



Factors affecting people's participation in joint forest management programmes in Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh, India

Chaman Lal*, Chandresh Guleria, R.S. Prasher and Ravinder Sharma

Department of Social Sciences, Dr. Y.S. Parmar University of Horticulture and Forestry, Solan-173230 (H.P.), INDIA

*Corresponding author. E-mail: negi.chaman9@gmail.com

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Abstract: The present investigation examined the various factors affecting people's participation in the planning, implementation and maintenance of JFM programmes in the tribal district (Kinnaur) of Himachal Pradesh. In total, 10 factors were identified that influence people's participation in Joint Forest Management (JFM) activities in the study area, which were independently affecting in all of three development blocks. District as a whole factors affecting in decreasing order were Lack of awareness about participatory forest management (66%), lack of co-ordination with forestry officials (64%), non availability of routine funds (56%), lack of training and visit programme (56%), clash between agriculture and JFM activities (54%), lack of emphasis on quick economic activities (49%), improper usufruct sharing (43%) etc. were some of major factors that influenced people's participation. Policy and development emphasis on these factors, particularly taking into consideration the geography and need based activity in the various development blocks will increase the people's participation in similar kind of projects.

Keywords: Activities, Factors, Joint forest management, People's participation

INTRODUCTION

Joint Forest management (JFM) followed the implementation of the Forest Act 1988 through which forest management was oriented towards conservation and promotion of welfare of forest dwellers. JFM is oriented towards government and communities working together with the local communities having a major role. Under the scheme, forest dwellers and primary user villages participate in conservation via representatives from the local communities in the village forest committees. The village committees negotiate on user rights over forest produce and also responsibilities on village protection activities. The implementation of the forest policy of 1988 was actuated by the Government of India's resolution in June 1990 (the JFM circular), which in legal parlance, is not binding on the government (Kashyap, 1989; Lindsay, 1994; Khan and Pillai, 2002; Upadhyay, 2003), but this paved the way for the "involvement of village communities and village assemblies in the regeneration of degraded forest lands" (Upadhyay, 2003).

From 1990, when the actual guidelines for community participation were laid down, in a period of twenty years, 27 States have implemented JFM and 63000 villages are registered under them. In India JFM covered an area of 14.25 million hectares of forest land during 2001 and about 18% of the total forest area. By the year 2011, so far 118213 JFMC's were constituted covering an area of 22.94 m ha forests in the country. About 14.5 million families including 4.6 m SC and

ST families are involved in JFM activities (ICFRE, 2011). Although an overall increase is recorded in the number of JFMCs but the area covered under forests has decreased. There has been downward correction in number of JFMC's and forest area covered in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Mizoram and Punjab because many registered JFMC's were found non-functional, JFM flourished and reached its peak in the first half of the past decade leading up to 2006-2007 in terms of imitation and impact, after which it got stagnated (Guleria and Vaidya, 2015).

Although the initial success story was Arabari in West Bengal, the leader States for JFM have been Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and also Uttaranchal with its indigenous system of Van Panchayats. Theoretically this is a very fair arrangement and everyone involved is slated to gain. However, JFM has encountered some problems that come in the way for fast spread (Menon, 2012).

First, the scheme is not routinely funded and also does not enjoy constitutional approval as in the case of Panchayati Raj institutions. If the two institutions' area of operation overlaps, village communities feel secure to participate in the latter. Second, the forests under JFM have been of degraded variety and basic employment objective is overriding, eclipsing its holistic role as a participatory rural development program. More economic cause of concern is linking markets to the collection of non timber forest products (NTFPs) to give some prediction of income generation from JFM (Kadekodi, 2004). The Himachal Pradesh Government issued JFM Notifi-

cation on 12.5.1993 for constitution of Village Forest Development Committees (VFDCs) and made HP Participatory Forest Management Rules 2001 for registration of VFDCs under Societies of Registration Act, 1860. In Himachal Pradesh, so far 1023 JFMC's have been constituted with an area of 0.20 mha of forest by the year 2011 (ICFRE, 2011). They were performing well in some of the places like Balyani JFMC of Kullu, Haripur JFMC in Naggar Range of HP, one of prize winning JFMC in state is doing well in legitimate utilization and participatory management of resources and second Amboya Tapi JFMC of Ponta Sahib, HP is another active committee involved in creating stakes, asset formation and management of available resources. Taking into consideration of such a splendid success of JFM programmes in the state, forest department in district Kinnaur also tried to implement such type of activities in the district to ensure people's participation in the conservation and management of village forest resources during late 90's.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study area: The study villages are located in the Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh in India. It is part of the Great Himalayas that lies between 31°05'55"N and 32°05' 20" N latitude and between 77°45'E and 79°00' 50"E latitude along NH 22 (Hindustan Tibet Road) nearly 250 km away from Shimla, the state capital of Himachal Pradesh. The valley runs all along the river Sutlej and the length of the valley is about 365 km which covers an area of nearly 6401 sq. km. accommodating about 84298 inhabitants (Census, 2011).

Sampling procedure: For the present study multistage random sampling was used. In first stage, district Kinnaur is divided into three development blocks. In second stage of study, from each development block two panchayats were randomly selected.

In stage three, from the selected panchayats, 2-3 cluster villages were selected where JFMC's/ VFC's work has been implemented. In the final stage twenty respondents from these cluster villages were interviewed randomly. Thus, 40 respondents from each development block were selected for the study, making a sample size of total 120 for all the three development blocks.

Data collection: Structured pre-tested schedule/ questionnaire were used for the collection of data. For studying the factors affecting people's participation in project activities in the various JFMC's/ VFC's of the study area, a questionnaire was developed. After reviewing thorough literature on participatory forest management at regional level, India and abroad, the factors responsible for participation in JFMC were noted. A questionnaire was then structured and tested in the field considering views of the beneficiaries and executive agency. The questionnaire was modified accordingly and further used for the study. The data was collected through personal interviews, focus group

discussion and key respondents. Meetings of the JFMC's/ VFC members were also organized to analyse the participation of the local masses in the planning, implementation and maintenance stages of the programme. Factors affecting the people's participation, constraints and suggestion to increase the participation were also observed. Secondary data of the various JFMC's/ VFC's were collected from the Forest Department of HP. Data thus obtained was analysed by applying suitable statistical tools like percentages, ranks and indexing etc.

Ranks were given for the particular factor affecting the implementation of JFM programme in the study area on the basis of percentages of response obtained through personal interview from the respondents. The factor affecting the implementation of JFM activity having highest percentage was given Rank I followed by II, III and so on upto the last factor affecting the implementation of JFM having lower percentage which ultimately gets the last rank.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Various factors affecting peoples participation in activities under JFM through various VFDC's in different blocks of district Kinnaur of Himachal Pradesh were as under:

Nichar block: It is evident from the table that all the 10 factors considered for the study were observed to have influenced people's participation in the JFM programmes. The lack of awareness/ knowledge about participatory forest management (85%) and non availability of routine funds (77.5%) was the most important reason for the poor participation. The second important factor was lack of training and visit programme (72.5%) and lack of co-ordination with forestry officials (72.5%). Lack of transparency (70%), clash between agriculture and JFM activities (67.5%) and lack of emphasis on quick economic activities (62.5%) were another cause for low participation. Factors such as village politics, improper usufruct sharing and poor economic status wise found responsible for the poor participation. In total 267 multiple responses were received from the Nichar block (Table 1).

Kalpa block: All the factors under study were found to be responsible for the low participation. The lack of co-ordination with forestry officials (70%), lack of awareness/ knowledge about participatory forest management (65%) and lack of training and visit programme (60%) was the most important reason for the poor participation. The next important factors were the non availability of routine funds (55%) and clash between agriculture and JFM activities (55%). Village politics, lack of emphasis on quick economic activities, improper usufruct sharing, lack of transparency and poor economic status also contributed for the poor participation of locals in Joint Forest Management Programme activities in the study area. In total 198 multiple responses

Table 1. Factors affecting people's participation at block level.

Sr. No.	Factors affecting people's participation	Nichar				Kalpa				Pooh			
		Yes response(N=40)				Yes response(N=40)				Yes response(N=40)			
		R	% age	Rank	R	% age	Rank	R	% age	Rank	R	% age	Rank
1	Lack of awareness/ knowledge about JFM	34	85	I	26	65	II	19	48	II			
2	Non availability of routine funds	31	77.5	II	22	55	IV	14	35	V			
3	Lack of co-ordination with Forestry officials	29	72.5	III	28	70	I	20	50	I			
4	Lack of training and visit programmes	29	72.5	III	24	60	III	14	35	V			
5	Lack of transparency	28	70	IV	13	32.5	VII	12	30	VI			
6	Clash between agriculture and JFM activities	27	67.5	V	22	55	IV	16	40	IV			
7	Lack of emphasis on quick economic activities.	25	62.5	VI	16	40	VI	18	45	III			
8	Village politics	24	60	VII	18	45	V	16	40	IV			
9	Improper usufruct sharing	24	60	VII	16	40	VI	12	30	VI			
10	Poor economic status	16	40	VIII	13	32.5	VIII	9	23	VII			
	Total	267*			198*			150*					

Note: N= Number of respondents; R=Number of Responses; * Multiple responses

were observed in the Kalpa block (Table 1).

Pooh block: The factors responsible for low participation in JFM activities of this cold and arid region of Kinnaur district were the lack of co-ordination with forestry officials (50%), lack of awareness/ knowledge about participatory forest management (48%) and lack of emphasis on quick economic activities (45%) was the most important reason for the poor participation. The next important factors were the clash between agriculture and JFM activities (40%), village politics (40%), non availability of routine funds (35%) and lack of training and visit programme (35%). Lack of transparency, improper usufruct sharing, and poor economic status were the other factors that has contributed least for the poor participation in Joint Forest Management programme. In total 150 multiple responses were observed in the Pooh block (Table 1).

Factors responsible for low participation of locals in JFM activities in Kinnaur district: In total 615 multiple responses were obtained from the study areas which are ranked according to the response of the people. It is apparent from table that all the 10 factors were observed to have influenced people's participation in the area under investigation. The lack of awareness about participatory forest management (60%) ranked first for low participation (Table 2). The second important factor was lack of co-ordination with forestry officials (64%). Non availability of routine funds (56%), lack of training and visit programme (56%) and clash between agriculture and JFM activities (54%) also contributed largely to the poor participation. The other factors responsible for low participation of people were lack of emphasis on quick economic activities (49%), village politics (48%), lack of transparency (44%), improper usufruct sharing (43%) and poor economic status (32%) that kept away people from participating in activities under JFM programme (Table 2). Similar types of perceptions were recorded in their individual studies by various authors like; Brahma and Sehgal (2008) in their study at different regions of Himachal Pradesh, reported that lack of awareness/ knowledge about CPR's, lack of training and visit programmes are the important factors affecting people's participation in JFM programmes. Naidu (1992) reported that appropriate education, communication, persuasion and demonstration are some of the important factors in promoting the involvement of people. Loganandhan and Mondal (2005) stated that among socio-economic characters, education extension contract and mass media exposure had a positive and significant influence on the awareness, knowledge and attitude of the farmers. Purushotam and Singh (2005) also reported that illiteracy in people, lack of knowledge, poor economic status, migration of people for wages, village politics and lack of visits of progressive farmers in model watersheds had influenced the people's participation in watershed projects. Badal et al.

Table 2. Factors affecting people's participation in district Kinnaur as a whole.

Sr. No.	Factors affecting peoples participation	Yes Responses (N=120)		
		R	Percentage	Rank
1	Lack of awareness/ knowledge about JFM	79	66	I
2	Lack of co-ordination with Forestry officials	77	64	II
3	Non availability of routine funds	67	56	III
4	Lack of training and visit programmes	67	56	III
5	Clash between agriculture and JFM activities	65	54	IV
6	Lack of emphasis on quick economic activities.	59	49	V
7	Village politics	58	48	VI
8	Lack of transparency	53	44	VII
9	Improper usufruct sharing	52	43	VIII
10	Poor economic status	38	32	IX
Total		615*		

Note: N= Number of respondents; R=Number of Responses; * Multiple responses

(2006) reported that people's participation varied from 25 to 72 per cent at various stages of watershed programme in Rajasthan and found that key factors influencing people's participation were farmers' awareness, human resource development, institutional effectiveness and transparency etc.

Conclusion

Differing geographical conditions of the various development blocks in the study area makes public choices different. That's why factors identified so far in the study area which were responsible for the failure of JFM programme were different for the different blocks. Considering these factors on priority basis, the future planning and implementation of such projects in the study area and the state of Himachal Pradesh should be undertaken for sure shot success of such type of programmes.

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