

Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Peoples' Participation on Wasteland Development in India

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*Abstract-*In this research paper, author would like to focus on Non-Governmental Organizations and Peoples' Participation on Wasteland Development in India. A Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary group of citizens which is organized at local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to the notice of governments for necessary remedial action. They provide expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms and help sometimes implement international agreements. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, the environment and health. Their relationship with offices and agencies of the United Nations System differs depending on their goals, their venue and their mandate. Over, 1,500 NGOs with strong information programme on issues of concern to the United Nations are associated with the Department of Public Information (DPI), giving the United Nations valuable links to people around the world. DPI helps those NGOs gain access to and disseminate information about the range of issues in which the United Nations is involved, to enable the public to understand better the

aims and objectives of the World Organization.¹

Key Words: NGO- DPI- IPS- DOWD- expertise- organized- information- humanitarian

Introduction

In India the financial assistance is being provided to the Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) for taking up the development of wastelands. The NGOs are required to prepare a project indicating the area to be taken up and the nature of activity to be undertaken. The activities, which can be funded under this scheme, are nursery raising, soil and moisture conservation and plantations. The project is generally implemented in periods ranging from three to five years and funds are released directly by Department of Wasteland Development (DOWD) to the voluntary agency. The department launched in 1994-95, a central sector scheme entitled the Investment Promotion Scheme (IPS) for development of wastelands with the objective of mobilizing and channelizing resources from the user industries, including

¹The Chief, NGO section. 2002. Department of Public Information, United Nations. New York, p.1.

corporate bodies, financial institutions and banks, under IPS, Central Promotional Subsidy subject to a maximum of 25 per cent of the total cost of a project is provided.²

Drawbacks of NGOs

However the NGOs suffer from their own drawbacks, some of them inherited and some others are invited ones. They are referred to here under for favour of information.

- i. Most NGOs are small, with a hand full of workers, operating at Panchayat level or in a cluster of villages. They do not have proper and required assistance for maintenance of their management and service activities,
- ii. they are not keen to share with others their plans, information, resources which leads to poor identity, insecurity, suspicious of their service amongst the people,
- iii. Many of them do good work and keen to prove themselves, but they fail to be noted by the government or the public. Because, they have not reached the critical mass and not so attached with the public,
- iv. if proved that one NGOs is not a genuine agency, it reflects on others. All of them are treated as good as or as bad as anybody else,
- v. many NGOs struggle for funds because they depend on government grants for projects they have taken up, because their funds base is very weak,
- vi. the earnings are not regular in NGOs. Some of the workers look for switching over to the bigger NGOs, because the NGOs suffered from poor earnings and

- vii. the expectation of the government and the public expectations have developed in such way that the NGOs have often failed to deliver goods. They are not able to disprove this public opinion, because when some succeed, many do fail on their attempt.³

Government Stipulation on NGOs

Apart from their drawbacks, the NGOs are associated with some of the stipulation as laid down by the government. Some of them are as follows:

- i. there is a legitimate concern that NGOs may be hastily created in order to take advantages of new opportunities offered by policy since they have not shown good performance within that given duration,
- ii. there is an obvious recognition of the need for committed intermediaries to bridge the gap and promote trust and understanding between public administration and peoples' organization, because they have to improve and develop the relationship with the people and also increase the income from the wastelands, and also convert the wastelands into cultivable lands and
- iii. the NGOs are expected to motivate the villagers and form and organize its role which therefore is envisaged at the local and pragmatic level, rather than at higher level affecting policy and structural relations.⁴

It is evident from above that the NGOs, in spite of their problems and government stipulations over them, can

²Industrial Herald. August, 1997. Multi-pronged Approach to Wasteland Regeneration, Chennai. pp.42-43.

³Wastelands News. 1994. SPWDP, Vol.XI, No.3, Feb-April, New Delhi, pp.7-8.

⁴Ibid., 2000. p.58.

deliver goods in a limited way in the context of development of wastelands in India in general and Tamil Nadu in particular. As already stated that in the sampling frame, the researcher had contacted 40 NGOs at a rate of one per block selected for the present study. Also it was understood from them that wastelands development programme needs detailed investigation on the following aspects, which the researcher was able to study in detail and present below with necessary proof of evidence collected during the primary survey.

- i) Involvement in wastelands development programme,
- ii) Government sanctions towards wasteland development and
- iii) User participation and types of participation.

NGOs involved in Wasteland Development Programme

As per the research design, it becomes inevitable to assess and find out the involvement of the NGOs in wasteland development programme. The assessment for this particular aspect of the study has been carried out from personal interview of 40 NGO-respondents involved in the wasteland development programme.

According to the interview conducted, all the 40 respondents have been actively involving themselves in implementing this programme. All the

respondents are very positive in their approach towards wastelands development programme.

Government Sanctions towards Wastelands Development

The Central and State Government have their due share of expenses each to the tune of Rs.1000 and Rs.3, 000 per ha., respectively of lands respectively for their operations irrespective of the NGOs involved in the programme. For example, out of a total sanction of Rs.20, 00,000 per 500 ha. the state Government participation will be one-fourth viz., Rs.5,00,000 till 2001. After words the ratio was 2:1 by both central and state governments respectively.

The researcher collected necessary basic information from the respondents about the actual sanctions received by the respective NGOs in different slots. The data so collected were compiled together on all the sample districts /NGOs and presented in Table 5.1.

According to the table there are 5 districts in which the project has been extended for a second term through the same NGOs, indicating the fact that the programme deserves expansion in a phased manner irrespective of districts. There was no need for government extent the programme further in the same districts through the same NGOs, unless or otherwise the

TABLE 5.1
Total Grants Sanctioned to NGOs in Tamil Nadu
(in Rs.)

Sl. No.	Districts / NGOs	1993-94	1994-95	1996-97	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	Total
1.	Pudukkottai a) CARD	262000	-	-	-	-	2140000	2620000
	[I & II] b) MANUSHI	-	-	-	-	-	-	21400000

2.	Sivagangai	a) AISNMM	3272000	-	-	-	-	2040000	3272000
	[I & II]	b) TRUPA	-	-	-	-	-	12200000	20400000
3.	Madurai	a) ANTHODAYA	-	-	-	-	-	4100000	12200000
		b) CHASE	-	-	-	-	-	-	4100000
4.	Ramanatha	a) SMSSS	-	-	-	-	8000000	-	8000000
	puram	b) AIRD	-	-	-	-	5100000	-	5100000
5.	Viruthunagar	a) ROMA	-	-	-	-	4000000	-	4000000
		b) AIMM	-	-	-	-	4624000	-	4624000
6.	Tuticorin	a) AWED	-	-	-	-	-	8220000	8220000
		b) AWARD	-	-	-	-	-	8800000	8800000
7.	Tirunelveli	a) SANDS	-	-	-	-	8000000	-	8000000
		b) CAST	-	-	-	-	8000000	-	8000000
8.	Theni	a) CISA	-	-	-	-	4660000	-	4660000
		b) ARDA	-	-	-	-	4800000	-	4800000
9.	Dindigul	a) REAL	-	-	4180000	-	-	-	4180000
	[I & II]	b) COODU-TRUST	-	-	-	-	-	12000000	12000000
10.	Coimbatore	a) EWD	-	-	1920000	-	-	-	1920000
	[I & II]	b) GMAI	-	-	-	10620000	-	-	10620000
11.	Erode	a) WORD	-	5020000	-	-	-	-	5020000
	[I & II]	b) REEDS	-	-	-	-	-	11820000	11820000
12.	Karrur	a) SCORE	-	-	-	-	7000000	-	7000000
		b) SWARD	-	-	-	-	8000000	-	8000000
13.	Namakkal	a) WORD	-	-	-	4000000	-	-	4000000

		b) BES	-	-	-	702000 0	-	-	7020000
14.	Salem	a) RAESO	-	-	-	-	8000 000	-	8000000
		b) SCD	-	-	-	-	7420 000	-	7420000
15.	Dharmapuri	a) RIDS	-	-	-	-	-	860000 0	8600000
		b) RIDO	-	-	-	-	-	108000 00	10800000
16.	Vellore	a) SEED	-	4000000	-	-	-	-	4000000
		b) REACH	-	7500000	-	-	-	-	7500000
17.	Cuddalore	a) CREED	-	-	-	-	4000 000	-	4000000
		b) ICOP	-	-	-	-	6740 000	-	6740000
18.	Perambalur	a) READ	-	-	-	-	-	800000 0	8000000
		b) OASIS	-	-	-	-	-	850000 0	8500000
19.	Ariyalur	a) SPEED	-	-	-	-	-	274000 0	2740000
		b) RDAD	-	-	-	-	-	302000 0	3020000
20.	Tiruchirapalli	a) LEAD	-	-	-	-	-	107000 00	10700000
		b) SEVAI	-	-	-	-	-	120000 00	12000000
Total			5892 000	1652000 0	6100000	216400 00	8834 4000	163300 000	301796000

Source: Primary data, 2002-2003.

performance was satisfactory. The researcher had occasion to personally verify in facts. Similarly in other district the programme was successfully implemented by respective NGOs in their given slots and their further interested in the extension to other wastelands with in the same districts are out side the districts. The details given in the table are self-explanatory. It is will be appropriate is this stage assessing their opinion the participation of user groups or

beneficiaries. The profile of NGOs is given in Appendix-F.

NGOs Opinion on Users participation

It will be appropriate at the state assess their opinion the participation of usual groups or beneficiaries. It is stated below.

Out of 40 NGOs, 85 per cent viz., 34 reveal that the public participation and their involvement is full in latter and spirit and they are whole heartedly involved themselves in the scheme and 15 per cent of NGOs viz., 6 said that they are not so.

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They are partially involved in the scheme mainly because of the encouragement given by the NGOs. This 15 per cent also later convinced with the scheme and

they become fully satisfied with it. The relevant details are given in Table 5.2.

TABLE 5.2
NGOs Opinion on Users Participation

Sl.No	Participation	Respondents	Percentage
1	Complete	34	85.0
2	Partial	6	15.0
	Total	40	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2002-2003.

The NGOs were further enquired about their considered suggestion for increased people participation in wasteland development. Some of the new suggestions are listed below, which they believe that, would considerably scale down their problems already mentioned.

- i. to encouraged to setup local male SHGs exclusively for the purpose of wastelands, which will assist the NGOs in every possible way,
- ii. to encouraged to the existing female SHGs to involve themselves in the maintenance of wastelands in the process of development,
- iii. to bring about a scheme as part of IWDP to recognize NGOs as trainers and chalk out periodical, local specific and purpose oriented training programme for village male and female youth under the auspicious of every block development office assigned with it,
- iv. to arrange for better coordination and increased support from the following organizations for successful improvement of wastelands development programme.
 - a. District Agriculture Office
 - b. District Forest Office
 - c. District Horticulture Office
 - d. District Rural Development Agency
 - e. Social Forestry Wing of State Government
 - f. Research Foundation working on rural development and
 - g. Block level and village level Community Organisations.
- v. Finally, the VAOs and Panchayat Officials need to be motivated financially or otherwise to involve themselves in the process of wastelands development as they are considered to be change agents in the entire process of wastelands development.

Peoples' Participation

As already quoted, in India, However, the "people usually mean the Villagers. To the educated Indians, participation means telling somebody else to do the job. Almost all respondents operations in India are done by poor illiterate villagers. As they are uneducated and shy, it is not surprising that they are not able to do some work properly. This results in poor quality of execution. The so-called educated exports and motivators usually give only instructions while standing at a little distance from the mud and dirt. It is not therefore uncommon to find villagers not listening to our plans and schemes properly. They listen to educated people mostly out of politeness and simplicity without any conviction. We have

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enough experts in India who can give erudite discourses on peoples participation when it comes to handling a spade or pickaxe however, very few people will be found equal to the task".⁵

While it was felt that the key motivation for participation was private gain in respect of individual economic livelihood, the operative reasons for non-participation in the development of wasteland varied according to the legal status of the land as well as the mindset of the people. The peoples' participation could be justified as follows:

- i) a situation where the local people, much more so the poor and under privileged, have a voice with regard to the use of the land, the kind of greening to which the land is to be put, the management and the sharing of produce,
- ii) a scheme of things where the local community including the Educational Institutes, Cooperatives, NGOs., Public Trusts, and others determine in consultation with the appropriate technical advisers the design and management of a wasteland development programme and decide on how the benefits are to be shared and
- iii) in different situations each of the above circumstances had particular relevance. The basic question is that of motivation which include the people to participate in each case. The participation required is in different types of wastelands development programmes on lands in a variety of ownership pattern ranging from individually held private land, on the one hand, to Government owned and managed wastelands, on the other. These separate major motivations could be identified as (1) subsistence motive, (2) profit motive, and (3) the social motive.

The group recommends that the schemes of National Wasteland Development Board (NWDB), or of other Government Agencies, in order to actively involve people to the maximum extent:

- a) use existing community structure to the extent possible and assist in setting up new community structures in order to institutionalize the mechanisms for people's participation at the village level and
- b) Ensure that the species and technologies used for the other development of degraded common and forest lands are such that they further the subsistence needs of the poorer sections of the community to the extent possible by specifically addressing themselves to the fuel wood and fodder needs in preference to industrial or other options.
- c)

Principles of Peoples' Participation

Development, including ecological development, present unusual challenge to both practitioners and theoreticians of developing people and not only things. This is the fundamental premise on which both ends and means must stand totally reconciled, development appears less and less to depend either on resources or on technologies by themselves, attention for uses more and more on people and institutions which can mobilize and manage resources and extent adapt technologies.

The essence of development is to raise productivity which is achieved through an integrated action of land, labour and capital and is defined as economic development. What the economist call labour, social scientist and development practitioners are call people.

⁵Wastelands News. 1994. SPWD, Shriram Bharathiya Kala Kendra, 1. copernicus Marg. New Delhi, P.8.

Technologies, resources and people's institutions, each contribute in different but complementary ways to raise productivity. Strategies and concrete action are best executed if the people who participate in such execution understand and see their own interest both short and long term in such development. Focus should be on strengthening of local capacities for planning and implementing development activities.

Analytical framework should define the three dimensions of participation and collective action, who: who participates, what: in what kind of participation and how: what are the quantitative aspects-voluntary or cohecive participation-continuous or adhoc. The dimensions can be described as ranging from highly selfish to highly altruist and from highly individualistic to highly cooperative. These dimensions define a 'space' within people' 'values' can be located. The concept of 'social energy' to account for the dynamism observed in certain grass root projects. A concept like energisation although not quantifiable nor predictable, can still has real and significant consequences. Possibility of 'free-riding' will inhibit collective action in general and the individual acts of piracy will inhibit regimes of natural resources management such as soil and water conservation in the Himalayas. Realization of the approach by the farmers and rural people of self-reliance because they learnt that if they did not help themselves, nobody else would help development of organizational capacity for farmers, to participate in the management of common resource. Such development should ensure for farmers, a continuous role in the planning, operating and maintenance of the common system so that it would not lapse back in its sad and unproductive condition.⁶ The success of people participation depends on the coordination of VAs and SHGs locally available. A brief reference about them is made here under.

Voluntary Agency (VAs)

Instead of grant-in-aid for the purpose of raising nurseries, voluntary agencies should be encouraged to assist in promoting decentralized nurseries and in utilizing seedlings produced in such nurseries. The scheme should stress more on voluntary agencies to act as facilitators, coordinators and extension agents. Instead of simply enabling execution of projects, the scheme should give greater stress to the expected role of voluntary organizations as catalysts, mass mobilizes and innovators.

The proposal of State Government should be considered by National Wasteland Development Board (NWDB) specially with regard to actual steps being taken to involve local people, create village level community structure and ensure equitable distribution of usufruct to the local community, especially the poorer sections. With regard to Margin Money Scheme, the private lands including Trust lands should be included for purpose of eligibility. The State Level Multi-State Co-operative Institutions should also be made eligible for the grants under the scheme.

In order to create and foster peoples' participation and to meet training and extension needs, the Central and State Governments should fund systematically, the creation and augmentation of village level structures including co-operatives in terms of developing their technical, extension and managerial capabilities. Projects of the type being implemented by NDDDB and IFFCO need to be replicated on a larger scale. The social costs of creating these structures should be born by NWDB and also, if feasible, by the State Governments. These entities should execute projects under the National Wastelands Development Programme. Using NWDB funds and also obtains funds from various sources including those

⁶Pramod Singh. 1986. Problem of Wasteland and Forest Ecology in India. Ashish Publishing house, New Delhi, pp..184-186.

available under various Employment Guarantee Programmes. They should also decide on the manner of distribution of benefits from such programmes.

State Government must identify the structure and mechanisms for coordination of funds under various schemes, both on public and private lands. The State Government should be asked to constitute State Wasteland and Land Use Board and to create coordination committees at the district and lower levels without any delay. For effective involvement of other people, it is imperative to decentralize the Wasteland Development Programmes to the extent possible.

Industrial requirements of wood products should be met mainly out of private wastelands. Forest departments and forest corporations should address themselves to meeting fuel wood, fodder, small timber and similar needs of the people out of government degraded lands in preference to the needs industry.⁷

Self-Help Groups (SHGs)

The Self-Help Group is a voluntary group, formed to attain same common goals; most of its members have similar social identity, heritage caste or traditional occupation and come together for common cause and manage resources for the benefit of the group members. These groups are called as "solidarity groups" as they provide monetary and also moral support to individual members in time of difficulties.⁸ "Small economically homogeneous and affinity groups of rural / urban poor voluntarily formed to save and contribute to a common fund to be lent to its members as per group decision and for working together for social and economic uplift of their families and community."⁹

The SHGs can be composed of either male or female members, SHGs believe in two things.

- 1) the poor can transit from dependency to self reliance much faster through social mobilization and awareness creation than through economic intervention, and
- 2) woman from the basis of social mobilization and there for aiming for women's empowerment is the most cost effective strategy available even for economic development. A typical rural women's SHGs performance a number of functions such as enabling member to become self dependent and self reliance providing a forum for members for discussing their socio-economic problems, developing decision-making capacity and leadership qualities among members: and equipping women with the basic skills required for understanding monetary transaction. The SHGs have been popular in countries like Bangladesh, Malaysia, Korea, Philippines and Indonesia for a long time in Bangladesh. The SHGs have been transferred into national programme and it has produced good results.¹⁰ Their special features are given here under.

⁷Report of the Working Group for Wastelands Development Sector in the Eight Five Year Plan. 1989. National Wastelands Development Board, Ministry of Environment, and Forests Government of India, New Delhi, pp.48-54.

⁸Kurukshetra. 2001. Council for Advancement of Public Action in and Rural Technology, New Delhi, November, p.28.

⁹Tamil Nadu Corpoation for Development of Women. 1999. Guidelines for Self Help Groups, 100, Anna Salai, Guindi, Chennai, p.1.

¹⁰Kurukshetra. 2001. Council for Advancement of Public Action and Rural Technology, New Delhi, November, p.28.

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- i) around 50 per cent of the watershed community that is those villagers, who are directly or indirectly dependent on the watershed, are enrolled as members of at least one self-help group,
- ii) separate self-help groups are organised for women, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Agricultural labour, Shepherds, etc.
- iii) around 80 per cent of the SHGs,
 - a) meet regularly at least once in a month and take all their decisions by common consensus amongst the members,
 - b) transact business with around 50 per cent of the resources generated from amongst the members,
 - c) have timely recoveries of around 80 percent of the outstanding and
 - d) maintain their accounts up-to date.¹¹
 - e)

Training for SHGs/UG Members

Watershed Development Team (WDT) members will ensure that a majority of the members of SHGs / UGs are given basic training and orientation on the technical and organizational aspects of the running of SHGs and UGs. The training will be practical skill up gradation involving specific user groups, SHGs for their respective activities. Mostly, the training should be organised by the WDT members with the help of local officials of technical developmental institutions, VAs, etc. Guest faculties invited may be paid an honorarium as per norms to the prescribed by the DRDA. The SHG / UG members could also be taken for visits to research stations/ successful VAs, watersheds / KVKs, etc., where they could see the demonstration of successful technologies/ practices/ designs that are relevant to them. User of audio-visual media to increase awareness and motivation among SHG/UG members should be encouraged.

During the initial stage, the WDT members shall be competent to take decisions regarding community organisation and training expenditures. Once the WA and WC have been constituted these matters will be considered and approved by them in consultation with the WDT.¹²

SHGs being voluntary associations and informal groups, doubts do arise whether such groups remain stable or would they break up when strong differences arose among members on any vital issue. This fear cannot be dismissed as something imaginary. Since the experience of last few years in the formation of SHGs bears out that, in several cases, a small proportion of the groups formed had become non-functional later for a variety of reasons. Destabilization of groups may arise from internal weaknesses as well as external influences, and the group members have therefore, to be suitably trained and educated to meet such challenges.¹³

In this context, the social forestry wing should function not in competition with individuals and organizations but for their support. As such, the major tasks of social forestry should be extension, training and coordination. Extension work needs to be done both directly by field staff of the social forestry wing and by people's organizations such as Voluntary Agencies, Ladies Clubs, Educational Institutions, Cooperatives etc. These bodies

¹¹Guidelines of Watershed Development. 1994. District Rural Development Agency, Karur. p. 13.

¹² Ibid., pp. 14-45.

¹³ Kothiah. P. 1995. Linking Self help Groups with Banks, NABARD, Bombay. pp.32-33.

should therefore, be looked upon as potential extension agents and not merely potential implementors of small wastelands projects. Infact, the latter aspect should be only for the purpose of buttressing their extension activities and not as substitute for it.

Training programme should be designed by multi-disciplinary cells in association with agricultural colleges, research institutions, government departments, etc., so as to reflect the needs at the field level. Training in nursery raising, soil and water management, planning, protection, conservation etc., should be the major tasks of social forestry divisions. This should be done both directly by the staff and by training people's organizations who could then conduct future training. Specific efforts must be made for creation of model villages which could operate as centers of excellence demonstrating the ideal activities under wasteland development efforts, when taken up in an integrated and wasteland development efforts, when taken up in an integrated and planned manner.¹⁴

According to the tables 5.3 and 5.4 the SHGs were on the increase from 1992-93 to 2000-2001 in Tamil Nadu. The total number of SHGs in

TABLE 3
Self Help Groups in Tamil Nadu

Sl. No	Districts	April 2000 to 31 March 2001 No. of SHGs	Cumulative upto 31.03.2001 No. of SHGs
1	Coimbatore	64	81
2	Cuddalore	477	775
3	Dharmapuri	1,374	2,523
4	Dindigul	786	1,194
5	Erode	143	364
6	Kanchipuram	693	1,364
7	Kanyakumari	1,081	1,347
8	Karur	249	687
9	Madurai	1,061	2,172
10	Nagapattinam	734	1,182
11	Namakkal	578	654
12	Nilgiris	31	90
13	Perambalur	259	269
14	Pudukkottai	151	303
15	Ramanathapuram	949	1,416
16	Salem	599	1,046
17	Sivagangai	995	1,680
18	Thanjavur	279	333
19	Theni	49	95
20	Tiruchirapalli	1,280	2,784
21	Tirunelveli	938	1,463
22	Tiruvallore	116	139
23	Thiruvannamalai	304	714
24	Tiruvrur	767	1,024
25	Tuticorin	862	1,367

¹⁴ Ilangoan, D., Padmanaban, K and Anbalagan, C. 2002. Cooperative Perspective Development of Weastelands on Co-operative basis, Vol.33, No.2, Pune, pp.14-18

26	Vellore	692	1,219
27	Villupuram	804	1,131
28	Virudhunagar	462	894
29	Uts	149	318
Total		16,926	28,590

Source: Sapra, Y.L. 2001. Compendium of Circulars on Self Help Groups, Bank Linkage Programme, NABARD, Chennai, p.94.

TABLE 4
Self Help Groups in Tamil Nadu (1992-2001)

Sl. No	Year	No. of SHGs	Cumulative No. of SHGs
1.	1992-93	22	22
2	1993-94	34	56
3	1994-95	203	259
4	1995-96	205	464
5	1996-97	408	827
6	1997-98	444	1,316
7	1998-99	2,633	1,949
8	1999-2000	7,715	11,664
9	2000-2001	16,926	28,590
Total		28,590	

Source: Sapra, Y.L. 2001. Compendium of Circulars on Self Help Group, Bank Linkage Programme. NABARD, Chennai, p.93.

Tamil Nadu is 28590 in 2000-2001. Such Self-Help Groups in wasteland development through the DRDA and block level offices. Tiruchirapalli district accounts for the highest number of Self Help Groups viz., 2784 and the lowest in Coimbatore viz., 81 only. The Self Help Groups involve in the wasteland development out of their own interest.

Based on the above information, the researcher wanted to make an overall assessment of the level of people participation in wasteland development, as explained below. The respondents were personally interviewed in this context, as per the sampling plan given in Chapter I and the summary of results are appended here under.

Kinds of Participation of Public

While assessing the opinion of some of the owners of the land regarding their involvement in converting their wastelands into cultivable lands almost all 400 respondents interviewed are in favour of full participation in the programme.

Regarding the nature of the participation in this scheme, 14.5 per cent of the respondents said that they are for only physical participation, 15.25 per cent for only monetary involvement and 70.25 per cent of the respondents are for both. The details containing the responses of the landowners are given in Table 5.5. More than 70 per cent of the 400 land owners interviewed regarding the conversion of the wastelands into

TABLE 5.5
Nature of Peoples' Participation

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Sl. No	Subject	Respondents	Percentage
1	Physical participation	58	14.50
2	Monetary participation	61	15.25
3	Both	281	70.25
	Total	400	100.00

Source: Primary data, 2002-2003

Note: **FC** = Forward Caste, **OBC** = Other Backward Caste, **SC** = Scheduled Caste, **ST**= Scheduled Tribe

Cultivable lands, told that they are in favour of offering their physical as well as monetary assistance to the programme. As stated above, 15.25 per cent of respondents (61 out of 400) opinion that they could contribute to wastelands development monetarily, that is the statutory requirement of 10 per cent of the total expenses, which is only 5 per cent for SCs and STs. Yet another group of 58 out of 400 respondents (14.5 per cent) said that they can only extended physical help and obviously cannot provide even the marginal financial assistance. Because they are economically and proverbially weak and their daily earnings will not even be enough for their family and personal needs and hence their stand could be justified. It would mean that although all the respondents are equally interested in the development of wastelands, their socio-economic status does not provide for necessary commitment in required measure.

12 Member of User Groups

The researcher wanted to study about a status of the respondents as members or non-members of such user groups of the programme under study. As already referred to the government is strict about people participation in the IWDP by way of monetary contribution to the tune of 10 per cent of the total investment from the social group of FCs & OBCs and minimum of 5 per cent in case of the social group of the SCs & STs.

It could be remembered here that the selection of sample respondents was made by giving equal opportunity (200 each) for both the groups who are required to contribute 10 and 5 per cents of the total government contribution respectively.

Table 5.6 is prepared to show the membership status of the respondents on the basis of social the group they belong to. The table is self-explanatory.

The researcher was curious to study further about the economic status of the respondents who are above poverty line and below poverty line and their relative participation in the programme under study. Out of totla 368 respondents, 174 (47 per cent) respondents belong to the group above poverty line and 194 (53 per cent) respondents belong to the group below poverty line. It could be seen from the Table 5.7 almost SCs and STs have utilized and benefited by IWDP. And It could be remembered here that the selection of sample respondents was made by giving equal opportunity (200 each) for both the groups who are required to contribute 10 and 5 per cent of the total cost respectively. It is expected that the members are more aware of the benefits of the wastelands development programme and to those non-members, it is not so. Hence, the researcher further enquired the purpose for which they tried reclamation of wastelands, which is explained in the table.

TABLE 6
Member of User Groups

Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Peoples' Participation on Wasteland Development in India

Sl. No	Subject	FCs and OBCs		SCs and STs		Total	
		Respon dents	Percen tage	Respon dents	Percen tage	Respon dents	Percen tage
1	Member	182	91.0	186	93.0	368	92.0
2	Non-member	18	9.0	14	7.0	32	8.0
	Total	200	100.0	200	100.0	400.0	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2002-2003

TABLE 7

Economic Status of User Groups

Sl. No	Income Category	FCs and OBCs		SCs and STs		Total	
		Repon dents	Perce ntage	Respo ndents	Percen tage	Respo ndents	Percent age
1	Above poverty Line	143	79	31	16.5	174	47.0
2	Below poverty line	37	21	157	83.5	194	53.0
	Total	180	100.0	188	100.0	368	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2002-2003

1. User group required to pay 5% contribution (SCs & STs and FCs and OBCs below poverty line) = 37 + 188 = 225
2. User group required to pay 10% contribution = 143 = 38.86%

Purpose of Reclamation of Wastelands

When the landowners were enquired regarding the purpose of reclamation of their wastelands, out of the 368 respondents who are in favour of development of wastelands, 60 respondents (16.30 per cent) told that they were taking reclamation of the wastelands for cultivation purpose, another 67 respondents (18.2 per cent) wished to continue to use the lands for agriculture purpose, and yet another 51 respondents (13.88 per cent) interested in reclamation

to get self employed. 68 respondents (18.48 per cent) wanted to reclaimate for increased income and the remaining 122 respondents (33.15 per cent) wanted to achieve all the above benefits as a result of the reclamation of the wastelands. Relevant details are given in Table 5.8.

The remaining 32 respondents who have no interest at all to get the lands reclaimed should be encouraged by the NGOs and the Central and State Government to get them enlightened about the matter under discussion.

TABLE 8

Purpose of Reclamation of Wastelands

Sl. No	Subject	Respondents	Percentage
1	Cultivation	60	16.30
2	Continuous Use	67	18.21
3	To get self employed	51	13.88
4	Increase Income	68	18.48
5	All the above	122	33.15
	Total	368	100.00

Role of Non-Governmental Organizations and Peoples' Participation on Wasteland Development in India

Source: Primary data, 2002-2003

Income Returns from Wastelands Development Programme

At this juncture it will be appropriate to bring to light the level of income returns from wastelands development. The user group of respondents had been enquired about it and the relevant information collected from them are given in Table 5.9. Three successive period of wasteland development is shown in the table viz., 1993-96, 1996-99 and 1999 – 2002.

When the scheme was launched in the beginning, the level of participation was not so encouraging. Only 74 out of 368 interviewed had participated in the programme. This is only 20.11 per cent of the total. However in the second slot of 1996-99, there was considerable improvement in participation viz., 112 out of 368, which is a little more than 30 per cent of the respondents. In the third slot of 1999-2002, 182 out of 368 (49.46 per cent) participated in the programme. This would mean that the programme has gained momentum by attracting almost all-prospective beneficiaries of the development of wastelands. However, it should be remembered here that this 368 is not the overall total. As already stated, 400 respondents were contacted, out of which 32, constituting only 8 per cent of the total stated that they are not interested in the programme. That means, any programme launched by the government will have only partial response from the target audience and in this case 92 per cent response is attained. This itself could set a positive trend, and considered as success of the programme. Further, the success is to be determined by the capacity for generation of income by participants, which is shown in Table 5.9. 176 out of 368 respondents were able to make an income up to Rs. 10,000. Another 121 respondents were able to make Rs. 10,001 to 20,000 from

their wastelands. Yet another group of 44 respondents out of 368 generated an income of Rs. 20,001 to 30,000. The remaining 27 respondents made an income above Rs. 30,000. It is evident from the table that the programme under review is economically beneficial and socially relevant today for the welfare for the community at large. The government established that the wastelands need not remain wastelands and if there is commitment and involvement in required measure on the part of the people. So wastelands development is reality.

Employment Opportunity

As seen before, wasteland development is economically worth doing. While the researcher conformed that there is income generation in that activity, it was necessary to find out, whether such an income is regular in character and permanent in nature. This would depend up on the employment potential of the programme. So the user groups were enquired about the regularity of employment opportunity in the wastelands that they have developed. The study was heartening, as shown in Table 5.10. It was found out that 347 respondents were affirmative about the increased employment opportunity in the wasteland development programme. This presented a rosy picture. It is sure that their involvement in the development of wastelands with the help of government is concrete. Only 21(5.7 per cent) respondents were of the opinion that the employment opportunity has not increased in the programme, may be due to their nature of approach towards the programme. The researcher had occasions to see a few big farmers used engage their own form workers including that of recently developed current fallow lands. In such a case, the chances for increased

employment for a same farm worker are rest assured.

Experiences with Government and NGOs

It is equally important to know the experience of the user groups with that of the Government and Non-Government

Organizations irrespective of their continued patronage for the success of the programme. The opinions of the respondents are termed as favourable, partially-favorable, and unfavourable as given in Table 11.

TABLE 10
Employment Opportunity

Sl. No.	Subject	FCs and OBCs		SCs and STs		Total	
		Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
1	Increased	168	96.5	179	92.3	347	94.3
2	Not-Increased	6	3.5	15	7.7	21	5.7
Total		174	100.0	194	100.0	368	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2002-2003

TABLE 11
Experience with Government and NGOs

Sl. No.	Subject	Government		NGOs	
		Respondents	Percentage	Respondents	Percentage
1	Favourable	245	66.5	292	79.3
2	Partially Favourable	107	29.1	55	15.0
3	Unfavourable	16	4.4	21	5.7
Total		368	100.0	368	100.0

Source: Primary data, 2002-2003

According to the table out of a total of 368 respondents, 292(79.3 per cent) were in favour of the performance of the NGOs in developing the wastelands for cultivation, 55 (15 per cent) respondents were partially favourable to the assistance rendered by NGOs, and 21 (5.7 per cent) respondents were not in favour of getting help from NGOs at all, may be because of

their lack of commitment to the programme.

Regarding the experience of the user groups with the government, out of a total of 368 respondents, 245 (66.5 per cent) stated that they are in favour of the government, 107 (29.1 per cent) respondents stated that they are partially-favourable to the government and 16 (4.4 per cent) respondents told that they are not

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favourable the government. These 16 respondents were against the government because they would have deviated themselves from the set standards of their participation in the programme and may be out of frustration they opined in the negative.

Conclusion

The foregoing discussion on the various aspects of IWDP and the role of Government and NGOs in the implementation of the scheme brought to light the impact it made on the community at large. So the researcher wanted to collect the opinion of the user groups on the prospects of the programme. The findings are given below. Over a period of 12 years the programme could make a positive impact on the community mainly by its useful results. The respondents, on enquiry, felt comfortable about it and as such a majority of them (94.5 per cent) suggested the following when the researcher wanted to assess the future of the programme.

- i) The programme can be extended further for the benefit of wastelands owners in India as long as all the wastelands converted in to cultivable lands,
- ii) the respondents further opined that the programme could be redesigned with consultancy cell, consisting of one or two staff of the Department of Agriculture for required assistance in the areas where the programme was already implemented and
- iii) as a part of the programme, there must be some inbuilt arrangement to evaluate the regularity of the beneficiaries in maintaining the lands developed under the programme. In case of defaulters, there can be a mechanism to collect the 90 / 95 per cent of money spent

on their land is to be collected back through legal process or their lands have to be taken-over by the government and handed over to successful beneficiaries.

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