

Theme	Water stewardship
Title	Strengthening the Natural Resource Base through Integrated Watershed Development
State	Madhya Pradesh
District	Sehore
Implementing Agency	SRIJAN
Evaluation Agency	WASSAN Foundation
Date of Submission	September 2014

Executive Summary

Objectives: Assessing the impacts of watershed development programme in Sehore against its objective of strengthening the natural resource base of the district, improve soil and moisture regime, impact soil health and agricultural productivity, and building strong institutions.

Key Findings:

1. Since the topography of Icchawar block has high slopes and run-off, the efforts on conservation of rainwater was given priority in the project villages.
2. The expenditure on water utilization led to increase in the area under agriculture and supported irrigation in the project villages. Farmers could significantly improve the productivity, incomes and also diversify agriculture through sprinkler systems and group wells.
3. Efforts and interventions on agriculture related practices, like farmer field schools, are not very "investment intensive" yet proved to be effective.
4. 92% of project farmers attributed the increased yields to improved soil condition, while only 56% of control group farmers indicated yield increase due to improved soil conditions.
5. As a result of watershed intervention, the cropping pattern of farmers changed from single crop to more than two crops per season, and also ensured crop cover for the full year. 67% of farmers shifted from single cropping to at least 3 crops per season in the project villages.
6. 67% farmers reported rising of water table, 88% reported more water available for irrigation, 89% reported increase in share of irrigated land, 86% reported decline of soil erosion, 88% reported improvement in soil fertility and 79% reported improvement in soil moisture content.
7. As a result of strengthening the farmer's livelihood support system, a positive impact on social development indices were observed. Significant impact on asset creation happened at household level like: increase in percentage of families with improved housing conditions, building cattle sheds for livestock, construction of individual household toilets and possession of valuable assets.

Areas for Improvement:

1. Livestock management part was found to be relatively weak in the villages, though 71% of households owned livestock and potential of livestock as a sustained source of income, is well recognized in these villages.
2. Biogas plants were found to be one of the important interventions in the project. Though there are limited numbers of families that have these plants, scaling up on this initiative can make significant impact on the quality of life of the villagers.

3. The horticulture intervention with pomegranate plantation failed initially due to lack of water availability but now with improved water situation, horticulture seems to have evolved as a potential area which should be explored as a prospective income generating avenue to farmers.
4. The programme laid emphasis on people's participation in planning and execution of activities and their contribution. The local institutions are able to steer the project. However, there is a scope for improving emphasis on 'equity and gender issues'.

Please write to us at: itcmsk@itc.in for the full study