

Constraints and its Remedies in the Implementation and Operation of the Forest Development Programmes in Nainital, Uttarakhand

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Abstract

The present study entitled “Constraints and its Remedies in the Implementation and Operation of the Forest Development Programmes in Nainital, Uttarakhand” was undertaken to overview the effects of FDPs in terms of marketing constraints faced by the rural people. The study was undertaken in Nainital district of Uttarakhand, which was purposively selected for the study as this was the first district of implementation of participatory forest management programme and witnessed its successful implementation. Three villages were selected randomly from Bhimtal block of Nainital district of Uttarakhand. Twenty beneficiaries from each village were selected thus making the total respondents 60. Investigation was done for two separate years one immediately after the implementation of Forest Development Programmes (FDPs) and other for the latest year of implementation of FDPs. Marketing constraint analysis concluded that major channels of marketing of forest produce were found to be producer to middlemen, middleman to ultimate consumer. Constraints as seen by the beneficiaries were found to be seasonality of work, unequal wage distribution among man and women, back breaking work, underpayment, presence of middleman for salary distribution and thus less salary, frequent casualties etc. Constraints as observed by Sarpanch of Van Panchayat Samities were found to be huge loads of paper works, records, maintenance, large amount of calculations, lack of efficient staff with good skills and technical knowledge; lack of honesty, prevailing laziness in people etc. Constraints as reported by NGOs persons were reluctance of people to attend training been organized, lack of education level that leads to the wastage of time in teaching the

beneficiaries and lack of cooperation of beneficiaries

Key Words: JFM, NGO, NAP, FDP

1. Introduction

India has around one fourth of its geographical area under forest and tree cover. India is a green country, forestland occupies a little over 21% of the country's total geographical area with moderately dense to very dense forests covering approximately 13% of the land mass (Forest survey of India: 2011). Forest has been the source of mineral and nutrients since time immemorial. Indian state of forest report (2011) revealed that forestry constitutes the second largest land use in India after agriculture, covering about 769538 km² or 23.4% of the total land base. These statistics are also very important, driving home the quantum of forest dependence in our country. An estimated 200 million people depend on forests for at least part of their livelihoods. Agriculture and allied activities support livelihoods of nearly 52 per cent of India's rural population. In recent years, land based livelihoods of small and marginal farmers are increasingly becoming unsustainable, since their land has not been able to support the family's food requirements and fodder for their cattle. As a result, rural households are forced to look at alternative means for supplementing their livelihoods. Planning Commission (2002) stated that forests may be a source of wealth for the state, but for more than 10 crore forest dependents, as the Ninth Five-Year Plan noted in its mid-term appraisal, it is a source of livelihood and sustenance, fodder, fuel-wood, small timber, honey, wax and fruits.

Over the last two decades, National Afforestation Programmes (NAP) and Joint Forest Management Programmes (JFM) in India have been the major

thrust of forest management. A lot of efforts have been put by government, forest officials, NGO personals and the local people for regeneration of forests through execution of Forest Development Programmes. Nainital, where present study is conducted is the first district in implementation of JFM programmes under National Afforestation Programmes in Uttarakhand (Sarin *et. al.*, 2008). But the programmes are found to have an overall impact on livelihood of forest dependent people. Unemployment and under-employment are emerging as major constraints on welfare of the rural people in context of Forest Development Programmes. There may be many constraints prevailing to achieve benefits from the programmes by rural people and during implementation of the programmes by the forest officials and NGO persons. In this context, it becomes important to examine the pattern of marketing and constraints faced by different stakeholders in the implementation and operation of the Forest Development Programmes and to find remedies for the same.

2. Material & Methods

Nainital district of Uttarakhand was purposively selected as it is the first district in Uttarakhand where Participatory Forest Management programme/ Joint Forest Management programme under National Afforestation Programme had been launched and is one of the successful districts in implementation of Participatory Forest Management Programme in the state as reported by district forest office. Bhimtal block was selected randomly for the study. From the selected block Forest office, list of villages having forest development programmes such as NAP, NGOs implemented and JFM programme was obtained and out of them three villages, Jalna Neel Pahadi, Bahediya and Hediya were selected purposively as these are the villages that were completely covered under Forest Development Programmes. The primary data were collected from the sample beneficiaries on pre-structured schedule through personal contact and Sarpanch of each village van panchayat, forest officials and NGO personals were also consulted separately.

Constraints faced in implementation and operation of the FDPs.

An enquiry was done about various constraints faced by different stakeholders i.e. the beneficiaries, the village van panchayat head / Sarpanch and the Forest Protection Committee (FPC). The village van panchayat head acts as connecting link between the local people and the FPC and has the responsibility of smooth operation of the programme at village level. Hence, he was enquired about problems faced by him during operation of the programmes in the village. The

constraints faced by FPC were enquired as it acts as local monitoring authority and implementing agency of the programme at village level. Simple statistical tool like percentage and frequency were used to find out their relative importance and intensity. The constraints identified by higher number of individuals were considered as more severe constraints in the operation of the programme.

Garrett's Ranking Technique:

In the Garrett's scoring technique, respondents were asked to rank the constraint faced by them while marketing the forest produce then these ranks were converted into percent position by using the formula

Percent position =

$$\frac{100 \times (R_{ij} - 0.5)}{N_j}$$

Where, R_{ij} = ranking given to i th attribute by the j th individual.

N_j = number of attributes ranked by the j th individual.

By referring to Garrett's table the percent position estimated were converted into scores. Thus for each constraint the scores of various respondents were added and the mean values were estimated. The mean values thus obtained were arranged in descending order the attributes with the highest mean value were considered as the most important one and other followed in that order.

The percent position of each rank is obtained by converting it to scores referring to the table given by Henry Garrett. For each constraint of individual respondents were added together and divided by total respondents to calculate the mean score. These mean scores were arranged in descending order, by allotting the ranks accordingly.

3. Results and Discussion

Constraints were operationalised as the degree to which the respondents face some difficulties or hindrances in implementation and operation of the forest development programmes. For analysing the constraints faced by the beneficiaries and schedule was developed keeping the possible constraints in view and degree of constraints was measure on point continuum, of yes or no. Score of 2 & 1 was given for yes and no respectively.

1. The constraints faced by the beneficiaries in marketing of goods

The constraints faced by the beneficiaries in marketing of goods along with the number of respondents identifying the constraints are presented in Table 4.1

Table 1 Constraints faced in marketing of goods

S. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Percentage	Rank
1.	Lack of availability of transportation	38	63.33	II
2.	Presence of intermediaries and less producers share in consumer rupee	34	56.66	III
3.	Very Small incentives are provided by forest produce	6	10	X
4.	Market is located very far.	60	100	I
5.	Institutions (Forest department and extension agencies) are inefficient	4	6.66	XII
6.	Forest produce is bulky and its collection is labour intensive	9	15	VII
7.	No export potential for forest produce	2	03.33	XII
8.	Perishability of forest produce	20	33.33	VI
9.	Casualty, risk /wild animal attack	7	11.66	IX
10.	Long production period.	17	28.33	VII
11.	Forest produce are difficult to process	27	45	V
12.	Existence of subsistence farming i.e. non commercial farming	30	50	IV
13.	No problem at all	5	8.33	XI

All respondents (100%) agreed that location of market to a very far off place that is a strict limitation in disposing off their perishable produce in time hence the problem has been ranked as I.

About 63.33 per cent of respondents reported a lack of transportation facility as the villages are located in the remote area i.e. about 25 Kms away from the main market and it is difficult to get frequent vehicle from these places. Moreover, disposing forest produce need a big vehicle which is not that frequent. Hence, lack of frequent availability of transportation was considered as next constraint in marketing and was given a rank of II

Presence of intermediaries and less producers share in consumer rupee was reported by 56.66 per cent of the respondents. Usually respondents will not dispose off their products directly to the consumer usually they will handle it to mandi men via which the produce will reach to ultimate consumers. Forest products include aromatic flowers, medicinal parts of the plants, fruits, mosses (green and white), grasses etc. and these mandi men sells the produce in approximately 250 per cent of its original cost at which they have purchased it from local farmers. Hence, Presence of intermediaries and has been ranked as III a major constraint

Common marketing channels identified were:

- I. Producer ----- middleman (mandi person) --- processor ----- consumers.**
- II. Producer ----- middleman ----- consumers.**

Half of the respondents reported that subsistence farming i.e. non-commercial farming was prevalent in the study area i.e. farmer used to grow just for fulfilling their self-consumption need using old seeds, old methods and with old machines and thus

it could be considered as IV major obstacle in marketing of forest produce.

Next constraint in the study area was found to be the difficulty in processing forest produce face by the beneficiaries. It was reported by 45 per cent of respondents that due to lack of adequate machineries and skills it was difficult for them to process forest produce. Hence, the constraint was ranked as V.

About one third per cent of beneficiaries reported that forest produce are perishable in nature thus they need early disposal. And beneficiaries could not go to market frequently due to far off location of market and unavailability of frequent transportation vehicle making this next major i.e. VI constraint in marketing of forest produce.

Around 28.33 per cent respondents agreed that it takes a long gestation time and production period for producing forest produce besides their production being seasonal in nature. Hence, this was reported as VII constraint by the respondents.

About 15 per cent beneficiaries reported that Forest produce is bulky and its collection is labour intensive as well as back breaking thus, this was VIII constraint in marketing of forest produce.

About 11.66 per cent of responded revealed the frequent casualty, risk /wild animal attack thus this was revealed as IX constraint in marketing of forest produce.

Around 10 per cent beneficiaries reported that very Small incentives are provided by forest produce, 8.33 per cent revealed that they are not facing any problem, 6.66 per cent of beneficiaries reported that institutional agencies (Forest department and extension agencies) are not working efficiently, 3.33 per cent people reported that there is no export potential for forest produce. Thus, they were given X, XI, XII, XIII ranks respectively.

Table 2 Constraints faced by the beneficiaries

S. No.	Particulars	Frequency	Per centage	Rank
1.	Seasonality and irregularity of work	20	33.33	VII
2.	Under payment i.e. more work for less money	42	70	III
3.	Negligence of forest officials	18	30	VIII
4.	Delay of wage payment	28	46.66	V
5.	Engagement of mediaries for salary distribution	35	58.33	IV
6.	Unequal wages for man and women	60	100	I
7.	Too laborious work	45	75	II
8.	Frequent casualty	21	35	VI
9.	Ignorant attitude of department i.e. forest department and extension agencies	15	25	IX
10.	Work availability to a very far off site from home.	9	15	X
11.	No problem at all	6	10	XI

2. Constraints faced by different stakeholders in the implementation and operation of FDPs

The constraints faced by the beneficiaries along with the number of respondents identifying the constraints are presented in Table 4.2

A perusal of the table shows that almost (100%) all the beneficiaries have identified the Unequal wages for men and women the prime problem. About seventy five per cent of them have pointed out too much laborious and back breaking work as next constraint.

The less payment according to work is the next identified constraint as per the beneficiaries as 70 per cent of the beneficiaries have reported it as a problem. These beneficiaries stated that there is exhaustive manual labour required in planting and construction of irrigation channels on the hills and it also spoils a working day. But, they get less payment according to their labour.

Engagement of mediaries for salary distribution is next revealed constraint as reported by 58.33 per cent of the beneficiaries. About 35 per cent per cent of the beneficiaries have stated that there is no medical facility provided by the Forest officials for any casualty during the operation of the programme. Delay of wage payment is the next identified constraint opined by 46.66 per cent of the beneficiaries.

Seasonality and irregularity of work was reported as next constraint. These respondents also want that at least 120 days of work in a year should be given through this programme.

The other constraints associated with the programme are Negligence of forest officials as reported by 30 per cent of the beneficiaries, Ignorant attitude of department i.e. forest department and extension agencies (25 %), Work availability to a very far off site from home (15 %). Whereas, some of the

beneficiaries (10 %) are happy with the programme without any complain.

3. Constraints faced by the Sarpanch of the Van Panchayat in the implementation of the programmes

1. Sarpanch of Van Panchayat in all the three villages revealed that huge loads of paper works, records, maintenance, large amount of calculations etc. are the integral part of the FDPs which needs efficient staffs with good skills and technical knowledge. Van panchayat Sarpanch of both the villages faced the problem of lack of efficient staffs to execute these tasks as the trained staff was demanding higher salaries which was out of van Panchayat budget.

2. Sarpanch of Van Panchayat of Hediya and Bahediya village reported that there is lack of honesty in people towards their work. Doing less work they usually demands higher wages.

3. Availing work for all the seasons is a most challenging task for Van Panchayat however, he told that they had given training of craft making out of Baboo and Ringal to villagers in order to provide employment whole season.

4. Lack of honesty in people prevents them from timely coming to work. Moreover, they do less and demand more.

5. Several times shortage of fund becomes a major problem.

4. Constraints faced by the NGO officials in the implementation of the programme

CHEA (Central Himalayan Environment Association) an NGO is working very efficiently in the study area for restoration and regeneration of forest. CHEA is playing a very important role in the life of rural population as besides decorating their environment it is also undertaking some important

activities in the study area that include providing plantation to rural masses for home planting purpose (including fodder and fruit trees), imparting training to the people for keeping them self-employed for major part of the year when seasonal employment is prevailing. Training imparted by CHEA so far includes:

- How to make bamboo products.
- Teaching rural people the medicinal importance of mosses and local grasses.
- Plantation techniques.

The NGO personnel were contacted personally and their views were obtained on the constraints faced by them in implementation of FDPs that follows

1. It takes extra efforts to teach minute details to the villagers such as the plantation time, spacing, Intercultural operations etc
2. People are often reluctant to attend training that is being given to rural people that too free of cost due to their negligence and laziness.
3. Excessive regulation by Forest department does not allow the FPC to take any development work in the village according to local needs.
4. Lack of efficient staff as most of the efficient people do not want to work in remote areas and those who want to work were not found to be that much efficient.

Summary & Conclusions

Considering the constraints faced by the beneficiaries in the marketing of forest produce, most of the beneficiaries (71.66%) have identified the far off location of market place for selling their goods as the prime problem. Considering the constraints faced by the beneficiaries, all the beneficiaries (100%) have identified unequal

distribution of wages for men and women as the prime problem. The back breaking work is the second most shouted constraint as per the 75 per cent beneficiaries. Constraints as viewed by van panchayat head (sarpanch) of the villages are huge loads of paper works, records, maintenance, large amount of calculations, lack of efficient staffs, lack of honesty in people towards their work, difficulties in providing nearby worksite facility and work for the whole season every time. One of the constraints faced by the NGOs in the implementation of the programs was found to be lack of efficient staffs in adequate number.

To address these constraints certain measures can be taken such as vocational training centres at the local level should be established to teach the beneficiaries the processing, packing and packaging of forest produce. Payment of wages should be done on the basis of piece of work completed rather than on time duration of work basis. This will probably enhance the quality of work and will further prevent the wastage of time for both beneficiaries and forest officials as well. The facility of first aid at working site should be provided by the Forest officials for any injury, illness and casualty during the operation of the programme. It will encourage the participation of local people in the FDPs.

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