each selected district, two DPAP blocks were selected, one with the maximum area and the other having minimum area. From each selected block, two villages were selected on the same criteria as for blocks. Further 13 beneficiary households from each village were selected.

Thus, in all 12 states, 12 districts, 24 blocks, 48 villages and 624 beneficiary households were selected.

### **4. Reference Period**

The reference period for the study was 1973-74 to 1991-92.

### **5. Main Findings**

1. The prescribed expenditure limits on both core and minor sector activities of the programme had been maintained since Seventh Plan period onwards.
2. The achievements of targets of core sector activities had been encouraging during the relevant plan periods, as it varied from 93.35 per cent to 98.73 per cent.
3. The integrated approach with watershed as a basic unit of planning for area development was not adopted at the project levels. However, the core sector activities were taken up in a dispersed manner. The Watershed Committees and Beneficiary Advisory Boards were also not constituted.
4. The watershed approach had not made much dent either on the extension of area under cultivation or changes in cropping pattern.
5. The people in the selected areas were aware about the works being executed, but their role in initiation, formulation and implementation of the programme was limited.
2. The programme had no specific effect on conservation of ground water level and the water harvesting structures could not contribute much to the net irrigated area.

3. The programme had also no impact on increasing the availability of fuel and fodder, drinking water facilities, extension of area under cultivation and adoption of agronomic practices at the grass root levels, though it had helped checking the migration of the people during the drought periods.
4. The main constraints in the implementation of the programme at the block levels were untimely release and lack of funds, lack of people's participation, lack of coordination and lack of staff.
5. The livestock possessed by the selected beneficiary households marginally declined over the period, but there had been a positive shift from the local breeds in favour of improved breeds of livestock.

## **6. Major Suggestions**

1. The coordination between the nodal agencies and the line departments on the one hand and among various implementing departments on the other hand should be strengthened.
2. The people's participation needs to be mobilised by creating greater awareness about the utility of different sectoral schemes. The works of local needs should be taken up on a larger scale.
3. The village Panchayats and voluntary agencies should also be involved in planning, formulation and execution of the programme works.
4. The watershed approach as the basic unit for area development should be implemented effectively. Besides this, the concerned State Governments may be cautioned against the consequences of excessive exploitation of ground water.
5. The activities under afforestation and pasture development need to be taken up on a larger scale.
6. There is a need for effective association of research institutes and agriculture universities for technical guidance. The monitoring and evaluation of the programme should be taken up regularly and thoroughly to ensure effective implementation of the programme.