

Rapporteurs Note on Watershed Management - Review of Programmes and Impact Analysis: Session - III

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Studies on watershed management under surface and groundwater irrigation have focussed on the analyses from two distinct perspectives. Firstly, the environmental perspective, which mainly arises out of the mismanagement (or generally overuse) of water. This has been a subject of debate for long. Almost a consensus has been reached to underscore the irrigational overuse of water both under the surface and groundwater irrigation systems. Large number of suggestions have come up to encounter this problem. Secondly, it is a well known fact that even with the complete exploitation of the water resources potential under surface and groundwater systems in the country, we will not be able to provide irrigation to all the regions. Hence, it will be difficult to make available this most required input to the entire cultivated land and almost half of the land mass would remain unirrigated and dependent on rainfall. In the recent past water management on a watershed basis has emerged as an important alternative strategy to deal with dualistic problem of coping up with the environmental hazards due to the overuse of water and also providing the minimum required water to the regions which are placed unfavourably in any water balance equation.

In this perspective the third session of the seminar dealt mainly with the review of the watershed management programmes under different perspectives viz., governmental programmes, non-governmental organised project programmes and programmes taken up by voluntary organisations. The session also addressed to the most crucial problem of the impact analysis of the programmes.

Four presentations were made in this session. Joshi and Bantilan elaborated on the experience from International Crop Research Institute for Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISATs) studies on watershed management research in semi-arid tropics. The focus of the paper and their presentation was more on the directions and methodology to evaluate the impact of watershed management technology. The issues such as total factor productivity, efficiency in various inputs use, cropping pattern effect and sustainability of the natural resources in the process were highlighted. It was felt that finer technological niches need to be analysed while dealing with the impact analysis of any watershed project. Some of the participants expressed that the clear water balance equations of different regions need to be worked out before taking up the studies on the impact of watershed management.

Deshpande and Rajasekaran presented the experience of the impact analysis of National Watershed Development Programme for Rainfed Agriculture in the State of Maharashtra. The paper concentrated specifically on two broad aspects viz., the methodology of the impact analysis and the experience gathered from the field studies under diverse climatic situations. First time they pointed out to the differentials impact of watershed management across reaches as well as the variation in participation due to the actual implementation time of benefits. The participants in the session expressed that the involvement of beneficiaries at three levels namely - planning, monitoring and sustaining the watershed structures becomes more crucial for the success of the programme. It was also felt that if the basic sustainability itself is threatened and even survival needs become most important then the society will automatically react and