

Impact of Forest on Peoples Life: A Study on Some Selected Blocks in the District of North 24-Parganas in the State of W.B.

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Abstract: *The entire population of the world somehow depends upon forests . However, this dependence is not similar everywhere, while the developed countries are more concerned with climatic change, maintenance of bio-diversity and recreational opportunities, the developing countries primarily depend to get food, fuel wood, fodder for their sustenance. It is very urgent to find out the ways and means to manage sustainably in the face of current pressures and to augment the raw material production.*

Keywords: Forest provide livestock, income, shelter, medicine, to the poor people.

1. Introduction

The state west Bengal with area of 88752sq.km is one of the smaller states in Indian. According to census report in 2011, it has a population of about 80 million of which union 75% dwell in rural areas. The state is highly industrialized by Indian standard and there is heavy concentration of wood based industries .The state forest supply only a small part of the requirement of the industry and most of the industries are facing some raw material crisis. The total forest cover of the state is 13.5% of the total geographical area. The state forest cover is not small in size but its distribution quality and productivity are not uniform also 09% of the total geographical area of the state is under actual forest cover. Productivity of more than half of the forest land in much poor either because of low soil fertility or for gradual degradation through felling over grazing and burning.

Considering this situation, the forest Department of the Government of West Bengal launched a social Forestry Program with the assistance from World Bank in 1981.The present study in an overview of the impact of Social Forestry in the state of West Bengal in the general as well as in some community Development blocks in the district of north 24 parganas. In order to improve the economic condition of the people living below the grinding poverty line the pattern of planning will have to be changed .investment in heavy industry, while a must in the vital sectors of investment in heavy industry, while a must in the vital sectors of economy like defense cannot solve the problem of poverty prevailing in our country. The living example is of Bihar which is one of the most highly industrialized States in the country and yet one of the poorest. The possible solution to removal of poverty of creating wealth in villages themselves for starting a chin of cottage industries .

2. Objective of the Study

West Bengal has about 11897 sq.km area of total record forest out of which 7054 sq.km is reserve forest, 3772 sq.km is protected forest and 1053 sq.km is unlashd state forest. It reveals that 13.38% of the geographical area of our state is covered with forest's .The forest covered including the

forest created outside the recorded forest area is 15.68% of the geographical area as assessed by the GIS cell of the West Bengal forest department in the year 2006 .on the basis of satellite enquiry procured from NRSA, Hyderabad in Digital Format. While computation the forest cover of the state the protocol damaged by RRSSC, Kharragpur under department of space. GOI, NRSA, Hyderabad in earlier study was followed. Estuarine water bodies like river and creek in mangrove forest and river flowing through the recorded forest ;land in Jalpaiguri and other district have include while computation the forestry cover .similarly large portion of firm forestry, raised outside forest land, having like micro-ecosystem, have been enumerated as forest cover.

Central government and the state government of our country have substantially stepped the spending on forest development. Govt. spending out of its non resources in supplemented substantially foreign aid.

Keeping in view the growing development of social forestry for supplying food, fodder, firewood, raw material, etc. Arrangement should be made for adequate supply of these items. It requires scientific analysis of the proble so that the resources available from forestry can be utilized efficiently. The other important points to be consider is the livelihood hood of the poor community who lives surroundings the forest, the poorest if the poor people.

The other points is that afforestation the landless labuor the samll farmers and other village artisians, who hardly get sufficient work during the year, will get employment right.

The primary objective of the research is to make a study of the impact of socuila forestry in West Bengal with special reference to the district of notrth 24- parganas.For this purpose the study specially aims act:

- To study the overall objectives of the social forestry.
- To study the various components of social forestry.
- To study the several important issue to the programme.
- To study the acheivements under the programme .
- To find out the various problems.
- To study the steps take by the government for solving the problems.

- g) To suggest ways for improving the implementations of the programme for better result.

3. Research Methodology

The study is partly exploratory and partly descriptive. It is based on both primary and secondary data. The primary data have been collected in the district of North 24 Parganas through the multi-stage stratified samples techniques. The secondary data have been collected from different sources like reports and brochures of the department of forest, West Bengal, state forest report directorates of forest, government of West Bengal. Reports published by the Indian statistical Institute (ISI). Apart from this we have interviewed officials of divisional forest office north 24 parganas and a few selected blocks for a spot idea what is been done for the development of social forestry. We have also visited some selected villages where social forestry is being done for the betterment of village people. The collected data have been tabulated and analyzed using accounting and simple statistical tools.

Social forestry is carried out more or less each of the 19 districts in West Bengal. However total geographical area of north 24 parganas is 3977 sq.km. out of these 43 sq.km. is only under recorded forest area. As a result we can say that percentage of recorded forest area of north 24 parganas is 1.08%.

There are five sub-division in north 24 parganas. Bongaon, Basirhat, Barrackpur, Barasat and Bidhannagar. This sub-division area divide into 22 community development block (CDBS) and CDBS area divide into 200 Gram Panchayat (GP) and 2942 villages.

4. Major Problems

1. In 16 selected division the social forestry programme was implemented by the regular officials of the Forest Department in addition to their normal workload without any extra staff support. However, in few cases staff was sanctioned for implementation of specific schemes.
2. No extension and motivated staff at the grass root level was appointed in forest office in some cases posts are filled up partially.
3. The officials at various levels involved in the programme were not trained in social forestry and there was no permanent arrangement for their training. It was also forest observed that the forest department official did not prefer their posting in social Forestry Organization.
4. The implementation of the programme was affected in some of the cases due to lack of coordination between the Forest Department and block agencies. No follow up action taken up by the implementing agencies in almost all cases for getting feedback on implementation through regular field visits.
5. The size of some selected nurseries was very small, whereas they were required to cover a very wide areas in terms of number of villages, some of the selected nurseries covering more than 100 villages each had also work much below capacity.
6. In some of the cases, the beneficiaries under Farm Forestry were in fact big farmers whereas the programme was meant for small marginal farmers.

7. In actual seeding distribution was reported to be more than what was targeted for.
8. Sometimes funds were sanctioned in time whereas in most cases the programme suffered due to late release of fund but the District Rural Development Agencies (DRDA) under social forestry components of National Rural Employment Programme (NREP), Drought Prone area Programme (DPAP) etc.
9. Involvement of voluntary agencies in Social Forestry Programme appeared to be nominal and undoubtedly is a great problem.
10. Strip plantation on public land had yet matures in our state. Some informal arrangements had, however been made in a few districts for sharing of the produce public plantation as and when matured. Out of 200 villages, block plantation on public community land were raised in 23 villages only which proves the lack of proper administrative policy.
11. More and more selected beneficiaries reported lower survival percentage of the seeding due to scarcity of water, browsing of plants by animals, an attack from insects and pests.
12. There was no remarkable achievement in the major source of fuelwood, fodder and small timber for the beneficiaries as they had to travel long distance for collection of fuelwood and fodder.
13. Wages paid under social forestry programme were less than the minimum wages under the Act.
14. Smuggling activities in forest affect the social forestry

5. Conclusion and Suggestion

The primary object of the present field work has been to make a study on the problems of social forestry in West Bengal through a case study in the district of North 24 parganas. As the problems are closely linked with various sectors, the study has made an attempt to identify many such problems that have ultimately lead to the financial foresters and the people live surrounding the forest. Government has been trying to resolve these problems so that income of poor and community will increase and to improve the economic condition of that people.

Social forestry plays a pivotal role in national economy. Its potential as food supplier, fuel wood, fodder, capacity to generate employment and improve national economy thought export earning was not realized earlier. After Independence, special emphasis was given to forest department. It is very difficult to achieve socio economic development of poor man community, provide rural employment and derive financial strength through earning foreign exchange to achieve this goal appropriate measures on the part of government may be taken update national policy.

The study reveals that social forestry suffers from many problems. To overcome most of the problems and for development of social forestry in West Bengal as well as North 24 parganas, some suggestion are put forward:-

- To carry out a need-based time-bound programme of afforestation with special emphasis on fuel wood and fodder development on all degraded and denuded lands / forests.
- Afforestation to be made in abandoned Jhum lands and mind areas, and also utilized land under state government

- or private ownership for creating green belts environments.
- Linear strip plantation of fast growing species on side of public roads, river banks, irrigation, canals, etc.
- Implementation of farm forestry programme may be made in the form of rising rows of trees on boundaries of fields and also flowering tree and shrubs mainly to serve as recreation forest for the Urban and rural pollution.
- To encourage peoples participation involving women and young people in conservation of forest and environment
- To create environmental awareness celebration of “Vana Mahotsava”, “Environment day”, additional, monitoring incentives may be considered for the official for the proper motivations of staff posted in the social forestry organization. in order to give a thrust to social forestry separate trained staff should be provided at all levels including extension and motivation staff at the gross route level.
- Proper training arrangement should be their at all levels of staff .
- The supply of seedlings should be at minimum price in order to prevent the wastage of the same the seeding to small marginal farmers may be supplied up to a certain limit and beyond that limit supply should be priced.
- Fund for rising of seedlings in the nurseries should be made available well in time.
- The voluntary organization should be strongly associated with the implementation of the program .However, the capabilities of dynamic voluntary organizations should be assists in advance, and they may be encouraged to adopt a group of village for free plantation programme.
- There should be an integrated approach involving all concerned departments related to forest of Coordinated action for successful implementation of social forestry. Targets setting under various components of the programme should be the responsibility of district level committee .The programme at the grass roots should be implemented through block and gram panchayat level committee with peoples participations at all levels.
- Incentives in the form of fertilizers and insecticides should also be distributed free to small marginal farmers and weaker section of the society.
- The system of maintenance of records especially distribution of seedlings etc. needed to be considerably improved.
- Seedlings should be made available at the plantation sides for which more nurseries should be set –up.
- Chowkidar should be engaged for the proper maintenance of plants .There is also need for motivating the villagers through extension work about usefulness of plants and involving school children and local club I plantation programme.
- Unrestricted grazing of animal should be regulated in the village under the supervision of local panchayet.
- Fund should be increased in the government budget for the social forestry programme.
- Tax relief on revenue from forest to be enforced by restricting the tax policy of the government.
- To be prevent wood smugglings, local administration should be alert and precaution to be adopted .

- To fill up all sanctioned but vacant post of staff and official as early as possible to expedite social forestry programme.

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